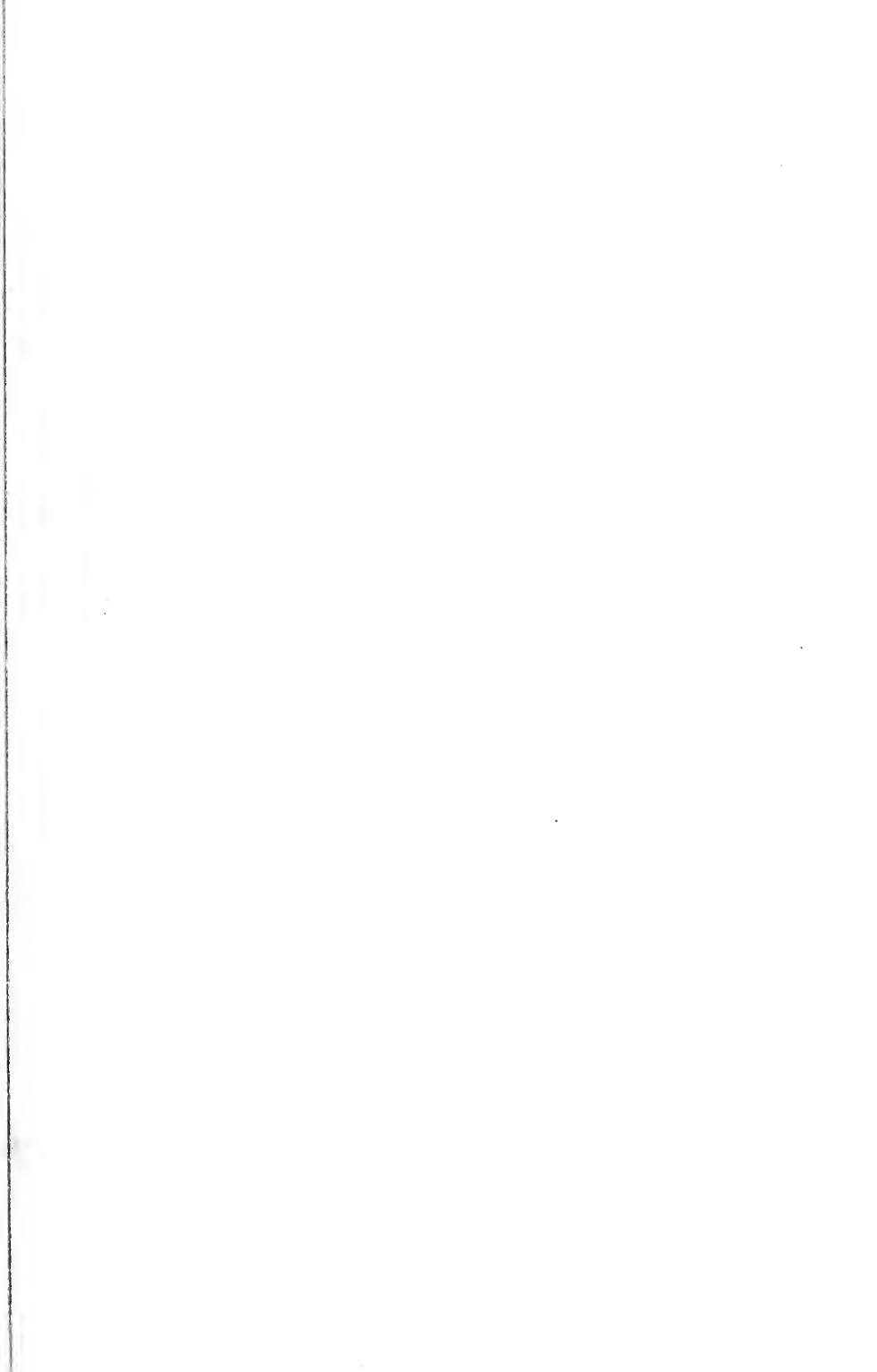


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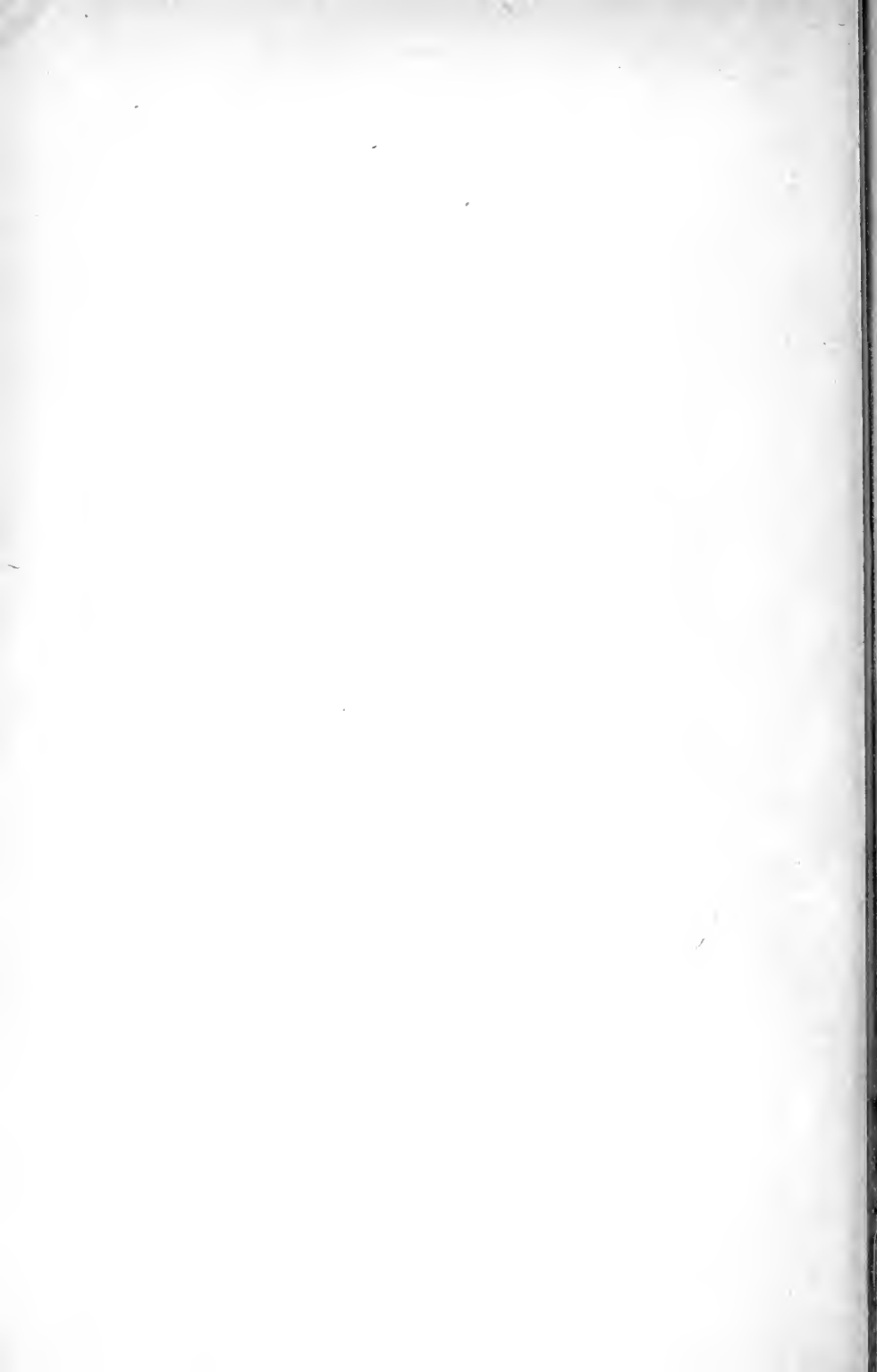
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GREAT NATIONS
FRANCE







G. Chaper

Monnet & Co.

Jeanne d'Arc

FRANCE

THE NATION AND ITS DEVELOPMENT
FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO THE ESTAB-
LISHMENT OF THE THIRD REPUBLIC

BY
WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON



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TO MY FRIEND
GEORGE WHALE



P R E F A C E

THOUGH interrupted from time to time by pressure of other work, the writing of this book has occupied me for a number of years. It was therefore begun without any anticipation of the crisis which in August 1914 was to unite France and England in a common cause against a common foe. Of the additional interest which their alliance has given to the completion of my task it is scarcely necessary to speak, but reference may be permitted to another point which during the preparation of my last chapters has been always uppermost in my mind. The war which is now raging is, as it cannot be too often repeated, essentially a conflict of principles, and the principles for which France and her allies are fighting to-day are just those principles of democratic government which she was herself the first among European nations to proclaim in unmistakable terms to the world. The Revolution, it is true, appeared to end in disaster for the democratic cause; a hundred years ago all Europe was in the midst of a sweeping reaction; everywhere the powers of darkness seemed to have entered upon a new tenure of life; in our own country, in Professor Pollard's vivid phrase, the Tories were sitting "upon the safety-valve of constitutional reform." But the great movement, though checked, could not be permanently arrested; 1830, 1832, 1848, 1871 are dates which mark its further progress in the teeth of ever-reviving opposition; the present struggle against militarism and autocracy is only its continuation; and the overthrow of Prussia and of all that Prussia has stood for will be the victory of the ideals by which from the outset it was inspired. Hence the significance of the Revolution in Russia, which is

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yet in its early stages as I write, but which happily gives every promise of stability; hence the significance of the entry into the alliance of the great American Republic, pledged, in President Wilson's words, to "spend her blood and might for the principles that gave her birth." In the light of these things, and of the vast changes now impending, the history of France—the standard-bearer of liberty among the peoples—is fraught with fresh meaning for those of us who believe that the triumph of democracy is the only guarantee of the future of civilization.

My warmest thanks are due to the friends who have helped me in various ways during the progress of my work: in particular, to Mr J. E. Mansion, B.-ès-L., for his kindness in reading the whole of my manuscript and for many valuable criticisms and suggestions; and to Mr C. C. Wood, for similar services while the book was passing through the press, and for his patience and skill in the verification or correction of innumerable difficult points of detail. To Mr Wood I am furthermore indebted for the Index. I desire also to express my gratitude to the Librairie Larousse of Paris for their great courtesy in supplying many of the blocks which I have used in this volume, and for providing information concerning others of the illustrations chosen.

WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON

LONDON, *May* 1917

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the keep, and the defensive stockade, later reinforced by the moat. "The Frankish villa always consisted of two distinct parts, sharply separated from one another and designated by different names; on the one hand there was the residence properly so called of the master and his family (*curtis*), the friends who were his guests and his personal domestics sharing this with him; on the other, there were the buildings designed for the slaves, the animals, and all the implements useful in agricultural labour" (*op. cit.*, p. 591). These particulars indicate that such an establishment was on a very extensive scale and that its proprietor was evidently a man of considerable wealth and consequence. *Reproduced by permission of Messrs Hachette & Co., Paris.*

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Preserved in the Treasury of Monza Cathedral. With this the Lombard kings, it is said, were crowned at Pavia, their capital, or Milan, or perhaps Monza. It was used by Charles V, who crowned himself with it at Bologna in 1530, and by Napoleon at Milan in 1805 (p. 538). In 1859 it was carried off by the Austrians, but was restored in 1866. Perhaps the original was a simple iron crown, or possibly only the interior circlet of iron (visible in the picture), which tradition asserted to have been formed of one of the nails of the Cross, brought by Helena from Jerusalem. The golden, jewelled exterior dates perhaps from about 1100. It is a simpler and apparently later work than the imperial crown figured below. (Condensed from note in Mr H. B. Cotterill's *Medieval Italy*.) *Photo G. Bianchi, Monza.*

6. THE SO-CALLED CROWN OF CHARLEMAGNE

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"This magnificent crown, surmounted by a cross and arched diadem, is in the Imperial Treasury at Vienna. There is great divergence of opinion as to its date. Some authorities, as Bock—with whom I agree—believe the crown itself to be early Italian work, and the diadem with the name 'Conrad' to have been a later addition. In this case there is just a possibility that the crown is actually that which was used by Leo III to crown Charles the Great. But some patriotic Teutons . . . assert that both parts were undoubtedly made in Germany, and they insist that the whole *cannot* be anything but eleventh-century work, and therefore *must* be an imperial diadem made specially (at Mainz ?) for the coronation of Conrad II and his consort Gisela in 1027. . . . The arched diadem bears, worked in pearls, the words *Chuonradus Dei Gratia Imperator Augustus*. The crown itself is a mass of precious stones, gold filigree, and pearls. It has three pictures in enamel representing (1) Christ, between two angels, as King of Kings; (2) David as the King of

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Manly Courage ; (3) Solomon as the King of Justice and Wisdom ; (4) Hezekiah as the King of Piety." (Mr H. B. Cotterill's note in his *Medieval Italy*.) Photo by S. Schramm, Vienna, photographer to the Court of Rumania.

7. FACSIMILE OF PART OF THE STRASSBURG OATHS 48

The part reproduced gives the oath taken by Louis, as preserved in the unique manuscript of Nithard's *Historiarum Libri IV*, Book III, chap. v (Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. 9768, fonds latin).

Louis took the oath in Romance, and Charles repeated it in German. The second oath was taken, in Romance and in German, by the armies of the two Kings. Nithard's manuscript gives the Romance and the German versions of both oaths, and is a document of supreme interest to philologists. (See p. 49.)

8. THE CASTLE OF MONTLHÉRY 64

Of the great castle of Montlhéry, between Paris and Étampes, all that remains to-day is the keep, with the adjoining stair-turret. The substructures of four other towers and of the main walls, and also of the three fortified terraces which separated the castle from the town below, are still plainly discernible, however, and, founding on these, the well-known artist and archaeologist F. Hoffbauer has reconstituted the castle as it appeared in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The original fortress was built in the eleventh century by a younger son of the house of Montmorency. Under Philippe I it was the stronghold and retreat of the brigand Hugues de Crécy (see pp. 65, 90). From Larousse, "*Histoire de France*."

9. A CRUSADER KNIGHT 74

From a French bronze of the fourteenth century in the National Museum, Florence. Photo Brogi.

10. THE CHÂTEAU GAILLARD 110

Built by Richard I in 1197 on a height above the village of Les Andelys to command the navigation of the Seine and protect Normandy against Philippe-Auguste. Owing to its position, its triple lines of outworks, its seventeen towers, and its walls of from 8 to 14 feet in thickness, it was at the time deemed impregnable, yet it was captured by Philippe in 1204 (see p. 111). It was afterward used as a State prison, and was the scene of the murder of Margaret of Burgundy, wife of Louis X, in 1315. Though, except for the donjon, it is now in ruins, it is considered one of the finest specimens of the Norman castle. Our illustration is, of course, reproduced from Turner's well-known picture in the *Seine et Loire* series.

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The Cathedral of Notre-Dame is the most imposing thirteenth-century monument in Paris. It was begun in the twelfth century by Bishop Maurice de Sully, on the site of a church dating back to the fourth century, but only the apse and part of the nave were built at this time. The principle façade was begun under Philippe-Auguste, and it was under Louis IX that Jean de Chelles, the only architect of Notre-Dame whose name has come down to us, built in 1257 the southern façade and several of the chapels which surround the choir. During the course of the eighteenth century and of the First Empire the appearance of the cathedral was much altered by ill-judged restorations; it was much neglected and was threatening ruin when in 1845 the great architects Lassus and Viollet-le-Duc undertook to save the monument and restored to it much of its early splendour. *X Photo.*

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B. 1215, d. 1270. From an engraving by Pedretti after the portrait by de Creuse.

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This "Parthenon of Gothic architecture," as Viollet-le-Duc called it, has served as a model for many other monuments in France and other countries, particularly for Cologne Cathedral. It was erected in 1220-88 by Robert de Luzarches, Thomas de Cormont, and the latter's son Renault. The towers of the west façade belong respectively to the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries; the west portal was completed in the fourteenth. It has been calculated that the erection of such a building to-day would entail an expenditure of at least £4,000,000. *X Photo.*

15. THE SAINTE-CHAPELLE

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Besides the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris possesses two other churches dating from the thirteenth century, Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre and the Sainte-Chapelle.

The latter, the most perfect monument in pure Gothic style to be found in Europe, was built by Louis IX in 1245. It formed a part of the Palais de la Cité, where Louis often resided, and was intended to serve as his private chapel. It consists of two stories: the 'lower chapel,' intended for the people and officials who dwelt within the precincts of the Palais, and the 'upper chapel,' reserved for the King and his family. To give the church

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BOOK I

THE GAULS THE ROMANS AND THE FRANKS

TO 987

CHAPTER I

GAUL BEFORE THE COMING OF THE FRANKS

THE story which is to be told in these pages begins some centuries before any France existed either as a geographical entity or as a name, with the country which the Romans knew as Gallia Transalpina, or Gaul beyond the Alps. Stretching from the Mediterranean to the English Channel and from the Bay of Biscay to the Rhine, this territory included a good deal more than goes to the making of modern France. When history opens upon it it was peopled by three races which Julius Caesar called the Aquitani, the Belgae, and the Celtae. The Aquitani occupied the region to the south-west between the Garonne and the Pyrenees. The Belgae spread north-east from the Seine and the Marne to the Lower Rhine and the Ardennes. Between lay the land of the Celtae, embracing the Atlantic seaboard, the great plains of Central France, and the lowlands of Switzerland.

We now know that these races were not, as Caesar supposed, homogeneous, but that each was a conglomerate of many tribes. But the question of their derivation and composition, like that of the aboriginal inhabitants whom they displaced, belongs rather to ethnology than to history, and need not detain us here. Caesar says that they differed from one another "in language, institutions, and laws"; but while it is evident that the Aquitani belonged to an entirely separate

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stock, the Celtae and the Belgae appear to have had much in common; and these closely connected members of the great Celtic family we may for present purposes consider as one people under the generic Roman name of Gauls. They are described by early writers as tall and fair, with clear skins and blue eyes; haughty of bearing, childishly impulsive and fickle, fond of fighting, and of great strength and courage.¹

In many migrations and colonizing movements from about the tenth pre-Christian century onward, these restless peoples had from time to time touched the fringes of the older civilizations. Successive hordes of them had in particular passed over the Alps, attracted by the sunny skies and the wines and fruits of Italy, and so many had settled in the rich plain between Alps, Apennines, and Adriatic that that region had come to be called Gallia Cisalpina, or Hither Gaul. But they definitely enter European history some three hundred years before the birth of their destined conqueror, Julius Caesar, when 30,000 warriors of the Celtic tribe of the Senones crossed the Apennines into Central Etruria and laid siege to the important city of Clusium (now Chiusi). The panic-stricken Clusians appealed to their old foe on the Tiber, and the Senate dispatched the three sons of Fabius Ambustus, the Pontifex Maximus, with peremptory orders to the invaders not to molest a city which was now the ally of Rome. "By what right do you attack the Etruscans?" the envoys demanded of the Gaulish Brenhir, or chief; and the Brenhir (or, as the Romans called him, Brennus, thus turning a descriptive title into a proper name) replied: "We carry our right on our sword, and all things are the property of the brave."² In a battle which followed, the Fabii, forgetting their neutrality as envoys, joined in the fighting, and one of them killed a Gaulish leader with his own hands. Brennus instantly sent an embassy to Rome to demand the surrender of the man who had thus broken the

¹ Caesar, *Commentaries*, Book II, chap. vi; III, viii, xix; VI, xiii. Diodorus Siculus, Book V, chap. ii.

² Livy, *History*, Book V, chap. xxxvi.

GAUL BEFORE THE FRANKS

law of nations. The wiser counsels of the few were overborne by the clamour of the many, and the Roman people not only refused reparation, but even elected the offenders military tribunes for the ensuing year. The infuriated Gauls thereupon raised the siege of Clusium and marched straight for Rome, not even pausing to plunder the tempting villages on their way. The Romans, who had not yet begun to realize with what sort of men they had to deal, allowed the invaders to come within a dozen miles of their walls, and then sent out an army to meet them at the juncture of the Allia and the Tiber. The contest was short and decisive. The Roman lines broke before the fierce onset of the strange enemy, whose gigantic forms and wild war-cries filled them with panic fear, and only a few survived to carry to Rome the news of the disastrous defeat (390 B.C.). The city was sacked and fired, though the Capitol was saved, legend says, by the timely warning of the sacred geese of Juno ; and when the barbarians marched away they left behind them a tradition of their power which long haunted the Roman imagination.

ROMAN EXPANSION IN GAUL

For many years after this Rome continued to encounter tribes of the Gauls, now as independent marauders, now as mercenaries in the armies of the Etruscans and the Samnites ; and for a time she did little more than hold her own against them. But with the crushing defeat which she inflicted on the allies in the Third Samnite War the neck of the Gaulish power in Italy was broken (298-290 B.C.). This was followed by Roman expansion in Cisalpine Gaul. Then came the great struggle with Carthage, which interests us here in particular because, some of their free will and some under compulsion, many warriors of the tribes on the Upper Po fought under Hannibal's banner and gave him substantial help. But it must also be noted that the Second Punic War (218-201 B.C.) first definitely turned Roman attention to Gaul beyond the Alps. The city of Massilia (Marseille), which had been founded by Phocæan settlers some four hundred years before, had now

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grown to be the rival of Carthage in maritime power. It was natural, therefore, that it should side with Rome. The protection which, in return, Rome extended to Massilia marks the beginning of Roman influence on Gallic soil.

The subjugation of Cisalpine Gaul, which had been interrupted by the struggle with Hannibal, was completed in 191 B.C., and Gallia Togata (or Gaul which had adopted the toga) was added to the fast-growing map of Rome. In the middle of the following century the Massilians, harassed by surrounding tribes, turned again to the Romans for help. Such help was freely given, the Romans at the outset demanding nothing in repayment save the preservation of the overland route into Spain. But the rapid development of their territorial ambitions soon brought about a change in their policy. The interests of Massilia were made the excuse for a campaign of conquest which ended in the formation of another province—that of Gallia Bracata, so called because, unlike those of Gallia Togata, its inhabitants continued to wear the Gallic breeches. This territory (the alternative name of which, Gallia Provincia, survives in the modern Provence) ultimately extended from the Rhone to the Pyrenees and as far inland as the Cevennes. The founding by the proconsul Caius Sextius in 123 B.C. of the city which, with reference in part to its hot springs and in part to his own name, he called Aquae Sextiae (now Aix-en-Provence), was an event of importance, for this was the first Roman city in Gaul proper. A few years later Narbo Martius (Narbonne), originally a Phoenician settlement, became the first Gallic *municipium*, or Roman colony, and before long the successful rival of Massilia, whose glory from this time forth began to wane. Other *municipia* followed—among them Nîmes, Béziers, Arles, and Avignon—each with its magistrates, its forum, its capitol, its circuses, and its temples, after the fashion of the mistress city on the Tiber.

THE SUBJUGATION OF GAUL

Scarcely had the Romans firmly established themselves in Gaul when their very existence there was threatened by a

GAUL BEFORE THE FRANKS

terrible danger from the north. Vast swarms of Cimbri from the borders of the Baltic and of Teutones from the far-off forests of Germany suddenly poured southward, and, crossing the Danube, for some years swept everything before them in Central Gaul, Provincia, and Spain. Having repeatedly defeated the Roman legions sent out to check them, they presently resolved upon the invasion of Italy. For this enterprise they divided into two parts, the Teutones taking the route across the Maritime, the Cimbri that across the Central Alps. Rome itself trembled, and dispatched the only man who at that hour of desperate crisis seemed capable of saving the Republic—Caius Marius. For more than two years Marius was engaged in protracted operations against the Teutones, whom at length, however, he annihilated in a terrific battle in the hills near Aquae Sextiae (102 B.C.). In this two days' engagement it is computed that anywhere between 100,000 and 200,000 (so do the reports vary) of the barbarians were slain. The next year Marius met the Cimbri in Northern Italy and defeated them in a battle still more bloody, the carnage extending even to the women, children, and dogs of the invading host. Rome was once more freed from the fear of external foes. But the civil dissensions of the capital now spread to Provincia and caused unrest and disruptions, while maladministration inspired various movements of revolt. Then a fresh Germanic invasion began under a chief named Ariovistus, whose aid was implored by the Sequani against their powerful foes, the Aedui. The defeat of the Aedui gave Ariovistus a secure footing in Gaul, for Rome was at the moment too much preoccupied with troubles at home to be able to interfere. Other Germanic tribes were naturally encouraged by this success. Then the Celtic Helvetii, who had formerly joined the Cimbri in their depredations in Northern Italy, set out to invade Transalpine Gaul. This brought them into conflict with Julius Caesar, who had recently been appointed proconsul of the two Gauls (Cisalpine and Transalpine) and Illyria. Caesar vanquished them, and, turning at once upon Ariovistus, drove the Germans back across the Rhine. The Gauls were

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at first delighted to be thus delivered from their foes. But when they perceived that it was Caesar's intention to maintain an army of occupation in their territory some of the more independent among them took alarm. The Belgae, whom Caesar describes as the bravest of all and the least touched by the softening influences of civilization,¹ formed a powerful confederacy and put an enormous army in the field. This gave Caesar the excuse for which he had been waiting. Discarding all pretence of friendship, he now openly undertook the conquest of Gaul.

The accomplishment of this enterprise was the work of nearly six years (57-52 B.C.) and (including those in Britain) of eight campaigns, and the story of it is written with marvellous brevity and lucidity in the famous *Commentaries*. Caesar's first task was the destruction of the Belgic league. Then he proceeded to bring the Veneti and other coast tribes into submission; after which, realizing that Roman power depended upon security from foes without as well as from malcontents within, he carried the war among the Germanic peoples on the farther borders of the Rhine. The invasion of Britain (55, 54 B.C.) was also an incident in the carrying out of his general frontier policy. The subjugation of Gaul now seemed assured, and the Roman Senate accorded the conqueror a public thanksgiving of twenty days. But the natural consequences of subjugation soon began to appear in a well-marked tendency toward unification among the Gallic tribes. Hitherto divided by rivalries and contentions, they resolved to make common cause against the common oppressor. The first attempts at a general insurrection failed, mainly, it would seem, for want of a great leader. Such a leader now appeared in the person of a warrior of the Arverni named Vercingetorix.

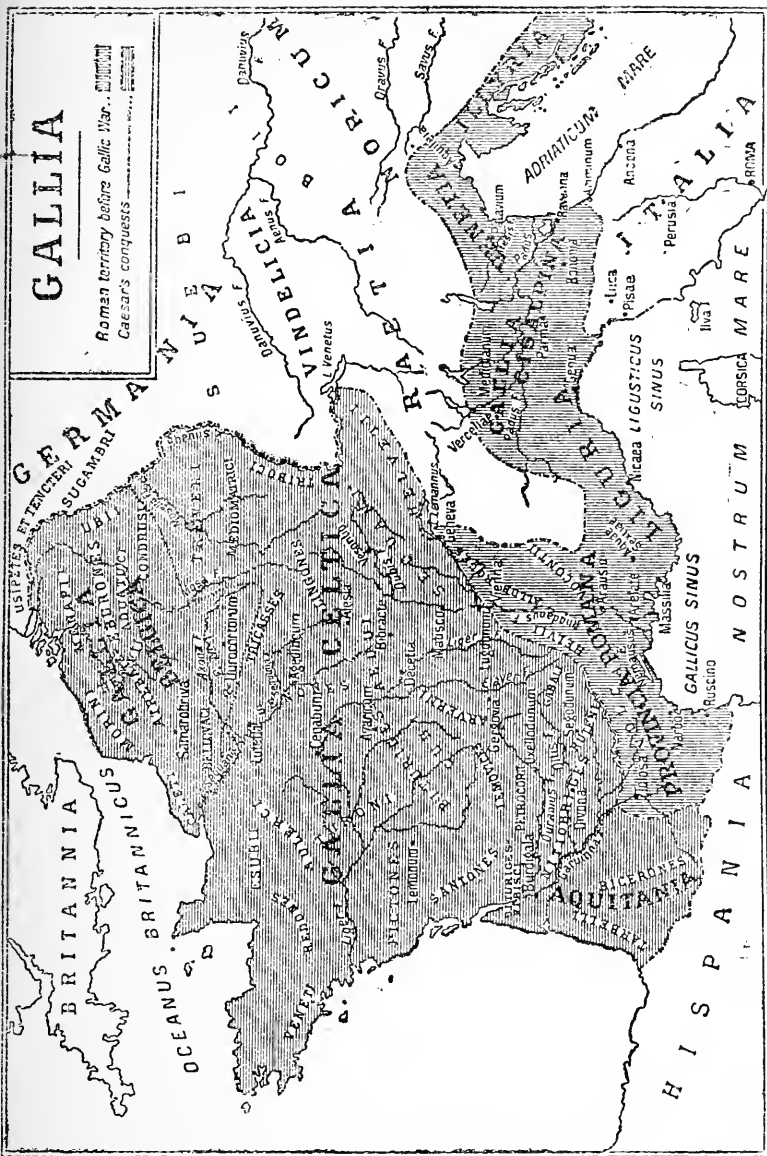
VERCINGETORIX

It is to be regretted that for most of our knowledge of Vercingetorix we have to depend upon the records of one who,

¹ *Commentaries*, Book I, chap. i.

GALLIA

Roman territory before Gallic War...
Caesar's conquests



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great as he was as a soldier and a statesman, was a most ungenerous foe. Yet even in the dry and unsympathetic pages of the *Commentaries* the magnificent courage and personal power of the young Arvernian are still apparent. It was in the dead of winter that the signal for revolt was given. The news reached Caesar in Northern Italy, whither he had been called by the critical state of things in Rome. Without an instant's delay he marched across the Cevennes, where in places the snow lay six feet deep. The struggle which followed demanded all his energies and skill, and the severe reverse which he suffered at Gergovia, the capital of the Arverni, left him for the moment in a really desperate plight. He contrived, however, to reunite his scattered forces, and with the fall of Alesia, in which, after several reverses, Vercingetorix had shut himself up with 80,000 men, the organized insurrection came to an end (52 B.C.). The "great chief of a hundred kings"¹ then surrendered himself to his conqueror. Caesar's bald narrative provides no details of the interview.² Other writers are more circumstantial, though unfortunately their accounts differ. Plutarch describes the great Gaulish chieftain riding into Caesar's camp in full military array, dismounting before Caesar's seat, and laying down his arms in absolute silence.³ According to Dion Cassius, on the contrary, he relied on Caesar's former friendship for pardon, and his demeanour was that of a humble supplicant.⁴ This much at least we know, that the noble young hero was loaded with chains and carried to Rome, that there he languished for six years in prison, and that at the end of this time he was taken out to grace Caesar's triumph, after which his head fell beneath the executioner's axe.⁵

¹ This is the meaning of the name Vercingetorix, though whether it is a proper name or the title of an office is uncertain.

² *Commentaries*, Book VI, chap. xxxix.

³ *Life of Caesar*.

⁴ *Historia Romana*, Lib. XI, cap. xl.

⁵ The colossal statue of Vercingetorix which stands on the hill above the modern village of Alise-Sainte-Reine (near Dijon) was erected by Napoleon III in 1864.

GAUL BEFORE THE FRANKS

After the decisive victory at Alesia Caesar had still to cope with various separate outbreaks of revolt in different parts of Gaul. But these he had little difficulty in quelling, and a year after the overthrow of Vercingetorix the Roman conquest of the country was complete. A second Roman province was then formed—Gallia Comata, or 'Long-haired Gaul.'

THE ROMANIZATION OF GAUL

A striking change now came over Caesar's policy. He had conducted his campaigns with relentless cruelty. He now set himself to reconcile by tact and clemency the people whom he had crushed by force, and this new task he accomplished so rapidly and so thoroughly that when the Civil War broke out Gaul declared for its conqueror. Caesar's aim was to Romanize the country of which he had made himself master, and though undoubtedly this end was largely dictated by purely personal ambitions, still it must be admitted that in the means he devised to attain it he showed a genius for statesmanship equal to that which he had already shown for war. He interfered with existing conditions only so far as Roman security seemed to demand. He destroyed the old tribal confederations, for these would have been a standing menace to internal peace, but he respected the independence of the cities. Though he struck hard at the despotic power of Druidism and forbade human sacrifices, he did not otherwise disturb the religion of the people, to whom he also left their local laws, their traditional customs, and their native tongue. Taking advantage of their warlike disposition, he linked their interest with his own by recruiting his army from their best fighting men, forming a Gaulish legion which soon became famous under the name (derived from the figure on their helmets) of *Alauda*, or 'The Lark,' and to which he presently granted all the rights of Roman citizenship. He was singularly moderate in the financial burdens which he imposed, and drew out the sympathies of many noble and influential families by marks of personal favour in the form of bounties and honours. Caesar's own sagacious policy, which

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reveals an extraordinary insight into the character of the people with whom he had to deal, will go far to explain the rapid transformation of Gaul into a Roman territory. Yet it is only when the peculiarities of the Gallic genius are taken into account that the ease with which the conquered people assimilated the culture of their conquerors can be understood. "The Gauls," as Fustel de Coulanges has well said, "were intelligent enough to perceive that civilization is better than barbarism. It was civilization itself rather than Rome which subdued them. In their eyes, to be Roman was not to obey a foreign master. It was to share the manners, the studies, the pleasures of what was then known as the noblest and most cultivated portion of mankind."¹

This transformation was greatly accelerated by the policy of Augustus, which was specifically directed to the destruction of all the ancient foundations of Gaulish power. In his division of the country into four provinces he was careful to obliterate the natural lines of tribal demarcation, thus seriously impairing local patriotism. He built new cities expressly to damage the prestige of the Gaulish cities already existing, and these cities he made centres of Roman influence. He introduced Roman law. He substituted Roman religion for Druidism, which henceforth survived only among the lower classes in remoter districts like Armorica. These changes were not made, indeed, without resistance; but they were made; and by little and little, under the successors of Augustus, the arts and manners, the ways of life, the modes of thought, the culture and even the language of Imperial Rome were adopted by the wealthier classes throughout the south; the lower classes and the peoples of the north meanwhile remaining, as was inevitable, far less affected by the spread of the new influences. The abortive attempt of the Batavian Civilis (A.D. 69) to found an independent Gaulish empire showed that some memories of the past survived among the conquered people. But thenceforth the Romanizing processes went on with little interruption and

¹ *Histoire des Institutions politiques de l'Ancienne France*, "La Gaule Romaine," p. 137.



2. THE ARENA, ARLES



3. THE MAISON CARRÉE, NÎMES



GAUL BEFORE THE FRANKS

with so much effect that by the middle of the second century Gaul, with its splendid Roman roads, its agriculture and its commerce, its handsome and busy cities, and its educational activity, enjoyed greater prosperity and had reached a higher degree of culture than any other portion of the Empire. The arch at Orange, the Porta Nigra at Trèves, the amphitheatre and Maison Carrée at Nîmes are renowned monuments of Roman Gaul. Its schools became so famous that students crossed the Alps from Italy to attend them, while Gaulish teachers were to be found in Rome itself instructing the Italians not only in rhetoric (in which they soon showed astonishing skill), but even in the Latin tongue. Gaulish genius had likewise already made, and continued to make, a mark in literature. Cornelius Nepos came from Cisalpine Gaul and "represents the fresh note of cosmopolitan biography,"¹ as the Cisalpine Vergil represents the melancholy and romantic passion of the Celt. Vergil's friend Cornelius Gallus, who "brought into Roman poetry a new touch of Gallic vivacity and sentiment,"² was a provincial, while at the real close of Latin literature two writers of some importance, Ausonius and Namatianus, were born and educated, the one at Burdegala (Bordeaux), the other in the province of Narbonensis. The natural aptitude of the Gauls for oratory and poetry is a point to be emphasized.

THE PERIOD OF DECAY

The Golden Age of Roman Gaul, as of other parts of the Empire, was the period covered by the combined reigns of the two Antonines (138-180), and in Gaul, as elsewhere, decay set in with the accession of the infamous Commodus. For nearly a century thereafter Imperial history is a monotonous record of rebellions, murders, and general anarchy; while the dummy figures set up and overturned by the caprice of the soldiers followed one another in rapid succession on the throne. The day of divine wrath foreseen by Tacitus was approaching.

¹ J. Wight Duff, *A Literary History of Rome*, p. 423.

² Mackail, *Latin Literature*, p. 122.

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With increasing luxury and outward splendour went the spread of moral corruption, and repeated risings of slaves, peasantry, and the offscourings of the cities bore witness to the hopeless misery of a population driven to desperation by famines, unbearable loads of taxation, and military and judicial oppression.¹ Meanwhile, amid the universal distractions of the third century the weakening of every frontier left the Empire open to the barbarians beyond the borders, and swarms of Teutonic peoples—Goths, Vandals, Alamans, Franks, Suabians, Burgundians—under pressure, it would seem, of the Slavonic tribes behind them, overran Gaul, Spain, and Greece. Though again and again for short periods the Imperial power recovered strength enough to drive the invaders back, these barbarian inroads ultimately proved the chief solvent of the ancient Roman civilization. With one of these—the Frankish invasion—we shall have to deal in some detail presently. Regarding it here simply as an incident in the general Teutonic conquest of the West, we have only to note that with the fifth century comes the definite settlement of the Germanic peoples in Gaul—of the Burgundians in the Rhone valley, of the Visigoths, or Western Goths, in the south-west, of the Franks in the north. When in 451 the enormous hordes of the Huns under Attila (Étzel), “the scourge of God,” were defeated by Aëtius, “the last of the Romans,” on the Catalaunian Plain, near what is now Châlons-sur-Marne, the victorious army which thus saved Europe from Tartar savagery was composed of Romans, Burgundians, Visigoths, and Franks. But the union of these elements was only for the moment, and after the battle they fell once more apart. The force of the Empire was no longer competent to check the confusion which followed. Even its nominal supremacy in Gaul was over, and when in 476 Romulus Augustus, contemptuously nicknamed Augustulus, gave up even his shadowy title the power to make history passed from the Gallo-Romans to the Franks.

¹ Such popular risings came to be known as *baguadæ* or *bagals*—a word of uncertain derivation. Their resemblance to the English peasant risings of the Middle Ages has often been remarked.

GAUL BEFORE THE FRANKS

THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY

While our main concern at the moment is with the destructive forces which had been let loose upon the dying old world, we have still to take account of the rise of an agency which was soon to show itself potent for law, order, and social reconstruction. Of the beginnings of Christianity in Gaul it is not possible to speak with certainty, but its first centre was undoubtedly Lugdunum (Lyon), and the date of its appearance there about 160. It came, not from Rome, but from the East, the first Bishop of Lugdunum being an Asiatic Greek named Pothinus, the second the celebrated Irenaeus of Smyrna. The progress of Christianity in Gaul was signalized by a long tale of martyrdoms and a good deal of internal disturbance consequent upon the struggle of orthodoxy with various forms of heresy. But it spread steadily over the different provinces of the country, and even before the end of the third century important Christian communities existed at Augusta Trevirorum (Trèves), Arelate (Arles), Tolosa (Toulouse), Augustonemetum (Clermont), and Lutetia (Paris), and smaller churches at many other places. The conversion of Constantine and the policy of Gratian¹ naturally gave it a fresh impetus, and it continued to gain in prestige and power. The Church thus emerged as the one principle of life and the sole element of stability amid the general welter of the collapsing pagan world, and at the time of the abdication of Augustulus it was already fast assuming that rôle of supremacy in which it was to reveal itself as the natural heir of the conservative forces of the Empire. As we shall soon see, the further story of Christianity in Gaul forms an important part of the history of the Franks.

¹ Constantine merely gave Christianity official recognition and a legal standing. It was Gratian who made it the State religion.

CHAPTER II

THE FRANKS: THE MERWING OR MEROVINGIAN DYNASTY

THE Gallo-Roman society of the fifth century bore all the marks of exhaustion and general debility. It no longer possessed the power to control its own fate in such a period of universal upheaval. That fate was therefore left to the arbitrament of a fresher and stronger race. We have seen that with the dissolution of the Empire Gaul had fallen a prey to the Burgundians, the Visigoths, and the Franks. The last-named of these were now to become the overruling force in its evolution, and ultimately to give the country its modern name.

The Franks first appear in history as a confederation of Germanic tribes who about the middle of the third century of our era had settled in the valley of the Rhine. Of their origin we know nothing for certain,¹ and the etymology and primary meaning of their name remain in doubt.² Their coalition was formed for general advantage only in their struggles with Rome, and was so loose that the associated clans kept their own laws, customs, and chiefs. Before long, however, they broke up into two fairly defined groups—the Salian Franks, who inhabited

¹ This has been sought in the Sicambrian League, which for a time gave Caesar considerable trouble (see *Commentaries*, Book IV, chap. xviii, xix). There is a good deal of indirect evidence in favour of this view.

² It has been variously derived from the Celtic *franc*, open, large, from the German *frei*, and from the Saxon *franca*, a dart; but the more likely suggestion (supported by the authority of Grimm in his *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, Part I, p. 512) is that it is the Latinized form (*francus*) of a native dialectical word signifying ferocious. It must have been of comparatively late introduction, since Tacitus, writing at the very end of the first century, knows nothing of it.

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the districts along the Lower Rhine and its affluents, and the Ripuarian Franks, who dwelt on both sides of the Middle Rhine, between the Meuse and the Moselle.¹ The first irruption of the Franks into the Empire was in 253, when, breaking through its overstrained defences, they ravaged Gaul as far as the Pyrenees. Thereafter, though repeatedly repulsed, they soon gathered strength to renew their raids; and their steady gain is attested by the fact that while they suffered a severe reverse at the hands of Julian the Apostate, the victor permitted the Salians to remain in the country of Toxandria, between the Meuse and the Scheldt. In 428, under the leadership of Hlodion, or Chlodion, the Salians defeated the Romans at Cambrai, and though in turn they were defeated by Aëtius, they were not dislodged. Though their progress was still hampered by the partition of their power among a swarm of petty chiefs, by the middle of the fifth century they were virtually in possession of Northern Gaul; the Ripuarians meanwhile remaining concentrated around their capital, Colonia Agrippinensis, or Cologne.

By this time Merowig,² reputed son of Chlodion, was dead (457) and his son, Childeric, succeeded him as King of Tournay. Within a year Childeric's people, disgusted, according to Gregory of Tours, by his outrageous licentiousness, drove him into exile, and accepted the rule of the Roman military governor, Aegidius. After eight years, however, he was recalled. During his exile he had been the guest of a chief of the Thuringian Franks, and had become the paramour of his host's young wife, Basina. Shortly after his return he was surprised by Basina's arrival in Tournay; and when he asked her why she had forsaken her husband to follow him, her reply, as recorded by Gregory, was as simple as it was bold. "I know you are strong, brave, and clever," she said, "and that is why I have come to live with

¹ The etymology of their names is doubtful. *Salian* may come from *Sal*, a form of Issel or Ijssel; *Ripuarian* (also written *Riparian*) is perhaps from *ripa*, bank, which the Romans sometimes used specifically for the bank of the Rhine.

² I follow the usual practice of historians in referring to Merowig as a real person. But there are grave doubts as to this.

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you. Understand, if I had known, anywhere beyond the seas, any man more capable than you, I should have sought his company." ¹ Childeric made her his wife, and of this union the first great figure in Frankish history, Hlodowig, or Clovis, was born.

HLODOWIG, OR CLOVIS

Clovis was a youth of fifteen when his father died in 481. Already the Visigoths and the Burgundians were settled in compact kingdoms which together covered Southern Gaul. Over a territory stretching north-westward from that of the latter to the land of the Armorican federation Syagrius, son of Aegidius, held sway, really as an independent king of the Suessiones, though by his assumption of the title of Roman governor he kept up the pretence of Imperial authority. The Franks meanwhile were scattered and disunited, and showed little tendency toward consolidation. Such were the conditions in Gaul when Clovis began to reign, a mere petty prince, confronted by rivals having to all appearance an equal chance of success in that general struggle for existence which was now certain to ensue.

Clovis, however, soon proved himself to be the man of destiny. Acting on the aggressive, he began by attacking Syagrius, the son of his father's old enemy Aegidius, and in a great battle near Augusta Suessionum (Soissons) destroyed the last vestiges of Roman power in Gaul (486). Syagrius fled for refuge to Alaric II, King of the Visigoths; but Alaric delivered him up to the victor, by whom he was promptly put to death. Thus at twenty Clovis found himself master of the whole country between the Somme and the Loire. The most important consequences of this triumph are, however, to be sought in the new relations between the Franks and the Church to which it led. Guided by the instinct of self-preservation, the Church naturally looked to the barbarians for the support which the Empire could no longer afford. To conquer the conquerors was now her immediate ambition, and in

¹ Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, Lib. II, cap. xii.

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realizing this she became the great medium of civilization between the old Roman and the new Teutonic worlds. Remigius, Bishop of Reims, made friendly advances to Clovis while Clovis was still a heathen, and it was probably on his advice that the young king took to wife Clothildis, or Clotilda, the Christian niece of the reigning Burgundian king. Before long Clovis himself became a Christian. According to the highly coloured narrative of the ecclesiastical historian upon whom we have in the main to depend for information, the immediate cause of his conversion was an experience of a startling character. In 496 the Ripuarian Franks appealed to him for help against the encroachments of another Teutonic confederation, the Alamans, along the Rhine. The united Frankish forces attacked the enemy somewhere in Alsace.¹ At first the battle went against them, and presently Clovis saw that their position was critical. Then, moved to tears ("commotus in lachrymis"), he lifted up his eyes toward heaven, and, addressing the God of Clotilda, vowed that if He would grant him the victory he would become a Christian. Even while he was yet speaking the fortunes of war began to change, and in the end the Alamans were utterly routed.² For the moment, none the less, Clovis, for fear of his soldiers, hesitated to fulfil his vow. But when he laid the case before them, they proclaimed their readiness to abjure their old gods and to worship henceforth the God of Remigius. Whereupon, on Christmas Day of the same year, the King was baptized at Reims, together with more than 3000 of his followers, Remigius taking care to impress the imagination of the barbarians by the magnificence of the ceremonial.

CONVERSION OF THE FRANKS TO CHRISTIANITY

The personal significance of Clovis' conversion must not be misunderstood. Its motive was of the crudest. The alleged incident on the battlefield must, of course, be set aside as a

¹ The commonly accepted statement that the battle was fought at Tolbiac (Zulpich), near Cologne, appears to be without foundation.

² Gregory of Tours, *op. cit.*, Lib. II, cap. xxx.

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fabulous accretion of the kind that we expect in a myth-making age. But it is at least indicative of the central fact that Clovis changed his religion because he had come to believe that Christ was more powerful, and therefore better worthy of his devotions, than the gods of his fathers. That Christianity made any difference to his character his whole subsequent career emphatically disproves. This "eldest son of the Church" was crafty, mean, and bloodthirsty before he became a Christian; he was equally crafty, mean, and bloodthirsty afterward. But under the impartial light of history his union with the Church is seen to have been fraught with the most momentous results. It meant the fusion of the two elements which together were to ensure the supremacy of the Franks: their own racial qualities, and the prestige and influence which at the time, as the one firmly organized institution in a disordered society, the Church alone possessed. It did much (as he was probably astute enough to anticipate from the outset) to establish his rule over that Christianized Gallo-Roman populace which formed the bulk of his subjects.

It is also a point of capital importance that while most of the other Christianized barbarians had embraced the Arian faith, officially condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325, Clovis, on the contrary, identified himself with the Catholic Church. This at once gave him an advantage which he was quick to seize. Orthodox Christianity looked to him to champion her cause against heretic as well as heathen, and he was thus able to secure the powerful support of the Church for his lust of conquest by cloaking it under religious zeal. After reducing the Burgundians to subjection he accordingly turned his attention to the Visigoths, nominally on the ground that he could not endure the thought that as Arians they should occupy any portion of the fair land of Gaul,¹ but really, of course, because he coveted their possessions. The strength of his arms rather than the justice of his cause prevailed. Alaric, the King, was slain; the Visigoths were driven across the Pyrenees into their Spanish domain; and Clovis carried

¹ *Cp.* Gregory of Tours, *op. cit.*, Lib. II, cap. xxxvii.

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Frankish power and orthodox theology through Aquitania from the Loire to the Garonne (507). Nor was his career of triumph yet ended. During his closing years he devoted himself to the congenial task of exterminating all his relatives who menaced his sovereignty. The most dangerous of these was Sigebert, King of the Ripuarians. At Clovis' instigation Sigebert was murdered by his own son Cloderic, and then Cloderic in turn by emissaries sent by Clovis for the purpose; after which Clovis himself marched into Rhineland, categorically denied all responsibility for what had happened—"for I could not shed the blood of my kinsfolk, since that is forbidden"¹—and proposed to take the Ripuarians under his protection. The suggestion was applauded, and he was raised, Frankish fashion, on the shields of the soldiers amid the enthusiasm of the multitude (509). Thus, says Gregory, "God daily prostrated his enemies beneath his hands and increased his kingdom, because he walked before Him with an upright heart, and did those things which were pleasing in His eyes."² By force or guile he soon contrived to remove also the Kings of Tournay, Cambrai, and Mans; his conduct in the case of the King of Cambrai being particularly characteristic of this man of upright heart; for, having had his prisoner brought into his presence bound, he reproached him for disgracing their common family by appearing in that condition, and then clove his skull with an axe. After this, according to Gregory, "having killed many other kings who were his kinsmen," he summoned an assembly of his people, and with tears in his eyes bewailed the fact that he was now alone in the world, with no relative left to help him in his hour of need. But this he did, our annalist explains, not out of grief, but as a ruse, so that if perchance any relatives were left he might put them to death.³ He died in Paris, which he had made his capital, in 511.

Obviously it would not be worth while to consume space in analysing Clovis' character. The deeds of this "most

¹ Gregory of Tours, *op. cit.*, Lib. II, cap. xl.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, Lib. II, cap. xlii.

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Christian king," as Pope Anastasius called him, speak for themselves, and comment would be superfluous. It is, however, to the point to remember that his atrocious ferocity, his ruthless cruelty, his greed, perfidy, and mean cunning are all revealed to us in detail, not in the narrative of an enemy, but in the pages of a chronicler who writes as an ardent admirer. It is enough for Gregory that his hero, of whom he has not a single good action to record, was a Christian and a defender of the orthodox faith. That one fact blots out all other considerations. Far more than Clovis' own conduct such obliquity of moral judgment on the part of one who stands for Christian doctrine is of significance for those who would enter into the spirit of the age. A further revelation of that spirit is to be found in the legendary aftergrowths by which the original story is in part overlaid. In his successful struggle for self-aggrandizement Clovis figures as the leader of God's chosen people. Miracles were wrought in his behalf. Christ answered his prayer on the battlefield and gave him victory. A white hind of "wonderful magnitude" guided him through the turbulent waters of the Vienne. A pillar of fire blazing from the cathedral lighted his way by night to Poitiers. The walls of the Visigothic city of Angoulême, emulating those of Jericho, fell down at his approach.

Yet if Clovis' motives and methods were those of untempered savagery, his achievements were remarkable. During his reign of thirty years he established the supremacy of the Salians over all the other Franks, made himself master of Aquitania, and reduced Burgundy to the condition of a vassal state. He thus laid the foundations of the future France.

PARTITION OF THE KINGDOM OF CLOVIS

On his death his large kingdom was divided, according to the Germanic custom, among his sons, Theodoric taking the kingdom of Metz (the later Austrasia) in the Rhine valley, Clodomer that of Orléans on the Lower Loire, Childebert that of Paris, stretching from the Lower Seine to Armorica, and Clotaire that of Soissons, between the Seine, the Oise, and the Lower Rhine. Confusion,

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of course, ensued. With little sense of the need of a common understanding, the four brothers ruled independently, each seeking only the extension of his own power; and if at times two or more of them combined against a foreign foe, they were always equally ready, on any provocation or on none, to intrigue against or attack one another. Thus when Clodomer was slain in battle with the Burgundians, Childebert and Clotaire invaded his lands, killed his children (save one who was made a monk), and divided the territory between them. Ultimately, on Childebert's death in 558, Clotaire became sole king of the Franks; and when he died in 561, so steady had been the progress of the Franks that his kingdom was considerably larger than that which his father had left behind him just fifty years before. This half-century of territorial expansion, however, brought little change in the character of the Franks. The conduct of Clotaire was infernal in its combined cruelty and malice, while the strange quality of his religion is shown by the childishly boastful exclamation wrung from him by the sufferings of his closing hours: "How powerful the King of Heaven must be if He can thus kill such great kings!"¹

THE STORY OF FREDEGONDA AND BRUNHILDA

On his death the kingdom was again broken up, and, as it happened, there were again four sons to share it; and this fresh dismemberment initiated a long period of chaos, internecine feuds, treacheries, murders, reconsolidations, and redivisions. To follow the ceaseless struggles for ascendancy among successive relays of ambitious and ruthless men whose passion for conquest was boundless and who stopped at nothing to gain their ends would be both wearisome and profitless. One extract from the tangled story will suffice to illustrate its general character. A certain Fredegonda, a woman of low birth and the most vicious instincts, was for a time the mistress of Chilperic, the weak King of Soissons. He put her away when he married Galswintha, a daughter of the King of the Spanish Goths, but she soon won back his affections and he

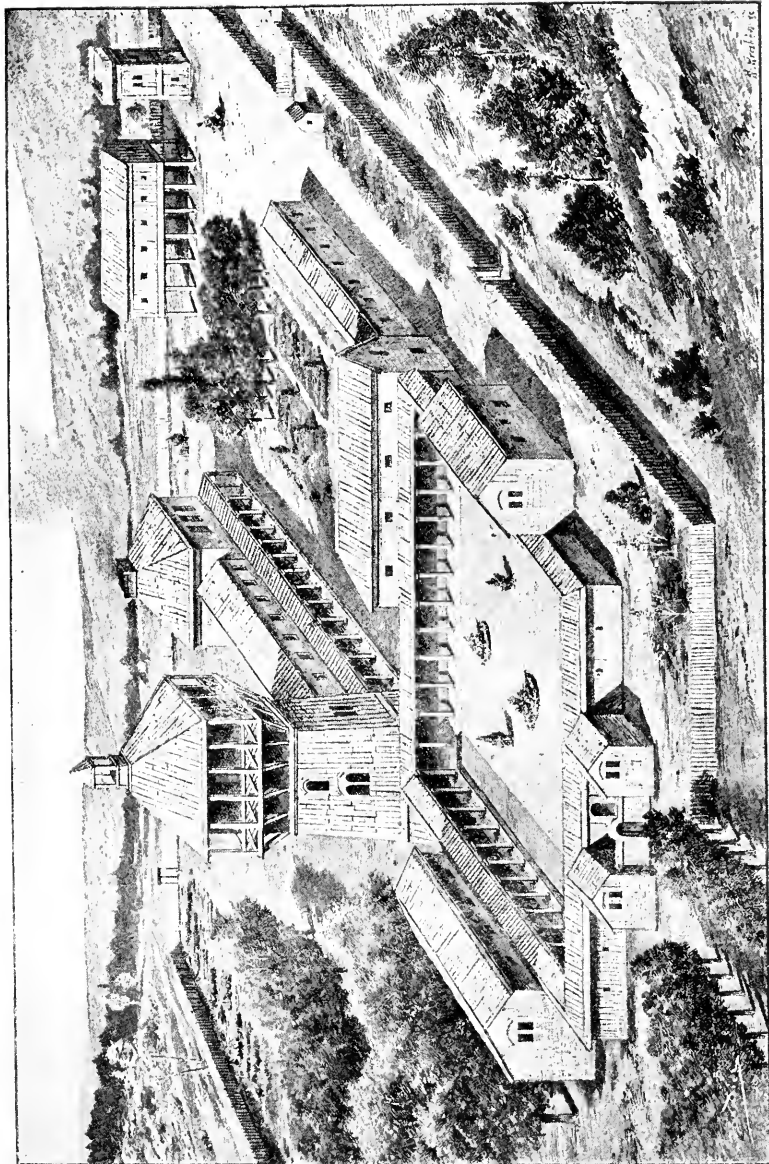
¹ Gregory of Tours, *op. cit.*, Lib. IV, cap. xxi.

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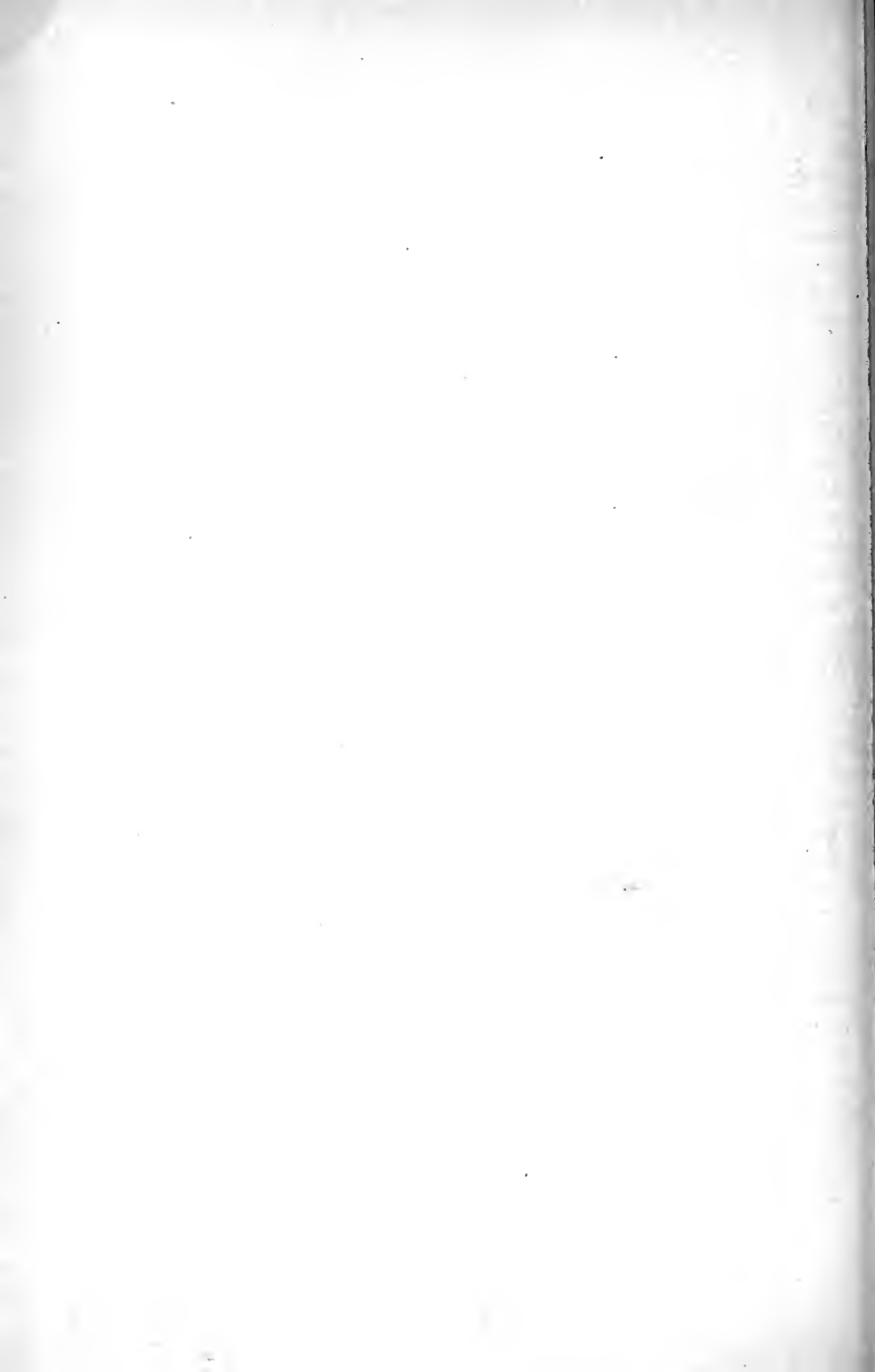
restored her to the Court. This made Galswintha angry, and she threatened to return to her father. Then at the bidding of Fredegonda Chilperic had her strangled in her bed, afterward making Fredegonda his wife. This involved them both in a bitter feud with Galswintha's sister Brunhilda, a masterful woman who was the wife of Chilperic's brother Sigebert, King of Metz. For upward of forty years wars, plots, counterplots, and assassinations were the result of the rancorous hatred of these two ambitious and unscrupulous women, who presently, as regents, sought between them to govern the entire Frankish race. A veritable Lady Macbeth, Fredegonda did not scruple to murder all who stood between her and the realization of her plans, and though in the face of much evidence to the contrary it has been stoutly maintained that Brunhilda was on the whole more sinned against than sinning, the crimes of which she too stands convicted were still many and grave. Fredegonda died ("full of days" the chronicler says, and by a strange want of dramatic propriety hers would seem to have been a natural death) before she had fully achieved the great purpose of her manifold villainies, which was to place her son Clotaire on the throne of all the Franks. Brunhilda outlived her rival sixteen years, during which she exhibited unabated energy and courage in the face of the powerful enemies whom she had raised up against her on every side. In the end she fell into the hands of Clotaire, who in his treatment of her proved himself his mother's son. Though now nearly eighty, she was cruelly tortured for three successive days for the delight of the King's army, after which she was bound to an untamed horse and dashed to pieces.

BEGINNINGS OF DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

The most important fact in the history of this long period of chaos is the gradual segregation of the Frankish peoples into two great groups, the Eastern Franks in their kingdom of Austrasia, and the Western Franks in their kingdom of Neustria. In the east the Frankish population far outnumbered the Celtic,



4. A MEROVINGIAN VILLA



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and in consequence Austrasia remained fundamentally Teutonic. In the west the Gallo-Roman population considerably outnumbered the Frankish, and there the Latin language and the remains of Latin culture were destined to exercise a profound influence over the future fortunes of the country. Already, therefore, we see foreshadowed the later division between Germany and France. Before long, while the eastern kingdom was known as Oster Ric, the western came to be called Frank Ric, which in the speech of its Gallicized people assumed the form of Francia.

The bitter jealousies of these two sections, of which the feuds of Brunhilda and Fredegonda were only a phase, filled the whole land for many years with the tumult of almost incessant civil war, the advantage lying now with one and now with the other side. The final triumph of the Austrasians is connected with a new factor in the history of Frankish civilization. This new factor was the growing power of the so-called Mayors of the Palace of the Merovingian kings.

THE MAYORS OF THE PALACE

The *Maire du Palais*, or *Major Domus*, appears to have been originally only the chief servant of the royal household, with general charge of its management. By little and little, however, the office assumed a political character; the Mayor, ceasing to be a domestic, became the king's principal man of business, confidential adviser, and presently minister. This transformation of the office was at first due to the increasing power of the king, but later it was accelerated by the decay of that power. After Dagobert I, who was sole King of the Franks from 628 to 638, a rapid moral and physical rot attacked the Merovingian stock. Steeped in debaucheries, and with constitutions wrecked by excesses, king after king sank into an early grave, some, indeed, dying by violence, but others of premature old age; while if one here and there lived to five-and-twenty, he had neither mental vigour nor strength of will nor bodily energy to make his royalty a real thing. These are the poor, feeble, shadowy *rois fainéants*, the 'do-

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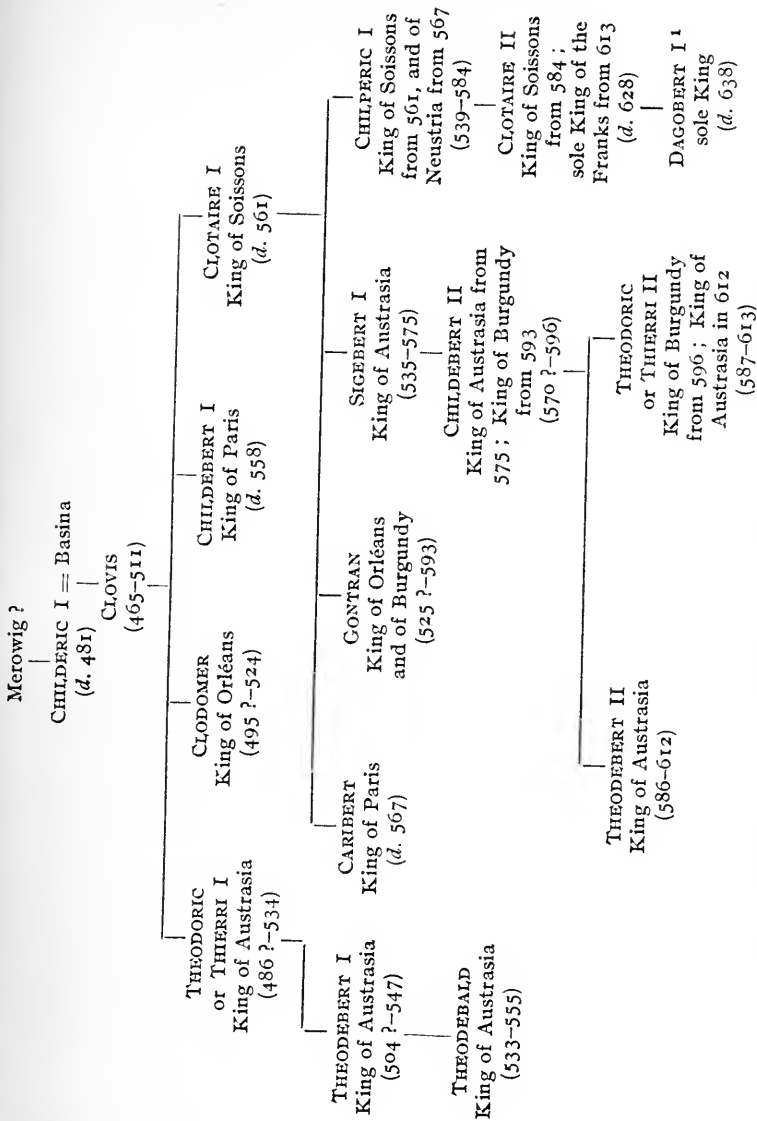
nothing kings,' of whose meaningless titles history does not trouble to take account. Meanwhile the power which these degenerate children of degenerate fathers still retained in name passed in fact into the hands of their *tuteurs* and guardians the Mayors of the Palace, who gradually became the actual masters of those whom they were supposed to serve. In the pages of Einhard's biography of Charlemagne we have a vivid description of the pitiable state of decrepitude into which the Frankish kingship had fallen in the last years of the Merovingian dynasty. "There was nothing left the king to do but to be content with his name of king, his flowing hair, and long beard; to sit on his throne and play the ruler; to give ear to the ambassadors that came from all quarters, and to dismiss them, as if on his own responsibility, in words that were in fact suggested to him or even imposed upon him. He had nothing that he could call his own beyond this vain title of king, and the precarious support allowed by the Mayor of the Palace in his discretion, except a single country seat, that brought him but a very small income. . . . The Mayor of the Palace took charge of the government and of everything that had to be planned or executed at home or abroad."¹

It is remarkable that in such an age the empty show of royalty should so long have survived its reality. More than a hundred years, however, elapsed between the accession of Dagobert's sons, the first of the 'Do-nothings,' and the actual extinction of the line with Childeric III; while the failure of an attempt made by a certain Mayor named Grimwald, in 656, to usurp the Austrasian throne shows how tenaciously the Franks still clung to the Merovingian tradition. A quarter of a century later the struggle between Neustria and Austrasia was really a struggle between the two powerful Mayors Ebroin and Pippin of Heristal.² In 680 Ebroin was victorious and gained the mastery for Neustria. But the success was only for the moment. In the following year he fell at the hand of a private

¹ *Vita Caroli Magni*, trans. Turner, chap. i.

² So called to distinguish him from his grandfather, who is known as Pippin of Landen.

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¹ It is unnecessary to add the names of the 'do-nothing kings' who followed Dagobert I.

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assassin, and in 687 Pippin turned the scales by routing the Neustrian army at Testry, near Péronne. He thus became Mayor, and practical ruler, of all Frankland ; and though the unsubstantial royalty of the Merwings continued for another sixty-four years, it is at this point that the history of the new dynasty of the Karlings may justly be said to begin.

CHAPTER III

THE KARLING OR CARLOVINGIAN DYNASTY

PIPPIN OF HERISTAL, was the grandson on his mother's side of Pippin of Landen, otherwise Pippin the Old, and on his father's of Arnulf, Bishop of Metz. The original Pippin, who was Mayor of the Palace in Austrasia till his death in 639, and Arnulf were fast friends, and as joint counsellors to the King they laboured, according to an anonymous contemporary biography of the former, to rule the land in harmony with the will of God. Both were ultimately canonized. Arnulf's son Anseghis married Pippin's daughter Begga. This was the origin of the line which we know as the Karling, from its outstanding representative Karl the Great, or Charlemagne. The office of Mayor, still elective in Neustria, became in Austrasia a family right of these Karlings, who in their vigour, martial ability, and intellectual powers present a remarkable contrast to the decadent Merovingians whom they served. History, presenting the almost unparalleled spectacle of five generations of really competent men, for once has to acknowledge a telling argument in favour of the hereditary theory of government. Unfortunately for the credit of that theory, the *baton sinister* is conspicuous in the Karling genealogical tree.

The victory of the Austrasians over the Neustrians achieved by Pippin and completed by his successor may be regarded as one more wave in the Teutonic invasion of Gaul. It meant another triumph of a strong, fresh race over a population in which signs of rapid social degeneration were everywhere apparent.

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Though the battle of Testry had made him the real governor of all Frankland, Pippin made no attempt, as his uncle Grimwald had done, to assume the forms of royalty. Surrounded by a jealous and turbulent aristocracy, who would be quick to resent usurpation, he wisely contented himself with the substance of power, and left the shadow of it to the four successive puppet-kings in whose names he ruled. Yet the transformation of his anomalous position is suggested by the fact that he presently came to be known not only as Mayor of the Palace, but also as Dux Francorum. His headquarters were in his own Austrasia, but he kept his hold upon both Neustria and Burgundy by delegating his authority to carefully chosen subordinates. His policy throughout was directed to the centralization of government and to the consolidation of the Frankish dominions. When the Neustrians rose in revolt against him he sought to conciliate them by arranging a marriage between his son Drogo and the widow of their last Mayor; while in a long series of campaigns he subdued the Frisians, the Alamans, the Thuringians, and the Bavarians, all of whom had taken advantage of the continued dissensions of their conquerors to repudiate the Frankish yoke. Here again he endeavoured to cement by peaceful alliance the success which he had gained by arms, for he married another son, Grimwald, to the daughter of Ratbod, King of Frisia, notwithstanding the fact that this Ratbod was still a heathen. As a result of this the way was opened up for the extension of Christian missionary enterprise among the Frisian people, and some years later the Northumbrian preacher Willibrord founded the Bishopric of Utrecht.

On his death in 714 Pippin left behind him an illegitimate son named Karl, or Charles,¹ then twenty-five, and already of tried

¹ Though Karl is obviously the correct form, it would savour of pedantry to cling to it, and I therefore adopt the almost universally accepted Charles. In the same way I shall speak of this Karl's grandson, Karl the Great, under the familiar form of Charlemagne. This form has only popular usage to justify it, but after all, as Thomas Hodgkin said, "by its union of the Teutonic Karl with the Latin Magnus it not inaptly symbolizes the blending of the German and Roman elements in the Frankish empire" (*Charles the Great*, Preface, p. vi).

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valour, and three grandsons—the two sons of Drogo, who were then growing into manhood, and a child of Grinwald, a boy of five. Pippin was guilty of the incredible folly of naming this boy as his successor. This last mad act almost wrecked the work of his life. His widow, Plectrudis, at once assumed the regency and threw Charles into prison. Revolt instantly followed, the old antagonism between Neustria and Austrasia blazed out anew, and the Frankish dominions were once more on the verge of anarchy. But Charles escaped, put himself at the head of the Austrasian army, and after a sharp struggle crushed Neustria and established himself as Mayor of the Palace and Duke of the Franks.

The story of Charles' twenty-seven years' tenure of office is little more than the story of his wars, and the extraordinary vigour, courage, and patience which he exhibited in his innumerable campaigns is well expressed in the name which he presently came to bear—the name of Martel, or 'the Hammer.' He had first to confirm his authority over the Neustrians, among whom discontent still smouldered. Then in turn he fought the Germanic tribes on his eastern borders, the Saxons, the Bavarians, and the Alamans, and reasserted Frankish supremacy over the restless peoples of Aquitaine, Burgundy, and Provence. But all these achievements sink into insignificance beside that crowning triumph by which, as a careful and temperate historian has phrased it, he decided "that not the Koran but the Gospel was to be the guide of the conscience of Europe."¹ Within less than a century after the Prophet's flight to Medina his fanatical successors had overrun Arabia, Syria, Persia, Palestine, Phoenicia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Armenia, portions of India, and Northern Africa as far as the Pillars of Hercules. With their thirst for conquest still unquenched, they then, in 711, crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, and in nine years more pushed their way through Spain into Southern Gaul. Narbonne, Carcassonne, and Nîmes fell into their hands; they besieged Toulouse, almost destroyed Bordeaux, burned the great church of Saint-Hilaire in Poitiers, and,

¹ Hodgkin, *Charles the Great*, p. 43.

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sweeping on in their unchecked career, reached Burgundy, where they sacked Autun. At this critical moment Charles Martel appeared on the scene as the champion of menaced Christendom. In October 732 the armies of the Crescent and the Cross came face to face near Poitiers. Seven days passed, each side waiting for the other to open hostilities. At length, early on a Saturday morning, the Arabs began to attack. All day long the turbaned warriors flung themselves upon the Franks ; but " the northern nations stood immovable as a wall " ¹ under their shock. The invaders' losses were enormous, and when the new day dawned it was found that they had fled under the cover of night. The Arabs were not yet, indeed, driven out of Gaul, for they maintained their footing in the south, and, of course, firmly established their power in Spain. But the great victory was none the less decisive in the sense that it made Moslem advance in Northern Europe impossible.

Charles Martel died at fifty-two, his iron constitution prematurely broken by a life of incessant exertion and fatigue. He stands out as a memorable figure against the background of his time. A man, it is clear, of tremendous force of personality, he was especially great as a soldier, using his sword, indeed, as a hammer to beat down all opposition to his will ; and yet, though his chief business was fighting, he was never, so far as the meagre chronicles enable us to judge, either cruel or treacherous. Unfortunately for his memory, however, he offended the clergy by conferring ecclesiastical dignities upon favourites of his own for services rendered or to be rendered to the Crown, and by compelling the Church, the fast-growing wealth of which was exempt from public burdens, to place some of it at his disposal for the defence of the kingdom. It is for this reason that, notwithstanding the support he gave to missionary enterprise, the churches he founded and endowed, and his splendid victory at Poitiers, he was held up to obloquy by later ecclesiastical writers as a destroyer of monasteries and a despoiler of the things set apart for God. It is instructive to notice the difference, legend for legend, between the case of

¹ *Isidori Pacensis Chronicon* (in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, t. xcvi, p. 1271).

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Clovis and the case of Charles. The brutal and perfidious Merwing enjoyed the particular protection of heaven. Charles, it was alleged, died "a fearful death," and was afterward seen by a saint in a vision writhing in the torments of hell.¹

PIPPIN THE SHORT

Charles' great aim was the same as that which had governed his father's policy, namely, the centralization of the Frankish power. On his death, though still only Mayor, he divided the kingdom between his two sons, the elder, Karloman, becoming Mayor in the east, the younger, Pippin, surnamed 'the Short,' Mayor in the west. For nearly seven years the brothers co-operated successfully in campaigns against the Aquitanians, Alamans, Bavarians, Saxons, and Slavs. Then, for some personal reason about which it would now be idle to speculate, Karloman gave up his share in the government and turned monk, leaving Pippin sole Mayor. This was in 747. Secure in his position, Pippin soon determined to make himself King in name as well as in fact. With the consent of his nobles he sent an embassy to Zacharias, Bishop of Rome, desiring to know who should be King of the Franks—he who had the title but not the power, or he who, without the title, was able to make his will prevail. Zacharias replied that "it seemed better and more expedient to him that he should be called and be King who had power in the kingdom rather than he who was falsely called King." This reply was of course just what was wanted, and it had the merit of being clearer than the answers of the oracles in general. Without delay Childeric III, the last of the Merwings, was shorn of his royal locks and immured in a monastery, and in the autumn of 751 Pippin the Short became King of the Franks. Perhaps to gain the prestige which descent could not give to one who was after all a usurper, he had himself anointed King by Boniface, the Devonshire missionary who was now Archbishop of Mainz. This was an innovation among the Germanic peoples, and it

¹ The source of this fable was the *Visio S. Eucherii*, a forgery of Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims from 845 till his death in 882.

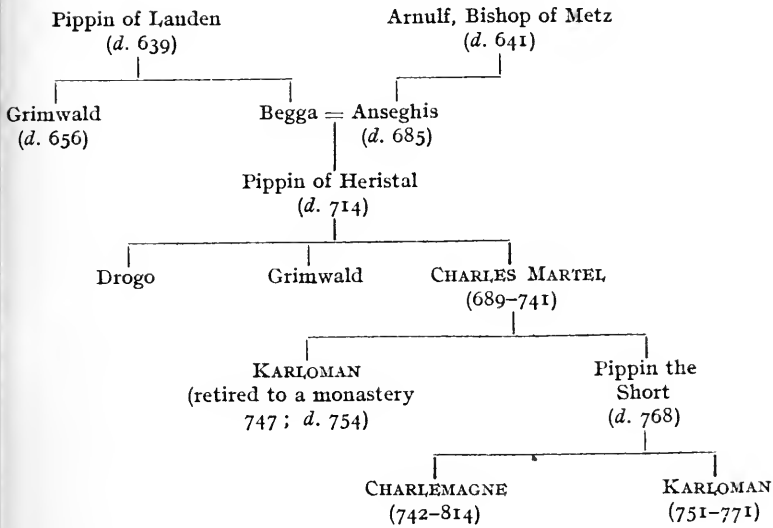
HISTORY OF FRANCE

symbolizes that increasing closeness of relationship between the Franks and the Church of which it is now necessary to speak.

It will be remembered that when in 726 the Emperor Leo the Isaurian forbade the worship of images he precipitated the great iconoclastic controversy which for a time shook the fabric of the whole Christian world. Pope Gregory II refused to obey the decree, and in this refusal he had the general support of the Western Church. The Imperial deputy in Italy, the Exarch of Ravenna, did his utmost to compel the Pope, who ruled nominally as the subject of the Greek Emperor, to conform with his master's orders. To the Emperor's claim to be head of the Church Gregory replied that such headship belonged, not to the secular authority, but to the Bishop of Rome, thus for the first time asserting that distinction between Church and State which was later to become so important a conception in European politics. Meanwhile the Lombards, who had steadily been extending their power in Italy, took advantage of the confusion to attack the Exarch, whose city they captured, though they were able to hold it for a short time only. Under Gregory III the struggle between the Bishop at Rome and the Emperor at Constantinople passed into an even acuter phase, but in the end the Bishop triumphed. Scarcely had he done so, however, when he realized that he was threatened by a danger nearer at hand. The Lombards under their king Liutprand were making efforts to subdue all Italy, and in 739 they marched to the very gates of Rome. Gregory now found himself compelled to seek for help abroad. With the repudiation of the Pope's allegiance to the Emperor Rome had become a sort of republic, with St Peter's Patrimony for domain and the Bishop as ruler. The steps which Gregory now took to safeguard his interests were, as it proved, the first steps toward the establishment of the later Pontificate. He turned to the Franks, both because they were the strongest race in Europe and because he was assured of their Christian sympathies. A personal friend of Liutprand, Charles Martel intervened as peacemaker, and the trouble was for a time averted.

THE KARLING DYNASTY

(a) TO CHARLEMAGNE



HISTORY OF FRANCE

But ten years later the new Lombard king, Aistulf, again overthrew the Exarchate, and again threatened Rome ; and again the Pope—now Stephen—appealed to the Franks, crossing the Alps in person to lay his case before their king. Pippin was manifestly under obligations to the Roman See. He accordingly marched into Italy, and, having defeated the Lombards, bestowed certain lands and cities which he had wrested from them upon the Pope, though he himself was recognized as the Pope's overlord, with the title of Patricius. This was the beginning of the Pope's temporal sovereignty, and it marks a further stage in the development and consolidation of the connexion between the Papacy and the Franks. Of this connexion and its results there will be much more to say in the sequel.

Like his father and grandfather, Pippin laboured for the unification of the scattered dominions which years of conquest had brought under Frankish rule ; and like them he risked the undoing of his life's work by the unwisdom of the plans which he made for its continuance ; for on his death-bed, still following the Germanic tradition, he appointed his two sons, Karloman and Karl, jointly his successors. In the division of the territory, which was in due course ratified by a general assembly, the elder brother received, roughly speaking, the southern and the younger the northern part of the kingdom. The integrity which Charles Martel and Pippin himself had struggled to develop would obviously have been imperilled, in the best of circumstances, by such an arrangement. Matters were made worse by the bad blood which existed between the two brothers. For a time the situation was critical. Then the danger was removed by the death of Karloman in 771, by which Karl, whom we know as Charles the Great, or Charlemagne, was left undisputed King of all the Franks.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLEMAGNE

771-814

BORN in 742, Charlemagne was now twenty-nine, and as sole King he reigned nearly forty-three years. The fact that during this time he took part, in person or by deputy, in more than fifty campaigns is sufficient to give some measure of the conditions of the age and of his own activities. Of three of his wars—those with the Saxons, the Lombards, and the Saracens—it is now necessary to speak.

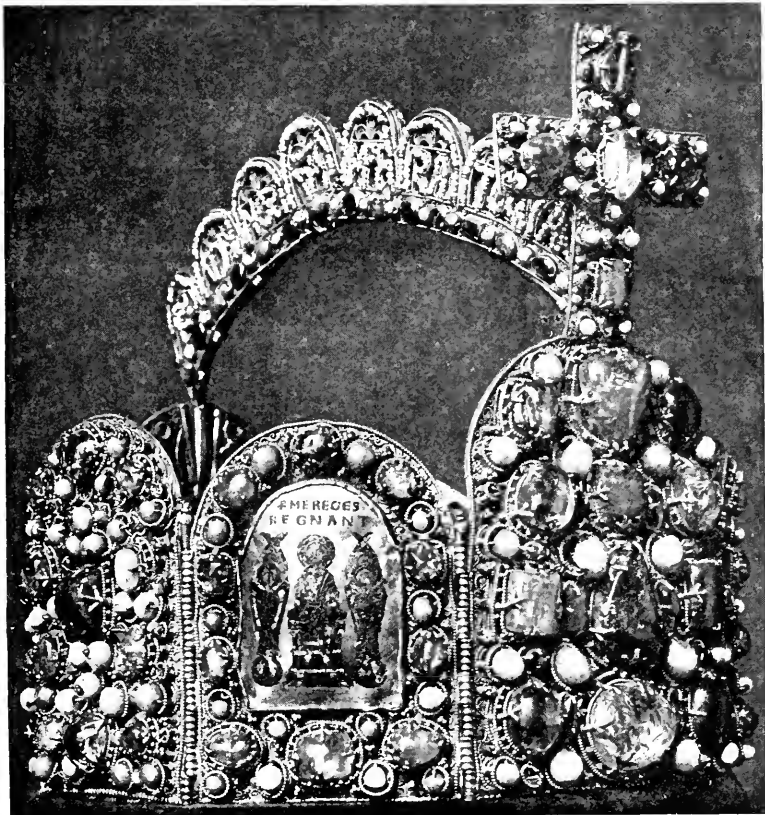
His struggle with the Saxons lasted for more than thirty years (772-804), and is specially interesting because it was inspired by his militant Christianity. The Saxons were pagans, and Charlemagne was determined to convert them at the point of the sword. It is, I think, a singular detail that the only act of downright barbarity recorded of him was perpetrated in this religious war ; and this was when, in 782, enraged by the stubbornness and treachery of his enemies, he caused 4500 prisoners to be beheaded in one day at Verden, on the Aller. Again and again (" it would be hard," Einhard declares, " to say how often " ¹) the Saxons were reduced to nominal submission ; and again and again as soon as Charlemagne's back was turned insurrection broke out afresh. Ultimately their most famous leader, the heroic Widukind, surrendered, and consented to baptism ; an incident which naturally became the starting-point for pious legend when a little later nearly everything connected with Charlemagne was overlaid by a wild growth of romantic fable. This at last broke the neck of Saxon revolt, and though much fighting had still to be done, and though many of Widukind's countrymen fled to

¹ *Op. cit.*, chap. vii.

HISTORY OF FRANCE

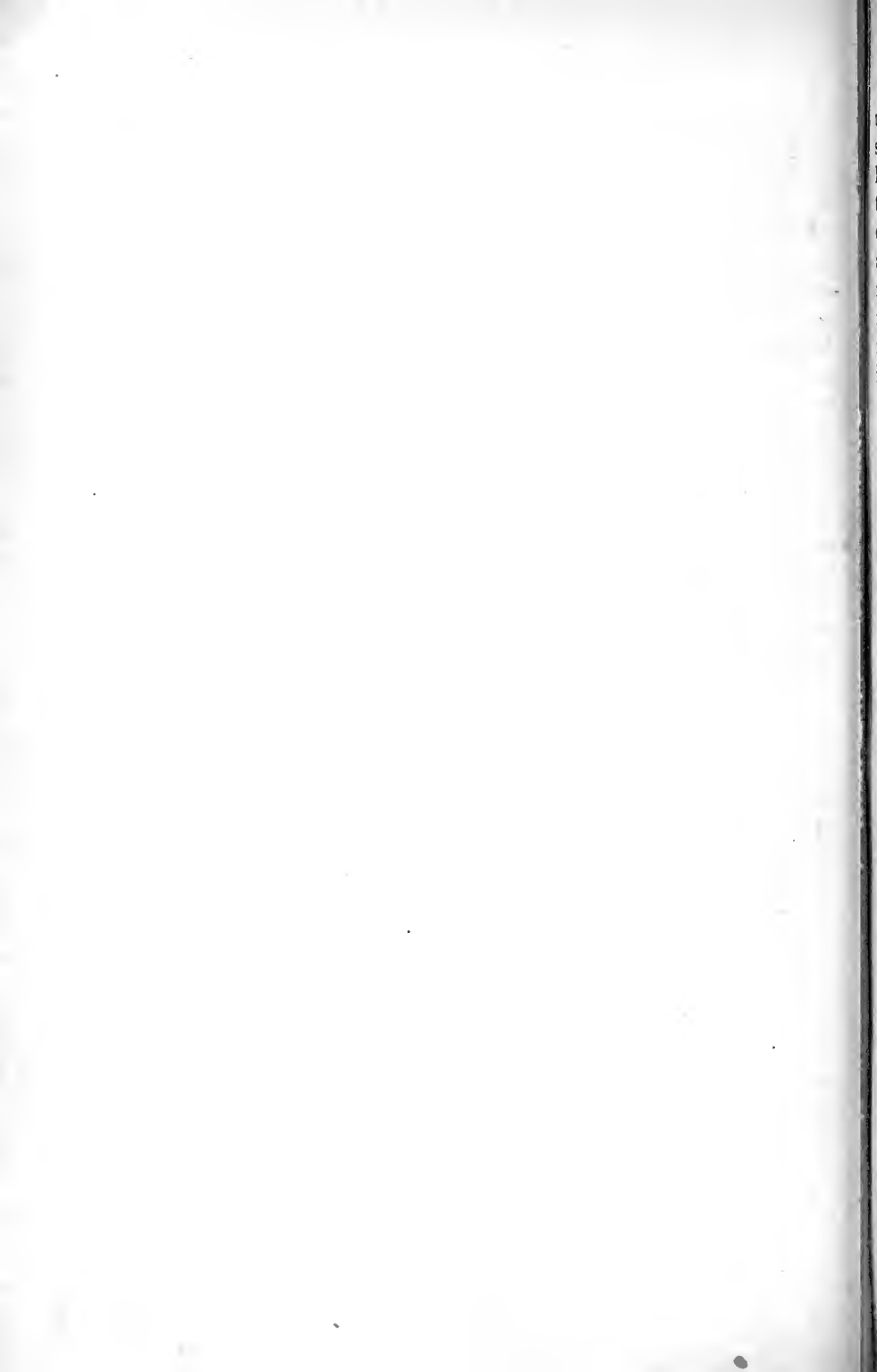
Scandinavia, the Saxon people in the mass were rapidly Christianized.

Meanwhile Charlemagne's energies were needed beyond the Alps. Trouble had again broken out between the Lombards, under their king, Desiderius, and the Pope, and, following the policy of his predecessors, the Pope had called upon the Franks for help. The dynastic relations of Desiderius and Charlemagne were embittered by personal hostility : in particular, the wrath of Desiderius had been aroused when Charlemagne, who had married his daughter, repudiated her after a year of matrimony, while Charlemagne on his part was angry because Desiderius had espoused the cause of Karloman's widow, also a daughter of Desiderius, and her infant children. As one point in the quarrel between Desiderius and the Pope was the former's demand that the latter should consecrate Karloman's sons as their father's successors, Charlemagne had an immediate interest in acceding to the Pope's request. Accordingly he invaded Italy, and, having defeated Desiderius, put an end to the kingdom of the Lombards (773-774) by placing on his own head the famous Iron Crown (sanctified by a nail out of the Cross) which nearly two hundred years before Gregory I had bestowed on the then Lombard king. Again in 776 and 780 Charlemagne had to return to Italy to complete his conquests, and thus he made good his position as *Rex Langobardorum* as well as *Rex Francorum* and *Patricius Romanorum*. But the significance of this achievement is to be sought less in his assumption of Lombard sovereignty than in the further consequences which it entailed both for the Papacy and for the secular power. Charlemagne gained the Pope's favour by confirming the 'Donation of Pippin,' which he regarded as merely the restoration of certain possessions to their rightful owner. This greatly strengthened the Pope's hands in his struggle for freedom with the Eastern Emperors. Since the time of the iconoclastic controversy the breach between the Popes and the Emperors had been steadily widening. It happened that the Byzantine throne was at the moment vacant, for the Italians refused to recognize Irene, who had



5. THE IRON CROWN

6. THE SO-CALLED CROWN OF CHARLEMAGNE



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usurped the place of her son, on the ground that Caesar's sceptre could not be wielded by a woman. This gave Pope Leo III the opportunity of making a bold attempt to revive the Empire in the West by transferring the crown from the decadent Greek line to that of the Franks, who were the ascendant race in Europe, were orthodox Christians, and were, moreover, allies of the Papacy. This purpose was consummated when Charlemagne, still in the interests of the Pope, made his fourth expedition into Italy. The anti-papal party in Rome had driven Leo III from the city on various charges of criminal misconduct. Leo had appealed in person to the King, who, on satisfying himself of his innocence, restored him to his office. The Pope's gratitude was expressed in dramatic form. On Christmas Day, 800, as the King was kneeling in prayer during the solemnities in the great basilica of the Vatican, the Pope approached him from behind, and, placing a gold crown on his head, proclaimed him Emperor and Augustus amid the plaudits of the vast multitude which thronged the church. Einhard distinctly says that Charlemagne knew nothing of this in advance, and himself declared that he would not have set foot in the church that day "if he could have foreseen the Pope's intention."¹ But if this is to be taken as a plain statement of fact, the fact is one for which no satisfactory explanation appears to be forthcoming. In one sense, of course, this papal donation of the Imperial title, resting as it did on perfectly baseless assumptions of right to give and to receive, was, as Charlemagne himself clearly perceived, nothing but an empty show. Yet, as a modern historian has said, it really laid the foundations of the whole political system of the Middle Ages, and of the great controversy between Pope and Emperor which this involved.²

¹ *Op. cit.*, chap. xxviii.

² Lavallée, *Histoire des Français*, t. i, pp. 179, 180. Three centuries later, when this great controversy was at its height, it was held by the papal party that Leo had crowned Charlemagne in virtue of the sacred power vested in him as successor of St Peter, while the Imperial party maintained that Charlemagne's right to the crown came directly to him on the strength of his conquests. *Cp. Dante's De Monarchia*, Lib. III.

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Charlemagne's third great war was waged against the Saracens. Dissensions had arisen among the followers of the Prophet, and feuds between the Arabs and the Moors, who were divided by racial, political, and religious differences, raged furiously in Spain. In the spring of 777 Charlemagne was invited by the Arabian party to interpose, and, seeing the chance of strengthening his frontiers against the Mussulman, he invaded Spain with two armies early in the following year. Though he added the north-east corner of the peninsula to his empire under the title of the Spanish March, his expedition was otherwise futile. Its interest for us to-day is, indeed, rather legendary than historical. On his return across the Pyrenees the rear-guard of his army was surprised and completely destroyed by a horde of wild mountaineers who fell upon it in the narrow pass of Roncesvalles. Among the slain was a certain Hroland, who is named as prefect of the Breton Marches. This is the only historical reference to that Roland or Orlando who was afterward famous as the hero of the vast Charlemagne legend-cycle, and of that fine *Chanson de Roland* in which, with little regard for fact, some unknown poet has made the massacre of Roncesvalles the theme of epic story.

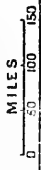
Of Charlemagne's many minor wars—and he was almost continually occupied in putting down disturbances on one or another of his frontiers—it is needless here to speak. It is enough to say that their total result was the extension in all directions of the boundaries of his rule. His vast empire finally spread from the Ebro to the Elbe, and included most of Italy, modern France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, and a large part of what is now Austria-Hungary.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHARLEMAGNE

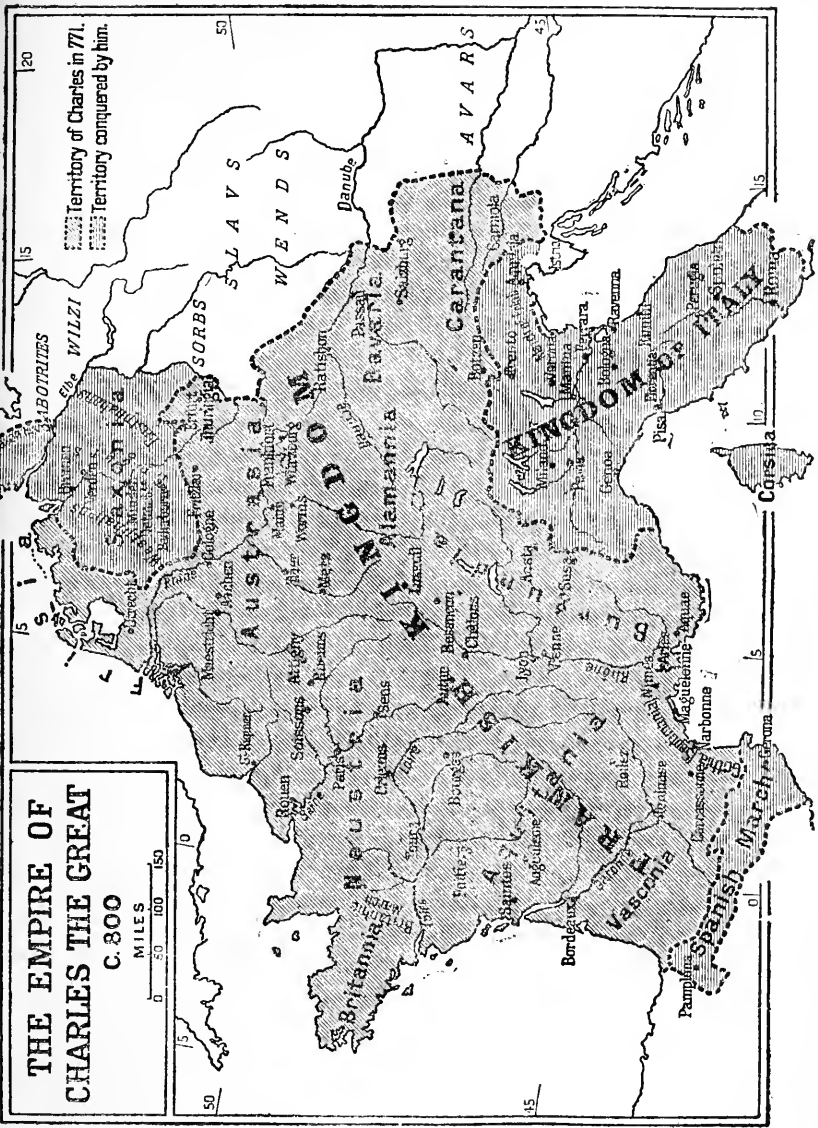
It is, however, rather as an administrator than as a soldier that Charles deserves his title of 'the Great.' Relentless and often cruel in war, he was always generous to the vanquished; as soon as his sword was sheathed his policy was that of conciliation; and he revealed no little constructive genius

THE EMPIRE OF CHARLES THE GREAT C. 800

C. 800



..... Territory of Charles in 771.
..... Territory conquered by him.



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in his efforts to weld together the heterogeneous elements of his realm. The chief and central feature of his government was the General Assembly, which met twice a year—in spring and in autumn—and which was obviously a survival of the old Teutonic folk-moots described by Tacitus. Nominally, this was an assembly of all the freemen of the Empire ; actually, it was composed of the chief men only, ecclesiastic and lay. Its functions were those of a council ; it deliberated over the important questions of the hour, expressed opinions, and gave the King advice. But it had no executive or legislative powers. It was left to the King to initiate, to decide, and to act, and he was his own lawmaker. Though he thus made a show of governing by popular consent, he was practically an autocrat.

Active as he was as a legislator, Charlemagne made little attempt to reduce to order and harmony the diverse and often conflicting laws of the different countries under his rule. To each he left its own institutions and customs, only requiring obedience to such general enactments as he deemed necessary for the peace and prosperity of the Empire at large ; and these enactments were often a curious medley of old Germanic, Roman, and Christian elements, the retention of the ancient Frankish method of trial by ordeal showing the tenacity with which he held to the traditions of his race. His most important work as an administrator is to be found in his Capitularies. Strictly speaking, these are not laws ; they are temporary edicts of various kinds, which in many cases may be described as supplementary to the existing laws. But they give us a vivid sense of Charlemagne's activity and earnest desire for the welfare of his people, while the paternal nature of his government is shown by the fact that no line is drawn in them between the legal and the ethical, the civil and the religious, the public and the domestic. We have sixty-five of these Capitularies attributed to Charlemagne, and the contents of their 1151 articles are so miscellaneous that no classification is possible. Almost everything pertaining to the administration of the Empire finds a place in them, with much else that

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can hardly be brought under that head. They assign definite penalties for definite crimes, and provide moral maxims for the guidance of Christian folk. They regulate the military service, and the public worship of the Church. Details of farm management, the adjustment of weights, measures, and prices, the suppression of beggary and theft, are alike considered in them.

For the purposes of local government Charlemagne divided the Empire into districts, roughly adopting, where possible, the former limits of the Roman *municipia*; over each district, or county, he placed a count, or *Graf*, who was responsible to him for its civil, judicial, and military welfare, while *Markgrafen*, or Counts of the Marches, were appointed to defend the frontiers. As experience soon proved that these distant officers were apt to abuse their powers, he developed the Merovingian system of *missi dominici*, or royal envoys, as a check upon them. These special commissioners, chosen by him "from among his best,"¹ were sent out in pairs—one member being a cleric and the other a layman—at stated intervals and on regular circuits, and it was their duty to inquire into all local conditions, and to report directly to the Emperor concerning taxes, schools, churches, the army, the priesthood, the conduct of the *Graf* and the minor officials of the district, and, generally, on all other subjects which in their judgment ought to be brought to the Emperor's attention. This system, thoroughly organized, kept the Emperor in personal touch with even the remotest portions of his wide dominions.

For a full understanding of Charlemagne's administration it is necessary always to remember that it was for him essentially Christian in character. His conception of government combined the theocratic with the imperial. He ruled as God's anointed, and it was therefore his duty not only to safeguard and develop all secular interests, but also, with divine aid, to spread the true faith, convert the heathen, defend the Church against heresies, and ensure by every possible means

¹ "Ex optimatibus suis." See the Capitulary of 802, in which their functions are defined.

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the religious well-being of his realm.¹ He divided his realm into bishoprics, which soon became important centres of civilization, increasing in power as little by little cities grew up about them. He gave much space in his Capitularies to ecclesiastical and theological matters, and by repeated exhortations and remonstrances showed his anxiety that the sanctity of priests and monks should be approved by their conduct, and that all in authority should labour for the good of those entrusted to their care. Yet while he greatly consolidated and strengthened the hierarchy, and gave it a larger place than it had previously occupied in the body politic, he regarded himself as supreme head of the Church no less than of the State. All ecclesiastical matters he kept under his control; he called councils and presided over them; he revised canons; he superintended the appointment of bishops and archbishops. He carried his claim to authority, indeed, so far as to treat even the Pope as his subordinate, his view of the relations of Emperor and Pope being that while the Pope was the Patriarch of all the Western Churches, he was still a subject of the Emperor, whose rule over all the West was absolute. He therefore did not hesitate on occasion to reject the findings of a council, reprimand the successor of St Peter for meddling with things which did not concern him, take the initiative in controversy, and impose his will in respect of points of doctrine.

Anxious for the eternal welfare of his people, Charlemagne was no less anxious for their temporal progress. He sought to promote agriculture, manufactures, and commerce. He regulated weights and measures. He revised the currency. He was also a munificent patron of the arts. But the most valuable part of his life-work is to be found in what he did for education. Keenly alive to the dense ignorance which prevailed even among his clergy, he invited learned men from foreign countries to his Court to aid him in his efforts toward

¹ The following passage from a letter which he wrote to Leo III is significant: "Nostrum est secundum auxilium divinae pietatis, sanctam ubique Christi ecclesiam ab incursu paganorum et ab infidelium devastatione armis defendere, foris et intus catholicae fidei agnitione munire."

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an intellectual revival. Among these was the famous Englishman Alcuin, the greatest scholar of the age, with whose help he organized the Schola Palatina, or Palace School, in which all the members of the Court, from the monarch downward, were pupils. Many other schools were also established throughout his domains; especially in connexion with cathedrals, as at Reims and Orléans; and with monasteries, as at St Gall, Reichenau, Fulda, Corvei, and Hirschau. One of these monastery schools—that of Saint-Martin of Tours, of which Alcuin himself was for many years abbot—became celebrated among the greatest centres of learning in Europe. In these institutions much attention was given to Latin studies, and, besides the Vulgate, such classical authors as Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Sallust, Juvenal, and Seneca were read and interpreted. Music, too, was a subject in which Charlemagne was deeply interested, and two establishments expressly devoted to its cultivation were founded by him, one at Soissons, the other at Metz. Nor were his intellectual energies confined to the scholastic field. The revival of learning, which he stimulated by precept and example, led to the multiplication of ancient manuscripts by copyists and to the preservation of Latin works which would otherwise have perished. A thorough German in character, ideas, policy, tastes, and language—an important fact which the familiar French form of his name tempts us to overlook—he was also concerned about his native tongue, had a grammar of it prepared for the use of the clergy, and made a collection of German songs and ballads which most unfortunately, on account of the heathen spirit of its contents, his pious son ordered to be destroyed.

It is thus evident that Charlemagne's labours for education and culture are not the least among his many titles to fame. It must, indeed, be remembered that his success was only local and temporary; even during his lifetime the intellectual influences which he inspired scarcely spread beyond his Court, and they were soon lost amid the general confusion which followed his death. But credit is due to him none the less for what he tried to accomplish.

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Judged by the standards not of his own time only but of all time, Charlemagne was so great a man that curiosity regarding personal details may in his case be forgiven. Fortunately Einhard has left us a full portrait of his master and friend. He was "large and strong" and "of lofty stature," though not disproportionately tall; his head was round, his eyes big and bright, his nose "a little long," his hair fair, his general expression "laughing and merry." His neck was, indeed, rather short and thick, and in middle life he tended to corpulency ("venterque projectior videretur"); but his firmness of gait and virile carriage still gave him dignity. Endowed with vigorous health, he enjoyed all manly exercises, especially hunting. He was simple in dress and manner, and temperate in eating and drinking, "for he abominated drunkenness in anybody, much more in himself and those of his household." Quick in sympathy and of generous disposition, he was specially kind to the poor, while his gifts to the many churches in which he was interested were numerous and costly. Though his domestic relations were irregular—he appears to have had two wives and at least half a dozen concubines—he was much attached to his large family. "He was," says Einhard, "so careful of the training of his sons and daughters that he never took his meals without them when he was at home, and never made a journey without them; his sons would ride at his side and his daughters would follow him, while a number of his bodyguard, detailed for their protection, brought up the rear." The same writer even adds that his curious unwillingness to marry any of his daughters was due to the fact that he "could not dispense with their society." A man of boundless energy, he was as alert and vigorous mentally as he was physically, and his curiosity was unflagging. It was his custom, even while sitting at table, to listen to music or reading, and "the subjects of his readings" were either "the stories and deeds of olden time" or "St Augustine's books," of which "he was fond"—especially the *City of God*, which undoubtedly exercised a considerable influence over his political ideas. Though, despite the attempts which he made late in life to master the

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mysteries of the alphabet, he never himself learned to write,¹ he had "the gift of ready and fluent speech," could speak Latin as well as his native tongue, and had also a fair knowledge of Greek. Rhetoric, dialectics, and astronomy were among his favourite studies. Such particulars enable us to realize that Charlemagne was not only a great soldier and ruler, but also, like our own Alfred, an enlightened and many-sided man.

He died after a week's illness, on January 28, 814, having not quite completed his seventy-second year, and was buried in the basilica which he had himself built at Aachen. It was, of course, impossible that so notable a figure should pass out of the world without some patent sign of the interest of heaven. Accordingly we find that "very many omens had portended his approaching end." Eclipses of sun and moon were frequent during the last three years of his life; for seven days a black spot remained on the face of the sun; buildings were struck by lightning and shattered by thunderbolts; on one occasion a ball of fire rushed suddenly across the sky. But we are told (and the modesty and courage suggested are, in such a superstitious age, not unworthy of remark) that "Charles despised, or affected to despise, all these omens, as having no reference whatever to him."²

¹ Einhard, chap. xxv.

² *Ibid.*, chap. xxxii.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST OF THE KARLINGS

AS a provision for the welfare of his realm after his death, Charlemagne during his lifetime made his three sons kings: Ludwig, or Louis, of Aquitaine (including Gascony, Septimania, Provence, and portions of Burgundy); Pippin of Italy; Charles of Neustria, Austrasia, and the remainder of the kingdom. As Pippin and Charles died before their father, these arrangements lapsed; but Pippin's son, Bernhard, was confirmed in the Kingship of Italy, with results which will become apparent later. The surviving son, Louis, was, however, crowned by Charlemagne himself in 813, in the basilica at Aachen, and the following year he succeeded in due course to his father's undivided imperial power.

Louis I, known as Louis le Pieux, or 'the Pious,' and Louis le Débonnaire, was a gentle, unselfish, and thoroughly well-meaning man, but, as he himself admitted, his virtues were better fitted for the cloister than for the throne. Weak in will, he was, like many other weak rulers, autocratic; and this combination of qualities made him not only impotent for good, but also potent for evil. Efforts have been made to show that his policy was dictated by the best intentions. There is little profit in discussing these. Whatever the motives behind it, the consequences of that policy were disastrous.

His drastic attempts at the very opening of his reign to correct the laxity of the Court, to begin with, were ill-advised; reform was sadly needed, it is true, but save that he stirred up by it the animosity of those about him, his extreme puritanism had little practical effect. Swayed by considerations of piety, he feebly acquiesced in the encroachments of the Church upon lay interests and the secular power. He freed

THE LAST OF THE KARLINGS

most of the monasteries of his realm, now increasing rapidly in wealth, from all public duties except that of praying for the Emperor and the State. He permitted the monks to close their schools to laymen, thus frustrating his father's intentions of founding a system of public instruction, and making learning the prerogative of the clergy. He did not protest when, on Leo III's death, the Roman people without consulting him elected a new Pope on their own responsibility, and he made a further serious concession to the fast extending papal claims by allowing the Pope to assume that the Imperial designation was invalid until sanctioned by the occupant of St Peter's chair. To conciliate his *leudes*, or great nobles, whom he frequently estranged, he distributed among them from time to time gifts of royal domains, and he was guilty of the amazing folly of granting them the titles of these in perpetuity. He thus impoverished himself by alienating the estates upon which, in the absence of regular taxation, the King depended, and undermined his supremacy by setting up centres of conflicting power.

These were bad blunders. Even worse, at least from the point of view of immediate consequences, were those which he committed in connexion with the partitioning of his realm.

In 817, when he had been scarcely three years on the throne, he resolved to delegate a portion of his authority to his three sons. To his eldest, Lothair, then aged nineteen, he granted the kingdom of Italy, at the same time making him his associate in the Empire; while for the other two he created subordinate kingdoms—for Pippin, then aged eleven, the kingdom of Aquitaine; for Louis, who was eight years of age, that of Bavaria. These were the children of his first wife, Hermengard. On her death he allowed himself to be overruled by his nobles, and instead of entering a monastery, as he desired, he married again in accordance with their wishes. In 823 his second wife, Judith, bore him a son, and for this son, Charles, he conceived so passionate an affection that he presently annulled the constitution of 817 in order to carve out for him, while he was still a mere child, a new kingdom,

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which he called Allemannia, in the territory between the Jura, the Alps, the Rhone, and the Main. As might have been anticipated, these divisions were the cause of endless trouble. In the first place, Louis' nephew, Bernhard, whose title to the throne of Italy had been ignored, rose in revolt. An interval of peace ensued upon his downfall and death. But it was a brief interval only. The donation to Charles in turn exasperated his half-brothers Lothair and Pippin, who took up arms against their father, and captured and deposed him. A counter-plot against Lothair soon restored him to the throne ; but a second insurrection broke out in 832, when Lothair and Pippin, again joining forces, had the further support of their brother, Louis of Bavaria, and of the Pope. The unfortunate Emperor was now deserted by most of those who professed to be his adherents, and Lothair assumed the Imperial title. This assumption was, however, repudiated by his brothers, and by their exertions the twice deposed monarch was for a third time placed on his throne. But even now Louis failed to make good his position. A man incapable of learning from experience, he still let himself drift, while his continued infatuation for his youngest son led him from mistake to mistake. Jealousies, intrigues, contentions, patched-up truces, fresh divisions, renewed misunderstandings and conflicts, thus made up the dismal record of Louis' remaining years. By his instability more even than by his downright misrule he had long since forfeited the respect of his subjects, and his two public confessions of his sins—one made in 822 of his own free will, and one in 833 under compulsion of Lothair—hopelessly degraded him in their eyes. Yet sentimental regard for the man ultimately triumphed over contempt for the ruler, and thus the fatuous and futile Louis passed into history as 'the Pious King.'

THE STRASSBURG OATH AND THE TREATY OF VERDUN

His death in 840 again let loose the hardly restrained forces of anarchy. Lothair's claim to his full rights as Emperor was once more contested by Louis and Charles ; the son of Pippin,

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unū quēq; ut in absoluo. Cū Karolus.
hæc eadē uerba romana lingua posuisset.

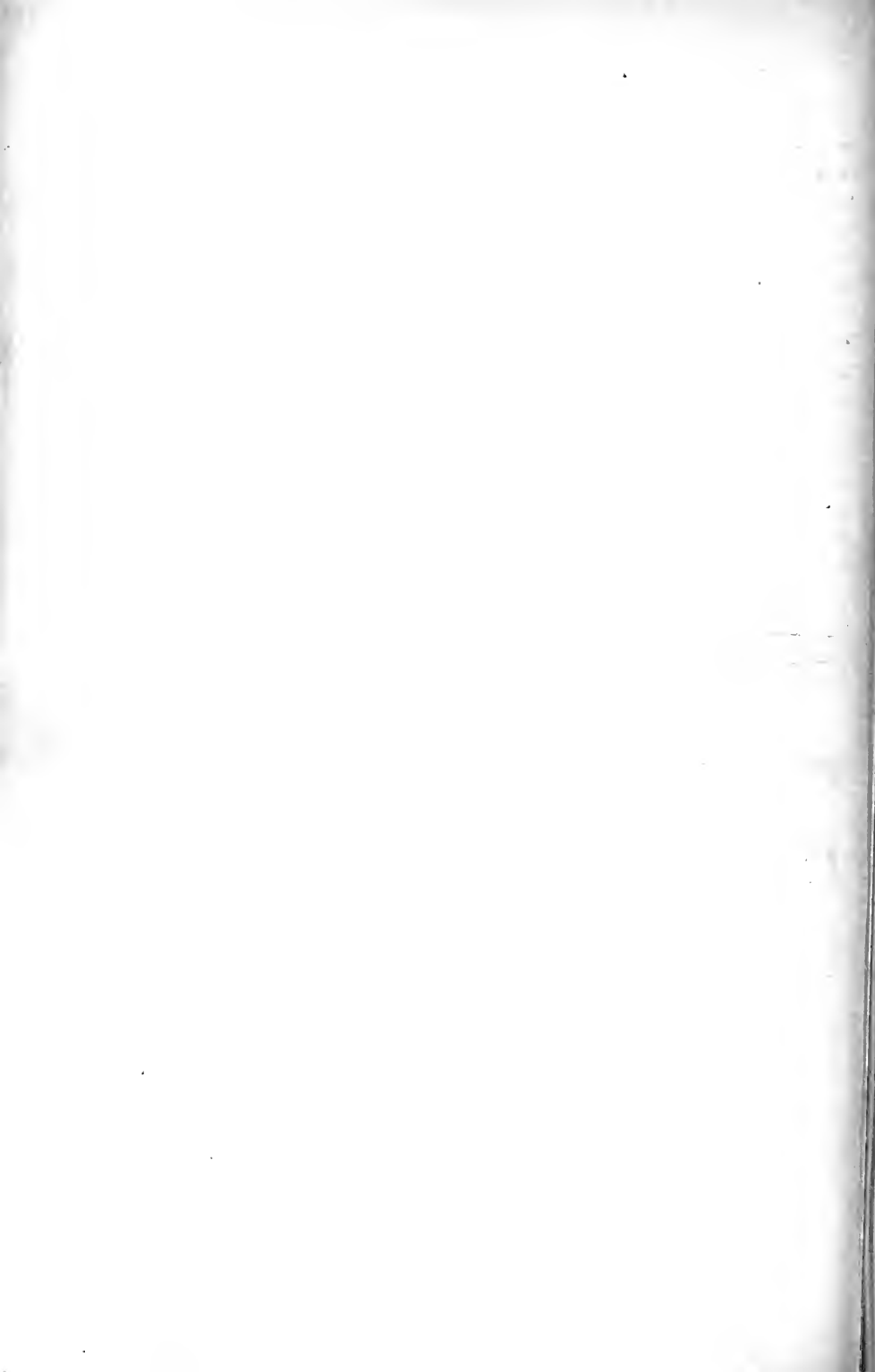
Lothari uicē ip̄s maior nō uenit. prior
hæc deinde seruari rē restatit.

*non dicit
Jurandus
et hanc
et hanc
et hanc*

Pro dō amur & p̄cepti an populo & nō oōmni
saluamētū. dicit di en auant. inquantū
saur & potur medunco. si saluaratē.
est meon frudre Karlo. & in ad iudha.
& in ead huna cōsa. sicū om p̄ dicit son
frudra saluar dicit. Ino quid il m̄ahre
si faxe. Et ab iudher nul plaid ni quā
p̄indrai qui meon uol est meon frudre
karle in damno suo. Quod cū lothari
expleisset. Karolus eadē ca lingua sic
eadē uerba restatit.

Jugoles minna indunber. x̄paner. solcher
indunser bealherogallusio. fombere

*Karolus Karolus
et hanc
et hanc
et hanc
et hanc*



THE LAST OF THE KARLINGS

now dead—Pippin II of Aquitaine—meanwhile making common cause with Lothair under promises of Imperial favour. A great battle was fought in 841 at Fontanet, near Auxerre, and Lothair and Pippin were defeated with immense slaughter. None the less the war went on; and the next spring Charles and Louis met near Strassburg to renew their alliance. This meeting is historically significant by reason of the solemn oath that was sworn there. The allied armies were of different speech, and the oath which their kings exchanged in their presence was therefore taken in the two tongues—the *teudisca lingua* and the *romana*. Both forms have been preserved, the latter being the oldest surviving monument of that romance idiom which was later to evolve into French.¹ Before long after this Lothair became convinced that he was playing a losing game, and opened negotiations for peace with his brothers. Finally, in August 843 the famous Treaty of Verdun was signed, in accordance with the terms of which Lothair retained the Imperial crown and was granted a narrow strip of territory ('the Middle Kingdom,' Lotharingia, Lorraine) running from the Mediterranean to the North Sea along the valleys of the Rhone and the Lower Rhine, while, roughly

¹ During the Roman occupation of Gaul the original Celtic tongue disappeared almost entirely, vulgar Latin conquering first the towns and finally the whole country. Thus a rapidly deteriorating form of Latin was the language of all Gaul when the barbarian invasions began. The Teutons in turn gradually adopted this as they amalgamated with the Gallo-Roman people; but though the actual infusion of Teutonic elements did not perhaps exceed some 500 words (see Brachet's *Dictionnaire étymologique de la Langue française*, Introduction), the provincial tongue naturally underwent many changes in grammar, syntax, and pronunciation through their adoption of it. The following is the text of the formula above referred to: "Pro Deo amur et pro christian poblo et nostro commun salvament, d'ist di en avant, in quant Deus savir et podir me dunat, et salvarai eo cist meon fradre Karlo, et in aiudha et in cadhuna cosa, si cum om per dreit son fradra salvar dift, in o quid il me altresi fazet; et ab Ludher nul plaid nunquam prindrai qui, meon vol, cist meon fradre Karle in damno sit." ("For the love of God and for the common safety of the Christian people and of ourselves, from this day forward, as far as God gives me knowledge and power, I will support this my brother Charles and aid him in all things, as one ought justly to support one's brother, on condition that he does the same by me; and with Lothair I will make no arrangement which, in my will, may be to the disadvantage of this my brother Charles.")

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speaking, all the territory lying east of this was assigned to Louis and all the territory lying west of it to Charles. This treaty is of the utmost importance because it marks the beginning of an entirely new order of things. The three principal peoples of the Empire—the Italians, the Germans, and the Gallo-Franks—now separated for good. The dominions of Lothair were, indeed, too incoherent in composition to hold together long, and with the later dismemberment of the Empire three important kingdoms arose out of them—the kingdoms of Lorraine, Burgundy, and Provence.¹ But, on the other hand, on the east and west of this uncertain country, the future Germany and the future France now began to emerge as definite units. It is with the Treaty of Verdun, therefore, that their individual histories begin. Charles, known as Charles le Chauve, or 'the Bald,' stands out as, in fact, the first real French king.

This, however, is his sole substantial title to distinction, for endless family squabbles are the only special feature of his long but inglorious reign. Over these we need not linger, nor will we attempt to follow in detail the ever-growing evils which marked the period of his son Louis II, called 'le Bègue' ('the Stammerer') and his grandsons, Louis III and Karloman. On the latter's death in 884 a posthumous son of the Stammerer, Charles, a child of five, stood in the natural line of succession; but the nobles set him aside in favour of another Charles, the son of Louis of Bavaria. As this Charles, surnamed 'le Gros,' or 'the Fat,' was already Emperor and King of the Eastern Franks, the possessions of Charlemagne were for a time reunited (884-888). Chronic ill-health and general incapacity made him, however, an impossible ruler; he was guilty of actions which his subjects could not forgive, and with his own consent he was presently deposed. Upon this the Empire again fell to pieces, the western kingdom passing into the hands of Odo, or Eudes, Count of Paris and Duke of France,

¹ Burgundy was at first divided into two kingdoms—Cisjuran Burgundy, or the kingdom of Arles, and Transjuran, or Upper Burgundy. They were united in 930.

THE LAST OF THE KARLINGS

whom the northern nobles chose for their king simply because he had proved himself a strong man. But, under conditions which will be described presently, the western kingdom had itself by this time broken up into a number of petty states, and a movement was soon on foot among those of the south for the restoration of the Karlings in the person of Louis the Stammerer's son Charles. The premature death of Odo secured the success of their design, and while Odo was succeeded in the dukedom by his son Robert, Charles, surnamed 'the Simple,' ascended the throne (898). Follies and misfortunes make up the history of Charles' thirty-one years' reign, and for a long time before its close he had to face formidable rivals, first in Robert of France, and then in Robert's son-in-law, Raoul, or Rudolf, Duke of Burgundy. Rudolf died childless in 936, and Charles the Simple's son, Louis IV—Louis d'Outremer, whose mother was our Athelstan's sister—was recalled from England, where he had been living, and made king. A man of some ability, he held his own against his turbulent vassal Hugues le Grand, the son of Robert of France, who perpetually challenged his power. His sudden death in a hunting accident in 954 placed the crown on the head of his son Lothair, a boy of thirteen. In these circumstances it is strange that Hugues refused to grasp the kingship, now well within his reach. Yet Lothair was allowed to reign till his death in 986. His son, Louis V—'le Fainéant,' or 'Do-nothing'—died within a year of his accession, and with him the dynasty of the Karlings came to an end. The long-pending change was now effected.

The Archbishop of Reims and the bishops of the whole country called the nobles together at Senlis, and the Archbishop made a speech in which he maintained that the crown was not hereditary, and that Duke Hugues, the son of Hugues le Grand, was the most fitting person to receive it. The last Karling, Louis' uncle, Charles of Lorraine, was accordingly ignored, and Hugues Capet¹ was proclaimed king. The new

¹ His surname, Capet, is said to have been derived from the *cappa*, or hood, which he wore as lay abbot of Saint-Martin of Tours.

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dynasty which he thus founded in 987 was destined to rule over France for three hundred and forty-one years.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE NORSEMEN

This rapid survey of the long period of confusion between Charlemagne's death and the final collapse of his line, though necessarily incomplete will suffice for the purposes of our story. One outstanding fact, however, has still to be mentioned—the settlement of the Northmen on Frankish soil.

A chronicler of the ninth century tells us that Charlemagne himself had witnessed the first descent of Scandinavian corsairs upon the Mediterranean coast, and had been moved to tears thereby, foreseeing "with what evils they would overwhelm his successors and their people."¹ This may be fable. It was at any rate about this time that the piratical raids of the Northmen began, and only thirty years after Charlemagne's death a party of marauders even ascended the Seine and sacked Paris. Again and again they reappeared, their plundering forays becoming increasingly like regular invasions, and again and again the Karling kings attempted, and of course in vain, to stop their progress by buying them off. It was by his heroic stand against them when they once more laid siege to Paris in 885-6 that Count Odo specially proved his quality. At length in 911 Charles the Simple ceded to their principal leader, Hrolf, or Rollo, the whole valley of the Seine, on the condition that he should settle there peacefully, leave the rest of the country alone, and become a Christian. These terms were accepted, and in accordance with the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte Rollo was baptized, taking the name of Robert, and the arrangement was cemented by his marriage with Charles' daughter. Because they were relatively few and were scattered over a large extent of country, the settlers soon lost their racial identity and amalgamated with the natives among whom they lived, adopting their manners, their language, and their religion. Thus the Northmen, under the

¹ *Faits et Gestes de Charles le Grand*, by a Monk of Saint-Loup, in Guizot's *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'Histoire de France*, t. iii, p. 251.

THE LAST OF THE KARLINGS

slightly modified name of Normans, enter almost at once into the pages of French history.

The consequences of the establishment and transformation of these Scandinavians in France must be carefully noted. By the time of the Treaty of Verdun, Celtic, Roman, and Frankish elements had already been combined toward the making of the complex French race. With the Treaty of Saint-Clair the last of the components of that race was introduced. This Northern factor, which we can still recognize in the fair hair and blue eyes of the Norman people, was destined to count for much in the subsequent course of French civilization.

THE DISSOLUTION OF CHARLEMAGNE'S EMPIRE

Let us now glance back over the course of events recorded in this chapter. In themselves they have little interest. They become extremely interesting when their broad significance is examined.

The history of the later Carlovingian period is, it will be seen, the history of dissolution. How is this dissolution to be interpreted?

The purely personal aspect is naturally the first to arrest attention. Charlemagne was a strong and able man. A strong and able man was needed to wield his sceptre. His successors were on the whole weak-willed and incapable. Their very surnames—'the Pious,' 'the Bald,' 'the Stammerer,' 'the Simple,' 'the Fat'—are significant. The disintegration of his dominions, it is often said, followed, therefore, as a matter of course. Yet this explanation, though it has to be recognized, does not carry us far unless at the same time we remember the conditions of Charlemagne's imperial rule. He had built up his empire by military conquest; it was held together by arbitrary power; its unity was artificial; even he had failed to reduce its heterogeneous components to anything like real homogeneity. Instability could therefore on general principles have been predicted of the vast and straggling aggregation of many races, differing in blood, tongue,

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interests, degrees of civilization, over which he held sway, and the gradual breaking up of that aggregation after the withdrawal of his individual power was thus simply the result of inherent tendencies now no longer held in check. Many modern writers, following Thierry,¹ have gone farther than this, and have maintained that the growing sense of nationality was the primary disintegrating force, and that, like separating from unlike and uniting with like, new groups began spontaneously to form out of the fragments of empire in accordance with the natural laws of racial affinities, language, and manners. Facts do not entirely justify this attractive theory, and it has against it the great weight of the authority both of Guizot² and Fustel de Coulanges.³ In general terms, indeed, it is safe to say that in the great upheaval of the ninth century community of interest followed grouping, and that the sense of nationality was the result rather than the cause of segregation. Though I still hold that much importance may be attached to the development of nationality among the centrifugal movements of the time, we cannot, it is clear, regard it as an explanation of those movements. That explanation is to be sought mainly in the decentralizing policy of the Karling kings.

The results of such policy are shown, to begin with, in that partitioning of the Empire by Louis le Débonnaire which, as we have seen, led first to struggle among his sons, and through this to the definite division of the Treaty of Verdun. They are shown even more conspicuously in the rise and establishment of what are known as the great fiefs. The dismemberment of the Empire was followed by that of the western kingdom. The practice adopted by the later Karlings of granting hereditary *beneficia* out of Crown lands to their loyal nobles entailed the rapid multiplication of what were in effect petty states, while at the same time the dukes, counts,

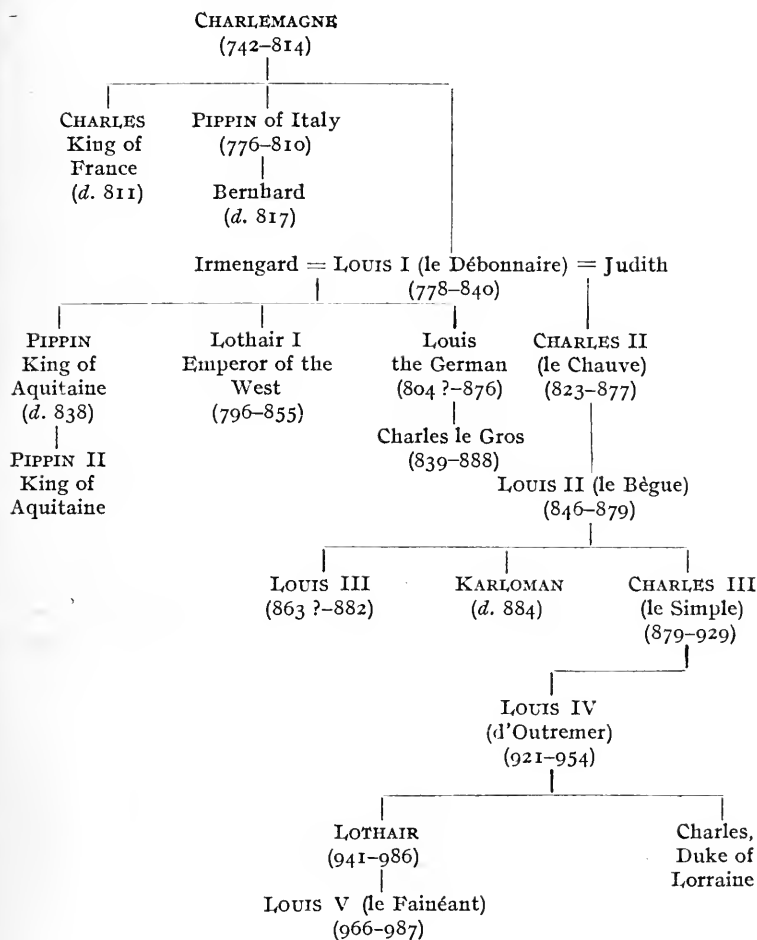
¹ *Lettres sur l'Histoire de France*, XI, XII.

² *Histoire de la Civilisation en France*, chap. xxiv.

³ *Histoire des Institutions politiques de l'Ancienne France*, "Les Transformations de la Royauté," Liv. IV, chap. v.

THE KARLING DYNASTY

(b) THE LATER KARLINGS



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and viscounts who had originally been representatives of the king in Charlemagne's administrative districts were allowed to turn their offices into family possessions, and so to increase their independence as to become sovereigns in everything but name.¹ Hence local centres of government sprang up everywhere and local rulers were permitted to the destruction of the central power. By the end of the ninth century twenty-nine fiefs already existed in Frankland; by the end of the tenth—the time of the final collapse of the Carolingian dynasty—the number had increased to fifty-five. These, of course, differed vastly in size, importance, and the extent of the autonomy which they claimed. Many of them have little place in history. But some—like the counties of Flanders and Anjou and the duchies of France, Normandy, Brittany, and Burgundy in the north, and the county of Toulouse and the duchies of Gascony and Guyenne in the south—were in fact kingdoms within the kingdom, having their own sovereigns, customs, coinage, and laws. This decentralization ultimately brought about the alienation of the powers of the Crown into the hands of numerous petty rulers, and thus that great conflict began between the king and the feudal nobility which was to be so prominent a feature in the history of France for nearly five hundred years.

¹ By a capitulary of 877, often referred to as the Edict of Kiersy-sur-Oise, Charles le Chauve formally promulgated the hereditary principle in respect both of benefices and of royal offices.

BOOK II

THE FEUDAL MONARCHY

987-1328

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST FOUR CAPETIAN KINGS

987-1109

IT is necessary to consider carefully the conditions under which the first king of the new dynasty began his reign.

Nominally he was ruler of a country which we are now entitled to call France, though the geographical area of that country was not precisely that of the France of to-day.¹ Actually his sovereignty was confined within the limits of his own estates, which, covering the area now occupied by the departments of Seine, Seine-et-Oise, Oise, and Loiret, were smaller than those of many of his vassal nobles. Outside these his position was that of suzerain only, and while in theory he had the right to demand obedience from his vassals, he was in fact impotent to enforce it. In all parts of the country, as we have already seen, the great local chiefs themselves exercised powers within their territories equal to his within the duchy of France, administering justice according to their own will, making wars, concluding treaties, and otherwise acting as independent kings with little or no reference to his supposed final authority. He was therefore scarcely more than a feudal lord among other feudal lords. As Duke of France, Count of Paris, Count of Orléans, and Abbot of three of the richest and

¹ It should in particular be remembered that what was presently to be the province of Provence was in part incorporated with the kingdom of Arles and in part ruled by independent counts. It did not become French till 1481.

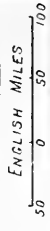
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most influential abbeys in the land—those of Saint-Martin of Tours, Saint-Denis, and Saint-Germain-des-Prés—he was at least the equal of the most powerful of them. But his real standing depended upon these possessions, not upon his kingship. As King he enjoyed special prestige, it is true, but along with this only a very shadowy title to the prerogatives of his regal office.

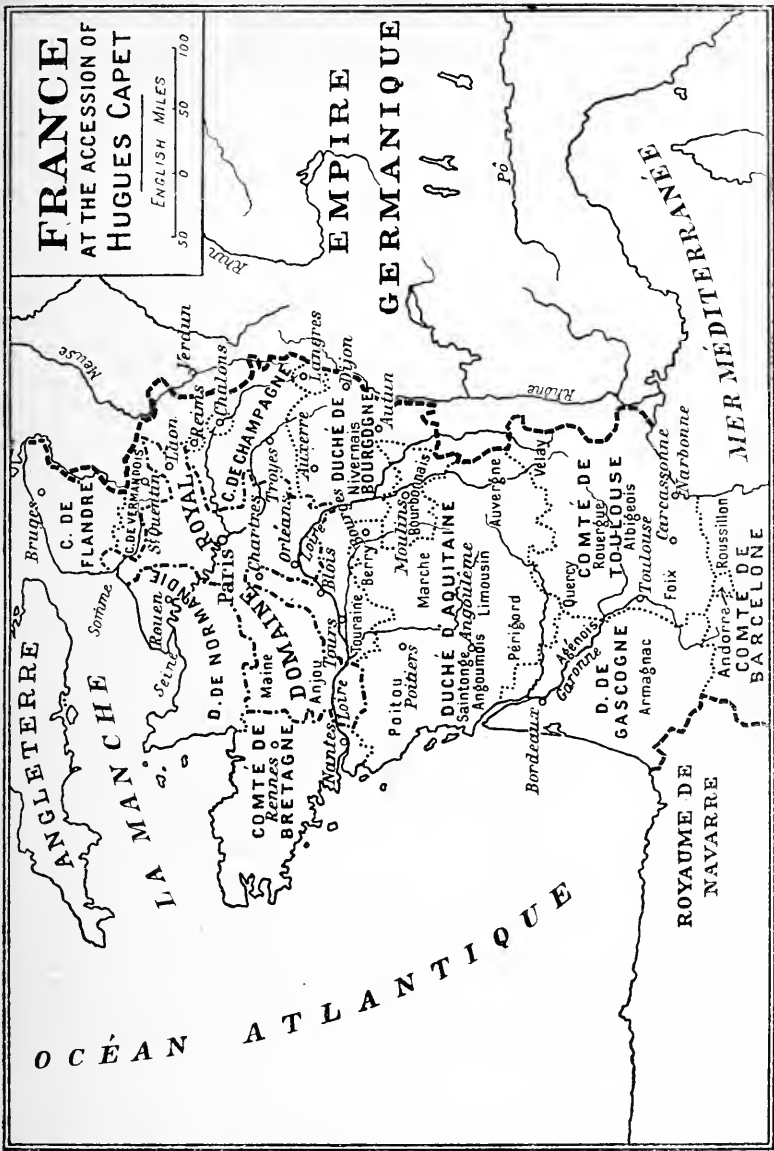
These facts are of the utmost importance, for they form the point of departure of the story of the Capetian dynasty, upon which we now enter. The staple of that story will be the struggle of the King of France to consolidate his kingdom and establish his authority over all its parts. We shall find him at first losing ground in his conflict with the disintegrating forces of the feudal aristocracy. Then we shall come to the point at which his fortunes begin to turn, and thence onward we shall have to note the gradual unification of France as, through conquest, reversion, or intermarriage, the great fiefs fall into the power of the Crown, and, with this unification of the kingdom, the parallel evolution of the monarchy in the direction of the absolutism which was later to be attained.

Though this consummation is as yet a long way off, there is one feature in the history of the centralizing process which becomes conspicuous at the very beginning of Hugues Capet's reign, and which may therefore be fittingly mentioned in this place. This is the rise of Paris into a position of paramount importance among the cities of the land. We first hear of Paris as a collection of mud huts on an island in the Seine, which Caesar called Lutetia, and described as the chief settlement of the Gallic tribe of the Parisii. It soon acquired strategic value, and in course of time became a recognized home of Gallo-Roman culture. Thus in the fourth century we find it the favourite residence of Julian the Apostate. Clovis, as we have seen, chose it as his chief city, but the German sympathies of Charlemagne caused him to abandon it in favour of Aachen. Under the Carolingians, therefore, its fortunes dwindled. But they were restored by the accession

**FRANCE
AT THE ACCESSION OF
HUGUES CAPET**



**EMPIRE
GERMANIQUE**



HISTORY OF FRANCE

to the French throne of a Duke of France. Hugues Capet naturally made it his principal city, and it is with him that it definitely assumes the position it was never afterward to lose, of the capital of the realm.

On his assumption of royalty Hugues Capet was sagacious enough to take precautions against further recourse to that elective principle to which he owed his own elevation by having his son at once consecrated as his associate. In this policy he was followed by his successors till the crowning of Philippe-Auguste in 1179. As by that time the hereditary theory had been firmly established, the practice was then allowed to lapse. It should further be noted that the Capetians broke at once with the old Frankish custom of dividing the country among the king's sons, substituting for this the rule of primogeniture. This was already a distinct step in the direction of unification. None the less, Hugues' accession was followed by immediate disturbances. He had the support of most of the northern nobles and of the Church, and the Pope's acknowledgment of his title strengthened his hands. But the great princes of the south were against him, and these, in league with the Counts of Flanders and Vermandois, backed Charles of Lorraine when he contested the election. The war which ensued lasted two and a half years, and ended only when Charles was taken prisoner and confined in the tower of Orléans, where he shortly afterward died. This we may regard as the last effort of the dying house of Charlemagne. After this the country enjoyed comparative peace for the remainder of Hugues' reign. Yet it was a troubled heritage which, dying at fifty, he passed on to his son. He had just contrived to hold his own against his turbulent vassals, but that was all. How little they respected his suzerainty is shown by the fact that when, in the course of a quarrel, he sent a messenger to the Count of Périgord with the question, "Who made you Count?" the haughty chief retorted: "Who made you King?"¹

¹ Adémar de Chabannis, *Chronicon Aquitanicum* (in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, t. cxli).

FIRST FOUR CAPETIAN KINGS

ROBERT II ('LE PIEUX')

The religious element had been prominent in Hugues Capet's character. It was even more pronounced in that of Robert II (970?-1031), as his surname, 'the Pious,' suggests. He gave much of his time to works of charity, often feeding a thousand poor persons a day; his humility of spirit was such that on Holy Thursday he washed the feet of beggars and served them on his knees; he was devoted to church music, and was himself a composer of hymns. It is a curious fact, therefore, that the chief feature of his reign was his long and obstinate quarrel with Rome. This quarrel originated in his marriage with his relative Bertha, daughter of the King of Arles and widow of the Count of Blois. To this union Pope Gregory V objected, nominally on the ground of consanguinity, really at the instigation of the Emperor, who for political reasons desired to annul it. Though his devoutness and his placid temper alike prompted him to yield, Robert stood out against the command of Rome even when in 998 that command was reinforced by an edict of excommunication. The whole country was now thrown into a state of panic; and popular feeling was the more intense because of the widespread belief that with the fatal year 1000, now fast approaching, the world was to come to an end. As a result, the King came to be regarded as a creature accursed; people fled as he drew near; the vessels which he touched in eating and drinking had to be purified by fire. Yet despite this general agitation it was not till 1006 that he consented to put away his wife; upon which, of course, the papal ban was withdrawn.

His second marriage, with Constance, daughter of the Count of Toulouse, was, however, equally unfortunate, though in a different way; for Constance was an imperious and unscrupulous woman, who greatly troubled his life, and even stirred up his sons to rebellion against him.

One detail connected with this marriage has a certain independent interest. On her arrival in Paris Constance was accompanied by some troubadours from Aquitaine. The

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impression which these southerners made on the people of the north was remarkable. Their style of dress and bearing, their luxurious habits, their close-shaved heads, were all severely criticized, and they were adjudged, in the words of a contemporary chronicler, as vain, light-minded, and dissolute.¹ The point of this lies in the evidence it affords of the fundamental antagonism which then existed between the north and the south. It was this antagonism, rather than any real affection for the Carolingian dynasty, which had inspired the southern nobles to support Charles of Lorraine against Hugues Capet, the Duke of France. The course of time and the progress of events were now tending still further to separate the two peoples, and the evolution of their languages into markedly different dialects—the *langue d'oc* and the *langue d'oïl*—naturally helped the differentiation. Some of the consequences of this antagonism will become apparent presently.

Save for matrimonial troubles, the reign of Robert was generally uneventful. A war of five years put him into possession of the duchy of Burgundy, but that important fief was soon lost to the Crown by his son. A cruel persecution of the Jews in 1010 and the burning of thirteen heretics at Orléans in 1022 were incidents not without significance in the light of future developments of religious fanaticism. Of another prophetic occurrence—an insurrection of Norman peasantry—we shall have occasion to speak in a later chapter.

HENRI I

As his eldest son died before him and his second was an imbecile, Robert in 1031 was succeeded by his third son, Henri I. His mother, Constance, intrigued to have him set aside in favour of his younger brother Robert, and Henri had to purchase peace by the surrender of the duchy of Burgundy. This was, very obviously, a loss to the Crown. Henri was a brave man, and for thirty years kept up a ceaseless struggle with his great neighbouring vassals, the Counts of

¹ Rodulfus Glaber, *Chron.*, lib. III, cap. ix (in Guizot, *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'Histoire de France*, t. vi).

FIRST FOUR CAPETIAN KINGS

Blois and the Dukes of Normandy; but the general result of his reign was a marked shrinkage of the royal power. His encounter with Normandy was specially disastrous. Realizing how completely his estates were hemmed in by dangerous rivals, and how effectually Normandy blocked his outlet to the sea, he made a resolute effort to extricate himself from his entanglement by the practical vindication of his authority. But he was twice badly beaten—at Mortemer in 1054, and at Varaville in 1058—by Guillaume le Bâtard, whom we know in English annals as William the Conqueror. From these two blows he never recovered.

Meanwhile the whole south seethed in turmoil through the desperate rivalry of Eudes, Count of Blois, and Foulques, Count of Anjou, called 'Nerra,' or 'the Black.' Even against the lurid background of his time the latter's monstrous figure stands out in high relief. A man of unbridled passions, who knew no fear of God or man when the mood was upon him, he murdered his first wife, and either banished his second or drove her by ill-treatment to leave him, compelled his rebellious son Geoffrey to crave forgiveness with a horse's harness on his back, and on his various military expeditions took a savage delight in devastating the whole country with fire and sword. Yet if his boundless brutality and often grotesque wickedness were characteristic of his age, his feverish fits of piety were no less so. Remorse thrice impelled him to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and on the last occasion he caused himself to be bound naked to a hurdle and dragged through the streets of Jerusalem, while his servants scourged him with cords. It is related that when he fired the church of Saint-Florent-sur-Loire he promised the saint that he would make reparation by building another temple elsewhere in his honour, and that the fulfilment of this vow was the origin of the cathedral of Angers.

PHILIPPE I

Henri's son Philippe ascended the throne in 1060, when he was only seven, and he was therefore still a mere boy when

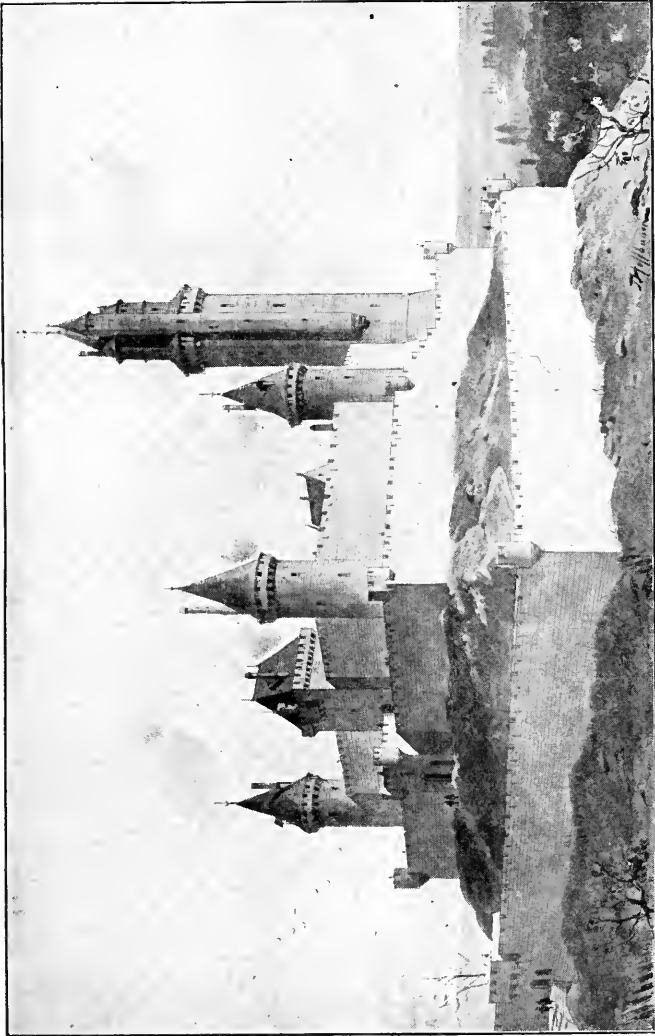
HISTORY OF FRANCE

his vassal William, Duke of Normandy, became King of England. As he grew into manhood he was of course compelled to realize the immense additional power which thus accrued to the most dangerous of his great nobles; but he was too indolent and easy-going to make any definite stand against the new conditions. Instead of open hostility, he had recourse to the shifty methods of intrigue; in particular supporting the Bretons in their collision with the Normans, and Robert, William's son, when he rose against his father. The latter action, and a ribald jest which he made at William's expense, brought William himself, hot with anger, into the field, swearing vengeance; but a fatal injury received while he was riding through the burning city of Mantes on his march to Paris removed this most formidable foe. Philippe pursued the same tortuous policy in respect to the Conqueror's two sons, Robert, now Duke of Normandy, and William Rufus, King of England, seeking to weaken them by sowing dissension between them.

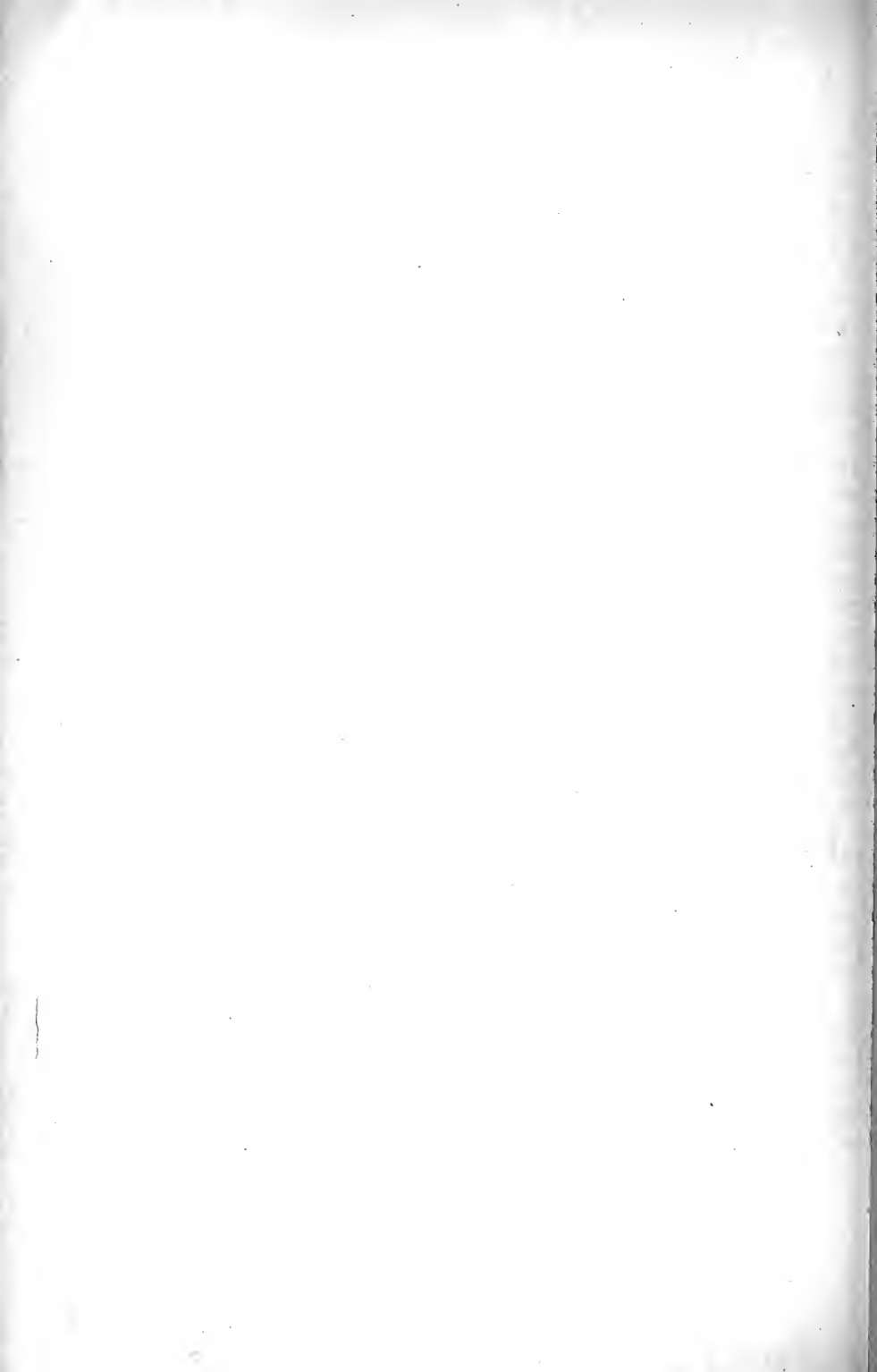
Indolence was undoubtedly the main cause of Philippe's refusal to join the First Crusade, which threw France into a fever of excitement during his reign. I defer to a later chapter the treatment of this important event; but it is necessary here to lay stress on the King's apathy in regard to it, because this goes far to explain the extreme animosity of the ecclesiastical chroniclers toward him. That some at least of the numerous crimes with which they charge him are merely the inventions of their own prejudice now seems clear. But his torpor and indifference, in part cause and in part effect of his gluttonous habits, and in later life of his abnormal fatness, are beyond dispute.

THE ANARCHY OF FEUDALISM

Such a man, it is evident, was wanting in all the qualities necessary for successful resistance to the fast-growing lawlessness of the time. In his reign, indeed, the anarchy of feudalism reached its height. Central authority was now a fiction in France. Shut up in his narrow estates, and encompassed by



8. THE CASTLE OF MONTLHÉRY



FIRST FOUR CAPETIAN KINGS

ambitious and disorderly princelings, the monarch maintained his show of royalty only on condition that it should be nothing more than a show. Even within his own domain the frowning fortresses of insubordinate chiefs—of the lord of Montlhéry, for example, between Paris and Étampes, and of the Count of Corbeil, between Paris and Melun—openly defied his arms, and he could not ride beyond the gates of his capital without risk of being captured and held for ransom. The huge and massive castles which had now sprung up all over the land enabled the contumacious barons to do as they liked, and to laugh at the consequences. Many of these feudal chieftains were simply bandits, who terrorized the whole district around them, and enriched themselves by murder and pillage. If a measure of protection could still be found within the closely walled and heavily fortified cities, it was a measure only; and outside the baronial highwayman, who lay in wait for passing traders and compelled them by imprisonment and torture to give up their wealth, made even the main roads so perilous that national commerce almost disappeared. At the same time the fields were left deserted, for even the peasant had no safety at his plough, and horrible miseries and frequent famines were the result. Brute force thus menaced with destruction what little survived of law and order, while the quarrels and jealousies of the greater nobles kept the whole realm in a state of perpetual upheaval.

It is true that the Church, materialized and feudalized though it now was, had already realized that something must be done to check the lapse of society into barbarism, and to that end had made a determined attack upon the practice of private war among the nobles. In the south this first took the form of the edict known as the Peace of God; in the name of God men were commanded as Christians to desist from fighting and violence under penalty of excommunication and future damnation. But the proclamation was but "idle thunder"; the great nobles loved fighting and violence more than they dreaded the ban of the Church and the torments of hell. Then a compromise was introduced in the Truce of

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God (about 1041), according to the terms of which all warfare was to cease from Wednesday or Thursday evening (the edicts differ) till Monday morning, as well as during the principal ecclesiastical festivals, while in regard to churches, cemeteries, women, pilgrims, traders, and labourers the Truce was made perpetual. Like nearly all the religious reforms of the period, this was a phase of the spiritual movement known as the Cluniac Revival. In the south the Truce was widely observed; in the north it was frequently disregarded. Yet on the whole we may take it, as we may also take the various associations for the maintenance of peace which had meantime grown up independently among the laity, as marking the beginning of a new and better order of things.

To such a pass, then, feudalism had brought the realm of France. At this point it will therefore be well for us to pause in our story to consider in such detail as space will permit, and our story itself requires, the system which had wrought these deplorable effects. At the same time we shall find it convenient to say something about the closely associated institution of chivalry.

CHAPTER II

FEUDALISM AND CHIVALRY

THE genesis of feudalism has long been the subject of violent controversy, and while the tendency among modern scholars is toward agreement on fundamentals, many important points are still in dispute. Into the question of origins, however, it is not necessary for us here to enter. We are concerned only with the broad aspects of feudalism as it existed in medieval France.

The state of things which we find firmly established in the eleventh century arose from the combination of various causes. The weakness of the later Carolingians had, as we have seen, permitted innumerable encroachments upon their prerogatives. The grants of land which, under the Latin name of *beneficia*, had been made by the king to his personal followers on condition of such and such services to be rendered in return had, to begin with, been grants for life only. Under the name of *feuds* or *fiefs* they gradually came to be regarded as permanent possessions. The officers appointed by the Crown as its representatives and agents in different parts of the country had, in like manner, by little and little so far forgotten the primary significance of their positions as to treat their authority, not as a delegated function, but as an inalienable right. The result was that what were originally royal commissions gradually assumed the character of territorial and hereditary holdings. Charles le Chauve's capitulary of Kiersy, in 877, specifically recognized the hereditary quality both of *beneficia* and of public offices, thus giving regal sanction to a revolution which was already in progress. In this way, by concessions and usurpations, the power of the king had been distributed among his subordinates or vassals. Of these the most prominent

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were the lords of the seven great feudal states, as they are called, the counties of Flanders, Vermandois, and Toulouse, and the duchies of Normandy, Burgundy, Aquitaine, and Gascony.¹ But the subdivision of the country by no means ended here, for it is recorded that when Hugues Capet became king there were no fewer than 150 territorial lords who claimed the sovereign rights of coining money, legislating, administering justice, making war, and concluding treaties of peace. Thus, as Guizot says, "the rights of property had become confused with those of sovereignty"; the administrative hierarchy of Charlemagne had grown into an immense feudal hierarchy of petty rulers, and France had been turned into a congeries of practically independent states.

Concurrently the development of feudalism was accelerated by the weakening of the central authority in yet another way. As in the anarchy which followed the dismemberment of Charlemagne's empire it became increasingly obvious that the king himself was unable to maintain general order, nothing was left for the small land proprietor, perpetually threatened by outrage and depredation, but to place himself directly under the protection of some strong noble. It was impossible for the simple freeman to stand alone; safety then had to be purchased at any cost, even at the cost of some sacrifice of individual independence. This was expressly recognized in another capitulary of Charles le Chauve—that of Mersen, in 857, by which every freeman was permitted to choose a lord, whether the king or one of his vassals. Thus arose the practice known as 'commendation'; a freeman desiring to secure such protection was said to commend himself to a lord when he voluntarily yielded up his land to him, receiving it back in the form of a feudal grant; which meant that the ownership of the land was now vested in the lord, that the tenant henceforth was to enjoy the beneficiary use of it only, and that a relationship entailing various undertakings on both sides was

¹ The eighth great state, the duchy of France, belonged to the Capetians themselves and formed the nucleus of the royal domain, Hugues Capet being, as we remember, Duke of France on his accession to the throne.

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set up between the said tenant and the lord whose vassal he became. This practice, which was already well known in the time of Charlemagne, became more and more common under the later Karlings, and soon led to the virtual extinction of all allodial land-ownership—that is, of absolute ownership, or ownership in fee-simple—throughout the north of France. In the second half of the fourteenth century such absolute possession had become so rare that the proprietor of a freehold estate at Yvetot, in Normandy, styled himself king because he depended upon no one, and won so great a fame that long afterward his name passed into proverb and popular song.

THE INSTITUTION OF FEUDALISM

Disruptive as feudalism was, it none the less involved a chain of reciprocal duties and responsibilities. Its foundation was a particular way of holding land, then the sole basis of property and the one nexus of society. Theoretically, all the soil of the country belonged to the king, who granted it in large parcels to his great vassals, such grants carrying with them the privilege of *immunitas*, or freedom from any interference on the king's part with the affairs of the estate of the vassal so long as the vassal faithfully fulfilled his part of the contract. In this way the right to exercise sovereign power within a given territory came to be recognized as an appurtenance of the land of which such territory was composed. But this direct concession of land and prerogatives by king to personal vassal was only a first step in the feudal process. Subinfeudation was its logical consequence. The great vassals themselves granted estates out of their territories, and their vassals, in turn, estates out of theirs, this subinfeudation often continuing to the third or fourth degree, or even farther. This, taken together with the practice of commendation, accounts for the enormous multiplication of minor fiefs. Each fresh grant habitually implied a certain amount of immunity, and in each case the tie established was between the vassal and the lord from whom he immediately held. The disastrous consequences of these conditions in still further undermining

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the central power will be apparent. It is noteworthy that, made wise by experience, William the Conqueror took steps to prevent these evils in England by exacting an oath of fealty to himself from all holders of land, whether they held directly from him or from some intermediate lord.

The essence of feudal tenure was the relationship between lord and vassal. The tenant held his land on terms of personal service and fidelity. He did homage to his lord for his estate, and by the act of homage, as the word etymologically implies (for it is derived from the Latin *homo*), he became his lord's man. The full significance of the connexion was brought out in the solemnity of the formality with which it was initiated. The future vassal knelt, bare-headed and with sword ungirt, and, placing his hands in those of his lord, vowed thenceforth to be his man, and to serve him faithfully even with his life. Then followed the ceremony of investiture, the lord symbolizing the grant of beneficiary rights to the land for which homage had thus been done by giving his vassal a sword, flag, ring, clod of earth, or twig of a tree. The vassal's chief duty was military service; and feudalism developed in large measure because the granting of fiefs on the terms in question was the only way in which the king, and after him the great vassals, and after them again the smaller vassals, could secure the armed assistance which they needed in an age of perpetual warfare. This military service, which was generally limited to forty days in the year, did not, however, exhaust the vassal's engagements. His pledge included monetary aids as well, on three occasions in particular: when his lord was taken prisoner and had to be ransomed, when his lord's eldest son was made a knight, and when his lord's eldest daughter was married. Moreover, he had to purchase his lord's consent to the marriage of his own daughters and to forfeit considerable sums of money in the event of any one of them marrying without such consent; and when he died 'relief' was exacted from his heir before he was admitted to his inheritance. On his side the lord undertook in return to defend his vassal against his enemies, help him with counsel, secure

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justice for him, and after his death protect his widow and children.

The general character of the relationship which constituted the essence of feudal tenure is now clear. In a sense it was entirely personal; yet it should be observed that the obligations of the fief really appertained to the fief itself, and therefore on alienation, whether by grant or inheritance, passed as a matter of course to the person who came into possession of the land.

Though it is a mistake to speak of feudalism as a system, it still bound up the whole of France in a network of extraordinary consistency. The complications to which it gave rise must, however, be noted. The majority of nobles were at once lords and vassals, holding of a superior lord, and having tenants holding of them in turn. It might even be that a lord became in respect of a certain fief the vassal of a man who in respect of another fief was already his own vassal. In other ways anomalies were very apparent. The Duke of Normandy, for example, though King of England, and as such much more powerful than the King of France, was still vassal of the King of France, and owed feudal service to him; while the King of France himself, as holder of a particular fief which belonged to it, was vassal of the Abbey of Saint-Denis. Moreover, a man might hold lands of different lords who were at enmity, and thereupon find himself committed to divided allegiance. An illustration on a large scale of this kind of confusion is furnished by the case of the Count of Flanders, who held his western estates of the King of France, and the rest of the Emperor of Germany.

The reference just made to the Abbey of Saint-Denis will serve to remind us that the Church too had its place in this feudal network. Church lands, no less than lands in lay hands, carried with them all the rights and prerogatives of lordship, and were at the same time charged with all the obligations involved in the feudal relationship. The problem thus arose as to how these obligations were to be fulfilled, since even in that warlike age (though the higher ecclesiastics were

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often to be found actively engaged on the battlefield) the Church could hardly undertake to provide its quota of fighting men. This problem was solved by the practice of subinfeudation. Monasteries and bishoprics granted their lands to nobles who, becoming their vassals, made themselves responsible for military service on the usual terms of feudal tenure. It should be added that the principle of *immunitas* was most broadly applied to the estates of bishops and religious houses.

The feudal aristocracy was relatively very large, and it contained many grades, from the great dukes, marquises, counts, and viscounts at one end of the scale, through barons and simple knights, down to the mere landless squires in whom the series ended. But high and low, rich and poor, all these were regarded as nobles; they bore arms; they had nothing to do with the vulgar concerns of labour and trade; and as even the humblest of them lived, not by his own toil but on the toil of others, he was ranked as a gentleman. Hence the chasm which separated the feudal aristocracy from the two other classes of contemporary society (the clerks or ecclesiastics being for the moment omitted)—the burgher class in the towns, and the peasants in the country. The burghers, or citizens, together with the artisans beneath them, represented industry and commerce; and though the towns themselves formed an organic element in the feudal plexus, their position and wealth gave them a certain independence. The progress of the towns and the burghers, as we shall see later, was a most important factor in the decline of feudalism from the eleventh century onward. The peasantry, as the tillers of the soil, were, on the other hand, in the closest connexion with the territorial aristocracy, and it was upon them that the conditions of feudalism bore most heavily. They may be divided roughly into two classes—the free *villeins*, or *roturiers*, and the serfs.

The villeins paid for their land in money, in labour, and in kind, and though in theory they received an adequate return in the lord's protection (which was indeed a matter of supreme value in such a time of violence), in practice the lord was able

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to get by far the best of the bargain. Countless ways were open to him in which he could despoil his tenant. He administered justice on his estates, and his right to impose fines at discretion for all sorts of offences was a source of considerable income to him at the tenant's expense. Every kind of privilege had to be purchased by the tenant—the privilege of pasturing flocks, obtaining wood from forests, hunting, fording a stream, fishing in it. A tax was imposed on each head of stock owned by the tenant. The lord was further entitled to demand maintenance for himself and his retinue in time of peace, and for his army in time of war, when they passed through the tenant's lands. The tenant was also obliged to provide him with a certain amount of service in the management of his castle and estates. As the lord had a free hand, and was generally quite unscrupulous, in the exercise of these and other rights, monopolies, extortions, and despotism of a peculiarly exasperating character were the inevitable result. Theoretically, indeed, there was always the privilege of appeal to the king. But the king was difficult of access, and it was obviously unwise to incur the anger of the lord who was near at hand; for which reasons the abstract right possessed but little practical value.

Hard as was the lot of the *roturier*, that of the serf was even harder. He was attached to the soil, and could neither leave it of his own accord nor be driven from it by his master, though there were recognized ways in which he might acquire his freedom. His master's power over him was in effect unlimited, for it was expressly stated that in this matter the master was responsible to God alone. He was forced to give to his master so many days' labour in each week upon the seigniorial demesne, and so heavy were the demands thus made that only the very narrowest margin was left for the cultivation of his own holding. While the master thus flourished upon his servile labour, he himself was generally able to wring only a miserable living from the soil to which he was bound. His master had a first right on the produce of his land, and could seize what he chose, paying for it when and as little as he saw fit. The custom

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of *banalities* was also a grievous burden : the serf was compelled to grind his corn in his master's mill, to bake his bread in his master's oven, to press his grapes in his master's wine-press, and to pay well for conveniences which he was obliged to use.

Such in broad outline were the outstanding features of feudal society. With the moral side of feudalism it is unnecessary to deal at length. It was at bottom the product of anarchy, and though it proved of immense service as a temporary measure against anarchy, it bore the evil marks of its origin. It thrived upon war, and helped to keep the war spirit alive. Small and great, the nobles, as I have said, despised work and held all peaceful interests in contempt. Their sole occupation was fighting ; their huge, gloomy, powerful castles, which sprang up all over the country, were fortresses rather than homes ; and their leisure was devoted entirely to the mimic battle of joust and tournament, and such sports as hunting and hawking.

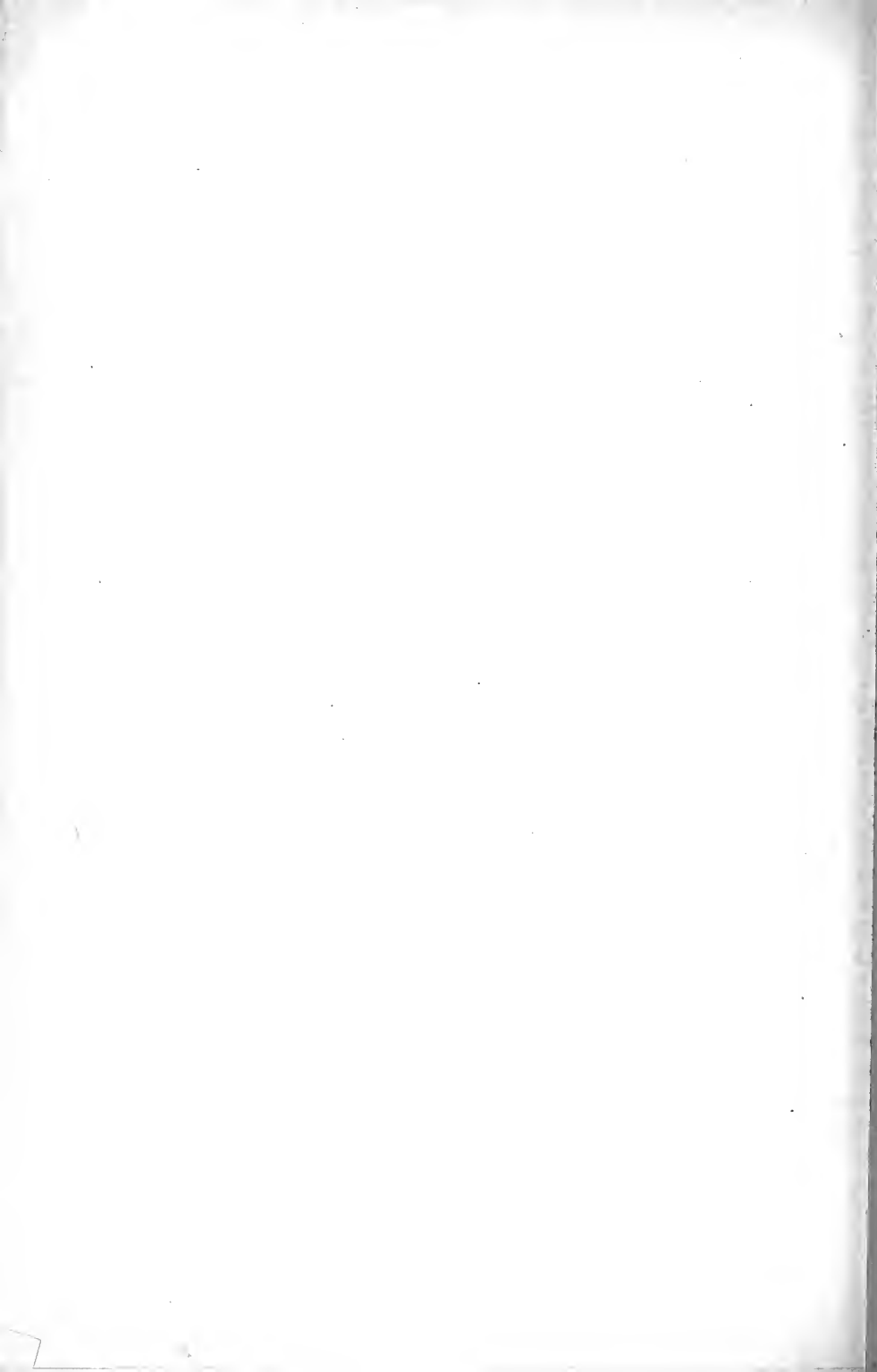
CHIVALRY

Closely connected with feudalism, and in large measure an outgrowth from it, was the institution of chivalry, of which France was the cradle. This reached its maturity about the eleventh century, by which time the order of knighthood was so well established that all the sons of the nobility, even of those too poor to hold fiefs, passed into it as a matter of course, save those who were destined to swell the ranks of the other aristocracy—that of the Church. It had then also definitely assumed its specifically religious character. The influence of the Church had grafted the ideals of Christianity, as Christianity was then understood, upon the military forms and principles of feudalism.

Discipline for knighthood was long and arduous. At the age of seven the boy was taken from the care of women and placed in the household of some wealthy noble, whom he served as *damoiseau*, or page, and by whom he was trained in sport and manly exercise, while the ladies of the family attended to his education in religion and etiquette. At



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fourteen or fifteen he became an *écuyer*, or squire, and as body-servant now accompanied his lord to battle, carrying his arms, caring for his horse, and on occasion even taking part in the fight. At twenty-one he was ready for the coveted honour of knighthood. Into this he was initiated by a solemn and impressive religious ceremony. First came the symbolic bath; then fast, vigil, and confession; then a sermon on the duties which he was about to undertake. He was then led to the altar by two knights who were to be his sponsors; his sword was blessed by the priest; and the lord by whom the dignity of knighthood was to be conferred struck him on the shoulder with his sword, as he knelt humbly before him, saying: "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (or alternatively, "of God, of St Michael, and of St George") "I dub thee knight." The neophyte then took the vow of chivalry, swearing to be loyal and brave, to maintain the right, to succour the distressed, and to defend God, the Church, and the ladies.

Of the influences of chivalry for good and for evil it is difficult to speak in brief, in part because there is so much to be said on the one and the other side, and in part because the facts of the subject have been so much confused by the glosings of romance. That in practice the chivalrous ideal was rarely realized—that, as we shall soon have occasion to learn as we continue our story, the pure and disinterested impulses upon which the knight was supposed to act were habitually blended with, and often wholly submerged by, personal ambitions, rude desires, and the sordid passion for gain—that, as one writer has put it, "deeds that would disgrace a thief, and acts of cruelty that would have disgusted a Hellenic tyrant or a Roman emperor, were common things with knights of the highest lineage"—all this is only what on general principles we should expect. It is more to the point, therefore, to insist that even at their best the ethics of chivalry were those of the age, and the virtues which it inculcated and fostered the natural results of militarism touched by religion. Hence its codes of morality and etiquette, while containing much that we are bound to regard as intrinsically and permanently

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admirable, were narrow, incomplete, and conspicuously one-sided. The worst feature of chivalry was its exclusiveness. Springing from militarism, it was inevitably aristocratic. Its finest ideals had little play beyond the hard-drawn boundaries of the knightly caste. Duty toward inferiors and dependents was not included in its scheme; no dim conception of the brotherhood of man ever entered into its range of thought; it did nothing to restrain, even if it did not positively encourage, injustice and brutality toward the lower orders. The courtesy practised by the knights among themselves had no counterpart in their dealings with the peasantry, whose homes were burned and whose fields were destroyed without compunction. Even chivalry's boasted devotion to womanhood in the abstract had for its concrete object only the woman of noble birth and gentle breeding. Thus there is justification for Dr Arnold's indignant outburst: "If I were called upon to name what spirit of evil predominantly deserved the name of Antichrist, I should name the Spirit of Chivalry."

Yet obviously it would be inexcusable in an historian to leave unrecognized the other side of the picture. We have only to place the institution of chivalry back in the setting of its age to perceive that along with its many imperfections there was much good in it too. On the whole it exercised a profoundly refining influence upon those portions of society which were directly affected by it. It helped greatly to raise the status of women, and though the fantastic sex-worship—"the superstition all awry"—which it bred was itself pregnant of countless evils, this is an important fact to be set down to its credit. The ideal of character which it helped to create was also in many essential respects markedly superior to anything which had previously been accepted as a general standard of manhood. Attention must furthermore be directed to another aspect of its usefulness which is commonly overlooked. It mediated between the Church and the world. The logical tendency of ecclesiastical ethics was toward asceticism and the development of the monkish type. Chivalry did much to adapt Christian idealism to the practical demands of the secular life.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST CRUSADE

FRENCH historians have called attention to the fact that France was the cradle and the centre of the whole Crusading movement, and that a paramount part was played in it throughout by French leaders and French arms. None the less the Crusades properly belong to the general history of Europe rather than to the special history of France, and we must therefore deal only with such aspects of them here as have an immediate connexion with the matter of our own narrative.

The series of religious wars, great and small, which intermittently for more than a hundred and fifty years Europe waged in the East must on a broad view be considered as an important new phase of the struggle which had already been going on for four centuries between Christianity and Islam, though the scene of activity was now changed. Their primary cause has, however, to be sought in the curious religious sentiments of the Middle Ages. The superstitious veneration with which men had come to regard every sacred spot early led to those devotional expeditions which we know as pilgrimages, and which filled so large a place in the life of medieval society. For obvious reasons a pilgrimage to the Holy Land was deemed in the highest possible degree meritorious, and strange notions grew up about its spiritual value. Prayers uttered amid the scenes made blessed by Christ's ministry and death, for instance, were held to possess a peculiar efficacy; the waters of Jordan had miraculous properties; and even the shirt worn by the pilgrim on entering Jerusalem, if afterward used as a winding-sheet, would ensure his instant admission to paradise. Under the influence of such crude ideas pilgrimages to Palestine had

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begun almost as soon as Christianity had established itself in the West, and generation by generation they were undertaken by ever increasing numbers of men and women, who thus sought to expiate their sins and gain the special blessing of heaven. The fresh religious enthusiasm which followed the Cluniac Revival naturally gave an additional impulse to the pilgrimage spirit, and immense companies of persons—on one occasion 7000 are mentioned—often set out together for the Holy Land. Thus far the sacred spots had been in friendly hands; for the Saracen caliphs, though fierce, were generous; they respected the religion of the Christians even to the extent of allowing them to build a hospital and a church at Jerusalem; they even, for commercial reasons, encouraged the pilgrims. But a great change took place before the eleventh century was over. The Seljuk Turks from the Caucasus captured Jerusalem in 1076, and overran Asia Minor. Newly converted to Mohammedanism and still wholly ignorant of the real teachings of their religion, these barbarians were none the less filled with proselytizing zeal, which they exhibited by the desecration of all the spots sacred to Christian feeling and the ill-treatment of the Christians themselves. Europe was soon shocked by the reports of returning travellers concerning these things. A strong martial spirit pervaded the Church at the time. The cry of Christian sufferers for protection and vengeance thus fell upon ready ears. The idea of a great military enterprise to rescue Christ's sepulchre from the infidel began to displace that of the peaceful journey undertaken for the soul's salvation. The pilgrim's staff became the Crusader's sword.

The general inspiration of the Crusades was, therefore, provided by religion, as religion was then understood. The epidemic enthusiasm out of which they arose and by which they were fed cannot, however, be explained by reference to such large and disinterested motives only. The temper of the time and the state of society must also be taken into account. A spirit of unrest was abroad in Europe, especially among the Normans, in whom the old Viking blood was still

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strong ; a craving for excitement and adventure marked all classes ; the love of fighting for its own sake was almost universal. Such being the mood of the age, men would have given an eager welcome to the proposal for a crusade had it been urged upon them merely on secular grounds. The fact that such an enterprise turned the satisfaction of their lust for violence and bloodshed into a religious duty and an act meritorious even unto salvation made its appeal irresistible. Even as religious enterprises, therefore, the Crusades, while to a certain extent legitimate in purpose and generous in principle, are still to be interpreted as in large measure the products of the turbulent passions, the gross superstitions, and the debasing moral theories of the Middle Ages. It must further be remembered, however, that thousands of those who took the vow did so without the slightest show of religion. This is admitted even by the old chroniclers, like William of Tyre. The Crusaders were, indeed, a motley crowd. Restless spirits joined the army of the Cross out of mere desire for change ; traders in the expectation of profit ; married men because they were tired of the responsibilities of wife and children ; debtors to evade their debts ; criminals to avoid punishment for their crimes ; serfs to escape from oppression which had become intolerable ; while most of the great nobles who started with large contingents under their leadership were prompted by pure ambition and the hope of conquest and personal aggrandizement.

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From these general considerations we must now pass to the history of the First Crusade, which alone is our immediate concern.

The Byzantine rulers naturally took alarm when the Turks in their career of conquest established themselves at Nicaea, only seventy miles from Constantinople, and an urgent appeal was sent to Gregory VII, who then sat in St Peter's Chair. That astute and ambitious man instantly saw the opportunity of carrying a step farther toward realization his grandiose

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scheme for the universal empire of the Church, and at once began to devise means for an organized invasion of the East. For various reasons, however, he was obliged to abandon his plan, and it was reserved for Urban II, some ten years later, to carry it out. To him the Emperor Alexius Comnenus sent letters describing the immediate danger of Eastern Christendom and imploring his help. Urban called a council at Piacenza in 1095 to consider the situation, and as no definite results appear to have been reached, in the autumn of the same year he crossed the Alps and convened another council at Clermont-Ferrand, in the territory of the Count of Auvergne. It is here that the close connexion of France with the First Crusade becomes apparent; as Voltaire put it, Italy had wept, but France armed. On November 24, at the end of eight days of deliberation, the Pope delivered an address in the open air to the vast crowds which gathered about the high scaffold from which he spoke. Three versions of this address exist,¹ and though they differ much in details they agree in substance. The orator described in vivid terms the terrible condition of the Holy City, the atrocities perpetrated by the infidels, the trials of the pilgrims and the sufferings of their Christian brethren in the East; dwelt upon the dangers which menaced Christendom, and made an impassioned appeal to all those who were able to bear arms to give up their private fighting and join in a concerted effort in the name and for the glory of Christ. His words were spark to gunpowder. There was in all that throng, a contemporary poem tells us, not a dry eye or a heart unstirred. That address was the real origin of the First Crusade. As the Pope finished, a great cry of "Dieu le volt!" ("God wills it!") went up from the frenzied multitude. Thousands pressed forward to take the vow of service and afterward to have its sign—the cross of red cloth—fastened across their breasts. Urban solemnly reaffirmed the Truce of God, put the families and property of the Crusaders under the protection of the Church, proclaimed salvation for

¹ In the *Historia* of William of Tyre, in the *Gesta* of William of Malmesbury, and in a manuscript in the Vatican.

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all who died upon the coming expedition, and commanded the clergy to preach the Crusade throughout France.

An immense wave of enthusiasm thereupon swept over France and Southern Italy. The time had now come of which it had been written that men should take up the cross of Christ and be His disciples. In such a mood people looked for supernatural signs of God's approval, and supernatural signs were not, of course, wanting. Fire fell in showers of stars from heaven; earthquakes suddenly ceased; the earth gave promise of marvellous fertility.

Among those who threw themselves with special ardour into the work of propagandism was the famous Peter of Amiens, better known as Peter the Hermit. The popular story runs that Peter had himself been an eye-witness of the sufferings of the faithful in the Holy Land, that, moved to indignation, he had hurried to Rome and had laid their hard case before the Pope, and that it was with the Pope's permission and approval that he set forth to fire the masses of the people with zeal for the sacred cause. All this is as legendary as the more obviously fabulous story that his inspiration had come directly from Christ, who had appeared to him in a vision in the church at Jerusalem. It was Urban himself and not Peter who was the originator of the First Crusade. Peter's alleged pilgrimage to the Holy Land is apparently an invention of the chroniclers. There is no evidence that he ever spoke with the Pope, and it is certain that his preaching began, not before, but after and as a result of the Council of Clermont. Yet even when accretions of myth have been brushed aside Peter's part in the early drama of the First Crusade remains conspicuous. During the winter of 1095-96 he traversed Auvergne, Berry, the royal domains, and Lorraine, and everywhere he went he evoked the wildest enthusiasm. Small, thin, dark-skinned, with long, tangled hair and beard, his costume a hermit's cloak of coarse stuff girt with a cord, his hands and feet bare, he presented a strange figure as he rode on his mule from town to town and from village to village, haranguing the populace from pulpit or roadside or market-place, and by

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his inflammatory eloquence stirring their passions to fever-heat. "Something divine," says a chronicler, "was felt in his slightest movements, and people tore the hairs from his mule to preserve them as relics."¹ When he reached Cologne he had a following of 15,000 persons. At Cologne his numbers doubled. This enormous army, if army it can be called, was recruited almost entirely from the lowest classes, and was largely composed of peasants, beggars, and adventurers, while women and children further swelled its ranks. Unprovisioned, poorly equipped, insufficiently armed, wholly undisciplined, and hopelessly ignorant of the dangers and hardships of the journey before them, these straggling multitudes, led by Peter himself, a certain knight from Burgundy named Gautier sans Avoir, or Walter the Penniless, and other men of less note, made their way through Germany and Hungary, and thence along the Danube toward Constantinople, robbing, plundering, persecuting the Jews, and in general by their disorderly conduct arousing such animosity that many were slain by the inhabitants of the districts through which they passed. Those who reached Constantinople were received by the Emperor, who none the less deemed it wise to send them forward as quickly as possible into Asia Minor. There the Turks soon annihilated the poor remnant which had managed to survive hunger, thirst, exposure, and the ravages of disease. Thus ends the grotesquely tragic story of the Peasants' Crusade. Peter himself, though guilty of cowardice in action, was prominent among the Crusaders till the fall of Jerusalem, some time after which he returned to Europe, dying in 1115 in a monastery of his own foundation at Huy, in the Low Countries.

While Peter's rabble was marching through crime and misery to destruction, preparations for the real Crusade were advancing slowly. Urban, himself a Frenchman, appointed Adhémar, Bishop of Puy, his legate and representative; while among the French nobles who were specially active in raising forces were the King's brother, Hugues, Count of Vermandois,

¹ Guibert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos* (in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades: Historiens occidentaux*, t. iv).

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Robert, Count of Flanders, the hot-headed Robert Courte-Heuse, Duke of Normandy, who mortgaged all his lands to provide the sinews of war, the vain and untrustworthy Étienne, Count of Blois, and the crafty but daring Raymond of Toulouse, the leader of the south.

When at length the immense army, or collection of armies, was ready to start, necessity obliged the different chiefs to take different routes to Constantinople, where a general meeting was planned. Six divisions accordingly set out at considerable intervals of time, one following the peasants through Germany and Hungary, a second taking a more southerly course through Dalmatia, while the remainder went by way of the Alps, and, crossing the Adriatic, completed the journey by land.¹ By the end of 1096 the entire force was gathered beneath the walls of the Eastern capital. Realizing that his own interests were seriously imperilled by the character and proportions which the expedition had assumed, the Emperor Alexius determined to exact from its leaders an oath that they would deliver all conquered territory to him, receiving it back, if they wished, as a fief. This gave rise to trouble, but finally, by means of flattery and bribes, the Emperor secured the homage of nearly all the chiefs. It was not till May 1097 that the real business of the Crusade began with the siege of Nicaea, which on June 19, as a result of secret negotiations, surrendered, not to the Crusaders, but to the Emperor. As the Crusaders had counted on the rich booty of the conquered city, they were furious at being thus cheated of what they regarded as their rights, and though they were compelled to accept the Emperor's terms of indemnity the incident deepened their antipathy toward him. In the long and painful march through Asia Minor their ranks were greatly thinned by fatigue and famine, and the quarrels of their leaders still further menaced their cause. But in October 1097 they reached Antioch, which they at once invested.

¹ It is impossible to speak with certainty regarding the numbers of the army. The chroniclers themselves generally employ vague terms only, and when definite figures are given they are obviously little more than guesswork. Modern experts incline to believe that more than 600,000 men perished in the expedition. See Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, t. ii, 2e Partie, p. 233.

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The tedium and disappointments of a siege conducted amid the heavy rains of winter, which turned their camp into a swamp, famine, and pestilential diseases so demoralized the Christian army that many deserted; among them the poor Hermit, whose fanatical piety was no proof against the pangs of hunger, and who, captured in full flight, had to undergo the humiliation of a public reprimand. At the end of seven months, however, treachery delivered the city into the Crusaders' hands. At daybreak on June 3, 1098, the victors poured through the open gates, with wild cries of "Dieu le volt!" and slaughtered 10,000 of the inhabitants without respect of age or sex—thus giving to the infidels a fine example of Christian chivalry. Then, their thirst for blood for the moment slaked, they ceased their carnage to indulge in a fierce orgy of plunder and debauchery.

Scarcely, however, had they taken possession of the city when they found themselves in turn besieged by a huge Moslem army which had marched to its relief. Before long they were reduced to the last extremity of starvation, and those who only recently had been glorifying God for their successes now cursed Him for forsaking them. Again desertions were numerous; many let themselves over the walls with ropes and made good their escape to the coast—among them one of their leaders, Stephen of Blois; some even went over to the enemy. A pious fraud, the miraculous finding of the lance with which the side of Jesus had been pierced (though the trickery was so palpable that many of the Crusaders openly scoffed at it), served its purpose by putting fresh heart into them, and in the great battle of Antioch (June 28, 1098)—the piece of old iron representing the Holy Lance carried with them as their standard—they scattered the enemy with terrific and of course indiscriminate slaughter. The way to Jerusalem was now open. But instead of pushing forward to the accomplishment of the final purpose of all their exertions they wasted nearly twelve months in Northern Syria, while their leaders quarrelled among themselves and engaged in the congenial occupation of conquering fiefs on their own account. It was

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on a bright June morning in 1099 that the remnant of the mighty host which had left Constantinople some two years before—now perhaps not more than 25,000 fighting men in all—at length came in sight of the sacred city. A frenzy of devotion at once seized upon them. A great shout went up from their ranks—"Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" Tears of joy ran down their cheeks; they fell on their knees to kiss the ground on which they stood; and then, putting off their armour, they advanced, with heads and feet bare, toward the spot hallowed by the Saviour's sufferings and death. Five weeks later—on July 15, 1099—the great object of the expedition was attained, and the Holy Sepulchre delivered from the enemies of Christ. What followed upon the capture of Jerusalem was only a repetition, on a larger scale and with details of even greater atrocity, of what had occurred at Antioch. The religious fury of the victors knew no bounds, and their greed was equal to their brutality. The blood of the infidel ran in streams. The Jews were burned alive in their synagogue. Christian knights rode through the streets, their horses splashed with gore, hacking and hewing the bodies alike of the living and the dead. Meanwhile the praises of God resounded through the city along with the hoarse shouts of soldiers drunk with violence and the groans of the mangled and the dying; a reign of universal plunder prevailed; and in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre a kneeling host, worn out with massacre and looting, lifting up their bloody hands, offered their thanks to God in a mood of exaltation compounded of blood-madness and mystical religious ecstasy. The next day the butchery was renewed, now in the form of a deliberate and systematic slaughter, and though it is true that a few young men and women were spared, it was not from pity, but with an eye to the money they would fetch in the slave-market.

The conquest of Jerusalem was completed by the sensational victory of a small band of Christians over an immense Mohamadan host on the plains of Ascalon.

Though further expeditions to the Holy Land were inspired by news of the success which had been achieved, the real work

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of the First Crusade was now over. A Latin kingdom was founded at Jerusalem, on the model of a feudal state, under the headship of Godfrey of Bouillon, who, refusing the name of king, assumed the title of Baron and Defender of the Holy Sepulchre. Two other principalities—one at Antioch, the other at Edessa—had already been established under Christian chiefs. A European colony was thus formed in Palestine, which during the next fifty years continued to increase in size, wealth, and power. But with its further history we are not for the moment concerned.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CRUSADES

I have dealt with this first of the Crusades in some detail, both because it was by far the most important of all, and because it may be taken in a broad way as typical. The other organized expeditions to the East will be treated as episodes in our story only. This will be the most convenient place, therefore, to consider, even at some risk of anticipation, the effect of the Crusades in general.

It has been said, and there seems little exaggeration in the statement, that the Crusades may be regarded as the first of three great movements of advance in European history, the other two being the Reformation and the French Revolution. Yet their influence, profound and far-reaching though it was, has to be sought, not along the line of their avowed purposes, but in the vast and various changes which incidentally they helped to bring about. Save that they certainly did secure Europe against Mohammedan invasion, they failed in their immediate object. The results which they actually achieved were for the most part such as were very remote indeed from the imaginations and desires of their promoters.

Their damaging effect upon feudalism has first to be noted, for this was especially conspicuous in France. Many of the nobles who went to the Holy Land never returned, and their estates escheated to the Crown, while many more were impoverished by the drain upon their resources which so large an enterprise entailed. By thus reducing in number

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and weakening in influence the great territorial chiefs, the Crusades in the long run materially helped the king in the establishment of the royal central authority. Meanwhile, if the king gained on the one side at the expense of the feudal aristocracy, the burghers gained equally on the other. Ready money was mainly in their hands ; it was to them that knights and nobles in need of loans had to turn ; and as the merchants and traders thus enriched themselves land fell in value. The towns in particular were greatly benefited by these changing conditions ; in return for contributions and accommodations they often received charters granting special privileges from their overlords, against whose tyrannous exactions they were now able to make increasingly successful stands. Industry developed, the number of artisans increased rapidly owing to the urgent demand for arms and equipment, and the demand for labour tended toward the liberation of the lowest class from the condition of serfdom. All this meant the rise of the power of money and the decline of the power of land. Nor was this the only way in which commerce was encouraged by the Crusades. It received an immense stimulus from the widening of the area of operation, the extension of trading relationships, the growth of fresh tastes and the introduction of fresh commodities, when, as a natural result of these martial enterprises, the East was opened up to Western trade. From the consequent increase of financial prosperity the commercial classes were the principal gainers.

As we shall see later, the emergence of these commercial classes was to prove a powerful support to the royal authority in its further efforts to subdue the lawlessness of feudalism. At the same time it must not be forgotten that another danger to such authority was now to become increasingly apparent. Papacy and Church grew enormously in prestige and influence through the Crusades. The prominent part which the Pope played in an enterprise which was not national, but European, confirmed his position as supreme head of Christendom. The establishment of the religious-military orders of the Hospitallers and the Templars enhanced his power. Prelates and monastic

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houses meanwhile amassed wealth by the purchase at almost nominal prices of the lands of those who were eager to get money for the wars, and by the falling in of mortgages on estates encumbered for the same purpose, while the stimulation of pious ardour characteristic of the time led to an immense increase in the number and value of gifts and testamentary bequests. Such rapid growth of ecclesiastical power was to prove a source of grave political difficulty in times to come.

More important, however, than these practical results, if less easy to analyse and appraise, were the effects produced by the Crusades in the intellectual sphere. The whole horizon of the medieval man was expanded, his imagination quickened and dilated, by contact with new peoples, new things, and new ideas, whether that contact was direct, as with the Crusader himself, or indirect, as with those who stayed at home and learned merely by report of what was to be seen and experienced beyond the seas. A current of feeling was set going which in the end was certain to do much to undermine the dogmatic edifice of medieval theology. Inspired by religious fanaticism, ignorant, superstitious, and bigoted, the Christian warrior set out for the Holy Land filled with the bitterest hatred toward foes whom he had been taught to regard as scarcely human, and it often happened that through personal intercourse alike with Jew and Saracen he learned his first lessons in tolerance and charity. Eastern civilization and culture, in many ways superior to their own, had also much to teach the men of the West, and vast stores of fresh materials were brought home by them which the thought of Europe proceeded by little and little to assimilate. So potent were the influences which they thus exerted that the Crusades may legitimately be classed among the remote causes of the Renaissance. But of their further significance from this point of view I shall have something more to say when I come to deal later with the literature and art of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. Meanwhile we may lay stress on the self-destructive character of the Crusades. The spirit which they helped to create was in the long run fatal to their continuance.

CHAPTER IV

LOUIS VI ('LE GROS')

1108-1137

WE have seen that in the reign of Philippe I the anarchy of feudalism was at its height. The reign of his son and successor, Louis VI, or 'the Fat' ('le Gros'), marks the first stage in the long history of the growth and consolidation of the central power.

Though, like his father, a huge feeder, and at forty-six so unwieldy that he was no longer able to mount a horse, Louis was an energetic as well as a capable man. Good-natured and affable, he had the happy faculty of making friends, and he was upright and open-minded as well as shrewd and courageous. The chief fault with which his contemporaries charged him was avarice, but this may in part at least be explained by his pressing need of money in the carrying out of his plans. He had a clear conception of the responsibilities and functions of his position. He held it to be "the duty of kings to repress with a strong hand, and by the original right of their office, the audacity of the great, who rend the State with their ceaseless wars, vex the poor, and destroy the churches." These words of his confidential adviser, Suger, the Abbot of Saint-Denis,¹ express the principles which governed his policy, and by steady adherence to which he began the transformation of French monarchy from a form of territorial possession into a real national power.

As a result of his determination to prove, as Suger puts it, "that the efficacy of the royal virtue is not confined within the limits of certain places,"² Louis was engaged in almost incessant petty warfare with his vassals. His most substantial

¹ In his *Vie de Louis le Gros*.

² *Ibid.*

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successes were achieved over his immediate neighbours, the smaller barons, whose estates surrounded his own, and who yet had long pillaged and plundered all about them, in defiance even of his protection and safe-conduct. With great determination and patience he persisted in his efforts to stamp out their pestilential power, burning or razing their castles, liberating towns and abbeys from their tyranny, righting the wrongs of those who had suffered at their hands, and establishing security for the merchant, the pilgrim, and the labourer on highway and in field. This useful police work he carried on for many years, and by the gradual destruction of such dangerous foes of public peace as, for example, the haughty lord of Montlhéry he laid the foundations of law and order where hitherto chaos had prevailed. The cases of Hugues du Puiset and Thomas de Marle may be cited as illustrations of the difficulties with which he had to contend. On the fertile plains of Beauce, Hugues, as Suger puts it, "devoured all the Church lands in the district," made his mere name a terror for miles around his fortress, and openly jeered at secular force and ecclesiastical denunciation. Three times his castle was besieged, taken, and burned by troops sent by the King in response to the appeals of his victims, and three times he rebuilt it and began his depredations afresh; at length ending a life of sustained atrocity on a pious pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Thomas de Marle was an even more appalling product of triumphant feudalism. His cruelty was such as to amaze even his contemporaries, who were scarcely sensitive about such matters; he took a fiendish delight in devising new tortures for the unfortunate creatures who fell into his clutches; "No one can reckon," a chronicler tells us, "the number of those who died of hunger, maltreatment, and filth in his dungeons." For fifteen years, despite repeated attempts to overcome him, this desperate villain had his way; but at last he was mortally wounded in a skirmish and carried a prisoner to Laon, where he died. It is a certain satisfaction to know that he at least fell at the hands of human justice, and was not allowed, like so many diabolical scoundrels of

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the time, to make his peace with God by a journey to Jerusalem for his soul's salvation.

Though much of his energy was thus taken up with matters near at home, Louis also attempted to bring to submission some of his greater vassals, who meanwhile continued to rule independently in other parts of France. Much to the surprise of the local powers, he interfered with some effect in the affairs of Auvergne and Aquitaine, making the royal authority for the first time a real thing in the south. But otherwise this larger task proved beyond his capacity. His conflict with both Normandy and Flanders ended, indeed, in his discomfiture.

The special difficulties with which he had to cope in his relations with Normandy had originated some years before his reign began. Henry Beauclerk, the Conqueror's youngest son, had succeeded William Rufus on the English throne in 1100, and six years later he had defeated his elder brother, Robert, in a bloody engagement at Tinchebrai. Robert was thereupon confined in Cardiff Castle, where as a prisoner he spent the remaining twenty-seven years of his life. Thus the duchy of Normandy was again united to the Crown of England, and Henry "governed these two states with wisdom and enjoyed constant prosperity."¹ Louis, of course, perceived the danger to himself of this combination of power in the hands of a man who, vicious and cruel though he was, had plenty of strength and ability to back up his ambition. He therefore resolved to pursue his father Philippe's policy of weakening his enemy by creating or fomenting family dissensions. His immediate purpose being to separate Normandy from England, he espoused the cause of William Clito, Robert's son, who now came forward to claim the duchy in his own behalf. After a struggle of some years Louis was defeated, first at Brenneville and then at Breteuil. On this he appealed to the council which had just then met at Reims under the presidency of Calixtus II, and was led to hope that the Pope would intervene in his interests. In this, however, he was

¹ Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

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disappointed; nothing practical came of his representations, and through the Pope's intermediation a peace was patched up. The terrible disaster of the *White Ship*, in the wreck of which in 1120 Henry's only son was drowned, seemed for the moment like the interference of fate in Louis' behalf at a juncture in which neither arms nor diplomacy had availed. But the advantage soon passed. Henry induced the Witan to accept his daughter Matilda as his successor, and in 1128 married her to Geoffrey, son of Foulques V, now Count of Anjou, and known as Plantagenet from the sprig of broom (*planta genista*) which he wore in his bonnet. This marriage meant checkmate to Louis' policy. Hitherto he had received the support of Anjou in his conflict with Normandy. Now Normandy and Anjou were allied against him; while notwithstanding the fact that on Henry's sudden death Stephen of Blois seized the English crown and Matilda's claims were set aside, the Anglo-Norman power was immensely extended on French soil. The marriage of Louis' son and heir to Aliénor, the daughter of the Count of Aquitaine, proved no offset to this, since, as we shall see presently, the new possession was soon lost to the Crown.

In the case of Flanders Louis received an equally bad rebuff. A party rising, the murder of the Count, Charles le Bon, and the disturbances which followed, gave him as suzerain an excuse to intervene. But this attempt to force William Clito on the Flemings, though successful for the moment, failed; war broke out between William and the rival claimant to the Countship, William was killed in battle, and the independence of Flanders remained unshaken.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE COMMUNAL MOVEMENT

We are now in a position to realize to what extent the disruptive forces of feudalism were checked by Louis le Gros' policy. That policy was meanwhile reinforced from another side by the anti-feudal revolt of the towns. What is known as the communal movement first becomes prominent during his reign.

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Signs of unrest in many parts of the country had already shown that the miseries arising from chronic war, famines, pestilences, and the despotic exactions of their lords were little by little goading the masses of the people to despair. In a Latin poem addressed to Robert le Piéux, Bishop Adalbero had divided society into two classes—those above, who prayed like the priests or fought like the nobles (praying and fighting being the only gentlemanly occupations), and those below, the serfs and labourers, who worked but did not count in the State. Yet even this self-satisfied theorist perceived with alarm that disturbances were threatening to interfere with this divinely arranged system of things, and in the true spirit of obstinate conservatism he deplored in advance the change of manners and the collapse of the social order.¹ He was right at least in believing that the system he loved could not continue unchallenged. An attempt at a general rising by the villeins of Normandy in 997 may be regarded as the first blow in a great battle which was destined to last many hundreds of years. The plot, however, miscarried; its leaders were captured by the Count of Évreux, uncle of the reigning Duke of Normandy; some were put to death with atrocious tortures; others, with eyes gouged out and hands and feet cut off, were sent home as an object-lesson and a warning to their fellows. A little later, in 1024, a revolt of Breton peasants was also put down with barbarous cruelty. It was much too early as yet for any effective agrarian rising. Conditions were far more favourable in the towns, and it was there that the popular demand for justice and liberty first met with a measure of success.

It would be impossible within the limits of this narrative to trace the progress of the French towns from the downfall of the Western Empire through the confusion which followed the barbarian invasions. It must suffice to say in general terms that in the absence of any strong central control they suffered as much as the country districts from the growing evils of feudalism, and were so completely at the mercy of

¹ *Poème sur le Règne de Robert.*

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their lord that they could claim no rights of self-government, and had no power of appeal against him when, as often happened, his exactions became unreasonable and excessive. The increasing prosperity of the towns which came with the development of industry and commerce naturally made them more tempting as prey to their rapacious masters, who were in chronic need of money, and who had come to consider it as their special privilege to batten on the toil of others (the people who did not count), while they devoted themselves exclusively to the noble business of fighting and plundering. But it was out of this increasing prosperity that opposition to them ultimately sprang. As the burgher class grew in wealth they came more and more to realize their importance and power, and resistance to their lord, at first ill-defined, soon took the practical form of specific claims for rights and privileges in respect of civic self-government, personal liberty, the guaranteeing of safety for the conduct of business, and fixed arrangements for taxes and impositions. Hence the communal movement, which reached its height during the twelfth century. This movement was not concerted; it was general simply because the same causes were everywhere at work, producing the same results; though it came to a head earlier in the south than in the north because in the south some traditions had survived of the Roman *municipia*, which had tended to keep the civic spirit alive. The charters which formed the basis of the new relations between town and lord were obtained in different ways. Sometimes they were wrung from the lord by force; sometimes they were secured by purchase; very rarely they were conceded of the lord's free will. But in any event, where they were obtained at all they assured, not, indeed, the complete freedom of the town from its suzerain, but at least the regulation of the reciprocal rights and duties, together with a certain amount of autonomy.

That the communes should be bitterly opposed by the feudal nobility in general was of course inevitable. Vested interests are quick to scent danger, and they properly saw in them a menace to their own power. To more impartial observers

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of the conservative sort they seemed equally objectionable ; as to Guibert de Nogent, for example, who denounced the very word *commune* as "new and detestable."¹ Yet in course of time some of the nobility found it to their advantage not only to grant charters, but even to establish new towns, publishing a charter and making known the privileges which would be enjoyed by those who joined the undertaking.

In general the attitude of the Church was also one of opposition. It is true that in the opinion of some historians the Church supported the movement of emancipation, and that those who hold this view are able to adduce instances in point. But the fact seems to be that the clergy made common cause with the people against the nobles only when the suzerainty was in lay hands and they themselves were sufferers from it. When, on the contrary, the suzerainty was itself ecclesiastical, the Church showed itself the fiercest foe of the communal movement, while in all other cases in which their own interests were not involved the clergy attacked the communes as unscriptural and uncanonical. According to their lights, they, no less than the feudal nobles, were perfectly right in so doing, for the spirit of self-assertion and independence was later to prove a powerful enemy of sacerdotalism and its assumptions.

The policy of the King is less easy to describe in brief, because it was dictated rather by considerations of immediate personal advantage than by settled principle, and varied, therefore, at different times and places. On the whole, however, he favoured the communes because they helped him directly or indirectly in his struggles with the nobility. But he must not be regarded as supporting the burghers as burghers against the barons as barons. He did not aim at the destruction of feudalism ; he sought only to correct its abuses and to bring it into submission to himself ; and when he interfered in the quarrels between towns and their lords he did so in part in the interests of law and order, and in part from a sense of the benefits which would accrue to himself. It is also to be remembered that though he emancipated his serfs he did not permit the

¹ *De Vita Sua* (in Guizot, *Collection des Mémoires*, t. x).

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establishment of any communal government within his own domains, preferring to hold the reins of power firmly in his own hands. His successors, however, saw more clearly than he had done how much the royal authority stood to gain by fostering the communal movement. Louis himself conferred eight charters. His son conferred twenty-five.

The communal movement was unfortunately attended here and there by those outbursts of violence which are generally inseparable from a great popular upheaval. The most famous of these occasional riots—that which occurred at Laon—shows, however, that while deeply to be regretted they were not without excuse. Certain concessions were granted to that city by its bishop, Gaudry, who, presently regretting what he had done, induced the King by promises of money to cancel them. News of this treachery got abroad; the episcopal palace was fired by an angry crowd; the Bishop himself was killed by a blow with a hatchet; while in the general tumult the women of the people seized all the noble dames they could find, beat them, and tore their clothes. As for Louis himself, whose part in the drama was neither wise nor heroic, he made good his safety by flight.

We are concerned here only with the beginnings of the communal movement. Its further developments will be noted in later stages of our story.

CHAPTER V

LOUIS VII ('LE JEUNE')

1137-1180

LOUIS VII, who is distinguished among the many Louis of French history as 'the Young,' was a man of very different character from his father, whom he succeeded in 1137, for he was superstitious, credulous, and rather weak. None the less he followed the general lines of his father's policy, protecting the Church, fighting against rebellious vassals, and seeking to bring the forces of anarchy into submission to the royal power. On the whole, too, as we have seen, he favoured the emancipation of the towns. The continued progress of commerce and industry, and the consequent growth of the towns both in number and in population, made the communal movement increasingly important; and Louis clearly perceived this, and acted accordingly; though, like his father, he was guided by personal interest rather than by principle. In particular, he confirmed to the Hanse or Guild of Paris merchants the monopolies which they had gradually assumed. Their armorial device—a ship with the legend *Fluctuat nec mergitur*—afterward became that of the city itself.

Despite his piety, Louis' relations with the Church were disturbed for some years by his quarrel with Pope Innocent II over the appointment of the Archbishop of Bourges. This led not only to the King's excommunication, but indirectly to another result of infinitely greater moment both to him and to his realm. During an invasion of Champagne, which he had undertaken because the Count, Thibaut, had given asylum to the Pope's nominee, he set fire to the church at Vitry, and burned to death some 1300 people who had sought refuge in it. This crime weighed heavily upon his mind, and

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to expiate it he resolved, against the advice of his old tutor and sagacious counsellor Suger, to join the new expedition to the Holy Land for which Europe was now busily preparing.

THE SECOND CRUSADE

This Second Crusade was inspired by the perilous position of the Christians in the East. Under Godfrey of Bouillon and his successors the two Baldwins, the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem had continued to expand. But soon after the death of Baldwin II dissensions arose among the Christian leaders themselves which seriously jeopardized their common interests ; and when in 1144 the capture of Edessa by the Sultan of Aleppo was followed by the steady advance of the Turkish army things began to look very black indeed for the Latin power in Syria and Palestine. Messengers were despatched post-haste to Europe with appeals for immediate help, and the Western Church was thrown into consternation by the thought that everything which had been gained in the First Crusade at the price of so much money and blood was now likely to be lost. Decisive action was necessary to avert such a disaster.

Such was the situation when the Church met in council at Easter 1146 in the little mountain town of Vézelay, and there the cause of Christ in the Holy Land found its spokesman in the celebrated Bernard of Clairvaux. A man of extraordinary personal magnetism and an orator of marvellous power, this Cistercian monk possessed in a supreme degree the special gifts which ensure success in popular leadership, while the fame of his sanctity, his intellectual endowments, and his masterful spirit lent him an equal authority among the statesmen of his age. Upon the multitudes which had gathered at Vézelay his burning words produced an instantaneous effect ; hardly had he finished speaking when, as with a single voice, they cried aloud for a new Crusade. Then under commission from the Pope he set forth to stir the enthusiasm of the masses through France and Germany. He found the task more difficult than his precursor, the Hermit, had done, for the temper of the people was already changing. But his impas-

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sioned eloquence none the less triumphed over all obstacles, and such vast numbers flocked to the standard of the Cross that in some districts fields, castles, and towns were almost deserted. Notwithstanding this success, however, the new enterprise, even in its inception, was far from popular in France. A general tax imposed upon all classes to meet its expenses aroused great discontent, and when in 1147 the King rode out of his capital it was, a chronicler tells us, amid the imprecations of his people.

Louis had a royal colleague in the enterprise in the Emperor Conrad III of Germany, and the strength of their united armies has been variously estimated at from 900,000 to 1,200,000 fighting men. Yet despite such a splendid parade of power this Second Crusade was destined to be a lamentable failure from first to last. When, on the heels of the Germans, who without waiting for their allies had already hurried forward, the French reached Constantinople, such violent hostility instantly broke out between them and the Greeks that for the moment the expedition to the Holy Land threatened to turn into an organized attack upon the Eastern Empire. Alive to his danger, the Emperor Manuel Comnenus cleverly circulated reports of immense booty already captured by the German army. The cupidity of these soldiers of Christ was at once aroused; they forgot their designs upon Constantinople in their feverish anxiety to hasten on and share the spoils. It was not long, however, before they discovered the trick which had been played upon them, for, meeting a remnant of the German army in disorderly retreat, they learned that the main body of that army had been cut to pieces by the Seljuk Turks in the mountains near Laodicea. Warned by their fate, the French took a more southerly route; unwisely, as it proved; for it was a route beset with so many dangers and difficulties that many perished by the way, while those who survived were exhausted and demoralized. At length they reached Adalia, on the southern coast of Asia Minor. There fresh trouble awaited them. The ships placed at their disposal by the Greeks proving insufficient for transport, Louis, his nobles,

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and the flower of the army monopolized them, leaving the rank and file to shift for themselves. Thus basely abandoned by their leaders, the disorganized rabble attempted to reach Syria by following the line of the coast ; but they were practically annihilated by the enemy. When at length the French and the Germans joined forces in Palestine only a few thousands were left of the mighty host which had passed through Constantinople less than a year before.

Even now the promises of the expedition might have been redeemed, in part at least, by strength, decision, and unity. Weakness, stupidity, and disagreements completed its failure. At a council of war held at Akka it was resolved to open the campaign by laying siege to Damascus. This to begin with was a blunder, for the Emir of Damascus was favourably disposed toward the Christians, and would willingly have entered into an alliance with them against their common enemy, Nureddin, now master of Edessa. But Damascus was a rich city, and the chance of booty was allowed to outweigh all other considerations. The investment therefore began ; and such was their assurance of success that the chiefs neglected their military duties to quarrel with one another about the distribution of the spoils. Discords, jealousies, whispers of treachery, charges and counter-charges of bad faith, gradually took all the heart out of the invading army and paralysed their efforts ; and it was almost a relief to them, therefore, when news of the approach of a great Mussulman host compelled their leaders to raise the siege. It was then proposed to make an attack upon Ascalon, but the ever-growing hostility between the French and the Germans rendered any further concerted action impossible. Conrad in disgust left Palestine in September 1148. Louis remained as a pilgrim in Jerusalem till the spring of the next year.

The utter failure of this Crusade caused great dissatisfaction throughout Europe, and its effect upon popular sentiment is shown by the complete collapse of Bernard's efforts to muster a second army to repair the fortunes of the first. His own reputation suffered much from the fiasco. Not content with

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being an apostle, he had also assumed the *rôle* of a prophet, confidently predicting God's blessing upon the expedition and its glorious success. He was now forced to acknowledge his confusion over the actual results, which he could explain only by reference to the sins of the Crusaders themselves, whom he did not hesitate to liken to the Jews of old.

THE RISE OF THE ENGLISH POWER IN FRANCE

Though in the meantime Suger had governed the realm so admirably that he had won for himself the title of Solomon, Louis' long absence from his country was a great mistake, for it meant loss of personal influence and prestige. On his return he was guilty of what, from a purely political point of view, was a far more serious blunder. His marriage, during his father's lifetime, to Aliénor of Aquitaine, or Guyenne, has already been referred to. This promised much for the expansion of the royal power. It was by this time firmly established that women could inherit fiefs and exercise all the feudal rights appertaining to them. This principle, we may note in passing, proved in the long run one cause of the extinction of the great feudal families, for as many men were killed in war fiefs continually passed into the hands of women, who by marriage often merged them with other fiefs. Aliénor was heiress of the duchy of Guyenne, which included, along with other vassal states, the counties of Poitou and Périgord and the duchy of Gascony, and thus she brought to her husband a territory covering about one-half of Southern France. The consequent accession in strength which this ensured to the Crown is obvious. Unfortunately, however, misunderstandings arose between Louis and his wife. She made no secret of the fact that she cordially detested him; he on his part was bitterly annoyed by her light behaviour, and rightly or wrongly believed that during his absence she had been faithless to him. Suger did his best to prevent the trouble from coming to a head; but his death in 1152 removed the only restraining influence, and two months later—in the March of that same year—at the request of both parties, the marriage was annulled by the

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Council of Beaugency. Almost immediately after this Aliénor married again, her second husband being Henry Plantagenet, the son of Geoffrey and Matilda. Now Henry was already Count of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, and Duke of Normandy, and his wife's possessions being added to his own, he became master of all the west of France, from the Norman coast to the Pyrenees. Thus when he ascended the English throne in 1154 as Henry II, the first of the Angevin line, the French territories of the English King formed a compact state as great in extent and power as that directly ruled by his nominal suzerain, the King of France, himself. It was fortunate for Louis that Henry, through his quarrel with the Church, his troubles with Becket, and the intrigues of his rebellious sons, was too much entangled in domestic affairs to pay any close attention to things in France. Indeed, the murder of Becket was distinctly to Louis' advantage, for it gave him the opportunity to appeal to the Pope against Henry, with results familiar to every reader of English history. But the anomaly of the situation thus created was pregnant of danger for time to come. Here we have the real beginning of that long and bitter struggle between the French and English dynasties which will fill a considerable space in future chapters of this story.

CHAPTER VI

PHILIPPE II ('PHILIPPE-AUGUSTE')

1180-1223

LOUIS VIII ('LE LION')

1223-1226

THE reign of Philippe II, called 'Auguste,' from the month of his birth, covers an important period in the history both of the French monarchy and of French civilization. In the struggle between the central authority and disintegrating forces of feudalism a decisive victory was at length gained by the former. The great nobles had now for the first time to recognize the supremacy of the King of France as the sole administrator and legislator of the realm. This consolidation of the royal power was accompanied by a steady growth in unity among the long-scattered elements of the French people. Those sectional differences by which the country had hitherto been broken up into fragments began to disappear, and with the amalgamation which attended increasing coherence the French nation came into existence.

These momentous changes were, of course, largely the result of the many general forces—industrial, religious, social, political—which were at work at the time. But the personal part of the King himself in them must still be emphasized. A man of great ability, clear-sighted, cool, calculating, firm, entirely unscrupulous, yet public-spirited enough to be genuinely interested in the welfare and progress of his subjects, Philippe was just the ruler to make capital out of the weakness of his enemies and to turn the complexities of the hour to the best account. He had the advantage, too, of knowing his own mind. From first to last his policy was consistently governed

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by one aim—the increase of his power at the expense of his nobility. To this object he bent all his energies, and the success which crowned his efforts constitutes the central interest of his reign.

The son of Louis VII by his second wife, Alix of Champagne, Philippe succeeded his father when he was only fifteen. His youth and inexperience gave the feudal nobility, as they themselves were quick to perceive, an opportunity to regain a portion at least of the ground they had lost under the late King. But Philippe soon showed that he was not to be played with. He had not been long on the throne when he was involved in a quarrel with one of his most powerful vassals, the Count of Flanders, over certain rights in respect of the counties of Vermandois, Valois, and Amiens. The Count had the support of the northern barons. Yet Philippe beat him; reduced him to submission; and forced him to cede Amiens and a portion of Vermandois to the Crown (1185). This was a remarkable achievement for a youth of twenty; and the new possessions thus obtained, together with the county of Artois, which formed the dowry of his first wife, Isabelle of Hainaut, whom he married in 1191, greatly extended his domains on the north. Already he took up a strong position regarding the rights of kingship. The lord of the county of Amiens was the bishop of that city; and the bishop demanded that Philippe should do homage to him for it in accordance with feudal custom. But Philippe threw feudal custom to the winds. "We neither can nor ought to render homage to any one," was his reply. This was a new conception of the place and prerogatives of royalty. Philippe's assertion meant that the Crown was now lifted above the feudal plexus, and that henceforth the king was to be regarded as something more than a feudal chief.

PHILIPPE'S STRUGGLE WITH ENGLAND

Such internal disputes were, however, insignificant compared with the great conflict with the English King which occupied Philippe till almost the end of his life, and which he carried on with untiring energy and persistency because he realized

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that the power of the English Crown in France was the most formidable rival of his own. One fixed purpose with him, therefore, was to dislodge the English from their possessions in his realm.

Henry II, now growing old and weary, was no longer able to cope with his rebellious sons, among whom, soon after Philippe ascended the throne, fierce dissensions broke out concerning their rights or claims in France. The family war was carried into Guyenne, which was ravaged without mercy by the opposing armies. Then Henry, the eldest, and Geoffrey, the second son, died, the former without issue ; while the wife of the latter, Constance, Duchess of Brittany, shortly afterward gave birth to a boy whom she named Arthur. Philippe, who, following his father's policy, had vigilantly watched for every chance to turn these English troubles to his own profit, now sided with Henry's third son, Richard, when in 1189 that turbulent and intractable young prince took arms against his father, Richard acknowledging the French King's aid by consenting to do homage to him for his fiefs. Shattered in health and spirit, Henry was no match for the forces arrayed against him ; and, having lost the chief castles in Maine and the city of Le Mans, he agreed to a humiliating treaty of peace in which he expressly recognized Philippe as his liege lord, and the terms of which further included an indemnity to all Richard's followers, the cession of the territory of Issoudun, and the renunciation of all claims to suzerainty over the county of Auvergne. The discovery of the name of his youngest and favourite son, John, in the list of his enemies came as a fatal shock, and, broken-hearted, Henry died suddenly at Chinon, on July 6 of that same year.

THE THIRD CRUSADE

Two years before this Europe had been surprised and horrified by the news that Jerusalem had been captured by the Sultan of Syria and Egypt, Salah-ed dîn, famous in history and romance as Saladin. The effect of this intelligence was, indeed, so great that Philippe and Henry paused in their struggle and

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met at Gisors to discuss the question of peace and the possibility of joining forces in the common cause of Christendom. The two kings even embraced and assumed the Cross; but despite their pious vows, their agreement, as we have seen, came to nothing.

Meanwhile, the call for a new Crusade had gone forth, and the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, after some hesitation, had undertaken to lead a German army in person, while the Dukes of Austria, Swabia, and Moravia had also promised their support. The excellent understanding which for the moment existed between Philippe and Richard, now King of England, made the way clear for their co-operation in the enterprise. Richard accordingly hurried to England, and, the coronation ceremonies over, proceeded to raise money for the holy expedition by the cruel persecution and robbery of the Jews, the imposition of a special tax called the Saladin Tithe, and the sale of all the offices, dignities, and royal lands for which he could find a purchaser. Then, hastening back to France, he met Philippe at Vézelay. There the two kings entered into a solemn undertaking, exchanging guarantees of mutual support against all who should trouble the peace of either realm during their absence, and swearing each one to defend the other's rights as if they were his own. To what extent either party to this contract was actually in earnest at the time it was made we do not know. But we do know that these royal vows were soon to be proved as valueless as dicers' oaths.

Taught by the disasters which had overtaken the former two expeditions, the leaders of this Third Crusade laid their plans with the greatest care and paid infinite attention to even the minutest details. In particular, the composition of the forces was regulated with extreme severity. The vagabonds, adventurers, and scoundrels who had swollen the ranks of the earlier armies and had done them so much damage were now entirely eliminated; only actual combatants were enrolled; and special precautions were taken to ensure order and thorough military discipline.

The German army took the lead, and on April 23, 1188,
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more than 100,000 men, under Frederick's command, marched out of Regensburg. They followed the overland route through Constantinople, Mysia, and Phrygia, and for a time all went well with them; for they took Iconium by storm, and crossing the Taurus made their way, though amid many difficulties, to the coast. Then their misfortunes began. In trying to cross a small stream near Seleucia Frederick was drowned. This tragedy deeply affected the spirit of the soldiers, already much worn by fatigue; famine and the repeated attacks of the enemy played havoc with them; disease set in, and general demoralization followed in its train. Many of them at once returned to Europe, and, desertions being now added to deaths, it was but a small remnant of Frederick's vast army that the Duke of Swabia ultimately led forward into Palestine. There they were presently joined by several minor bands of Germans who had come independently, and, later, by the armies of Richard and Philippe, which had taken the sea route: the former sailing from Marseille, the latter from Genoa. A general reunion of the Christian forces took place before the walls of Akka, the siege of which by the Germans had already lasted nearly two years when Philippe and Richard arrived. Bitter animosity at once declared itself between the two royal chiefs.

This was not the beginning of trouble. The alliance had been rudely disturbed by various feuds on the way. Richard's turbulent spirit chafed under the restraints imposed by his relations with Philippe as vassal with lord, and the smouldering fires of discord were ready at any moment to burst out into flame. At Messina, where the fleets wintered, Richard repudiated his engagement to marry Philippe's sister, and the quarrel which ensued almost led to an actual rupture. Peace was restored for the time, but the condition was still one of unstable equilibrium, and almost from the hour of their arrival at Akka their rivalries and contentions kept the Christian army in a state of perpetual agitation. The English chroniclers lay all the blame on Philippe's shoulders; they declare that he was jealous of Richard's manifest superiority in the field, and was bitterly aggrieved because (as one writer puts it) he was

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obscured by Richard as the moon's light is obscured by the sun's. There is doubtless a measure of truth in this view. But on the other hand the French chroniclers are unquestionably right in their opinion that one chief source, if not the chief source, of difficulty was Richard's own character. Arrogant, hot-headed, fierce-tempered, self-willed, hectoring and perfidious, the English King was an impossible man to get on with, and if Philippe had personal reasons to dread and distrust Richard, Richard's conduct throughout was certainly calculated to deepen his feelings of animosity into the fiercest hatred.

Notwithstanding these unfortunate dissensions, however, and other bickerings among the leaders of the Christian army which do not belong to our present story, the siege was finally successful, and in 1191 Akka was forced to capitulate.¹ Upon this the Crusaders should of course have pressed on without delay to Jerusalem, the recovery of which was the main object of their expedition. Instead, their chiefs wasted their time and strength in incessant wrangling. Then, in 1192, Philippe, assigning the charge of the French army to the Duke of Burgundy, returned to Paris, which he reached after an absence of eighteen months. The reason alleged by Philippe himself for this abandonment of the Crusade was ill-health, though it was very commonly supposed that he had become disgusted with the secondary *rôle* he had to play beside his domineering vassal.² The real reason, however, was his anxiety to steal a march upon him. He saw the chance, while Richard was preoccupied in the East, to undermine his power in France.

Richard was now left in undivided chief command of the Christian forces, and soon proved himself totally unfitted for the position. He was capable, indeed, of performing prodigies of personal valour which aroused the admiration even of the Saracens, and such was his reckless daring that, fighting "almost single-handed," he would bring back the heads of

¹ The city was then handed over to the Knights of St John; whence its new name of Saint-Jean-d'Acre, by which it has since been known in French history.

² Michaud, *Histoire des Croisades* (1841), t. i, p. 131.

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his foes, "sometimes ten in a day, sometimes twelve, or twenty, or thirty, as they happened to fall in his way."¹ But he was wholly wanting in the elements of generalship. His impetuosity was fatal; he knew and cared nothing for method and strategy; and he thought far less of the object of the holy war and the success of the Christian arms than of his own individual glory and the gratification of his passion for fighting. Misguided and mismanaged by this lion-hearted but hare-brained hero, the Crusaders wasted valuable time in absurd or useless adventures and neglected every opportunity for steady advance. Twice undertaken, the march to Jerusalem was twice abandoned without justification. Discontent, disease, and treason spread through the host. Then, learning that his brother John was plotting against him with Philippe, Richard resolved to throw up the enterprise, and in hot haste signed a treaty with Saladin which secured to the Christians as the only substantial gain of all their efforts the privilege of free access, as unarmed pilgrims, to all holy places for a period of three years three months and three days. It is not surprising that this pitiful conclusion of a great war was received with a storm of curses by the Christians throughout Palestine, who held that the selfish King had betrayed their cause. Richard, however, recked little of their feelings. Without waiting for his army or fleet, he sailed alone for Europe on October 25, 1192; was shipwrecked near Venice; and started to make the journey in disguise through the dominions of his bitter enemy, the Duke of Austria. But he was recognized, seized, and handed over to Henry VI of Germany, who, flouting all considerations of justice and decency, threw him into prison and demanded a heavy ransom for his release. He was not set at liberty till March 1194.

PHILIPPE'S STRUGGLE WITH ENGLAND RENEWED

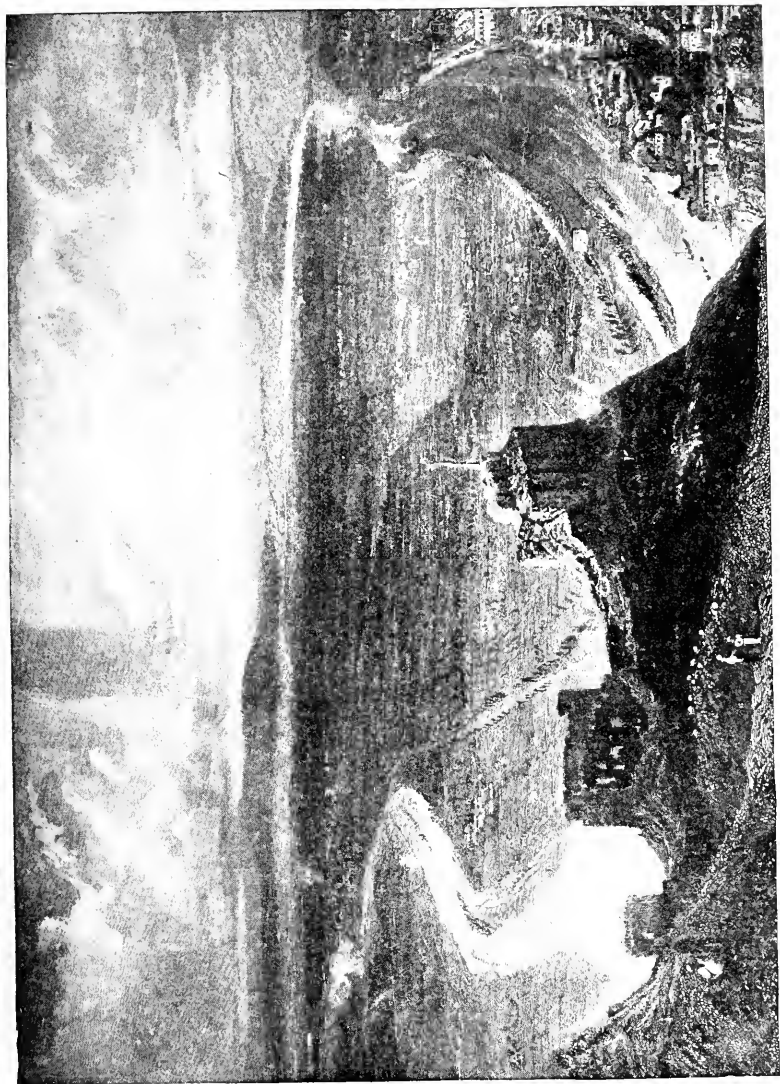
These eighteen months furnished Philippe with the opportunity for which he had been waiting, and it must be admitted

¹ Geoffroy de Vinsauf, *Itinerarium Regis Anglorum Richardi*, Lib. III, c. xxix.

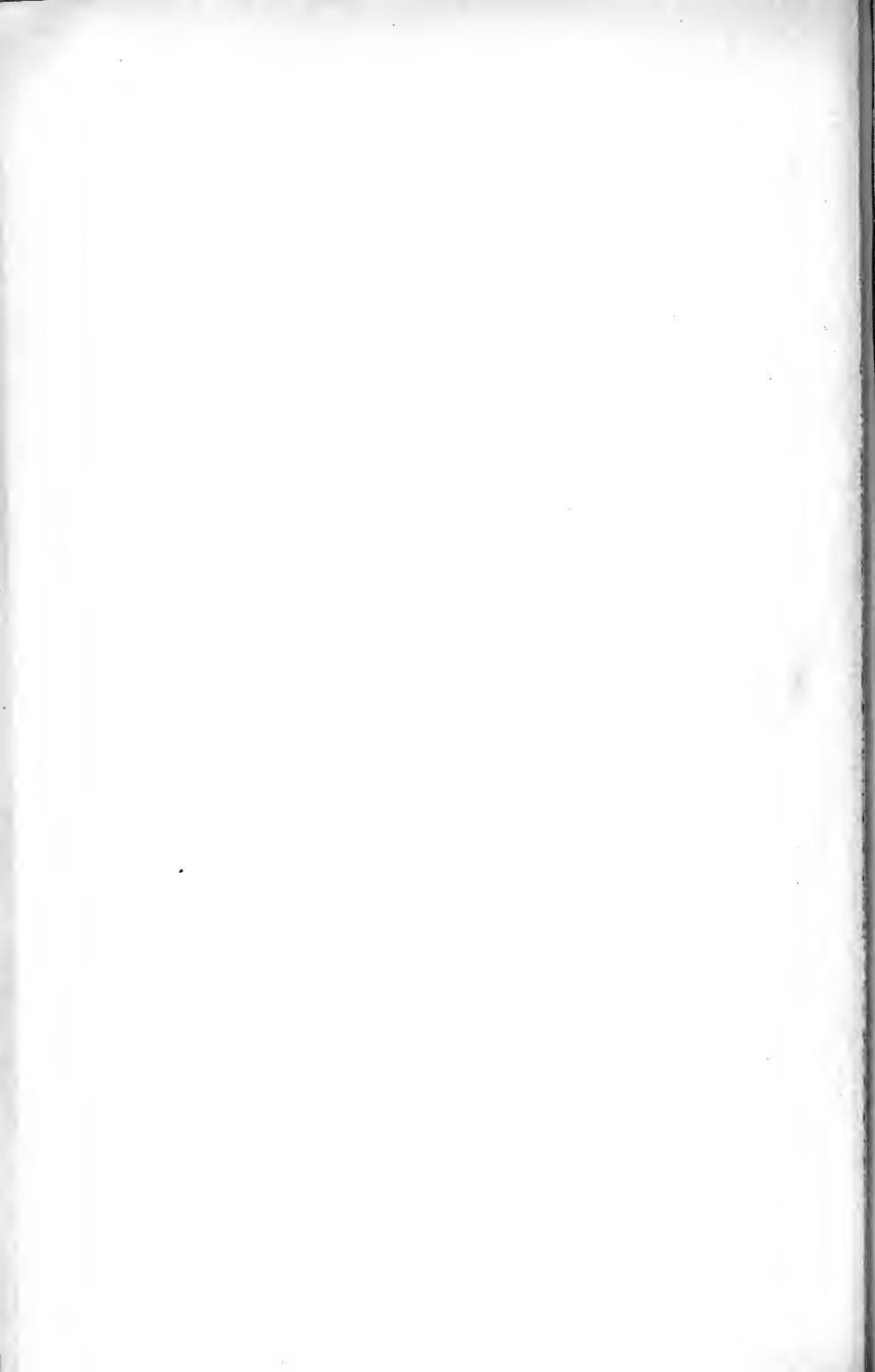
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that in availing himself of it he acted very badly. Before leaving Saint-Jean-d'Acre he had solemnly renewed his engagements with Richard, but during his stay in Rome on his homeward way he had tried to induce the Pope, Celestine III, to absolve him from his vows. Failing in this, he proceeded to set these vows aside on his own account. John was now busily intriguing to get possession of the English crown, and in his anxiety to obtain Philippe's help went so far as to engage to do homage to him not only for his French fiefs, but even for England itself. Philippe saw that he could use John as a tool. He therefore invaded Normandy in his behalf, seized Évreux, and laid siege to Rouen. But the ransom of Richard deranged all his plans, and for a time fortune turned against him; for Richard arrived in Normandy at the head of a strong army, defeated the French at Fréteval (1194) and Vernon (1198), and built near Les Andelys the mighty fortress called the Château Gaillard, to command the Seine and block the Norman frontier. These successes made him for the moment master of the situation. But shortly afterward, while besieging the castle of Chalus in a foolish quarrel with his insubordinate vassal, the Viscount of Limoges, he was fatally wounded by a chance shot of an archer.

Richard's death was followed by an immediate change in Philippe's policy, and John, on ascending the throne, found an implacable enemy in the man who had hitherto posed as his friend. The dissensions in the Plantagenet family greatly favoured the French King's ambitions. John's nephew, Arthur, had inherited his father's estates in France, and in right of his mother he was also heir to the duchy of Brittany. John, on the other hand, claimed the duchy of Normandy as an inheritance from William the Conqueror, and various other states—among them Poitou and Guyenne—through his mother Aliénor, Louis VII's divorced wife. In this complicated condition of things Philippe perceived that his interest lay in the espousal of Arthur's cause. John's atrocious behaviour, first in the abduction of Isabelle Taillefer of Angoulême, and afterward in the murder of Arthur, arousing as it did a



10. THE CHÂTEAU GAILLARD



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storm of popular indignation, gave Philippe ample cause for action. Taking his stand on his rights as suzerain, he ordered John to appear before him to answer for his conduct as vassal to lord. The course was unprecedented, but John did not dare to refuse outright. In his characteristically shifty way he first promised obedience, and then broke his promise. Upon this it was formally declared that he had forfeited the fiefs which he held from the French Crown, and Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou were duly incorporated in the royal domains. Philippe also marched into Normandy, seized city after city—Falaise, Caen, Bayeux, Lisieux—and (greatest achievement of all) captured Richard's powerful, and, as it was believed, impregnable, fortress, the Château Gaillard.¹ Even John's mean spirit was stirred by these reverses, and, realizing the impossibility of acting alone, he had recourse to outside help, and entered into a formidable coalition with the Counts of Flanders and Boulogne, who welcomed the chance of striking a blow at Philippe's supremacy, the Duke of Brabant, and the Guelph Emperor Otho IV, who was becoming exceedingly jealous of the fast-growing power of France. Philippe had now to face the greatest danger of his reign. The attacks of the allies were to be delivered simultaneously in the north and in the south. Philippe's son Louis was sent to repel John in Poitou. Philippe himself marched out against the main body of the enemy at the head of an army composed both of northern nobles and their vassals and of the militia of the communes, which had promptly answered his appeal for aid. The opposed armies met at Bouvines, between Lille and Tournay, and there, on January 27, 1214, the armies of the allies were routed

¹ The above is a very condensed account of the intricate and obscure relations of Philippe and John during the early years of the latter's reign. It is not known for certain whether the command to appear before Philippe and the confiscation of the fiefs occurred before or after Arthur's murder; popular report says after; but popular report is probably wrong (see the essay by Charles Bémont in the *Revue historique*, t. xxxii, 1884). It is, however, possible, as P. Guilhaumoz maintains (see *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, January and February, 1899), that John was summoned twice before Philippe, once after the abduction of Isabelle, and once in consequence of the death of the young prince.

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with great slaughter. This signal victory was much more than a matter of momentary glory. It gave a practical demonstration of Philippe's power alike to the French nobility and to the rest of Europe, and it thus settled the Capetian dynasty more firmly than ever on the throne.

Incidentally Bouvines also affected the history both of Germany and of England. It was at least a part cause of the downfall of Otho. It was at least a part cause of the revolt of the barons against John. Philippe's son Louis was now called in to take the leadership of the English nation, and reached London in May 1216. For the moment it seemed likely that the English monarchy was to be merged in that of France. But the death of John, the interference of the Pope in favour of John's young son, Henry III, and the revulsion of feeling which now turned the barons against the foreigner to whom they had only just appealed, destroyed all Louis' chances of success, and the next year he returned to Paris, having renounced once and for all his pretensions to the English crown.

THE FOURTH CRUSADE

Of the other events of Philippe's reign the most important were two armed expeditions of a religious character which, though properly classed among the Crusades, were markedly different in object and results from those which had preceded them.

The first of these—the Fourth Crusade as it is called—had its origin in the policy of Innocent III for the expansion of the papal power in the East. He enjoined Alexius III of Constantinople to support the Christian armies, while he sent missionaries through Europe to preach peace to a Christendom rent by internal strife and to make ample promises in his name of forgiveness of sins and heavenly blessing to all who would set aside their own interests for the sake of the holy cause. It was still easy to fire the enthusiasm of the masses, and more than 200,000 persons are said to have taken the vow. But these were principally churls or adventurers, who provided

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but poor material for the real business of war. The knightly classes, on the other hand, were slow to yield even to the appeals of Foulques of Neuilly, who specially distinguished himself among the French apostles of the enterprise by his zeal and eloquence. Finally a few of the greater nobles were induced to assume the Cross; among them, the Counts of Flanders, Blois, and Champagne. It was decided to aim, not at Jerusalem, but at Egypt, which had become the centre of Mussulman power; the sea route was chosen; the date of departure was fixed for April 1202; and arrangements were made with Venice, whose interest in the Crusade was entirely commercial, for vessels for transport and for provisions for the voyage. But when the time came the Crusaders found themselves unable to pay the 85,000 silver marks which they had promised, and they were glad enough to be allowed to discharge their obligations by aiding the Venetians to conquer the city of Zara, on the coast of Dalmatia. The Pope was angry when he learned of this diversion of the expedition from its true object; but all his thunders produced no effect. The way was now clear for the business of the enterprise to proceed; but the abandoned purpose was never revived. Disturbances in Constantinople had placed a usurper on the Byzantine throne; Alexius Angelus, son of the deposed Emperor, appealed to the Crusaders for help; his appeal was reinforced by promises of material advantages made by the Venetians, who saw a splendid opportunity of furthering their commercial interests in the East; and so little religious fervour and so great a greed for gain animated the Christian army that, notwithstanding the emphatic prohibition of the Pope, the expedition against the Mohammedans was without the slightest difficulty transformed into an expedition against the Greeks. Constantinople was taken by storm in 1204, and in the sack of the city which followed countless treasures of ancient art were ruthlessly destroyed, while nearly all the silver and bronze statues and the fine metal-work of the churches was melted down as booty. In the end a Latin Empire was founded at Constantinople, with Baldwin, Count of Flanders, as its first head. This

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Empire, which lasted for a little more than half a century, was the one conspicuous achievement of the Fourth Crusade. For the cause of Christianity in the Holy Land it accomplished absolutely nothing. But the Pope had his reward in the establishment for the time of his supremacy in the Eastern Church.

THE CRUSADE AGAINST THE ALBIGENSES

The second of the religious wars now in question, that against the Albigenses, differs from those already mentioned in these pages in that it was waged, not against a race of alien infidels, but against a European and Christian people. It is one of the most shocking episodes in medieval history.

The Albigenses were a sect, or, more strictly speaking, a group of sects, of heretics who, though dating from some two hundred years before, became prominent in the south of France about the beginning of the thirteenth century.¹ They held doctrines on many important points which were so fundamentally at variance with those of official Christianity that the Bishop of Marseille described them as "sons of Belial," while Pope Innocent III did not hesitate to declare that they were "more wicked than the Saracens." Failing in his attempt to make good Catholics out of them by missionary effort, Innocent called upon the King of France to root out their errors with the sword. Philippe, however, held aloof, not from conscientious scruples (for he was always ready enough to persecute heretics), but because he was too deeply occupied with his own affairs. His indifference did not affect the Pope's success. An immediate excuse for the expedition was provided by the murder of the papal legate Pierre de Castelnau by a servant of Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse; its real object was to dispossess the Count because of the protection which, it was alleged, he had extended to the misbelievers. Pardons and

¹ The name is derived from the district of Albigeois, in the county of Toulouse, the capital of which was Albi, now in the department of Tarn. In estimating the character and conduct of these sects it is necessary to remember that most of our knowledge of them is derived from the accounts of their bitter and unscrupulous enemies.

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absolutions were freely promised, with the lavish generosity which commonly characterized the head of the Church when he needed assistance for his own purposes, to all who helped the cause of God by slaughtering those who differed from them; and it is a noteworthy fact that the northern nobles, inspired in part by that animosity against the south to which reference has already been made, showed themselves more eager to take up arms against their fellow-countrymen than they had lately done to march out against the Mussulman. A weak and vacillating man, Raymond sought to avert the storm by humiliating penances and protestations of obedience to the Holy See. But orthodox fanaticism and the passion for fighting and gain had been aroused, and were not now to be restrained. An army of 200,000 men, led by Arnold, Abbot of Cîteaux, took Béziers by storm, and demonstrated their Christian zeal by wholesale slaughter and pillage. "Then," writes an anonymous chronicler of this holy war, "the greatest massacre that ever was in all the world took place, for no one was spared, neither young nor old, nor even the baby at the breast: all were killed and exterminated. . . . The city was looted, and everywhere set on fire, so that it was all devastated and burned, and no one in it was left alive."¹ Then the brutal and callous Simon de Montfort, just home from the Fourth Crusade, was appointed chief commander of the forces, and swept the whole beautiful country of Toulouse with fire and sword, burning all the towns which fell into his hands and ruthlessly slaying their inhabitants. He was rewarded by the gift of the lands he had conquered and wasted, but, as one is happy to add, was killed by a stone at the siege of Toulouse before he could enter into possession of them. Still the war went on, fostered by the rancorous spirit of bigotry which was kept alive by the Pope's representatives and by their repeated promises of heavenly blessings, while Raymond VII made a brave stand against the overwhelming odds against him. To carry this tragic story to its close, though in doing so we have for the moment to pass beyond the proper limits

¹ *Histoire de la Guerre des Albigeois.*

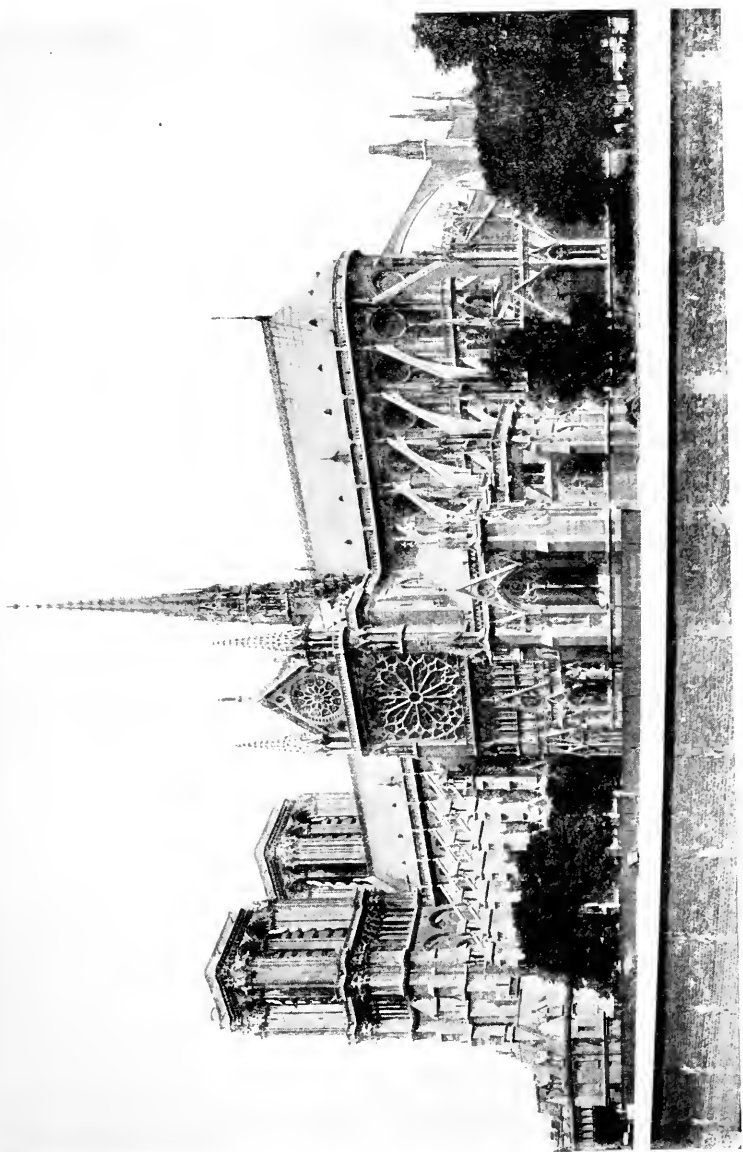
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of this chapter, I may say at once that in the end, after thousands had perished on both sides and the fairest parts of Southern France had been turned into a blackened wilderness, Raymond in 1229 purchased peace and relief from the ban of the Church by the payment of large sums of money, the immediate cession of various lordships to the King, then Louis IX, and the undertaking to make Louis' brother the heir to all his other territories. Incidentally, therefore, the power of the Crown was increased by this lamentable war. The heretics were handed over to the tender mercies of a papal commission and the Dominican Order, and orthodox truth, aided by torture and the stake, soon prevailed over those damnable errors which had moved the Pope first to sorrow and then to wrath. One further result of this crusade must be noted in the almost complete destruction of the culture and art which had flourished on southern French soil.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF PHILIPPE-AUGUSTE

To complete this brief survey of Philippe's reign it is necessary to re-emphasize and supplement what was said at the outset about its importance in the making of French history. It covers a period of marked progress in many directions—progress, fortunately, but little interrupted by the King's two collisions with the Church.¹ "I desire," he once said to one of his counsellors, "that at the end of my reign the Crown shall be as powerful as it was in Charlemagne's time." We have seen how much he actually did toward the fulfilment of this ambition. He more than doubled the royal domains; he was the largest landowner in France; he was rich; and he forced even the greatest of the feudal nobles to respect his supremacy. In order to check the ruinous practice of private

¹ In the first case he drew upon himself the edict of excommunication by repudiating Ingeburge of Denmark, whom he had taken as his second wife, and marrying Agnès of Méranie. Though he held out for eight months, he was then forced to yield to the Pope. In the second case he incurred the anger of Innocent III by taking possession of John's confiscated fiefs; but in this instance he held his own, and successfully.



II. THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE-DAME

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war to which, despite ecclesiastical denunciations, these nobles still clung as a right, he proclaimed the *quarantaine le roy*, or forced truce of forty days between the injury received and the recourse to arms to avenge it: an interval which gave time for the subsidence of angry passions and opportunity for the peaceful settlement of difficulties. The hereditary character of the monarchy was so firmly established by him that, as I have already said, departing from the practice hitherto followed by the Capetians, he did not have his son crowned as his successor during his lifetime.

His reign was further significant for important changes in administration. The chief official of the Capetian Court had been the seneschal, who regulated all affairs and dispensed justice in the king's name. Philippe saw that the power of this official was steadily increasing to a dangerous extent. He therefore abolished the office altogether, assigning the charge of the army to a *Connétable*, and that of justice to an ecclesiastic who was called the *Chancelier*. He found it necessary also to curb the *prévôts*, or local managers of the royal estates, who, in the spirit of the time, had been tending more and more to regard their functions as hereditary. He accordingly placed over them a number of new officers, named *baillis*, who were directly responsible to him for the finances and justice of the districts committed to their supervision. More than either his father or his grandfather he perceived the advantages to be gained by the monarchy from the emancipation of the towns and the alliance of the king with the *bourgeoisie*. Hence he greatly favoured the communal movement, which continued to make headway during his reign. The progress of Paris, his capital and place of residence, was remarkable. He found it a city of narrow, tortuous streets close-packed with low and dirty houses. He enlarged its boundaries, improved its fortifications, surrounded it with a crenated wall with thirteen gates and five hundred towers, built markets and hospitals, constructed drains, and paved the principal thoroughfares with stone. He also began the castle of the Louvre, on the site of the present palace; while

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Notre-Dame, commenced under his father, was nearly finished during his lifetime. The Paris of his day, though vastly different, of course, from the Paris we know, now began to take some of the traits of the modern city. Extending on both sides of the Seine, with the Ile de la Cité as its centre, it already accommodated 120,000 inhabitants, and by the fame of its university, of which I shall speak in a future chapter, it attracted students in large numbers from all parts of Europe.

LOUIS VIII

Philippe died at fifty-seven, and was succeeded by his son, Louis VIII, who was then thirty-five. Louis' reign, which lasted only three years, has, however, very little independent interest in history. Trained under his father, and surrounded by his father's counsellors, he continued the policy the success of which he had had ample opportunity of appreciating. In his contest with the feeble Henry III of England he completed the conquest of Poitou and other portions of South-western France, while the close of the crusade against the Albigenses made him practically the master of Languedoc. He thus further extended and consolidated the royal authority and aided the unification of the nation. But his chief distinction lies in the fact that he was the connecting link between two monarchs much greater than himself. He was the son of Philippe-Auguste and the father of Louis IX.

CHAPTER VII

LOUIS IX ('ST LOUIS')

1226-1270

BOTH the character and the reign of Louis IX, called 'the Saint,'¹ have great importance in history. Personally he was the finest product of the Christianity of his time, and the fullest embodiment of its virtues and ideals. At the same time his reign marks the culmination of the medieval monarchy in France.

Born in 1215, he was not yet twelve when, on his father's death in 1226, he succeeded to the throne. The question of regency was settled by his mother, Blanche of Castile, who at once had him crowned at Reims, and then proceeded to rule in his name. At the same time she devoted herself with great ardour to the boy's education, which she personally superintended in all its details. A woman of practical genius, great energy and courage, and rigorous piety, she exerted an immense influence in the moulding of her son's character, and the impress which she stamped upon it was indelible.

Her ability to maintain the position which she had assumed was soon brought to a decisive test. The great nobles had chafed under the repressive policy of the two preceding kings. In the fact that France now had a boy on the throne and a woman as ruler they saw an excellent opportunity for the reassertion of their independence. The unpopularity of Blanche, who as a Spaniard was distrusted and disliked, gave them a further motive for revolt. In the first year of the regency the royal house was accordingly threatened by a formidable coalition of feudal chiefs. The conspiracy had the

¹ He was canonized by Boniface VIII in 1297.

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support of the Counts of La Marche and Toulouse, the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany, Henry III of England, and even the young King's uncle, the Count of Boulogne. Events soon proved, however, that its leaders had hopelessly misjudged the quality of the woman whose overthrow was the first object of their exertions. Blanche rose to the occasion, and gave instant proof of her courage, resolution, and cleverness. By her beauty and persuasive power she succeeded in detaching from the league one of its most dangerous adherents, Thibaut, Count of Champagne, and winning him to her side. Then she marched with extraordinary rapidity and vigour against the insurgent nobles, and everywhere secured a victory over them. The contest continued, indeed, for several years, even after the back of the conspiracy had been broken; but the Treaty of Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier in 1231 registered the triumph of royalty over the feudal aristocracy. The Duke of Brittany still held out, but the next year witnessed his subjection. Blanche also worked for the unity of the country and the power of the Crown by peaceful means as well as by the sword. The marriage of her son in 1234 with Marguerite, eldest daughter of Raymond Bérenger, Count of Provence, was of her negotiation. Politically this was an excellent move, for it allied Provence to the royal cause.

As a result of his mother's energies Louis on coming of age in 1236 found himself the ruler of a kingdom which, despite the shocks which it had lately withstood, was as well consolidated as it had been in his father's time. Yet the continued unrest of the nobility was still fatal to internal peace. In 1242 he was called upon to face a new coalition headed by the Count of La Marche and backed by the English King, who himself took the field. It was now that for the first time Louis had a chance of showing his mettle. The allies were defeated at Taillebourg and Saintes, and Henry III had to fly to Bordeaux. At this juncture Louis was prostrated by illness, and the campaign was brought to a premature close. The power of the rebellious nobles was again crushed, but Louis refused to follow up his advantage against Henry, though

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that King's quarrels with his barons at home left Louis a free hand in France. Indeed, he even came to the conclusion that some of his grandfather's annexations had been unjust, and to satisfy his conscience he restored Limousin, Quercy, Périgord, and other provinces to the English Crown. But as Henry on his side responded by relinquishing all claims to Poitou, Touraine, Maine, Anjou, and Normandy,¹ Louis did not lose by the transaction. His uprightness in these and other dealings so impressed the English imagination that Henry and his barons appealed to him to arbitrate between them. Though unfortunately they did not abide by his decision, this was a signal testimony to the esteem in which he was held. But the Treaty of Paris (May 1258), in which an attempt was made to bring to an end the long rivalry of the two countries over the English King's Angevin possessions, proved to be nothing but a covenant of truce. It was soon set aside by Louis' successors.

The resolution which Louis exhibited in dealing with his refractory vassals was shown again in his relations with the Emperor and the Pope. In this case his independence was the more remarkable because he believed in the Empire as a divine institution, while his extreme piety naturally inspired a filial attitude toward the Papacy. In the bitter struggle which for some years Frederick II carried on, first with Gregory IX and then with Innocent IV, Louis so far as possible remained neutral. Frederick detained some French prelates on their way to a council which had been convoked in Rome. Very quietly but very firmly Louis insisted upon their immediate release. When the Pope freed the German princes and people from their oath of allegiance to the Emperor, Louis paid no attention to the edict. But when Frederick overran Italy and forced Innocent to fly for safety to Lyon, Louis interfered in Innocent's behalf. In his further relations with the Church he was careful to safeguard his royal prerogatives, his jealousy in regard to which was partly due to the fact that he regarded himself as invested, through the ceremony of consecration, with

¹ This transfer was made under the Treaty of Abbeville, 1259.

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spiritual and almost sacerdotal powers.¹ He resisted the encroachments of the Holy See in national affairs, compelled the Church to recognize the State in a practical way by contributing to its support, curbed to some extent the judicial powers of the bishops, and brought a part of the clergy within the boundaries of the civil law.²

THE INTERNAL POLICY OF ST LOUIS

The King's sagacity and the practical character of his religion were, however, most clearly shown in the many reforms which he introduced in internal affairs.

By an ordinance of uncertain date, though generally assigned to 1260, he forbade judicial duels or trials by combat throughout his dominions, substituting the appeal to witnesses for the appeal to arms. He renewed and confirmed his grandfather's *quarantaine le roy*, and later, in a decree of 1257, entirely prohibited private warfare, proclaiming that peace-breakers would be punished "according to the exigencies of the case." His desire for peace led him even to condemn tournaments, which often ended in bloody encounters, and at best did much to inflame the martial spirit. In all these cases, it should be remarked, he acted as a devout son of the Church, for his object was to enforce by secular authority what had already been promulgated by canon law. He did all that he could according to his lights for the protection of industry and commerce, and if in regard to these matters he did not always act wisely, his good intentions are beyond dispute. He also sought to bring something like order into the financial chaos of the realm. More than eighty of his nobles still enjoyed the privilege of coining their own money, and the money of one province was not accepted in any other. Louis fixed a standard of value for his own currency, and enacted that while such

¹ It is at this point alone that Catholic writers have any fault to find with him. See, e.g., Sepet's *St Louis* (English translation), p. 161 and *passim*, and Father Tyrrell's preface to this volume.

² It should, however, be noted that the Pragmatic Sanction attributed to Louis, and long regarded as the foundation of the liberties of the Gallican Church, is now dismissed as a forgery of the fifteenth century.

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currency should be the only legal tender within the royal domains, it should pass on a par with that of all his vassals in the territories of the vassals themselves. This was the beginning of a national currency, and, as such, a further step toward national unity.

It was, however, to the administration of his realm that he gave his most careful thought. He reorganized the office of *bailli*, established by Philippe-Auguste, and to bring it into closer relations with the Crown he revived the Carolingian practice of sending out *missi dominici*, now called *enquêteurs*, or visitants, whose duty it was to report to him on all the affairs of the different bailiwicks. He endeavoured, moreover, by many regulations to ensure honesty and efficiency in his officers.¹ At the same time he greatly strengthened the judicial authority of the Crown. This he did in two ways. In the first place he forced the nobles to accept the principle of appeal from their own courts directly to himself. In the second place he insisted that in any case which involved the interest of the King or of the realm at large the right of judgment should lie with him and with him alone. These 'royal cases,' as they were called, proved of great influence in undermining the judicial prerogatives of the nobility, since, in the absence of any exact definition of the term, 'royal cases' multiplied so fast that before long every question of importance, civil, criminal, ecclesiastical, was included in the category. This practical assertion of the King's judicial supremacy was in part, of course, the concomitant of the gradual changes which were taking place in feudal society. The revived study of Roman law was, however, a factor of note. Students of Roman law were already busy engrafting royal authority upon

¹ As the Queen's Confessor records: "In that the blessed King wished that all his *baillis* and *prévôts* should never do any injury or wrong to the people of his land, either in judging badly, or in unjustly taking away their goods, therefore he was accustomed to despatch certain *enquêteurs*, minor friars and preachers, laymen, or even knights, and to give them power, that if they found among the said *baillis* anything wickedly taken away from any person whatsoever, they should instantly restore it, and, in addition, that they should dismiss from their offices all who were worthy of being dismissed."

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the imperial principle. According to their theory, the king was the source of all justice, while such powers as his vassals enjoyed were delegated powers only. These abstractions of the doctors did something even now, and were destined to do more later, to strengthen the King's hands.

Louis' personal part in the administration of justice is vividly described in a famous passage from the pen of his friend and biographer, Jean de Joinville.¹ "The King so arranged matters that Monseigneur de Nesle and the good Count of Soissons, and we others who were with him, when we had heard Mass, should go and hear the pleadings at the gate, now called the Court of Requests. And when he came out of church he sent for us, and sat down at the foot of the bed, and caused us to be seated round him, and he asked if there were any pleaders to dismiss who could not be dismissed without him. And we gave their names, and he ordered them to be fetched, and he asked of them: 'Why do you not take that which your people offer?' And they said: 'Sire, it is because they offer so little.' And he spake thus: 'You ought to take what they are willing to offer.' And the holy man endeavoured thus with all his might to set them in the right and reasonable way." And again: "It often happened that in summer he went after Mass to sit in the wood of Vincennes, and leaned his back against an oak-tree, and bade us sit round him; and all those who had business came to speak to him, not hindered by the guards or by other people. And then he would ask with his own mouth: 'Is any one here who has a cause?' And those who had a cause stood up. And then he said: 'Be silent, all of you, that we may take one after the other.' And then he would call Monseigneur Peter of Fontaines and Monseigneur Geoffrey of Vilette, and would say to one of them: 'Decide this cause for me.' And when he found anything to correct

¹ Jean, Sieur de Joinville, in Champagne, was born about 1224 and died in 1317. He was a close follower and confidential friend of the King, whom he accompanied on his first Crusade. He wrote his fascinating *Histoire de St Louis* when he was upward of eighty.



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13. LOUIS IX AND BLANCHE OF CASTILE



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in the words of those who spoke for others, he himself spoke the correction with his own mouth. Sometimes in summer I have seen him come into his garden in Paris to decide causes, wearing a camlet tunic, a surcoat of wool without sleeves, a mantle of black taffety round his neck, his hair well combed and flowing, a cap made of the feathers of a white peacock [swan] on his head. And he would have carpets spread that we might sit round him, and all the people who brought causes before him stood up in his presence. And then he would dismiss them after the manner of which I have told you in the wood of Vincennes."

His high conception of justice is shown in the instructions which he gave to his son: "Dear son, if you come to reign, do that which befits a king; that is, be so just as to deviate in nothing from justice, whatever befall you. If a poor man goes to law with a rich, support the poor rather than the rich till you know the truth, and when the truth is known, do that which is just."

While, however, according to Louis' conception of kingship, it was fitting that the king himself should act as supreme judge, the delegation of his sovereign powers to trained representatives was of course a practical necessity. The definite establishment, under the name of the Parliament of Paris, of a supreme court of justice was, indeed, one of the most notable events of his reign. This Parliament was the chief judicial portion of the King's Council. Introducing the important principle of the subdivision of functions among his advisers, Louis assigned to a second portion of such Council the charge of the Treasury, while a third remained his advisory body, or Council proper in the strict acceptation of the term.

While the King's power was thus continuing to grow, the communes, on the contrary, were beginning to lose ground. Their character had for some time been fast changing for the worse. The vicious influences of feudalism had already deeply affected them. They had taken to waging wars against one another, and in these wars they showed themselves as reckless in regard to the lives and property of the peasantry of the neighbouring districts as the great barons themselves. They

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were often torn by internal disputes, and especially by the feuds of rich and poor. The former with increasing wealth had grown proud and tyrannous; the latter were becoming more and more discontented and rebellious; while all chances of good government were too often wrecked by the venality of the magistrature. Mismanagement had, moreover, in many cases brought the finances of the towns into almost hopeless confusion. For all these reasons the King's policy was directed toward the curtailment of the power of the towns as well as of that of the feudal nobility. In the interests of national stability the officers of the Treasury repeatedly interfered in the administration of communal finances, and in many instances punished a bankrupt city by declaring its charter to be void. On other grounds as well charters were often withdrawn, and with them, of course, much of the independence which the towns in question had formerly enjoyed. In these cases the towns passed directly under the rule of the King, who exercised a controlling power even over their municipal elections and officers. This transformation of the free towns into 'royal towns,' as they were called, went on with great rapidity under St Louis and his immediate successors, and it is to be interpreted as one aspect of the great general movement for the centralization of power. By the end of the fourteenth century all the free communes had practically disappeared, their prerogatives having been absorbed in those of the Crown. This is an important fact, for it meant the virtual destruction in a political sense of that middle class which in England was to prevent the consolidation of power in the hands either of king or of nobles. This middle class having been rendered impotent, the way was clear for the steady growth of royalty into absolutism.

LOUIS' FIRST CRUSADE

Profoundly interested as he was in the internal welfare of his realm, Louis none the less conceived it to be part of his religious duty to spend a number of years in absence from it. Unfortunately for himself and for France, he heard and answered the call of the East.

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Jerusalem had again fallen into the hands of the infidels, and at the thirteenth Oecumenical Council, held at Lyon in 1245, Innocent IV had called upon the Christian nations to undertake once more the rescue of the Sacred City. The appeal had little effect in Europe generally. But Louis at once responded to it. Already while lying seriously ill the previous year he had made a vow that if God granted him recovery he would conduct another Crusade to the Holy Land. This vow, in spite of the vigorous opposition of the Queen-Mother and his advisers, he now determined to fulfil. Having appointed Blanche as regent, he left Paris barefoot, in his pilgrim habit, amid an immense concourse of people; sailed from Aigues-Mortes in the summer of 1248; and after a voyage of twenty days reached Cyprus, where for two years he had been carefully laying up vast stores of provisions. Despite his own great anxiety to push forward he had to wait there for his barons and their reinforcements. It had been determined to attack Islamism in its great stronghold in Egypt, and Louis with an army of 50,000 men in 1800 vessels of all shapes and sizes accordingly made directly for Damietta, at one of the mouths of the Nile. There he effected a landing on June 7, 1249, defeated the Saracens in a short, sharp engagement and with the loss of only one man, and took the city without striking another blow. This easy victory was due to the panic which had seized the enemy. Unfortunately it was followed by a long delay, now inexplicable, during which the enemy had ample time to recover strength and courage, while the Christian army was demoralized by idleness and vice. At last in the summer of 1250 the inland march began, the aim being the occupation of Cairo and Mansurah. Hard fighting, severe losses, and the ravages of disease thinned out and wore down Louis' forces, and he was presently compelled to retreat. Disaster followed disaster, and in the end he himself and the entire remnant of his host were captured and taken to Mansurah. He purchased freedom for himself and his followers at the price of 80,000 gold pieces and the surrender of Damietta; after which, his religious enthusiasm still undamped, instead of

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returning to France he went on into Syria. There he spent nearly four years in fruitless efforts to establish peace among the jarring factions of the Christians themselves, in restoring fortresses, and in making plans and again plans for the relief of Jerusalem. He also appealed for help to Europe, and even sought to secure the support of the English King by offering to cede Normandy and Poitou in return for it. Little heed, however, was paid to his earnest solicitations; and in 1254 the news of the Queen-Mother's death compelled him to return to France. He had accomplished nothing. But the attempt gave him a certain spiritual satisfaction, and, as he was soon to testify, his Crusading zeal was unabated.

One event which occurred during his absence was so closely connected with it that it may find mention here, though in fact its social significance was far broader than such connexion would lead us to suppose. This was the Pastoureaux revolt, or rising of the poor peasantry, in 1251. Their leader was a strange man, half fanatic, half adventurer, whose real name remains unknown, but who was commonly called 'the Master of Hungary.' He went through the north of France declaring that it was the will of the Blessed Virgin, as revealed to him in a vision, that the *pastoureaux*, or shepherds, should set forth to rescue the King. The crowds gathered fast and reached Paris many thousands strong. Then they broke through all restraint and, streaming southward, abandoned themselves to all kinds of violence. Finally the Master was killed by a butcher who clove his head with a hatchet, and his following dispersed like smoke. As this curious outburst of mob fury is in part at least to be traced to the ever-growing evils of ecclesiastical despotism, it has a certain importance as a sign of popular unrest.

LOUIS' SECOND CRUSADE

Louis' first Crusade had been disastrous. His second was destined to prove fatal.

While busily engaged with his internal reforms he had not been unmindful of the critical condition of things in the East, 128

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and he was deeply moved by the news which reached him, now of the unchecked ravages of Tartar hordes in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, now of the massacre of believers, now of the destruction of the church at Nazareth. The determination to which he came in 1266 to lead another expedition of the Cross filled his counsellors with consternation and caused profound dissatisfaction among his people. He was, indeed, wholly unfit for the labours and fatigues which he had resolved to undertake, for his physical weakness was such that, as Joinville records, he could not sit on a horse and could scarcely bear the motion of a vehicle. Yet his indomitable spirit rose superior to all infirmities, and after four years of preparation he set out on the journey from which he was never to return. His brother, Charles of Anjou, now King of Sicily, had persuaded him to strike first at Tunis. In due course that city was besieged. But the extreme heat of the season, the want of fresh food and pure water, and the frightful sandstorms which swept the country played havoc with his troops. A deadly plague broke out in the camp, and daily carried off appalling numbers of men. Louis himself was soon attacked by it; his enfeebled state made him an easy victim, and he succumbed on August 25, 1270, at the age of fifty-five, thus crowning his life with martyrdom. The collapse of his enterprise marks the real end of the Crusades.

THE CHARACTER OF ST LOUIS

St Louis so completely sums up the religious and chivalrous ideals of the Middle Ages that a brief analysis of his character is desirable.

Tall and well built, with the bright eyes, the fair complexion, and much of the personal beauty of the Hainault family, to which his grandmother Isabelle belonged, Louis was, in earlier life at least, a fine and imposing man. There was something peculiarly angelic, observers noted, about the expression of his face. Notwithstanding his humility, the kingly dignity of his carriage was unmistakable, and while his manners were marked by serenity and cheerfulness, even those who were

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in most intimate relationship with him were aware that he had his reserves. The central interest and the one controlling power in his life was, of course, religion. The influence of this pervaded all his activities and shaped his conduct down to its most trivial details. He paid punctilious attention to the devotional exercises which had their appointed places in each day's scheme of work ; and Masses, *horae*, and Bible readings were never interrupted even by the exigencies of his campaigns, since, as a contemporary tells us, " while he rode, his clerks on horseback chanted the canonical hours as if they were in church." His own share in such exercises was marked by the utmost intensity of spiritual ardour ; when, for example, in the celebration of the Eucharist he went to the altar, it was not walking, but on his knees, and " he received the true body of Jesus Christ " with " many sighs and groans." ¹ He not only attended with scrupulous exactitude all the services, ordinary and extraordinary, of the calendar, but was also passionately given to the practice of private prayer and meditation. His interest in the more formal aspects of religion was equally great ; he loved pious conversation and discussions of the subtle points of doctrine, and sermons and Scriptural expositions were among the chief pleasures of his life. Nor was his piety a matter of personal emotion and consolation only. It had a practical side, which was highly characteristic of the Middle Ages, in the attention which he constantly gave to the poor and the sick ; concerning which the chroniclers have much to record which is often strange and sometimes quite repulsive to modern taste. One illustration, which rests on the authority of Queen Marguerite's Confessor, will serve to show the frequent combination of the touching and the grotesque in those works of charity which the age held in such high esteem. One Good Friday, when he was making his customary pilgrimage to the neighbouring churches (bare-footed, or rather, after his wont on such occasions, wearing shoes without soles, so that the flesh might not be seen though the naked feet touched the ground), he met a leper walking

¹ Galfrid de Beaulieu, *Vie de St Louis*.

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on the other side of a narrow street, and, in accordance with the law, ringing his bell to warn all chance comers to get out of his way. "Then the King, thus warned, perceived him, and went toward him, for this purpose setting his feet in the cold muddy waters which ran in the middle of the street ; he joined the leper, gave alms to him, and kissed his hand."

It is not surprising that such devotional fervour led Louis to asceticism. His temperament was indeed of the cheerful kind ; he loved hunting, dogs, horses, and falcons ; he was fond of innocent gaiety, though he frowned on secular romances and music, and, it is expressly recorded, never permitted himself to laugh on Friday. Yet ascetic practice was part of his system. He used fasting and abstinence ; was strongly attached to the mortification of the hair shirt till on the ground of health and kingly duty he was persuaded by his spiritual father to abandon it ; and for many years he had himself scourged every Friday by his confessor. Such practices he also recommended to those who were nearest to him ; for example, he sent a gift of disciplinary scourges to his daughter the Queen of Navarre, begging that she would scourge herself at times "for her own sins and for the sins of her poor father." Sometimes his austerities were childishly trivial ; as when, because he did not like beer, he made it his drink during Lent. More generally he renounced all luxury in eating, drinking, and dress for himself as an individual ; although, believing that these things had a proper place and purpose in the sphere of kingship (of the dignity of which he thought much), he encouraged them officially and in his royal surroundings.

His excessive devotion and minute attention to the exercises of piety were severely criticized by some of his great nobles, who held that they were more fitting for a monk than for a king. This view seems to have been recognized by Louis himself, who, it is said, at one time entertained the idea of abdicating in favour of his son and joining one of the mendicant orders. Yet it is to mistake his character entirely to regard him as a weak sentimentalist. He was on the contrary a thoroughly virile man. There was no suggestion of feebleness

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or vacillation in his management of public affairs, into which he carried conspicuous intelligence and firmness. He asserted himself with much effect against his powerful vassals, and held his own in his conflicts with Emperor and Pope. He was a good fighter, and his coolness and heroism in battle were, like his quiet courage in critical emergencies, remarkable. When it seemed to him that the occasion required it, he could be stern and inflexible even (as we should deem it) to cruelty ; as when, despite the protestations of his priests and the prayers of the ladies of his Court, including the Queen, he confirmed the sentence against a faithless woman who had compassed the death of her husband, and so sent her to be publicly burned at the stake.

What perhaps impresses us most in his character is his fine religious sense of the duties of kingship and the entire unselfishness with which he sought to discharge them. While lying as he thought at the point of death in 1258, he said to his son Louis (who himself died shortly after) : " Fair son, I pray you to make the people of your kingdom love you, for in sooth I would rather that a Scotsman came from Scotland to govern the people of this kingdom well than that you should govern them ill in the sight of all." No one can deny that, according to his lights, Louis sought to live up to his own ideal. He wins our admiration too by the way in which, in the true spirit of Christianity, he tried always to make peace even between his enemies, instead of following the usual practice of the rulers of his time, and fostering their contentions in order to take advantage of them.

In all these respects Louis far transcended the average working morality of his century. It is hardly necessary to add that at many other points he was still essentially a man of that century. We see this very clearly in the ferocity of his edicts against blasphemers and in his brutal treatment of Jews and heretics. When we find even the good St Louis formally declaring that if a layman hears the Christian faith ill spoken of by a Jew he should not try to answer him with argument, but should thrust his sword into the body of the

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miscreant "as far as it will go," we realize with painful vividness how utterly impossible it is for even the best of men to escape from some of the worst prejudices of their age.

We have also, of course, to recognize that there is much in Louis' character to remind us of the stiff and pinched ideal of humanity which medieval Christianity developed as its highest type. Yet, whatever its limitations, its nobility, purity, and greatness remain conspicuous and engaging. It has been said that no man could ever carry virtue farther than this pious thirteenth-century king; and the significance of the eulogy may be gauged by the fact that the eulogist was none other than Voltaire.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RENAISSANCE

IT will be convenient to pause at this point in our narrative to glance at the intellectual condition of France during the period of which St Louis is the central figure. Our habit of dividing history sharply into epochs leads us too often to think of the Renaissance as a movement which (so far as France is concerned) began suddenly toward the end of the fifteenth century. This common view is entirely erroneous. Premonitions of the great revival may be detected amid the deepest darkness of the Middle Ages, and in increasing strength and variety from the close of the eleventh century onward, while the thirteenth century may fairly be described as the time of its early spring. It is true that, for reasons which will become apparent in the sequel, this season of progress was followed by a long period of decline: the fulfilment of its promise being, in fact, postponed for nearly two hundred years. Its own achievements none the less make it extremely important as a stage in the history of the French people.

Many influences were already at work creating a strong current of new intellectual life. The development of commerce, by establishing wider and more varied relations between man and man and country and country, was doing much to break down the narrow boundaries within which thought and sympathy had long been confined. The corresponding growth of the towns at the same time favoured the evolution of a type of character and a range of ideas radically unlike those which were fostered in the strongholds of medievalism—the cloister and the castle; for the secular interests and the civic demands of these busy centres of practical activity were inevitably productive of a spirit at once positive, independent,

SPRING-TIME OF THE RENAISSANCE

progressive, and fundamentally hostile both to sacerdotalism and to the principles of feudalism. Conditions thus emerged which greatly encouraged freedom of thought, the expansion of the lay mind, and the rise of the *bourgeoisie*. Contact with Arabian culture in Spain, and, through the Crusades, with the Far East, also proved a potent force, directly and indirectly, in the intellectual awakening of the Western world; while the revived study of the literature of classical antiquity, though its full influence was not felt till much later, tended from the first to sap the foundations of medievalism, in life and thought.

Though universities now existed in many other French cities, that of Paris was indisputably the centre of the intellectual life of the country. The schools of the capital—of Notre-Dame, of Sainte-Geneviève, of Saint-Victor, and others of only less note—had long been famous throughout Europe; but the incorporation of these separate schools into a university, with its four faculties of theology, law, medicine, and art, belongs to the early part of the thirteenth century. Fifty years later an important new chapter in the history of the institution was opened with the inauguration of the college system. The vast influx of students made it increasingly difficult to provide adequate accommodation for them; they were fleeced by unscrupulous lodging-house keepers; and at the same time they suffered much in morals from the fact that their dispersion about the city rendered effective control and discipline impossible. An attempt was made to correct these evils by the foundation of cheap and well-regulated *hospitia*, or hostels. But these were boarding-places only, and were in no way connected with the academic organization itself. The happy idea of making a student's place of residence the place also of his tuition then occurred to Robert de Sorbon, St Louis' chaplain and confessor, who, with the King's consent, established in 1253 the first of the colleges of the University of Paris, the famous Sorbonne. This, which was devoted exclusively to the study of theology, is the only college which dates from the thirteenth century. By the

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middle of the following century, however, at least twenty-five other colleges, small and great, were in existence ; by the end of it the number had risen to forty. In general, the condition of these colleges was deplorable ; the students were often so poor that they had to live by begging ; bad food, dirt, and neglect of the elementary principles of sanitation made diseases of the most loathsome kinds prevalent among them ; and they were frequently guilty of rioting, street fighting, and the grossest debaucheries. But the fame of the university was at this period firmly established, and the lectures of some of the greatest of European scholars who from time to time taught there gave it a glory and an influence beyond any other educational institution. The French Abélard, the Italian Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas, the Swabian Albertus Magnus, the English Roger Bacon, and the Scotch (or Irish) Duns Scotus may be mentioned among the most celebrated of the great doctors who helped, in contemporary phrase, to make Paris a second Athens.

It is to the University of Paris, then, that we have to turn if we would learn something of the scholarship and the higher intellectual activities of France during the later Middle Ages ; and here the facts which come to light are such as to impress us at first with the tragic disparity between the energies put forth and the value of the results accomplished. The best thought of the time was expended upon the dogmas of medieval theology (for a full mastery of which a course of fourteen years of rigorous study was prescribed) and upon the subtleties of that kind of philosophy which is called scholasticism ; the great aim of which was not the independent search after truth, but the re-establishment by the processes of reason of the truth already authoritatively given by revelation. The medieval philosopher was not a scientist ; he cared nothing for the facts of external nature ; he had neither telescope nor microscope nor chemical apparatus nor battery nor museum to help him ; and if, as a recent writer has said, deprivation of these aids from without only made him think the harder,¹

¹ Rickaby, *Scholasticism*, p. 9.



14. THE CATHEDRAL, AMIENS



SPRING-TIME OF THE RENAISSANCE

it happened with him as it happens with every thinker whose mind is divorced from reality—he lost himself amid barren speculations and meaningless trivialities. As he worked without any sound material to work upon, his thought necessarily lacked substance; and as a result (to adopt the quaint comparison of old Fuller), like a person living in a crowded street, he ran his house up high because he had so little ground to build upon. Yet puerile and pedantic as his subjects and methods now seem to us to have been, their importance from an historical point of view must still be recognized. In the philosophizing of the schools we may see the mind beginning to strike out for itself amid all the encumbrances of ignorance and tradition; and if the discussions of rival theorists about nominalism and realism almost invariably degenerated into logic-chopping and hair-splitting of the most futile sort, they still provided an outlet for the awakening spirit of intellectual adventure, while it was through them that the claims of reason and inquiry were first set forth. This is true even in respect of those philosophers in whom the purely medieval temper is most apparent, like Peter Lombard (1100–60), Bishop of Paris, and—most famous of all the theologians of the Middle Ages—Thomas Aquinas (? 1226–74). It is even more conspicuously true in respect of the few really independent thinkers here and there who sought to emancipate themselves to some extent from the intellectual trammels of their time. Such a one in particular was the great Pierre Abélard (1079–1142), who lectured at Paris, it is said, to five thousand pupils, and who, when the shame of public scandal forced him to leave the capital, was followed into his retreat near Troyes by multitudes of ardent disciples. His powerful advocacy of the rights of reason and his insistence upon the open mind as the only condition for the pursuit of truth made him a marked man, and, as the Church held, a very dangerous one, in his generation. Yet Abélard still worked along the lines of purely metaphysical inquiry, and, radical as he was in specific doctrine, his place is therefore among the typical schoolmen. Hence less importance really attaches to his labours than to the

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halting efforts of those rare students of nature who, turning from the abstractions of formal logic and system-building to the world about them, gave the first impulse toward modern methods of scientific research. Chief among these was the great contemporary of St Louis and Thomas Aquinas, Roger Bacon, who more than any other man of his age sought to bring the mind back to reality, and whose significance as a pioneer of those inductive principles which we commonly associate with his more famous namesake and successor is now fully recognized by every historian of thought. Bacon's rôle was, of course, European; but he enters specially into our story because he was for a time connected with the University of Paris, and suffered ten years' imprisonment in the French capital as a heretic and servant of the devil.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERATURE

Meanwhile, outside the field of theology and scholastic philosophy the revival of intellectual interests was apparent in the development of general literature. This development followed many lines.

South of the Loire, through the greater part of that fertile region which we know as Provence, lyrical poetry flourished with extraordinary vigour from about the middle of the twelfth century for upward of a hundred years. This poetry was essentially aristocratic and chivalrous in character. The *troubadours*, as the Provençal poets were called, formed a well-recognized caste, and whether they themselves belonged (as was often the case) to the nobility or sprang from a humbler stock, they were entirely court poets, who depended upon princely favour and sought inspiration and audience among the great knights and ladies of the land; among their principal patrons being the Counts of Provence and of Toulouse. Their poetry was therefore almost wholly a poetry of war, gallantry, the subtleties of passion, and the metaphysics of love; it had little about it that was popular either in theme or in style; and while it was undoubtedly marked by much beauty of language and versification, it was artificial in manner and

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strained and conventional in feeling. The crusade against the Albigenses brought the Golden Age of Provençal literature to an abrupt and tragic close, and though many efforts were later made to revive the old enthusiasm for "the gay science" of song, the real poetic glory of the south had now departed for ever. Flying before the combined forces of military brutality and ecclesiastical fanaticism, many of the *troubadours* found refuge at the little Italian courts; and thus they came to exercise a considerable influence on Italian poetry—even on that of Dante and Petrarch.

In the north during the same period there was also lyrical poetry in abundance, and most of this, like the poetry of the Provençal singers, was inspired by the two great interests of the age of chivalry—fighting and love. Some of these northern poets belonged to the highest ranks of feudal society, like Thibaut IV, Count of Champagne and King of Navarre, who wrote verse that was good enough to earn the praise of Dante. Others were professional minstrels, like Colin Muset of Champagne, who spent his life in wandering from castle to castle, repaying hospitality with song, and Blondel de Nesle, who is famous for his connexion with the story of Richard I's captivity, and Philippe de Nanteuil, who went to Egypt with the Sixth Crusade, and Bodel, who followed St Louis to the Holy Land. But one important difference between these *trouvères* and the *troubadours* of the south is to be noted in the fact that while the latter were almost exclusively lyrists, the former showed from the first a strong bias toward story-telling. The fondness for verse-narrative, which had long been exhibited in the immense *chansons de gestes*, or tales of the exploits of popular heroes, like Alexander the Great, Arthur, and Charlemagne, began as time went on to express itself in somewhat different forms, and in some of the innumerable *romans d'aventures* of the thirteenth century we may perceive a tendency toward a freer and more varied treatment of life and character. But the very flower of medieval romance in France is the exquisite *cantefable* (or story told in a mixture of verse and prose) entitled *Aucassin et Nicolette*, which in the delicacy of

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its sentiment and its simple charm remains a little masterpiece of its kind.

For the most completely representative French poem of the Middle Ages, however, we have to turn to the celebrated *Roman de la Rose*, the translating of which gave our own Chaucer his real introduction to the practice of verse. This work is in two parts, and it is a special feature of its interest that these two parts are strikingly different in matter and tone. The first, which is the production of Guillaume de Lorris (about 1225), is a discourse in which the whole art of love is unfolded ("où l'art d'amors est tote enclose"), and its mysticism, scholastic subtlety, chivalrous idealism, and elaborately wrought allegory combine to make it typical of one side of the taste and culture of the time. Another, and contrasted, side is presented in the second part, added by Jean de Meung some fifty years later (perhaps about 1280). Though the allegorical method is preserved, the whole spirit of the poem is changed. Guillaume de Lorris' pretty fancies, philosophical abstractions, and fine-spun disquisitions on love and kindred topics now disappear, to make way for a vigorous satire on some of the political and ecclesiastical abuses of contemporary society. The new poet is rough and often coarse; he is humorous, irreverent, and often astonishingly sceptical; in his reaction against the ascetic restraints of clerical ethics he descends at times to open profligacy. Realistic descriptions and classical allusions alike abound in his work; while his substitution of a cynical treatment of women and love for the conventional idealism of his predecessor is especially noteworthy. Taking the two divisions together, we may therefore say that the *Roman de la Rose* both epitomizes the Middle Ages and marks the beginning of their end.

Nor is Jean de Meung's work by any means the only expression in medieval French literature of the movement toward realism, of the growth of the popular element, and of the spread of that free, vivacious, often mocking and sometimes mutinous spirit which French writers call the *esprit gaulois*. Side by side with the courtly lyrics and romances in which

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chivalrous themes were developed and chivalrous sentiments expressed for the delectation of the aristocratic few, other kinds of literature now began to evolve, reflecting the life and humours of the *bourgeoisie* and lower classes and giving voice to their restlessness and discontent. In the *fabliaux*, or short stories and anecdotes in verse, which reached their perfection in the thirteenth century, we have a native product of the popular genius working independently of court and schools, and the well-marked realism and racy satire of these smack unmistakably of the soil from which they sprang. In the topical verse of the *bourgeois trouvère* Rutebeuf (c. 1230-c. 1280), again, we are equally aware that we are passing out of the bounds of courtly society into a world of entirely different interests and ideas. But nowhere is the anti-feudal and anti-chivalrous spirit in thirteenth-century literature so pronounced as in the famous beast-epic the *Roman de Renart*, which is, at bottom, a parody of the aristocratic romance of love and knighthood. With the numerous problems connected with the genesis and transformations of this extraordinary work we are not here concerned. We have only to note that in its mocking tone, its unabashed cynicism, and its incidental pungent satire upon ideals and sentiments which were still traditional in aristocratic circles it everywhere reminds us that the old order of society is fast falling into decay.¹

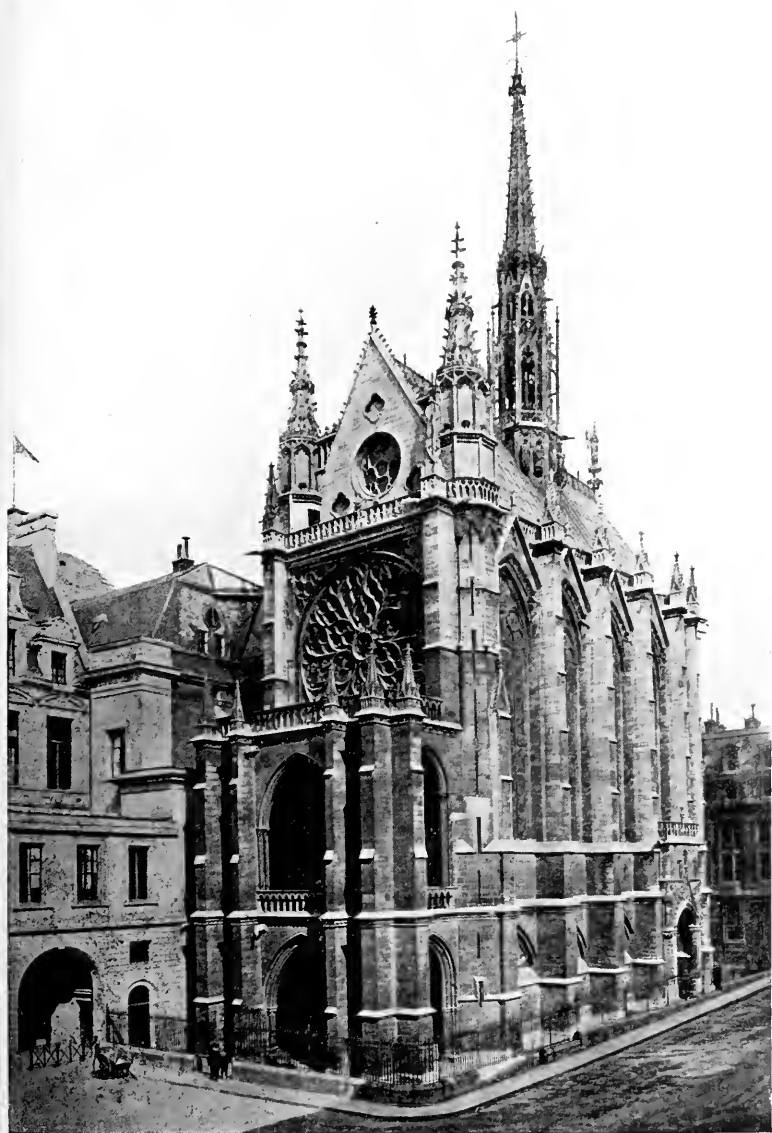
The drama of the period now in question is no less significant than its other kinds of literature of the changes which were coming over its temper and aims. The religious drama, which emerged from the liturgy and commenced a separate existence in France (its birthplace) toward the end of the eleventh century, was flourishing in full vigour during the thirteenth, and plays representing scenes from the Bible and the lives of the saints were periodically performed before immense crowds on scaffolds erected in streets and squares in all the chief cities of the country. Yet while these edifying spectacles

¹ The *Roman de Renart* gripped the popular imagination, and its amazing vogue is curiously shown by the fact that the name of its hero, though at first only a proper name, soon displaced *goupil* as the accepted word for 'fox.'

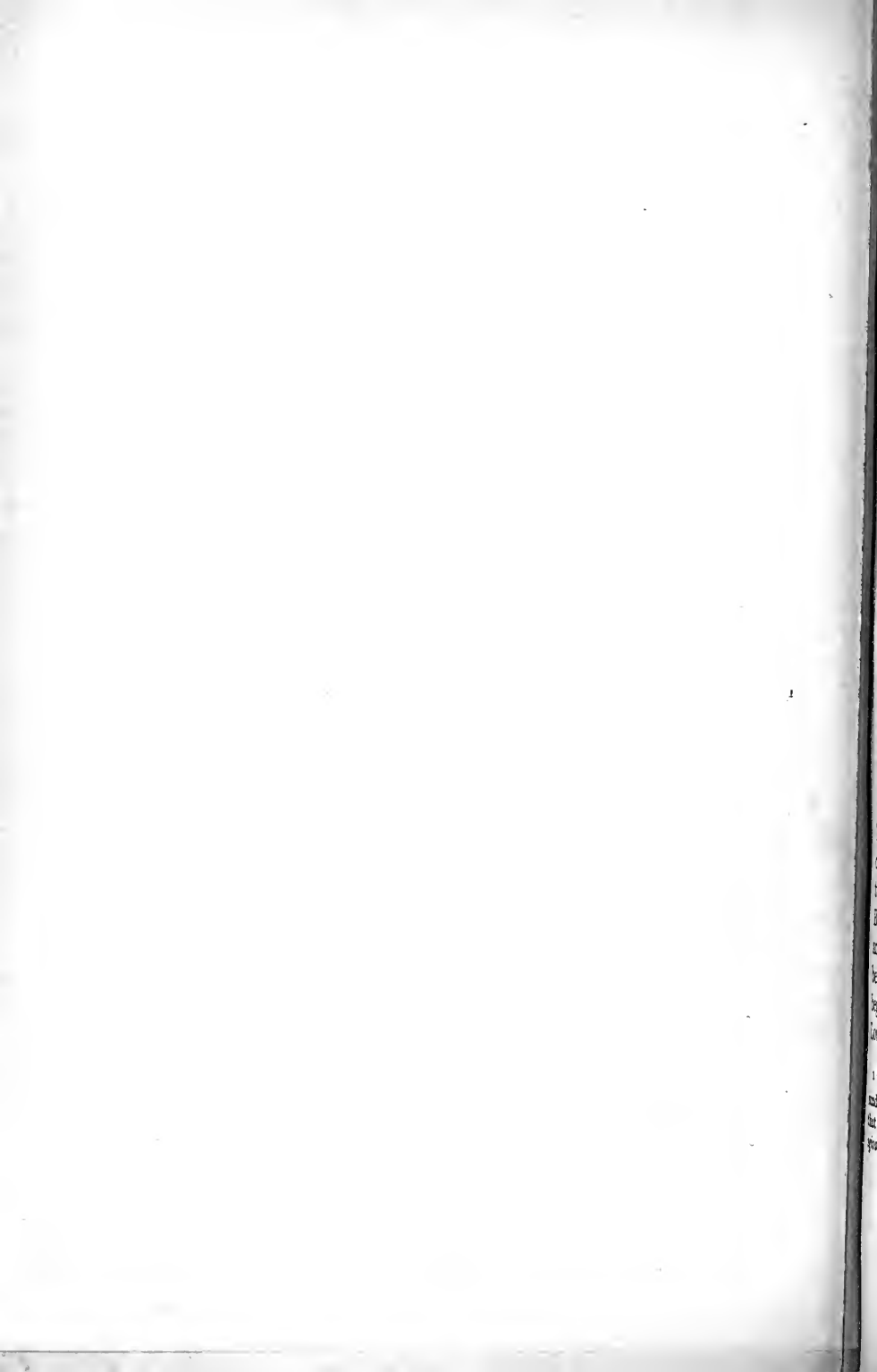
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bore ample testimony to the continued ardour of religious belief, they already began to hint in many ways at influences which were foreign to their original intentions. The tendency toward a more realistic handling of character, quite obvious here and there, and the encroachment of the comic element, mark in particular the growth of the secular spirit in what had formerly been the vehicle only for the popularizing of ecclesiastical dogma. This is even more clearly shown in the rise, under the name of *jeu*, of a rudimentary form of independent drama. The singular bit of dramatized autobiography *Le Jeu d'Adam*, or *de la Feuillée*, in which Adam de la Halle (1240-88) put himself, his father, and various other citizens of his native town of Arras on the stage, is commonly regarded by historians of literature as the first French comedy. In the same way, the same writer's pastoral *Le Jeu de Robin et de Marion* contains the germs of that thoroughly characteristic product of French dramatic genius, the light opera.

The development of French prose for purposes other than those of imaginative literature must also be referred to as one of the most noteworthy achievements of this time. From a very early period it had been the practice in most of the great monasteries to keep regular records of important events, local and national, and this had led in many places to the digesting of such records into systematic chronicles. First written in ecclesiastical Latin, some of these were presently turned into French, and a distinct movement toward the secularizing of history was thus initiated. But real history may be said to have begun in France with Geoffroi de Villehardouin's *Conquete de Constantinoble*, a narrative of the Fourth Crusade, in which the author himself had taken a prominent part. In its graphic force, its breadth of view, and the clearness and sincerity of its narrative this was a new thing in French literature. Villehardouin had several successors in the thirteenth century, but the only one who here calls for note is that Jean de Joinville who has already been mentioned as the companion and confidant of St Louis. His biography of his royal friend, the work, as we have seen, of his extreme



15. THE SAINTE-CHAPELLE



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old age, though entirely wanting in Villehardouin's vigour, is very charming by reason of its *naïveté* and sympathy.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ART

Yet though literature thus expresses under various forms, all of which are therefore historically interesting, the activity of French genius during the central Capetian era, the great achievements of that genius are of course to be sought, not in lyric or romance or drama, but in church, castle, and hall. The glory of the Middle Ages was that style of architecture which is known popularly as Gothic,¹ more correctly as Pointed; and the pride of its paternity belongs to France. Arising by a series of transformations out of the Romanesque architecture of the tenth century, this new style made rapid progress toward perfection during the epoch of that general national revival which accompanied the consolidation of the kingdom and the growth of the royal supremacy. A passion for church-building now inspired the whole country, and, among countless minor monuments of religious enthusiasm and artistic power, those magnificent cathedrals began to rise which are among the lasting wonders of the world. These are, in the strictest sense of the term, great national creations, for the learning and the skill of France were at the disposal of those who reared them, and kings and bishops, nobles, clergy, and people, according to their respective measures, alike contributed to their erection. The second half of the twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth centuries were the great age of French ecclesiastical architecture, and it was during this period that the cathedrals of Amiens, Beauvais, Soissons, Chartres, Noyon, Laon, Reims, Langres, and Bourges came into existence. Notre-Dame in Paris also belongs to the same epoch of marvellous activity, for it was begun in 1160 under Louis VII, and finished in 1235 under Louis IX, and to this may be added the exquisite Sainte-

¹ 'Gothic' has no real justification, and in fact carries with it etymologically sundry incorrect connotations; but it is so firmly lodged in current speech that it would be absurd to refuse to use it. The French alternative term *ogival* is derived from the 'ogive,' or pointed arch.

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Chapelle, built by St Louis as a shrine for the relics which he brought back with him from the Holy Land.

Yet while these great religious buildings naturally occupy the first place in our admiration, it is a mistake to suppose that Gothic architecture was in essence an expressly religious type of art. Its adaptability to secular purposes was shown on the one hand in the great castles of the feudal nobility, on the other hand in the fine public edifices—the town-halls and the courts of justice—which grew up along with the churches in all the more important cities. The immense progress of civic architecture is particularly interesting because it serves to connect the history of Gothic art with the rise of the middle classes and the evolution of the towns. It should be added that though the arts in general were still in their infancy, the development of architecture gave a decided impulse to certain ancillary crafts, like those of stained-glass making and sculpture. The skill of the goldsmith was also encouraged by the spreading love of church decoration. The increasing use of tapestries in houses may also be mentioned as a sign of growth in domestic comfort and taste.

Even so brief a sketch as the foregoing will suffice to make good the opening statement of this chapter that the thirteenth century in France was an age of progress along many lines. The causes which combined to arrest that progress will become clear as our story proceeds.

CHAPTER IX

PHILIPPE III ('LE HARDI')

1270-1285

PHILIPPE IV ('LE BEL')

1285-1314

SAINT LOUIS was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, Philippe III, called, for no very obvious reason, 'le Hardi,' or 'the Bold.' Owing to a curious absence of contemporary records, our knowledge of his character and of the details of his reign is very slight. He appears, however, to have been a pious and well-meaning man of limited education and very mediocre intelligence. On the whole, he carried on his father's policy, though he revived the tournament and was far less stringent than Louis had been in regard to judicial duels. The outstanding feature of his reign is the continued steady growth of the royal power. This was exemplified in various ways. By the acquisition of the county of Toulouse, with most of its subordinate territories, Philippe greatly strengthened his position in the south. He dealt severely with such nobles here and there as still disturbed the public peace, and crushed without difficulty a few small movements of revolt. The number of 'royal cases' brought before the Parliament of Paris showed a yearly increase, and this meant the further weakening of the baronial courts. The King's authority was also asserted against the Church in the correction of an ecclesiastical abuse which was fast becoming a scandal. Large numbers of men took the tonsure, thus becoming clerics in name, and then, though they lived as laymen, carried on business as laymen, and as laymen married, they claimed as clergy all the privileges of clerical immunity in respect of

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civil law and taxation. Philippe destroyed such privileges and brought these pseudo-clerics under State control. He also made the Church contribute substantially to his exchequer by imposing a tax, equal to two or three years' rent of the same, on all the new property which it acquired. All this was a distinct advantage to civil government and helped the work of unification. In his choice of confidential advisers, too, Philippe made further inroads upon the prestige of the territorial nobility. It is generally said, though doubt is now thrown upon the statement, that he granted a patent of nobility to his steward Raoul, thus for the first time separating aristocracy from its old feudal basis in the land. It is certain that his favourites were men of middle rank. The most famous of these was one Pierre de la Broce, who had been his surgeon and *valet de chambre*, and by force of cleverness and ambition rose from this humble position to the highest place in the royal councils. His success stirred the hostility of the great nobles and of the King's second wife, Marie of Brabant; fierce quarrels ensued, and charges of treason were brought against the favourite. The case is obscure and much mixed up with Court scandals, and to disentangle the rights and wrongs of it would require more space than can be afforded here. It is enough to say that in June 1278 La Broce perished on the gibbet of Montfaucon, that enormous structure of solid masonry on the confines of the Faubourg Saint-Martin on which it is said (such was the provision then made for wholesale executions) sixty persons could be hanged together. La Broce's successor in the King's confidence was an abbot of Saint-Denis, whose influence was so strong that he was popularly regarded as the real master of France.

Philippe's foreign policy was also directed toward the expansion of the royal authority. Henri le Gros, King of Navarre and Count of Champagne, had on his death left one child only, a daughter, Jeanne, who was still a minor, and her mother, Blanche of Artois, a daughter of Charles of Anjou (Philippe's uncle), undertook to rule in her name. The Kings of Aragon and Castile, however, laid claim to the throne. On this Blanche

PHILIPPE IV

appealed to Philippe, who promptly affianced his second son (also Philippe) to Jeanne, and sent an army into Spain to secure her rights. The kingdom of Navarre and the county of Champagne were thus attached to the French Crown. A second interference in Spanish affairs was also prompted by family ambitions. By his despotism and cruelty Charles of Anjou had aroused the deadliest hatred of his Sicilian subjects. This hatred found vent in the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers. The crown of Sicily was then offered to the King of Aragon. Resolved to keep it in his own family, Philippe invaded Aragon ; but the expedition was a failure, and he died at Perpignan on his way home.

PHILIPPE IV

His son, Philippe IV, the husband of Jeanne of Navarre, now ascended the throne. He owed his popular surname of 'le Bel' to his great personal beauty, which won the admiration of all who saw him. This gives him a certain distinctness of outline against the background of his time. But of his character and mental and moral qualities we know even less than of his father's. It is even doubtful whether his personality counted at all in the policy which was pursued in his name, for it would rather seem that he was in the main an instrument merely of his advisers. But his reign was in many respects one of the most important in the earlier history of his country. Under him France became more manifestly than ever before the foremost Power in Europe, while royalty took an immense further stride toward absolutism.

The dominant factor in the shaping of these results was unquestionably the power of a new class of men—the legists, as they were called—who were devoted to the study of Roman law and sought to apply its principles to the administration of the kingdom. Under their influence the feudal conception of kingship began to give way to the imperial doctrine that the king's power is not only absolute, but also unique—a power differing in kind as well as in degree from that exercised by those beneath him. The anti-feudal tendencies of Capetian

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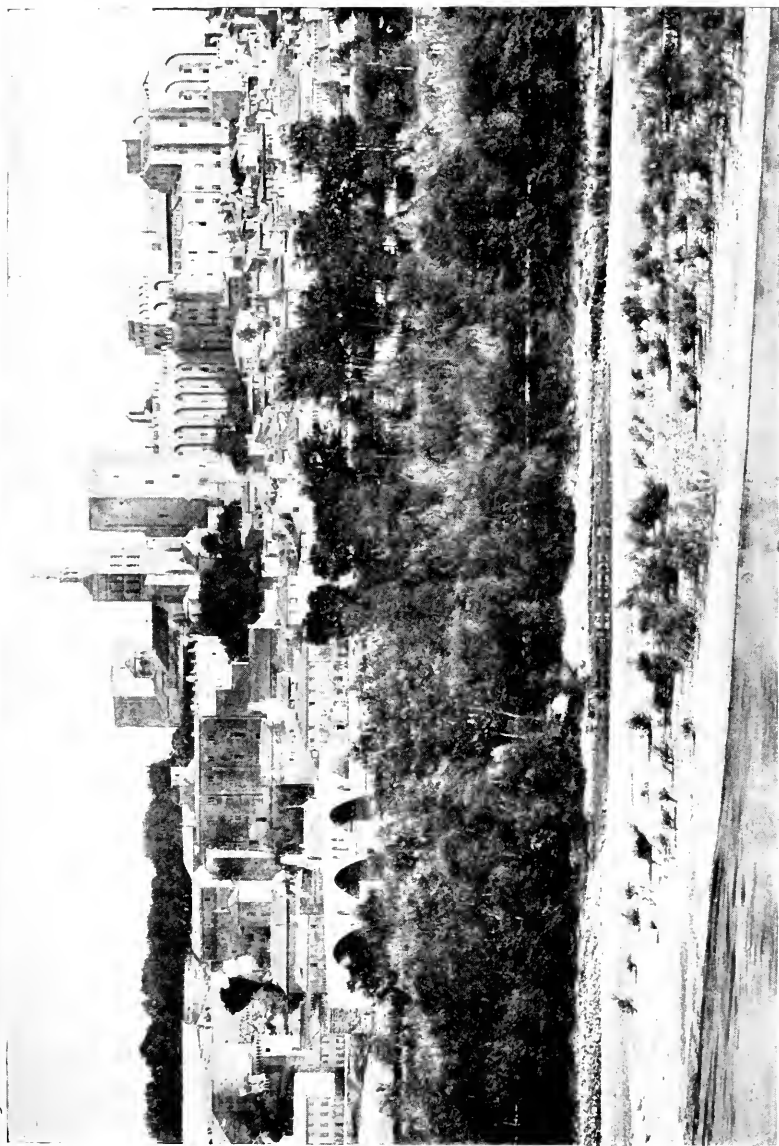
rule received an enormous impetus by being thus formulated, exhibited as part of an organized philosophy of government, and backed by all the authority which Roman antiquity was now beginning to acquire. All the King's chief counsellors—such men, for example, as Enguerrand de Marigny, Guillaume de Nogaret, and Pierre Dubois—belonged to this new Romanizing school.

PHILIPPE'S QUARREL WITH ROME

The inspiration of the imperial idea is clearly shown in Philippe's collision with Rome.

The Papacy had emerged, demoralized it is true, but still triumphant, from its long and bitter struggle with the Emperor, and Boniface VIII was now putting forth extravagant claims to universal sovereignty. These claims Philippe resisted. The quarrel began with a bull in which Boniface forbade the clergy to pay any taxes whatsoever without the permission of the Holy See, and proclaimed the excommunication of any ruler who levied taxes on Church property. Philippe retorted by prohibiting any money to be taken out of France into Italy, thus seriously crippling the Pope's income. Though he yielded for the moment and even sought peace with France, Boniface soon returned to the charge with a bull, *Unam Sanctam*, in which he asserted his temporal supremacy and threatened to depose Philippe. This action was resented by the legists, guided by whom Philippe replied that temporal power belonged to the temporal sovereign alone. The Pope tried to give effect to his threats by an edict of deposition and excommunication. Upon this Guillaume de Nogaret hastened into Italy, intrigued with various enemies of the Papacy, raised an army of adventurers, besieged the Pope in Anagni, seized him, and subjected him to all kinds of indignities. Shortly after this the old man died, his end doubtless hastened by anger and chagrin over his failure, and Philippe forced his successor, Benedict XI, to retract his claims. Then on Benedict's death he secured the election of a Frenchman, the Bishop of Bordeaux, who ascended the Chair as Clement V,

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16. THE PALACE OF THE POPES, AVIGNON



PHILIPPE IV

and in 1309 took up his residence at Avignon. This opened the period of 'Babylonish Captivity,' which lasted till 1377. and during which, established on French soil, the Papacy was largely the creature of the French king. The underlying significance of these events is clear. On the fall of the Empire the Pope sought to step into the Emperor's place as the acknowledged head of Europe. Philippe's resistance to his assertion of imperial rights was dictated by a determination to maintain the integrity and independence of the French monarchy.

Two important incidents are connected with this long quarrel. The first of these was the suppression of the order of the Templars. This military-religious brotherhood, it will be remembered, owed its origin to the First Crusade. It had grown rapidly in wealth and power in many countries, and nowhere more than in France. Philippe's determination to destroy it was perhaps inspired by the fear that, like the Teutonic Knights in Germany, its members might set up a principality of their own. He had reason for hostility, too, in the fact that, owing to the religious foundations of their institution, they regarded themselves as subjects, not of the King, but of the Pope. But undoubtedly the real cause of his action is to be sought in his cupidity; for they were immensely rich, while he was in desperate need of money. The weak and unscrupulous Pope connived in return for certain concessions on Philippe's part, and the policy of extermination was carried out with shocking cruelty. Taking advantage of the evil stories which were current about the immoral and blasphemous character of their secret rites, the King ordered the arrest of all their chiefs throughout the kingdom. Inhuman tortures wrung out of the wretched victims evidence enough to convict the whole brotherhood, and fifty-four Templars were roasted to death over slow fires in one day in Paris alone, while similar executions took place in all the principal provincial towns. At the Council of Vienne in 1312 the Pope himself formally pronounced the suppression of the order. But it was Philippe who mainly profited by it. He confiscated its great wealth very much as Henry VIII in

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England afterward confiscated the wealth of the suppressed monasteries.

More important than this, however, is the second event referred to—the emergence of the Third Estate in the affairs of the nation. The king's Council had hitherto consisted of members of two estates only—the nobility and the clergy. In 1302, when his relations with the Pope were at their stage of greatest tension, Philippe summoned his Council for advice, and at the same time, being anxious to secure the support of all his people, he called upon the towns to send two or three of their burghers each to represent them at the meeting. He made the same demand again when in 1308 the question of the Templars came up for discussion, and again in 1314, when the renewal of the war with Flanders made it necessary that he should at once raise a large sum of money. This entrance of the Third Estate into the political history of France (marking the beginning of the real States-General) was of course a consequence of the communal movement. But, interesting as it is, we must be careful not to exaggerate its importance. It is not to be compared in significance with the birth of the English Commons a little earlier, since the Third Estate in France, as we shall see, exercised no practical influence till the time of the Revolution.

PHILIPPE'S FOREIGN POLICY

As Philippe's domestic policy was directed to the consolidation of the royal authority, so his foreign policy was largely guided by his desire for its security, and, where opportunity offered, for its expansion.

His principal enemies were the King of England and the Count of Flanders, both of whom were ambitious to make themselves entirely independent of the French Crown. On the ground that Edward I was guilty of felony in refusing to appear in person before him to answer various charges, Philippe declared war and seized Guyenne. To strengthen his hand he formed an alliance with Scotland, then engaged in a fierce struggle with the English King. This was the beginning of

PHILIPPE IV

the long union of France and Scotland against England as their common foe. Edward on his side found a ready supporter in the discontented Count of Flanders. By the Treaty of Montreuil in 1299 peace was at length established with England, Philippe betrothing his daughter Isabelle to the heir to the English crown (afterward Edward II) and giving her Guyenne as a dowry. This arrangement, as we shall learn later, was fraught with serious consequences.

The peace with England was followed by the surrender of the Count of Flanders and the union of the county with the French Crown. But the extortions of the governor appointed over the province soon led to the revolt of nearly the whole Flemish people. A French army was despatched to quell the disturbance, and in the battle of Courtrai (1302) was almost wiped out by the militia of the Flemish towns, 20,000 men perishing to a bare hundred of the enemy. This disaster was retrieved in a fresh campaign by the victory of Mons-en-Pévèle, near Lille (1304). Philippe, however, was afraid to continue the war, which was brought to a close by the Treaty of Athis-sur-Orge in 1305. By this treaty Philippe retained Lille, Douai, and Orchies, but otherwise recognized the feudal independence of the Count. In this case, therefore, his ambitions suffered a serious check.

On the whole, Philippe's reign saw many improvements in administration. The steady rise of the Parliament of Paris toward a position of recognized judicial supremacy was a great corrective to feudal anarchy and an immense gain to good government. The effective management of public affairs was also furthered by the continued differentiation of functions. New official departments were established—the 'Hôtel,' which had charge of everything appertaining to the King's personal service—including, of course, the army—and the 'Chancellerie,' which was largely the King's executive; the work of the Council was more clearly defined; and out of this Council a 'Chambre des Comptes' was created to superintend national finance. But, on the other hand, with the growth of sovereignty toward absolutism the evils of absolutism began to appear.

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Philippe was hard and despotic, and sometimes, as in the affair of the Templars, unjust and cruel. The increasing expense of government also led him to various abuses of power, for the means by which he sought to refill his always empty Treasury were often such as merit the severest condemnation. The extermination of the Templars is a case in point; and arbitrary taxation, forced loans, and the persecution of Jews and foreign merchants have to be added to the list. His tamperings with the coinage, the value of which he altered in his own favour, come under the head of very sharp practice, if not of downright dishonesty.

Philippe le Bel died on November 29, 1314, at the age of forty-six.

CHAPTER X

THE END OF THE CAPETIAN DYNASTY

1314-1328

THREE sons of Philippe IV now occupied the throne in rapid succession—Louis X, called 'le Hutin,' or 'the Quarrelsome' (1314-1316); Philippe V, 'le Long,' or 'the Tall' (1316-1322); and Charles IV, 'le Bel,' or 'the Handsome' (1322-1328). With these the direct Capetian line comes to a close.

THE FEUDAL REACTION

The fourteen years of the combined reigns of these kings added little of much importance to the history of France. They are chiefly noteworthy for the resolute attempt of the nobility to regain the privileges which they had lost under the centralizing policy of the preceding kings. Intrigue secured the overthrow of most of the ministers who had guided the counsels of Philippe le Bel; some were imprisoned, others exiled; while Enguerrand de Marigny perished on the gibbet at Montfaucon which he himself had built—his fate thus recalling that of Haman of old. Then the nobles reasserted the rights of coinage, the judicial duel, and private war. This reaction against the growth of absolutism, as a French historian has pointed out,¹ might have led to results very similar to those attained by the English barons in their struggle with the monarchy, but for the fact that, instead of organizing among themselves and forming an alliance with the middle classes, as was the case in England, the French nobles acted independently, each man for himself, and for the most part against the interests of the rest of the nation. This is one of the

¹ Lavallée, *Histoire des Français*, t. i, p. 501.

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points at which we may clearly note the difference between the forces at work in the constitutional evolution of the two countries. Even as it was, however, the monarchy temporarily lost ground. In the interests of peace concessions of various kinds were made to the nobles, and many of the local privileges of feudalism were restored.

So far as the Crown was able to check this feudal reaction at all, it did so by cultivating the support of the commercial population, to which, indeed, in the changing financial conditions of the country, it had more and more to look for the necessary supplies. The frequent convocation of the States-General has therefore a certain significance, as has also the fact that Philippe V granted letters of nobility to men belonging to the burgher ranks. "In order," as the statement ran, "that the people might do business more securely," the same King further attempted to regulate the currency and the weights and measures of the realm, while Charles IV, though in his pressing need of money he did not scruple to debase the coinage, plunder the Jews, and obtain tithes from the Church under promises of a new Crusade, also concerned himself with industrial affairs. Such policy was in general for the advantage of the middle classes and to the detriment of the feudal aristocracy. But by far the most remarkable sign of the times from this point of view was the growing independence of the Parliament of Paris as the supreme agent of justice. This was specially exhibited in the case of a notorious Gascon count, named Jourdain de l'Isle, which came to a head in the reign of Charles IV. A survival from the worst days of feudal anarchy, this turbulent nobleman had lived for many years as a law unto himself, setting the King's authority at naught. On a charge of eighteen capital crimes he was at length summoned to appear before the Parliament. His reply was first to kill the official who delivered the summons, and then to ride into Paris with a large escort of friendly nobles and armed followers. By such display of insolence and brute strength he apparently expected to cow the ministers of justice. Fortunately he failed, and though Pope and nobles interceded for

END OF THE CAPETIAN DYNASTY

him, he was sent to the gallows. His fate was an emphatic proof that central justice was now a real power in France, and that the monstrous lawlessness of the age of Philippe I was a thing of the past.

In other ways, however, the spirit of social unrest was active. It found vent in particular, under Philippe V, in a fresh rising of the *pastourcaux*. Again a vast rabble of peasants and serfs collected with the avowed object of marching to the Holy Land, and again as they poured southward they left behind them, as the evidence of their passage, devastated homes, pillaged churches, and the corpses of murdered Jews. No one as yet deemed it worth while to inquire into the miseries which in part lay behind these disturbances. The revolt was simply quelled by the heroic method of massacre and wholesale executions. A cruel persecution of the Jews and lepers, whom vulgar fancy pictured as allied in the practice of nameless abominations, must also be mentioned in connexion with the social history of the time.

Though the later Capetians fully maintained the standard of their ancestors as a singularly handsome race, it was noted by the superstitious that the hand of fate seemed to be upon them. One by one they died young—Philippe IV at forty-six, Louis X at twenty-seven, Philippe V at twenty-eight, Charles IV at thirty-four. With the last-named the direct line of Hugues Capet ended. We now come to the circumstances in which the crown passed to a new, though closely connected, dynasty.

THE ORIGIN OF THE VALOIS DYNASTY

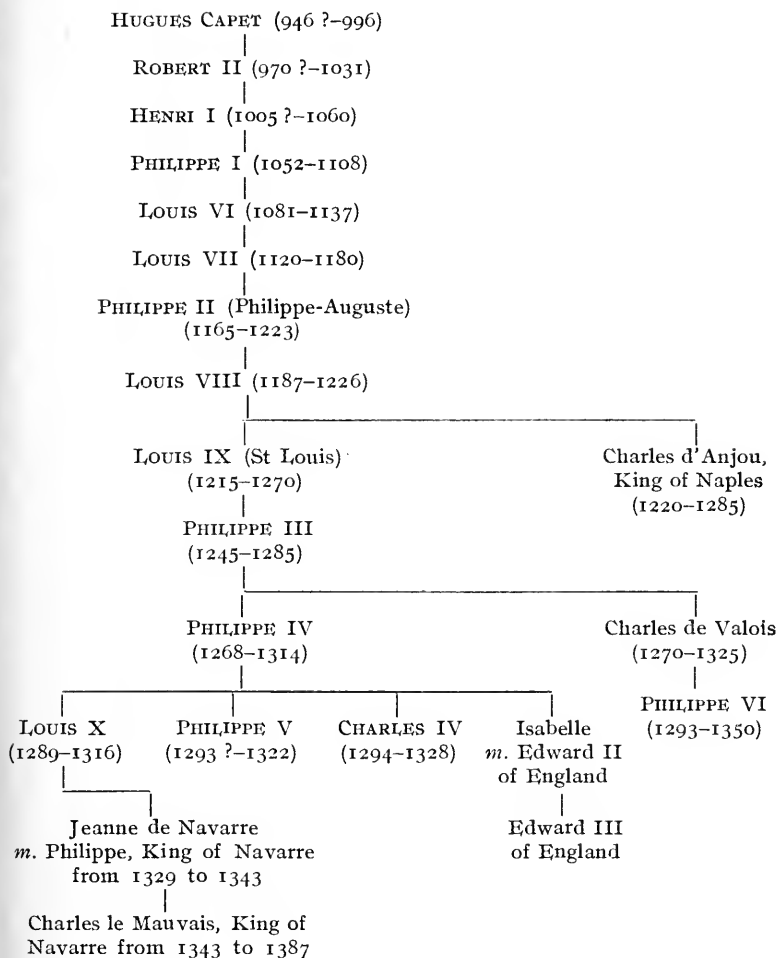
When Louis X died he left a daughter, but no male heir; a son who was born shortly afterward, and who appears in the chronological list of kings as Jean I, lived only a week. Louis' brother, Philippe, who meanwhile had been acting as regent, thereupon assumed the title of King, and to justify his position he called the Council together and caused them to declare that he was in fact the proper heir, since the crown of France could never pass to a female nor through a female line. This is the origin of the so-called Salic Law. The rule

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was based on a doubtful passage in the code of the Salian Franks, which, referring as it did to the transmission, not of the crown, but merely of ordinary property, had no bearings whatever upon the case to which it was now applied. Yet such rule not only served its immediate purpose, but also established a precedent; and to this precedent appeal was made a few years later when, as it happened, the problem of succession came up in a very similar form. Like Louis, Charles IV died without male heir, leaving his wife pregnant, and the instructions which he gave on his death-bed attest the hold which the Salic principle had already gained. "When Charles saw that he must die," writes Froissart, "he ordered that if the Queen should give birth to a boy, then Messire Philippe of Valois, his cousin-german, should be his tutor and the regent of the kingdom until such time as the boy should be of an age to be King; but if it happened that a girl was born, then the twelve peers and the high barons of France should take counsel and give the realm to him who ought to have it." Soon after his death the Queen gave birth to a girl. Then the barons met in deliberation as Charles had directed. Louis X's surviving daughter and the two daughters of Philippe V were passed over because it was now established that no woman could sit on the throne, and when later Edward III of England put in his claim as the son of Isabelle, daughter of Philippe IV, it was barred on the ground that it rested on descent in the female line. The choice of the barons accordingly fell upon the next male heir in the male line, who was Philippe of Valois, the son of Charles of Valois, Philippe IV's brother. Thus the direct Capetian dynasty was followed by the house of Valois.

The Capetians had ruled over France for 341 years, and this long period had witnessed, as we have seen, the practical transformation of the country. With the end of their line we are also within sight of the real end of the *régime* of feudalism. We are now about to enter upon the long period of transition from medieval to modern times.

THE HOUSE OF CAPET¹



¹ The dates given for each monarch are those of his birth and death. The date of accession synchronizes in every case with the death of the preceding king.

BOOK III

THE HOUSE OF VALOIS

1328-1589

CHAPTER I

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

THE FIRST STAGE (TO 1360)

WHEN Philippe of Valois ascended the throne the power of the monarchy was greater than it had been since the time of Charlemagne. Three-fourths of the territory of France now belonged to the royal domain, while of the remainder the most important parts were held in fief by the Kings of England and Navarre. The people were also on the whole prosperous, and, as things then went, happy, and both their prosperity and their happiness seemed likely to increase. The new reign therefore opened with brilliant promise. That promise was destined, however, to remain unfulfilled. Before long France was involved in the terrible struggle with England which for more than a century was to keep the country seething in anarchy and more than once to bring it to the verge of irretrievable disaster.

At the outset, indeed, there seemed a good chance of peace between the French King and his cousin, for Edward, pre-occupied with war in Scotland and complications at home, made no protest against Philippe's election to the throne, and even took the vow of vassalage in respect of his French holdings. But it was impossible that a good understanding should continue indefinitely while the King of England, firmly lodged on French soil, remained an obvious rival to his nominal suzerain. It would have been the height of folly on Philippe's part, too, to ignore the patent fact that Edward's claim to

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

the French throne, though renounced for the moment, would certainly be revived on the first convenient occasion. His perception of danger prompted him to act in a way which at once jeopardized peace, for in order to embarrass his rival he supported the Scots in their splendid stand for independence against him. Then came the affair of Robert of Artois, who quarrelled with Philippe about his ancestral estates, resorted to fraud and, it was alleged, to black magic, to maintain his rights, and finally, compelled to fly for his life, took refuge at Edward's Court. Philippe thereupon proclaimed (1336) that Robert was a public enemy, and that the property of any one abetting him would accordingly be confiscated. Edward understood, of course, that the threat was meant expressly for him, and, instigated by Robert, renewed his claims to the French crown, following this up with a declaration of war.

It happened that the Flemings, under the leadership of Jacob van Artevelde, a brewer of Ghent, were just then in revolt against the despotic Count of Flanders, the French King's vassal. Artevelde invited Edward to interfere in the Flemings' behalf, and urged him, as a justification of his action, at once to assume the title of King of France. This Edward, after some hesitation, was ultimately persuaded to do. In a naval engagement off the Dutch coast near Sluis, in 1340, the English fleet destroyed the French, and Edward was thus insured against any French invasion of his own shores. But his hands were tied by troubles with his nobles and clergy, and for some years no decisive step was taken by either side.

THE INVASION OF FRANCE BY EDWARD III

Further complications now arose in connexion with a dispute about the succession to the duchy of Brittany. Two claimants were in the field—one the uncle of the late Duke, John of Montfort, the other the late Duke's niece Jeanne, now the wife of Charles of Blois, of the royal house of France. Philippe naturally supported Jeanne; and this was of course sufficient reason for Edward to throw his influence into the other scale. Hostilities began between the competitors, and

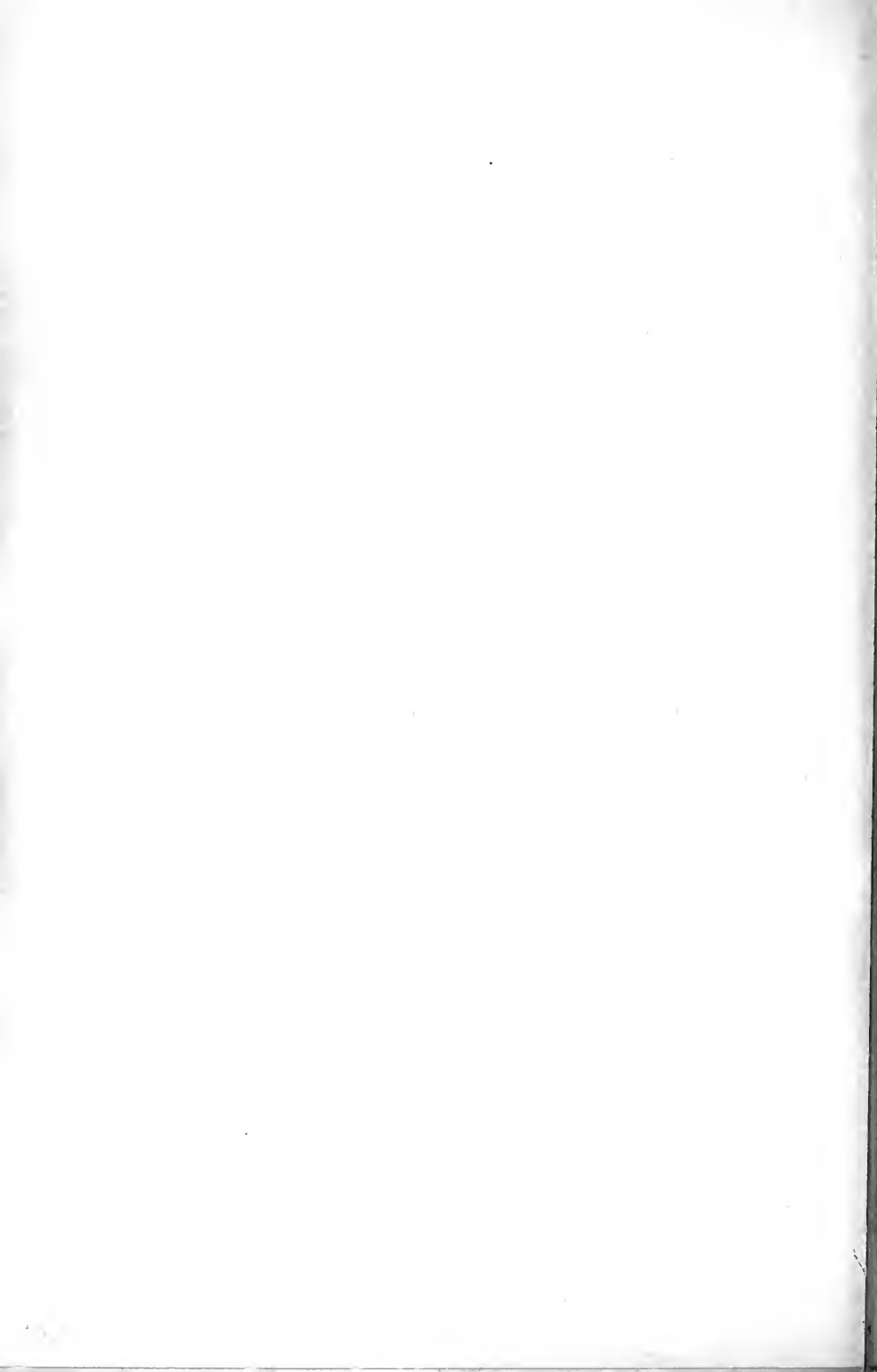
HISTORY OF FRANCE

when John was made a prisoner his wife, also named Jeanne, carried on the struggle with astonishing vigour; whence the conflict came to be known as the *Guerre des Deux Jeannes*, or War of the Two Joans. A truce was presently arranged which was to last till St Michael's Day 1346. But in the meantime Philippe invited fifteen knights of Brittany who had espoused the English cause to a tournament in Paris, where he had them arrested and executed without the formality of a trial. Upon this Edward decided upon the invasion of France. With his son, the Black Prince, and 32,000 men he landed on July 22, 1346, at La Hogue-Saint-Vaast, in Normandy, seized Barfleur, Cherbourg, Valognes, and Saint-Lô, captured Caen after a brief resistance, and, having failed in an attack on Rouen, pushed on toward Paris. Philippe advanced to meet him with a great army, and Edward, finding it advisable to fall back, drew up his forces on the slopes near Crécy, a village twelve miles north of Abbeville. There, on August 26, 1346, a sensational victory was won by the English, mainly by reason of the extraordinary skill and prowess of their bowmen. Froissart puts the number of the French army at 100,000, that of the English at 40,000. Of the French, eleven princes, eighty knights-bannaret, 12,000 simple knights, and 30,000 soldiers were slain.

Eight days later Edward was before the walls of Calais, which he had determined to capture, as the key to France. The city was strongly fortified, and he therefore resolved to starve it into submission. But so heroic was the resistance of the inhabitants under their governor, Jean de Vienne, that though the siege began in September 1346 it was not till the middle of the July following that, reduced to the direst extremities by hunger and disease, the men of Calais were driven to capitulation. Then comes one of the most moving passages in French history. An embassy was sent to Edward to sue for peace. His reply was that he would consider the request only on condition that six of the principal citizens, clothed only in their shirts, and each one with a halter round his neck, should bring him the keys of the city and deliver



17. THE BATTLE OF POITIERS



THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

themselves unreservedly into his hands. When Jean de Vienne returned with this response "he caused the bell to be rung that all manner of people might assemble in the market." Men and women came eager for news; and when they heard they began to weep so that the hardest heart would have been filled with pity to see them. Then after a space the richest burgher in the city, Eustache de Saint-Pierre, stood forth and offered himself as one of the delegation; "for I have," he said, "great hope of peace and pardon from our Lord if I die for this people." Five others soon joined him, and together they presented themselves as directed before the English King where he sat surrounded by his nobles. But Edward listened to their dignified appeal for mercy unmoved, and when they had done ordered them away for instant execution—an action which provides a curious commentary upon the boasted refinements of chivalry. Is his conduct at this point, we may wonder, to be included among those "honourable and noble adventures" which Froissart desired to "put in perpetual memory," that they might encourage others in similar well-doing? It was only through the passionate intercession of the Queen, Philippa of Hainaut, that the lives of Eustache and his fellows were spared.¹ The French inhabitants were then driven out, and Calais became an English colony.

A truce was now arranged between the two Kings which was continued till 1355. Five years before its expiration Philippe died, and the French throne was now occupied by his son, Jean II, called 'le Bon' ('the Good') a strange surname for a man who was violent in temper, vindictive, improvident, and dishonest. His 'goodness' apparently consisted wholly in his fair endowment of physical courage. Though the War of the Two Joans continued in Brittany, the renewal of hostilities between France and England began in the south. Jean was at variance with Charles le Mauvais, King of Navarre, whom, on the ground that he would have no one master in France except himself,² he had arrested at a banquet and thrown into prison; afterward laying siege to Breteuil in his dominions.

¹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, chap. cxlvi.

² *Ibid.*, chap. clvi.

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At this juncture the Black Prince landed at Bordeaux and made a marauding excursion through the south, burning and robbing as he went. On his way back to the coast his army, now laden with booty, found its way blocked near Poitiers by a French force led by the King himself. The odds against the English were once more tremendous, for they mustered only some 2000 men-at-arms and 6000 bowmen against 60,000 of the enemy. But Jean's fatal blundering in tactics, the headstrong courage of the French nobles, and the deadly work of the English archers turned Poitiers into a second Crécy. Thousands of Frenchmen were left dead on the field, and Jean himself was taken prisoner. That evening the Black Prince gave a great banquet in his honour, himself serving him with meat and otherwise behaving with all the fantastic gallantry of which romance loves to take account. It is not inappropriate at this point to recall his father's brutality to the noble citizens of Calais.

THE TREATY OF BRÉTIGNY

Carried to London, Jean remained a prisoner to the English for three years, and was then released upon payment of an enormous ransom. A treaty of peace was thereupon arranged between the two countries, and signed (1360) at Brétigny, near Chartres. By this treaty Jean undertook no longer to stir the Scots against the English, while Edward engaged to cease supporting the Flemings against France. As the question of the relations of Scotland with England had all along been a kind of offset to that of the relations of Flanders with France, the balance thus struck was fairly even. Otherwise the treaty was entirely in England's favour. Edward was permitted to retain Guyenne, with all its dependencies, and Calais, and received in addition Poitou, Périgord, Limousin, and various other provinces: all these henceforth to be held, not on feudal tenure, but in right of full independent sovereignty.

This treaty brings the first stage of the Hundred Years' War to a close, with Edward the absolute master of nearly one-third of France.

CHAPTER II

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

THE SECOND STAGE (to 1380)

WHEN four years later Jean le Bon died his son Charles V succeeded to a heritage of trouble. The Treaty of Brétigny had dismembered the country, which was still further torn by the strife of rival factions, the war in Brittany still dragged on, and Charles the Bad of Navarre continued to be a source of danger to the public peace. The state of France thus gave cause for the gravest disquietude. Nor, as it seemed, was the new King precisely the kind of man to grapple effectively with so many and such great difficulties. Of frail constitution and uncertain health, he was markedly deficient alike in physical courage and in moral resolution. His tastes, indeed, were those of the scholar rather than those of the soldier, or even the statesman, and up to the time of his accession he had found his chief pleasure, not in the stress of war or politics, but in mathematics and philosophy. To these tastes in part, though even more to the sound intelligence he presently revealed, he owes his surname of 'le Sage,' or 'the Wise.' Yet, while there was thus little in his character to inspire hope in such a period of confusion, his reign of sixteen years, covering the second stage of the Hundred Years' War, witnessed a decisive revival in the fortunes of his country. Of his sagacity in internal administration we have not now to speak. The point which for the moment concerns us is that before he died the successes of the English in France during the two preceding reigns had been almost completely wiped out.

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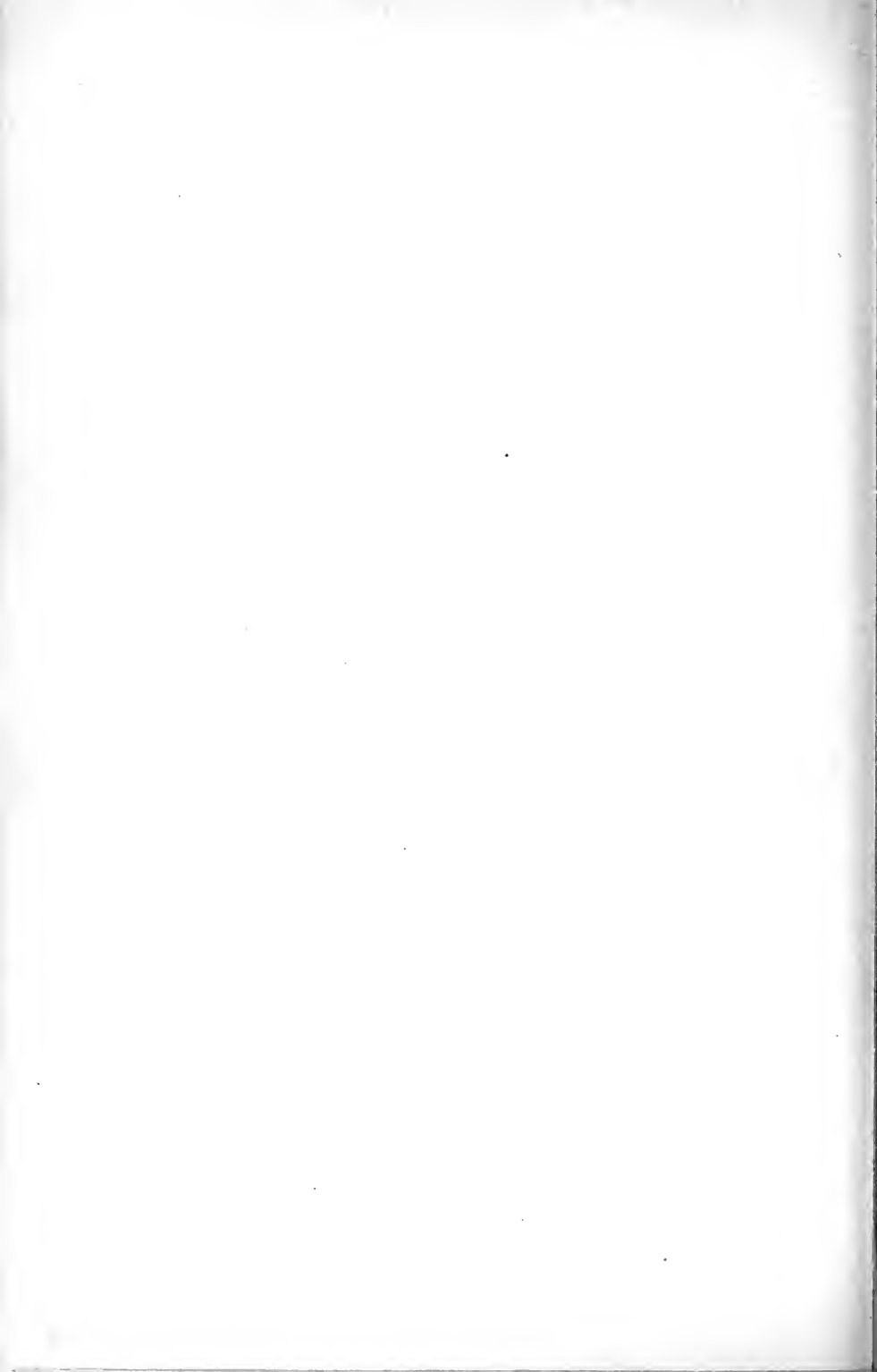
BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN

This extraordinary reversal in the position of the two countries is in large measure to be explained by the fact that, while himself entirely unfit for the field, Charles was fortunate enough to surround himself with great military commanders whose genius and energies sufficed to make ample amends for his own shortcomings. Among these by far the most important was the famous Breton, Bertrand Du Guesclin, who, born about 1320, was in the full vigour of his manhood when Charles came to the throne. It was he, too, who more than any other man of his time brought into warfare a new sense of the value of science and strategy. Crécy and Poitiers had been lost in part because the French nobles had despised tactics and had relied entirely upon their reckless courage and their individual prowess. With the rising school of captains, of whom Du Guesclin was the chief, warfare became an art. In the battle of Cocherel, with Charles the Bad of Navarre, he showed how by a feigned retreat he could lead his enemy into a trap.

He first distinguished himself in the endless War of the Two Joans in Brittany, which was finally brought to a close by Charles' decision to recognize the claims of the Montfort party. Then later, when the folly and tyranny of the Black Prince put all Gascony into a fever of revolt, and Charles saw that the moment had come for a resolute move against the foreign intruder, Du Guesclin came into prominence as the great guiding genius of the French arms—the brain behind the muscles. He had already been a prisoner of England, and the circumstances of his release throw a curious light upon his own character and upon the temper of the time. One day, during his captivity at Bordeaux, he chanced to encounter the Black Prince. "How do you do, Bertrand?" the Prince inquired. "Marvellously well, Monseigneur," Bertrand replied, "for it is everywhere reported that I am the first knight in all the world, since you do not dare to ransom me." The Prince was piqued, and told him on the spot that he could fix



18. THE DEATH OF DU GUESCLIN



THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

his own ransom. "A hundred thousand gold doubles," was the reply; and when, astonished at this (for Du Guesclin was not rich), the Prince asked where he could hope to raise such a sum, his answer was: "Monseigneur, the King of France will pay one half, and the King of Castile the other; and if that is not enough, there is not a woman or girl in the land who would not sell the work of her distaff to rescue me from prison." The money was in fact obtained without difficulty, and Du Guesclin was again able to take the field.

On the appeal of the Gascons, Charles in 1369 cited the Black Prince to appear before the Chamber of Peers in Paris to answer certain charges of extortion and misgovernment made against him. "We will go willingly to our uncle," was the Prince's reply, "but it will be with our bassinet on our head and sixty thousand men in our company." War then broke out in north and south. The French exasperated and wearied the English with their clever tactics; and the Black Prince stained his fame by the last exploit of his life—the brutal massacre of the men, women, and children of Limoges. Du Guesclin, now Constable of France, pursued a harassing policy of minor engagements, avoiding every danger of putting himself at a disadvantage against the fine infantry and splendid bowmen of the enemy, yet making each small success count substantially in his general plan of campaign. By such methods, continued without relaxation for nearly fourteen years, by his clever ruses, his rapid marches, his bold manœuvres, and his ceaseless activity, he gradually broke down the strength of the invaders, losing now here and now there, indeed, but on the whole gaining ground upon them, until at length, castle by castle and town by town, Poitou, Aunis, Saintonge, Guyenne, Auvergne, and Limousin were almost entirely in his hands. By this time the English, disgusted and worn out, were heartily sick of such an expensive and disastrous war. A truce arranged in 1375 was broken by Charles on Edward's death in 1377, and the whole of Guyenne was conquered. Then in 1380 the English consented to retire

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from France, having lost all their possessions except the five fortified towns of Calais, Cherbourg, Brest, Bayonne, and Bordeaux.

Charles died in September 1380, having outlived Du Guesclin just two months. It was a good omen for France that the weak and indolent Richard II now sat on the English throne.

CHAPTER III

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

THE THIRD STAGE (TO 1420)

CHARLES VI, a boy not yet twelve when his father died, was placed under the tutelage of his uncles, Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, Louis, Duke of Anjou, and John, Duke of Berry, whose violent rivalries at once threw the government of the country into confusion. Ambitious, grasping, and cruel, swayed only by considerations of their own interests, and without a spark of public spirit, these masterful men, by their quarrels, depredations, and the fresh burdens of taxation which they sought to impose, added so much to the miseries of the people that movements of revolt broke out in many parts of the land, while some of the great towns, such as Rouen and Paris itself, were plunged into what was practically a state of civil war. At length, after some years of ever-increasing turmoil, the condition of things became intolerable, and at a council which he convened at Reims in 1388 Charles, now of age, was urged to take the reins of power into his own hands. Four years of relative tranquillity followed. Then the King's mind, which had already on more than one occasion shown signs of unsteadiness, gave way entirely, and from 1394 onward he was insane. Upon this the destinies of the realm once more passed to the princes, two of whom proceeded to engage in a fierce struggle for ascendancy. One of these was the King's brother, Louis, Duke of Orléans, who lived in open adultery with the Queen, the beautiful but worthless Isabelle of Bavaria, and aspired to the dictatorship of the kingdom; the other the new Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Bold's son, John the Fearless. Each of these leaders

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professed to act in loyalty to the King, treating the other as an impudent usurper of royal authority ; while the poor King himself, in his occasional lucid intervals, could only look on in pitiful impotence. Ultimately the Duke of Orléans was murdered one evening in a Paris street " by eighteen men who lodged in a hotel which had for its sign the image of the Blessed Virgin . . . where they had remained for several days waiting their opportunity." This, as the world soon learned, was the work of the Duke of Burgundy ; and it was an act of peculiar atrocity because only on the preceding Sunday the two princes had taken the sacrament together in token of their reconciliation. Then the murdered Duke's son, Charles, allied himself by marriage with the Count of Armagnac, the Constable of France, who put himself at the head of the anti-Burgundian party. It was now war to the knife between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs ; the former of whom, with the red cross of St Antoine as their badge, depended openly on the support of the populace, while the latter, the party of the white scarf, were in close alliance with the Queen and the Court.

That the progress of these internal dissensions was watched with eager interest on the other side of the Channel will of course be taken for granted. The English at first favoured the Burgundians. Then Henry IV, shortly before his death, was persuaded that it would be to his advantage to change sides. Nothing of importance happened, however, till Henry V succeeded to the throne. Upon this the struggle between the two countries was renewed with a peripeteia as astonishing as that which had brought the second stage of the long drama to its close.

THE INVASION OF FRANCE BY HENRY V

A bold soldier, a bigoted Churchman, and an ambitious king, Henry was, indeed, no statesman, yet he was shrewd enough to perceive that merely as a matter of policy war with France had everything in its favour. By such a war, which would certainly be popular, he saw that he could divert public

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

attention from his own very doubtful title to the English crown, draw off the restless nobility, whose energies could be more safely employed in foreign conquests than in civil broils, and evade for a time at least the domestic troubles which were threatening to assume dangerous proportions. The chaotic condition of France gave him his opportunity. Each of the rival parties sought to strengthen itself by his support. For a time he intrigued with both. This gave him time to make his preparations. Then he took decisive action. To begin with, he demanded the immediate surrender of all the territory which had been ceded to England by the Treaty of Brétigny. Then he suddenly revived Edward III's claim to the French crown. The impudence of such a claim on his part was nothing short of amazing. But it served his purpose. Negotiations for a possible compromise went on for some time, Henry meanwhile making secret arrangements with the Duke of Burgundy, whose alliance it was his interest to secure. Then, his plans matured, he proceeded to the invasion of France.

The events of his campaign were few, but striking. It was in the summer of 1415 that he embarked at Southampton with a fleet of 1500 vessels and about 30,000 men. Harfleur was captured after a siege of five weeks—a costly victory, for disease meanwhile reduced his army by at least one-third. Realizing that an aggressive policy would now for the moment be dangerous, he decided to winter in Calais. But on the road thither, at the village of Maisoncelles, he was met by a formidable French force, numbering three times his own, and composed, moreover, of fresh and vigorous soldiers. Every one is familiar with what followed, if only through Shakespeare's vivid though overcharged picture. The foolishly confident French, after their chiefs had rejected Henry's overtures for peace, spent the night before the battle in dicing and revelry. The English, impressed by the solemnity of the occasion, made confession and received the sacrament. Rain fell heavily, but during an interval of moonlight the English King made a careful examination of his troops and the field. Next morning found

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the two armies face to face ; but some time elapsed before either ventured to attack. Then Henry gave the order to advance. Once more the English archers did splendid service. In three hours the rout of the French was complete. It was a wonderful victory, though the glory of it was tarnished by the massacre of the prisoners, carried out at Henry's command. Henry called the battle Agincourt, from the name of a castle near by.

Meanwhile the contentions of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs went on increasing in fury, and further complications arose from the bitter quarrel between the Queen and her young son Charles, now the Dauphin. These conditions made it easy for Henry to pursue his scheme of conquest. A few months made him master of the greater part of Normandy, and, while civil war raged in Paris, he found little to obstruct his further triumphant march. Common danger now brought the French chiefs for a moment to their senses, and the Duke of Burgundy and the Dauphin at a personal interview (July 1419) agreed to unite in defence of their country, thereupon embracing one another with all the fervour of brotherly love. A second meeting was arranged at Montereau, on the Yonne, in order that their policy might be thoroughly discussed and settled. At that meeting (September 10, 1419) the Duke, as he knelt before the Dauphin, was struck down and killed by the Dauphin's followers. This crime produced a tremendous popular reaction against the Dauphin and his party, and far more than Henry's own achievements—far more even than the brilliant victory at Agincourt—it ensured Henry's success. The Queen, the new Duke of Burgundy, and the people of Paris entered forthwith into negotiations with the English King for peace ; his demands, once deemed extravagant, were now accepted ; the Dauphin was set aside altogether ; Henry was recognized as regent of France during the present King's life and as his successor upon his death ; and, to unite the two houses, it was further agreed that the Princess Catherine should become Henry's wife. The marriage took place on Trinity Sunday (June 2) 1420, less than a fortnight after the

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signing (May 21) of the disgraceful Treaty of Troyes, by which the independence of France was crushed at a blow and the crown of France made the heritage of a foreign king.

Henry did not live long to enjoy a triumph which, however much it might redound to his personal glory, was destined to bring untold disasters upon his own country in the years to come. Compelled by the activity and successes of the Dauphin to undertake a fresh invasion of France, he was attacked by dysentery and died at Vincennes on August 31, 1422. According to his death-bed directions, the regency of France was placed in the hands of his brother, the Duke of Bedford, having first been offered to and declined by the Duke of Burgundy.

Two months later Charles VI also died, and the infant son of Henry and Catherine, Henry VI, was proclaimed King of France.

CHAPTER IV

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

THE LAST STAGE (TO 1453)

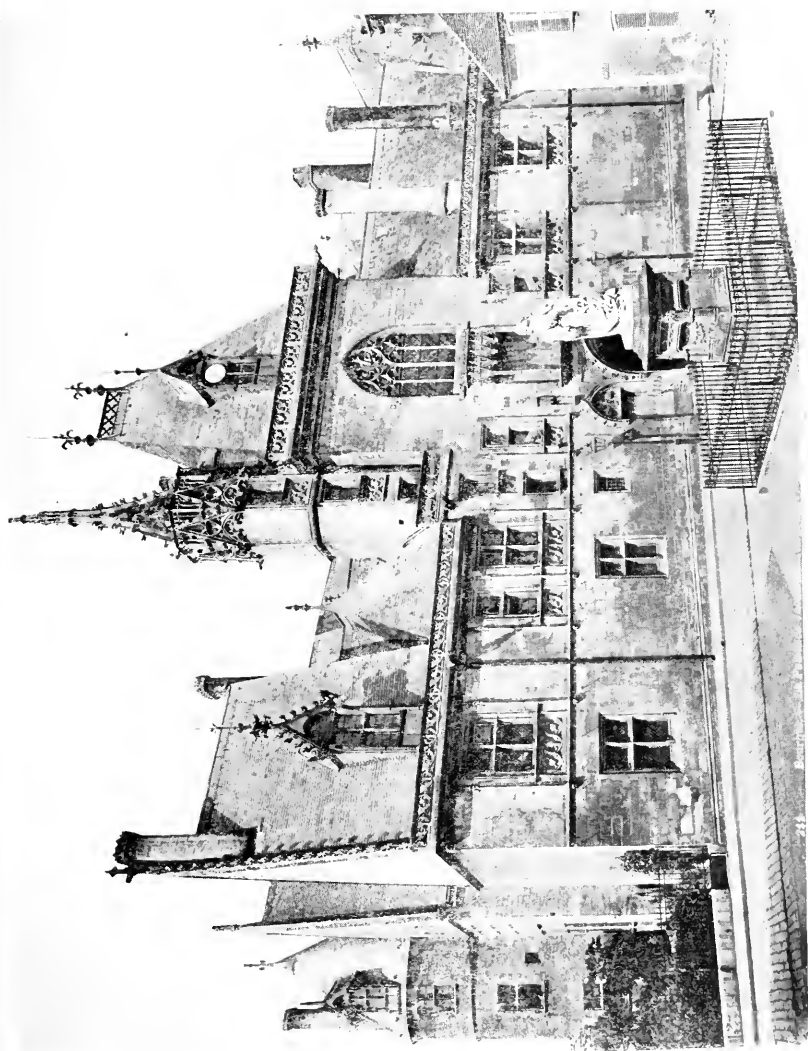
NEWS of his father's death reached the disinherited Dauphin, now a youth of nineteen, at the castle of Espaly, near Le Puy, in Languedoc, where he had taken refuge with a small band of adherents. The next day, clothed in a robe of royal scarlet, he attended Mass in the castle chapel, after which the banner of France was unfurled, and those about him cried: "Vive le roy!"

As he thus refused to accept the shameful Treaty of Troyes, France had now two kings in name. North of the Loire almost the whole country was for Henry, who was also accepted in Guyenne. In the south, Auvergne, Languedoc, and Lyonnais remained faithful to the legitimist cause, as did also the central counties of Touraine, Orléanais, Berry, Bourbonnais, and Anjou. But the English only laughed at Charles' pretensions, calling him in jest the King of Bourges, in which city he chiefly resided.

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Brilliant as Henry V's work appeared on the surface, however, it was obviously unstable at its foundations, since the English after all were only foreigners on French soil, and the success achieved by their arms would have to be maintained by military occupation. This the conqueror himself had evidently realized on his death-bed. All that was needed to secure the overthrow of this alien *régime* was a decisive revival of that national spirit which the long war of rival factions had almost crushed. Such a revival was now soon to come.

To consolidate the alliance with the powerful Burgundian



19. THE HOUSE OF JACQUES CŒUR



THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

party, which was manifestly essential to English supremacy, the Duke of Bedford married the Duke of Burgundy's sister. This, however, did not prevent the breaking out of a serious private feud between the Duke of Burgundy and the English Protector, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, over the latter's marriage with the Countess of Hainaut. This disturbance of peaceful relationships with the haughty nobleman whose co-operation the Regent was most solicitous to retain was a clear menace to English interests. Yet as the war dragged on the English on the whole continued not only to hold their own, but even to gain ground, and the position of the French became more and more precarious. Constitutionally feeble, morally weak, and now depressed to the point of despair, Charles allowed things to drift from bad to worse without making any serious effort to check the rot in his fortunes. He was now so miserably poor that he was often compelled to have recourse, even for the barest necessaries, to the ever open purse of Jacques Cœur, the great merchant-prince of Bourges; and his Court was crowded with followers as needy and as infirm of purpose as himself.

At length the Regent resolved to clear the whole country north of the Loire of Charles' sympathizers, and to extend southward the area of English influence. Orléans, the most important city still in Charles' possession, was accordingly selected as the first object of attack, and on October 12, 1428, it was duly invested by an army under the Earl of Salisbury, who had been placed in chief command. The city garrison numbered only between 400 and 500 men, but the inhabitants were courageous and determined, and having expected the siege they had made careful preparations for resistance. Before a fortnight had elapsed the English had suffered a severe loss in the death of the Earl of Salisbury, who while examining the fortifications from a tower commanding the city had been struck and mortally wounded by a cannon-ball. Under his successor, the Earl of Suffolk, the siege continued throughout the severe winter, the English gradually drawing their lines closer and closer about the city in the hope of establishing a

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complete blockade. One incident only in the monotonous struggle is worthy of record, and this is the strange battle which was fought near Rouvray on February 12, 1429. The English, having devastated the surrounding country, were now themselves falling short of provisions, and the Duke of Bedford therefore despatched a large convoy—principally salt fish—to their relief, with an escort of 1700 soldiers under the brave Sir John Fastolf. The French in large numbers intercepted the convoy; but the English, using their wagons as barricades, repulsed the attack with great slaughter. The field of battle was covered with fish; for which reason the people of Orléans humorously called it ‘the Battle of the Herrings.’

By this time, however, the condition of the beleaguered city was desperate; famine was imminent; and, as it would seem, there was no hope of relief from the indolent King. At that critical juncture one of the most wonderful figures in all French history appeared upon the scene—the inspired peasant girl, Jeanne Darc, well named the Saviour of France.

JEANNE DARC

Jeanne Darc (familiarily known in English history as Joan of Arc) was born on January 6, 1412,¹ in the village of Domremy, in Champagne, where her father was a small farmer. Her childhood was uneventful. She received no education, and to the end could neither write nor read; but her devout mother gave her careful religious instruction and she early knew the Lord’s Prayer, the Ave, and the Creed by heart; while, as she afterward told her judges, in sewing and spinning she could hold her own “against any woman in Rouen.” Occupied from her earliest years in household labours, she grew up like the other girls about her, active and happy, though she was distinguished among them by her habit of silent brooding and the special ardour of her piety. These characteristics became more marked from about her twelfth year on, when she ceased to join in the games of her

¹ This is the date now generally accepted, though it is not absolutely certain.

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

companions and showed increasing fondness for the services of the Church, for prayers and meditation, and for long, solitary rambles in the surrounding country. All that she saw and heard—and, like other children, she saw and heard much—of the fearful calamities which incessant war had brought upon France made a deep impression upon her. She wept over these things in secret; they came to possess and control her whole being. Hence, as we may suppose, the mystical call from heaven which was to determine her life and fate.

It was in the noontide hush of a summer day in 1425 that, as she stood in her father's garden, Jeanne suddenly saw a strange light, which was not that of the sun, and heard a voice speaking to her, as it would seem from the direction of the neighbouring church. At first she was seized with a great terror. But as after this the signs came again and again, she grew familiar with them, and all her fear left her as she learned that the voices were those of St Michael, and of St Margaret and St Catherine, whom St Michael had sent to comfort her. So by little and little her great mission was revealed to her and her whole nature was penetrated by spiritual rapture and patriotic zeal. But she said nothing, not even to her mother or to her confessor, till she was sixteen. Then the voices became more specific in their biddings, and she was commanded to go at once and seek out Robert de Baudricourt, who was then at the head of the French army in Vaucouleurs. She induced a relative by marriage, one Durand Laxard (or Lassoir) to escort her, and was presented to the brave but dissolute Baudricourt, to whom she spoke, though timidly, of her desire to help the King. We must not be surprised that the trained soldier refused to take seriously the offer of this strange peasant girl, who suddenly appeared from nowhere and with no credentials to substantiate her appeal. Regarding her, and very naturally, as a mad woman or an adventuress, he made short work of the interview. "Take her home to her father," he said to Durand, "and give her a good whipping." But after this rebuff the voices grew more and more urgent, and when Jeanne protested "I am only a poor girl, I do not know how

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to ride or fight," the reply was: "It is God's will." At last, no longer able to resist the imperative call, Jeanne resolved to commit herself to heaven, and one day in January 1429, without a word of warning or farewell, she left Domremy—as it proved, for ever. Her parents when they heard of her flight made no attempt to recover her, undoubtedly because they were too angry to care. When afterward she was reproached with her unfilial behaviour toward them, her answer was: "It had to be; but since then I have had letters written to them and they have forgiven me."

Again she repaired to Vaucouleurs, and there her faith in her cause, the ardour of her patriotism, and the strange magnetic force of her personality gradually broke down all opposition, and ultimately made a profound impression upon a few loyal adherents of the King, and even upon Baudricourt himself. "Have you not heard," she said to him, alluding to a prophecy which had become current, "how it has been foretold that France should be lost by a woman"—the infamous Isabelle of Bavaria—"and restored by a maid?" And again: "I had far rather spin at my mother's side, for this is no work of my choosing; but I must do it, for it is God's will." The superstition of the age was of course greatly in her favour, and she had her way. Provided with a man's costume and with six attendants who had volunteered to accompany her, she set out on February 23 for Chinon, where the King then lay. The journey was beset with dangers, for the road led through a country infested by the enemy. But it was safely made, and Chinon was reached on March 6.

The moment of her arrival was opportune. The French Treasury was empty; the fall of Orléans was expected daily; the royal outlook seemed hopeless. In such circumstances the King might well be willing to clutch even at a straw. None the less the difficulties with which she had to contend were such as would have shattered any faith less absolute than hers. She asked the King for troops for the relief of Orléans. He was suspicious, and temporized. Those of his Court who were sceptical laughed; those who were devout

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surmised the devil. "Give me soldiers, soldiers," she kept repeating, growing daily more and more impatient of delay. Then more valuable time was wasted while a number of learned theologians, commissioned by Charles, made elaborate inquiries into her case, to the end that it might be determined whether her inspiration was indeed of God or of Satan. At length the King was advised, though in a guarded way, that he might venture to avail himself of the young girl's offer of help. She was accordingly provided with a charger, a suit of white armour, squire, page, heralds, and a detachment of men. Her banner was of her own devising—white, with embroidered lilies, with on the one side God enthroned, and on the other the shield of France supported by angels, and the motto "Jhesu Maria." This she carried herself in preference to her sword, for she never took any personal part in the fighting, nor did any man ever fall by her hand. Her pennon, also wrought on her own direction, represented the Annunciation.

She began her campaign by sending to the Duke of Bedford—the "so-called Regent"—a formal demand that he should at once raise the siege of Orléans and deliver to her the keys of all the good French cities which he had captured. Her letter, couched in the language of prophetic enthusiasm, stirred the English leaders to fury. Then she advanced upon the city, which on April 30 she succeeded in entering with victuals and stores for the starving garrison. It was evening, and as amid the glare of many torches she rode in full white armour through the crowded streets the whole population went mad with excitement, looking upon her as indeed a deliverer sent straight by heaven. Her appearance was followed by an immediate and extraordinary change in the situation. The Maid's presence in the city, as Dunois afterward testified, seemed to transform the inhabitants: faith and courage revived in them; instead of awaiting their doom like rats in a trap, they took the offensive. On the other hand, the English, convinced that some diabolical power was in action against them (for on this side too superstition played a large part in the Maid's success), lost heart and hope. One by one the

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bastilles which they had built about the city were captured ; repeated reverses, following the long strain of the siege, caused rapid demoralization ; and on the 12th of May, abandoning provisions, artillery, baggage, prisoners, and sick, they made a hurried and humiliating retreat. Then disaster was added to disaster. The Earl of Suffolk fell into the enemy's hands at Jargeau ; Talbot was captured at Patay ; Fastolf, it is said, found safety in flight ; and some 2500 soldiers were slain. Bedford, compelled to return in hot haste to Paris, then wrote to his Government at home that the tide of fortune had been turned against them by " a limb of the fiend " whom the French called ' la Pucelle.' In that phrase we already detect the bitter and insensate hatred with which the English were to pursue the noble and patriotic French girl to the tragic end of her brief career, and which later passed through lying chronicles to find its ultimate expression in the vulgar animosity, the vile accusations, and the disgusting coarseness of Shakespeare's *Henry VI.*¹

At Jeanne's instigation Charles without further delay set out for Reims, with an army of 10,000 men. Troyes, though strongly garrisoned by Burgundians and English, and Châlons-sur-Marne surrendered to him by the way ; at his approach the citizens of Reims drove out the English troops, and he entered the city in triumph on Saturday, July 16. The next day he was crowned by the Archbishop in the cathedral. Joan stood beside him during the ceremony, holding her standard in her hand, and when it was over she fell on her knees before him, the tears streaming down her cheeks ; " and all those who were watching her were greatly touched."

Many other towns now capitulated to the King, while the Duke of Bedford, paralysed by these French successes, could only send urgent messages to England for reinforcements.

It would have been well for the Maid if at this point, her

¹ Yet such is the force of superstitious veneration for a great name that there have not been wanting modern English writers of repute to defend and justify Shakespeare—if indeed Shakespeare was responsible for the atrocious scenes in question.

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immediate mission accomplished, she had been allowed to return to Domremy and private life. Such appears to have been her own desire. But unfortunately Charles persuaded her to remain for a time in his service. She therefore accompanied his army on its march toward Paris, and was present at several engagements. But the King's pusillanimity and the obstinate hostility of his advisers were a continual check upon her plans. The failure of an attack on Paris (September 7), in the course of which she was herself slightly wounded, was a deep disappointment to her, for she had set her heart upon the winning of the capital. Charles' inactivity during the ensuing winter was equally vexatious, for it gave the English time to recover strength; and if on the one hand the jealousy of the courtiers was a perpetual menace to her, on the other hand she had increasing reason to fear the fanatical enthusiasm of the populace. With the spring, however, came the long-awaited chance of resuming the campaign, and as news now arrived that the Duke of Burgundy was preparing to lay siege to Compiègne, the Maid determined to hasten to its defence. She reached the town on May 24,¹ at sunrise. That same evening she attempted a sortie; whether by error or by malicious intention, the gates were shut against her; her retreat was cut off, and she was taken prisoner by the Burgundians. Then for several months she was dragged from prison to prison; after which she was sold for 10,000 livres to the English, who meanwhile were mad to get her into their power.

More than a year elapsed between the Maid's capture before the walls of Compiègne and the closing act of the tragedy at Rouen; and during that time not a single effort, military or diplomatic, was made by Charles or by any of his counsellors to save her from her fate. Such monstrous ingratitude and cowardice seem almost incredible; but it remains beyond dispute that the base-minded King and those about him, having been rescued from their difficulties by her energy and courage, were now actually glad of the opportunity of washing their hands of her and of proving to the world that they had

¹ This seems the correct date, but the 23rd and the 25th are also given.

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no need of her after all. This is attested by the fact that after her death it was made part of the official policy as far as possible to forget her ; her name being omitted, for instance, from documents in which God was praised for the victories He had granted to the royal arms.¹

The way was thus left clear for the English to wreak the full measure of their hatred upon her. It served their nefarious purposes to put her case into the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities, and she was accordingly tried at Rouen before the tribunal of the Bishop of Beauvais, a wretched creature of her enemies, on four different charges—the practice of magic, disobedience to her parents, the use of male attire, and heresy. The proceedings opened on January 9, 1431, and lasted for 114 days, during which the simple-minded peasant girl, shamelessly abandoned by those who should have supported her, was subjected in endless cross-examinations of learned theologians and casuists to every refinement of mental and moral torture which their erudition and subtlety could devise. Bewildered, exhausted, almost maddened by the protracted strain, Jeanne at length, in order to escape the penalty of death by fire of which she was found worthy, blindly consented to yield at all points to her judges' demands. She therefore made public recantation of all her pretensions to a divine mission and sought peace with the Church ; and this done, she was sentenced to be imprisoned for life and fed on bread and water. But the implacable English were not yet satisfied. They were determined that the girl should be sent to her death. That this purpose might be compassed, however, it was necessary that some capital charge should be proved against her. Such a charge was devised by a piece of diabolical trickery. The woman's raiment which she had resumed was taken from her and her male attire was left in its place ; and when, in order to defend herself from the insults of the five Englishmen who had been set to guard and spy upon her, she was compelled to adopt the discarded costume, she

¹ See Petit de Julleville's *Joan of Arc* (English trans.), in "The Saints" series, pp. 59, 60, 87-90.

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was accused of relapse. So her enemies triumphed; the capital sentence was pronounced; and on May 30, 1431, she was burned to death in the market-place at Rouen.

A grim detail may be added to close this pitiful story. Twenty-five years later, the iniquitous proceedings which had sent her to the stake having been 'revised' by a commission appointed for the purpose, a judgment was delivered which absolutely annulled all the findings of the Bishop of Beauvais' tribunal, cancelled the sentence pronounced upon her, and rehabilitated her memory. A tardy reparation, surely!

No authentic portrait of Jeanne Darc exists, and such verbal descriptions as have reached us are vague and often contradictory. But it seems that we are safe in picturing her as a simple peasant girl, in whom the natural strength and the homely virtues of her stock were conspicuous. Of one thing at least we may be certain. Hers was an essentially womanly character. There was nothing masculine about her; in all her tastes and sympathies she was as far as possible removed from the conventional idea of the Amazon. She had no love of adventure or the chase; her disposition was the reverse of martial; and so tender was her heart that in the thick of a battle she would pause to tend a fallen foe. She did what she did without a single thought of self or personal glory, because, as she believed, it was God's purpose that France should be saved through her.

It is possible that her romantic story, the glamour of her personality, and her brilliant immediate successes may lead us to over-estimate the actual importance of her work. It must not be forgotten that an English rally followed her death and that the war continued for more than twenty years. At the same time it does not seem extravagant to say that, all reaction notwithstanding, what she achieved exercised a permanent influence over the fortunes of her country. In making this statement I am not, of course, thinking mainly of the relief of Orléans and the coronation of Charles. These were only incidents. I am thinking of the moral effect produced by her—of the revival of patriotism which was brought

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about by her appearance, and of the marvellous way in which she transmitted to the French people the high faith and enthusiasm with which she was herself inspired. It was in part at least the strength of the popular sentiment which she both elicited and directed that made the English dream of supremacy on French soil henceforth impossible.

THE END OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

There is little of interest in the story of the closing stages of the long war. Young Henry was crowned at Paris on December 16, 1431; but how little this meant as a counterblast to the coronation of Charles at Reims is shown by the fact that the ceremony was performed by an English prelate and that not a single French prince lent his presence. Several important cities, including Chartres, fell to the French during the following year; but the English sustained a far more severe blow by the rupture of their alliance with Burgundy, and the Duke's reconciliation with the King of France (1435). The restoration of friendly relations between the two long hostile parties whose quarrels had filled the country with civil war meant the ruin of English interests. A fortnight after the ratification of the Treaty of Arras, by which this peace was formally secured, the Duke of Bedford died, his end being undoubtedly hastened by vexation at the miscarriage of his plans. Divided councils at home delayed the appointment of his successor to the French Regency, and in the meantime the French captured Paris (1436). The new Regents—first Richard, Duke of York, then the Earl of Warwick, and then the Duke of York again—found themselves compelled to act wholly on the defensive. The English themselves had by this time grown thoroughly weary of the spirited foreign policy initiated by Henry V for purposes of his own, and domestic troubles made them anxious for peace. But they still obstinately refused to abate their claims by acknowledging Charles as King. Thus things remained for a time at a standstill. Then a crisis was precipitated by the pillage by an English force of the rich manufacturing town of Fougères, in

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Brittany (1449). Charles and the Duke of Brittany proceeded to reprisals, and it was soon open war again between the two countries. Rouen was taken; Fougères recovered; by the end of the year nearly the whole of Normandy was in the power of the French; in the August of the year following Cherbourg, the last English stronghold in the duchy, surrendered. The loss of Normandy was quickly followed by that of Guyenne and Gascony; and when on October 19, 1453, Charles VII made a triumphant entry into Bordeaux the Hundred Years' War was practically over, though it was not till 1492 that the Treaty of Étapes definitely established peace. Of all their great possessions in France of only thirty years before, Calais now alone remained in English hands.

CHAPTER V

FRANCE DURING THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

IT would be difficult to paint in colours too dark the condition of France during the greater portion of the period now under review. The unhappy country was shaken to its foundations by repeated shocks of disaster, and from time to time it seemed as if no earthly power could save it from utter collapse. Foreign armies again and again swept over it, intent on conquest and plunder. Twice it was dismembered by shameful treaties of peace and some of its fairest provinces were given over to alien rule. The fierce feuds of rival factions, often blazing out into open war, still further intensified the general confusion and misery. To all these evils, moreover, have to be added those arising from the disorders bred by the long war. French and English soldiers were alike guilty of license and brutality, and it mattered little to the wretched peasantry whom they robbed and maltreated whether their sufferings were caused by professed friends or avowed foes. With every fresh truce immense numbers of mercenaries of many nationalities, their occupation gone, were let loose upon the land to wreck and riot as they chose; their ranks were swollen by thousands of adventurers and camp-followers of the lowest kinds; while many nobles joined their companies, lured by the love of booty and by the attractions of a life which to their turbulent spirits seemed "bonne et belle."¹ Neither person nor property was safe; robberies, outrages, murders were things of daily occurrence; the very churches were turned into fortresses, and on their

¹ This is the phrase which Froissart puts into the mouth of one of the most notorious captains of these *grandes compagnies*.

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

towers sentinels were posted to watch for approaching enemies or marauders. Far and wide the land was waste; at one time, it was said, a man might travel from the sea-coast to the borders of Lorraine and find nothing but burnt homes and desolate fields; night by night the wolves came and ravaged even the outskirts of Paris itself. Meanwhile, the Treasury being everlastingly drained dry by the demands of war and the prodigalities of improvident rulers, desperate remedies were resorted to, with results which only blind unwisdom could have failed to foresee. Thus, to cite a single case only, Philippe VI, to meet an immediate emergency, established a Government monopoly in salt—an expedient which led Edward III to call him punningly the real *roi salique*. This *gabelle*, as it was called,¹ was meant at first to be only temporary, but it was declared a permanent impost by Charles V; and here we have the beginning of that hated tax which was to be an instrument of tyranny down to the time of the Revolution.

Such being the social conditions of the period, it is not surprising that the country seethed in unrest. Toward the end of the reign of Philippe VI a fearful pestilence known as the Black Death, which carried off, it is estimated, a full third of the entire population, led to an outburst of religious fanaticism strangely symptomatic of the state of the popular mind. Bands of flagellants marched through France, lashing their naked bodies with heavy scourges and crying aloud that their blood would mingle with that of Christ for the salvation of the world. At the same time the despair of the ignorant and superstitious masses found vent in wild accusations against the Jews of poisoning the wells and thus spreading the plague, and ruthless massacres in many districts were the result.

POPULAR RISINGS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT

Ten years later, while Jean le Bon was a prisoner of war in England and Charles the Dauphin was ruling in his stead,

¹ From the Low Latin *gabulum*, a gift.

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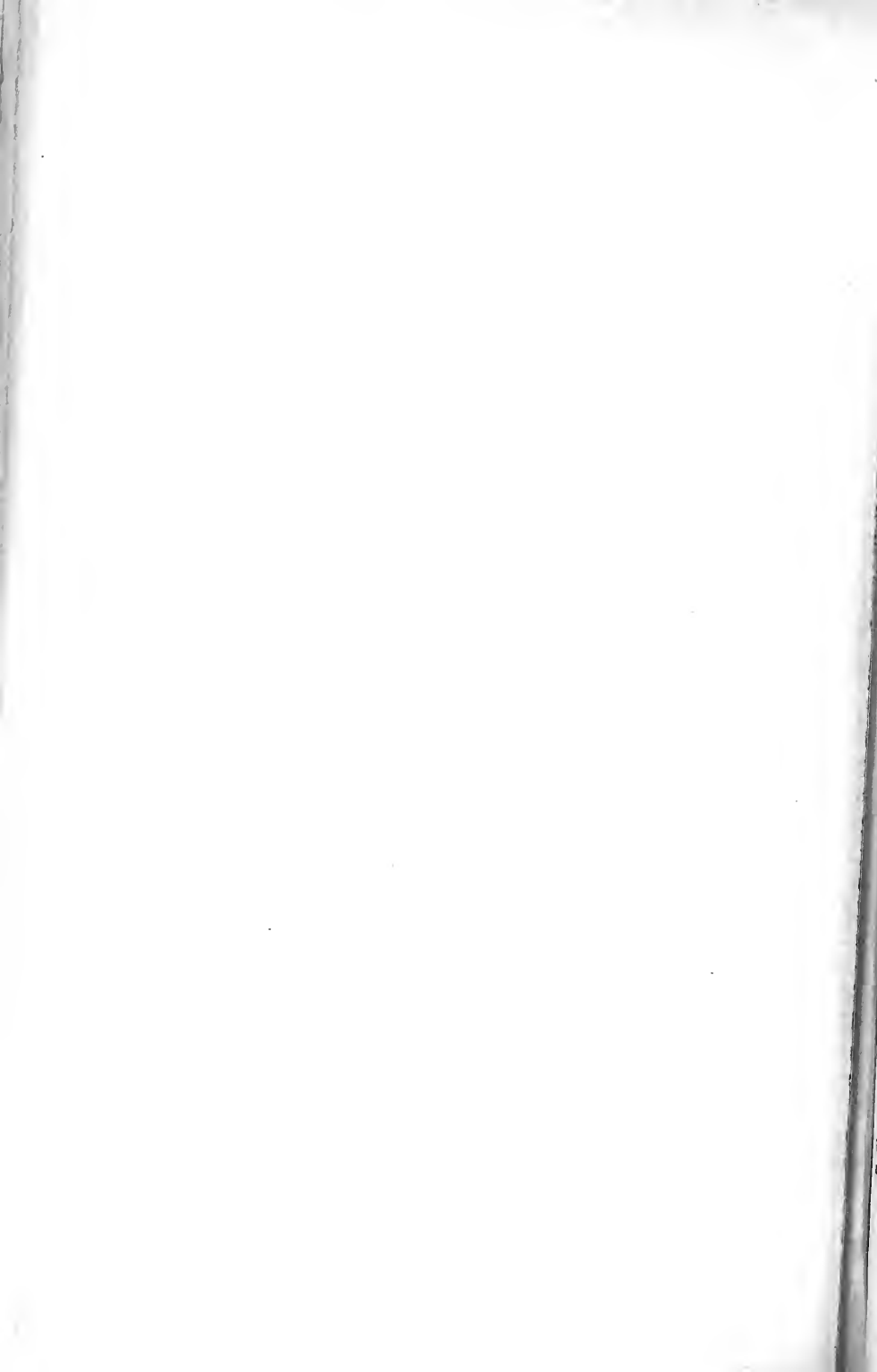
Paris became the centre of serious political trouble. The populace, already driven to desperation by ever-increasing burdens of taxation and by the misgovernment which left them defenceless victims of the general anarchy, now broke into open violence. They found an energetic and capable leader in the provost of the city Étienne Marcel, who had previously made himself prominent in various movements for reform. He began by calling together an army representing all the various interests of the capital, and at the head of this he went straight to the Dauphin's palace, penetrated into his private apartments, and roundly demanded of him that he should fulfil his duty as the protector of the people. Angry words passed, inflamed by which Marcel's followers threw themselves upon the two principal advisers of the Dauphin and murdered them where they stood. Then, hastening to the Hôtel de Ville, Marcel reported what had happened to an excited multitude which was there awaiting his return. Insurrection now gathered to a head, and the situation was rendered more dangerous by a rising of the wretched peasantry, who more than any other class of the community groaned beneath the unchecked evils of the time. This Jacquerie,¹ as it was called, spread rapidly from the Ile-de-France, where it originated, north and east; and the fast-gathering crowds, hungry, ragged, reckless, and armed with such weapons as they could lay their hands on—knives, scythes, sticks, stones—attacked the castles of the nobility, and slew without pity or discrimination of age or sex. The nobles, thoroughly alarmed, thereupon formed a powerful combination, and, meeting the forces of the Jacquerie at Meaux, routed them with tremendous slaughter, afterward destroying their villages with fire and sword. A little later, intriguing with Charles of Navarre to put him on the throne of France, Étienne Marcel was caught in the trap of a counterplot and slain.

Another popular rising in 1382, known as the revolt of the

¹ From 'Jacques Bonhomme,' the popular name for the French peasant. It appears first, it would seem, in the chronicles of the fourteenth-century writer Jean de Venette.



20. THE PLACE DE GRÈVE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY



THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

Maillotins,¹ showed that, though sheer force might triumph for a time over an ill-organized democracy, popular discontent continued unabated. Beginning in Paris, this too soon swept to other cities—to Châlons, Reims, Sens, Troyes, Orléans—while concurrently disturbances of artisans and peasants broke out in the south. Some years later—in 1413—the capital was again the theatre of an outburst of mob-violence, which was in part connected with the feud of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs. A band composed of the lowest dregs of the populace, and known as the Cabochiens, from their ring-leader, one Caboché, a flayer of slaughtered animals, held the city for a time under a reign of terror. Scenes of shocking brutality were enacted daily; the insurgents seized the Bastille, forced themselves into the King's presence, compelled him to adopt their badge—the white scarf—imprisoned unpopular princes and ministers of State. The disturbance was finally quelled by the joint efforts of the Armagnacs and the University of Paris, and order was restored under the Duke of Orléans.

EFFORTS TOWARD REFORM

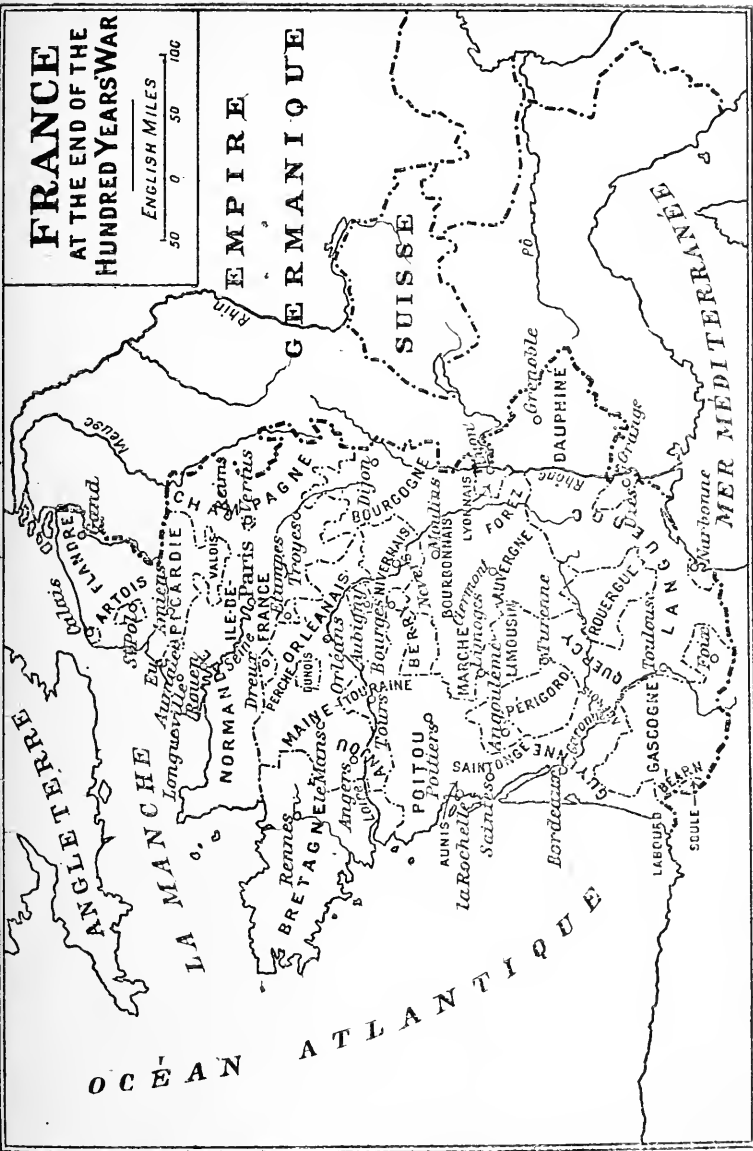
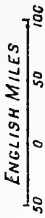
In the social history of France during the Hundred Years' War a large place is thus filled by the widespread misery of the people and the dangerous paroxysms of passion which were the inevitable result. In the meantime such practical attempts as were made to grapple with consequences by getting down to their causes were chiefly connected with the activity of the States-General and the influence of the middle classes. The broad lines of the movement for reform may here be just indicated by reference to a few of its principal phases. Thus, for example, in 1338 an assembly decreed that the King should impose no extraordinary taxes without the consent of the three Estates; a provision which Philippe and afterward Jean le Bon managed by subterfuge to turn into a dead letter. In 1351, during a season of great financial

¹ From the *maillets*, or mallets, which had been stored up in the *Hôtel de Ville* against a possible attack from the English, and with which the rioters armed themselves.

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distress, the States-General lodged various complaints against the King and extracted various promises from him of immediate amendment in administration; but these promises were never redeemed. Then, in 1356 and 1357 far stronger protests were made against waste and misgovernment, demands were formulated for a fixed standard of currency; and while the assembly engaged to provide the King with funds necessary for the defence of the realm, it insisted also that the moneys now to be raised should be entrusted to specially nominated receivers. At this time, moreover, a commission was appointed to draw up a programme of reform, and requisitions were made that several of the King's officers should be brought to trial, that deputies (*réformateurs*) should be sent out to inquire into administrative abuses in the provinces, and that a permanent Grand Council should be created, consisting of four prelates, twelve nobles, and twelve members of the Third Estate, to assist in the government of the country. The Dauphin, who on his father's capture at Poitiers had assumed the title of Lieutenant and the headship of affairs, took alarm at these radical proposals, and at once dissolved the gathering. But in the March of the following year—1357—a new assembly was convened, one of the moving forces in which was Étienne Marcel; and now a great ordinance was prepared and presented, the sixty-one articles of which included fundamental reforms in finance, the executive, the army, justice, and general administration. This ordinance was accepted by the Dauphin, only to be revoked the next year, when he announced his intention of ruling independently and according to his own discretion. An edict which he issued at the same time for another alteration in the value of the currency was a chief cause of the rising in Paris under Marcel of which I have already spoken. The struggle of the Dauphin with Marcel to some extent epitomizes the struggle which was now in progress between the royal power and the democracy; and though Marcel's downfall was due immediately to intrigue, it is well to emphasize the fact that his ideas of popular government were several centuries in advance of the time.

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Charles' policy then and later was largely shaped, under the influence of the legists, against the States-General, of whose encroaching claims he was suspicious. But the menace of feudalism was still strong enough to make the Crown anxious for the support of the country at large; and under Charles' successors the States-General and the States-Provincial (or local assemblies) continued active in their efforts for reform.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES

In other ways the increasing power of the middle classes was manifest. As soon as he had freed himself from the tutelage of his uncles, whom the people hated, Charles VI gathered about him a number of sound business men of humble origin—Bureau de la Rivière, Pierre de Vilaines, Jean de Noviant, Jean de Montaigu, Jouvanel des Ursins—who addressed themselves resolutely to the task of bringing order out of the chaos of the country. The nobles, who were of course jealous of their supremacy in the King's councils, sneeringly called them the Marmousets; but we have already noted in passing that under these 'Monkeys' France enjoyed for the first time for many years a short period of internal peace. Unfortunately, the collapse of the King's mind brought that period to a sudden close; the princes recovered their power, the Marmousets were overthrown, and the land was soon torn by the strife of Burgundian and Armagnac. But Charles VII in his turn was shrewd enough to select his chief counsellors from the ranks of the prominent commoners, and it was through their instrumentality that the legal, financial, and administrative reforms which give importance to his reign were brought about. Noteworthy in particular among these men of the time was Jacques Cœur, the great merchant of Bourges, whose ambition it was to develop the foreign commerce of France and to break down the monopoly of Venice in the East. Charles made him his Treasurer, and in that capacity he did excellent service, not only administering the finances of the realm with much sagacity, but also putting his own vast wealth at the King's disposal at times of urgent

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need. His riches and his power naturally aroused the envy of the great nobles of the Court. He had, it is true, a powerful friend in the King's wise and beautiful mistress, Agnès Sorel, and so long as she lived his position was secure. But her sudden death in 1450 removed his main defence against the machinations of his enemies, the dastardly King abandoning him to his fate as he had already abandoned Jeanne Darc. By plots and concocted charges his ruin was accomplished; his property was confiscated and he was thrown into prison. Through the Pope's intervention, however, his life was spared, and he was ultimately permitted to find an asylum beyond the borders of the country he had served only too well. Nor was this the only way in which the selfish nobility showed their disapproval of the new influences in the politics of the time, which, as they perceived, were bound to work to their disadvantage. Their futile revolt, the so-called 'Praguerie,'¹ had already (1440) given proof of the tenacity with which they still clung to the traditions of their power.

THE DECLINE OF THE FEUDAL NOBILITY

The steady waning of that power was none the less one of the principal features of the period of the Hundred Years' War. That war itself directly hastened the decay of the feudal aristocracy. Their immense losses at Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, where the very flower of their chivalry was destroyed, greatly affected both their numerical strength and their prestige. The old military basis of their supremacy was also undermined by the new methods of fighting which now began to determine the issue of the field. The splendid victories of Edward III, the Black Prince, and Henry V were essentially victories of English bowmen over French knight-hood; the common foot-soldier, first with his bow, afterward with his gun, showed himself more than a match for the mail-clad noble with his lance and battle-axe. Indirectly, too, the spread of the spirit of nationality, which the Maid of

¹ The excitement caused by the case of Huss at Prague explains why any kind of revolt was, for the moment, called a 'Praguerie.'

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Orléans had helped to awaken and to which she had appealed, was fatal to the continuance of the separatist claims of the great territorial princes, who more and more came to be recognized as refractory forces in the gradual welding together of the realm. The transformation of the army from a heterogeneous mass made up of bodies of fighting men, each under its own leader, into a compact, homogeneous whole depending immediately upon the king is also a fact of capital importance in the history of the decay of feudalism. This transformation was accomplished by a long series of changes and reforms, and it would take too much space to follow it here in detail; but, speaking in very general terms, it may be said that the experiment of Charles V in 1374 in the creation of a standing army was completed by Charles VII in 1445 when he established his fifteen companies of ordnance.

In other ways the power of the feudal nobles was gradually broken and their former prerogatives gathered up by the royal authority. The right of coining money was taken from them by Philippe VI and Jean le Bon; the right of raising troops and waging private war by Charles VII; the right of independent taxation and the administration of justice by the same King. Even their castles were attacked by a decree of Charles V, who ordered the demolition of such as were not necessary for the defence of the realm. The extension to the middle classes of various privileges—such as that of wearing gold spurs—of which they had hitherto enjoyed the monopoly, and the granting by Charles V of patents of nobility to men of importance in civic affairs, may also be mentioned among the many signs of the passing of the old feudal order of French society.

From the point of view of royalty itself the period of the Hundred Years' War was one of loss followed by recovery. Under the first Valois the Crown shared in the general decadence of the country, and its very existence was imperilled during the protracted insanity of Charles VI. But in the later years of Charles VII the long-interrupted progress was resumed. The royal domain also increased rapidly through confiscations,

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purchases, escheats, and inheritances, and at length, of course, by the wresting from the English of the large territories which they had formerly possessed on French soil. One acquisition is specially interesting—that of Dauphiné, in the region of the Lower Rhone, which was bought by Philippe VI for 120,000 florins. Dauphiné was so named from the dolphin which figured on its crest, whence also the lord was himself called the Dauphin; and it was one of the conditions of the transfer to the Crown that the eldest son of the reigning king should henceforth be known by this title. The royal authority, while thus steadily gaining over the power of the old nobility, also asserted itself against that of the Papacy. By the Pragmatic Sanction of 1438 Charles VII strongly maintained the independent rights of the Gallican Church against the universal ecclesiastical sovereignty claimed by Rome. Here we perceive the working of the spirit of nationalism under another form.

In general, then, it may be said that the period of the Hundred Years' War, despite the anarchy by which it was largely characterized, was one of importance in the evolution of the French monarchy and of the French people. New conditions were now emerging, the full significance of which will become increasingly apparent in the sequel.

CHAPTER VI

LOUIS XI

1461-1483

THE last years of Charles VII's reign were embittered by the unfilial conduct of his eldest son. Already as a youth of seventeen Louis had taken part in the Praguerie, and though, when this was crushed, he craved and received his father's pardon, his turbulent spirit made lasting harmony impossible. For a time, indeed, a safety-valve for his feverish energy was provided by expeditions against the Armagnacs and the Swiss, in which he acquitted himself with great vigour and courage. But fresh troubles soon arose. On the death of his first wife, the gentle Margaret of Scotland—"Une princesse," says Monstrelet, "parfaicte aux beautés de l'âme et du corps"—he angered his father by marrying, without even asking his consent, the daughter of the Duke of Savoy. He also intrigued against the King's ministers, flouted the royal authority whenever it conflicted with his own will, and added to his offences by his discourteous behaviour toward the royal favourite, Agnès Sorel. His relations with his father being thus strained to breaking-point, Louis retired to Dauphiné, with the government of which he had been entrusted, and there assumed all the rights of an independent sovereign: coining money, levying taxes, receiving embassies, concluding treaties, and on his own initiative founding a university at Valence and a Parliament at Grenoble. The party of his enemies, with the Count of Dammartin, the King's favourite adviser, at their head, was strong at Court, and Charles was urged to punish his son's insubordination. On pretext that the Dauphinois had appealed to him against excessive taxation, he accordingly sent a peremptory message requiring Louis

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to appear in person before him. Well aware of the danger of his position, and warned by the recent downfall of Jacques Cœur, who had been his very good friend, Louis not unnaturally refused. Upon this Charles despatched a large army to Dauphiné under Dammartin's command, and Louis was driven to flight (1456). Writing to his father that he proposed to join a crusade against the Turks, he actually sought refuge with Philip, Duke of Burgundy (called Philip the Good), who received him with the most marked demonstrations of friendship, gave him the castle of Genappe, near Brussels, for his residence, and bestowed upon him for his maintenance a pension of 30,000 crowns. "Our brother Philip has taken home a fox who will eat his chickens," was the King's caustic commentary upon these events.

Safe at Genappe, Louis busied himself with intrigues which kept the Court in a state of perpetual apprehension and unrest. Dreading treachery, even among those who stood nearest to him, and suspecting poison in every dish, the miserable King, in whom a trace of his father's madness seems by this time to have appeared, refused all food. When at length his obstinacy was overcome starvation had completed the ruin of a constitution already enfeebled by sensual excess, and in July 1461 he died of an abscess in the throat. Such was the wretched end of a monarch who figures in history as Charles the Victorious. During his reign of thirty-nine years France, as we have seen, recovered in some measure from the disastrous consequences of the Hundred Years' War. But little of the credit of such recovery can be given to the indolent and pleasure-loving King.

Anxious to pose as the friend and protector of the new sovereign, Philip the Good accompanied Louis to Reims with an immense and splendidly equipped retinue of knights, pages, and men-at-arms, and it was from his hands at the ceremony of coronation that Louis actually received the crown. King and Duke also entered Paris together in a stately procession, in which, it was remarked, the Duke made by far the more imposing display. During the month's festivities which

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followed, his magnificence and lavish hospitality created wonder and enthusiasm among the populace of the city. Always indifferent to dress and ceremonial, Louis meanwhile showed no resentment at being thus effaced. He was for the moment willing enough to conciliate his powerful vassal, whose various requests he granted without demur. But when Philip and his followers returned home they soon realized that they had been cajoled by promises which were little more than empty words. Having secured his place on the throne, and being determined to be King in reality as well as in name, Louis now entered upon a course of policy which was shortly to bring him into conflict not only with the Duke of Burgundy, but also with the other great nobles who looked upon the Duke as in some sort their head.

LOUIS XI AND THE FEUDAL NOBILITY

The difficulties which Louis had to face at the opening of his reign were enormous. So far as external relations were concerned, indeed, the times were favourable, for France had little to fear from foreign Powers, since Italy had long been impotent, Spain was a house divided against itself, Germany was in a state bordering upon anarchy, and—most important of all—England was distracted by civil war. But conditions at home called for a clear head and a strong hand. The chief danger lay in the still formidable feudal aristocracy, the leaders of which were ambitious of regaining their former ascendancy in the land. Remembering Louis' antagonism to his father and his long association with Philip the Good, they saw in him at first a possible ally. But they were soon undeceived. The King, it is true, behaved with marked consideration to some of the most prominent among them—to the Count of Foix, for example, the most powerful noble in the south and to the families of Burgundy and Brittany. But none the less he asserted his royal authority in many unexpected ways; and when he called upon the nobles at large to pay their feudal dues and bear their part in the general taxation and even, for the protection of agriculture, deprived them

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of the privilege of hunting, except by royal licence, they resented his encroachment upon what they regarded as their immemorial rights ; and before long their irritation broke out into open revolt.

THE LEAGUE OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Unfortunately, Louis at the same time weakened his position by hasty and ill-advised measures which spread discontent among all classes throughout the country. Some decrease in taxation had been confidently expected from him. His pressing need of money compelled him, on the contrary, to raise the *taille perpétuelle* from 1,200,000 to 3,000,000 livres. Insurrections followed in Rouen, Alençon, Aurillac, and Reims, the leaders of which were punished by hanging or mutilation. Believing that it gave too much power to the clergy, and indirectly to the aristocracy, he revoked the Pragmatic Sanction in defiance of the remonstrances of the Parliament of Paris. He also demanded of the clergy a full statement of all their possessions and of the titles by which they were held. He forbade the University of Paris to interfere in the affairs of the kingdom and the city. He curtailed the jurisdiction of the Parliaments of Paris and Toulouse by establishing another Parliament at Bordeaux. By such despotic acts he contrived within four years to put almost the whole of France—the aristocracy, the *bourgeoisie*, the clergy, the men of learning, and the principal lawyers—against him. This universal dissatisfaction gave the nobles their opportunity. A coalition of malcontents was formed which called itself the Ligue du Bien Public, and proclaimed that its object was to compel the King to redress the grievances of the country. As Louis very properly pointed out in letters which he caused to be published throughout the land, the members of the League had never shown much concern for the public welfare. The title and ostensible purpose were of course only a thin disguise. Yet it was a sign of political progress that this self-seeking feudal organization felt it necessary to justify its existence by a show of patriotism.

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The actual trouble began with Burgundy. In a personal interview Louis induced Philip, whose powers were now failing and who was as usual in want of money, to restore to him on payment of 400,000 crowns a number of towns along the Somme which Charles VII had ceded to Burgundy under the Treaty of Arras. Philip's headstrong son, Charles, Count of Charolais, was furious when he learned of this arrangement, and at once began to stir up the discontented nobles. He found a ready ally in François II, Duke of Brittany, who, like the Duke of Burgundy, was practically an independent sovereign, and who, with other grievances against the King, was specially annoyed because Louis had forced him to permit appeals from his own Parliament to that of Paris. Other nobles hastened to join the alliance, which soon numbered more than five hundred princes and barons. Chief among these, besides the Count of Charolais and the Duke of Brittany, were the Duke of Bourbon and the King's vain and foolish young brother, Charles, Duke of Berry.

At the outset Louis tried to throw oil on the troubled waters. He convoked at Rouen an assembly of the deputies of the northern cities, and explained to them at length the grounds and objects of his policy. He afterward called a conference of the nobility at Tours, and in an eloquent speech set forth what he had done to improve the condition of the country and insisted upon the need of union between the aristocracy and the Crown. Those who heard him were loud in their protestations of loyalty. But scarcely had the gathering dissolved before the League was under arms.

The King's position was now critical, for the total strength of the confederates was great, and treason was soon busy among those of his following in whom he had believed that implicit confidence might be placed. Realizing, however, that scattered forces and divided counsels would be likely to impede his enemies' effective action, he hastened to take the initiative in the hostilities, his plan being to destroy the League in the south before the northern leaders were ready to take the field. His promptness and vigour gave him at first a substantial

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advantage. But meanwhile the Count of Charolais made a rapid and triumphant march upon Paris, before the walls of which he was presently joined by the combined armies of the Dukes of Brittany and Berry. Failing in his attempt to reach the capital before the allies, Louis found his way blocked, and against his wishes was thus driven to risk a general engagement. On July 16, 1465, a battle was fought at Montlhéry, on the plain of Longjumeau, which ended at nightfall with no decisive result. But Louis gained this much, that, the road being cleared, he was two days later able to enter Paris. On August 10 he left for Normandy to collect reinforcements, returning on the 28th with 12,000 men, artillery, munitions, and an ample supply of flour. Notwithstanding this accession of strength, however, his case became more and more precarious. News came that first Pontoise, then Rouen, then Évreux and Caen, had opened their gates to the enemy. In Paris itself the League had many adherents; signs of disloyalty became increasingly manifest; the King no longer knew whom he could trust. His only hope lay in the condition of the allies, among whom the inevitable dissensions had already appeared, and who were, moreover, beginning to suffer from lack of provisions. Perceiving the growing weakness of his enemies, Louis accordingly opened up negotiations with the Count of Charolais. Two months were spent in pourparlers and skirmishes. But in the end the King had to yield. A truce was proclaimed at Conflans on October 2; a definite treaty was signed on the 29th at Saint-Maur-les-Fossés. By this treaty—"the most humiliating that ever King of France entered into with his subjects"¹—all the original demands of the princes, formerly rejected as exorbitant, were granted, the insurgent chiefs being, as it would seem, richly rewarded for their disloyalty. To name the most important of the provisions only, the Count of Charolais recovered the towns on the Somme which had been ceded by his father; the Duke of Brittany received the counties of Étampes and Montfort, and was granted the sovereign rights which he had claimed, including

¹ Lavallée, *Histoire des Français*, t. ii, p. 193.

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exemption from appeal to the Parliament of Paris ; the Duke of Berry was made Duke of Normandy, with a sovereign court at Rouen ; the Duke of Orléans was appointed to the government of Guyenne, and obtained a share in the royal taxes levied in his domains ; the Duke of Nemours became Governor of Paris and the Ile-de-France. Thus, as Comines puts it, " les princes butinèrent le monarque et le mirent au pillage." Other leaders obtained concessions of territory, of privileges, of money, while the late King's ministers, whom Louis had dismissed, including his old enemy, the Count of Dammartin, who had been active in the insurgent cause, were either reinstated or placated with gifts and pensions. To make good the idea of ' public welfare,' for which the League had ostensibly been organized, a clause was also inserted in the treaty that a commission of thirty-six notables—twelve knights, twelve prelates, and twelve judges of the Supreme Court—should be instituted to inquire into and remedy the abuses of which popular complaint had been made. How little the League troubled about this part of the treaty was, however, shown by the fact that the appointment of the members of the commission was left to the King himself.

The first struggle of Louis with the feudal nobility thus ended in a very complete victory for the nobility, and for the moment the progress of the monarchy suffered a serious check. But Louis was not the man to regard engagements as binding beyond the point at which they could be practically enforced. After signing the Treaty of Saint-Maur he made a great show of friendship toward those who had wrung it from him, even offering the Count of Charolais the hand of his daughter Anne, then three years old. But he did not in the least intend that his defeat should be final, and if he appeared to accept it in good part he was only waiting his time. Conditions, as he was quick to perceive, were after all in his favour. At once greedy and stupid, his enemies had no settled policy to oppose to his own. As Henri Martin has pointed out, while the barons of England, after their victory over the Crown, had become a definite aristocracy and a coherent political organization,

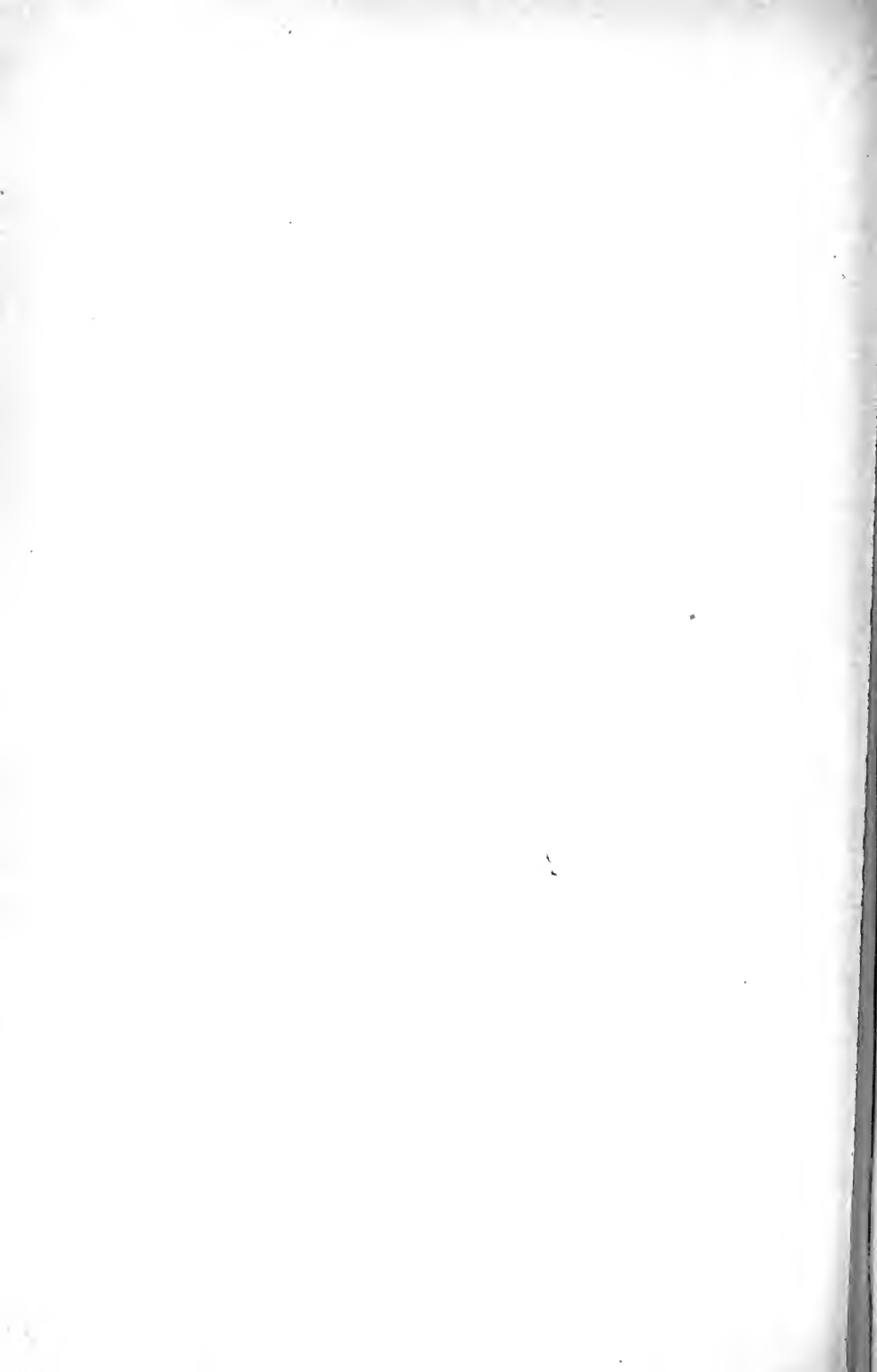
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22. CHARLES THE BOLD



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the French princes cared only for their independent power, and save in their opposition to the throne had few interests in common.¹ This want of union was a radical weakness, and it was the more dangerous to them because their determination to remain petty sovereigns was in obvious antagonism to that growing sense of nationality which, as we have seen, had been greatly fostered by the Hundred Years' War.

LOUIS' STRUGGLE WITH CHARLES THE BOLD

The League dissolved, it was Louis' policy to prevent its re-formation. He therefore sought to secure the allegiance of some of its most formidable members by secret gifts and favours. At the same time he did all in his power to win over the middle classes of the towns, and especially those of Paris. His first great object, however, was the recovery of Normandy, a province of the utmost importance to the Crown both because it was a connecting link between the domains of Burgundy and Brittany, and because it might at any moment lay France open to the English. Opportunity soon offered. While the Count of Charolais' hands were tied by insurrections in Liège, Dinant, and Ghent, he purchased the Duke of Brittany's neutrality for a sum of 120,000 crowns, and entered Normandy, which in a few weeks submitted entirely to his authority. This violation of the Treaty of Saint-Maur caused some commotion among the nobles, and the Count of Charolais, now Duke of Burgundy, and known as Charles le Terrible or le Téméraire ('the Bold'), formed a new coalition against the King (1468), finding a willing supporter in the Duke of Brittany, who had taken alarm at Louis' success in Normandy, and an ally in Edward IV of England. Upon this Louis convened the States-General at Tours (taking care that the deputies chosen should be all on his side), and asked their counsel on three questions, namely, Did the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany owe allegiance to the Crown like other vassals, or were they permitted to make alliances on their own account with foreigners? Could Normandy be alienated from the Crown? and Had the

¹ *Histoire de France*, t. vi, p. 571.

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King provided sufficiently for his brother Charles by granting him a pension of 60,000 livres a year? The States-General decided all these questions in the King's favour. This made Charles the Bold very angry; but it suited his purpose to remain quiet until his marriage with the sister of the English King. Meanwhile Louis compelled the Duke of Brittany to sign a treaty in which he engaged to relinquish all alliances save that with the King of France. Then in October Louis met Charles the Bold in a personal interview at Péronne. The meeting was most friendly, and negotiations began under favourable auspices. Unfortunately, however, news just then came of a fresh revolt in Liége. Charles fell into a violent passion, openly accused the King of treachery, and, on pretext that he wished to prevent the escape of a thief who had stolen a casket of jewels, ordered the gates of the city and castle to be shut. Louis thus found himself a prisoner in the power of his most deadly enemy. Every reader is familiar with the vivid description of this dramatic situation in the pages of *Quentin Durward*, and will remember that even Scott, whose antipathy to the King is sufficiently pronounced, admits that he did not lose his courage or presence of mind. For two days his fate trembled in the balance. Then Charles was persuaded by his council that he would lose rather than gain by the King's death. He therefore turned his advantage to account by extracting a treaty by which that of Saint-Maur was ratified in all that concerned the house of Burgundy, while the King's brother was to receive as his appanage the province of Champagne, which, lying between Burgundy and Flanders, would serve to connect the two most important portions of Charles' dominions. Louis also engaged to accompany Charles to Liége, and was actually present at the capture and sack of a city which had been his faithful ally.

Louis thus suffered a second rebuff at the hands of his powerful and ambitious vassal. But he was soon able to retrieve one of his mistakes. At their parting he had entrapped the Duke into an admission of his willingness that, if Charles of Berry would not accept Champagne, the matter might be

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settled in any other way that would be satisfactory to the young Prince. Louis thus regarded himself as relieved from the solemn oath which he had sworn to fulfil the treaty, and contrived to obtain his brother's consent to take Guyenne in place of Champagne. This, and the reconciliation of the brothers, which followed, were a severe blow to Charles the Bold. By supporting the Earl of Warwick in his intrigues against Edward IV, Louis also sought to nullify Charles' English alliance. The submission of the Duke of Nemours, and the overthrow and flight of the Count of Armagnac, still further increased the isolation of Burgundy.

A third coalition against Louis was formed in 1471. A son had been born to him the year before, and Charles of Berry, now Duke of Guyenne, no longer heir to the throne, again went over to his brother's enemies. The ever restless Duke of Burgundy was only too glad to make capital out of his discontent, and to cement their union offered him his only daughter in marriage. This would have meant the ultimate consolidation of Burgundy and Guyenne into a single dominion exceeding in extent, population, and wealth that of the King himself, and Louis was naturally alarmed. Charles the Bold also sought the support of Edward IV, now firmly seated on the English throne, and of the King of Aragon. The discordant interests and cross-intrigues of the confederates, however, made joint action very difficult, and Charles in his embarrassment was willing to listen to overtures from Louis for an alliance against the Dukes of Brittany and Guyenne, though he secretly assured both of them that as soon as his immediate objects were compassed he would repudiate his engagements with the King. But the death of the Duke of Guyenne still further dislocated his plans. The young Prince had been ill for some months, but his end was sudden, and there were rumours that he had been poisoned by his almoner. Furious at the miscarriage of his hopes, Charles thereupon issued a manifesto in which he accused the King of instigating the alleged crime, and, without waiting for the expiration of the truce between them, marched through Picardy, ruthlessly

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burning and ravaging as he went. The little town of Nesle was the first to fall into his hands; he ordered a general slaughter; even the women and children who had taken refuge in the church were put to the sword; and when he rode in, the blood flowing about his horse's fetlocks, he crossed himself and exclaimed: "This is a fine sight! I have good butchers with me!" Roye and Montdidier yielded to him without resistance; but Beauvais, though poorly fortified and ill-manned, unexpectedly blocked his way. Fired by the example of the captain of the garrison, Louis de Balagny, the inhabitants armed in haste, and held the enemy at bay till relief came up, and much to his chagrin Charles was forced to raise the siege. In this heroic episode the women of the city played a prominent part; one Jeanne Laisné, called 'Hachette' from the weapon which she carried, specially distinguishing herself by her courage and activity. Louis showed his admiration and gratitude by instituting an annual procession in which the women were to have precedence of the men, and by marrying Jeanne to one of his officers; in addition he exempted Beauvais from taxation.

Charles the Bold continued his bloody march into Normandy, but, failing to join forces with the Duke of Brittany, then hard pressed by the King, was compelled to turn back. His turbulence, obstinacy, and cruelty were now beginning to disgust some of his most valuable adherents, several of whom, perceiving that his recklessness could end only in final disaster, forsook him and transferred their allegiance to the King. Among these was the famous chronicler Philippe de Comines, who had been his chamberlain, and was henceforth one of Louis' most trusted advisers. Louis now concluded an advantageous peace with Brittany, and a truce was arranged with Charles the Bold.

Charles' policy at this point underwent a significant change. Thus far he had been the leader of the malcontent French nobles in their struggle against the supremacy of the Crown. Notwithstanding temporary successes, it was now becoming increasingly evident that the Crown was too strong for them. He therefore directed his energies into another channel. He

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resolved by acquisition and consolidation to create a separate kingdom, and to rule over this as an independent king. Had his design prospered, it may be noted in passing, it would have meant the practical restoration of the old 'Middle Kingdom' of Lotharingia between France and Germany. Parts of his vast but scattered dominions, it will be remembered, he held nominally as fiefs of the King of France, and other parts as fiefs of the Holy Roman Empire. He now turned to the Emperor Frederick III, proposing that he should receive the kingly crown at the Emperor's hands in exchange for a marriage between his daughter and the Emperor's son, Maximilian. Duke and Emperor met to discuss the matter at Trèves (1473), but the Emperor was unwilling to accede, and the conference, which lasted for five weeks, ended without result, though the Duke had been so certain of success that he had made elaborate preparations for his coronation. Thwarted in his purpose, and angry at being exposed to the ridicule of Europe, Charles was further irritated by news that a league, composed of the Archduke Sigismund, the Rhenish towns, the Swiss, and the King of France, was being formed against him (1474-75). Once more he sought the aid of England, and, prompted by him, in the summer of 1475, Edward IV, with a magnificent army, descended upon France. But Louis, though, as usual, unwilling to fight, met the crisis with the diplomatic cleverness of which he was so great a master. He had little difficulty in convincing Edward that Charles was using him for his own private ends and was powerless to render him any effective help in the prosecution of the English claims; after which he bought off the invader with an indemnity of 75,000 crowns, and the promise of an annual payment (which the French called pension and the English tribute) of 50,000 livres. This method of securing peace was both unheroic and costly. But Louis cared nothing either for the humiliation or for the cost. He was satisfied with his success on one essential point. The English had come with formal demands, first for the whole of France as their rightful possession, and then for the restitution of Normandy and Guyenne, and they had left the country

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without receiving an inch of French territory. Charles, who had tried in vain to interrupt the negotiations, then consented to make peace with Louis in order to be free to pursue his objects elsewhere. He overran Lorraine (1475) and invaded Switzerland (1476), crossing the Jura unopposed with an army of 20,000 well-equipped troops. His capture of Granson was accompanied by a signal act of perfidy: he induced the garrison to surrender by promising them their lives, and then hanged them to a man. But his baseness was quickly punished. Two days later—on March 2—the united forces of the Swiss reached the town; Charles' army was saved from destruction only by flight, and all the wonderful treasures of plate and jewellery with which he travelled were carried away by the foe. An even more disastrous defeat awaited him a little later at Morat, where it is estimated that he lost at least two-thirds of his men. This catastrophe paralysed his energies, and he retired to his castle near Pontarlier, where he spent two months savagely brooding over his own desperate case. Then news came that the young Duke of Lorraine, whose territory he had annexed, had laid siege to Nancy. This aroused him from his lethargy. Gathering together the wrecks of his army, he hurriedly marched to the relief of the city. He arrived to find that three days before it had capitulated to the enemy. The odds were now fatally against him, but, notwithstanding the entreaties of his few faithful advisers and the defection of his Italian mercenaries, he persisted in acting on the offensive. On Sunday, January 5, 1477, a battle was fought near Nancy which in a few hours ended in his utter rout. His own fate was for the moment a mystery. He had last been seen in the thick of the conflict fighting with reckless courage and inspiring his followers with word and example. At first it seemed possible that he was among the handful who had escaped slaughter or capture. But two days later his naked body, mangled almost beyond recognition, was discovered in the mud on the bank of a frozen brook. By the Duke of Lorraine's orders an honourable burial was given to his remains.

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So closed the stormy career of a man who may justly be described as the last great representative and defender of the old feudalism. Charles the Bold¹ was not without his good qualities. He was energetic and courageous; he was sober and chaste; he could upon occasion be both just and generous; he had some taste for serious things. But he was passionate, violent, headstrong, brutal, and altogether untrustworthy. Even in the boasted ethics of chivalry he fell short, for he was treacherous, vindictive, and implacable. Relying wholly on brute force, he failed as a soldier because, despite his great personal prowess, he lacked the intellectual and moral qualities necessary for success in the art of war; and his ultimate ruin was in large measure due to his reckless disregard for the elementary principles of generalship. Even more conspicuous was his incapacity as a statesman. His diplomacy was futile; his policy, at once aggressive and vacillating, alienated even those whose interests he might have made his own; and he showed no concern for his subjects and no genius for constructive rule. His fiery imagination was filled with grandiose dreams of wealth and power, but his vision went no farther than conquest and territorial aggrandizement, and he did nothing toward the creation of a coherent kingdom out of the patchwork of miscellaneous states over which he actually held sway. His downfall was thus symbolical of the final collapse not only of feudalism, but also of that entire conception of government of which feudalism had been the foundation and stay.

Louis had apparently been a mere spectator of Charles' ruin. In reality he had done much to bring it about, for it was largely through his secret machinations that Charles had been entangled in his disputes with the Flemish towns and in the fatal quarrel with the Swiss. He did not attempt to hide his delight when he heard of the Duke's death, which not only freed him from his most persistent and dangerous enemy, but

¹ I follow accepted English usage in calling him Charles the Bold; but the more correct translation of the French *Téméraire*, and a far more fitting surname, would of course be 'Rash.'

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also cleared the way for a further development of his territorial schemes. For the male line of Burgundy was now extinct, and Charles' only daughter, Marie, a girl of twenty, found herself, as a result of her father's violent and foolhardy policy, without an army, without resources, and practically without support. Even during Charles' lifetime his heterogeneous domains had scarcely held together. Now the inevitable tendency toward disintegration was obvious.

Louis at once proceeded to turn the situation to his own account. He announced his title to the fiefs which Charles had held of the Crown of France: to the duchy and county of Burgundy on the ground that they were male fiefs over which he was now called upon to exercise the right of feudal guardianship; to Picardy under the Treaty of Arras; to Artois as forfeit to him by reason of Charles' 'felony.' On various pretexts he even laid claim to Franche-Comté and Hainaut, though these were fiefs of the Empire. The duchy of Burgundy was induced without much difficulty to accept what was nominally the royal protection; Franche-Comté yielded after a brief but lively resistance; Picardy, always French in sentiment, soon submitted; but Artois held out obstinately against the royal arms. Arras in particular gave the King a great deal of trouble, and his consequent resentment was so strong that when at length it fell into his hands (June 1479) he ordered that its fortifications should be destroyed, its very name changed, and its inhabitants driven out in the mass, their places being taken by artisans and tradesmen chosen by lot from various other towns.¹ After this his career of conquest in the county was checked only by Saint-Omer, which remained impregnable. But his cruelty and treachery had badly damaged his cause, and though Artois was reduced to subjection its hostility was unbroken. The war of devastation which a little later he waged in Hainaut had much the same result.

¹ Louis naturally failed in this attempt to transform the population of the city. Before he died he permitted its former inhabitants to return to their old homes. But the industries which had made Arras prosperous were seriously injured.

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Meanwhile Louis was looking with jealous eyes upon Flanders and was busy with intrigues by which he hoped to get possession of that rich and thriving territory. The Flemings were not, however, easily entrapped. Then through his agents he endeavoured to incite the feelings of the principal Flemish towns against Marie, his design being of course to profit by her embarrassment. In this emergency Marie was guilty of some double-dealing in her relations on the one hand with her counsellors and on the other with the King, and at the right moment Louis produced a secret letter from her in which her duplicity was revealed. By this singularly base action he aimed to increase the animosity of her Flemish subjects to such an extent that she would be forced to purchase his protection by the acceptance of any conditions he might see fit to impose. But here the wily King in fact overreached himself. Marie's anger was aroused by the troubles and humiliation which he brought upon her, and the Flemings, who would on no account have him for master, were ready to pardon her indiscretion when in 1477 she gave her hand to young Maximilian of Austria, the son of the German Emperor. This union laid the foundations of the greatness of the house of Austria, and created for France a dangerous rivalry which was to last for more than two hundred years.

Louis had had other plans for Marie's future, and this marriage sadly disturbed his calculations. War with Burgundy followed, and on August 7, 1479, a bloody battle was fought at Guinegatte (now Enguinegatte, in the Pas-de-Calais) without decisive issue. Three years later Marie died from injuries received in an accident while hawking, leaving two children, a son, Philippe, and a daughter, Marguerite. Maximilian soon embroiled himself with his subjects, and was glad to make peace with the King. On the 23rd of December of that same year a treaty was signed at Arras by which Marguerite was affianced to the Dauphin, to whom she was to bring in dowry Franche-Comté and the county of Artois. Nothing was said about Picardy or the duchy of Burgundy, which were thus tacitly allowed to remain in Louis' hands.

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CONSOLIDATION OF THE MONARCHY UNDER LOUIS XI

A good half of Charles the Bold's dominions were thus definitely merged in the kingdom of France. This, however, represents only a part of the substantial successes which Louis achieved on behalf of the monarchy. While Charles was too much preoccupied with his own wild schemes to interfere, Louis contrived, now by one method and now by another, to ruin the great houses of Alençon (1473-74), Armagnac (1475), Saint-Pol (1475), and Nemours (1477). Twice condemned to death for 'felony' and twice pardoned, John, the old Duke of Alençon, was sent to prison for the rest of his life, and his domains of Alençon and Perche were confiscated by the Crown. John V, Count of Armagnac, a man of scandalous life and a persistent rebel against the throne, was slain. His cousin Jacques, Duke of Nemours, and Louis de Luxembourg, Count of Saint-Pol, were both executed for high treason. Louis thus disembarassed himself of some of the chief disturbers of the peace and security of his realm. In other cases he sought not to destroy but to conciliate the great nobles whose power was still a menace to his own; as when he gave his daughters in marriage, the elder, Anne, to the Count of Beaujeu, the heir to the duchy of Bourbon (1473), the younger, Jeanne, to Louis, Duke of Orléans, the future Louis XII (1466). The death of his brother enabled him to reabsorb Guyenne and Berry. Anjou reverted to the Crown as a male fief. Maine and Provence came to him under testamentary bequest from Charles of Maine. As a result of Louis' intervention in the affairs of Spain, Roussillon and Cerdaña were also added to France, but these were not permanent acquisitions, for they were restored by Charles VIII a few years later to Ferdinand and Isabella. Altogether the reign of Louis XI was signalized by an enormous increase in the royal territory and by a corresponding increase in royal power and prestige. France as he left it was almost the France that we know to-day, for at his death only one great feudal house—that of Brittany—still claimed complete independence. Nor was the gain territorial

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only. Out of a congeries of petty states Louis made an organic kingdom.

Louis did not long survive the triumph of Arras. He had been struck by paralysis in 1480 and again in 1481, and at the time of the signing of the treaty he was seriously ill. His intellectual vigour remained, indeed, unabated, but sickness made him increasingly suspicious of all who came near him, even of his nearest relatives, and his cruelty and vindictiveness grew to such a pitch that he punished even the most trifling offences with the most barbaric severity. He had now shut himself up in the gloomy castle of Plessis-lès-Tours, which was in fact more like a prison than a castle, for its windows were protected with iron bars ("bons, grands, et épais," says Comines), the walls bristled with iron spikes, and day and night archers kept watch on the battlements and in the ditches. Here he lingered on, tortured incessantly by fear of death. Grossly superstitious and credulous, notwithstanding his astuteness and cynicism, he surrounded himself with relics and images borrowed from innumerable shrines; with the Pope's special permission he ordered the sacred ampulla to be brought from Reims with the design of having his entire body anointed with its miraculous oil; he made large donations to monasteries and churches to secure their prayers, and votive offerings to obtain the intercession of the saints; he paid enormous sums to astrologers and charlatans for their prognostications and nostrums; he sent all the way to Calabria for the famous hermit Francis of Paola, and implored him on his knees to use his favour with God for the prolongation of his days. His physician, the coarse and avaricious Jacques Coictier, became his tyrant, and during the last five months of his life extorted from him upward of 50,000 crowns, besides various privileges for himself and his family. His only other attendants were a few men of the lower *bourgeoisie* whom he felt he could trust because, wholly dependent as they were upon him, their interest lay in keeping him alive. "Les hauts seigneurs, dit-il, n'auront qu'à gagner à ma mort; mais les pauvres sires seront désappointés de tout, peut-être même

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pendus.”¹ As the sands thus slowly ran out he found amid all his fears and agitations a certain satisfaction in the thought of what he had accomplished for France: “Nous n’avons rien perdu de la couronne, mais icelle augmentée et accrue.” His conscience never seems to have been troubled about the tortuous and often perfidious methods, the false dealing, the cold-blooded cruelty, by which his objects had been attained.

On August 24, 1483, he suffered a third stroke of paralysis, and though he slowly recovered his faculties he knew that the end was at hand. “Il en est fait de vous,” his physician curtly told him. Upon this his attitude toward death underwent a curious change. He lost all fear of it. “J’espère que Dieu m’aidera,” he said simply. His mind was still wonderfully clear, and he passed his few remaining days in religious exercises and in the discussion of public affairs with his son-in-law, the Count of Beaujeu, for whom he had sent. He died on August 30, his last words being, “Lord, in Thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.” He was five months past his sixtieth birthday, and had reigned for twenty-three years.

THE CHARACTER AND POLICY OF LOUIS XI

It has been said of Louis XI that he was one of the most unkingly men who ever sat on a throne. Unostentatious in public, parsimonious in private life, he made no attempt to support the dignity of his station. For the reality of power he had the keenest sense; for its outward forms and symbols he cared nothing. His appearance was insignificant, his manners plain, his dress mean and even slovenly. Partly by policy but partly by natural preference, he posed as the *roturier* king, adopting the style and tone of the middle classes in deliberate contrast with those of the aristocracy. Partly by policy but partly by natural preference, too, he indulged in familiar intercourse with the *bourgeoisie*, cultivated the friendship of *petites gens*, and chose for his advisers such men as Tristan l’Hermitte (whom he called his *compère*), Olivier le Daim (originally his barber), Jean de Doyat, and Jean Balue, who

¹ Comines, *Mémoires*, t. ii, p. 481.

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were of low birth and little breeding. To these he gave his confidence so far as he gave it to any one at all ; but he was so sly and secretive that there is much point in Jacques de Brézé's remark that his horse alone carried his counsels. He had, indeed, a cynical unbelief in human nature, and laid it down as his favourite maxim that " He who does not know how to dissimulate does not know how to rule." Keen of intelligence, fertile in resource, alert, restless, slippery, he was endowed with a real genius for politics. He loved to pit his cunning against the brute force of his opponents ; he had a rare faculty for turning their weaknesses to his own advantage and for extricating himself from a difficult situation ; and he spun such a web of intrigue about him that he came to be known as the " universal spider " (*universelle aragne*). In carrying out his plans he was, as we have seen, neither guided nor checked by the commonest considerations of morality. The elementary distinctions of right and wrong did not exist for him when he had a particular purpose in view. The success which he achieved by it was for him a complete justification of the basest action, and he was absolutely callous to the suffering which he caused in carrying out a scheme or in satisfying his thirst for vengeance. Religious he certainly was in a way ; but his was the kind of religion which merely drugs the conscience and has no relation with conduct and no hold upon life. It is, indeed, one of the strangest facts about this strange nature that the grossest superstitions should have exercised a tyrannous power over so strong and positive a mind.

Be our judgments of the man and his methods what they may, however, we have still to recognize the importance of his place in the history of France. He has justly been called the real founder of the French monarchy. His one great object from the beginning of his reign to its close was the consolidation of the nation and the firm establishment of the authority of the Crown. That object he achieved. With him the period of medieval feudalism in France comes to an end.

Yet we must be on our guard lest we read back into his policy a spirit which was entirely foreign to it. A little too

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much has sometimes been made of Louis' *bourgeois* proclivities. These were not in the least indicative of democratic sympathies. If he made it his business to break the back of feudalism, and as an aid to this encouraged the burgher classes, he had not the slightest intention of transferring to the latter the powers of which the former had been deprived. He greatly favoured, it is true, the new aristocracy of industry and wealth which was now emerging into prominence under the changing conditions of the towns; he loaded its representatives with privileges; he granted them titles of nobility with a lavish hand. But he was at the same time careful to destroy the popular and democratic character of the communes, to reduce their administrative liberties, and to gather them securely under the rule of the Crown. Thus, while he made a great show of friendship toward the towns, he racked them with heavy taxation, and did not scruple to override their will whenever he saw fit. At bottom he was no more the friend of the Third Estate than he was of the nobility. Though his ambition was to subordinate particular interests to general, his government was entirely personal, his rule arbitrary. He held, as Comines says, that the power granted to him by heaven should be exercised for the public good; but he himself was the only judge of what constituted the public good, and of the means by which it might best be compassed. He was in fact a despot, and if the history of French feudalism ends with him, with him also begins the history of French autocracy.

It is from this standpoint that all his policy must be studied if we would understand it aright. Thus he created Parliaments at Bordeaux and Dijon as agencies of the royal authority in provinces now added to the Crown; but he deprived the Parliament of Paris of the political powers which it was beginning to exercise and reduced its functions to those of a judicial tribunal. He eliminated from his Council all men who carried real weight, and surrounded himself with advisers devoted to his interests and subservient to his will. At times, for political purposes, he substituted extraordinary commissions for the regular legal machinery. He convoked the States-

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General once only, and that was in 1468, in the circumstances already described.

Louis' work for the welfare of his country is not, however, summed up in what he did for it politically. He encouraged commerce, industry, and mining, initiated a system of posts, and endeavoured to foster national trade by prohibiting the importation of merchandise into France except in French ships. He was also a patron of learning and letters. He received with favour a number of Greek scholars who had fled from Constantinople on the capture of that city by the Turks. He founded three universities. He extended the scope of the University of Paris, and created a separate school of medicine in connexion with it. He reorganized the library established by Charles V. He protected the first printers when they set up their presses in the capital. He took an active interest in literature, and it was under his supervision that the collection of gross, but often amusing, stories was made which we know as the *Cent Nouvelles nouvelles*.

Yet, notwithstanding the substantial benefits which in many ways Louis undoubtedly conferred upon the French people, he was throughout, and particularly toward the end of his life, extremely unpopular among them. Himself genuinely solicitous, according to his lights, for the national welfare, he was one of the best hated of kings. The enormous expense of his government was undoubtedly a chief cause of this. Personally stingy, he spent money without pausing to count when political occasion demanded; and political occasion often did demand, for his great instrument was always money instead of the sword. The *taille perpétuelle* was almost quadrupled during his reign, for it went up to 4,600,000 livres in 1481, and though after the Treaty of Arras it sank again a little, it was only to 3,900,000 livres. This taxation, "très excessive et cruelle," as a chronicler puts it, was a grievous burden upon the masses of the King's subjects, and served to make them indifferent to what he had accomplished in their behalf. To the majority of them, indeed, his death came, not as a sorrow, but as a relief.

CHAPTER VII

CHARLES VIII

1483-1498

LOUIS XII

1498-1515

LOUIS XI left two daughters and a son. His elder daughter, Anne, now twenty-one, was, it will be remembered, the wife of Pierre de Beaujeu, brother of the Duke of Bourbon; his younger, Jeanne, had married the Duke of Orléans, her cousin, and the first prince of the blood. Born in 1470, his son, Charles, had only just turned thirteen at the time of his father's death. Technically he was indeed of age to reign in his own right, for the law had fixed the royal majority at thirteen. But his total inability to assume the responsibilities of government was patent to all, for he was poor in health and weak in character, and his education had been so shamefully neglected that at the time he could neither write nor read. Realizing the boy's incapacity, Louis on his death-bed had expressed the wish that Anne of Beaujeu should act as his guardian. In her he had great confidence; "she is," he once said, "the least foolish of all women—for wise there is none." Nor was she unworthy of his regard. She was plentifully endowed with energy, decision, and courage, and together with his love of power and his unscrupulousness she had a measure also of her father's intellectual qualities.

THE REGENCY OF ANNE OF BEAUJEU

The commonly accepted idea that Anne undertook her task single-handed appears, indeed, to be unsound. On the contrary, she acted throughout on the advice and with the support

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of her husband, a man of forty-four, and his part in her policy seems to have been so important that to him should properly be given much of the credit for the *régime* which is popularly associated with her name.¹ But it was she who was always to the front, as the current phrase, "the government of Madame," testifies.

The situation in France was thus very similar to that which had arisen on the accession of Louis IX, when, it will be recalled, a woman had become the effective ruler of the country in the name of a boy-king. Out of a similar situation similar results seemed likely to ensue. The weakening of the royal authority had offered to the rebellious nobility of the thirteenth century a good chance to regain the power which they had lost under Philippe-Auguste. The restless nobility of the fifteenth century, crushed by Louis XI, now believed that his death had cleared the way for one more effort for the recovery of their former prerogatives and prestige. Hence the aristocratic reaction which disturbed the early years of the new reign, and the leaders of which were the pleasure-loving young Duke of Orléans, himself indifferent to politics, but egged on by others, the Counts of Angoulême and Dunois, the Duke of Lorraine, and the old Duke of Bourbon.

On one point Anne yielded readily to the cabal. The late King's favourites were dismissed and punished: Olivier le Daim was hanged on the gibbet of Montfaucon; Jean de Doyat had his tongue pierced and his ears cut off; Coictier was forced to disgorge his 50,000 crowns. She even consented to the disbanding of the 6000 Swiss soldiers whom Louis had had in his service. But to the further demands of the princes for the restitution of lands and rights she refused to give ear. On the question of the regency and of the guardianship of the King she also remained firm, though an attempt was made to transfer her power to the Duke of Bourbon. In the end it was proposed that the States-General should be convened

¹ Petit-Dutaillis, in Lavis, *Histoire de France*, t. iv, 2e Partie, p. 422. This view appears to be sound, though it is directly at variance with Brantôme's statement that Beaujeu's wife "ne le consultait guère."

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to settle the difficulty. On this point agreement was easy, because each party confidently expected that the sentiment of the nation would be in its favour.

THE STATES-GENERAL OF 1484

The States-General which met at Tours on January 7, 1484, and sat till March 14 consisted of 246 members. There were as yet no fixed regulations for elections, which were conducted in all sorts of different ways, and in some parts of the country were not held at all. In the strict acceptation of the term, therefore, this could not be called a properly constituted, representative assembly. Yet it was the first really national assembly in the sense that it was the first to which deputies were sent by provinces lying outside the royal domains. Here was an unmistakable sign of the unification of the kingdom achieved by Louis XI. For purposes of voting division was made, not by orders, but by territorial sections, of which there were six—France, Burgundy, Normandy, Guyenne, Languedoc, and Provence. That Brittany was still unrepresented is a point to be noted. The King opened the session in person.

On the fundamental question of government the States were at first divided. Conservative members held that it was a question which in fact lay beyond their competence; their contention being that the royal power inhered in the royal family, and that if the king himself was unable to exercise it, it passed automatically into the hands of the princes of the blood. But there were others who repudiated this view and took a bold stand on the rights of the nation. Prominent among these was Philippe Pot, Seigneur de la Roche, the deputy of the nobility of Burgundy. "From the beginning," this orator declared, "the sovereign people have created kings by their suffrage. Princes exist, not to enrich themselves at the expense of the people, but, forgetting their own interests, to enrich and advance the people's welfare. It is only flatterers who attribute to a prince that sovereignty which really exists only in the people. The public interest is the interest of the

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people ; they confide it to the king. Those who have gained possession of it in any other manner can be regarded only as tyrants and usurpers. It is evident that our King cannot himself govern the commonwealth. Government should not therefore devolve upon the princes. It belongs to all. It is to the people who have granted it that the commonwealth should return ; and by the people I mean not simply the subjects of this kingdom, but men of all classes, even the princes." ¹ These words seem curiously prophetic of the far-off Revolutionary age. It has, indeed, been pointed out that they are less remarkable in fact than in appearance, since Pot's theories about the supremacy of the people and the elective nature of the monarchy were simply commonplaces of the schools at the time.² Yet even so his oration remains noteworthy in one respect : it boldly carried the abstractions of academic discussion over into the sphere of practical politics. The debate was heated, but little was accomplished by it. In the upshot the formation of a Council of State was left to the King, though the assembly recommended that twelve of the councillors should be chosen from its own body, and that in the absence of the King himself the presidency should devolve first on the Duke of Orléans, then on the Duke of Bourbon, and after him on the Sire de Beaujeu. The education and guardianship of the King were entrusted to his sister Anne.

The assembly then turned to the discussion of the reforms which were to be referred to the Council. The nobility claimed the restitution of various seigniorial rights. The clergy demanded the revival of the Pragmatic Sanction. The *cahier* of the Third Estate set forth the miseries of the people, "jadis nommé franc, et ors de pire condition que le serf," and urged that measures should be taken to stop the brigandage of the soldiers, that the military forces of the country should be reduced, that the pensions granted to the great lords should be

¹ Jehan Masselin, *Journal des États-Généraux de France tenus à Tours en 1484*, ed. Bernier, p. 146.

² Petit-Dutaillis, in *op. cit.*, t. iv, 2e Partie, p. 425.

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abolished, that taxes upon goods passing from one province to another should be suppressed, and that sundry other specified abuses should be corrected. A requisition was also made that the States-General should be convened every other year, and that no fresh taxation should be imposed without its sanction. Unfortunately the division of the assembly by provinces now proved to be a great mistake, for local jealousies and the rivalries of the different parts of the country continually cut across all attempts at reform. On the financial question, however, some concerted representations were made. But the accounts which the deputies obtained with difficulty from the Council were so obviously falsified that they were quite useless for discussion. Finally a grant was made to the King of 1,200,000 livres a year for the next two years. Then sectional hatreds broke out anew over the problem of the equitable distribution of the taxes by which this sum was to be raised. When, after unseemly wrangles, the assembly at length dissolved, to the immense relief of the princes, little had been actually done by it for the better government of the realm.

THE 'FOOLISH WAR' OF 1486-88

While nominally the predominant power in the Council was in the hands of the Orléanist rather than of the Beaujeu party, the fact that Anne of Beaujeu was officially the guardian of the King, was thus always with him, could bring her influence to bear constantly upon him, and was able even to make him the mouthpiece of her own will, gave her an enormous advantage which, as her father's daughter, she was not slow to turn to account. Before long the rival princes began to realize that their interests were seriously jeopardized by her ascendancy. The Duke of Orléans accordingly made common cause with the Duke of Bourbon, and with the Counts of Angoulême and Dunois, formed alliances with François of Brittany and Maximilian of Austria, and even sought the support of Richard III of England. But Anne checkmated him at all points. By backing the designs of Henry Tudor against

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Richard, she deprived him at the outset of all hope of English help ; by intriguing with the domestic enemies of François and Maximilian she crippled the resources of both of his allies. Then, having weakened him by her plottings, she sent her armies into the field. Maximilian was defeated in Artois (1487) ; the young King had little difficulty in subduing the south ; in July 1488 La Trémouille routed a Breton force at Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier, taking the Duke of Orléans prisoner ; and the 'Guerre folle,' as it was called, came to an end. By the Treaty of Sablé François of Brittany engaged himself thereafter to give no asylum to the King's enemies, and not to marry either of his daughters without the King's consent. A few weeks later he died, leaving the duchy to the elder of these, Anne, then only twelve. Child as she was, however, the little Duchess had a will of her own. She resolved both to preserve the independence of Brittany and to arrange her own destiny as she saw fit. Looking back we must admire her courage. But we cannot be astonished that events proved too strong for her.

Her marriage now became the most urgent question in French—we might almost go so far as to say in European—politics, for on it hinged the future relations of France and Brittany. This the King's enemies perceived as clearly as did Anne of Beaujeu, now, since the death of the old Duke, Duchess of Bourbon. One of the most active of these, Maximilian of Austria, for whom the Treaty of Arras had been only so much waste-paper, and who was resolved if possible to win back the whole of Charles the Bold's heritage, saw in a union with Brittany the first step toward his success. He therefore became a suitor for the Duchess's hand. The rivalries and contentions of her counsellors and the unsettled state of her dominion made her position both difficult and perilous, and in Maximilian's proposal lay, it would seem, her only chance of safety. It was a proposal, too, which appealed to her ambitions, for Maximilian was now King of the Romans and would in due time become Emperor. She therefore consented, and actually went through the ceremony of marriage

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by proxy, Maximilian himself being at the moment busy with a war in Hungary. The Beaujeus could not, of course, be blind to the menace of such a union. They therefore determined to act before it was too late. Brittany was invaded by a royal army under La Trémouille; a large portion of the duchy was occupied; and in August 1491 Anne found herself besieged in Rennes. Two months later the King himself arrived upon the scene; Anne was notified that, since it was contracted in defiance of the Treaty of Sablé, her marriage with Maximilian was null and void; and negotiations ensued which ended in her betrothal to Charles. In December 1491 the Duchess of Brittany thus became the Queen of France. The fact that this marriage in turn was a contravention of the Treaty of Arras could not of course be overlooked. But a fresh treaty, signed at Senlis in May 1493, got over the difficulty. Little Marguerite of Burgundy, who had been brought to France in order to be educated for her marriage with the King, was sent home, and the counties of Artois and Burgundy, which she was to have brought as her dowry, were relinquished. This meant the loss of a portion of the territory which Louis XI's diplomacy had secured. But such loss was trivial in comparison with the immense gain which accrued in the union of Brittany with the French Crown. The last of the great fiefs—the last real stronghold of feudalism—was destroyed, and the royal authority was assured over the entire kingdom.

Such dangers as meanwhile had threatened France from other quarters were happily averted. The new King of England, Henry VII, and Ferdinand the Catholic of Aragon had both thought to make capital out of the disturbed condition of France. But Henry was bought off with a promise of 745,000 crowns, while Ferdinand's energies were absorbed by his troubles with the Moors. The difficulties which he had to encounter in Flanders and Hungary similarly prevented Maximilian from giving practical effect to his anger at the Breton settlement.

CHARLES VIII

THE REIGN OF CHARLES VIII

This settlement was the closing act of the regency of the Beaujeus. Already Charles had been freeing himself, by little and little, from their influence, and now he began to rule entirely on his own account.

His policy toward the nobility was one of conciliation. To those who had recently been prominent in the reaction against the throne he behaved with marked generosity. He released the imprisoned Duke of Orléans and pardoned the Count of Dunois. He also restored the confiscated estates of the family of Nemours. In character the very opposite of his father, he moreover gained the sympathy of the aristocracy as a whole—whose feudal tastes remained unchanged though their feudal power had gone—by his chivalrous spirit, his carelessness, and his love of pleasure and display. The strongly romantic bias of his nature had been intensified by much reading of books of chivalry, which had in fact turned his brains a little, as a century later they were to turn the brains of the famous knight of La Mancha. Puny in body and weak in mind as he was, he had none the less come to believe that the *rôle* he was called upon to fill was that of Charlemagne—the Charlemagne of romance—whom he had taken as his model. His imagination teemed with extravagant fancies. One of these took definite shape in the field of foreign politics. He nourished the dream of making France instead of Germany the centre of world-empire. This was the origin of his invasion of Italy—a task lightly undertaken in a mood of uncalculating temerity and absurd self-confidence, but destined to have remarkable and far-reaching results alike for France and for Europe.

INVASION OF ITALY

As a beginning he put forth a claim to the kingdom of Naples—a claim which he traced back to Charles I of Anjou (brother of Louis IX), who had received both Naples and Sicily as a fief from the Pope.¹ The appeal for aid made to him by

¹ Sicily had passed to the King of Aragon in 1282, after the native rising against the French and the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers. See *ante*, p. 147.

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several petty Italian rulers gave him a further excuse for action. The conquest of Naples was, however, only the first step. His ultimate aim was to retake Jerusalem and to establish again the Empire of the East. Such a grandiose scheme was well calculated to fascinate the nobility, whose pent up energies craved for outlet. Their enthusiasm made him indifferent to the warnings of his wiser counsellors—of Comines, for example, and Anne of Bourbon. The proposed expedition would give ample opportunity for adventure; glory was to be gained in it; and the prize was great.

Charles accordingly gathered an army of 50,000 men and crossed the Alps; and it is worth while to note in passing that despite the activity of the nobles this army was mainly composed of mercenaries, instead of feudal retainers. This shows that the military organization of feudalism was now rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Thus began the Italian wars in which France was to be engaged for more than sixty years, and which were to interfere—as the Hundred Years' War had interfered—with the normal internal progress of the kingdom.

Charles had made his plans hurriedly, and they were so incomplete that at the very beginning want of money compelled him to borrow a large sum at a ruinous rate of interest. Fortune, however, seemed to smile upon him. The people of Italy were seized with panic at his approach. His march through the country was a mere 'promenade.' Florence, just then stirred to feverish excitement by the preaching of Savonarola, opened its gates to him; Rome did the same; without having to strike a blow he entered Naples in triumph (February 1495); and there, amid splendid festivities, he had himself solemnly crowned King of Naples, Emperor of the East, and King of Jerusalem. His brilliant success was, however, short-lived. While he was amusing himself and the Neapolitans with tournaments and magnificent processions news came that a formidable alliance, composed of Ludovico il Moro of Milan, Pope Alexander VI, Maximilian (now Emperor), Ferdinand of Aragon, and the republic of Venice, had been formed

LOUIS XII

against him. At first he refused to realize the imminent danger of his position ; but finally he was persuaded by Comines to lead the main body of his forces back to France while the route was still clear. Leaving armies of occupation at Naples, Pisa, and other places on the seaboard, he thereupon set out from Naples (May 20, 1495) with 10,000 men and all his artillery. In Northern Italy he found his way blocked by an army of the allies outnumbering his own by three to one. But he managed to push through, though at the sacrifice of a large portion of his men, and with the remnant made good his retreat into France. The forces he had left in Italy were soon driven out, and his chimerical dream of conquest came to an end.

This disastrous collapse of all his high-flown hopes seems to have exercised a tempering influence upon his giddy mind, for according to Comines he now set himself to live according to the commandments of God and for the better government of his realm. Little time, however, was left him to prove the depth of his new desires. On April 7, 1498, while walking through a dark passage in his castle of Amboise, he struck his head so violently against the top of a doorway that he died from concussion within a few hours. He was only twenty-seven.

LOUIS XII

Charles left no children, and with him closed the direct line of the Valois. The crown now passed to the heir-presumptive, the Duke of Orléans, whose complete reconciliation with the King had been shown by the active part he had taken in the Neapolitan campaign. He ascended the throne as Louis XII.

A good-natured man, though of no great intellectual parts, the new King at once made it clear that he purposed to follow his predecessor's policy in burying the hatchet. All his ancient enmities were forthwith forgotten by him. "It would not," he said, "be fitting for the King of France to avenge the quarrels of the Duke of Burgundy."

One special danger faced him at the opening of his reign.

HISTORY OF FRANCE

Charles' widow had now retired to her own duchy, and as she was still a young woman, and a very independent young woman, there was at least a possibility that, notwithstanding her engagement in her contract with Charles, she might marry some foreign prince, and that Brittany might thus again be lost to France. There seemed to be only one way of obviating this danger, and that was by marrying Anne himself. That he was already married to the late King's second sister, Jeanne, was a fact which was not allowed to count in his political schemes. There had never been any pretence of affection between him and his poor, pious, deformed wife, and she had borne him no children. He did not hesitate, therefore, to appeal to Rome for permission to annul the marriage. This was obtained without difficulty from the Pope, Alexander VI, whose conscience in such a matter was not exactly sensitive, and for a second time Anne of Brittany became Queen of France (1499).

LOUIS' ITALIAN WARS

Unfortunately Louis was perfectly willing to accept the heritage of Charles' unrealized Italian ambitions, and, not satisfied with reasserting the old shadowy title to the kingdom of Naples, he added on his own account a further claim, which he derived from his grandmother, Valentina Visconti,¹ to the duchy of Milan, from which the Viscontis had recently (1450) been expelled by the Sforzas. By gifts and promises he secured the friendship of the Venetians and the Pope, and then, assured that no outside obstacle would be thrown in his way, he despatched an army to Milan, which capitulated on October 6, 1499. This easy success, which gained him the support of several Italian potentates, led him to turn his attention at once to Naples. But here he made a grave mistake. In the hope of thereby securing himself against possible interference from Ferdinand the Catholic (whose dynastic interests in Sicily might appear to be threatened by this French invasion), he entered into a compact with that astute and unscrupulous politician by which he agreed to

¹ Who had married Louis, Duke of Orléans, in 1389.

LOUIS XII

share with him the kingdom of Naples as soon as it should be conquered. Frederick III of Naples had lately called in the Spaniards to aid him against the French ; but Ferdinand, without the slightest regard to his engagements, at once betrayed him to the enemy. Naples thus fell into Louis' hands, as it had previously fallen into Charles', without the firing of a single shot. But now came the question of partition, and with it the beginning of fresh trouble. French and Spanish were soon engaged in hostilities (1502), and though Louis called army after army across the Alps to retrieve repeated disasters, he had at length to abandon Naples to the enemy (1503). One figure stands out, rich with all the colours of romance, in the miserable story of this Franco-Spanish war. It is that of the Chevalier Bayard, the knight "sans peur et sans reproche." Many are the wonderful deeds of courage recorded of him. Perhaps the most wonderful was that which he performed at the battle of Garigliano, when, single-handed, he held a bridge against the foe.

Distressed in mind, sick in body, and now seriously threatened by Maximilian, who was preparing to assert his imperial rights over Italy, Louis was glad to obtain peace at any cost. This he did by signing three separate treaties at Blois (1504) with the Emperor and Ferdinand the Catholic. By these he obtained the Emperor's recognition of his claim to Milan by undertaking to support him against the Venetians ; Ferdinand was confirmed in the Kingship of Naples ; and it was agreed that the grandson of Maximilian and Ferdinand, Charles of Austria,¹ should marry Louis' daughter Claude, who should carry with her as dowry not only the duchy of Milan, but also Burgundy, Brittany, and Blois. These treaties were in the last degree disadvantageous to France, for Milan was the only gain secured by them, while on the other hand they involved a fresh dismemberment of the kingdom and an enormous addition to the future power of Charles of Austria, who was already heir to the Netherlands, Austria, Castile, and Aragon.

¹ Charles was the son of Philip, Archduke of Austria, the son of Maximilian and Marie of Burgundy, and of Joanna, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella.

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By a fourth treaty, the following year, Louis re-ceded his Neapolitan rights to Ferdinand on condition that Ferdinand, now a widower, should marry his niece Germaine de Foix.

Having made these great mistakes, Louis resolved to consult the nation as to the best means of undoing them. The States-General which met at Tours in 1506 declared that the treaties were null since the territory of the kingdom was inalienable. They also urged the King to marry his daughter to his heir-presumptive, François of Angoulême. Neither Maximilian nor Ferdinand was in a position at the moment to protest, and Louis thus made good his escape from the consequences of his injudicious action.

The conquest of Genoa, the next year, signalized the revival of his Italian policy. He then joined the Pope, Julius II, Ferdinand, and Maximilian in the League of Cambrai against Venice (1508), and won a striking victory over the republic at Agnadello (1509). But as soon as he had gained his ends the Pope turned against France, and, finding himself on the verge of defeat, called upon the Catholic princes of Europe for help. A Holy League was then formed against Louis, the principal members of which were Julius, Maximilian, Ferdinand, the Venetian Republic, and Henry VIII of England. Louis was excommunicated; and despite the splendid generalship and prowess of young Gaston de Foix, the French were driven out of Italy (1512, 1513). Nor was this the full tale of disaster. France was invaded. The Spanish seized Navarre. The English descended upon the northern coast, and at Guinegate won the Battle of the Spurs—so called because the French, attacked by sudden panic, “made more use of their spurs than of their lances.” Louis was again forced to sue for peace. He propitiated Leo X, Julius’ successor in the pontifical chair. He recognized Maximilian as the Duke of Milan. Treaties of peace were signed at Dijon with the Swiss, at Orléans with Germany, at London with England. The last-named was ratified by Louis’ marriage with Henry VIII’s sister, Mary (1514).¹

Louis, who had for some time been in poor health, did not

¹ Anne of Brittany had died in the January of that year.

LOUIS XII

long survive these events. He died on January 1, 1515, in his fifty-third year.

THE INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF LOUIS XII

Louis was guilty of extreme folly in foreign affairs. But he made ample amends at home, and notwithstanding the humiliation which he brought upon his country he was greatly beloved by all classes of his subjects. 'Le Père du peuple'—such was the surname which the States-General conferred upon him; "the most sacred name," he himself declared, "that can ever be given to a prince." He was, indeed, sincerely interested in the welfare of France, which during his reign, it was commonly said, was happier and more prosperous than it had been for the past three hundred years. The expansion of agriculture and commerce was in particular very marked. His military activity was not allowed to impose any fresh burdens upon his people, for he made Italy pay the cost of its invasions; while as his practice was to meet personal expenses out of the products of his own domains, he was even able to reduce general taxation by something like 200,000 livres a year. His economy, indeed, called forth some adverse criticism; but to this his reply was: "I would rather see the courtiers laughing at my avarice than the people weeping over my prodigality." In various ways he laboured for the public benefit. He put a stop to the brigandage of the soldiers, of which the common people had long had cause to complain. He carried forward the useful legislative work initiated by Charles VIII in the editing and publication of the customary laws of the different provinces, thus helping to guard against abuse; he sought to diminish the extortions often practised in the courts; he substituted French for Latin in criminal trials; and he instituted other important changes in the administration of the law. Such reforms give a real glory to his reign. It must, however, be added that much of the credit of them belongs to his favourite minister and confidential friend, Georges d'Amboise, Cardinal and Archbishop of Rouen, whose name history associates closely with his own.

CHAPTER VIII

FRANÇOIS I

1515-1547

HENRI II

1547-1559

LOUIS XII left only daughters, and the Orléans branch of the Valois dynasty ended, as it had begun, with him. He was succeeded by his nephew and son-in-law, François of Angoulême, the great-grandson of Louis, Duke of Orléans, the brother of Charles VI.¹

Young (he was not yet twenty-one), high-spirited and romantic, swayed rather by the impulse of the moment than by any thought of future consequences, and caring far less about questions of national policy than about the excitement of personal adventure, François had scarcely ascended the throne before he resolved upon the renewal of the irrational war with Italy. His first enterprise was the reconquest of Milan. He lost no time in concluding a treaty with Charles of Austria, by which, it should be remarked, Charles agreed to do homage for Flanders, Artois, and Charolais, and, leaving his mother, Louise of Savoy, as regent, crossed the Alps by an unguarded pass, and on September 13 and 14, 1515, at Marignano (now Melignano), twelve miles from Milan, completely routed a large army composed of the Swiss mercenaries of the duchy. The victory was brilliant, but it was costly, for he lost some 20,000 men killed and wounded. The severity of the fighting may be gauged by the remark of the old Maréchal de Trivulce: "I have taken part in eighteen battles, but they were merely child's-play; Marignano was a battle of giants."

¹ See *ante*, p. 228.

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It is an illustration of one side—the highly developed romantic side—of François' character that at his own request he received knighthood on the field at the hands of the Chevalier Bayard.

François was now master of Milan, but he was not satisfied with compelling the Emperor to acknowledge his claims. He turned his commanding position to account by making friends with the Swiss and with the Pope. With the Swiss, whose fighting capacity was just then one of the capital facts in the military situation in Europe, he formed an alliance by the terms of which he obtained the right to levy troops among them. This treaty was called 'la Paix Perpétuelle,' and it did in fact endure as long as the French monarchy. With the Pope he signed a Concordat (December 1516), which involved the complete abrogation of the Pragmatic Sanction of 1438 and the destruction of the rights of the Gallican Church thereby secured. This agreement, which at first aroused intense indignation throughout the country, has great importance in history because it governed the relations of France and the Papacy till the time of the Revolution. It should be noted that one effect of it was to strengthen the royal authority, for the appointment of all ecclesiastical dignitaries was now left to the Crown, whose selections were subject only to the nominal approval of the Pope.

FRANÇOIS' STRUGGLE WITH CHARLES V: FIRST STAGE

These early successes greatly flattered the King's abundant vanity and whetted his appetite for further glory and power, and thus when in January 1519 Maximilian died he put himself forward as one of several candidates for the Imperial crown. Here, however, he suffered rebuff. The choice fell on Charles of Austria, also King of Spain, and henceforth known as Charles V, who was now beyond comparison the most powerful potentate in Europe. François was angry at being thus thwarted in his ambitions. He saw, too, that the progress, if not the very existence, of France was imperilled by the new conditions which Charles' election had created. Pique and patriotism were in accord; he determined to enter into a trial

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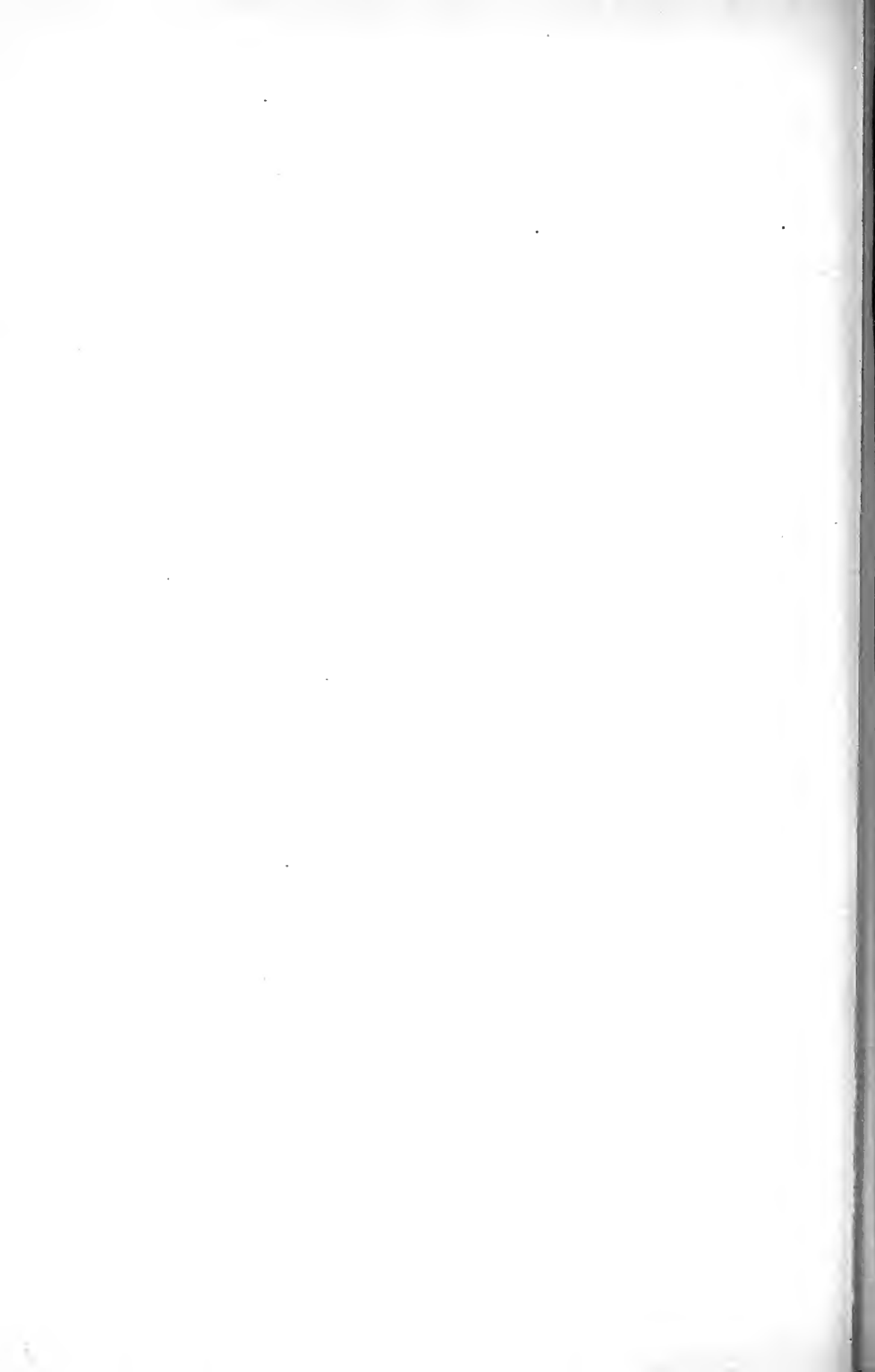
of strength with his formidable rival, and at once sought grounds for a quarrel with him.

The history of Europe during the next quarter-century is largely the history of the struggle between François and Charles, with the two other chief Powers, England and Rome, standing by, and from time to time, as their interests at the moment seemed to dictate, favouring now one side and now the other. Both the opponents at the beginning of the conflict were very young men, for François was still only four-and-twenty, while Charles was hardly more than nineteen. Save, however, for their youth, their ambition, and their unscrupulousness, they had practically nothing in common; indeed, the contrast between them was as striking as any to be found among the elaborately balanced character-studies of the Shakespearean drama. Though not lacking in a certain dignity and grace, Charles was poor in physique and of fragile health; he was gloomy in temper and deeply religious; tenacious of purpose, he pursued his ends with dogged perseverance; his life was orderly and simple, his personal morals, considering the age in which he lived, singularly pure. François, on the contrary, was strong and handsome; he was buoyant and debonair; he loved sports and excelled in all manly exercises; he was passionately addicted to pomp and display; he was impetuous, unstable, and licentious. Nor were their differences those of personal character only. Seen in retrospect, their rivalry resolves itself into one of opposed principles. Charles stood for the medieval conception of universal empire, and his attempt to restore this—an attempt in which, though he was checked by François, he was really foiled by Luther—was, as I have elsewhere said, the last dream of the Middle Ages in politics. François, albeit unconsciously, represented the rising power of nationalities, and with it that new idea of balanced equilibrium among them which was henceforth to be a vital factor in the evolution of the European peoples.

There were points enough in dispute to provide François with his warrant for instant action. Charles laid claim to Burgundy on the score that it had been unjustly annexed



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FRANÇOIS I

by Louis XI, and to the duchy of Milan as a fief of the Empire. François maintained his title to these dominions, demanded that Charles should do homage for Flanders and Artois, in accordance with his undertaking of some years before, and further objected because Spain had taken possession of Navarre. The issues involved in the quarrel were, as will be seen, widely scattered ; but unhappy Italy was still destined to be the chief theatre of war.

François' first step was an attempt to win over Henry VIII. The two young monarchs (for Henry too was still under thirty) met by arrangement near Guines, in the Pas-de-Calais, in a spot which, by reason of the lavish magnificence in which each party sought to outdo the other, was known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The utmost ardour of friendship was exhibited on both sides ; François even going so far, after the crazy fashion of the chivalry which he loved, as to visit the English King's tent in the early morning unattended, and to offer to act as his valet. But all the ridiculous waste of money, the vulgar ostentation, the repeated professions of brotherly affection, came to nothing. It is a commonplace of history that great results sometimes spring from the most trivial causes. There were tourneys and trials of skill at Guines to enliven the dullness of diplomatic discussion, in one of which the agile French King had the misfortune to overthrow his heavier antagonist ; and it is said that Henry's sensitive vanity was so outraged by this humiliation that his attitude toward François instantly changed. Be this as it may, cordiality had certainly given place to irritation before the conference closed. Then on his homeward way Henry was met by Charles at Wael, near Gravelines, and though there was now no gorgeous ceremonial to tickle the fancy, a good deal of business was very quickly done. By the promise to Wolsey of a pension at once and of the papal tiara in the near future, the Emperor without difficulty obtained the support of the English King.

The campaign which followed was very disastrous to François. The Imperial troops drove the French out of Italy, invaded

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Provence, and laid siege to Marseille; Navarre had to be abandoned; the armies of Charles and Henry even threatened France in the north. There was also treachery at home to contend with, for the Duke of Bourbon, the Constable of France, who had specially distinguished himself at Marignano, deserted to the enemy. It is to be hoped that that turbulent noble felt the full force of the rebuke administered to him at the battle of Rebecco, in 1524. Mortally wounded, Bayard kissed the cross of his sword-hilt, and had himself laid beneath a tree with his face to the enemy. "I have never yet turned my back to a foe," said the dying man, "and I am not going to begin to do so now." There, as it happened, he was found by the Duke of Bourbon, in hot pursuit of the French. The Duke, leaning over, spoke some words of pity to him. "I am not to be pitied," was the Chevalier's reply, "for I die as an honest man. It is rather you who should be pitied, who have taken up arms against your King, your country, and your vows."

Amid these reverses François kept up a gallant struggle. But the cup of disaster was not yet full. In 1524 he once more led in person a large army across the Alps against the forces of the Emperor, and laid siege to Pavia. This was in October. On the 24th of February following a great battle was fought outside the city, and François was defeated and taken prisoner. After some time in Italy he was carried to Spain, and lodged in the castle of Madrid, where he spent his time in reading, turn and turn about, Paul's Epistles and his favourite romance, *Amadis de Gaule*. Confinement, anxiety, and want of exercise told seriously upon his health and spirits, and in the end he was glad to buy liberty by a general submission to all the Emperor's demands. By the Treaty of Madrid (January 1526) he gave up all his Italian possessions, renounced the suzerainty of Flanders and Artois, ceded Burgundy as a fief, undertook to restore the Duke of Bourbon to all his former dignities, abandoned Navarre, and engaged to marry Charles' sister, the Dowager-Queen of Portugal, and to surrender his two sons as hostages.

FRANÇOIS I

This inglorious treaty marks the close of the first stage in the struggle between the King and the Emperor.

THE SECOND STAGE

Secure once more in his own domains, François soon made it clear that he did not intend to be bound by his engagements. The Treaty of Madrid, he declared, had been wrung from him by force, and he therefore refused to regard it as sacred. Conditions had now changed in his favour. Rome, England, Venice, Florence, and Genoa were all growing alarmed at Charles' steadily increasing power. They perceived that it was now to their interest to espouse the cause of France. A Holy League was thereupon formed against the Emperor by Pope Clement VII, who had already cleared the way by absolving François of his oath at Madrid. England was the more willing to enter into this league because Wolsey, having been disappointed in his hopes of the tiara, was at the moment ill-disposed toward Charles.

War in Italy began again in 1527, when a mixed army of Spanish and German mercenaries under the Duke of Bourbon (now Duke of Milan and Spanish commander in Northern Italy) laid siege to Rome. In the fierce struggle which raged before the fortifications were carried Bourbon himself was mortally wounded—struck down by a chance bullet which Benvenuto Cellini afterward asserted had been shot by him. But the city was captured, and the Imperial ruffians avenged their leader's death by a three days' riot of butchery, outrage, and pillage, while Clement remained shut up in the Castle of St Angelo. The news of the sack of Rome and of the Pope's imprisonment sent a thrill of horror throughout Catholic Europe. But though Charles disclaimed all responsibility and loudly expressed his regret for what had happened, he did nothing to save the Pope, in whom he saw merely the most active and dangerous of all his foes. François and Henry then determined to move in concert for the deliverance of Italy, each having his own selfish objects in view. But François' fresh attempt to conquer Naples failed, and again he was

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forced to come to terms for a cessation of hostilities. By the Peace of Cambrai (1529)—'le Traité des Dames,' as it was called, from the part played by Margaret of Austria and Louise of Savoy in bringing it about—the Treaty of Madrid was confirmed with modifications. François lost Flanders and Artois and renounced all his Italian pretensions; but he was allowed to regain possession of Burgundy. His two children were now restored to him, while his marriage with Eleanor of Portugal was solemnized the next year.

THE CLOSING STAGE

This treaty marks the close of the second stage of the struggle between François and Charles. In the seven years of peace which followed, while Charles was mainly occupied with the religious troubles in Germany and with the defence of Christendom against the Turks, François busied himself in strengthening his position by entering into all sorts of alliances. Never, as has been said, has any ruler shown himself so eclectic in his friendships. To please Henry VIII he favoured that King's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. At the same time he negotiated the marriage of James V of Scotland with Marie of Lorraine. He gained the support of the Pope (Clement VII) by proposing a marriage between the Pope's cousin, Catherine de' Medici,¹ and his son Henri, and by undertaking to stop the spread of heresy in his kingdom. But he none the less made overtures to the Protestant princes of Germany, then in league against the Catholic Charles. To the great indignation of Christian Europe, he even entered into an agreement with the Turks. Such were his preparations for a renewal of his conflict with his rival. His thirst for adventure was still unslaked. His ambition for foreign conquest was as strong as ever. He had learned nothing from the disasters of his previous campaigns. He was now only waiting for an opportunity for further action.

The execution at the instigation of the Emperor of the

¹ Catherine was not Clement's niece, as is commonly said, but his second cousin once removed.

FRANÇOIS I

secret agent of France at Milan, and the death shortly afterward, without heirs, of Francesco Sforza, the Duke, gave him the pretext for which he was in search. Once again he revived his claim to the duchy (1536), and seized Savoy and Piedmont. Charles replied by invading Provence, but the Constable Montmorency turned the country before him into a desert, and, decimated by famine and dysentery, the Imperial army had to retreat. Then Pope Paul III intervened and the third stage of the long and aimless rivalry was brought to an end by a ten years' truce, signed at Nice, June 18, 1538, each party retaining the possessions then in his hands.

It now, indeed, seemed as if the ancient enmity between François and Charles had at length burned itself out. When the next year Charles was called to the Low Countries to stamp out rebellion at Ghent, François not only permitted him to cross his kingdom, but even entertained him at Paris with all the lavish prodigality which he loved. But the reconciliation was of short duration. There was no sincerity on either side. François was annoyed because he failed to come to any practical understanding with his politic guest about the duchy of Milan, for which he still hankered; and the murder of two of his emissaries on their way to the Sultan of the Turks gave him an excuse for drawing the sword at the opportune moment when Charles' ill-fated expedition against Algiers (1541) had just ended in a sensational failure. Three more years of war followed. François sent out five separate armies against the Emperor, and won a brilliant victory over the Spaniards at Cerisola, in Piedmont (April 14, 1544). But Charles, with Henry now once more his ally, planned a double invasion of France, and the Imperial forces, marching through Champagne, actually came within twenty-four leagues of the capital. François was, indeed, saved from an overwhelming catastrophe only through the inability of his two enemies to work together. This fourth war was then closed by the Treaty of Crespy (1544), which in effect left matters pretty much as they were before hostilities began.

Thus ended François' twenty-five years of struggle with the

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Emperor. On the face of it he had gained nothing. He had rather wasted his substance and his energies in the pursuit of a chimerical dream, and the final peace, which at length gave his country rest, was a peace without honour. Yet, severely as we must condemn his amazing folly, history has to recognize that there was another side to his visionary enterprise. Though he could not conquer Charles, he had, as I have said, checked him. The far-reaching importance of that fact it would perhaps be difficult to exaggerate. He kept his country intact against the most formidable coalition of foreign Powers by which it had ever been threatened, and he stood between Europe and the enormous imperial ambitions of the house of Austria.

LAST YEARS : CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE

François' reign, which had opened so brilliantly, closed amid ever deepening gloom. At fifty the once gay, witty, genial King was already an irritable, morose, and suspicious old man. Painful disease and premature decay were the penalties he had to pay for a profligate life. Even his handsome person was disfigured by monstrous swellings and chronic abscesses ; his mind lost much of its vigour and clearness ; his ready speech grew halting. He died at the castle of Rambouillet on March 31, 1547—two months after our own Henry VIII. In his last hours he made a great profession of religious faith, kissing the cross which he held in his arms and whispering the name of Jesus. But, as a recent writer has well said, "It is hard to know how much of this was sincere, how much a death-bed repentance. The monarchs of those days extended the divine right of kings beyond the grave and demanded a State entry into heaven. The ceremonies and pieties of dying sovereigns were part of their proper preparation for the celestial pageants, and François, in this respect, was every inch a king." ¹

Kingly we must certainly call him, if we think only of the externals of kingship. His were essentially the qualities which enabled him to play his part effectively as one of the out-

¹ Edith Sichel, *Women and Men of the French Renaissance*, p. 355.

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standing figures on the stage of his time. He was a man of fine presence and imposing personality; his manners were engaging, his conversation full of vivacity and charm. Restless of temper and alert of mind, he had an extraordinary range of interests and a remarkable general knowledge of many things. This versatility served to keep him in touch with nearly all the varied movements of the new age, and, himself a lover of beauty and a dabbler in learning, he was throughout a munificent patron of art and letters. It is thus that the Renaissance in France has come to be so intimately associated with his name. But he was wholly wanting in depth and sincerity, and, despite the superficial brilliancy of his mind, he had nearly all the faults of a thoroughly selfish and unstable nature. His finer qualities were, indeed, hardly more than skin-deep. At bottom he was inordinately vain, frivolous, capricious, licentious, and untrustworthy. His romantic bias prompted him to resuscitate the manners of chivalry; but it was only the pomp and splendour of chivalry, its gallantry, its adventurous spirit, that appealed to him; with its strenuous moral purposes he had neither sympathy nor concern. His radical want of balance was shown even in those elements of his character which we may most admire, for his generosity ran into the wildest extravagances and his courage to the extreme of temerity. He gave a great part of his life to magnificent schemes of foreign conquest, but he had nothing of the real statesman's large vision or steady insight; he acted on impulse, and his policy was guided by no definite or consistent aims.

His attitude toward the religious problems of his time enables us to realize very clearly his inconstancy, his fundamental want of earnestness, and, notwithstanding his autocratic temper, his susceptibility to outside influences. In early life, led by his sister Marguerite of Angoulême, he favoured the movement for the purification of the Church, and so long as the war with Charles continued he did all he could to stand well with the party of Reform. But this was a matter of selfish calculation only. He had no real interest in the questions at

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issue, and for toleration as toleration he cared nothing. The moment he saw that it would be to his advantage to placate the Pope he changed without hesitation from a friend into a foe of the Reformers, and by the advice of his evil counsellors was easily persuaded to become their bitter and systematic oppressor. A resolute attempt to stamp out heresy by persecution thus became a feature of the closing years of his reign. In particular we have to recall the brutal attack upon the innocent Waldenses of Provence in 1545. This crusade of infamy, in which twenty-two villages were burned and 4000 persons massacred, has left a dark stain on his memory, which not all the glory that redounds to him as the central figure in the French Renaissance will ever suffice to efface.

Of his part in the Renaissance I shall have occasion to speak in the next chapter. One fact, not altogether unconnected with this more general subject, may, however, be mentioned here. It is with him that the French Court, in the strict sense of the term, may properly be said to begin. His predecessors had lived, very much after the fashion of the great feudal chiefs, surrounded by their counsellors and their men-at-arms; women had been in the background; and all those complex conditions which emerge from the free and constant intercourse of the sexes in a world of wealth and leisure were as yet lacking. The transformation of the king's *entourage* began, but it only began, with Anne of Brittany, as the Queen first of Charles VIII and then of Louis XII. It was completed by François I, and its completion was due in part to that King's own tastes and in part to the changing conditions of the age. François gathered about him a multitude of courtiers; noble ladies who had hitherto spent their lives in the gloomy solitudes of remote feudal castles now basked in the sunshine of the royal presence and competed with one another in beauty, wit, and grace. Wherever the King went, even though it might be on a mission of State, he was attended by an immense retinue of lords and dames; sports, hunting parties, festivals, masquerades were things of daily occurrence; the most lavish display was encouraged; manners became at

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once more refined and more artificial; gallantry and intrigue followed as a matter of course. With this rise of the Court we may note, too, the rise of the influence—generally pernicious—of women as an almost permanent factor in political affairs. In addition to his mother, Louise of Savoy, who exerted great power over him while he was still a very young man, two women, both famous for beauty and intelligence, were specially prominent during his reign. One of these was Françoise de Foix, Countess of Châteaubriant, the other Anne de Pisseleu, Duchess of Étampes. But other women figured also, if in a smaller degree, in François' life, for he was a light lover and had many mistresses.

Regarding the political evolution of France under his rule a few words will suffice. The chief fact to be emphasized is the enormous development of the royal authority. The King was now an absolute monarch; his will, as a Venetian ambassador of the time declared, was supreme in everything; he stood, according to the express statement of the Parliament of Paris, above the law. The ancient nobility retained their titles and their revenues, but they no longer enjoyed—as indeed they no longer claimed—any sovereign rights, and their subordination to the King and dependence upon him were complete. The clergy, as we have seen, were also subjected to the Crown. The Third Estate, though increasing rapidly in wealth, had lost its old communal liberties and had gained nothing otherwise in political power. François never once convened the States-General, and thus never even made a show of consulting the nation, while by forbidding the Parliament of Paris to meddle with political affairs and by depriving it of its former right to withhold the registration of royal edicts—without which registration it had hitherto been held that no edict had the force of law—he destroyed the last safeguard against the despotism of the throne. The unification of the kingdom had been achieved, but at the price of autocracy. A large standing army, composed in the main of foreign mercenaries, helped to make the theory of absolutism a practical reality.

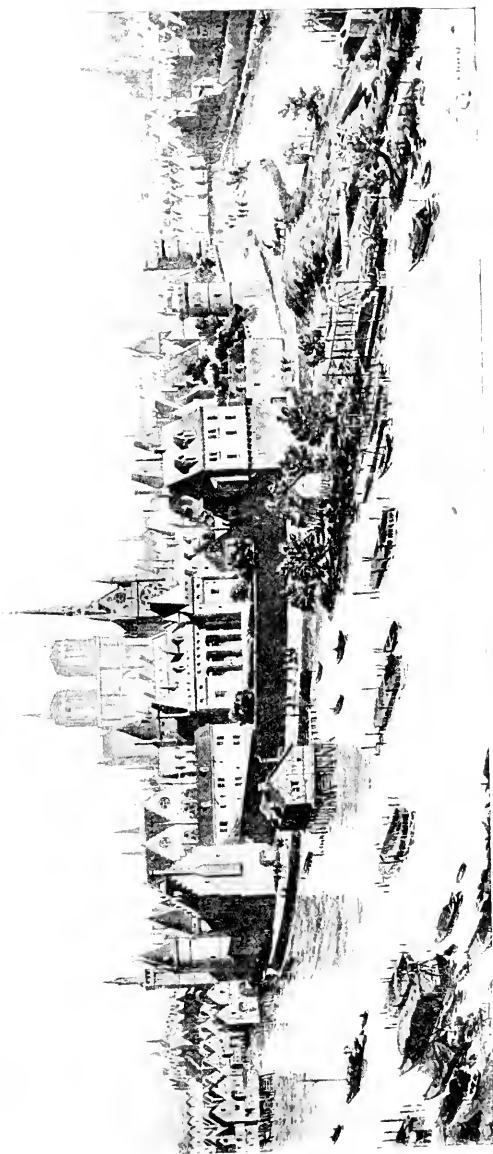
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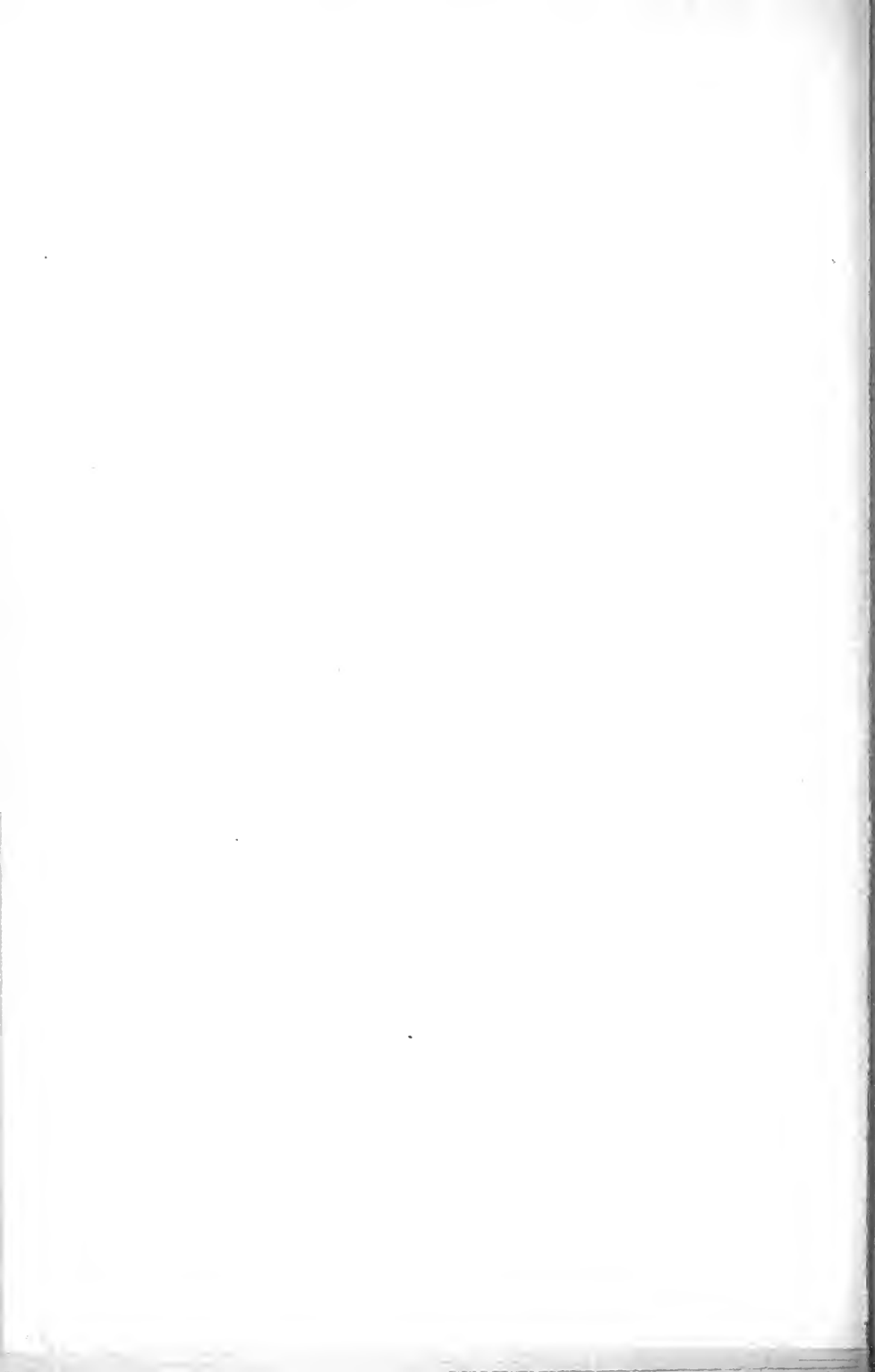
François I was of a reckless character will be readily understood. The King needed enormous sums of money for his foreign wars, for the upkeep of his army and navy, and for the maintenance of his prodigal magnificence at Court. Taxes had therefore to be increased and levies made, offices were sold, and a royal lottery was established. But as even these measures were inadequate he also had to borrow, and his borrowings initiated the public debt of France.

HENRI II

The twelve years' reign (1547-59) of François' son and successor, Henri II, added little of importance to history. Henri followed his father's foreign policy, and after a preliminary conflict with England, in which Boulogne was captured by the English and later restored to France, he embarked upon a fresh struggle with Charles V. While he ruthlessly persecuted the Reformers at home, he allied himself with the German Protestants against the Emperor, and fortune so far favoured him that he was able to make himself master of the Trois-Évêchés—Metz, Toul, and Verdun—which had strategical value in the defence of the eastern frontier of the kingdom. Then came (1556) the abdication of Charles, who, broken in health and weary of the burden of empire, retired to the monastery of Yuste, in Estremadura, leaving the crown of Spain, together with the Netherlands and Italy, to his only son, Philip II, who two years earlier had contracted a political marriage with Queen Mary of England. Henri thereupon entered into an alliance with the Pope (Paul IV) for the deliverance of Italy from the Spaniards; but the French invasion of Italy came to nothing through the inability of the commander, the Duke of Guise, to contend against the superior generalship of the famous Duke of Alva. The Spaniards at the same time invaded Picardy, under Duke Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, and at Saint-Quentin gained a decisive victory over the French under Montmorency. Meanwhile Henri had formed an alliance with Scotland against England, and was once more engaged in an English war. This



24. VIEW OF PARIS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY



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ended in 1558 with the capture of Calais by the Duke of Guise. Calais had been in the hands of the English for 210 years, and as it was still regarded by them as a key to France, its loss was considered as nothing less than a national disaster. Every one is familiar with the words of the dying Mary, that the name of Calais would be found imprinted upon her heart.

By this time the callous, bigoted, and fanatical Spanish King was ready to come to terms with France. He was the bitter foe of Protestantism, and had resolved upon forcing the countries which had embraced it back into the fold of the Church under compulsion of the sword. In this gigantic scheme he needed the support of Catholic France. Hostilities were accordingly closed with the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559, by which France was allowed to retain the Trois-Évêchés and Calais, while she relinquished Milan, Bresse, Le Bugey, and Savoy. With this treaty ends the long story of France's futile effort to establish a footing in Italy. To cement the peace two marriages were arranged, that of Philip to a daughter and that of Emmanuel Philibert to a sister of the French King. Brilliant festivities were held in Paris to celebrate this agreement; but these came to a tragic end, for while taking part in a tournament Henri was struck in the eye by the broken lance of the Count of Montgomery (a Scotch nobleman and the captain of his guard), and died eleven days later at the age of forty.

Henri resembled his father in his ambition, his prodigality, his licentiousness, and his devotion to manly exercises; but he had few of his better qualities; for whereas François, with all his vices, had been attractive and intelligent, he, on the contrary, was heavy and dull. He quickly squandered the large sums which François had gathered against a German war, and was henceforth driven to negotiate loans at ruinous rates of interest, thus adding greatly to the national debt. Offices, dignities, and favours he scattered among his courtiers with an equally lavish hand. His ignorance and moral weakness made him an easy prey to the stronger natures about him, and throughout his reign he was governed by favourites, whom he allowed to displace the tried ministers whose counsels

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his father had specially recommended him to follow. The regular administration of the country he confided almost entirely to the Duke of Montmorency, who had been banished from François' Court in disgrace, and was now recalled, and Jacques de Saint-André, whom he made Marshal of France. But an even more powerful personal influence was exerted upon him by his mistress Diane of Poitiers, and by the rising family of Guise. Though nineteen years his senior, Diane had gained his affections while he was still Dauphin, and afterward exercised an almost absolute sway over his judgment and tastes. The Guises were hardly less potent in his counsels. Proud, ambitious, determined, this cadet branch of the house of Lorraine was now pushing its way to the front, and three of its members—François le Balafré, Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, who had defended Metz against Charles and had taken Calais; his brother, Charles the Cardinal; and his son Henri—played the chief part, as we shall see directly, in the Wars of Religion as the leaders of Catholicism against the Huguenots.¹

¹ The founder of the family was Claude of Lorraine, who won distinction in Italy, and was made Duke of Guise by François I in 1527. His daughter married James V of Scotland, and was the mother of Mary Queen of Scots. François le Balafré (so called from the severe wound on his face, which he received at the siege of Boulogne) and Charles the Cardinal were his sons. His grandson Henri, the third Duke, was also nicknamed 'le Balafré,' from a scar on his cheek.

CHAPTER IX

THE RENAISSANCE IN FRANCE

I HAVE said that the Renaissance in France has come to be intimately connected with the name of François I. So close, indeed, is the association that the beginning of the great intellectual and aesthetic revival is very commonly assigned to the year of his accession. This is of course in a sense a matter of convenience only. Yet it is not without justification on historical grounds, for the impulses behind the new movement, though they did not actually arise, first became paramount in the early part of his reign. From the personal point of view, moreover, his direct influence upon them has to be recognized. A man of sumptuous nature and many-sided interests, he had, with all his vices, abundant curiosity and a genuine love of beautiful things, and even if vanity and the mania for display had not a little to do with his munificent patronage of scholars and artists, his encouragement and example counted much in the spread of the new ideas and tastes.

We have now, therefore, reached the point where we may fittingly interrupt our narrative to give a brief account of the Renaissance in France. One word of explanation is requisite before we proceed. The original movement of the Renaissance may be said to have lasted till about the close of the sixteenth century—that is, to the end of the Valois dynasty; by which time, as Brunetière has said, the surviving traditions of the Middle Ages had practically disappeared.¹ As we are here to be concerned with the period as a whole, this chapter will necessarily carry us beyond the chronological limits reached in the actual progress of our story.

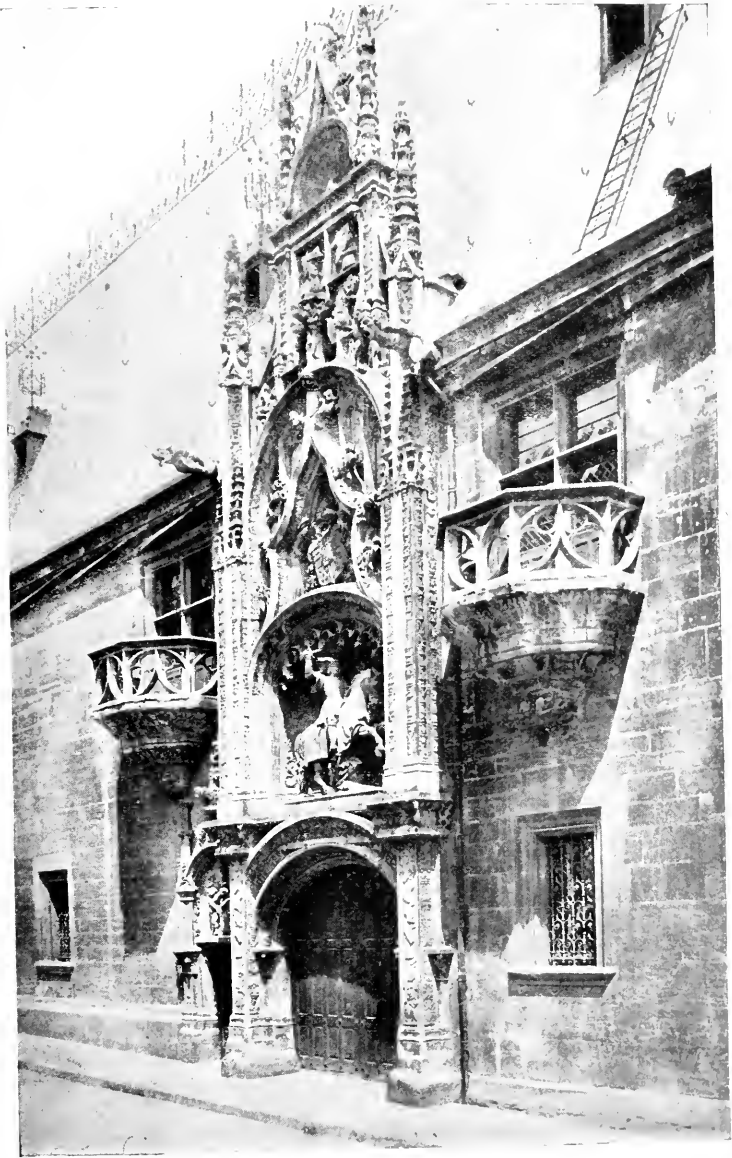
¹ *Manuel de l'Histoire de la Littérature française*, p. 47.

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We have already seen¹ that what we definitely call the Renaissance had been anticipated some two hundred years before, and at the very time when the great medieval order was at its height. It was then said, however, that the season of brilliant promise which came with the thirteenth century was destined to be followed by a long period of decline, and the causes of that decline are now sufficiently clear. The terrible strain of the Hundred Years' War and the universal anarchy which resulted were obviously fatal to intellectual progress, and it was not until the monarchy had been consolidated by Louis XI and the material prosperity of the country restored under Louis XII that conditions favourable to such progress were once more established in France. But meanwhile south of the Alps the great revival of letters and art had gone on unchecked, and what in France was an age of dissolution and reaction was in Italy an age of triumphant humanism. The development of civilization in France during the later fifteenth century itself prepared the soil; but it was from Italy that the first seeds of the Renaissance now came.

For some sixty years before François I ascended the throne the influence of the new Italian culture had been making itself increasingly felt. This is shown in particular in the Greek revival, one of the most important phases of the history of humanism. As far back as 1458 one of those wandering Italian scholars who early began to carry the torch of learning into Northern Europe—Gregorio Tifernas by name—arrived in Paris, and for a short time taught Greek at the university. He was followed a little later by a native Greek, Georgius Hermonymus of Sparta, who, though an utterly incompetent teacher, did something to keep the flickering flame of Hellenism alive. Little or no progress, however, was made for many years in this or in any connected line of study, for the university authorities were for the most part suspicious of the new learning, in which they scented heresy, and certainly did not encourage it, even when they did not throw positive obstacles in its way, while in the wider field of literature and art scarcely

¹ See *ante*, Book II, chap. viii.



25. THE PALAIS DUCAL, NANCY



THE RENAISSANCE IN FRANCE

any sign of the approaching change had yet appeared. Then came what from the standpoint, not of politics, as we have seen, but of culture, must be regarded as an epoch-making event—Charles VIII's 'holiday excursion' into Italy—his "voyage de Naples" as Comines called it. This led, in Michelet's characteristically rhetorical phrase, to the French "discovery of Italy." The weeks or months, as the case might be, which Charles' army spent—in a military sense, wasted—in the great centres of humanism and art—Naples, Rome, Florence, Siena, Pisa, Piacenza—produced a profound effect on the minds of some at least of his followers, whose enthusiasm for Italian culture was aroused by this direct contact with it, and even the King himself, ignorant and narrow-minded as he was, had his ambition stirred, and freely invited both scholars and artists to his capital and Court. The intellectual intercourse between the two countries thus opened up proved immensely fruitful to France for nearly a century, and it is from its commencement that we may date the great transformation which culminated under François I.

THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

In the new age of classical scholarship in France now initiated—the age which saw the study of Latin antiquity liberated from the trammels of medieval theology and scholasticism and revitalized,¹ and that of Greek antiquity firmly established—the lead was still taken by foreign pioneers: notably by the Greek Janus Lascaris, who had been in the service of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and was one of those who accepted Charles VIII's invitation to Paris; the young Italian Girolamo Aleandro (Hieronymus Aleander), who later became prominent

¹ Latin authors had been studied throughout the Middle Ages in the schools of France as in those of other countries, but in a mystical and allegorizing spirit which made all real apprehension of their meaning impossible. As Brunetière has well said, "La différence est en effet profonde entre la disposition d'esprit qui consiste à chercher, dans les *Tusculanes* ou dans le sixième chant de l'*Énéide*, les signes avant-coureurs du christianisme déjà prochain, et celle qui consiste à n'y vouloir uniquement saisir, pour en jouir, que les témoignages du génie mélancolique de Virgile ou de l'éloquence de Cicéron" (*op. cit.*, p. 42).

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as the bitter opponent of Luther at Worms and a persecutor of the Protestants in the Low Countries ; and the great cosmopolitan missionary of humanism, Erasmus, who exercised an enormous influence in France, as he did in England, Switzerland, and Italy itself. But before long native French scholars came to the fore ; among them the famous Guillaume Budé, or Budaeus, theologian, legist, historian, mathematician, and above all Hellenist ; Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, whose name we shall meet again among those of the early religious reformers ; Étienne Dolet, who in 1532 returned from a six years' sojourn in Italy filled with the new spirit, and was burned at the stake in 1546 on charges of heresy ; the younger Scaliger, who even at that time of encyclopaedic erudition was regarded as a prodigy of learning ; and Robert and Henri Estienne, who may be mentioned as representatives of the large number of scholar-printers who did for France what Aldo Manuzio and his successors had done and were doing for Italy. The labours of these men, and of many others whom we need not now pause to catalogue, placed France during the sixteenth century in the front rank of European scholarship.

The mention just made of the Estiennes will serve to remind us how much the progress of humanism and the dissemination of its influence depended in France as in other countries upon the agency of that " most formidable instrument of the modern reason," the printing-press. Into the much-discussed question of the origin of the art of printing by movable types it is not necessary that we should now enter. In the matter of beginnings it is enough for us to note that the first press in France was set up at the Sorbonne in 1470, and that only three years later a rival firm was already busy in Paris. Owing to the slow progress of the new learning, the books printed in France down to nearly the close of the fifteenth century were not, as in Italy, editions of the classics or commentaries upon them, but in the main romances in the vernacular, volumes of devotion, and manuals of philosophy in the old scholastic style.¹ But here again we have to emphasize the significance of

¹ Tilley, *Literature of the French Renaissance*, p. 158.

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Charles VIII's expedition into Italy, for from 1495 onward the issue of classical books, both reprints and dissertations, showed a steady increase. The use of types for Greek works was not, however, introduced till 1507.

As we have spoken of the personal influence of François I in the French Renaissance, it may be well to observe in passing that though he was chiefly interested in literature and art, he did something also to foster classical scholarship. For example, he appointed Lefèvre d'Étaples as tutor to one of his sons, and gave Budé a position at his Court as *valet de chambre* with a pension of 240 livres a year. In other more important ways, too, humanism profited by his patronage. When in 1533 the bigoted authorities of the Sorbonne, alarmed at the progress of the new learning, which they early perceived to be hostile to the entire order of thought of which they were the great pillars, agitated for the prohibition of printing, François rejected their petition. On the initiative of Budé he founded the Collège de France expressly for the promotion of classical studies along the new lines, and though, after his volatile fashion, he soon ceased to give much attention to it, the institution was henceforth a centre of enlightenment and a bulwark against obscurantist reaction. He also established at Fontainebleau a depository for the collection of manuscripts and books which was the germ of the later Bibliothèque Royale, and of which Budé was the first keeper, though the charge soon passed into the hands of a less eminent scholar, Pierre Gilles.

From the point of view of general culture and civilization, which is the only aspect of it which concerns us here, the importance of the revival of classical learning and of the whole movement which we epitomize under the term humanism is to be sought in their far-reaching influence upon life. The word Renaissance meant, to begin with, the rebirth of pagan antiquity in art and letters, and in the strict sense this of course is still its primary significance. Yet more broadly we may take it to describe that entire intellectual rebirth which contact with the rediscovered world of Greece and Rome was

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largely instrumental in bringing about. As I have elsewhere written, "In classical literature a generation of men who were still haunted by the cramping traditions of medievalism read the watchword of emancipation. They found in it an emphatic assertion of the long-neglected claims of nature and the dignity and value of the earthly life. The world into which it introduced them was a larger and more varied world than they had hitherto known. It suggested possibilities of experience of which they had never dreamed. They breathed in it an atmosphere charged with new and intoxicating emotions. The type of character which it presented to them was very different from the pinched and starved humanity which ecclesiastical other-worldliness and the superstition of asceticism had long held up as the highest standard of spiritual attainment. To men who had come into contact with the great literary masterpieces of Greece and Rome, things about them and their own lives could never be the same again. Out of the long forgotten pagan past a generous and inspiring influence swept in among the dry conventions and the blighting formulas of their theology. Their thoughts were liberalized, their feelings quickened and expanded. Human nature seemed to renew its dignity. The world was filled with beauty and fresh meaning."¹

THE LITERATURE OF THE FRENCH RENAISSANCE

The period of the Renaissance, therefore, was a period of fundamental change in life and thought, and as in this great transformation the rebirth of pagan antiquity was thus a chief factor, it is important to note that in France, as in England, its influences were soon carried far beyond the narrower circle of scholarship by the literature which it inspired. At this point the value of the work done by numerous translators, who became as it were the interpreters of antiquity to the larger public, must be fully recognized. Dolet's version of some of the Platonic dialogues and of the *Tusculans* of Cicero, Jamyn's of the *Iliad* and of portions of the *Odyssey*, Amyot's

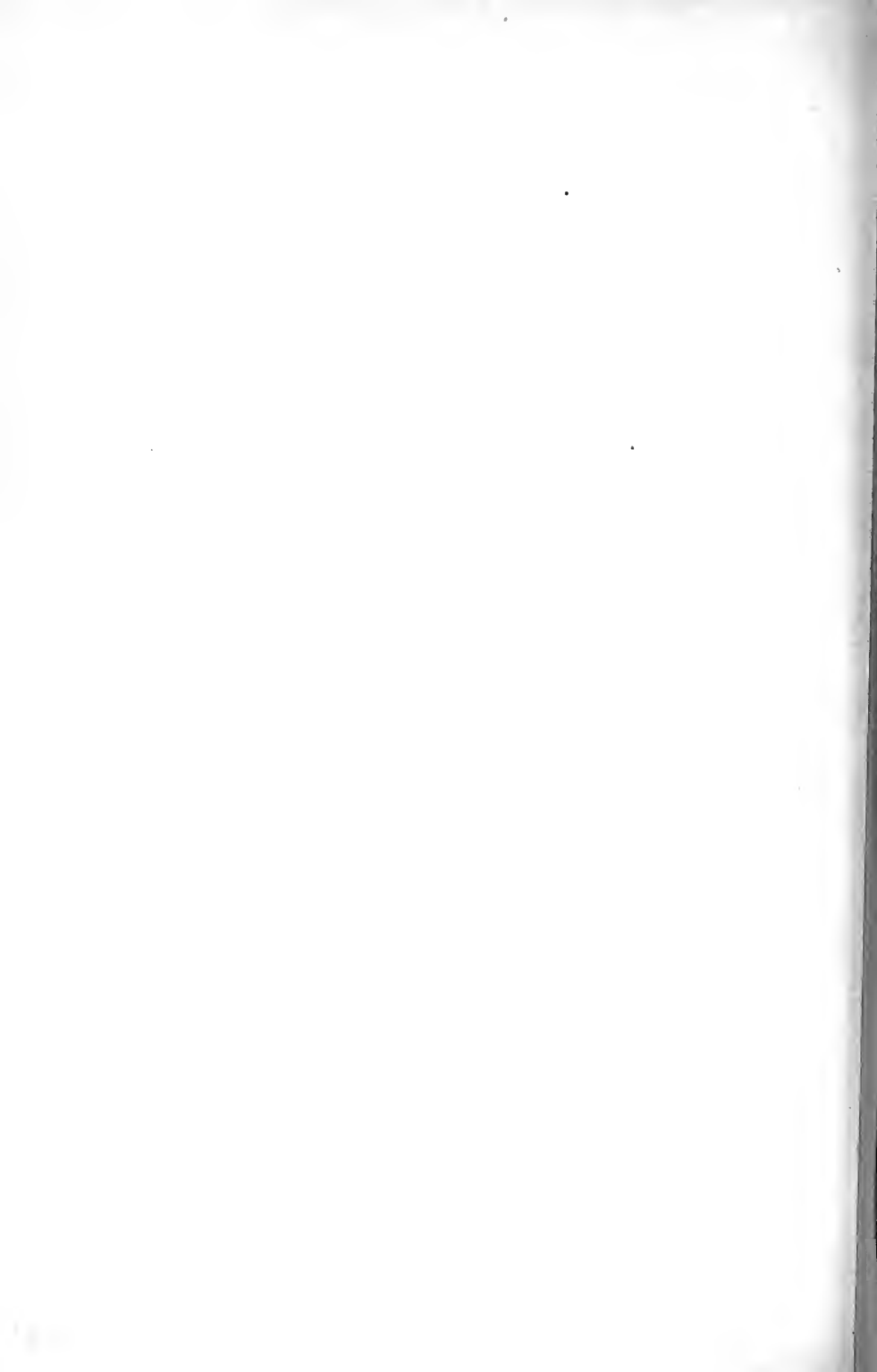
¹ *The Story of the Renaissance*, pp. 73, 74.



26. RABELAIS



27. MONTAIGNE



THE RENAISSANCE IN FRANCE

of the biographical and ethical writings of Plutarch,¹ to name only a few, put some of the treasures of Greek and Latin literature into the possession of many readers for whom the originals would have remained sealed books. Such work helped to charge the general atmosphere of the time with the spirit of the new learning. A taste for intellectual things was thus aroused among the wealthier classes, who hitherto had been almost wholly indifferent to them. The old chivalrous conception of manhood began to disappear, and a very different conception of the 'gentleman'—a conception which embraced interests and accomplishments altogether out of harmony with the ideals of feudal times—arose to take its place. A love of knowledge, long treated with contempt as the sign of the mere 'clerk,' now came to be regarded as "a true and powerful ornament" in life, and not only those connected with the capital and Court, but even provincial gentlemen, whose horizon had hitherto been bounded by the chase, were concerned to give their sons the advantages of a humanistic education.

The literature which arose in France under the stimulus of the revival of learning marks the beginning of that classic movement which was to continue through the following century and to reach its culmination in the 'great age' of Louis XIII and Louis XIV. Not so slavishly as in Italy, but far more closely than in England, the men of the Renaissance in France followed the lines which had been laid down—once and for all, as their superstitious veneration led them to believe—by the Greek and Latin masters. The first poet of any note in the new age, Clément Marot, who was one of the many writers whom François I's sister Marguerite of Navarre gathered about her at her Court, remained, indeed, faithful on the whole (as did Marguerite herself in her own verse) to the traditions of the older French poetry. It is true that he

¹ Amyot's *Vies des Hommes illustres* (1558) was the most famous and widely read work of the kind at the time, and still retains its place among the French classics. It has also a special interest for the student of our own literature, because it was in turn 'Englished' by Sir Thomas North, whose translation provided Shakespeare with the materials for his Roman plays.

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made some translations from Vergil and Ovid, but except in his *Eclogues* he did not imitate the ancients, and his original work shows that the bent of his genius was decidedly against classicism. But though only a youth of nineteen when François came to the throne, Marot really belongs to the outgoing generation. The strength of the classic current which had now set in was attested soon after his death in exile at Turin in 1544, by the formation of the famous Pléiade. Organized in 1548, this association was composed, as its name implies, of seven members—all save one young, and all enthusiastic lovers of poetry and antiquity—Ronsard, du Bellay, Thyard, Baïf, Belleau, Jodelle, and Dorat. Its object was the regeneration of French literature on the basis of the classics, and its manifesto was contained in du Bellay's *Deffense et Illustration de la Langue françoise*, published in 1549. The fundamental argument of this remarkable treatise is that all the great types of ancient literature—epic, tragedy, comedy (as contrasted with the current *sottie* and farce), ode, satire, pastoral, epistle—should be resuscitated and naturalized on French soil, and that the ancients themselves should be everywhere followed implicitly as guides. At the same time a strong plea is made for the native tongue. In Italy the tendency had been to despise the vernacular as unworthy of the attention of scholars. Du Bellay's ideal, on the contrary—and in this, as in all other matters, he speaks for his colleagues as well as for himself—is a new French literature reproducing what was greatest in the literatures of antiquity, but having, not Latin, but French as its medium. The importance of this point is obvious; it shows us that, unlike their Italian forerunners, the pioneers of classicism in France were not seduced by their admiration of the past into the absurd notion that a living literature can be produced in a dead language. None the less, the Pleiads were firmly convinced that, with all its possibilities, French as it existed was too poor for the purposes of great poetry, and they therefore argued that it should be enriched by a plentiful admixture of words and idioms from various other sources, and especially from the classic

THE RENAISSANCE IN FRANCE

tongues. The result, as may be anticipated, was an extraordinary development of pedantry, from which French poetry continued to suffer till a reform was effected by Malherbe early in the century following. As Boileau said of Ronsard, by far the greatest of the Pléiade, and a poet of real genius, his French muse spoke in Latin and Greek.

True to their programme, the members of the brotherhood made an heroic attempt to create a new poetry by the revival of the principal classic types. Ronsard himself, for example, cultivated the ode, taking the Greek ode as his model, and boldly essayed, though without success, the regular epic in his unfinished *La Franciade*. The satire and the pastoral were forms also employed by independent writers, while the Protestant du Bartas, turning classic art to religious themes, offered other sustained examples of poetry in the 'grand style' in *Judith*, *Le Triomphe de Foi*, and the fragmentary epic of creation *La Sepmaine* (*Semaine*). But much the most important historically of all these experiments in transplanting antique forms was that made in the drama. In his *Cléopâtre* and *Dido se Sacrifiant* Jodelle introduced that Senecan type of tragedy which, with slight modifications, was to flourish in France unchallenged till the far-off days of Dumas and Victor Hugo.

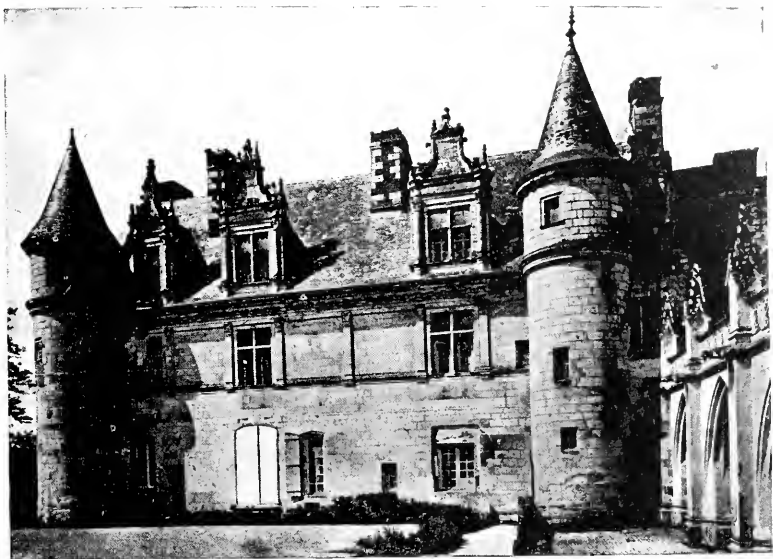
Meanwhile prose developed more independently and along many different lines, with results which are more important to us to-day than those attained in verse. It was during the sixteenth century, indeed, that the foundations of modern French prose literature were firmly laid. The French had already shown remarkable aptitude for memoir-writing, and this kind of work, together with the kindred form of biography, became immensely popular at a time when people everywhere were keenly interested in public events and in the personalities conspicuously connected with them. Some of these memoirs were written by the actors themselves, as in the case of the so-called *Commentaires* of the ferocious soldier of fortune Blaise de Montluc, and of the *Discours politiques et militaires* of the Huguenot La Noue; others were the compositions of

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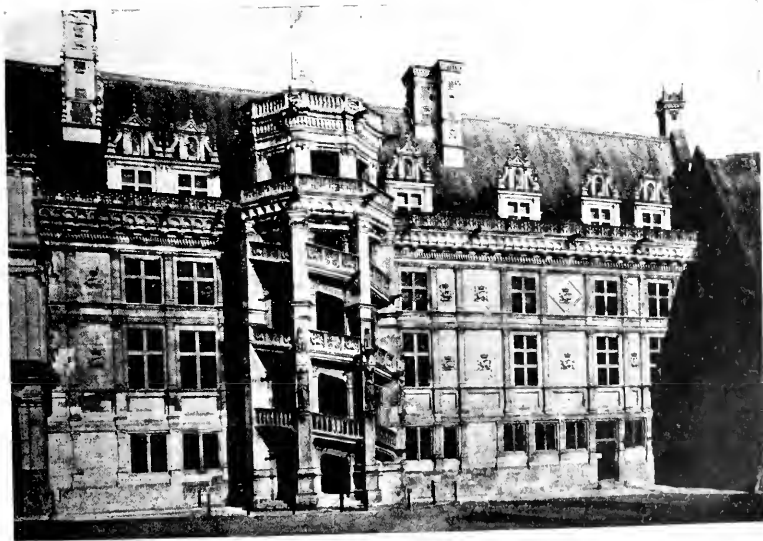
those who stood very near to the men whose deeds were recorded in them, like the *Vie de Bayard* by 'Le Loyal Serviteur' (said to be the Chevalier's secretary, one Jacques de Mailles); others, again, were compiled by outsiders, like the *Vie des Hommes illustres* and *Vie des Dames galantes* of that famous gossip and snapper-up of unconsidered trifles Brantôme. Regular history also felt the impulse of the same conditions and began to outgrow the methods of the formless old chronicle (as, e.g., in Pasquier's *Recherches de la France*), though nothing in this field was yet produced even approximating to the high standard set up in Jean Bodin's *Methodus ad facilem Historiarum Cognitionem*—a work which in its singularly modern conception of the philosophy of history was distinctly in advance of its time. In the domain of theology Calvin's *Institution chrétienne*, the French translation made by the author himself from the Latin in which the book was first published, is, apart from all question of matter, regarded as one of the monuments of the new prose. The bitter struggles of the age in religion and politics were naturally productive of a vast amount of literature, and while most of this was merely ephemeral, a few works here and there still retain their vitality. Specially noteworthy among these is *La Satire Ménippée*, a plea for pacification published after Henri IV's coronation by a group of writers belonging to the party of the *politiques*, or moderate men.¹ The stir of new thought is also to be felt in widespread speculations regarding the principles underlying the current controversies. From this point of view some significance attaches to Bodin's *De la République* as a philosophical inquiry into the foundations of monarchy and a qualified defence of absolutism. But much more remarkable, of course, are the books which represent the radical side. In certain 'advanced' circles there had long been much talk about the popular basis of government,²

¹ For the *politiques* see next chapter. The title of the satire—which is the first political satire in the language on a large scale—was derived from the name of the Greek cynic philosopher, Menippus.

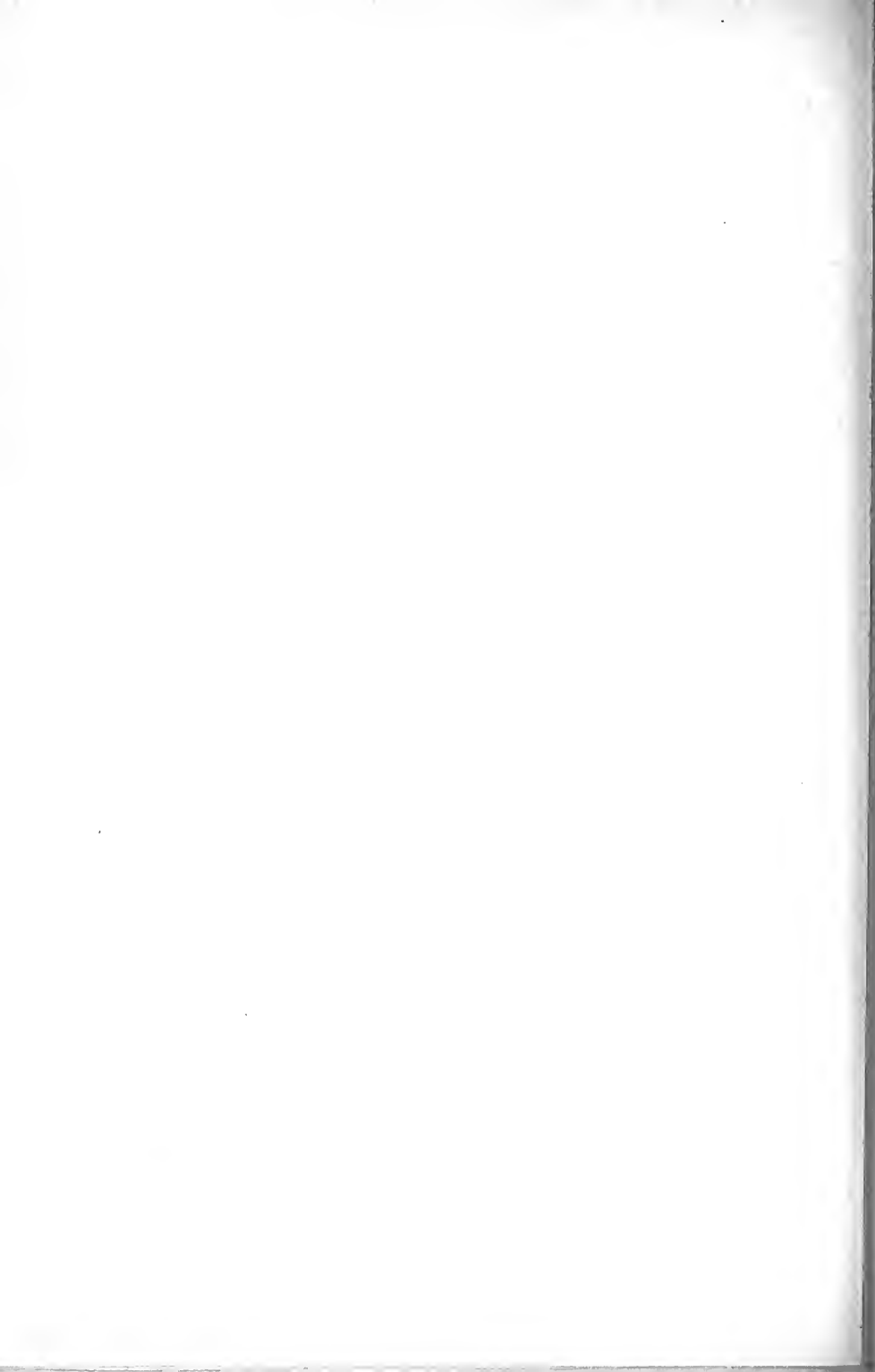
² *Cp. ante*, pp. 218-219.



28. THE CHÂTEAU OF AMBOISE



29. THE CHÂTEAU OF BLOIS



THE RENAISSANCE IN FRANCE

and this was naturally stimulated both by the study of classical antiquity and by the agitation of the Protestants for religious and political freedom. This talk now passed into literature. In his *Franco-Gallia*, a work which produced a great sensation first in its original Latin form and later in the French version made under the author's supervision, the Huguenot Hotman boldly appealed to history for justification of the principle that in the last analysis all sovereignty is vested in the people. This principle was further asserted on theoretic grounds by another adherent of Calvinism, Hubert Languet, in his *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*, which was also widely read in a French translation. Both these treatises owe their inspiration to the conflict of the Protestants with a persecuting autocracy, and thus illustrate the political bearings of the Reformation. But views no less revolutionary were independently expressed in the *Contre Un, ou Discours sur la Servitude volontaire*, written at the age of twenty-two by Montaigne's dear friend La Boétie, though not published till some years after his premature death. La Boétie, a professed Catholic, was one of those who had nourished his thought with the wisdom of the ancients. But he had also been an eye-witness of the horrible brutalities which attended the suppression by Montmorency of a popular rising against the iniquities of the *gabelle* in his native province of Guyenne, and he had thus had an opportunity of studying the evils of despotism in their most monstrous forms. It is true, indeed, that he nowhere explicitly refers to contemporary events; but their influence upon his mind is to be seen in the passionate protests against injustice and inhumanity which run through his philosophical argument in favour of republicanism. Such works as these, small as was their practical effect at the time, are memorable as evidences of the rising power of that critical spirit in the sphere of politics which some two centuries later was to contribute so much to the overthrow of the Old Régime.

It was, however, in general prose that the greatest triumphs of the French Renaissance were won. Two of the most illustrious names in the annals of their country's literature belong,

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indeed, to the sixteenth century—the one to the first, the other to the second half of it—those of Rabelais and Montaigne. Though difficult to classify, Rabelais is usually placed among the *conteurs*,¹ and justly so, since, so far as they can be said to belong to any recognizable form at all, his *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* may be described as a kind of burlesque *roman d'aventures*. Montaigne, on the other hand, by expanding and adapting the popular memoir, really created a very distinct and fruitful literary type—the personal essay. But with the technical characteristics of these two great writers we are not now concerned. Their importance for us lies in the fact that, vast as was the difference between them, each was in his own way a product and an interpreter of the Renaissance. The ardour with which at forty-one, after thirty years of monastic discipline, Rabelais threw himself into life, itself seems to typify the spirit of a generation conscious of emerging from the shadow of the cloister into the broad daylight of the world. His pages are full of the youthful vigour and the mighty hopes of the lusty new age. A humanist to his finger-tips and a man of immense scholarship (“totius encyclopaediae profundissimus abysmus”), he pours out his accumulated stores of learning with utter disregard of measure and form. He is often the irresponsible buffoon whose *rive énorme* (as Victor Hugo called it) is excited merely by his huge delight in the extravagances of his own riotous fancies. When the mood is upon him he turns everything into jest and wallows in the mire of obscenity, naked and unashamed. But he is at the same time something more than a reckless fun-maker. He is an intellectual pathfinder, Utopian dreamer, satirist, reformer, critic of life. It is certain, indeed, that, after their manner, modern students

¹ Story-literature of various kinds naturally flourished on a soil which had been well prepared by the *contes*, *fabliaux*, and *romans* of the Middle Ages. Among the most famous books of fiction of this time is the *Heptaméron*, commonly attributed to Marguerite of Navarre, though more probably, in large measure at least, the work of some of her courtiers. An imitation of the *Decamerone*, this has a curious interest for the student of manners because, while the tales composing it reflect the licentious taste of the age, they are turned to a moral purpose under the influence of the pious Queen.

THE RENAISSANCE IN FRANCE

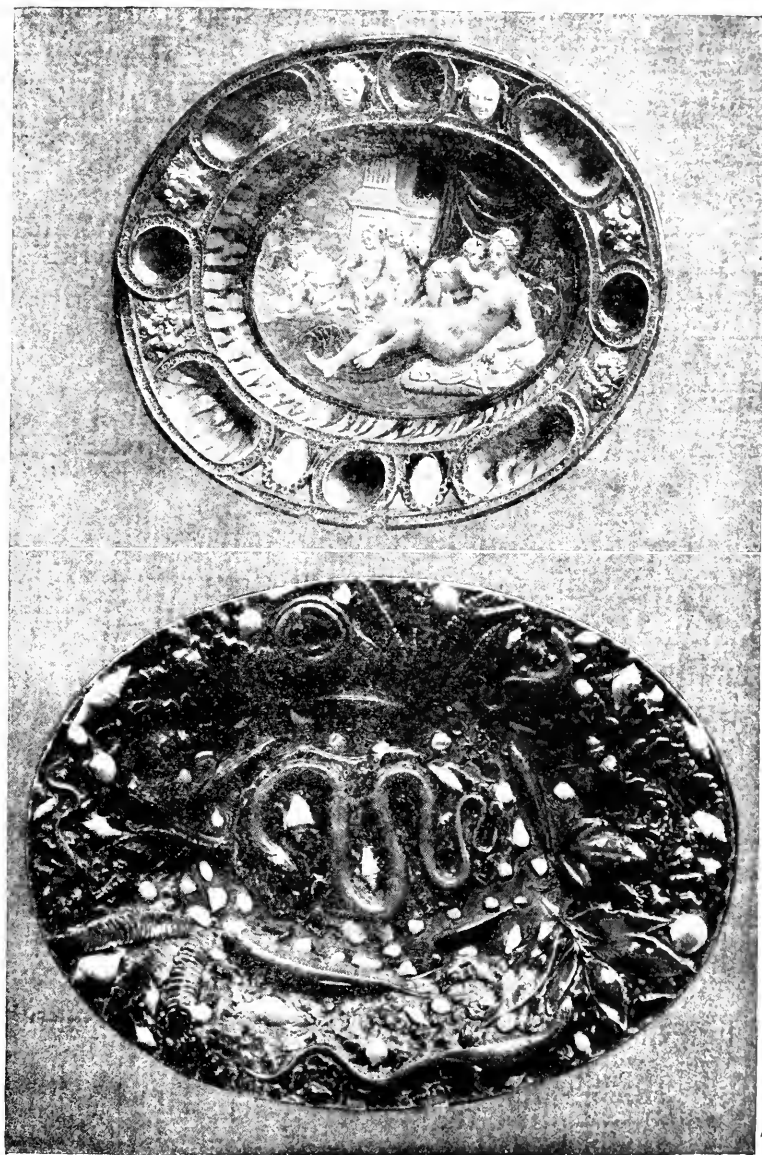
are apt to read too much system and too many of their own ideas into his writings. Whether, for instance, his three fabulous giants, Grandgousier, Gargantua, and Pantagruel, are really to be taken as symbolizing respectively the Middle Ages, the period of transition, and the Renaissance may be considered doubtful. But the whole trend of his teaching at least is unmistakable. He is first and last the uncompromising opponent of medievalism in every form, and especially of the ascetic ideal fostered by the monastic tradition of other-worldliness. He believes in nature, in beauty, in freedom; he proclaims the just claims of the body no less than those of the mind; and his theory of education is based upon the Greek principle of the harmonious development of all the faculties whose co-operation is necessary to the production of a complete humanity. No less typical is the philosophy expounded by Montaigne. The awakening of personality was, as Burckhardt has said, the great sign of the new time, and this meant the shifting of the ethical accent from self-repression to self-realization and self-expansion, and the assertion of the right of each individual to the full enjoyment of all his powers and opportunities. "The greatest thing in the world is for a man to know that he is his own," writes Montaigne, and thus sums up the individualistic tendencies of the Renaissance in a single pregnant phrase. From this point of view even the unabashed egotism of his *Essais* is historically significant. Even more significant are his insatiable curiosity and his universal scepticism. The world for him was a field of inexhaustible interest, and to get the maximum amount of value out of experience was one of his guiding principles. At the same time his searching intellect recognized neither fixity nor finality in belief. "Que sçais-je?"—the motto of his title-page—was the key-note of his philosophy of life. Amid the strife of creeds he maintains his detached and anti-dogmatic position. It is true that he lived and died a Catholic, but this fact is of little weight against the influence which he exerted for toleration and freedom of conscience by the whole tone and drift of his thought. "My own opinions

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are slippery, but I do not change them, for so are the others," he explains with his customary frankness. The quest for absolute truth must therefore be abandoned as hopeless; each man must be left to his own devices; and the wisest will be content with approximations and qualifications. Thus Montaigne's place in the literature of the Renaissance is defined. He was the incarnation at once of the inquisitive temper of his age and of its new-born spirit of emancipation.

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE REFORMATION

Though it would carry us beyond the purpose of this chapter to pursue the subject in detail, a few words must be said about the relation of the Renaissance in France to the Reformation. The revival in religion was in origin part of the great general intellectual revival. It was, moreover, as is well known, directly stimulated by the application of the new learning and the critical methods which accompanied it to the interpretation of the Scriptures. Hence it was natural that many of the leading French humanists and progressive thinkers—men, for example, like Lefèvre d'Étaples, the Estiennes, Peter Ramus, the daring opponent of the old scholastic Aristotelianism, Paré, the eminent surgeon, Bernard Palissy and Jean Goujon, the artists, and Rabelais—should have been sympathetically disposed toward the Reform movement, while some of them were for a time at least avowed adherents of it. To them that movement appealed because, as it seemed, it brought with it the promise of enlightenment and liberty in spiritual things. But when, as they soon learned, Calvinism meant, not enlightenment and liberty, but gloomy fanaticism and the return of theological despotism in another form, their attitude toward it underwent a change. The terrible religious wars, whose course we are presently to follow, and which for many years drenched the country in blood, were also a factor in their reaction. Long before the century closed humanism and the Reformation had definitely parted company.



30. SPECIMENS OF PALISSY EARTHENWARE



THE RENAISSANCE IN FRANCE

THE ART OF THE FRENCH RENAISSANCE

Of the Renaissance in art, which meanwhile went on concurrently with that in letters and thought, a very brief account will suffice. The growth of a taste for Graeco-Roman architecture in France was one result of the "discovery of Italy." But while south of the Alps the classic mode had been restored with great rapidity, its progress in France was for some time very slow. Gothic architecture, though already, indeed, it had lost its primitive purity and had passed into the flamboyant stage, was so deeply rooted in French soil that it was not easily displaced by an alien form. Hence a lengthy period of transition, during which many leading architects sought to combine the old manner and the new, retaining the structural principles of Gothic, but making a free use of classic details. This mixed style, or 'style François I,' as it is called, for it flourished in the earlier part of that king's reign, was employed especially in the country residences of the nobility on the banks of the Loire, as in the *châteaux* of Chambord and Blois, while other admirable examples of it are to be found in portions of the Hôtel du Bourgthéroulde, in Rouen, and in the church of Saint-Eustache, in Paris. By little and little, however, under the influence of Italian architects whom François I brought to his capital, the Renaissance style gained ground, and after a struggle which continued till the middle of the sixteenth century its triumph was completed by the native masters Pierre Lescot, Philibert Delorme, and Jean Bullant. The restoration of the old palace at Fontainebleau was carried out for François by Italians, and it was also an Italian, Pietro di Cortona, who provided the plans for the new Hôtel de Ville. But the Louvre, begun by François in the closing years of his life to replace the old Louvre of the times of Charles V, was in the main the work of Lescot, while the palace of the Tuileries, which was built for Catherine de Médicis,¹ was commenced by Delorme and completed by Bullant. These buildings may be

¹ Here and henceforth I adopt the Gallicized form of the name under which Catherine de' Medici figures in French history.

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cited as famous sixteenth-century examples of the new style. But many public buildings in provincial towns, belonging to the same period, show that the Italian mode had now established itself all over the country. Nor must the social aspect of this fundamental change in architectural method be overlooked. The old feudal castles of the nobility, built with little regard to comfort and with the primary purpose of furnishing security in case of siege, now began to make way for constructions of lighter character, designed to answer the altered needs, as they expressed the modified tastes, of the *gentilshommes* of the rising generation.

Italian taste in painting and sculpture naturally accompanied Italian taste in architecture. Once more it was foreign masters—men like Andrea del Sarto, Francesco Primaticcio, and Benvenuto Cellini, who worked for François I at his Court—who gave the first impulse to the new school. In these allied arts, however, comparatively little was accomplished by Frenchmen themselves during the period now in question, though native sculpture was brilliantly represented by Jean Goujon and Germain Pilon. Among the minor arts which meanwhile were cultivated with success, the beautiful ceramic work invented by Bernard Palissy deserves particular mention. Palissy was one of the noblest and most striking figures in the France of his time. He was not only an artist, he was also an indefatigable and enlightened student of nature, and the lectures on natural philosophy which he gave for some years in Paris have a noteworthy place in the history of scientific thought. But as a Huguenot he was harassed by persecution. Imprisoned at Bordeaux and then released by royal edict, he escaped death in the massacre of St Bartholomew by special grace of Catherine de Médicis, only to be thrown later into the Bastille and to die there as a martyr to his faith. Though we have nothing more to do with him here, he thus forms a connecting link between this digressive chapter and the main course of our narrative, to which we now return.

CHAPTER X

THE LAST OF THE VALOIS: THE REFORMATION IN FRANCE AND THE WARS OF RELIGION

GR^{EAT} as were Henri II's shortcomings as a king, his premature death was a misfortune, for it left the royal power in the hands of a youth of fifteen. François II reigned only seventeen months (1559-60), and then died of chronic blood-poisoning. Feeble in character as in health, and wholly wrapped up in his beautiful young wife, Mary Stuart (whom we know as Mary Queen of Scots), he left all the affairs of State to her two uncles, François, Duke of Guise, and the Cardinal of Lorraine, though the Queen-Mother, Catherine de Médicis, was nominally the head of the Government. His brother, Charles IX, then ascended the throne at the age of ten, and reigned nearly fourteen years (1560-74), almost entirely under the domination of his mother. Leaving no issue, he in turn was succeeded by his younger brother, Henri III, then twenty-two, with whom, in 1589, the line of the Valois kings came to a close.

The thirty years thus covered by the combined reigns of the three sons of Henri II were years of fierce tumult and deadly peril for the country, for they were the years of the terrible Wars of Religion, by which all patriotic feeling was destroyed and the very existence of the nation jeopardized, and in which, it is computed, more than a million Frenchmen perished. At such a critical period France needed a wise and strong king. Henri II's sons were neither strong nor wise. The decadent offspring of a now exhausted stock, and tainted alike in blood and in mind, they were totally unfit to cope with the gigantic problems of an age in which riotous passions were let loose

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to work destruction. Poor, sickly François was a sovereign only in name. Charles, though a man of physical vigour and some literary accomplishments, was weak of will, vacillating, cunning, and cruel. Henri, who passed his time for the most part between monstrous debaucheries and a feminine devotion to the toilet, with occasional outbursts of religious fanaticism by way of variation, was, so far as government was concerned, wholly the creature of the ascendant influences of the hour. Such a succession of ineffective rulers was in the last degree disastrous, for not only did the impotence of the throne allow the spirit of anarchy to grow unchecked, but it also encouraged a furious struggle among those ambitious party leaders who saw in such impotence an invitation to snatch at the reins of power. Thus personal rivalries, political intrigues, plots and counter-plots mingled with the religious animosities of the time and made confusion worse confounded.

LEADERS IN THE WARS OF RELIGION

It will be convenient to pass in review the chief actors in the tragic drama with which this chapter has to deal.

On the Catholic side the leaders were the three principal members of the house of Guise. François, the second Duke, was an ambitious, insolent, and domineering man, who stopped at nothing in the carrying out of his plans. But his military genius was conspicuous, and he easily takes rank among the greatest captains of his day. This gave him a hold upon the soldiers. At the same time his love of rich costumes, the splendour of his escort, his rather theatrical deportment, and a certain haughty grace of manners which on occasion he knew how to assume, made a potent appeal to the popular imagination, and helped him more than once in a moment of crisis to win the favour of the fickle crowd. His brother, Charles the Cardinal, was in many respects his antithesis and complement. Handsome, "de noble et grave presence," a scholar, an eloquent preacher, a shrewd though hardly a tactful politician, he had a capacity for affairs equal to that which François exhibited in the field. But, like François, he was thoroughly



31. FRANÇOIS II



32. FRANÇOIS OF GUISE



33. THE CARDINAL OF LORRAINE



34. HENRI OF GUISE



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self-seeking and unprincipled, and even his zeal for religion, which was great, was only an aspect of his passion for self-aggrandizement. In temper, too, he was no less brutal and autocratic; he was jealous; he was vindictive; he never forgot an injury and never forgave it. With the assassination of François and the death of Charles, the former's son, Henri, the third Duke, came to the front as the great champion of the Catholic cause. In him the bitter animus of his family against Protestantism was intensified by his father's fate, and religious bigotry being thus reinforced by the personal desire for revenge, he became one of the principal organizers of the atrocious crime of St Bartholomew, and later the head of the Catholic League. While neither so great a soldier as his father nor so consummate a schemer as his uncle, he resembled them both in his unqualified selfishness, and in his determination to make the ills of his unhappy country the instruments of his political ends. His ambition, indeed, carried him much farther than they had ventured. They had been satisfied with their ascendancy under the existing forms of royalty. He aimed directly at the kingship itself. This lust for power proved his doom.

Opposed to the house of Guise was the princely house of Bourbon, the head of which, Antoine, was a cousin on the maternal side of François, Duke of Guise, and the Cardinal of Lorraine.¹ The Bourbons were next-of-kin to the reigning line, Antoine himself being first prince of the blood. This gave them the place of honour in the eyes of the people, who regarded them as their natural leaders, and looked upon the Guises as foreigners. Antoine, however, was scarcely the man to improve his advantage, for though he was brave and courteous, his easy-going, careless, and fickle nature hopelessly disqualified him for decisive action. Through his marriage with Jeanne d'Albret, the only daughter of Henri II of Navarre and Marguerite of Angoulême, François I's sister, he became titular King of Navarre, and the father of the famous Henri of Navarre, who was presently to emerge as the great hero

¹ The father of Antoine was a brother of Antoinette, the mother of the Guises.

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of the Huguenots¹ and the founder of a new dynasty in France. Antoine's younger brother, Louis of Bourbon, Prince of Condé, was a much stronger man, though not really a great one either in character or in genius. When under François II the Guises became all-powerful in the kingdom, the two Bourbons, partly from jealousy and self-interest (which seem to have been the main influences with Antoine) and partly from real conviction, went over to the Huguenot cause. Of that cause Jeanne d'Albret was a strong supporter.

By far the most important man on the Protestant side, however, was the third of the sons of the Seigneur de Châtillon, Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France. It was during the captivity which followed his heroic defence of Saint-Quentin that he embraced the Reformed faith, and the cardinal purpose of his life thereafter was to obtain complete liberty of conscience and worship for his fellow-Protestants. Upright, disinterested, sincere to his finger-tips, deeply religious and patriotic, a sagacious statesman as well as a brave soldier, Coligny was one of the greatest and noblest Frenchmen of the sixteenth century.

Standing between the two rival parties of the Guises and the Bourbons, and in a position of immense difficulty and danger, was the Queen-Mother, Catherine de Médicis. For some years after her marriage with the second son of François I this extraordinary woman had given few signs of her real personality. That marriage had been only a detail in the political schemes of the French King and the Pope, and she soon found herself lonely and neglected in her new home. In these trying circumstances she comported herself with singular submissiveness. Even when her husband became King she still remained in the background, never asserting her position, and scarcely protesting against the domination at Court of Henri's mistress, Diane of Poitiers. It was only on the accession of her young and fragile son François that her real qualities, moral and intellectual, began to appear. Hence-

¹ This word appears to be derived from 'Eigenot' (German *Eidgenosse*, confederate), a Genevese nickname for the Reformers.



35. ANTOINE OF BOURBON



36. LOUIS OF BOURBON



37. ADMIRAL COLIGNY



38. JEANNE D'ALBRET



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forth, till her death in 1589, she was one of the ruling spirits of the age. A true child of the Italian Renaissance, she had both the love of beauty and the moral insensibility of her race. Treacherous, callous, cruel, she was, so far as it is possible for a human creature to be so, entirely devoid of conscience. The most elementary distinctions of right and wrong did not exist for her. Ethical considerations, even of the simplest kind, never for a moment entered into her calculations. Of the commonest feelings of humanity she knew nothing, and she was ignorant alike of compunction and of remorse. The one redeeming feature of her character was her devotion to her sons; though this was in fact only an extension of her selfishness and a chief cause of her crimes. Determined at all costs to maintain their power against the perils which threatened it from two different sides, she made it the principal object of her policy to turn the struggles of opposed parties to the advantage of the Crown. "Il faut diviser pour régner" was one of her favourite maxims; acting upon which she industriously fomented jealousies and dissensions among her enemies in the hope of turning against each other the forces which would otherwise be directed against the monarchy. Wholly without religious instincts, though profoundly superstitious, she regarded the conflict of the Churches from the political point of view only. She had, indeed, in earlier life exhibited some leanings toward Protestantism as the creed of "intellectual people"; while, but for political complications, her indifference might easily have led her to toleration. But she soon came to hate the Huguenots because, as she saw, the tendency of their teaching was against the despotic authority of the throne. Yet she did not scruple to make all the use of them she could as an offset to the dangerous supremacy of the Guises. Her double-dealing with the two religious parties was therefore only a matter of strategy. As soon as she was finally convinced that her interest lay in the triumph of Catholicism she even intrigued with the hated Guises for the complete annihilation of the Protestant cause.

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THE REFORMATION IN FRANCE

Such were the leading figures on the stage of French history during the period of the civil wars. A brief sketch of the Reformed religion in France must now be given.

The beginnings of the great movement may be traced in the meetings of a small group of Christian humanists known as the Mystics of Meaux, the social and intellectual importance of which is shown by the fact that it numbered among its members the tender and devout Marguerite of Angoulême, who, according to a contemporary writer, gathered about her all the better spirits in France as the wild thyme gathers the bees; Briconnet, the earnest but timid and temporizing Bishop of Meaux; and the distinguished scholar Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, whose translation of the New Testament had been inspired by his desire to have Christ "preached from the sources." Followers of Erasmus rather than of Luther and deeply affected by the Platonism of the Florentine humanist Marsilio Ficino, these unaggressive seekers after truth, while sincerely desirous for the purification of religion, cared far less about external changes than about the development of the spirit of personal piety. Yet the more militant element was not unrepresented among them, for their company included the restless, proselytizing Farel, and the image-breaking weaver Leclerc, later burnt at Metz on charges of sacrilege.

This was in the early years of François I. For the moment little was accomplished, for in these tentative stages the Reformation in France wanted leadership and driving power. Already, however, it had aroused the hostility of the Sorbonne and the Parliament of Paris. At first the King, on his return from captivity in Madrid, was inclined to protect its adherents; so it began to spread at Court. The favourite aristocratic poet, Marot, who was himself wounded at Pavia, went over to Protestantism, and made a translation of the Psalms which became popular with the lords and fine ladies; and thus the new views were for a time distinctly fashionable. But, alarmed by reports of the disturbances which had followed in the wake of the

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Reformed religion in Germany, the King began to waver. Then the influence of superstition caused him suddenly to change his front. In May 1528 news came that a statue of the Virgin and Child had been mutilated. The outrage produced a great commotion in orthodox circles, and François, report says, was "so much angered" that "he wept bitterly." The result of his panic was that he not only permitted but encouraged the persecution of the schismatics; many were burnt at the stake, some of the executions actually taking place in the presence of the King and his Court. His policy, indeed, changed for a short time while he was seeking alliances with Germany and England, but his negotiations with Pope Clement VII and the violence of a fanatical section of the Reformers led him to renew his attempt to stamp out heresy everywhere in his kingdom. Even more drastic measures than he had hitherto adopted were now employed; his severity, indeed, going so far that the Pope himself, Paul III, found it politic to remonstrate. But the pause which followed upon the strange papal interference was for a short time only. Persistent and ruthless persecution marked the closing years of François' reign, and his policy in this respect was carried out far more consistently and even more rigorously by his son.

Meanwhile the Reform movement had not only been spreading widely throughout the country, but had also been undergoing a significant change of character. It had become an organized movement with a definite creed and programme. For this change Calvin was largely responsible. The publication in 1535 of his *Instituts de la Religion chrétienne*, with its famous preface addressed to François I, is a landmark in the history of French Protestantism. That epoch-making work was, indeed, produced in Switzerland; but its author was a Frenchman, and as such made a more direct appeal to his countrymen than had ever been made by foreigners like Luther and Zwingli. His manifesto infused new energy into the Reform party, while at the same time his system of Protestant theology and ethics, claiming as it did the fixity and finality of the older creed,

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became a nucleus about which French religious thought quickly consolidated. Protestantism now gained substance and definiteness as well as popularity. Many members of the nobility and of the wealthy middle classes openly went over to it. In 1555 began the formation of regular churches. In 1559 the first national Synod met, and compiled a Confession of Faith and a Book of Discipline. Persecution had helped much in this notable development, because, overreaching itself, it had created a reaction in favour of the persecuted. The efforts of the Government to extirpate heresy and schism were not relaxed ; but the new faith continued to make progress.

Such was the situation when, with the accession of François II, the Cardinal of Lorraine became the controlling power in the internal administration of the realm. His unqualified antagonism to the Reformers was at once apparent. In the last days of the former King's reign there had been a great scene in the Parliament of Paris, when Anne du Bourg (son of one of François I's chancellors) and several other members had taken a bold stand for justice and toleration. The offenders were arrested by command of the King. His death did not stop their trial, nor did the protest of the Synod, then in session, affect its issue. They were promptly condemned to the stake, though du Bourg alone was executed. His cruel fate, and the dignified courage with which he met it, made a deep impression upon the populace, while his dying speech, according to a contemporary, "made more converts among the students of Paris than all the writings of Calvin." After this persecution continued with ever-increasing violence, with the result that ultimately the passions of the Protestants were aroused, and whereas they had hitherto borne their sufferings with Christian meekness, they now began to talk of armed resistance to the Guises and their unrighteous rule. Thus the religious movement became a political movement as well. This meant an accession of strength indeed, but of a kind which was likely to prove almost as dangerous to the Reformers as to their enemies. For the high-handed conduct of the Duke and the Cardinal had stirred up hatred throughout the land, and the

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ranks of the Protestants were now swelled by vast numbers of malcontents who had little or no sympathy with their doctrines. Demands were made that the Guises should be dismissed and their place in the King's councils be taken by the Princes of the Blood.

Matters came to a head in 1560 in a plot—the tumult of Amboise—to seize the King's person and, if necessary, to proclaim the Prince of Condé Governor-General of the kingdom. But the conspiracy was badly planned and even more badly managed; news of it leaked out; and the Duke of Guise crushed it with barbarous severity. Twelve hundred Protestants perished at the hands of the executioner, many of the victims being hanged or their heads exposed on the doors and battlements of the castle of Amboise, to which the Court had been removed—an arrangement made, says a chronicler, expressly for the distraction of some of the ladies, “who were getting bored at staying so long in one place.” Condé himself was arrested later and condemned to death; but the new Chancellor, Michel de l'Hôpital, a man of sound sense and moderate views, refused to sign the warrant, and so saved his life. L'Hôpital also prevented the introduction of the Inquisition into France, now advocated by the Guises, and by the Edict of Romorantin (May 18, 1560) transferred the prosecution of heretics from the Parliaments to the bishops' courts. Whether or not well-advised, this move was made in the interests of peace.

THE REGENCY OF CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS

At this juncture François II died, and on the accession of the ten-year-old Charles IX Catherine de Médicis became Regent of France. To placate the Bourbon party—for there was at the moment a strong popular feeling in favour of the Princes of the Blood—she released Condé and appointed Antoine of Bourbon Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. At the same time, to check the power of the Guises, she found herself forced into a policy of conciliation in regard to the Huguenots. Shortly before the late King's death it had

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been arranged that the States-General should be convened, and in December 1560 they met—for the first time for more than fifty years—at Orléans. The opening speech of the Chancellor made it clear that the Regent and her counsellors desired to put an end to the bloody conflict of the creeds, and to devise some means by which a common ground of agreement might be found for those who, great as were their differences of opinion, were after all men of the same race, living under the same laws. The subsequent debates showed that on this central question of religion the States were hopelessly divided. The clergy, while advocating the reform of the Church, demanded the extermination of heresy. The Third Estate asked for complete toleration and freedom of worship. The nobles of Central France sided with the clergy; those of the west with the Third Estate; the remainder contented themselves with urging that both religious parties should be made to keep the peace and that punishment for heresy should be visited upon preachers only.

The reply of the Government took the form of a promise to consider the abuses detailed in the *cahiers*, joined with a general amnesty. Unfortunately, however, even this measure of pacification proved the starting-point of renewed troubles. Emboldened by the suspension of persecution, and treating the concessions made as meaning more than was really intended, the Huguenots proceeded to the open practice of their religious rites. This inflamed the more bigoted Catholics; there were anti-Protestant riots in Paris and in the country; in many places the Huguenots retaliated by attacking churches and destroying relics. Once more the Government had to interfere. An edict of July 1561 prohibited under severe penalties the public performance of any religious ceremonies other than those of the Catholic Church, while at the same time it forbade any interruption of Protestant services in houses. Upon this Coligny wrote to his fellow-Protestants that they had nothing to fear so long as they continued to worship in private.

Meanwhile the Government had taken the bold step of calling a conference of Catholic and Protestant divines. This

THE WARS OF RELIGION

met at Poissy in September, the Protestants being represented by twelve ministers under the leadership of Théodore de Bèze, or Beza, whose fame as a scholar and controversialist was firmly established. The King, the Queen-Mother, and the Princes of the Blood were all present at the opening session. The Chancellor in his inaugural speech made a strong plea for peace and religious union; Beza stated the Protestant case with great power and clearness; the Cardinal of Lorraine replied in a tone of acrimonious partisanship. In ensuing sessions the discussion degenerated into personalities and wranglings. Nothing came of this 'colloquy' except the Edict of January 1562, which authorized a reformed public worship outside the walled towns though not within them. This for the first time granted to the Huguenots a certain amount of public liberty. Yet on the whole, like most half-measures, it was ill-advised. Either it went too far or it did not go far enough. It was intended as an eirenicon. In fact it annoyed the one side without thoroughly satisfying the other. It gave, it is true, an immense impetus to Protestantism. But precisely for this reason it justified the fears of the Triumvirate—the Constable Montmorency, the Duke of Guise, and the Marshal Saint-André, who had now banded themselves together to prevent by all possible means the further spread of the new religion among the people and at Court.

A deplorable incident which took place only six weeks after the promulgation of this edict fanned the smouldering fires of sectarian hostility into a mighty blaze. On Sunday, March 1, accompanied by his brother the Cardinal, his wife and children, and a large escort of gentlemen and retainers, the Duke of Guise on his way from Joinville to Paris stopped at Vassy to hear Mass. Close by the church was a barn in which, in defiance of the Edict of January (for Vassy was a walled town), a body of Protestants was engaged in public worship. These "*gens scandaleux, arrogans, et fort téméraires*" were for the most part the Duke's own subjects, and he was furious on discovering such a flagrant outrage upon his authority. He sent some of his suite to order them instantly to desist. The

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Protestants barred their doors. The Duke's men endeavoured to force an entrance. The besieged replied with a volley of stones, and several of the Duke's following and the Duke himself were struck. His escort thereupon opened fire with their arquebuses. The tumult was turned into a massacre, in which twenty-three Protestants were killed on the spot and more than a hundred wounded. News of the butchery soon found wing. The extreme Catholics hailed it as a victory, and went wild with enthusiasm when Guise marched in triumph into Paris. Other massacres of the Reformers followed in different parts of the country. At Toulouse 3000 of them were slain—men, women, and children—in cold blood, and in circumstances of peculiar atrocity. Sometimes for self-defence, sometimes goaded by the desire for vengeance, the Protestants began to arm themselves. Reprisals on their side were numerous. They slew priests; they pillaged churches; they were guilty of countless acts of violence and vandalism. In addition, hundreds of them flocked to Paris to place themselves under the orders of the Prince of Condé, who had declared himself their leader, the unstable Duke of Bourbon having now gone over to the Triumvirate. The capital seethed with excitement. A battle of factions in the streets seemed imminent. Catherine at first endeavoured to effect a compromise. Had the Protestants in this crisis rallied to the throne, she would certainly have upheld them; but they made the mistake of adopting an inimical attitude, and as a result she now took her stand with the Catholic party. A decree of July 13, 1562, proclaimed the Protestants rebels and placed them outside the pale of the law.

The war which followed was characterized by extraordinary ferocity on one and the other side, the spirit of cruelty which is usually bred of civil conflict being further intensified by religious fanaticism. The Catholic army, under Guise and Montmorency, was reinforced by Philip of Spain, that of the Protestants, under Condé and Coligny, by Elizabeth of England. In the south the fighting was mainly of a loose, guerrilla kind. The decisive actions took place in the north. In September

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the Catholic troops captured Rouen, after a long siege in which the Duke of Bourbon was mortally wounded. In December a fierce battle was fought at Dreux, in which both the Constable Montmorency and the Prince of Condé were taken prisoners. Following up this victory the Duke of Guise marched on Orléans, which he invested on February 5, 1563. On the 18th of that month he was shot from behind by a Huguenot from Saintonge, and died six days later. Though the war had on the whole gone against the Huguenots, Catherine was now anxious to make peace. This was secured by a treaty which she signed with Condé at Amboise, by which Protestant worship was authorized in the houses of the nobility and in one city in each *bailliage*. But this agreement was very unfavourably regarded by the Reformers in general, who had taken their stand on the Edict of January 1562, and Condé was condemned for having been persuaded or tricked into its acceptance. Coligny reproached him because he had secured the rights of his own class and sacrificed those of the poorer brethren of the faith. Calvin accused him of betraying God.

Though the peace made on this unsatisfactory basis lasted five years, during which the Chancellor de l'Hôpital sought to turn public attention to various much-needed political reforms, the country continued in a state of religious unrest. The Catholics were irritated by even the measure of liberty which had been accorded to their enemies. At the same time the course of events both at home and abroad could not fail to fill the Protestants with alarm. The third session of the Council of Trent (1562-63) showed that the attitude of the heads of the Roman Church was one of uncompromising and bitter opposition, and that the breach between the old doctrines and the new was permanent. The Jesuits were actively engaged in the work of propagandism among the masses. The Counter-Reformation was in full swing. Philip of Spain, who had already attempted to interfere with Catherine's efforts for pacification, had now made the Catholic cause in Europe his own. The temper of the Court was becoming increasingly hostile, and a very bad feeling was created when

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the Queen-Mother met in conference at Bayonne (1564) Philip's chief minister, the infamous Duke of Alva. That feeling was deepened two years later when the Duke began his crusade of extermination among the Protestants of the Low Countries. Rightly or wrongly, the Huguenots came to believe that a similar crusade was to be directed against themselves. Their fears prompted aggressive action, and the Second War of Religion broke out (1566). Condé blockaded Paris, and at an indecisive battle fought at Saint-Denis (November 10, 1567) the old Constable Montmorency was killed. Through the good offices of l'Hôpital a peace was finally patched up at Longjumeau (March 23, 1568) on the basis of the re-establishment without qualification or restriction of the Edict of Amboise.

HENRI OF NAVARRE

This agreement, however, brought only a moment's pause in the hostilities. The passions of the Huguenots were kept at fever-heat by news of the bloody work which Alva was now doing in the Netherlands, while Catherine's fresh edict forbidding under pain of death the public exercise of their religion and ordering all their ministers to leave the country within a fortnight proved how little confidence was to be placed in the promises of the Government even when backed by formal treaties. Barely escaping a plot to capture them, Condé and Coligny now sought refuge in the Protestant stronghold of La Rochelle, where they were joined by the heroic Jeanne d'Albret and her son, a boy of fifteen—Henri of Navarre. War, which had scarcely ceased, burst out anew. But things went ill with the Huguenots. At Jarnac (March 13, 1569) they suffered a serious reverse at the hands of Marshal Tavannes, and lost their leader, the Prince of Condé, who, badly wounded, was in the act of surrendering when he was treacherously shot by a captain of the guards of the Duke of Anjou. Coligny, now the real head of the Protestants, though young Henri of Navarre was appointed general-in-chief, made an heroic attempt to retrieve this disaster; but though suc-

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cessful at La Roche-Abeille, he was completely defeated at Moncontour (October 3, 1569). Reinforcements, however, enabled him to hold the field, and the obstinate spirit of the Protestants, who declared that they were ready to fight till their last man was slain, convinced Catherine that it was useless to prolong the struggle. Again she tried conciliation, and by the Edict of Saint-Germain (August 8, 1570) granted to the Huguenots liberty of public worship wherever it was already established, in the residences of the nobles, and in the suburbs of at least two cities in each province, admitted them to all employments, and further confirmed them in the possession of four cities—La Rochelle, Cognac, Montauban, and La Charité. These terms were far more favourable than any they had previously obtained. It seemed, indeed, as if, notwithstanding the indignation of the more bigoted Catholics, they provided the foundations of a lasting peace. As such at least Coligny appeared to accept them. He retired to La Rochelle and occupied himself with constructive work for the cause and with the education of the two young Bourbon princes—Henri of Navarre and his cousin Henri of Condé—who had been placed under his care.

Catherine's next move was to strengthen her hold upon the Huguenots, and perhaps to lull them into a false sense of security, by matrimonial alliances which would appeal to their sympathies. Her scheme to make one of her sons the husband of Elizabeth of England failed. But her overtures for the marriage of her daughter Marguerite to Henri of Navarre were, after some delay, favourably received by the young Prince's mother and by Coligny. The design was also encouraged by Charles IX, who now at the age of twenty-one woke up suddenly to his position and began to grow restive under his mother's rigorous control. This self-assertion on his part introduced yet another element into the complex situation. Charles seems to have become jealous of Philip of Spain, and this jealousy combined with the newly awakened spirit of opposition to Catherine to make him for the time being openly friendly to the Protestant party. Coligny was invited to

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Court ; treated with honour, listened to with respect. Catherine remonstrated. The Catholic nobles were wild with anger. But Charles took no heed. Then Jeanne arrived to make final arrangements for her son's marriage. She reached the capital in May 1572. On the 4th of June she fell suddenly ill. On the 9th she died. The report got abroad that she had been poisoned by command of the Queen-Mother by an Italian perfumer in her suite. The accusation has never been proved, and may probably be dismissed as a fabrication. But it is certain that Catherine had already begun to consider the possibility of accomplishing by treachery what she could not accomplish by force. In Charles' hostile attitude toward Philip II she saw a danger which must be averted at all costs. As England had refused to be drawn into an alliance with France, an alliance with Spain had become a necessity. Coligny, now the most influential statesman in the land, stood between her and her plans, and must therefore be got out of the way. The force of circumstances thus drove her back upon the Guises, whose bitterness against Coligny and the Huguenots in general had been greatly increased by their recent successes.

THE MASSACRE OF ST BARTHOLOMEW

The chance to strike a blow which she meant to be final came on the occasion of the marriage of her daughter with the young Prince, who was now since his mother's death the King of Navarre. The wedding took place on August 18, and Paris was crowded with Huguenot gentlemen who had come from all parts of the country to join in the celebration and to do honour to their chief. Three days later an event occurred which hastened the inevitable crisis. As Coligny was leaving the Louvre on his way back to his lodgings he was fired at from a grated window in a house belonging to one of the Guise following, by a professional assassin named Maurevel. The shot failed of its purpose, but it carried away the admiral's right index finger and wounded him in the left arm. That this attempt at murder was made at the instigation

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or at least with the connivance of Catherine there is not the slightest reason to doubt. Its effect upon the Huguenots in Paris may be imagined. News of it was carried to Charles while he was playing tennis. With an exclamation of anger he threw down his racket and retired in great agitation to his own apartments. There he was found by the King of Navarre and Henri of Condé, who demanded that the outrage should be promptly punished. Coligny also requested a personal interview with the King, but Catherine, fearing to leave the two alone, insisted upon accompanying him with several of her closest advisers. At the wounded man's bedside Charles swore a solemn oath that he would have swift and terrible vengeance for the crime. Catherine now stood in dread lest her responsibility for it should be revealed. Paris meanwhile was in a state of intense excitement. Both parties were under arms. An outbreak of hostilities seemed certain. Then the Queen-Mother called a council of her most trusted adherents. Precisely what happened at their deliberations will never be known. But one step was determined. It was the murder of Coligny and a general massacre of all the Huguenots in Paris.

The plans were carefully laid and punctually carried out. A little after one o'clock on Sunday morning, August 24—St Bartholomew's Day—the tocsin sounded from the city churches, and before the early summer dawn the slaughter began. Coligny was killed in his bedroom and his corpse thrown out of the window into the street, where it was kicked by the Duke of Guise. All the Huguenots in the Louvre were put to the sword. Then, urged on by the Duke, soldiers and civilians divided into parties, and with hoarse cries of "Tuez ! Tuez !" went from house to house throughout the city, slaying all who were even suspected of heresy, and pillaging their homes. "Anger, blood, and death," writes a contemporary chronicler, "filled the streets with such horror that even their Majesties, who were the authors of it, could not restrain their fear in the Louvre. Paris was like a conquered city. . . . All the Huguenots, including men, women, and children, were

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killed indifferently.”¹ At nightfall, when bands of lawless ruffians were let loose on the heels of the assassins to indulge in a debauch of butchery and looting, the terrors of the day reached their height, and it was some days before the killing and the rioting were ended. Altogether several thousands of the Protestants fell—2000 at least, though some accounts say 4000 and some even 10,000. The two young Bourbon princes—the King of Navarre and his cousin—escaped only by consenting to go to Mass. Charles, who at the outset had opposed the massacre, was soon swept away by the lust of blood, and, it is said, revelled in the ghastly spectacle upon which he looked from the windows of his palace. The story even runs—it is a story made familiar to us by the brilliant pages of Dumas²—that he took an arquebus and amused himself by shooting at the flying Protestants in the streets below, as if they were beasts of chase. This may be dismissed as a legend. But on Tuesday, August 26, he publicly assumed before the Parliament of Paris full responsibility for what had taken place.

Then the fury of fanaticism spread from Paris to other cities, and there were general massacres of Huguenots at Meaux, La Charité, Orléans, Saumur, Angers, Lyon, Troyes, Bourges, Rouen, Toulouse, Bordeaux. Only in a few places did the authorities make the slightest attempt to restrain the passions of the mob.

News of these atrocities caused an immense sensation throughout Europe. The Protestant nations were of course filled with horror,³ and even the German Catholic princes expressed their disapproval. But the Pope had a medal struck in honour of the victory of the faith, and Philip II when he heard of the massacre is said to have laughed outright—for the first and only time in his life.

Catherine had confidently expected that this great stroke would be the death-blow to Protestantism and end all her

¹ Tavannes, *Mémoires*, chap. xxvii.

² *La Reine Margot*, chap. x.

³ How long the memory of them lingered in England is shown, *e.g.*, by Spenser's reference in *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, Canto VIII, Stanza vi—published eighteen years later.

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troubles with the Huguenots. She was now to learn her mistake. "These wretches," as she called them, were stunned but not crushed. Disorganized and leaderless as they now were, they soon took heart anew and began to rally to the cause. It became necessary to drive them from their strongholds, of which the most important were La Rochelle on the west coast and Sancerre in Berry. This brought about the fourth civil war. Sancerre was quickly starved into submission; but La Rochelle offered a stubborn resistance to the besiegers, who in the end had to abandon the attack. Nîmes, Montauban, and many other cities in the south also kept their gates obstinately closed against the Government troops. Growing opposition among the more moderate Catholics at Court to the fiercely intolerant policy of the Guises weakened the hands of the King, and in July 1573 the Peace of La Rochelle granted to the Protestants liberty of conscience and the right of public worship in La Rochelle itself, in Nîmes, and in Montauban. Such concessions really meant a restriction of the privileges which in theory at any rate the Reformers had hitherto enjoyed. But the extremists of the Catholic party were angry and the King was mortified that the Huguenots should have been recognized at all, and, to make matters worse, the treaty was signed just at the time when Charles was receiving the congratulations of Rome and Spain on the bloody triumph of the Church. Even when it was made there was no hope that such a treaty could prove lasting.

On Whitsunday of the following year Charles died of a frightful disease which for some time had been wearing him away, though his end, it is believed, was hastened by remorse over the part he had played in the massacre of his subjects. Ever since that fearful crime he had been a prey to morbid melancholy, and at the last visions of his victims haunted him, while in his frequent attacks of delirium he saw blood everywhere about him and was shaken by agonies of horror. In these awful hours of dissolution he was abandoned by all his attendants except his old Huguenot nurse.

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HENRI III

His brother, Henri, Duke of Anjou, who through his mother's machinations had recently been made King of Poland, was now called to the throne. Abandoning his crown and his subjects, Henri fled from Cracow by night; but, lingering on the way to enjoy the pleasures of Vienna and Venice, he did not enter Paris until two months after Charles' death. On February 15, 1575, he was at length crowned at Reims by the Cardinal Guise, the third Duke's youngest brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine having died in the previous December. During the coronation ceremony, a chronicler reports, he complained aloud that the crown hurt him, "and it slipped off his head twice, as if he wished it to fall." Such behaviour made a very bad impression upon the French people, and his effeminacy, his favouritism, his fondness for worthless companions, and the scandalous stories which soon leaked out regarding the debaucheries of his private life quickly turned their disappointment into disgust. His accession, however, made little difference to the situation except in one particular. Catherine, whose authority had in some measure been challenged by the late King during his closing years, now once more became the effective head of affairs.

The Treaty of La Rochelle had not really put a stop to the fighting, which continued in an irregular way in various parts of the country. Fresh encouragement was now given to the Huguenots by the action of Henri of Navarre, who, contriving at length to evade the surveillance of those who had been appointed his guardians in the interests of the Court, took up his quarters in Poitou, and publicly renounced his enforced adherence to Catholicism. In the meantime opposition to the Guises was shaping itself definitely in a third party, called the *politiques*, whose avowed object was the restoration of peace to the distracted country by means of general toleration and the firm repression of all factions whether on the Catholic or on the Protestant side. The King's brother, the Duke of Alençon, placed himself at the head of this new movement

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for pacification, and though he was himself inspired by motives rather of personal ambition than of patriotism, his leadership gave it strength. Henri did not conceal his anger at his brother's defection; and, realizing that his life was in danger so long as he remained at Court, the Duke made good his escape and hastened to the south, where an alliance was formed between the *politiques* and the Protestants. The Duke of Guise's success against the German soldiers of the Huguenots at Dormans was offset by the gathering of a strong Protestant force under Condé and the Duke of Alençon at Moulins, and again Catherine found it necessary to come to terms. Acting as mediator, Alençon successfully negotiated the Peace of Beaulieu—otherwise known, from his title, as 'the Peace of Monsieur'¹ (May 1576)—by which he gained for himself the duchy of Anjou, for the King of Navarre Guyenne, and for Condé Picardy, while for the Protestants at large he obtained the right of public worship everywhere except in Paris and at Court. The Protestants also received eight strongholds or cities of refuge, while chambers of justice, called *mi-parties*, because they were composed half of Protestants and half of Catholics, were set up in each provincial Parliament.

THE LEAGUE

This, however, was once more a peace which was no peace. The irreconcilables among the Catholics were a fatal obstacle to the fulfilment of its conditions. Indignant at what seemed to them the entire betrayal of their cause, they determined to renew their resistance, and sought to consolidate their strength. In many parts of the country leagues had been formed among the zealous Catholics for the active defence of their faith. It was a natural step from these to a vast general association through which the forces of the anti-Huguenot party throughout the land should be definitely organized. Such was the origin of the famous Union Catholique, or Sainte Ligue (1576), which rapidly grew to formidable proportions in almost every part of France. According to its constitution,

¹ 'Monsieur' was the title now borne by the King's younger brother.

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all Catholics were bound to join it under pain of being otherwise accounted its enemies, and to lend it all the help in their power for the maintenance of the Holy Catholic Church. Its avowed object was the total extermination of Protestantism by any and every means which might be found available for the purpose, while ostensibly it also aimed to support the King against his rebel subjects. But the secret plan of its real instigator and leader, the Duke of Guise, was to use it as an instrument against the King and for the achievement of his own personal ambitions. Henri was becoming more and more unpopular. His brother, the Duke of Anjou, was under suspicion by reason of his relations with the Huguenot chiefs. After him, the next-of-kin to the sovereign were the heretical Bourbons. In these circumstances the Duke of Guise believed that with the assistance of Philip of Spain and the Holy See he might carve out a way to the throne.

The States-General which the King had promised in the Treaty of Beaulieu to convoke met at Blois in December 1576. Their election had been controlled by the League, and Protestantism was practically unrepresented. Extremist counsels therefore prevailed. Henri repudiated the 'Peace of Monsieur,' and at the same time, in the hope of checkmating the Duke of Guise, publicly declared himself the head of the League. The clergy and the nobles, supported by a majority of the Third Estate, demanded the immediate suppression of the Reformed religion and the banishment of its ministers, elders, and deacons.

This led to the Sixth War of Religion (1577), which after some months of unimportant fighting was closed by the Treaty of Bergerac (1578). The terms now granted to the Protestants were not on the whole so favourable as those of the Edict of Beaulieu. But they were better than might have been expected. The separate existence of the Protestant Church was definitely recognized; while, still acting in accordance with his anti-Guise policy, the King struck a blow at its chief enemy, the League itself, by prohibiting "all leagues, associations, and fraternities, now formed or to be formed on any pretext what-

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soever." A seventh war, the cause of which can be traced only in the general and increasing disorganization of the country, raged for a short time in 1580, and ended in November with the Peace of Fleix, by which the Treaty of Bergerac was reaffirmed.

Three years of comparative repose now followed. Then trouble began again with the death in June 1584 of the Duke of Anjou, who meanwhile had been helping the Flemings against Philip of Spain. This brought the question of succession once more to the front. It was obvious to all that Henri III, already worn out with his debaucheries, could not live more than a few years; he had no son, and the heir to the throne was therefore the Protestant King of Navarre. The King saw that the only way in which he could hope to secure peace was in persuading Henri of Navarre to become a Catholic. But this Henri refused to do. The Catholic leaders thus found themselves face to face with the fact that in all probability a Protestant prince would very soon be called upon to assume the crown of France. This danger stung them into immediate aggressive action. The League was revived and reorganized; Henri of Navarre was declared to be disinherited, and his uncle, Charles, the old Cardinal of Bourbon, was put forward in his place, though this was only a screen to hide for a time the pretensions of the Duke of Guise, who was now working steadily toward the realization of his schemes. Then a treaty was made (December 1584) with Philip of Spain for the extirpation of all heresy and schism throughout the kingdom. But Henri of Navarre rose to the occasion, answered the manifesto of the League with a counter-manifesto, in which he charged its chiefs with direct responsibility for all the evils from which France had so long suffered, and drew to his side not only the Huguenots, but also the *politiques*. The King now found himself between two fires. A reign of terror had already begun in the cities where the League was strongest. In Paris, which was completely in its power, the spirit of fanaticism ran high. The King tried to temporize; but, finding this impossible, he fell back upon the Guise party;

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under his mother's advice he negotiated a treaty with them (July 1585), and issued an edict rescinding all privileges formerly granted to the Reformers and forbidding everywhere the public exercise of their religion. The Pope, Sixtus V, now came to the support of the League with a bull which proclaimed that as a heretic Henri of Navarre was incapable of succeeding to the throne, and which further absolved all his vassals from allegiance to him.

THE WAR OF THE THREE HENRIES

The whole country was now in a state of anarchy, and fighting and rioting were universal. But it was not till the following year that the Eighth War of Religion definitely began—'the War of the Three Henries,' as it is commonly called, from the three leaders who took part in it—Henri III, Henri of Guise, and Henri of Navarre. The King's policy was, if possible, so to guide the course of events as to effect the destruction of both the opposed factions, and thus to ensure his own safety. But he had neither the strength of will nor the power of brain to achieve success in so delicate a game. At first fortune was against the Huguenots. Then Henri of Navarre inflicted a terrible defeat on the King's army under Joyeuse at Coutras (October 20, 1587). In the north, however, the Duke of Guise drove the German allies of the Protestants out of the country. This exploit gave him immense popularity among the masses of Paris; he became the hero of the hour; and when shortly afterward the King entered his capital (December 23), he was received with the jeers and insults of the crowd. In his alarm he brought a large contingent of Swiss mercenaries to the suburbs and sent a peremptory message to the Duke of Guise forbidding him to come to Paris. Events now moved rapidly toward the closing act of the long drama. The League became openly disloyal. Its metropolitan branch had already formed a secret government for Paris, called 'the Sixteen,' from the sixteen sections of the city represented in it. An active policy was pursued. Various attempts were made to seize the King's person, and, these

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having failed, the royal prohibition was set at defiance and the Duke of Guise was called in. He entered Paris amid scenes of wild popular enthusiasm. The King shut himself up in the Louvre, and most unwisely sent for his Swiss guards. The people of Paris took this as a threat and a challenge. The citizens flew to arms; the tocsin sounded from the churches; shops were shut; chains, benches, carts, barrels, were hastily put to service for the defence of the streets, and the capital assumed the appearance of a city under siege. On that 'Day of Barricades'—May 12, 1588—the King learned to his humiliation who was the real master of the situation. It was only through the personal intervention of the Duke of Guise that the Swiss guard was saved from destruction and Henri himself from capture by the populace. In an interview with the Duke the following day the King was obliged to accede to all the demands of the Leaguers.

If the King needed further proof that the whole country was now against him, it was furnished by the States-General, which he had undertaken to convene, and which met at Blois in October. He had determined to denounce the League, and in fact went so far as to declare that he would no longer permit any armed association to exist within his realm. But he was forced to eat his words, and to confirm the appointment of the Duke of Guise as Lieutenant-General of the kingdom.

This stirred his hatred of the Guises to fever-heat. He resolved to be rid of them at all costs. There was only one way, and he took it, while the States were still in session. Summoned to a council in the King's apartments, the Duke was assassinated by the royal body-guard (December 23). His brother, the Cardinal, shared his fate. Henri hastened to his mother in triumph with the news, and fatuously boasted that at length he could be King indeed.

THE ASSASSINATION OF HENRI III

Hardly was the crime committed, however, before he discovered that he had made a fatal mistake. The report of the murder threw Paris into a fury of excitement. The churches

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rang with denunciations of the King ; the Sixteen strengthened their organization ; such members of the Parliament of Paris as still remained faithful to the monarchy were arrested ; the Sorbonne solemnly declared that the French people were freed from all allegiance to the throne. A provisional Government was set up, and the Duke of Mayenne, the only surviving brother of the Duke of Guise, was made Lieutenant-General. In the midst of all this excitement the death of Catherine de Médicis (January 5, 1589) was almost unnoticed. But it removed the wretched King's sole support. There was now nothing left for him but to throw himself into the arms of the King of Navarre. The two sovereigns met at Plessis-lès-Tours, and an agreement was concluded between them, Henri of Navarre promising to stand by the Crown and undertaking on his faith and honour never to deny to the Catholics the liberty of conscience which he claimed for himself. A basis thus being established for united action, the combined armies of the Royalists and the Huguenots pushed steadily across the country between the Loire and the Seine, and on the evening of July 30, 1589, appeared, 40,000 strong, before the walls of Paris. The blockade began. The city went mad with excitement. Day and night processions marched through the streets. The frenzy of the preachers was as great and as little restrained as that of the populace. Priests made waxen images of the King and practised the rites of *envoûtement* upon them before their altars. Bands of children went about bearing lighted candles, which they blew out with shrill cries of "Dieu, éteignez ainsi la race des Valois !" The doctrine of tyrannicide was openly preached from the pulpit and was defended in the schools.

Meanwhile on the side of the invaders plans were laid for a general assault on the city on August 2. But before these plans could be carried out the doom of the King had been sealed. Among those in whom excitement had become delirium was a young Jacobin monk named Jacques Clément. The son of a peasant, he was marked by all the rude simplicity and gross superstition of his class. He had prayed and fasted, he had

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Charles, Comte de Valois
 Son of Philippe III
 (1270-1325)

PHILIPPE VI
 (1293-1350 ; King of France 1328)

JEAN II ('le Bon')
 (c. 1319-1364)

CHARLES V ('le Sage')
 (1337-1380)

Philippe le Hardi
 (d. 1404)
 (Ancestor of the
 House of
 Burgundy)

CHARLES VI
 (1368-1422)

Louis, Duc
 d'Orléans
 (d. 1407)

CHARLES VII
 (1403-1461)

Charles
 (d. 1465)

Jean, Comte
 d'Angoulême
 (d. 1467)

LOUIS XI
 (1423-1483)

LOUIS XII
 (1462-1515)

Charles
 (d. 1496)

CHARLES VIII
 (1470-1498)

FRANÇOIS I
 (1494-1547)

HENRI II
 (1519-1559)

FRANÇOIS II
 (1544-1560)

CHARLES IX
 (1550-1574)

HENRI III
 (1551-1589)

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seen visions and heard celestial voices, and he had become convinced that it was his sacred mission to free his country from the detested King. Provided with a counterfeit letter by way of introduction, he contrived to pass through the Royalist lines and to obtain access to Henri's camp at Saint-Cloud. In Henri's presence he declared that he had private information of the utmost importance to communicate to him. By command the royal guards withdrew. The monk then stepped forward and plunged a knife into Henri's abdomen. Hearing the King's cry, the guards rushed in and slew the assassin on the spot. That night the King of Navarre came to Saint-Cloud from his own headquarters at Meudon, and the dying monarch embraced him, gave him his blessing, recognized him as his successor, and urged him to adopt the true faith. Early next morning he passed away, and thus the prayer of the Paris children was fulfilled. With Henri III the race of the Valois became extinct.

BOOK IV

THE HOUSE OF BOURBON

1589-1789

CHAPTER I

HENRI IV

1589-1610

THE news of the assassination of Henri III caused wild rejoicings in Paris, where cheering crowds paraded the streets in the glare of innumerable bonfires, and even the churches rang with praises of Jacques Clément, the blessed martyr. But while popular feeling thus discharged itself in noisy demonstrations, the leaders of the contending parties in the country now found themselves faced by the serious question of the succession to the throne. As the nearest male representative of the royal house Henri of Navarre was, in accordance with the Salic Law, the rightful King of France. But as a Protestant under ban of excommunication he was obnoxious to the mass of the nation, and for the moment it seemed in the last degree unlikely that he could ever make good his theoretical claim. On the other hand, the Leaguers were divided among themselves and confusion prevailed in their counsels.

Henri's first step in assuming the royal title was to secure the support of the nobles, Catholic and Huguenot, who had followed his predecessor to Saint-Cloud. To this end he adopted a policy of general conciliation, solemnly undertaking to maintain the Catholic religion as the religion of the State and, as the technical phrase ran, to cause himself to "receive instruction" in it, and at the same time to preserve such freedom of worship as was already enjoyed by the Reformers. But though this declaration was accepted and countersigned

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by many of the chiefs of the royal army (August 4, 1589), it failed to give universal satisfaction. Its concessions displeased the extremists of both parties, and while several powerful Catholic nobles withdrew in dudgeon, some of the more stiff-necked Protestants declared their unwillingness to fight for a sovereign "who promised to support idolatry." By such defections the army at Saint-Cloud was quickly reduced to some eight or ten thousand men, mainly foreigners, whose clamorous demands for their long arrears of pay Henri was too poor to meet. In the country at large the new King's position was equally precarious. His title was generally recognized only in the south. Elsewhere, the provinces and principal cities either sided with the League or remained neutral. It needed a man of Henri's courage, determination, and self-confidence to stand firm against odds apparently so overwhelming.

HENRI'S STRUGGLE WITH THE LEAGUE

Meanwhile the leaders of the Catholic party were forced to take definite action. To reject the claims of the heretic prince was not enough. An orthodox king must be set up in his place. The intrigues of Philip II, who was busily scheming to establish a Spanish dynasty in France, and the pretensions of the Duke of Savoy helped to some extent to close up the ranks of the Leaguers. But the difficulty of finding an occupant for the throne who would be entirely acceptable to all the factions remained. Had the Duke of Mayenne, now the head of the League, possessed the requisite qualities of daring and resolution, he might easily have assumed the crown. But Mayenne was not the man to take advantage even of such a golden opportunity. He preferred to temporize. He therefore caused the Cardinal of Bourbon to be proclaimed King of France under the title of Charles X (August 7, 1589), while by the same edict he appointed himself Lieutenant-General of the Crown and State. As the Cardinal, who had been a prisoner of the Huguenots since the assassination of the Duke of Guise, was now old and gouty, the real power of

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40. HENRI IV IN 1556



41. THE DUKE OF MAYENNE



42. HENRI IV AND MARIE DE
MÉDICIS



43. THE DUKE OF SULLY

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the Government was vested, as was intended, in Mayenne. It was generally understood that this arrangement was designed only to mark time. But from the point of view of the pretensions of the house of Guise the proclamation of the Cardinal was a tactical mistake, since the legitimacy of the rival claims of the house of Bourbon was thereby formally acknowledged.

For the moment, however, the situation was entirely in Mayenne's favour, and when Henri learned that the League had been strongly reinforced by fresh troops from Spain he saw that to linger at Saint-Cloud would be to court certain disaster. Accordingly he raised the siege of Paris, despatched two of his chief supporters—Longueville into Picardy and d'Aumont into Champagne—in quest of money and recruits, and set out himself for Normandy at the head of an army of 7000 half-starved and discontented men. His principal object was now to reach the coast, in the hope of effecting a junction with the English auxiliaries promised by Queen Elizabeth. He paused in his march, however, to make a surprise attack upon Rouen; but this failing, pushed on to Dieppe, which at once threw open its gates to him. So desperate was his condition—in his own words, he was a king without a kingdom, a husband without a wife, and a soldier without money—that he was glad thus to secure a point of vantage from which, if the worst came to the worst, he could make good his escape to England. But in the meantime he took up a strong position on the heights round the village of Arques, four miles south-east of Dieppe, and there awaited the arrival of Mayenne, who had started in pursuit with a force of 25,000, augmented on the way to 33,000 men. Fully convinced that his immense superiority in numbers gave him the certainty of an easy victory, the Duke had promised the people of Paris either to bring Henri back bound hand and foot or to drive him into the sea. But he soon discovered to his cost that it was one thing to promise and another to perform. For nearly three weeks he did his utmost, now by force and now by treachery, to dislodge his obstinate foe. But Henri's little army repelled every attack; and

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when news reached the besiegers that several thousand English soldiers, well supplied with ammunition and provisions, had joined the King's forces, and that Longueville and d'Aumont were also approaching with further help, Mayenne abandoned his efforts and retired toward the Somme (September 18, 1589).

This success was a great encouragement to Henri and put new heart into his men, while the arrival next day in the port of Dieppe of 4000 more English soldiers and 1000 Scots was the signal for a general outburst of enthusiasm in the royal camp. Finding that he had now some 25,000 men at his disposal, the King, with characteristic audacity, resolved on a dash to Paris, calculating upon the moral effect which this would have upon his enemies. Paris was, indeed, completely taken by surprise when on the night of October 31–November 1, under cover of a thick fog, hundreds of Huguenots, with loud cries of "Saint Bartholomew! Saint Bartholomew!" poured into the suburbs on the left bank of the Seine. Three days of unrestrained pillage enabled the raiders to make up in booty what they still wanted in pay. Then the return of Mayenne obliged Henri to renounce all further attempt on the capital. He therefore withdrew his troops and fell back upon Tours, the provisional seat of his Government, which he entered by torchlight on the night of November 22, amid enthusiastic demonstrations of loyalty on the part of the inhabitants. On his march south he had captured Étampes and Vendôme.

Nothing succeeds like success. The news of Henri's victories already began to affect neutral opinion throughout the country, and even more markedly the attitude of foreign nations toward him. England, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark had already recognized him; first among the Catholic states to do so, Venice now followed suit. Even the Pope, notwithstanding the pressure brought to bear upon him by the League and Philip of Spain, began to waver in his antagonism. At the same time the King's position was further strengthened by the growing dissensions of his enemies. The stop-gap policy

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adopted in the proclamation of the Cardinal of Bourbon was already proving very unsatisfactory. On many sides Charles X was regarded as merely a phantom monarch. The League was torn by the plots and counter-plots of rival factions. Mayenne, though he now too late began to realize that he had missed his chance, was still nursing his private ambitions. Philip II openly asserted the rights of his daughter, as niece of the late King. The Dukes of Lorraine and Savoy also put forth their claims, the one on behalf of his son, who was a grandson of Henri II, the other on his own account as grandson of François I. The Dukes of Mercœur, Nemours, Nevers, and Aumale, each in his own territorial interest, demanded the dismemberment of the kingdom; while the turbulent Council of Sixteen sought to extend the interregnum, which had given them their power, with a view to the ultimate establishment of a kind of republic, the destinies of which of course were to be in their hands. In these circumstances Paris was a hotbed of ferment and intrigue, the only ground of understanding among the contending parties, amid all their internal jealousies, being their common hatred of the heretic of Navarre.

THE BATTLE OF IVRY

Determined at all costs to keep the realm together and to prevent the crown of France from passing under foreign control, Mayenne maintained a firm front against the enormous difficulties of his position. He took a bold line in suppressing the Council of Sixteen, and announced his determination to convoke the States-General, that the nation might itself decide as to the disposition of the crown. His immediate anxiety, however, was to recover the military prestige which he had lost at Arques, for this was essential to the continuance of his power in the country. The situation, too, called for decisive action. Having established a ministry at Tours and put his dilapidated finances on a somewhat sounder footing, Henri had once more taken the field. At first he met with almost unbroken success, Le Mans, Alençon, Falaise, Lisieux,

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and Bayeux quickly surrendering to him (November 1589–January 1590). But his triumphant career in Normandy was checked by Mayenne's counter-stroke—the capture of Pontoise and the investment of Meulan. With the object of drawing off at least a portion of the forces of the League, Henri in turn laid siege to Dreux. Mayenne at once marched to the relief of the city. Upon this Henri raised the siege in order to deploy his army on the plain of Saint-André, near the village of Ivry, sixteen miles from Dreux. Here on March 14, after two hours of furious fighting, the Leaguers suffered a defeat crushing almost to annihilation. Once more, as at Arques, the numerical odds were greatly in favour of Mayenne, who had some 17,000 men against Henri's 10,000, and the brilliancy of the Royalist victory was therefore the more apparent. One incident in particular in the great battle is familiar to every English reader through Macaulay's stirring ballad. Before hostilities began, Henri, mounted on his fine bay horse, harangued his soldiers. "My companions," he cried, "I am resolved to die or conquer with you. If you lose sight of the standards and colours, keep my white plumes always in view, for there you will find the road to victory and glory." And he was as good as his word, for from first to last he was himself in the very thick of the fray.

The victory of Ivry, and the fall of Mantes, which immediately followed, opened the road to Paris. Had Henri thrown himself upon the capital while the panic caused by the news of Mayenne's rout was still at its height, it seems probable that the inhabitants would have been glad to come to terms with him. He himself, it would appear, was anxious to make the attempt, but was dissuaded by his military advisers, who, Catholic and Protestant alike, feared that his too rapid triumph might be prejudicial to their own interests by placing him once and for all beyond the necessity of their help. As it was, therefore, he lingered in Mantes to readjust his finances and establish his Council of State, and this delay gave his enemies time to recover from their shock. Even when at length he renewed his campaign he spent several weeks in reducing and

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occupying various towns of strategical importance on the way. It was thus early May before the royal army was encamped outside the capital and the investment formally begun.

THE SIEGE OF PARIS

It was not Henri's policy to endeavour, at least for the moment, to carry Paris by storm. It is said, indeed, that he dreaded the excesses of his Huguenot followers, who were openly determined to avenge St Bartholomew.¹ What had happened in the suburbs a short time before may have made him alive to this danger. His plan was therefore to starve the city into submission. He now, indeed, seemed to hold it in an iron grip, for he had strong garrisons in the neighbouring towns, while the main roads and all the bridges of the Marne, the Yonne, the Seine, and the Oise were in his hands. The blockade was in fact practically complete.

His chances of success were, moreover, increased by the fact that Paris was but ill prepared for a long siege, being poorly supplied with both provisions and ammunition. But the temper of the people had been stiffened by the disaster which had at first filled them with consternation. Inspired by religious enthusiasm and the fiercest hatred of the heretic King, they were willing to face every peril and to endure every privation rather than yield. The demonstrations of the fanatical clergy and of the Council of Sixteen, which despite Mayenne's decree was still alive and active, became more violent than ever. The grand procession of the League, on May 14, when priests, monks, and students, 1300 strong, marched in battle order over the bridge of Notre-Dame, intensified the popular feeling. Thirty thousand citizens enrolled themselves among the regular troops. The very church-bells were melted down for cannon. Summary vengeance was wreaked by the populace on a few *politiques* here and there who ventured, however timidly, to suggest pacifist counsels. The Sorbonne, at the instigation of Cajetano, the papal legate,

¹ See Hardouin de Péréfixe, *Histoire du Roi Henri le Grand*, p. 134.

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issued an edict requiring all true Catholics to resist Henri to the bitter end, declaring that those who should advocate the overture of negotiations with him would thereby incur the guilt of mortal sin, and promising to such as died in the good cause the martyr's crown.

Hardly had the siege begun when news reached the city of the death of the Cardinal of Bourbon. This event gave the rival pretenders to supreme power a fresh opportunity to press their claims. But the general agitation was so great that the leaders of the League were far more concerned about their immediate danger from the foe without their walls than about what appeared to them the far remoter problem of the succession to the throne. Philip II exhorted Mayenne to proceed at once to the proclamation of a new sovereign, and plainly intimated that the young Duke of Guise would be acceptable to him. But Mayenne in reply announced his intention to defer this till the coming meeting of the States-General, and for the present to continue to exercise his functions as Lieutenant of the realm. In the meantime he was straining every nerve to secure succour from the Catholic Powers. Leaving the government of Paris to his brother, the young Duke of Nemours, he hastened to Condé to urge upon the Duke of Parma, the Spanish Governor of the Low Countries, the instant despatch of the reinforcements which had been promised by Spain.

The first two months of the siege were marked by many sorties and bloody encounters in the outlying suburbs, which resulted here and there in slight gains for the Leaguers. But nothing could be done to break the blockade; the slow agony of the city continued, and with every passing week the condition of its inhabitants grew more and more distressing. Strict orders were issued regulating the sale of provisions, and arrangements made for the public relief of the very poor. But the dearth steadily increased, and before long crowds of haggard and half-frantic people daily besieged the Hôtel de Ville and paraded the streets with hoarse cries of "Give us bread! Money is of no use to us. Give us bread!" The

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mortality became frightful ; hundreds died of starvation in the hospitals and the streets ; hundreds more contracted horrible diseases from vile stuff on which they fed. Inquisition made by command of the Duke of Nemours into the resources of the monastic houses brought to light large secret stores of provisions, which were at once converted to public use. But the alleviation thus obtained was only temporary, and the city's state was soon more grievous than before. By the middle of July all the cattle, horses, and mules had been slain ; dogs, cats, even rats and mice, were now used for food. " I have seen with my own eyes," writes an Italian in the suite of the papal legate, " many wretches devouring raw dog's flesh and the entrails of beasts which had been flung into the gutter. On one occasion I witnessed the furious combat of a man with a savage dog, which he had attacked to eat. The dog threw down the man, who was famishing, and began to tear and eat his flesh, when the shouts and blows of other miserable wretches drove the brute from his prey." ¹ Small loaves were made of a paste composed of human bones ground down and mixed with rancid oil, and thousands perished of this loathsome preparation.² The soldiers began to steal children, and in one case it is recorded that a woman of rank fed on the salted bodies of her own offspring.³ The sanitary state of the city was appalling, and pestilence stalked on the heels of famine. Altogether, it is computed, the death-roll of the first three months of the siege reached the gigantic total of 100,000. And still the populace, their hatred of the Huguenot deepened by their very sufferings, held out with grim determination, inspired by the enthusiasm of their fanatical priests, and encouraged by reiterated promises of coming relief from Spain.

On the night of July 23, however, a few private citizens, goaded to desperation, threw themselves from the walls, and contrived to make their way to Saint-Cloud, where they laid their piteous case before the King in person. Henri was much

¹ Pigafetta, *Assedio di Parigi*, 1591.

² *Cp.* Voltaire, *La Henriade*, Chant X.

³ *Ibid.*

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moved, and gave permission for 3000 persons of the non-combatant class—women, children, students, peasants, and priests—to leave the city. But at the same time he resolved to bring matters to a head by a general attack, and this four days later was delivered with such effect that after two hours' fighting all the important suburbs from Saint-Martin on the west side to Saint-Victor on the east were in his hands. This success further increased the rigour of the blockade, and the despair of the inhabitants now became so great that, notwithstanding the persistent clamour of the implacable demagogues and the prohibitory decree of the Sorbonne, it was finally decided to send a deputation to Henri in the interests of peace. On August 5 the delegates selected—the Bishop of Paris and the Archbishop of Lyon—were received in audience by the King. Their tone, however, was so unconciliatory that nothing came of the interview. Henri's ultimatum was, in effect, an emphatic refusal to recognize either Mayenne or the King of Spain in the negotiations, and a demand for the capitulation of the city within a week; though he showed his sympathetic spirit by permitting a further exodus of *bouches inutiles*, an act of clemency for which he was well rated by Queen Elizabeth.

The local situation had thus far made Philip II unwilling to withdraw any of his forces from the Low Countries, but Paris was now reduced to such an extremity that there was not a moment more to lose. The Duke of Parma was therefore ordered to hasten at once to the assistance of Mayenne, whom he joined at Meaux on August 23. His opportune arrival, which took Henri by surprise, instantly put a new complexion on affairs. The Duke's skilful tactics compelled Henri to raise the siege of Paris (August 30) in order to give battle to the enemy. The Duke, moreover, captured Lagny and proceeded to pour an abundance of provisions into the city by way of the Marne, of which he had thus gained control. In this way Paris was relieved, and Henri's hopes, after four months of expectation, rudely dashed to the ground.

The King's prospects were now, indeed, as black as they



44. HENRI IV AT CHARTRES



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had been in the days before Ivry, and his difficulties were greatly increased by a change in the occupation of the papal chair. Sixtus V, whose hatred and distrust of Philip II had led him to adopt a half sympathetic attitude toward the heretic of Navarre, died in August 1590. His successor, Gregory XIV, was entirely devoted to the League and to Spain. It was useless, therefore, for Henri to expect any compromise with Rome. But even more urgent were the troubles which faced him at home. Disaffection continued to grow apace in his camp, his Catholic adherents complaining of the long-deferred fulfilment of his undertaking to "receive instruction," the Huguenots openly grumbling that thus far they had gained so little by having a king of their own faith. This disaffection Henri sought to allay by further promises and edicts of a conciliatory character. But all such efforts had little influence, especially upon those among the more powerful of his nominal supporters, like the selfish and unscrupulous Marshal Biron, who were really playing for their own hand. Amid all these perplexities Henri saw that his only hope of salvation lay in vigorous action. He determined to utilize the reinforcements which he had now received from England, the Low Countries, and Germany in a fresh and energetic campaign.

All hope of taking the capital, now garrisoned by Spanish troops, had to be abandoned. But as its possession was essential to his success, his plan was to use the method of the long arm and cut off its communications with Normandy. He began by seizing "the granary of Paris," Chartres (April 10, 1591), the capture of which was largely due to "the valour and address" of Admiral Coligny's young son, Châtillon.¹ Then, after spending three months in making the necessary preparations, he marched with 40,000 men, scarcely a quarter of whom were French, upon Rouen, a great stronghold of the League and a point of the utmost importance in his designs, since its occupation would have made him master of all North-

¹ Sully, *Mémoires* (1814), t. i, p. 293. Châtillon had all the fine qualities of his father, and his death before the year was out was a great loss to Henri and the Huguenot party.

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western France (November 1591). But Parma's arrival compelled him to abandon his project (February 1592) and fall back upon the Pays-de-Caux. In the fighting which ensued the advantage, in part owing to the calculated inactivity of Biron, was mainly with the Leaguers. But the death of Parma (December 3) of a wound which he had received months before at Caudebec removed by far the most formidable of Henri's military antagonists.

While these events were in progress misery and confusion prevailed in Paris, which the capture of Chartres had once more brought to the verge of starvation. The popular mind was still greatly inflamed by the extremists among the clergy, who openly preached assassination and clamoured for a massacre of the *politiques*; but the general spirit had been so broken by privation and suffering that there was less actual violence than might have been expected. The Sixteen, in the meantime, their power immensely increased by Mayenne's reverses, were seeking by every means to make themselves supreme in the State, and to that end were engaged in secret negotiations with Spain. At this juncture the young Duke of Guise contrived to escape from the citadel of Tours and hastened to Paris, where as the son of the 'martyred' Duke he at once became the idol of the Catholic mob. He was seized upon by the Sixteen, who saw in his possible marriage with Philip's daughter, the Infanta, the promise of their triumph over the party of Mayenne. Mayenne was alive to the danger, yet he could not bring himself to accept the patriotic suggestion of some of his advisers that in the interests of the country he should checkmate Spanish ambitions by sacrificing personal considerations and coming to an understanding with Henri of Navarre. But he showed himself ready none the less to deal a decisive blow at the Sixteen. In November 1591 Brisson (the president of the Parliament) and two other magistrates of high standing were summarily executed by order of the Council. The terror-stricken Parisians thereupon sent message after message to the Duke at Laon, urging him to return instantly and save them all from destruction, and on his arrival he caused four

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of the most prominent members of the Sixteen to be seized and beheaded. The flight of several others, almost equally notorious for their turbulence, reduced the Council to impotence, and Mayenne completed its ruin by filling the vacant municipal offices with avowed *politiques* (February 1592). By this unexpected firmness he acquired for the moment an undisputed ascendancy in the city. Distrusted by all factions alike, however, he was unable to turn his position to account. By strengthening the hands of the *politiques* against the zealots he had in fact cut the ground from beneath his own feet.

Unfortunately, on his side, Henri was no less powerless to take advantage of the dissensions of his enemies. He had failed to make himself master either of Paris or of Rouen ; his treasury was empty ; his mercenaries would no longer fight without their pay ; discontent was rife among the rank and file of his French followers ; the defection of his nobles continued. Things were thus at a deadlock. And still throughout the country the war dragged on, bringing desolation and untold misery in its train.

At length, however, the influence of the *politiques* and of the more moderate among the Leaguers themselves began to make itself felt. Alarmed by the talk of compromise which now became current, Mayenne resolved to redeem his promise of summoning an assembly of the nation. But the States-General which met in Paris in January 1593 were entirely unrepresentative ; they mustered 128 members only, mainly of the Third Estate, and these for the most part were creatures either of Mayenne or of Spain. Philip, who was now convinced that he held the fate of France in the hollow of his hand, despatched an envoy-extraordinary to Paris to make known his plans for the French people. But national feeling and the counter-influence of Mayenne were stronger than he had anticipated, and his successive proposals—first, to place the Infanta on the throne ; then to elect the Archduke Ernest, who had become the Infanta's husband ; and finally to accept the Duke of Guise, to whom, the foregoing arrangements failing, he was willing to give his second daughter in marriage—were

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one by one rejected. Several months were consumed in these futile discussions. One decision only of real importance was reached, and this was in the teeth of the opposition of the extremists. It was agreed that envoys should be sent to Henri to consider with him "the means of securing peace and of maintaining the Catholic religion." The proposed conference met at Suresnes in May. On June 28 the Parliament of Paris declared itself on the patriotic side by issuing a solemn remonstrance, addressed to the Lieutenant-General, who himself supported it, against the abrogation of the Salic Law demanded by Philip and the establishment of any foreign prince or princess on the French throne. This remonstrance produced a profound effect throughout the country; the States made it a pretext to adjourn their debates without coming to any decision regarding the succession; the intrigues of the Spanish party were frustrated; and the chances of the Duke of Guise, now Henri's only rival, were seriously diminished.

HENRI'S CONVERSION TO CATHOLICISM

All this was in Henri's favour. Yet for one outstanding reason his success seemed as remote as ever: the weakness of his position made it impossible for him to impose his own terms upon the country and his religion continued to present an insurmountable bar. Three years had now elapsed since the battle of Ivry, and one thing remained clear: that, however weary they might be of war, the mass of the French people would never accept a heretic king. Such were the circumstances in which Henri took "the perilous leap" (as he himself called it) which he had long been meditating, and which had been repeatedly urged upon him by his most devoted and sagacious advisers. He publicly announced his conversion to the Catholic faith. On Sunday, July 25, with a large escort of nobles and guards, he repaired to the church of Saint-Denis through crowds of joyous people, who saw in the event the certain augury of peace. At the church, at the door of which he had first to knock, he was received by the Archbishop of Bourges, seven bishops, and a numerous retinue of clergy.

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“Who are you?” asked the Archbishop. “The King,” was Henri’s reply. “What is your request?” And Henri answered: “To be received into the pale of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church.” “Do you desire it?” inquired the prelate. “Yes, I do desire it,” responded the King. Then, kneeling before the Archbishop, he continued, at the same time handing him his signed confession of faith: “I protest and swear in the presence of Almighty God to live and die in the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion, to protect and defend it against all its enemies at the peril of my life and blood, renouncing all heresies contrary to the same.” The Archbishop thereupon gave him provisional absolution, and the ceremony was completed by a *Te Deum*, confession, and High Mass.¹

Henri’s apostasy has naturally been the subject of long and heated controversy, for it raises questions concerning which much may be said on one and the other side. That his conversion was at bottom a matter of real intellectual conviction cannot, I think, be maintained. It seems certain, on the contrary, that he continued to regard his old Calvinistic faith as sound, and that many of the dogmas of the Catholic Church were regarded by him as fooleries (*badineries*); though Sully stoutly urges in his defence that nothing “could have prevailed upon him to embrace a religion which he inwardly despised or even doubted of.” There was apparently, however, little depth to his religious feelings; he was not the kind of man to concern himself much about dogma, and held, indeed, that its importance was greatly exaggerated by the theologians; and while it evidently cost him something to break with the associations of his early life, he was of a light and debonair nature, and his emotions, though strong for the time, quickly evaporated. We may take it, therefore, that his action was dictated entirely by considerations of political expediency; that what he did he did, as he himself declared, not with an eye to his own personal benefit, but for the good of his people,

¹ For a full account of this ceremony see Palma Cayet, *Chronologie novennaire*, Livre V; Pierre Matthieu, *Histoire de Henri IV*, t. i.

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and in the hope, at a crisis when other hope there seemed to be none, of thereby bringing peace and prosperity back to his country, torn and prostrated by forty years of civil war. On this ground he has been greatly praised for his patriotism and fine statesmanship. Even if his change of religion was superficial only, even if it involved the sacrifice of his private beliefs, still, it has been urged, history shows that his conduct was completely vindicated by results. On the other hand, regarding his apostasy from the point of view of policy only, we have still to recognize the justice of the principle set forth in Queen Elizabeth's reproof: "It is a perilous thing to do evil that good may come." However excellent may have been the King's intention, the question will therefore intrude as to whether he is ultimately to be acquitted on the charge of dishonour in seeking even public welfare at the cost of personal integrity. Yet, considering the circumstances, it is hard to condemn him. What, it may be asked, would have happened to France if he had acted otherwise than as he did? In fairness to him we must look at the problem as one not of abstract theory, but of practical necessity. It is a mere assumption of the moralists that every ethical question can be reduced to terms of absolute right and wrong, and judgment pronounced accordingly. There are countless cases in which a final balance can never be struck, and this of Henri's acceptance of Catholicism is one of them.

On one point at least he deserves the greatest credit. At the time of his conversion he promised his Huguenot followers that he would still be their friend and the protector of the faith which he had abjured. This promise, as we shall see, he kept.

The news of his submission to the Catholic Church gave immense satisfaction to the moderate men of all parties, for whom it meant peace and the unification of the country. The clerical irreconcilables, it is true, did their utmost to persuade the Parisians that his so-called conversion was merely an act of hypocrisy, and continued to hurl their invectives against him as heretic and pretender. An attempt on his life

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by the dagger of an assassin showed the animus of the disappointed Spanish faction. At the same time many of the Protestants murmured at what they regarded as their leader's betrayal of their cause. But the national power of the League was now broken, and popular feeling throughout the provinces began to run strongly in Henri's favour. Before the end of the year several important towns, including Meaux, Orléans, and Bourges, had yielded to him.

HENRI ENTERS PARIS

Henri's next step was to confirm his title by the ceremony of coronation, which, since Reims was still in the hands of the League, was performed in the cathedral of Chartres, on February 27, 1594. Alive to the certain effect of this on public opinion, Mayenne in his own defence revived the Council of Sixteen and brought fresh Spanish troops into the capital. But Brissac, the Governor, bribed by money and the promise of a marshal's baton, threw open the gates, and on March 21 Henri entered the city with an escort of between 4000 and 5000 men. His action was a bold one, for his enemies within the walls were strong and their desperate plight had made them reckless. He knew well, therefore, as he passed through the narrow, crowded streets, that he went with his life in his hands. But the surprise of the people soon changed into enthusiasm, and by the time he reached Notre-Dame the city rang with shouts of "Vive le roi!" One last attempt made by the Sixteen to rally their forces failed, and the leaders of the Spanish garrison were glad to accept the King's offer that they should be allowed to march out of Paris with the honours of war. It is said that the King watched their retirement from a window over the gate of Saint-Denis, and that he courteously returned the salute of the officers with the words: "Remember me to your master. Go! I permit it; but return no more."¹

The submission of Paris was quickly followed by that of Rouen, which was another severe blow at the fast-waning power of the League. For the moment Mayenne and the Spanish

¹ Hardouin de Péréfixe, *op. cit.*, pp. 184, 185.

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faction were still strong in the north and in Champagne and Languedoc. But Laon capitulated in August, and Amiens and other towns in Picardy a little later, and presently the Duke of Guise and the Duke of Lorraine were bought over to the King's side. Among the great nobles Mayenne and Mercœur alone persisted in their opposition, and this they did in the hope of converting their governments—Burgundy and Brittany—into independent principalities.

In thus reducing the realm piecemeal, Henri's policy was to purchase the loyalty of the seigneurs of the League by immense bribes of money and offices. He also acted in the spirit of pacification; his desire being, as he himself said, "to forget everything," he treated even the most inveterate of his former enemies with the greatest clemency. The immediate result was satisfactory, for foes were turned into friends, and one of the principal obstacles to the restoration of peace was thus removed. Yet, as subsequent events proved, his measures were not altogether well advised. They led the nobility, in whom much of the old feudal temper still survived, to regard rebellion as a game which, skilfully played, might be made to pay.

One thing more was needed to make Henri's position secure—absolution from the Pope. This had been delayed by the opposition of Spain. But in September 1595 it was finally obtained from Clement VIII, and Henri's title was thus completely legitimized. This was the signal for the surrender of Mayenne, who in exchange for his submission was confirmed in the government of Burgundy and appeased with a gift of 35,000 crowns.

The League was now crushed and Henri had only one enemy left—Philip II, against whom he had formally declared war nine months before (January 1595). The struggle lasted three years, its chief events being the battle of Fontaine-Française, near Dijon (1595), in which Henri exhibited all his old reckless valour, and the siege and capture of Amiens (March–November 1597). But Philip was now dying by inches of a loathsome disease; he had been badly beaten by Eng-

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land ; the heroic resistance of the Netherlands had further paralysed his ambitions ; and, to complete his discomfiture, his domestic finances were in a state of hopeless confusion. Realizing that it was impossible for him to cope any longer with the reviving power of a united France, he was therefore anxious for peace, and the war was closed by the Treaty of Vervins, which was based on that of Cateau-Cambrésis forty years before, and was signed (May 2, 1598) only four months before his death. The failure of Spain was accompanied by the submission of Mercœur, the last of the great nobles to hold out against the King. The terms arranged were highly favourable to the obstinate Duke ; he received an indemnity of four million crowns and the promise of the marriage of his little heiress to the King's four-year-old natural son, the Duke of Vendôme.

THE EDICT OF NANTES

By far the most important event of this momentous year, however, was the proclamation on April 13 of the famous Edict of Nantes. This epoch-making document contained Henri's formal announcement of his policy of religious toleration. Its provisions ensured the practical equality of Protestants and Catholics before the law. Certain restrictions as to the towns in which Protestant worship was permitted were still maintained, and the payment of tithes in support of the established religion was made compulsory. But the Huguenots now obtained full recognition of their claims of citizenship. They were declared admissible to all public offices ; the benefits of all colleges, schools, and hospitals were extended to them ; they were empowered to found schools of their own and to set up their printing-presses in all the towns in which their worship was sanctioned. Their ministers were authorized to perform marriages and were relieved of all obligations for services inconsistent with their sacred calling. Within limits, their right of assembly was also acknowledged.

The significance of the Edict of Nantes can be appreciated only when we remember the condition of the Catholics at this

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time and for many years afterward in Protestant England. Historically it is of the utmost importance because it officially introduced an entirely new principle into the practice of government—the modern principle of toleration. More than any other act of his life it gives Henri his title to the admiration of posterity. It proves him to have been, in religious matters at any rate, by far the most enlightened ruler of his age.

Naturally enough the Catholic clergy regarded such an edict as a piece of sacrilege. For more than a year the Parliament of Paris refused to register it. Nor were the extreme Calvinists completely satisfied. But Henri was determined that its provisions should be enforced as part of the law of the land, and in this he had the support of the more moderate men of all parties.

REORGANIZATION : THE DUKE OF SULLY

The establishment of internal peace was, however, only the beginning of Henri's work of constructive statesmanship. He next addressed himself to the gigantic task of reconstituting the monarchy, of bringing order out of the chaos produced by forty years of civil war, and of restoring prosperity to the exhausted realm.

The state of France was indeed deplorable. According to a contemporary estimate, during the preceding eighteen years 800,000 persons had perished by war or massacre, nine cities and 250 villages had been razed to the ground and 128,000 houses destroyed. Many of the most fertile parts of the country had been wasted or abandoned. Communications were precarious, and in places even the main roads had ceased to exist. Agriculture was utterly paralysed. Commerce and industry were at a standstill. Food was dear, work scarce, jobbery and corruption were universal, and destitution and misery were the common lot of the masses of the people. As a result of the long-continued anarchy life itself was insecure and crimes of violence were things of daily occurrence. That the King's government might be made real and effective both wisdom and courage were required.

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In his work of reorganization Henri was fortunate enough to command the services of several faithful and sagacious counsellors, the most important of whom was a man whose name will always be closely associated with his own, the Protestant Duke of Sully. Maximilien de Béthune, Baron of Rosny, and later Duke of Sully, was born in 1560. He early attached himself to Henri's person, narrowly escaped death in the massacre of St Bartholomew, accompanied Henri in his flight from Paris, and during the King's years of adventure and struggle proved himself a brave soldier, a shrewd adviser, and a loyal friend. Keenly appreciative of his devotion and abilities, Henri made him in 1594 a member of his Council of State, and from 1597 onward he was virtually—though not till 1601 nominally—the Minister of Finance. In that capacity he fully justified the confidence which Henri reposed in him. He was not, it is generally conceded, a financial genius; there was nothing creative about his policy; in some important respects he was shortsighted and narrow-minded. But he was certainly a great administrator and a master in the art of finding immediate remedies for immediate ills; his energy and courage were alike indomitable; and even his harsh and stubborn temper, which made him generally unpopular, was of great help to him in carrying out his schemes in the teeth of the opposition of those who were interested in the abuses which he destroyed.

Among these abuses the most intolerable were those entailed by the existing vicious system of taxation. The taxes were farmed out; no proper supervision was exercised over the beneficiaries; pillage and malversation were universal, and favoured individuals fattened at public expense. The consequence was that though the people paid annually more than 200,000 millions of livres, less than 50,000 millions actually reached the Treasury. Sully suppressed these evils and brought taxation under the central control of the Ministry. The revenue was thus doubled without any additional charge on the country. He also readjusted in important ways the incidence of taxation, forcing many of the wealthy, who on various pretexts had

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shirked responsibility, to bear their share of the national burden, and thereby relieving the poorer classes. Without going into further details we may simply say that before the end of Henri's reign he had put the finances of the realm in order, redeemed a considerable portion of the public debt, and reduced taxation, while at the same time he had so increased the revenue that he had succeeded in amassing a handsome surplus even after devoting large sums to arsenals, fortifications, and the equipment of the fleet.

Sully regarded agriculture as the one great source of national wealth, and gave much attention to its improvement throughout the country. On the other hand—and here we touch one of his limitations—he distrusted commerce and manufacture. In this respect, however, Henri was in advance of his minister, and hence a great deal was done during the latter part of his reign to encourage domestic industry and trade with foreign countries. Henri even nourished colonial ambitions. In 1608 Samuel de Champlain founded Quebec and laid the foundations of a New France beyond the sea.

Sully, though far from sympathizing with his master's commercial views, agreed with him as to the need of opening up the country and developing its communications. Here he did much good work as Grand Voyer, or Controller of the Ports and Highways of France. Under his superintendence old roads were put into proper condition, new roads were laid out, the navigation of rivers was improved, and a great system of waterways was planned, of which a beginning was made with the Canal of Briare, connecting the Loire with the Seine.

France recovered rapidly under Henri's beneficent rule, and increasing prosperity made him widely popular. None the less the flames of faction were by no means quite stamped out. There were malcontents among the clergy who continued to denounce him; the pulpit was seconded by the printing-press; and the spirit of unrest was kept alive by the intrigues of Spain. Henri's greatest danger lay, however, in the insubordination of some of the nobility, whose feudal pretensions to independence had been encouraged by civil war, and who now

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saw their ambitions thwarted by the steady growth of the royal power. Several conspiracies resulted, the most serious of which was that in which the Duke of Biron, the son of Henri's former marshal, made common cause with Savoy and Spain. Biron, though loaded with favours, had already once before been guilty of treason, but had then been pardoned. This time he met a traitor's death on the scaffold (July 31, 1602).

Two years before this Henri had solved a problem which for some time had given great concern both to him and to the country. This was the question of the succession to the throne. His marriage with the profligate Marguerite of Valois had been childless, and husband and wife had long lived apart. A legitimate son (his bastard children by his various mistresses did not, of course, count) was necessary to assure his line and the peace of France after his death. To this end, with Marguerite's entire consent, he induced the Pope to annul his marriage; after which, on December 9, 1600, he took as his second wife the Pope's niece, Maria de' Medici.¹ The union was not a happy one, but it achieved its political purpose. Marie bore her husband three sons and three daughters.

ASSASSINATION OF HENRI

Though even after the Treaty of Vervins and the death of Philip II Spain continued to be a source of trouble, Henri perceived that his chief immediate menace now came from the Spanish dynasty's close connexion with the Imperial house of Austria. This power he sought for a time to check by alliances with the Protestant Governments of Europe. Then the religious and political disturbances of the German states, and specifically the dispute which arose concerning the succession to the duchy of Cleves (1609), provided him with a pretext to act. The war of aggression on which he was now resolved to enter was distasteful to many of his advisers as a war in defence of Protestantism. But he pushed forward his preparations for it and announced his intention of leading his army

¹ Hereafter the recognized French form of this name—Marie de Médicis—will be used.

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in person to the Rhine. His departure from Paris was fixed for May 19. On the afternoon of the 14th, accompanied by a small body-guard only—a few gentlemen and some servants on foot—he set out in an open carriage to visit Sully, who was lying ill at the Arsenal. On the way he was attacked by a fanatic named Ravailiac, who, leaning over from one of the back wheels of his coach, struck him with a dagger two blows in rapid succession, the second blow severing an artery near the heart and proving instantly fatal. It was with difficulty that the murderer was saved from the fury of the crowd. A fortnight later he was put to death with the most horrible tortures which the ingenuity of his judges could devise.

It remains uncertain whether Ravailiac acted on his own initiative or as a tool in the hands of others—perhaps of the Jesuits¹ or of Spain. The former supposition is the more probable. But even so the crime was the direct result of the violent diatribes of the recalcitrant clergy, who were still fired with the worst passions of the days of the Sixteen. It was not their fault that their vile teachings, which had now turned a wretched visionary's unstable brain, had not already borne practical fruit. Nineteen previous attempts at assassination had been made.

“When I am no more,” said Henri to some of his nobles, on the very morning of the day of his death, “you will know what you have lost.” And he was right. The grief of the people in Paris, and, as the news of the tragedy spread, throughout the provinces, was, contemporaries tell us, indescribable. Patriotic Frenchmen of all classes and opinions mourned his loss as that of a true father of his country.

HENRI'S CHARACTER

Henri's character has been very variously estimated, but there seems little ground to demur to Henri Martin's judgment that he was on the whole the greatest of all the Kings of France. He had, it is true, many serious personal defects, the worst

¹ In 1595 the Jesuits had been banished from France for inspiring an attempt on the life of the King. They were, however, allowed to return in 1603.

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of which were the grossness of his taste and manners—remarked even at the time—and the shameless sensuality which led him all through his life to indulge in the coarsest pleasures and to descend on occasion to the most vulgar intrigues. His private biography is indeed in large measure a chronicle of scandals, and his relations with his two wives and his numerous mistresses have provided ample material for gossiping pens. But, on the other hand, he was warm-hearted, generous, magnanimous, wonderfully free from prejudices, and for his age singularly humane. He possessed also the qualities of nature which were best calculated to make him popular and to disarm the criticism even of those who were most keenly alive to his faults, for he was affable, though brusque, frank (though his frankness covered a good deal of dissimulation), witty, full of *bonhomie*, absolutely indifferent to dangers and privations, and openly impatient of ceremonial. He is undoubtedly one of the most engaging and romantic figures in history, while as a ruler he claims our admiration by reason of his breadth of view and his enlightenment. From first to last he laboured for the welfare of France and with the interests of his people always in the forefront of his thought.

CHAPTER II

LOUIS XIII : FIRST PERIOD

1610-1624

HENRI'S eldest legitimate son, Louis, was born at Fontainebleau on September 27, 1601, and was therefore not nine years old at the time of his father's death. The late King's advisers saw the danger lest the sudden withdrawal of a strong hand from the reins of power might at once let loose the forces of anarchy. It was necessary to preserve order at any cost. Scarcely had Henri's body been carried to the Louvre, therefore, before the Parliament of Paris was hastily convened, and at the direction of the Duke of Épernon the Queen-Mother was proclaimed Regent of the realm during the young King's minority.

In thus arrogating to itself the right of interpreting the national will the Parliament acted without precedent and in excess of its constitutional powers. But at such a moment of crisis questions of theory were not too carefully scrutinized, nor did any one pause to consider the possible results which might follow the preponderance of so anomalous a body as the magistrature of Paris in the affairs of State.

THE REGENCY OF MARIE DE MÉDICIS : CONCINI

Marie's appointment to the supreme control of government was, however, a mistake. She was, to begin with, a foreigner, and as such was distrusted by the people; she was a commonplace and narrow-minded woman, lethargic of temperament and weak of will; and, worse than all—for this led her to take up a wrong attitude toward those who might have helped her in the extreme difficulties of the political situation—she was already completely under the influence of two vulgar and

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intriguing favourites, Italians like herself. On coming to France ten years before, she had brought with her a little ill-formed woman, with pinched features and sparkling black eyes, named Leonora Dori or Galigai, her foster-sister and bosom friend. In her numerous suite there had also been a young man, Concino Concini, the son of a minor official at the Florentine Court. Shrewd, self-seeking, ambitious, this needy adventurer—he was at the time penniless and deeply in debt—determined to make his way in his new home, and as a first step to advancement he married the Queen's confidante. Though there was no real affection between the pair, they were well matched, and worked together for their mutual interests. The union thus achieved what Concini had designed: it brought him into intimate relations with the Queen. The scandalous stories which soon gathered about these relations and were popularized in obscene street songs may be dismissed. But the ascendancy which the wily Florentine gained over the Queen's mind was patent to all. That ascendancy he turned to good account, for he soon made himself rich, and now by money and now by influence obtained position after position of honour and power. Before long he was Baron of Lusigny; then Marquis of Ancre and Governor of Amiens, Péronne, and Dieppe; then, though he had never seen a battle and was in fact a good deal of a poltroon, Marshal of France.

Marie's first important step as Regent was taken under Concini's advice, and was the practical reversal of her late husband's foreign policy. Henri's aim had been to check the power of Spain and Austria. She, on the other hand, sought their support. It was impossible at once to abandon the engagements to which France stood committed, and a small force was accordingly sent into Germany to join the English and the Dutch. But the War of the Cleves Succession was soon brought to a close by the indecisive Truce of Witstett, and this gave Marie the opportunity for which she was waiting of withdrawing from all interference in German affairs. At the same time she entered into negotiations with Spain, the upshot of which was an agreement for a double matrimonial

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alliance through the union of Louis with the Infanta Anne of Austria, and of Louis' sister Élisabeth with the son of Philip III.

There were those among the former counsellors of Henri IV—men like Villeroy and Jeannin, who had once belonged to the League—who were ready to welcome this new Spanish policy. But Sully vigorously opposed it. The result was that he was dismissed from Council and Court. Thus ended the public career of a statesman who had performed such yeoman service in restoring the prosperity of the country. He now retired to Poitou (of which he was Governor), where he lived till his death in 1641.

The Huguenots naturally took alarm at these proceedings, which seemed indirectly to threaten their cause. At a general assembly held at Saumur they therefore protested against the Spanish marriages and the treatment of Sully, and incidentally took occasion to make various demands for the further extension of their privileges. The Government threw oil on the troubled waters by despatching commissioners into the provinces to see that the provisions of the Edict of Nantes were being properly carried out. This for the moment satisfied the great body of the Protestants, who, with their minds still haunted with the awful memories of civil strife, were, like the mass of their Catholic compatriots, mainly concerned for the preservation of peace.

FIRST REVOLT OF THE NOBLES

The case, however, was different with the great nobles. The closing years of Henri IV's reign had witnessed an enormous development of the power of the Crown at their expense. But their feudal spirit was not yet broken and they still cherished dreams of turning their governorships into petty kingdoms. They were, moreover, in chronic need of money for the upkeep of the immense and sumptuous establishments which had now become a feature of their princely state. Henri's policy of compromise had taught them the profitableness of sedition, and in sedition they once more saw the means of satisfying their territorial ambitions, and even more their greed. If

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45. LEONORA GALIGAI



46. CONCINI



47. THE PRINCE OF CONDÉ



48. THE DUKE OF LUYNES



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success had attended rebellion with a ruler like the late King on the throne, still more likely was it to reward their efforts now that they had to deal with an incapable woman and with a Government weakened by internal dissensions which she was powerless to control.

Marie met their demands for money until the reserves accumulated at the Treasury by Sully had been exhausted, and then they openly raised the standard of revolt. The lead in this new movement was taken by the Prince of Condé. A selfish and irresolute man, with no talent except for intrigue, Condé none the less wielded great influence by reason of his wealth and rank. He was closely related to the royal family, and only the lives of Louis XIII and his younger brother Gaston stood between him and the crown. Furthermore, though himself a Catholic, he was a descendant of the famous Huguenot chief, and as such had a certain hold upon the more restless portion of the Protestant population. He began by issuing a manifesto addressed to the people in which he made various accusations against the Government, and, adopting the usual pretence of acting in the national interest, demanded the convocation of the States-General for the reform of the abuses specified. As a popular appeal this document had not the slightest effect. But though the masses were indifferent, a number of malcontent nobles at once joined the revolt, among them the Dukes of Longueville, Bouillon, Nevers, and Mayenne, and the young Duke of Vendôme, Henri IV's natural son by Gabrielle d'Estrées. There was, indeed, no love lost between the Condé faction and the Guise faction; but, keen as were their jealousies, they were united in a common hatred of Concini.

Some of the Regent's advisers urged her to take drastic action to crush the rebellion. But the feeble Queen-Mother, guided by her timorous favourite, preferred to fall back once more upon the old plan of compromise and bribery. Peace was secured by the Treaty of Sainte-Menehould (May 1614). Large sums of money were paid over to the chief insurgents, and a promise was made that the States should be convened

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and that the proposed Spanish marriages should be brought before them for ratification.

THE STATES-GENERAL OF 1614.

The States-General accordingly met in Paris in October 1614—for the last time, as it proved, till the very eve of the Revolution. They were composed of 464 deputies: 140 of the clergy, 132 of the nobility, and 192 of the Third Estate.¹ The nobles had intended to use this assembly for the furtherance of their own designs, but in this they were disappointed, for the Court had been careful to control the elections, and a strongly royalist feeling prevailed throughout the representation. The interests of the Government were at the same time favoured by the total want of harmony which soon became apparent among the three orders. Had the States acted as a united body they might have been strong enough to impose their will upon the Court. As it was they failed to come to agreement upon any one point of importance in their deliberations. The clergy demanded the promulgation of the decrees of the Council of Trent, Henri's refusal to accept which had been a standing offence to the Ultramontane party, who wished to bring the Gallican Church into entire subjection to Rome. The nobility demanded the abolition of the *paulette*.² The Third Estate demanded the reform of the finances, reduction of taxation, and the suppression of the enormous pensions paid to the great lords, the amount of which had doubled since Henri's death; and, further, that the Ultramontane

¹ It is important to remember that the Third Estate was in no sense representative of the nation. It was representative only of the *haute bourgeoisie*. Nearly all the deputies belonged to the *noblesse de robe*, or official classes, as officers of finance or justice, mayors, provosts, lawyers, and so on. See the list of deputies printed in Thierry's *Histoire du Tiers-État*, Appendix II.

² This was an annual tax instituted by Sully, by payment of which holders of public offices could not only enjoy such offices in perpetuity, but also dispose of them by sale as they chose or transmit them to their heirs. The sale of public offices had long been recognized, but this imposition turned the office-holders of France into a vast corporation with hereditary rights—a *noblesse de robe*, which at once aroused the antagonism of the *noblesse d'épée*, or territorial aristocracy, because its interests and influence were so obviously inimical to its own.

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doctrines of the clergy should be formally condemned. The orders were, indeed, at cross-purposes on everything except the Spanish marriages, which were approved.

One incident which occurred during the proceedings will serve to show the spirit which animated the nobility. The orator of the Third Estate, Henri de Mesmes, Civil Lieutenant of Paris, in a speech which was intended to be pacific, had ventured to represent the three orders as the three children of a common mother, France, the clergy being the eldest, the nobility the second (*puîsné*), the *bourgeoisie* the youngest (*cadet*) of the family; and he had even reminded his auditors how often it happened in families that the youngest sons were called upon to restore the home which their elders had ruined. The nobility regarded this parable as an insult, and through their president, the Baron of Senecey, complained to the King. As a commentary upon this episode we may recall the fact that when the addresses of the orders were presented to the King the orators of the clergy and the nobility were allowed to remain standing, while the representative of the Third Estate spoke on bended knee.

Yet the most significant thing about this last meeting of the States-General till the very close of the Old Régime was the proof which it gave of the growth of political intelligence in the Third Order. Many of their proposals regarding finance, administration, and commerce were characterized by remarkable wisdom and public spirit; their *cahiers*, indeed, containing "a vast programme of reforms, some of which were carried out by the great ministers of the seventeenth century, while others had to wait till 1789."¹ None the less all their efforts were doomed to sterility on account not only of the opposition of the nobility, but also of the radical weakness of the States as a constitutional assembly. It must be remembered that the functions of the States were extremely limited. They had no power to decree or to legislate. They could only petition the Crown; and as they had no control over the national purse they lacked the great means which the

¹ Thierry, *Histoire du Tiers-État*, pp. 160, 161.

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English House of Commons possessed of enforcing their requests.

The *cahiers* presented, the Third Estate desired to remain in session till the royal reply had been received. But this did not suit the Government, which scented danger in their deliberations and was in a hurry to be rid of them. On March 24, 1615, therefore, the States broke up, having accomplished nothing.

SECOND REVOLT OF THE NOBLES

This was the signal for further action on the part of the unruly nobles, who had already squandered the money which they had wrung from the Treasury on the occasion of their former easy victory. With Condé again at their head, they had the effrontery to complain that the demands of the States had not been met and that by the pending alliances the Government were guilty of sacrificing the interests of France to those of Spain. In taking this line their hope was of course to enlist popular sentiment on their side. Their attempt to draw the Parliament of Paris into the quarrel failed; but, on the other hand, they succeeded in stirring the Huguenots in the south. That autumn the Court travelled to the Spanish frontier for the celebration of the double marriage, and on the way ran no little risk from the proximity of Condé's troops. But once more the policy of concession was adopted, and peace was bought by the Treaty of Loudun (May 1616). Richelieu afterward estimated that this fresh truce cost the Treasury no less than six millions of livres, a million and a half of which went into the pockets of Condé alone. To complete the triumph of the oligarchic party, Condé was also made chief of the Council.

This second success turned the heads of the Prince and his followers, who now bore themselves with great insolence at Court, and even began to talk of declaring Henri's second marriage invalid, displacing Louis as illegitimate, and putting Condé on the throne. This time, however, they overreached themselves. Concini, believing his life to be in danger, had

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taken refuge in Normandy, but from that place of safety he sent urgent messages to the Regent pointing out the absolute necessity of vigorous action. Marie at length rose to the occasion, and on September 1, 1616, Condé was arrested and sent to the Bastille. This bolt out of the blue filled his adherents with consternation, and Mayenne, Longueville, Nevers, and Bouillon fled from the Court. Others of the faction who remained behind endeavoured to influence the people of Paris on behalf of their cause, but without success. Then Concini returned, made a clearance of all the old ministers, put creatures of his own in their places, and so established himself at the head of the Government more firmly than ever. In the meantime the leading nobles had taken up their headquarters at Soissons. Thence they demanded the release of Condé and the expulsion of Concini, and even made overtures to the young King, seeking to persuade him that they were really acting in his interests against a disloyal cabal at Court. The Government replied by proclaiming them guilty of high treason. Armies were despatched into the disaffected provinces. Soissons was besieged. The triumph of the Government would now have been assured but for the rise of unforeseen complications within the Court itself.

DEATH OF CONCINI : ALBERT DE LUYNES

Louis was now fifteen. According to the traditions of the French monarchy, he had attained his majority on his thirteenth birthday, and from that time on he had been King in form. But the real power had still remained in the hands of his mother. Sluggish by nature, indifferent to affairs, he had meanwhile spent his time with a group of young associates, hunting, fishing, and indulging in curiously trivial pursuits, such as sewing and cookery. He was thus regarded as a mere puppet at the Court ; no one paid the slightest attention to him ; the various factions carried on their quarrels without reference to his position or his will. But though apparently acquiescing in his anomalous situation he was in secret already brooding over it. He had come to hate his mother because, as he

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realized, she wanted to keep him in perpetual tutelage ; and even more bitterly he hated her counsellors, and especially the all-powerful favourite Concini, who on many occasions had treated him with marked discourtesy. Now among those who formed his personal retinue was a young man, some twenty years his senior, named Albert de Luynes, who had first endeared himself to him by his skill in falconry. Ambitious, clever, and unscrupulous, de Luynes had been quick to improve his opportunity, and had soon obtained an ascendancy over the boy-King's mind as great as that which Concini exercised over the Queen-Mother. He saw how much it would be to his advantage to make Louis King in reality as well as in name, and easily induced his young master to connive in a plot for Concini's overthrow. By his direction Louis ordered his captain of the guard, L'Hôpital de Vitry, to arrest the Florentine, and to kill him on the spot if he made the smallest show of resistance. Accordingly on the morning of April 24, 1617, as Concini was about to enter the Louvre, he was stopped by de Vitry and a posse of armed men. " I arrest you in the King's name," said the captain, and before Concini could turn round three pistol-shots were fired by the guard, and he fell dead. Louis, seated on a billiard table, received de Vitry's report with undisguised satisfaction. " *Merci, grand merci à vous,*" he exclaimed ; " *à cette heure je suis roi.*" The fallen favourite was hastily buried, but the long pent-up hatred of the populace of Paris was not yet assuaged. They exhumed the corpse, dragged it with noisy demonstrations through the streets, and burned it before the dead man's palace in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Vengeance also overtook his wife, who was charged with practising the black arts in order to obtain influence over the Queen-Mother, found guilty after a farcical trial, and beheaded in the Place de Grève.

Marie felt no personal regret for the loss of her favourites, for her infatuation for them was now a thing of the past. But she saw at once that her reign was at an end. She tried in vain to make terms with her son, and was presently forced to



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retire in exile to Blois, where her miniature Court forthwith became a centre of intrigue.

The great nobles of the malcontent party now hastened back to Paris in the belief that the death of Concini had cleared the way for them. But they soon learned their mistake. De Luynes had acted in his own interests, not in theirs, and he was not the man to allow them to appropriate the spoils. "Henceforth I will be King myself," Louis had declared when he received the homage of the courtiers on the day of the assassination. But as a matter of fact the King's favourite now seized the power which hitherto had been in the Queen-Mother's favourite's hands. Most of Concini's confiscated property was transferred to him. He became Duke and Peer of France and Governor of Picardy, and presently increased his prestige by marriage with a member of the great Breton family of the Rohans. One of his brothers was made Duke of Chaulnes, the other Duke of Luxembourg-Piney.

Nothing was now left for the insubordinate nobles in their disappointment but to join forces with their former enemy, the Queen-Mother. With the help of the Duke of Épernon, whose turbulent nature was still unaffected by age, Marie made her escape from Blois (February 1619) and sought asylum in the Duke's territory of Angoulême. Like Concini before him, de Luynes was too fearful of consequences to resort to violent measures, and the threatened outbreak of hostilities was for the moment warded off by an agreement under which Marie received as a sop the government of Anjou. But from their centre at Angers the nobles continued their efforts to arouse the provinces against the King. There was some lively fighting in which the advantage was mainly with the royal arms. But by this time Marie had begun to perceive that even in the now unlikely event of success she stood to gain very little for herself through her persistent opposition to her son. In August 1620 she finally came to terms with him, the arrangement of the preceding year being confirmed.

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TROUBLE WITH THE HUGUENOTS

More serious troubles were, however, brewing. The Government had formally ratified the Edict of Nantes, and all over the country there had been a lull in religious strife. But the immense masses of controversial literature which now poured from the press on one and the other side gave evidence that religious passions were still strong, and these passions were again inflamed by the beginnings in Germany of what was to prove the terrible Thirty Years' War. Deeply moved by the menace to their cause involved in the matrimonial alliance with Spain, the Huguenots now entered, most unwisely and with fatal results, as the sequel was to show, upon an aggressive policy which carried them far beyond the charter of their liberties. Their fortified towns were already little republics on the model of Geneva, and now, by welding these into a solid union, dividing France into great administrative districts, in each of which there were a military commander and a provincial council, and establishing representative assemblies which freely discussed not theological questions only but also national affairs, they set up what was indeed to all intents and purposes a state within a state. Weak and divided as it was, the Government was bound to take cognizance of such separatist ambitions, which were tantamount to a challenge both to its own supremacy and to the integrity of the realm. Then a crisis was precipitated by the action of the King in Béarn. Louis' grandmother, Jeanne d'Albret, had prohibited the Catholic religion in that province and had confiscated the property of the Church. At the time of his absolution Henri IV had promised that both religion and property should be restored. But though this promise had been redeemed in respect of worship, the Church lands had remained in possession of the Huguenots. By a royal edict of June 1617 such lands were at length retransferred to the clergy. To this the Huguenots replied by protests and threats. For the time being the Government was too much embarrassed by the coalition between the Queen-Mother and the nobles to give

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much attention to other matters, and things were allowed to drift. But as soon as his hands were free Louis determined to enforce the edict, marched into Béarn at the head of an army (1620), and began a vigorous campaign to stamp out the rebellion which his presence inspired. He met, however, with stubborn resistance, and hostilities continued till October 1622. Peace was then arranged by the Treaty of Montpellier, on terms which showed that the Protestants were already losing ground. The Edict of Nantes was, indeed, reconfirmed ; but, on the other hand, the political assemblies of the Reformers were forbidden as illegal, and all their fortified towns were taken from them except Montauban and La Rochelle. Condé, now again at liberty, was so indignant at this treaty that he left the Court and set out for Italy.

One event of special importance on account of its indirect results occurred during this war. At the siege of Montauban in December 1621 de Luynes was attacked by a fever which in four days proved fatal. His influence was already on the wane, and his death led to an immediate reorganization of the Ministry, and before long to the supremacy of the great statesman who for the next eighteen years, as the power behind the throne, was to shape the destinies of France—Richelieu.

CHAPTER III

LOUIS XIII : SECOND PERIOD

1624-1643

THE ADMINISTRATION OF RICHELIEU

ARMAND-JEAN DU PLESSIS DE RICHELIEU was born in Paris in 1585. Originally intended for the army, he decided instead to enter the Church, and at twenty-two was consecrated to the Bishopric of Luçon. He was elected to represent the clergy of Poitou at the States-General of 1614, and so made his mark in the debates that on the presentation of the *cahiers* to the King he was chosen as orator of his order. He then attracted the attention of the Queen-Mother and Concini, was made a member of the Council, and a little later became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The new policy adopted by the Government against the nobles, which had its first expression in Condé's arrest, was in part due to his advice. His career was checked for a time by Concini's downfall, which obliged him to retire to his diocese. But he presently formed an alliance with de Luynes, returned to Court, and was largely instrumental in bringing about the reconciliation between the Queen-Mother and her son. He soon enjoyed the complete confidence of Marie, now once more established in the capital, and through her influence he obtained in 1622 the cardinal's hat. In 1624 he again became one of the King's ministers, and within a few months was head of the Council and virtually ruler of the State.

RICHELIEU AND LOUIS XIII

It is necessary to consider rather carefully the relations of the minister and the King during the eighteen years of the former's power.

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Richelieu dominated Louis' mind in part by the overwhelming force of his genius, but in part also by his complete understanding of the peculiar character of his nominal master, and by his extraordinary tact in dealing with him. Louis was moody, capricious, uncertain in temper, extremely jealous of his dignity and prerogatives, suspicious of those who served him, and always ready to take offence. Though his education had been singularly defective and the early influences of his life thoroughly bad, he developed a keen interest in public affairs, and became really anxious according to his lights to govern for the good of his country. Nor was he without ability, though his mental activity was continually checked by his natural indolence, itself in large measure the result of his poor health.¹ At the same time he was, in spite of his fickleness, both self-confident and obstinate, and while it was often almost impossible to bring him to a decision, it was an equally hard matter to move him to a revision of judgment when once he had made up his mind. Had he been a mere zero and do-nothing king the task of his autocratic adviser would have been relatively simple. As it was it was fraught with countless difficulties and dangers. Moreover, the situation was complicated by strong personal feelings. It is certain that Louis disliked his minister—certain that he stood in fear of him. Yet his disposition made it necessary that he should have some one to lean upon; he fully appreciated Richelieu's greatness; and if he dreaded his power, he dreaded even more what might happen if he were deprived of his support. The delicacy of Richelieu's position and the slenderness of the thread by which he held to office will now be understood. He, on his side, knew perfectly well that he depended entirely upon the uncertain favour of an infirm and peevish master,

¹ He was subject all through his life to attacks, often serious, of enteric fever. We can only wonder, not so much that he survived so many illnesses, as that he did not succumb to his physicians, whose treatment of him throws a lurid light upon the drastic methods then in vogue among the medical profession. Without entering into therapeutic details, I may just say by way of illustration that in one year the unfortunate King was bled forty-seven times.

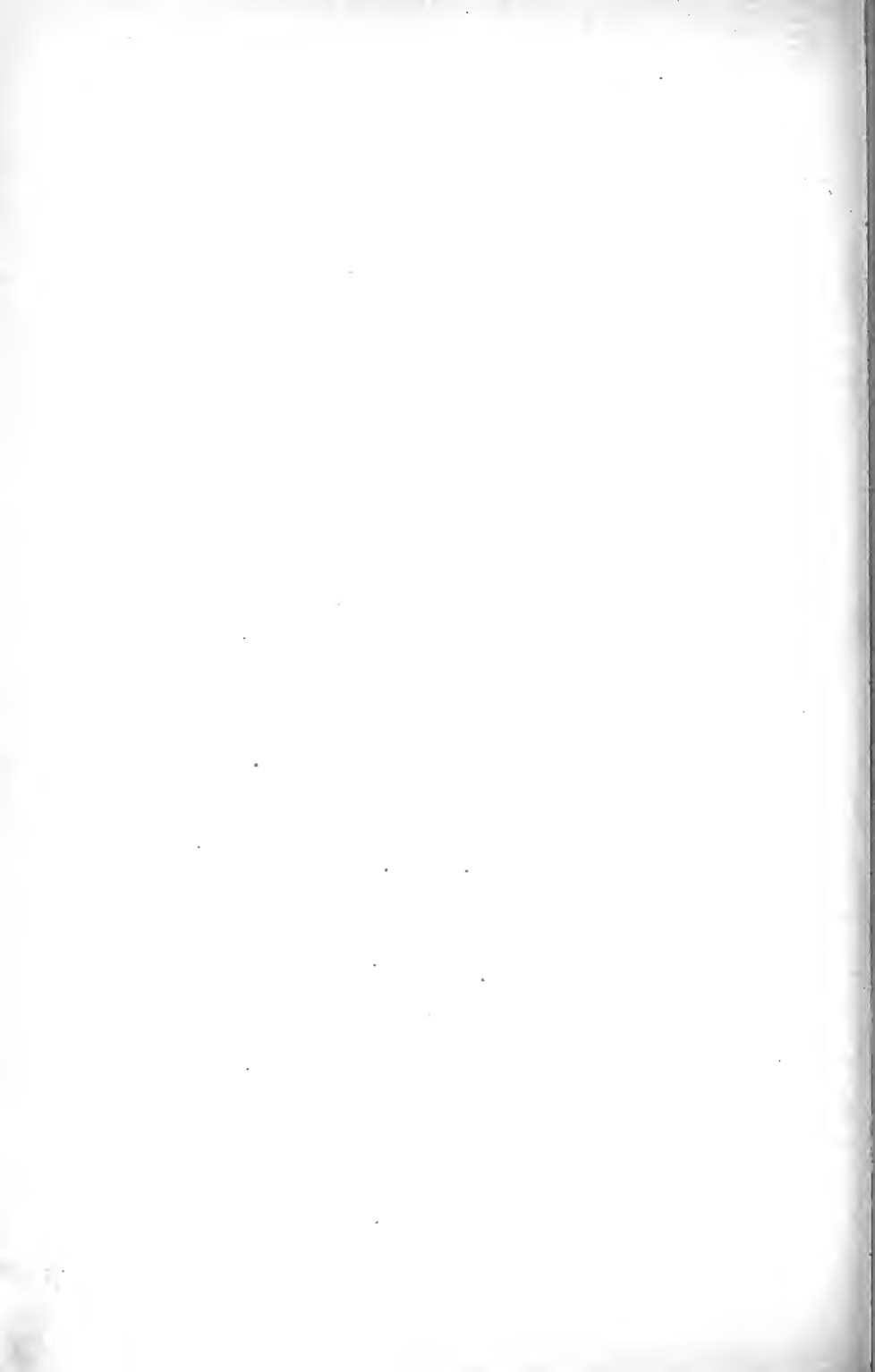
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and from first to last his conduct was guided by recognition of this one central fact. Dictator as he was, he was always the courtier. His hand of iron was always encased in a glove of velvet. He never for a moment usurped or appeared to usurp the functions of royalty. He never ventured upon a single step without Louis' express consent. He respected the King's sovereign attributes, and though at times he lectured him on his duties with remarkable plainness of speech, he always kept up an elaborate show of acting only in his behalf and as the instrument of his will. In this way, with consummate adroitness and skill, he allayed the King's suspicions and flattered his susceptibilities, while in every detail of administration he made his own will prevail. And this he did amid obstacles and perils beyond those which arose from the character of the King himself. The great minister was hated at Court and unpopular outside. He had many enemies and hardly a single friend. Formidable influences were ever at work to compass his downfall, and there were innumerable plots against his power and his life. When all these circumstances are remembered, we cannot but admire the calm resolution, the steady courage, and the marvellous dexterity with which he steered his frail bark among the rocks and shallows and maintained his supremacy unshaken till the very hour of his death.

RICHELIEU'S POLICY AND PROGRAMME

Richelieu's political ideals were fully formulated in his own mind long before he came to power; when once he felt the ground firm beneath his feet he made their realization the business of his life. The ends which he proposed can be very briefly defined. On the one hand he aimed so to strengthen the central authority of the Crown as to transform the government of France into a monarchy absolute in fact as well as in name. On the other hand he sought to make France pre-eminent among the nations of Europe. These objects involved on the domestic side the reduction of the nobles to submission and the destruction of the secular pretensions of the Huguenots,





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and on the foreign side a return to Henri IV's aggressive policy against Spain. But though we can thus distinguish between his domestic and his foreign ambitions, we must remember that these were closely connected in his own thought, since the entire suppression of all centrifugal forces at home was, as he rightly judged, a condition precedent to the success of his plans abroad.

Such then was his programme. How far was he successful in carrying it out? In answering this question it will be convenient for us to follow the main lines of his administration one by one, disregarding where necessary the actual chronological sequence of events. We will begin with his systematic efforts to crush the Huguenots.

RICHELIEU AND THE HUGUENOTS

It must be clearly understood that these efforts were directed against the Huguenots solely as a political power. With their creed and their liberty of conscience he never proposed to meddle. We have already seen that, stiffened in their antagonism to the Government by occurrences which seemed to them to menace their privileges, they had gradually arrogated to themselves rights which, as we have put it, practically constituted them a state within the State. They were no longer merely a religious organization demanding freedom of thought and worship. They had become a political faction ready at all times to make common cause not only with other unruly factions, but even with the foreign enemies of their country. Numerically weak though they were, they were thus a source of constant danger to the peace and order of the nation. It was for these reasons that Richelieu resolved to strike without mercy at their pretensions and to stop at nothing until he had reduced them to impotency.

It was certain in the circumstances that he would soon receive ample provocation to action. The memory of the defeat which they had recently suffered still rankled in the minds of the more mutinous of the Protestant leaders, who were therefore on the alert for any excuse to stir up further

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trouble. They saw their chance when at the very opening of Richelieu's administration France became involved with Spain. On the ground that the Treaty of Montpellier had not been carried out, they once more took up arms, the centre of the disturbance being the great stronghold of the party—that "nest of wasps," as Richelieu called it—the powerfully fortified city of La Rochelle. A curious feature of the brief struggle which ensued was that Richelieu suppressed the insurrection with the help of the Protestant Powers. His great difficulty was the want of a fleet. But England and Holland were extremely angry with the Huguenots for jeopardizing the combination against Spain, and provided him with ships, which he manned with French troops; and with these he obtained so complete a victory over the insurgents that one of their chiefs, the Seigneur de Soubise, was forced to fly to England. Preoccupation with foreign affairs, however, prevented Richelieu from following up this advantage, and he therefore patched up a hasty peace (February 1626) on the basis of the Treaty of Montpellier. Naturally no one was satisfied. The Catholics were furious at what they regarded as his capitulation to their enemies. The Protestants still nursed their pet grievances—the continued existence of the great fortresses which had recently been erected near La Rochelle, and against which they had protested, the old troubles in Béarn, the loss of the fortified towns which they deemed essential to their safety. But Richelieu himself never intended the convention to be permanent. He was simply biding his time.

The immediate cause of the final conflict was the intervention of England. One of Richelieu's first acts as Prime Minister had been the conclusion by marriage of the long-standing engagement between Louis' youngest sister, Marie, and Charles I. This was a move in his general foreign policy. But it led to quarrels which had an unfortunate influence on international relationships. Charges and counter-charges of bad faith were soon made. The French Government complained that the lot of the English Catholics, which Charles had promised

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to ameliorate, had grown worse instead of better ; the English Government retaliated by accusing Louis of similar perfidiousness in respect of his Protestant subjects. Matters were further embroiled by the indiscreet behaviour of the Duke of Buckingham, then at the height of his power. On the occasion of the nuptials that vain and foolish nobleman had been sent to Paris as Charles' envoy extraordinary, and had there conducted himself with outrageous gallantry, even to the extent, it was alleged, of making love to the Queen. Now Louis neglected his wife, it is true, but he was a jealous husband as well as a jealous King, and he took offence. The consequence was that when a little later Buckingham planned another visit to Paris he was informed that he would be regarded as a *persona non grata* at the French Court. His pique at this rebuff was one among the various factors which were co-operating in the growing ill-feeling between the two countries. Meanwhile Soubise in exile was busy stirring up English sentiment in favour of his coreligionists at home. Then the peace which Richelieu made with Spain in March 1626 increased the tension to breaking-point. Angry at Louis' defection, Charles resolved to put himself forward as the protector of the French Protestants. In this he was egged on by the self-seeking Buckingham, who, knowing that a war with France undertaken on such an issue would be widely popular in England, saw in it a chance of wiping out the insult which he had received from the French Court and at the same time covering himself with glory.

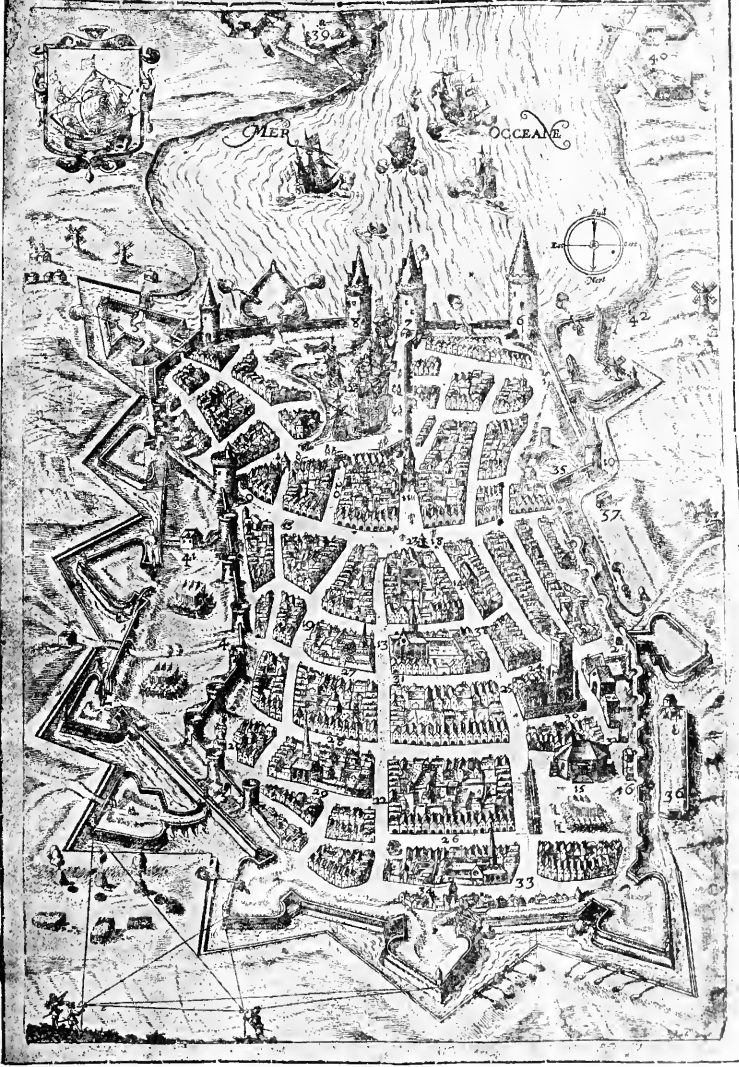
In July 1627 a large fleet was accordingly despatched to La Rochelle, with Buckingham in supreme command, and after a sharp engagement the English troops effected a landing on the island of Ré, just outside the harbour, and laid siege to Fort Saint-Martin. But Buckingham was as incompetent as he was arrogant. Saint-Martin, like the neighbouring Fort Saint-Louis, was at the moment ill prepared for resistance, and he might have carried both by assault and made himself master of the island. Instead of doing this, he turned the attack into a blockade. Richelieu on his side acted with characteristic promptitude and decision, and as the public

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Treasury was unequal to the sudden demand made upon it, he came to the rescue with his private purse. In August he arrived on the scene of action accompanied by the King, barely recovered from a severe bout of fever. The condition of the besieged garrison was already growing desperate, but it was not until the night of September 27, when it was within three days of the end of its provisions, that Richelieu succeeded in relieving it with a fresh supply of food. A little later he landed reinforcements on the island. Buckingham, who had staked everything on his design for starving out the French, was now faced by the imminent danger of being starved out himself. On November 27 he made a desperate effort to carry the fort by storm. The attempt was a pitiful failure, and the fatuous nobleman had to beat a hasty retreat to England with only a wretched remnant of the force he had taken out with him a few months before.

His expedition had, however, involved the Huguenots once more in war with their Government. At the outset the people of La Rochelle had shown no desire for an alliance with England, but they had been led to co-operate with Buckingham by the urgency of their leaders. Their decision was now followed by a general rising of the Protestants in the south. Entrusting Condé and Montmorency with the task of subduing Languedoc, Richelieu resolved to concentrate all his energies on the destruction of La Rochelle. Realizing that its defences were practically impregnable, he at once proceeded to institute a rigorous blockade. Immense lines of fortifications cut off the city entirely on the land side; the harbour was closed by a gigantic dike, the construction of which, under the direction of two Parisian engineers, was the arduous labour of six months. But, inspired by the magnificent courage of the old Duchess of Rohan and of the mayor, Jean Guiton, who threatened to stab any one who even hinted at surrender, the Rochelais set up a stubborn defence. In May 1628 an English fleet under Lord Denbigh arrived outside the still unfinished dike, but retired without striking a blow. In September Charles despatched a stronger expedition under the Earl of Lindsey,

Portrait de la ville de la Rochelle avec ses forterelles, comme elle est à present.



51. A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF LA ROCHELLE AT THE TIME OF THE SIEGE OF 1627



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as substitute for Buckingham, who had just fallen by an assassin's knife ; but this too proved a fiasco. By this time the city was reduced to the direst straits ; half the population was dead or dying of disease or famine ; scarcely 150 men fit for military service remained ; and as the last hope of relief from England had now disappeared, even the lion-hearted mayor was forced to admit that surrender was inevitable. On October 28, therefore, La Rochelle capitulated, after a siege which had lasted fifteen months, and on November 1 the King made a triumphal entry into the city. The lives of the inhabitants were spared and their religious liberty confirmed ; but the city's fortifications were razed to the ground and its municipal privileges cancelled. The fall of La Rochelle was presently followed by that of Montauban, the last bulwark of Protestant independence, and by the collapse of the Protestant revolt throughout the south ; and the Peace of Alais in June 1629 brought the last religious war to an end. Richelieu's object was now attained ; the Huguenot party as a political organization had ceased to exist. But we must not fail to appreciate the statesmanlike sagacity and moderation by which his policy toward them was marked. He left them no vestige of their former power ; but at the same time he did everything in reason to conciliate them. He reaffirmed the Edict of Nantes, assured them freedom of conscience and the protection of the law, and in proof of his entire confidence in their loyalty employed them throughout his ministry side by side with Catholics in the army, in diplomacy, in the magistrature, and in finance. The results justified his methods. The Huguenots now entered upon a long period of peace and prosperity as patriotic citizens of the State by which they had been absorbed.

RICHELIEU AND THE NOBLES

In his second great task, the subjugation of the nobles, Richelieu encountered more serious difficulties, for here he had to contend, not with open antagonism only, but also with the continual plottings of his enemies at Court, who jealously watched for every chance to contrive his downfall.

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So virulent was their animosity, so deep their dread of his power, that these restless malcontents would gladly have seen him fail against the Huguenots, knowing that success would strengthen his hands against themselves; an apprehension pithily expressed in a chance phrase of Bassompierre, one of his three commanders at La Rochelle: "We shall be fools enough to take the city." A master in the art of intrigue, Richelieu was generally able to fight underground conspiracy with its own weapons. But it is hardly surprising that whenever secret hatred burst out into open revolt he should have had recourse to measures, not of conciliation, but of extreme severity; though it is necessary to add that these measures, more than anything else in his ministerial career, have left a blot upon his name.

The central figure in the first great cabal against him was the King's brother, Gaston, Duke of Orléans, a weak, cowardly, and vicious youth, who had been made the willing puppet of a group of associates more resolute and courageous but not less vicious than himself. The immediate cause of the trouble was a Court quarrel about Gaston's marriage¹—in itself a relatively trivial matter; but, according to reports, perhaps exaggerated, the Cardinal's life was aimed at, and even the life of the King.² The Count of Chalais, Gaston's chief confidant, was sent to the block; other participants were imprisoned or banished; and Gaston, who, characteristically enough, had turned traitor to his friends, made grovelling submission to Louis and was forgiven.

This happened in 1626. The next year Richelieu came into conflict with the nobles over the practice of duelling. This practice had grown into a frightful abuse in the early seventeenth century; bloody encounters, in which the seconds as well as the principals frequently took part, were of almost daily occurrence; and, to make matters worse, the field of battle

¹ Richelieu and Louis had decided to marry him to Mlle de Montpensier, of the house of Guise; his advisers, on the other hand, urged him to strengthen his position by union with a foreign princess.

² As Louis was still childless, Gaston was heir-presumptive to the throne.

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was often a public street or square. Richelieu's determination to put an end to this evil was part of his general policy against the turbulent nobility, who clung to it as a survival of their former right of private warfare. Edicts against it existed, but they had never been enforced. The Cardinal not only issued a fresh edict, but on the first occasion put it into execution. The Count of Bouteville, who already had twenty-two duels to his credit, ostentatiously defied authority by fighting a twenty-third, in which once more he killed his man, the scene being the Place Royale. Though the offender belonged to the powerful family of the Montmorency, both he and his second, the Count of Chapelles, were beheaded in the Place de Grève (June 1627). Richelieu failed to stamp out duelling, but in his attempt to do so he struck a vigorous blow at the pretensions of those who arrogantly set themselves above the law.¹ His action, therefore, still further intensified their hatred of him.

His next great danger arose in 1629-30, from the machinations of the Queen-Mother. It was largely through her influence that he had first obtained his ascendancy at Court, but she too became jealous and alarmed the moment she realized that the power which she had intended to use for her own caprices was devoted entirely to the welfare of the State. Furious at what she regarded as his base ingratitude, she now turned against him with all the unreasoning passion of a narrow-minded, disappointed woman. Her anger was aroused in particular by his anti-Spanish policy, for the fact that her eldest daughter was Queen of Spain had inspired her with a sympathy for that country which made her utterly indifferent to the interests of France. Choosing a moment when Louis was dangerously ill, she extorted from him a promise

¹ The glorification of the duel was one reason for Richelieu's attack on Corneille's *Le Cid* (1636); another being the fact that its protagonist was the famous Ruy Diaz de Bivar, the national hero of Spain. Readers of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* will remember that D'Artagnan's father advised his son to fight duels all the more now that they were forbidden, since he would thus show his courage twice over—in disobeying the edict as well as in facing death.

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to dismiss the Cardinal, and her partisans at once began to gloat over their enemy's fall and their own brilliant prospects of advancement as its sequel. But Richelieu's offer at once to throw up his office brought the distracted King to his senses, and the upshot of an interview between the two at Versailles (then a simple hunting lodge in a deer-forest) was Louis' assurance that he would support his minister against all opposition. The day on which the conspiracy collapsed—November 11, 1630—has passed into history as *la journée des dupes*. Reprisals followed. One of the chief plotters, Michel de Marillac, Keeper of the Seals, was exiled; his brother, the Marshal, was condemned to death; Bassompierre was thrown into the Bastille; the Queen-Mother was banished to Compiègne, whence she presently escaped to Brussels; Gaston sought refuge in Lorraine.

The internal peace which Richelieu thus secured was, however, only temporary. Gaston's flighty temperament prompted him once more to stir up trouble. Much against his will, he had yielded to pressure and accepted Mlle de Montpensier as his wife; but now a widower, he cemented an alliance with Charles III, Duke of Lorraine, who for purposes of his own had taken up his cause, by secretly marrying the Duke's sister Marguerite. He also found a powerful adherent in Henri, Duke of Montmorency, Marshal of France and Governor of Languedoc. The people of that province had long enjoyed a large degree of political independence, which they now saw menaced by the measures which the Cardinal had taken on the suppression of the last Huguenot revolt. Resentment therefore made them ready to support their governor, whose personal influence over them was very strong, and who, indeed, as Richelieu complained, assumed within his territory an authority hardly second to that of the King. But notwithstanding the formidable character of this new insurrection it was easily crushed by a single decisive victory of the royal arms at Castelnaudary, in Languedoc (September 1, 1632). The contemptible Gaston again obtained pardon by abandoning his allies and making lavish promises of future

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good behaviour, while condign punishment was meted out to those who had been foolish enough to co-operate with him. But though many suffered death, imprisonment, or disgrace, public attention was centred upon the fate of Montmorency. It was of course admitted that he had been guilty of high treason in bearing arms against his King. Yet it was the universal feeling that his position as the last scion of a family which ranked perhaps first in the ancient and illustrious nobility of France should at least be held to plead in his favour against a felon's doom, and this feeling, if it did not originate in, at any rate was deepened by, his immense personal popularity. The news that he was condemned to the block caused the most profound sensation throughout the country; the people joined with the princes and the nobles in petitioning for his life; prayers were offered in the churches in his behalf; threats mingled with prayers. But Richelieu was inexorable, and Montmorency's head fell beneath the axe. This was Richelieu's greatest object-lesson to the mutinous nobles. He meant to teach them that treason is crime, whoever the criminal may be, and that no consideration of rank or character sufficed to put the traitor beyond the reach of the law.

This lesson had its effect. Yet at the very end of his life the Cardinal had to meet two more plots against his power. The first of these was headed by the Count of Soissons and the Duke of Bouillon, and ended with the former's death in battle (1641). The chief figure in the second was young Henri Coiffier de Ruzé, Marquis of Cinq-Mars. Placed as a boy at Court by Richelieu himself, Cinq-Mars quickly made himself popular by his personal beauty and attractive manners; won in particular the favour of the King; and at nineteen was already Grand Equerry. But success turned his head and filled him with extravagant ambitions; he began to dream of playing the part of a de Luynes; and to that end he did his utmost to undermine Louis' confidence in his great minister. Then once more the smouldering embers of discontent were easily fanned into flame, and designs against Richelieu's life were formed of which the Queen-Mother was cognizant and

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which had the secret support of Spain. But Richelieu, now nearing death, got wind of what was afoot and obtained (by what means is not known) a copy of the treasonable treaty with Spain. The plans of the conspirators were thus exposed. Cinq-Mars and his friend François de Thou (son of the historian) were beheaded; the Duke of Bouillon purchased pardon by surrendering his fortress of Sedan to the Crown; while Gaston—the ever restless, ever futile Gaston, who had again dabbled in rebellion and again scuttled and betrayed his accomplices the moment the bubble burst—though he escaped other punishment, was obliged to renounce all future claim to public office or dignity and to retire into private life at Blois.

Such in brief were Richelieu's relations with the nobility during the eighteen years of his administration. To complete this part of our story it must be added that by two general measures he struck at the roots of their traditional power. In the first place he ordered the demolition of all such feudal fortresses as were not needed for national defence, thus depriving their owners of the strongholds which in feudal days had enabled their ancestors to defy the king's authority, and which even yet remained a dangerous reminder of the former independence of their caste. Secondly, by an important development in the machinery of administration he secured the supremacy of the central Government in local affairs. The governorships of the provinces had long been in the hands of great ruling families, who (like the Montmorencys in Languedoc, for example) had come to regard them as hereditary possessions conferring what were tantamount to sovereign rights. Richelieu destroyed such territorial possessions by his system of intendants. These officials, who formed three classes—intendants of justice, of finance, and of police—were appointed by the Crown as its representatives and agents, their duty being to control, within their respective departments, not only the local governors (who now became military governors only), but also the municipalities and provincial Parliaments. This institution, as was evident at the time, and as subsequent

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events even more conclusively proved, was Richelieu's greatest single achievement in his policy of centralization.¹

RICHELIEU'S FOREIGN POLICY

We have now to turn from Richelieu's domestic to his foreign policy. This subject is unfortunately so entangled with the complicated European movements of the time that it would be impossible to deal with it here in detail without an unwarrantable digression into general history. It must therefore suffice to indicate the broad lines of the efforts which he directed toward his one great end—the securing for France of the first place among the nations.

That object entailed, as we have seen, a struggle with Spain and Austria. Devout Catholic and prince of the Church though he was, he was thus driven by diplomatic necessities, and purely as a matter of political calculation, to make common cause with the Protestant Powers, and he began with England (with what ill-success has already become apparent) and with the Netherlands. His first war was also undertaken in defence of a Protestant people. The Catholic inhabitants of the little Protestant republic of the Grisons had, at the instigation of Spain, revolted against their heretical rulers. The Spaniards had thereupon seized the Valtelline valley, which was of great strategical importance to them as the principal means of communication between their Italian provinces and Austria. Richelieu then intervened on behalf of the Grisons, cleared the country of Spanish and papal troops, and restored the Valtelline to the confederacy. Troubles with the Huguenots and the discontent of the Ultramontanes prevented him, however, from turning this victory to its full account, and he was obliged for the moment to make peace with Spain (1626).

Three years later hostilities were renewed over the question of the Mantuan succession. The Duke of Mantua and Montferrat had died leaving no near kin, and his next heir was a

¹ This system of intendants was not actually originated by Richelieu, but he revived it and made it permanent and effective.

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French subject, the Duke of Nevers, Governor of Champagne. Spain, the dominating Power in Italy, was, however, determined that the duchy should not pass into French hands, and therefore appealed to the Emperor Ferdinand II to interfere, at the same time setting up a rival claimant. This gave Richelieu ground to take the field in Nevers' support. Twice he crossed the Alps in personal command of the French armies (1629, 1630), crushed the Duke of Savoy, who had joined Spain, and was soon in a position to impose terms, which included the recognition of Nevers and the cession to France of the fortified town of Pinerolo. France thus established a centre of influence in Italy and obtained possession of an important key to the Alpine passes. In this triumph of his Italian policy Spain and Austria rightly saw a menace to their united power. Hence the continued activity of Spain in fomenting disturbances among the French nobles with a view to embarrassing Richelieu in the pursuit of his foreign ambitions.

Meanwhile the Thirty Years' War was running its disastrous course. In origin the result of religious dissensions among the German princes and their subjects, this great struggle or series of struggles had soon become political and dynastic, and had gradually spread until nearly all the rival Powers of Europe were drawn into it. Naturally Richelieu kept a vigilant eye upon every fresh development of a conflict which was certain in the upshot to alter fundamentally the European system; but his difficulties with the Huguenots compelled him for the time being to remain a spectator. On the whole fortune favoured the Catholic side, and when Wallenstein swept over Northern Germany his successes brought within measurable distance of realization the great ambition of the Austrian Hapsburgs—the establishment of a solid Germanic empire, with the Baltic ports as an outlet to the sea. At this critical juncture Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden stepped in as the champion of the Protestants against the Catholic League (1630), and Richelieu at once agreed to support him with large subsidies. But it was not until the noble 'Snow King'

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had closed his brief but glorious career on the field of Lützen (1632) that Richelieu began to see his way clear to decisive action. Even then he continued for some time to intrigue with the Protestant princes against the Emperor and his auxiliaries, meanwhile strengthening his own position by important alliances and carefully organizing the French army. At length in 1633 he determined to enter the conflict openly, and declared war against Spain, which throughout had been the mainstay of the Imperial and Austrian cause. At this point, therefore, the long war took yet another turn; it ceased to be even in name a war for the defence of Protestantism in Germany, and became a war waged by France for her own aggrandizement against the two branches of the house of Hapsburg. At the outset things went ill with France; at one time the Spanish penetrated into Picardy, seized Corbie, and even threatened Paris itself. But despite the general alarm Richelieu never lost his head or his courage, and in 1638 the tide began to turn. Spain, badly beaten in many directions, was further crippled by revolts of the Catalans and the Portuguese; the weakness of Spain wrecked the hopes of Austria; and in his closing years the great minister had the satisfaction of witnessing a succession of brilliant French triumphs by which the power of his enemies was paralysed, though by no means completely broken. Perhaps his greatest single victory was the conquest of Alsace,¹ the possession of which, together with that of Lorraine, carried the boundaries of France to the natural frontier of the Rhine and destroyed the coherence of the Imperial states. Though he died before the results of his policy could be consolidated, he left his country everywhere victorious. His successors had only to reap where he had sown.

RESULTS OF RICHELIEU'S ADMINISTRATION

In a remarkable document, *Le Testament politique*, the guiding principles of Richelieu's administration are thus succinctly

¹ Definitely ceded to France six years after his death by the Treaty of Westphalia. See *post*, p. 350.

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outlined either by Richelieu himself or perhaps by some one writing on his behalf : ¹

“ When Your Majesty decided to give me a place in your councils the Huguenots divided the State with you ; the nobles conducted themselves as if they were not your subjects, and the more powerful governors of provinces as if they were sovereigns in their own right. Foreign alliances were despised, private interests preferred to public ; in a word, the dignity of Your Majesty was so degraded and different from what it should be that it was almost impossible to recognize it. I promised Your Majesty to use all my industry and power to ruin the Huguenot party, lower the pride of the nobles, lead all subjects to their duty, and restore the country’s name among foreign nations.”

We are now in a position to realize how far these promises had been redeemed. A few words must, however, be added on the results of Richelieu’s administration in general.

His paramount object was, as we have seen, the complete concentration of authority in the Crown. This was of course no innovation. Centralizing tendencies had already been increasingly apparent in the evolution of the French Government from Philippe IV’s time to Louis XI’s and from Louis XI’s to François I’s ; and though they had been interrupted by the Wars of Religion and the anarchy which followed, they had reappeared with the restoration of internal peace under Henri IV. For several centuries, indeed, as our narrative has shown, the political history of France had largely been the history of a struggle for supremacy between the monarchy and the disruptive forces of feudalism ; in this struggle the monarchy had slowly gained ground ; and since the conditions

¹ The authenticity of this document (first published at Amsterdam in 1688) has been hotly debated. Voltaire pronounced it the work of a mere compiler, and this view has been accepted, with modifications, by many more recent historians. Henri Martin, on the other hand, declared it to be the genuine production of the Cardinal, and many experts, without going quite so far as this, regard it as having been inspired by him. The passage quoted in the text may in any event be used as a convenient summary, since it defines what were Richelieu’s actual aims.

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of the country prevented the emergence of that constitutional type of government which meanwhile had been gradually developing in England, the power lost by the nobles was absorbed by the throne, and the result was necessarily a movement toward autocracy. Richelieu only carried that movement a stage farther, but by his success he practically completed the transformation of feudal monarchy into absolute monarchy. His fundamental principle was the divine right of kings, "the living images of God"—that principle which the Stuarts had vainly sought to impose on the English people, and which, while he was firmly establishing it in France, the English people were preparing once and for all to reject. So thoroughly was this conception of kingship now formulated that Louis XIII was able to write: "I owe no account of my actions or the administration of my State save to God alone." There was but one step from this to his son's "L'État, c'est moi."

The destruction of the political power of the Huguenots and the subjugation of the nobility were aspects of Richelieu's policy which were entirely beneficial, for the most urgent danger of the time was still the danger of internal disorder and the first requirement the firm control of all the elements which stood in the way of national unity. Many of his other measures, on the contrary, can be regarded only with the strongest disapproval. In his determination to allow no division of authority he showed himself the uncompromising enemy of all such local liberties as still survived in various parts of the country, and especially of the provincial states. He crushed out all vestiges of constitutional government, and suppressed or weakened every institution which might conceivably become an agent of public opinion. Though at the beginning of his ministry he twice summoned an Assembly of Notables, he never again made even this pretence of seeking either the counsel or the support of the nation, and from first to last he deliberately ignored the States-General. He expressly forbade the Parliament of Paris to take any cognizance of public affairs unless specially invited to do so by the King,

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or to make any protest against any edict of the Government. He held the press under the severest censorship. Worst of all, he even tampered with the administration of justice, setting aside the Supreme Court and appointing extraordinary commissions—the mere creatures of arbitrary power—for the trial of every important political offender. By such measures he annihilated the political liberties of the country.

It has been argued that Richelieu is not to be held responsible for the abuses of absolute government during the later Bourbon period. Perhaps not. It is certain that he would have disapproved of them. But he opened the way for them, none the less. His own ideal was despotism for the public good. He did not realize that in the very nature of things despotism must sooner or later turn to public evil.

Nor were his own labours in internal administration by any means wholly satisfactory. A strong army and navy were essential to the success of his policy, and he strengthened and reorganized the one and practically created the other. These were obvious gains. He also endeavoured in various ways to develop colonial enterprise, extend foreign commerce, and foster domestic industry. But the period of his ministry was not one of general prosperity—in part, indeed, because it was a period of almost continuous war, but in part also because his policy overwhelmed the people with taxation and kept them poor. As a financier he was a failure. He attacked, it is true, the iniquities of tax-farming. But he left untouched the most radical evil in the financial system—that which arose from the fact that as the privileged classes were practically exempted from the *taille* the burden of taxation fell upon the shoulders of those who were least able to bear it.¹

RICHELIEU'S CHARACTER

Yet all allowances made, and whatever may be our own views of the ends to which his energies were directed, Richelieu

¹ In 1634 he made an attempt to reduce the number of exemptions. But so great was the storm of opposition which the effort aroused that even he had to bow before it, and the edict remained a dead letter.

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keeps his place, by the common consent alike of those who approve and of those who condemn his policy, among the great statesmen of France and of the world, and, as history clearly records, he left an impress upon his country which not even the Revolution was completely to efface. But what now of the man himself? Undoubtedly the chief feature of his singularly complex personal character was, if the paradox may be allowed, his utter impersonality. Vain and ostentatious he certainly was, fond of power and display, and, in a superficial view, inordinately ambitious. Yet there was nothing vulgar about his ambition, for it aimed at the aggrandizement, not of himself, but of France. He sank himself entirely in the State; he identified himself with its interests; he made its welfare his own. "I pray God to condemn me," he said on his death-bed, and we may be sure with absolute sincerity, "if I have had any other object than that of the welfare of God and of the State." In seeking to attain this object he did not scruple to resort to tortuous intrigue and the base arts of Machiavellian cunning, but these, like his pitiless cruelty, he held to be justified as means to his great end. We do not, of course, excuse him on these points. But there are on the other hand aspects of his character which we may cordially admire—his steadiness and tenacity of purpose, his patience his immense capacity for work, and above all his iron resolution and courage. A man of poor physique and fragile health, nearly always ailing and often ill, dependent for his power upon a king constitutionally as feeble as himself, and surrounded by enemies who watched, lynx-eyed, for every chance to compass his ruin, he none the less pursued without flinching his narrow and perilous way.

Richelieu died on December 4, 1642. Four years before he had lost his one friend and confidant, Father Joseph, popularly known as "l'Éminence Grise." His inveterate enemy, Marie de Médicis, died at Cologne, forsaken and poor, on the 3rd of the previous July. His royal master, in whose name he had ruled, survived him barely six months, dying on May 14, 1643.

CHAPTER IV

LOUIS XIV

I. THE ADMINISTRATION OF MAZARIN

1643-1661

LOUIS XIII's eldest son, also Louis, was not yet five years old when his father died, and thus the country was again faced by the dangers of an interregnum. The late sovereign by his will had entrusted the kingdom to Anne of Austria and a Council of Regency by which her acts were to be controlled. But Anne at once took steps to have this provision amended. Following the example of Marie de Médicis in similar circumstances, she appealed to the Parliament of Paris, and the Parliament, glad of the opportunity of once more asserting itself, forthwith annulled the Council and proclaimed her Regent with full powers to act according to her own discretion. The first use which she made of her authority was, however, an unpleasant surprise to the enemies of the dead Cardinal. She appointed as her chief minister Cardinal Mazarin, whom the dying Richelieu had recommended to Louis XIII as his successor.

CARDINAL MAZARIN

Jules Mazarin (whose name was originally Giulio Mazarini) came of a Sicilian family and was born at Piscina, in the Abruzzi, in 1602. He was educated under the Jesuits in Rome and Spain, and served for a time in the papal army; but he had already begun to attract attention by his political abilities when during the negotiations which followed the French wars in Italy he made the acquaintance of Richelieu. The great statesman was quick to recognize the young Italian's

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talents, and soon began to employ him in French interests in important diplomatic affairs. In 1639 he became a French subject, and was henceforth Richelieu's right-hand man; and in 1641, though he had never advanced beyond minor orders, he was, through Richelieu's influence, raised to the dignity of cardinal. It was now upon the shoulders of this naturalized foreigner, who never learned to speak with a perfect accent the language of his adopted country, that Richelieu's mantle fell. The complete ascendancy which he had already obtained over the mind of the Regent¹ made him in effect the master of the destinies of France.

But though, as we shall see, Mazarin was the faithful follower of Richelieu in both foreign and domestic policy, his personal character was strikingly different from that of his great predecessor. Sphinx-like, inscrutable, cold and domineering, Richelieu had been content to live in splendid isolation, holding with Machiavelli that it is better for a ruler to be feared than to be loved. Mazarin courted popularity, and possessed all the qualities by which in ordinary circumstances it may be assured, for he was supple, smooth-tongued, affable, insidious, quick to adapt himself to his surroundings, ready at all times to be all things to all men. Richelieu had given grave offence by the formidable state which he maintained, his retinue of servants, his private guard. Mazarin, though a man of luxurious and extravagant tastes, sought at the outset to allay antagonism by an elaborate show of simplicity, appearing in the streets with only a couple of lackeys behind his carriage.²

¹ This ascendancy and the constancy with which Anne supported her minister against his many enemies have been held to point to a personal relationship of the closest kind between them. That she gave him her love seems certain; but the existence of a secret marriage, though not impossible, cannot be proved. It must be remembered that Mazarin, though a cardinal, was not a fully ordained priest; he was only in deacon's orders, and could therefore legally marry. See Chéruel's *Histoire de France pendant la Minorité de Louis XIV* and *Histoire de France sous le Ministère de Mazarin; Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz*, edition of 1843, Appendix; and, for a summary of evidence, Hanotaux' essay "La Minorité de Louis XIV," in his *Études historiques sur le XVIIe et le XVIIIe Siècle en France*.

² De Retz, *Mémoires*.

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His ingratiating manners made him in particular a great favourite with women, who had always regarded the terrible Cardinal with hatred and distrust. But such attractions were merely superficial. Whatever his defects, Richelieu had throughout his career been guided by consideration of what he deemed to be for the public weal. Mazarin was self-seeking and rapacious. He rendered great services to France, it is true, especially in diplomacy, for which he had an extraordinary genius. But while he worked for the country he worked no less for his own ambitions, and he never subordinated personal interests to those of the State.

CLOSE OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

Richelieu, as we have seen, left France everywhere victorious. But his death put fresh heart into his enemies, who at once resumed the offensive. In the spring of 1643 a Spanish army, 26,000 strong, crossed the frontier from the Netherlands into Champagne and invested Rocroi, twenty-four miles from Sedan. Their design was to advance thence upon Paris, and in this they seemed to have an excellent chance of success, for the French force which opposed them was inferior in numbers and was commanded by an inexperienced youth of one-and-twenty, Louis, Duke of Enghien, afterward famous as 'le Grand Condé.'¹ But, as Voltaire said, the young soldier "était né général," and this first engagement established his fame as a military genius of the highest qualities. Against the judgment of his older advisers he determined to throw himself against the close formations of the enemy, and by a combination of skilful manœuvring and impetuous daring he broke down their resistance and ended by turning their defeat into a rout (May 19, 1643). This brilliant victory not only aroused immense enthusiasm in Paris, but also made a profound impression throughout Europe. For more than a century the Spanish infantry had been deemed all but invincible, but their

¹ He became Prince of Condé in 1646, on the death of his father, who, as we remember, had figured conspicuously in the troubles of the preceding reign.



52. THE GREAT CONDÉ



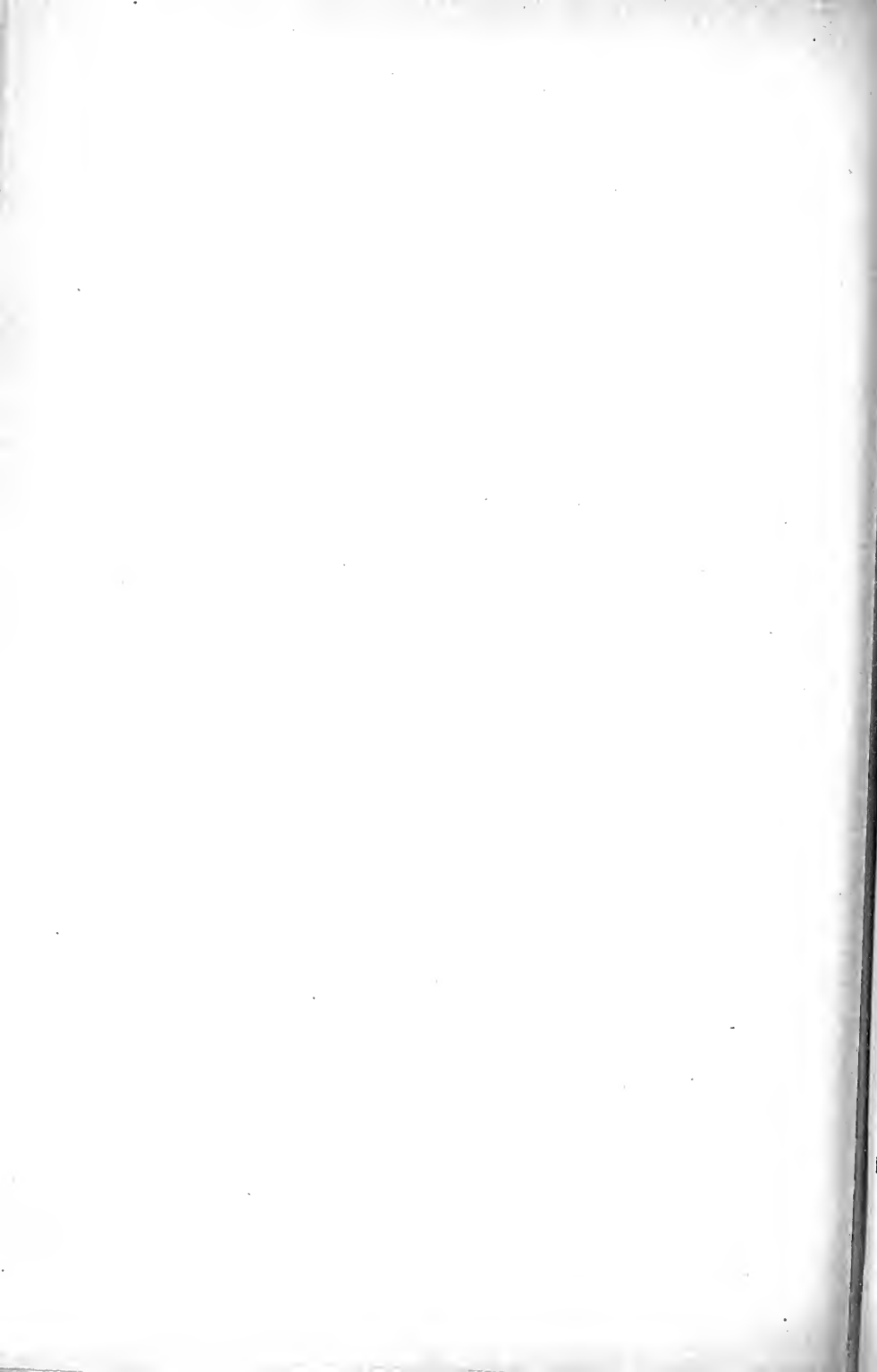
53. MARSHAL TURENNE



54. CARDINAL MAZARIN



55. CARDINAL DE RETZ 348



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traditional prestige was now destroyed, and their glory passed to French arms. Condé's next achievements, the capture of Thionville (Diedenhofen), in Lorraine, after a seven weeks' siege (August 1643), and that of Sierck, which quickly followed (September), gave the French possession of two important strategical points on the Moselle.

On the Rhine, however, where the French commanders were overmatched by the Bavarian generals, John of Werth and Baron Mercy, these successes were counterbalanced by serious reverses. The chief command of the campaign in this field was thereupon given to another young general of great distinction, Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Viscount of Turenne, who, though only thirty-two, had already won his laurels in the Thirty Years' War and had just been rewarded with a marshal's baton for his brilliant feat in wresting Roussillon from Spain. Turenne and Enghien were destined to become the great military rivals of their time, and it is therefore interesting to note the fundamental contrast, physical and moral, between them: the one thick-set, broad-shouldered, deliberate in speech, cautious in action; the other lean, emaciated, with the face of a bird of prey, energetic, fiery, dashing. Turenne's movements were hampered by the insufficiency of his forces, and he was powerless to prevent the capture of Freiburg, in Breisgau, and the advance of Mercy into Alsace. Then Enghien once more came upon the scene and took over the supreme command. A fierce three days' battle—the bloodiest of the whole war—was fought outside Freiburg (August 1644), but though Mercy was obliged to retreat, the French were too exhausted to follow up their success. Nor was their victory at Nördlingen a year later (August 1645) much more decisive, though the death of Mercy on the field removed one of their most redoubtable opponents. But in the campaign of 1646-48 Turenne, with the co-operation of the Swedish general Wrangel, overran and conquered Bavaria; and Enghien (now Prince of Condé) captured Dunkerque (1646), and, after suffering his first defeat at Lérida, in Catalonia, returned north and routed the Imperial forces at Lens (August 1648).

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By this time, however, the long and terrible war was at last nearing its close. For some years there had been talk of peace, and as early as 1643 a conference of ambassadors was convened in two sections in the Westphalian cities of Osnabrück and Münster. But the proceedings were protracted on account of the extreme complexity of the conflicting interests to be adjusted, and it was not till October 1648 that the Treaty of Westphalia was signed, Spain in the meantime having withdrawn from the negotiations. With the details of this treaty in its European aspects we are not, of course, concerned. It is enough to say that the religious quarrel in Germany was settled and the political liberties of the Protestants secured; that the supremacy of Austria was destroyed and the Empire reduced to a loose confederation of miscellaneous states; and that France retained all her conquests, including Alsace, and obtained a formal recognition of her right to the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun.¹ But while the power of Austria was now finally broken, the house of Bourbon had still its second enemy to vanquish before its pre-eminence in Europe could be assured, for the treaty left the relations of France and Spain untouched.

DISCONTENT OF THE NOBLES

While Mazarin had been thus vigorously pursuing the foreign policy of Richelieu to a successful issue there was at home a revival of the internal disorders which had marked the minority of Louis XIII. Richelieu's death had encouraged not only Spain, but also the domestic enemies of the central Government. Still restive under the severely repressive *régime* which he had established, the ambitious nobility saw, as they believed, in the weakness of the Regency a favourable opportunity to undo his work and recover at least a portion of the power of which they had been deprived.

The first flurry of discontent was that of a handful of aristocratic reactionaries ironically nicknamed 'the Importants,'

¹ These had actually been French since the days of Henri II. See *ante*, p. 242.

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prominent among whom were the Bishop of Beauvais (described by the pungent de Retz as "more of an idiot than any idiot of your acquaintance"), César, Duke of Vendôme, and his two sons, the Dukes of Beaufort and Mercœur, the famous La Rochefoucauld, Bassompierre (now released from the Bastille), the beautiful and witty Duchess of Chevreuse (a friend of the Queen-Mother, whom Louis XIII had banished from the Court), and two other almost equally notorious and unscrupulous ladies, the Duke of Enghien's sister, the Duchess of Longueville, and the Duchess of Montbazon. The object of this cabal was to obtain control of the Government by the overthrow—if necessary, the assassination—of Mazarin. But their machinations were discovered, Anne acted with unexpected decision, the conspirators were imprisoned or exiled, and the plot came to a sudden and ignominious end (September 1643).

A mere Court intrigue of this kind was of no great importance. But before long the Government had to face other dangers far more serious alike in their origin and in their bearings.

Richelieu had left as a heritage to his successor an enormous debt, a ruinous system of taxation, and widespread discontent. The problem of providing the sinews of an expensive war was one which in the circumstances would have been formidable enough for any minister, but it was further complicated in Mazarin's case by the necessity of finding money and still more money to maintain the Regent's extravagances and (for in this matter he followed in the footsteps of Henri IV) to buy the support of the greedy nobles. The utmost confusion prevailed in the finances of the country; the Treasury was empty; the revenue for the next three years had been swallowed up in advance; the pay of the soldiers and the salaries of the officers of State were falling more and more into arrear, and things were steadily going from bad to worse. Admirable as a diplomatist, Mazarin was very weak as a financier, and showed himself utterly incapable of grappling with so desperate a situation. He had appointed as his Controller-General a countryman of his own, a certain Michel Particelli, Sieur d'Émery,

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who years before, it was alleged, had been condemned as a fraudulent bankrupt, and whom de Retz describes, possibly with a touch of exaggeration, as "the most corrupt spirit of his age." At his wits' end for money, this clever but rascally agent of the chief minister had recourse to all sorts of extraordinary devices. He invented fresh imposts of particularly burdensome kinds; revived ordinances which had long fallen into oblivion simply that he might collect fines for their infraction; created absurd offices which he sold to the highest bidders; peddled patents of nobility; raised loans at exorbitant rates of interest. To justify his organized system of extortion he appealed, of course, to the urgent needs of the State. Unfortunately a considerable part of the proceeds of his plunder, instead of replenishing the national coffer, went straight into his own pockets and those of his innumerable underlings and parasites. Mazarin himself cannot be held guilty of actual complicity in these abuses, but he was indirectly responsible for the acts of his subordinates, and we cannot wonder that the country at large was not keen to distinguish between the minister and his agent. The people of Paris and other great cities were furious at seeing themselves exploited and despoiled by foreign adventurers, while throughout the provinces the condition of the peasantry was one of indescribable and ever-increasing misery. The whole country was thus ripe for revolt, and a state of things existed out of which, as Mazarin warned the Regent, capital could easily be made by those who for any reason of their own were desirous of weakening the royal authority.

THE FIRST FRONDE

The struggle of the Government with the forces of insubordination began with what is known as the First, or Parliamentary, Fronde.¹ Trouble arose as early as 1644 over the

¹ The *fronde* was the sling used by the boys of Paris in the street-fighting in which they then freely indulged. The term *frondeur* was first applied to the opponents of the Court by some orator during the course of a debate in the Parliament. It stuck, and henceforth *fronde* and *frondeurs* were the accepted names of the anti-royalist faction and its adherents.

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resistance of the Parliament of Paris to certain taxes which Émery sought to impose—the *taxe du toisé*, which was to be levied on houses in the suburbs, and the *taxe des aisés*, which was designed to tap the incomes of the wealthier classes. Though the dispute was settled for a time and nothing of importance happened immediately thereafter, friction continued between the contending parties, and in 1648 matters came to a head. The crisis was brought about by a fresh demand of the Government that the Parliament should register various new financial edicts. The Parliament refused; the Government persisted; and then the Parliament took the bold step of convening an assembly composed of representatives of its own body and of other so-called 'Sovereign Courts'—the Grand Conseil, the Chambre des Comptes, and the Cour des Aides—to deliberate upon the situation. Despite the attempt of the Government to prevent it, the conference met in May in the Hall of St Louis in the Palace of Justice.

The position of the Parliament of Paris must be carefully considered. The stand which it made against the despotism of the Court was, it may be conceded, in part the result of genuine public spirit, and it was certainly justifiable. Our sympathies, therefore, will naturally be with it in its battle for constitutional rights. Yet it was rather by accident than of set purpose that its own struggle with the Crown corresponded with the real interests of the nation. For while some of its members, notably its president, the upright and noble-minded Molé, were actuated by sentiments of real patriotism, the Parliament as a whole was scarcely less selfish than the aristocracy, and like the aristocracy was primarily concerned about its own privileges. Though it was undoubtedly encouraged by the example of the Long Parliament of England, it must always be remembered that it had no resemblance to that assembly save only in name, and that from the point of view of statesmanship the actions of the two bodies are in no way comparable. It was not in any sense a representative or democratic institution. It was simply a close corporation of magistrates and lawyers, and as such it was every whit as

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jealous of the popular element in the country as it was suspicious of the Crown. However admirable its protest against oppression, however excellent some of its recommendations, its inspiring motive was the desire to usurp the functions which had formerly belonged to the now abandoned States-General and to make itself the chief power in the realm.

The Conference of St Louis undertook to consider at large the condition of the kingdom and to draw up a kind of constitution, which the Parliament transmitted to the Court for the royal sanction. The proposals made included, among many matters of minor importance, the control of taxation by the Parliament, the abolition of the provincial intendants, and the security of the liberty of the subject by the abolition of extraordinary tribunals and of arbitrary imprisonment under the obnoxious *lettres de cachet*. Such claims, as Mazarin perceived, struck at the absolute authority of the Crown. None the less he hesitated to enter into open conflict with a foe whose strength he fully appreciated, though the Queen-Mother did not, and it was only after he had vainly tried the policy of pacification by concession that he yielded to her insistent demand for drastic measures. The moment seemed favourable, for report had just reached the capital of Condé's triumph at Lens, and this, Mazarin calculated, would increase the prestige of the Government and tend to enlist popular feeling on its side. Secret orders were accordingly issued for the arrest of three members of the Parliament—Charton, Blancmesnil, and Broussel—who had made themselves specially conspicuous by their opposition to the Court, and on August 26, immediately after a solemn Mass in Notre-Dame in celebration of the victory, the plan was promptly carried into effect. Warned in time, Charton eluded the guards and escaped; but his two colleagues were seized and hurried away, the one to Vincennes, the other to Saint-Germain. But Mazarin and the Regent were quickly made aware of their blunder. The news of what had happened ran like wildfire through the city, where Broussel, though an old man of no particular ability, was immensely popular among the middle and lower classes;

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shops were soon closed, the principal thoroughfares were barricaded, and excited crowds surged through the streets shouting "Broussel et liberté!" Paris, indeed, was on the verge of a general rising, and the following day the situation became even more alarming when it was known that the Regent had refused to listen to a petition of the Parliament for the release of the two members.

At this point a singular figure appeared upon the scene to add to the general confusion in the person of Jean-François-Paul de Gondi, the coadjutor of his uncle, the Archbishop of Paris, and afterward Cardinal de Retz.¹ Restless, volatile, ambitious, a lover of tumult and the very genius of intrigue, this extraordinary young ecclesiastic threw himself into the commotion in the hope, of course, of turning it to his own ends. He had already been coquetting with the popular party. He now first tried to render himself indispensable to the Court, and then, having failed in this, resolved to make himself master of Paris by placing himself at the head of the mob. At the same time the peril of the Government was increased by the re-emergence of several influential members of the ever-dissatisfied nobility, among them the Prince of Conti (Condé's brother), the Dukes of Elbeuf, Bouillon, and Beaufort, and the Duchess of Longueville. With no interest whatever in the real questions at issue, and certainly no sympathy with any demand for popular rights, these turbulent spirits, anxious at any cost to weaken the Government for their own advantage, joined hands with the Parliament and the disorderly elements in the capital.

The release of Blancmesnil and Broussel, to which, under great pressure from her advisers, Anne finally though most reluctantly consented, brought a momentary lull in the storm. But, realizing that the danger was by no means over, the Regent, as a measure of precaution, removed the Court from

¹ He did not receive the dignity and title of cardinal till 1652, but as a matter of convenience we shall here at once call him by his familiar name. His *Mémoires*, for which he is still famous, rank as a masterpiece in a kind of writing in which French literature is specially rich.

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Paris, first to Rueil and then to Saint-Germain. This step was regarded with suspicion by the anti-royalist party, and the arrest of two ex-ministers, opponents of Mazarin—the Marquis of Châteauneuf and the Count of Chavigny—provided fresh pretext for dispute. But none the less the counsels of the more moderate men on one and the other side began to prevail, and as a result of protracted negotiations an agreement was at last reached. On October 22, 1648, only two days before the promulgation of the Treaty of Westphalia, the Regent affixed her signature to a declaration of the Parliament incorporating most of the demands which had been made in respect of taxation and the right of the subject to constitutional trial.

There could, however, be no stability in such a peace. The Parliament was encouraged by its victory to adopt a more aggressive attitude toward the Government; Mazarin and the Regent, though they had been forced to yield, had done so only as a matter of policy and with the secret determination of taking the first opportunity to recover the ground they had lost; while the intriguing nobles, with de Retz at their head, were resolved for their own purposes to keep the spirit of tumult alive. In these circumstances a fresh outbreak of hostilities could not long be deferred. The Parliament soon had reason to complain that the provisions of the declaration of Saint-Germain were not being carried out; the Court again sought safety in flight; royal troops were concentrated outside the capital, and the city hastily made ready for a siege. In January 1649 civil war began in earnest. The provincial Parliaments and many of the leading cities throughout the country identified themselves with the anti-royalist cause, and popular risings occurred in Normandy and Provence. But Paris was the centre of the storm. The incapable Prince of Conti was appointed generalissimo of the city's forces, with the Duke of Elbeuf as his lieutenant; but de Retz, whose energy was tireless, and Beaufort, whose popularity with the mob had gained for him the dubious title of 'le Roi des Halles,' were the real leaders of the people. The royal army was placed under the command of the Great Condé himself. In the unequal

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conflict which ensued the advantage was of course entirely on one side. There were a number of skirmishes, in which the undisciplined Parisians quickly gave way before the well-seasoned enemy, and one engagement of some importance—that of Charenton (February 1649)—in which Condé scored an easy victory. These reverses and the menace of famine had a depressing effect upon the mercurial temper of the populace. At the same time dissensions arose, as was inevitable, between the Parliament and its princely allies. The nobles had joined the revolt against the Government entirely for the benefit which they hoped to reap from it for themselves, and their support had at once deprived it of all its constitutional and democratic character and turned it into a vulgar and petty struggle for personal ends. This fact was now perceived by the more patriotic members of the Parliamentary party, who thereupon began to seek for some compromise with the Government which would enable them to extricate themselves from the false position into which they had been led. Largely through the instrumentality of Molé, who at that critical juncture “displayed an invulnerable firmness and a presence of mind almost superhuman,”¹ terms were arranged with the Court, and by the Treaty of Rueil (March 1649) a limited measure of political power was secured by the Parliament, together with the promise of various financial reforms. At one point, however, the Parliament was badly beaten. It had demanded the dismissal of Mazarin, and Mazarin kept his place.

THE SECOND FRONDE

Such was the end of the First Fronde. The Second Fronde—the Fronde of the Nobles—which arose almost immediately out of its ashes, was very different in purpose and spirit. This was, indeed, at bottom merely a struggle for mastery between the nobles and Mazarin. It is true that, as Voltaire said, “the public good was in everybody’s mouth,”² but the reckless

¹ De Retz, *Mémoires*, Livre I, p. 431.

² *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, chap. iv.

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egotism of the leaders was so flagrant that the pretence of patriotism deceived nobody. Moreover, the movement was as frivolous as it was selfish. From first to last it was swayed by trivial ambitions, broken up into contentious factions, complicated by personal jealousies and squabbles, corrupted by the influence of dissolute women, entangled in love intrigues which fill many pages in the memoirs of the time but which need not be recounted here. Even the more outstanding figures on the stage—even men like Condé and Turenne, whose military genius and valour were beyond dispute—showed themselves almost as deficient in political wisdom and as inconstant and untrustworthy as the most contemptible of their followers, while other prominent rebels—Conti, Bouillon, Beaufort, and the rest—were creatures of poor intelligence and giddy temper, who were actuated by no higher motive than that of getting whatever they could for themselves out of the general welter of the hour. Hence, though the New Fronde kept the whole country in a state of turmoil for upward of three years, it has little historical importance, and a brief treatment of it here will therefore suffice.

The Treaty of Rueil had scarcely been signed before friction arose between Condé and Mazarin. The former's military triumphs had greatly increased his constitutional pride and arrogance, which were further stimulated by the part he had played in recent events as the protector of the Court, and he now demanded extravagant rewards for himself, his relatives, and the young lords—the *petits-maitres* as they were called—who sided with him. For a time Mazarin exerted all his cunning to defeat his ambitions by the arts of intrigue, but at length the situation became intolerable and he realized that his only hope of safety lay in his rival's removal. Condé's insolence had meanwhile made him as obnoxious to the Parliament and the Old Frondeurs as he was to the Regent, and thus the Cardinal felt free to act without fear of the consequences. Accordingly, on January 18, 1650, he had Condé arrested, together with his brother, Conti, and his brother-in-law, Longueville, and lodged in Vincennes. For the moment Paris

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rejoiced over the fall of the once idolized "hero of Rocroi." But de Retz, who had been bribed by the promise of a cardinal's hat to use his influence with the populace in favour of the Crown, now finding that his reward was delayed, went over again to the enemy's camp and began to stir up fresh trouble in the capital. The result was a temporary revival of the Old Fronde in union with the New. Insurrection had also broken out in several provinces, and, what was still more serious, Turenne, seduced by the Duchess of Longueville, with whom he was in love, had formed an alliance with the Spaniards and was already threatening Paris (June 1650). His defeat at Rethel in December removed this cause for alarm. But the feeling in Paris against Mazarin was now growing in strength, and when in January 1651 the Parliament petitioned Anne for the liberation of the imprisoned princes Mazarin was compelled to yield; the princes were released; and he himself retired from Paris to Brühl, near Cologne (April 1651), whence, however, he continued to guide the Regent's policy. Condé, who received a warm welcome from the Parisians, now determined to use the help of the Old Frondeurs to make himself supreme in the State. But violent quarrels soon dissolved the unstable coalition of Parliament and princes, and Condé himself, having by his outrageous egotism and his overbearing demeanour quickly contrived to put everybody against him, set out for Guyenne (August 1651), where he raised an army and embarked on civil war. Mazarin returned to Paris in December and proceeded to take active measures to quash the rebellion, with the invaluable assistance of Turenne, who had just deserted the Frondeurs and joined the party of the Court. This curious shuffling of the cards brought the two former colleagues into opposition, and they met in their first engagement at Bléneau, south of the Loire, where Turenne only just managed to avert an overwhelming disaster to the royalist cause (April 7, 1652). The great aim on both sides was now to gain the support of Paris, which was torn by the contentions of rival parties. Condé therefore took up his position at Saint-Cloud, whence he entered

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into negotiations with some of the leaders in the city. But Turenne, who meanwhile had defeated a Spanish force at Étampes (May 4), hastened to meet him, and a desperate battle took place outside the Porte Saint-Antoine, which would certainly have ended in Condé's decisive defeat but that at the last moment Gaston d'Orléans' daughter, Mlle de Montpensier—famous as 'la Grande Mademoiselle'—turned the guns of the Bastille upon the royalists and opened the city gates to Condé's army. This success of the rebels, however, and the anarchy which ensued, greatly strengthened the growing reaction against the princes and the desire for the restoration of peace. In order to remove all obstacles to the reconciliation of Parliament and Court, Mazarin again left Paris (August 1652). The young King thereupon entered the capital amid scenes of great enthusiasm, and so far as Paris was concerned the Second Fronde came to an end. Condé, who had fled into Flanders, was in his absence condemned to death; de Retz was sent to Vincennes; other conspirators, among them 'la Grande Mademoiselle,' were exiled; ten members of the Parliament were banished or imprisoned. At the same time the Parliament was formally forbidden henceforth to take any part in affairs of State, while the provincial intendants, to whom the nobles had specially objected, were re-established. Thus the cause of autocracy triumphed, and the discomfiture of its antagonists was completed by the return of Mazarin (February 1653), more secure than ever of his position and power.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS DURING THE FRONDE

The civil disturbances caused by the Fronde had naturally had a disastrous effect on foreign affairs, and Spain had gradually won back most of the places previously acquired by France, including Dunkerque, Casale in Italy, and the province of Catalonia (1652). With the restoration of internal peace Mazarin was able once more to devote himself to the prosecution of the war, though he was sadly hampered by the depleted state of the national purse. In 1654 Turenne compelled Condé, now in command of the Spanish army, to raise

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the siege of Arras. But in the next two years nothing decisive happened, though the French made steady progress in the Netherlands, while on the other hand Condé gained a considerable victory at Valenciennes (July 1656). Meanwhile both countries were growing weary of the war, and were even bidding against one another for the support of Cromwell, whose influence, it was understood, would suffice to turn the scale. Here Mazarin's unrivalled diplomatic skill prevailed, and in 1655 a commercial treaty was concluded between France and England which in 1657 Cromwell was at length induced to convert into a military alliance. This settled the issue. Six thousand of the famous Ironsides were sent to Flanders to co-operate with Turenne; Dunkerque was besieged; the Spanish army despatched to its relief was completely routed at the Battle of the Dunes (June 1658); the sea-port capitulated, and according to compact was handed over to the English. Spain, bankrupt, without troops, without allies, was powerless to make good these reverses and was driven to sue for peace, and the war was closed by the Treaty of the Pyrenees (November 1659), by which the Treaty of Westphalia was confirmed and France gained further territorial advantages along her frontiers. At the same time Condé obtained pardon and the governorship of Burgundy, while a marriage was arranged between the young King and the Infanta Maria Theresa, under conditions to which further reference will have to be made in the sequel. The previous year Mazarin had formed the League of the Rhine. This was an alliance of the Electors of Trèves, Mainz, and Cologne, various other German princes, and the King of Sweden for the maintenance of the Treaty of Westphalia, and it assured the supremacy of France in Western Europe.

These striking diplomatic successes mark the real end of Mazarin's career. He died on March 9, 1661, leaving the authority of the Crown firmly established in a country quiet at home and victorious abroad. His administration forms the prelude to the long period, first of glory, then of decline, which we know in history as the Age of Louis XIV.

CHAPTER V

LOUIS XIV

II. THE ZENITH OF ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

1661-1684

LOUIS XIV was now in his twenty-third year. He had attained his majority in 1651, and had therefore already been nominally King nearly ten years. But thus far he had given little sign either of desire or of capacity to rule. On the contrary, he had shown himself remarkably submissive to his chief minister, whose will he never challenged, and to whom he had continued to entrust the real government of the State. Those about him—the Queen-Mother herself, the counsellors, the lords and ladies of the Court—were therefore entirely unprepared for his extraordinary change of front the moment Mazarin's death released him from his long tutelage. One and all they had come to regard him as a young man who, preoccupied with sport and pleasure, would be content to enjoy the empty pomp of royalty while he left its responsibilities to others. To their astonishment he at once made clear his determination to take the reins of power firmly into his own hands and to be King in fact as well as in name. Within twenty-four hours he had given his ministers to understand that he was their master and that in future not even a State paper should be signed without his authority. When the Archbishop of Rouen, the president of the Assembly of Clergy, reminded him that hitherto he, the Archbishop, had looked to the Cardinal for instructions and asked him to whom he should now turn, "A moi, Monsieur l'Archevêque," was Louis' uncompromising reply.

There can be little doubt that the civil disturbances of the

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period of his childhood had helped to implant autocratic ideas in his mind, and that such ideas had greatly developed under the influence of Mazarin, who in the last years of his life had carefully trained him in the ideas of government as conceived from the purely absolutist point of view. Louis was only ten when news reached the Court of Condé's victory at Lens. "Le Parlement sera bien fâché," exclaimed the boy-King, thereby testifying that he had already been taught to consider the Parliament as necessarily a body of rebels. Mazarin had also familiarized him with that great instrument of royal authority the 'bed of justice,' by which the King was able to impose his own will upon the Parliament and to compel it to register edicts to which it had previously refused its assent. There is a popular story to the effect that when in April 1655 the Parliament undertook to discuss certain financial decrees, Louis, who was just starting for the chase, hurried back and appeared suddenly in the assembly, booted, spurred, and (according to one picturesque version) with a riding-whip in his hand, and then and there put a stop to the proceedings. The anecdote rests apparently upon rather doubtful foundations, but it may serve to indicate the young King's despotic temper and his attitude toward any semblance of opposition to his will.

LOUIS' CONCEPTION OF ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

As Louis XIV's reign marks the culmination of absolute monarchy in France, it is interesting to consider his own ideas of kingship as set forth in the *Mémoires historiques et Instructions* which he prepared with the help of Paul Pellisson, his historiographer,¹ for the guidance of his son. A king is God's representative and vicegerent on earth. His authority is divine because it is vested in him directly by God. No division of such authority is possible, nor can it be delegated to others,

¹ Pellisson became 'Historiographe royal' in 1666. Earlier in life he had been involved in the downfall of Fouquet (see *post*, p. 369), and had passed five years in the Bastille. A touching story is connected with his captivity: that of a spider which became the companion of his solitude, and which he taught to eat out of his hand.

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since it inheres entirely in the person of the sovereign. He is therefore responsible to God alone. To him and to him only belongs the right to initiate and decide. No one else possesses any political power; the people at large have no part in their own government, while the ministers are simply agents chosen by the king to execute his will. Parliamentary institutions in particular must be condemned, because they challenge the king's sovereign authority and are a source of perpetual disturbance to his realm. No criticism of his acts is to be allowed. His subjects owe him unconditional and unqualified submission. "He who has given kings to the world has willed that they shall be revered as His lieutenants and has reserved to Himself alone the right to examine their conduct. His desire is that whoever is born a subject shall obey without question [*discernment*]." Moreover, the king is lord and master of the property of his subjects, lay and clerical, as well as of their lives, and may dispose of one and the other according to his discretion. "L'État, c'est moi" is thus no empty boast. The king *is* the State, for the State as a political entity and organization exists only in him.

These prerogatives, however, entail corresponding duties. The king as God's representative and vicegerent on earth is charged with the task of ruling as God would will—that is, righteously and justly. If the State merges in him, the welfare of the State, and not his own personal interests as viewed apart from this, must be the one object of all his thoughts. His subjects have no rights, it is true; but since for this reason they are children it should be his highest ambition to act as their father. If he is not responsible to men, he must never forget his responsibility to God, to whom sooner or later he will have to give account of his stewardship.

These are the high ideals of a benevolent paternalism. In considering them on their own merits and without reference to the theory of autocracy as such, we must of course make ample allowance for the fact that Louis was naturally anxious to present his motives and actions under the best possible light. I do not, however, think that his good intentions were entirely

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pose or that he is to be regarded as a mere hypocrite. We shall have severe things to say of his character and conduct by and by ; but in common fairness it must be set down here to his credit that for something like twenty years he honestly did his utmost according to his lights to rule his people wisely and well. It was only in his later life, when the political influences by which he was surrounded had changed from good to evil, when his egotism, fed by the Oriental adulation of his worshippers, had swollen to monstrous proportions, when vanity and religious fanaticism had combined to distort his judgment, and his desire to identify his own interests with those of his realm had given place to selfish greed for power and glory, that the abuses of absolutism began to appear in all their appalling nakedness. But while we must thus be careful to distinguish between the first and last stages of his long reign, it is still obvious that the worst features of the second degenerate stage were but the logical results of a system in itself inherently and irremediably vicious. As Louis himself wrote in a sentence which reveals in a flash the dangers inseparable from irresponsible government, "When a man can do whatever he wishes, it is difficult for him to wish only what is right."

LOUIS XIV AS KING

Louis had undoubtedly many of the qualities necessary to enable him to play the part of *grand roi* as he himself conceived it. This much we must, I think, admit, however strong our antipathy to him may otherwise be. Though his intellectual parts were by no means exceptional and though he suffered much from his shockingly defective education, his mind was alert and vigorous, his judgment sound, his good sense in general conspicuous. He had force of character and strength of will, and while he lacked entirely the statesmanlike sagacity and grasp of Richelieu, he showed a natural capacity for business and real talent for administration. He was on the whole an excellent judge of men, and his knowledge of human nature, though mainly of such perverted human nature as

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flourishes best in the artificial atmosphere of a court, was remarkable : his well-known saying that by every benefit he had conferred he had made one person ungrateful and a hundred others discontented is in its penetration and cynicism worthy of La Rochefoucauld. He was singularly free from the capriciousness which is commonly associated with arbitrary power, and was always completely master of himself : the hostile Saint-Simon is our authority for the statement that throughout his reign of more than seventy years he lost his temper only four or five times. He had also a rare power of work, and his industry was not the least admirable of his characteristics. His mother professed to be highly amused by the ardour with which at the outset he threw himself into the task of government, and thought that the hot fit would soon pass. She knew little of his tenacity of purpose. For many years he regularly spent eight hours a day over affairs of State.

Such were some of the more solid attributes which ministered to his success. There were others of a less substantial kind which counted enormously in the power which he early gained and long kept over the imaginations of men. It may be questioned whether any sovereign was ever so obviously born to the purple as Louis XIV. Tall, finely built, handsome, noble of bearing, carrying an air of majesty into even the simplest actions, with an elegance of manners which was exquisitely compounded of dignity and gracious ease, he was indeed in appearance and deportment every inch a king. It was of course inevitable that, living as he did from youth to old age on the public stage and in the public eye, there should be something theatrical about his demeanour ; but, as Voltaire said, what would have been a trifle ridiculous in any one else seemed perfectly appropriate to him, and we have the unanimous testimony of his contemporaries, unfriendly as well as friendly, that he filled to perfection the *rôle* of chief actor in the magnificent Court drama of his time. That his splendour was in reality a thing mainly of costume and trappings, that he shone almost entirely by the glory that was reflected upon him by his surroundings, is of course true. But he still stands

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out as the 'Roi Soleil'—the superficially brilliant centre of a really brilliant circle.

LOUIS' SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

So much for Louis himself. We may glance next at the system of government organized by him, bearing in mind as we do so that this system, with a short interruption in the opening years of the next reign, remained intact to the end of the Old Régime.

As the sovereign himself is, according to the absolutist doctrine, the one and all-sufficient source of authority, he acts in theory entirely upon his own initiative and as the agent of his own volition. But, as Louis was astute enough to realize, while this may be the abstract principle of absolutism, the complexities of the modern state make it practically impossible for any one man, even though he be divinely appointed as God's vicegerent on earth, to conduct single-handed the whole work of government. Supreme as he is, he needs the advice of experts in the various departments of administration, while a certain amount of machinery is indispensable to him for the execution of his will. While, therefore, he never yielded one iota of his pretensions as autocrat, he none the less governed with the co-operation of councils and ministers, though, as these were of course appointed by and were wholly dependent upon him, they in no sense limited his power. The most important of the advisory bodies which he instituted as his auxiliaries was the Secret or Privy Council, known as the Conseil d'État or Conseil d'en Haut. This was composed of his regular ministers and of such others as he might see fit to summon on any occasion to take part in its deliberations, and all questions of general policy fell within its province. Then, closely connected with this, though subordinate to it, were other councils having special provinces and functions: the Conseil des Dépêches, whose business was with internal administration; the Conseil des Finances; the Conseil des Parties, which was a sort of Cour de Cassation, or Court of Appeal. Furthermore, there were a number of

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commissions, also loosely called councils, which were appointed to look after particular interests, such as the Conseil de la Guerre, the Conseil de Marine, the Conseil du Commerce. Such councils were the advisers of the Crown. Its great executive agents were the four Secretaries of State—for War, the Navy, Foreign Affairs, and the King's Household—together with the Chancellor (the head of the magistrature) and the Controller-General of Finances; while beneath these ministers there was a vast army of officials belonging to the different departments, the most important of whom were the intendants, now growing rapidly in power. But it should be noted that from the very first Louis declared his intention of being his own Prime Minister. A Prime Minister, in his view, was the greatest misfortune that could befall a monarch; even if he did not, like Richelieu and Mazarin, usurp the royal authority, there was always a danger that he would come to share it.

THE FINANCES : FOUQUET

When Louis thus took personal control of the Government the finances of the country were in charge of Nicolas Fouquet, who eight years before had been made Superintendent by Mazarin. So far from doing anything to bring order out of the chaos into which they had fallen, Fouquet by his reckless maladministration and his corrupt practices had greatly increased the general confusion, by which he had himself so profited that he had amassed a huge fortune out of the public funds. He was a man of considerable ability, a friend of many persons of intellectual distinction, and a generous patron of art and letters; but his ambition was unbounded; and even when he had been thwarted in his desire to succeed Mazarin as the chief pillar of the State he continued his career of arrogant self-aggrandizement, apparently blind to the fact that in the circumstances pride such as his was the certain prelude to a fall. The young King looked with a jealous eye upon his haughty subject's ostentatious display of wealth and power, and saw in his pretentious device—*Quo non ascendam?*—a challenge to his own supremacy. He was, moreover, fully

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aware that Fouquet was guilty of criminal mismanagement and the grossest speculation, and this gave him ground to act. The blow fell suddenly. In September 1661, a few weeks only after he had entertained the King at Vaux on a scale of regal magnificence, the Superintendent was arrested and lodged in the Bastille. His trial dragged on for three years. In the end a majority of his judges pronounced him worthy of banishment. This sentence, however, was changed by Louis himself to one of perpetual imprisonment, and he was immured in the fortress of Pinerolo, where he died in 1680. Louis' conduct in this matter has been condemned as arbitrary and vindictive, and it seems certain that it was dictated by personal hostility toward his victim. It can scarcely be maintained that Fouquet's guilt, obvious as it was, was of so exceptional a character as to justify such an aggravation of his fate. He was, indeed, part of a rotten system which had long been allowed to flourish, and the existence of the system may even be held to mitigate to a certain extent his individual responsibility. If Louis is to be exonerated at all from the charge of undue harshness, it must be on the supposition that, in making Fouquet an example, he intended to announce to all concerned and in the plainest possible terms that the system itself was now at an end.

COLBERT AND HIS REFORMS

Fouquet's fall was in large measure brought about by the influence of another of Mazarin's coadjutors, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, a man who holds a high position in the annals of Louis' reign, since it was to his advice and agency that what was best in the King's administration was really due. It was he who had convinced Louis by accumulations of positive proof of Fouquet's corruption, and if in part he was moved by jealousy and ambition, his disinterested patriotism must also be acknowledged. He now stepped into Fouquet's place. He did not, indeed, become his successor in name, for Louis abolished the office of Superintendent; but he was made head of the newly instituted Conseil des Finances, with the

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title of Controller-General. A few years later he was also entrusted with the charge of the marine, the colonies, commerce, and the affairs of the royal household, and thus he became actually though not nominally Louis' counsellor in chief.

Colbert was the son of a merchant of Reims, where he was born in 1619, and he was himself trained for a mercantile career. Before he was twenty, however, he secured a post under Le Tellier, then Secretary for War, where he soon attracted the attention and won the favour of Mazarin. Henceforth his advancement was rapid, and by the time of the Cardinal's death his abilities were fully recognized by Louis himself. He was in one important particular an ideal confidant for such a king, for Louis preferred to have about him men whose rank inspired them with no pretensions beyond those of their official position, and Colbert never forgot his middle-class origin. With his unassuming costume and his familiar velvet bag, indeed, he appeared in the Council in the guise rather of a busy clerk than of a powerful minister of State. Nor, despite the personal vanity which Mme de Sévigné and others laid to his charge, did he ever attempt to give himself any of the airs and graces of aristocracy. A strong, silent man, distant in manner, and rather difficult of access, he held himself aloof from the luxury and dissipation of the Court, and devoted himself with prodigious industry and never-flagging zeal to the business he had in hand. His administrative talents must be judged by the work which he actually accomplished. His official character is on the whole deserving of high praise. It is true that he had a keen eye for his own interests and that he died one of the richest men in France. But he was none the less absolutely honest and upright, and his ardour for reform and desire for the welfare of the country are incontestable. Unpopular indeed he was, but his unpopularity was itself testimony to his rectitude and thoroughness. He has been accused of furthering the cause of despotism; but it must not be forgotten that he did all in his power for many years to arrest the King's extravagance and guide his ambitions

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to public ends, and that the decline of his influence was coincident with the triumph of the evils he had striven to hold in check.

Colbert began his labours for reform with the finances, now in as critical a state as that which had existed immediately before Sully's time. The task before him was indeed Herculean. He too had to clean Augean stables. An enormous national debt had accumulated through long years of war, waste, mismanagement, and corruption; the revenues were already swallowed up two years in advance; each new year brought a bigger deficit; while, owing to the vices of the farming system, which again flourished in all its old luxuriance, out of eighty-four million livres of actual imposts only thirty-two millions found their way into the Treasury. The State was, in fact, living from hand to mouth; order and prevision there were none; no one knew—and it was to the interest of the whole army of officials, great and small, that no one should know—the real condition of the Exchequer; and every fresh demand as it arose was met by hasty and extraordinary devices for providing money, which in turn only bred fresh abuses. Colbert's policy was that of vigorous retrenchment, and if his methods were violent and despotic they may be explained if they cannot always be justified by reference to the desperate difficulties with which he had to grapple. He struck hard, to begin with, at the moral evils which had grown apace under Fouquet, and compelled the dishonest administrators who, with him, had enriched themselves at the country's expense to disgorge their ill-gotten gains. By this alone the Treasury profited to the tune of many millions of livres. By boldly writing down the public securities he forced the nation's creditors to accept repayment of loans on a much reduced scale, though, as a contemporary writer notes, this strong action caused "consternation and despair" among the multitude of *rentiers* affected by it.¹ He diminished the number of sinecure-holders and highly paid officials who had been fattening on the funds. One of the worst abuses of the time,

¹ Olivier Lefèvre d'Ormesson, *Journal*.

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the immunity from direct taxation (*taille*) enjoyed by the privileged classes, he did not, indeed, dare to attack at its root; but he tried in various ways to correct where he could not destroy. He deprived a large number of municipal functionaries of the right of exemption which they had long claimed. He revoked all patents of nobility which had been acquired by purchase since 1634 and had carried such right of exemption with them. He reduced the *taille* and increased indirect taxation (*aides*) on all sorts of commodities, especially luxuries, thus obliging the privileged classes themselves to contribute their share to the national purse. He also introduced a more equable distribution of the *gabelle*—the old and always unpopular tax arising from the Government monopoly of salt. Above all, he introduced order and economy where disorder and prodigality had hitherto prevailed. He instituted the strictest supervision over the whole financial system, insisted upon the proper keeping of accounts by all officials from the highest to the lowest, and so reduced the cost of collection that, as the revenue returns for the years from 1661 onward show, he increased the national income by many millions apart from the imposition of any new tax.

Colbert's work as Finance Minister was, however, only part of his comprehensive programme of reform. He saw clearly that the financial stability of the State was inseparably bound up with its general prosperity, and he therefore devoted himself with characteristic determination to the industrial development of the people. On the one hand he revived old industries and planted new, buying trade secrets from other countries and inducing foreign artisans to settle in France and teach their methods to native workmen; and before long factories for cloth-making, lace-making, silk-making, the weaving of carpets and stockings, and metal, leather, and glass works sprang up all over the land.¹ On the other hand, he sought to foster such home industries by a rigorous protective system, placing duties often high enough to be prohibitive on articles hitherto

¹ In 1662 he purchased the famous tapestry manufactory of the Gobelins and reorganized it as a royal upholstery establishment.

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imported from abroad which could now be produced at home. To the same end he also granted subsidies and monopolies to individuals and corporations, and, true to the prevailing theory of centralization, carried State control into the minutest details of factory organization. In all this we can now see the fundamental fallacies of the doctrines of protection and paternalism, and we are not, therefore, surprised either that his endeavours to make France independent of the rest of the world led ultimately to artificial stimulation, inflation of prices, and tariff wars, or that his policy of State interference proved destructive of individual initiative and power. But we must of course consider his labours in the light, not of later experience, but of his own time, and if he was no wiser economically than his contemporaries in other countries, his intentions were undeniably good. He further sought to open up new markets in distant parts of the world by extending the colonial system and founding companies for the development of French commerce in the East and West Indies, in Africa, and in Northern Europe; he improved the transport facilities of the country—his most important achievement in this direction being the great Canal du Midi, which connects the Mediterranean with the Garonne; he reduced, though he did not destroy, the provincial tariffs which hampered internal trade; he encouraged shipbuilding and the mercantile marine; he even tried to induce the nobles to take part in commerce by a special edict proclaiming that they might do so without loss of caste. Nor does even this long list include all Colbert's labours for reform, for a great improvement in the legislative system of the country is also to be put down to his credit.

It was by such heroic efforts as these for the national welfare that Colbert contributed substantially to the real greatness of the early years of Louis' independent reign. But while he was thus straining every nerve to build up the prosperity of France, there was another minister who was working quite as hard to ensure its military supremacy. This was the Marquis of Louvois, the Minister for War, who completely

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reorganized the army and made it far more efficient as a fighting machine than it had ever been before. Colbert and Louvois were long rivals in the King's councils, and their influences told in absolutely opposite directions. But in the end Louvois gained the upper hand, to the detriment of the best interests of the realm.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS : THE WAR OF DEVOLUTION

At the opening of Louis' independent reign the condition of Europe favoured the growth of his ambitions. The strength of France was in the measure of the weakness of other nations ; for Germany was in confusion, Spain decadent, Austria crippled, England embarrassed by the now restored Stuarts, and Holland, though powerful commercially, too feeble on the military side to interfere seriously in foreign affairs. Thus the way was clear for France to step into the place of pre-eminence which Spain had long filled, and for Louis himself to become head and dictator of Christendom. Such was the seductive object which was already in the young King's mind, and in the pursuit of which he brought to his country a few years of empty glory, to be followed in due course by ignominy and disaster.

At the outset the foreign relations of France were disturbed only by trivial incidents, such as a quarrel with Spain over the question of the precedence of the French and Spanish ambassadors in London¹ and a misunderstanding with the Pope, which led to nothing important and are chiefly significant as revealing Louis' determination to assert his majesty whenever and wherever it seemed to be threatened. Louis' first war—the War of Devolution—arose out of his marriage with Marie-Thérèse, which, arranged ostensibly to seal the peace between France and Spain, was now the cause of a fresh struggle between them. The situation was this : In 1665 Philip IV died, leaving as heir to his throne a son, then four years old, the child of his second marriage. Upon this Louis put forth a claim to the Spanish Netherlands in right of

¹ The "fray" between the ambassadors and the bloodshed which resulted are described in Pepys' *Diary*, September 30, 1661.



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his wife ; the basis of such claim being a custom of the Netherlands in accordance with which a paternal heritage devolved upon the children of a first marriage to the exclusion of all others. Spain replied that this was merely a civil custom which did not apply to the transmission of territory. It was also true that under the Treaty of the Pyrenees Marie-Thérèse had formally renounced all pretensions to her father's dominions ; but this renunciation had been made contingent upon the payment of a large dowry—a condition expressly designed by Mazarin as a loophole, since he well knew that in the insolvent state of the Spanish Treasury such payment was impossible. The war which followed has no interest from a military point of view, for Spain was entirely unequal to the contest, and Turenne and Condé, now once more fighting on the same side, met with little serious opposition in their campaigns. It was closed by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1668), by which a part of Flanders was added to French territory and the frontier greatly strengthened on the north-east, though Franche-Comté, which Condé had also occupied, was abandoned. One reason for this rather abrupt termination of hostilities was the action which England and Holland now took to arrest French aggression, the danger of which prompted them to sink their long-standing jealousies and make common cause against a foe which menaced them both. Largely through the admirable diplomacy of Sir William Temple, Sweden was also brought into the coalition, and the Triple Alliance thus instituted was formidable enough to prove a decisive factor in the establishment of peace.

THE WAR WITH HOLLAND

But neither Louis nor his ministers regarded this peace as permanent. The King had many personal grievances against the Dutch. He could not forgive them for the active part they had played against him ; he resented the sturdy independence of their diplomatists ; his irritable vanity was ruffled by the outspoken criticism of their pamphleteers and by the offensive medals which had been struck to commemorate

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X the Treaty of Aix ; while his absolutist ideas were outraged by their republicanism and his religious prejudices by their Protestantism. At the same time their commercial success and the friction which had arisen about tariffs provoked Colbert and brought him to the side of the bellicose Louvois, who held firmly to the view that the destruction of the United Provinces was necessary to the completion of the conquest of the Spanish Netherlands. Louis was thus easily persuaded to abandon the policy of Richelieu and Mazarin, both of whom had looked upon Holland as the natural ally of France against Spain, and to enter upon a war which, whatever pretexts might be trumped up in defence of it, was in fact nothing more than a war of utterly unjustifiable aggression.

→ While Louvois was busy with elaborate preparations for the coming campaign, diplomacy cleared the way by breaking up the Triple Alliance. Sweden was detached from the coalition by the promise of a large subsidy. England—or rather England's shameless king—was also bought over. With a fatuous desire to emulate his cousin, Charles II was doing his best to rule without a Parliament, and his chronic need of money and unwillingness to go to the Commons for it made him at all times ready to accept doles from Louis' purse. As mercenary as he was profligate, he had already sold Dunkerque to the French, and now by a secret treaty—the Treaty of Dover (1670)—he entered into an offensive alliance with Louis in return for a handsome pension. The French position was further strengthened by the renewal of the treaty with the League of the Rhine. Holland, on the other hand, now entirely isolated, was rendered specially vulnerable by its own military weakness and internal dissensions. Louis, however, did not move till everything was in complete readiness, and then in 1672 he took the field at the head of a splendidly equipped army, with Turenne and Condé as his chief commanders. The Rhine was crossed without difficulty—an achievement which was celebrated with the most fulsome flattery in art and poetry,¹ but which Napoleon pronounced “a military

¹ E.g., Boileau's *Épître au Roi : Le Passage du Rhin*.

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operation of the fourth class"; the United Provinces were invaded; city after city fell into French hands; and the triumphant progress continued till Amsterdam itself was threatened. The Dutch were at first paralysed, and for the moment their condition and outlook seemed in the last degree desperate. But the extravagant demands with which Louis responded to their appeal for peace stirred them to indignation and stung them to resistance. The oligarchic party of Jan De Witt was overthrown, he and his brother were murdered by a mob which held them responsible for all their troubles, and William of Orange was created Stadtholder and given supreme command by land and sea. The young prince—he was only twenty-two—attacked his apparently hopeless task with sagacity as well as courage. By cutting the dikes about Amsterdam and flooding the country he compelled the French to retreat, while at the same time he took advantage of the alarm caused throughout Europe by Louis' aggressive policy, and by consummate diplomacy succeeded in forming the Grand Alliance of The Hague—a powerful anti-French league of which Holland itself, the Empire, Spain, Brandenburg, Denmark, and Saxony were the principal members (1673). Shortly afterward the artificial alliance between France and England broke down under pressure of popular feeling in the latter country, and England made a separate peace with the Dutch. By his irrational ambitions Louis had thus contrived to array half of Europe against him; and even his continued military successes were no adequate offset to the peril latent in so grave a change in the general situation. Inspired by pique and cupidity, he had set out to crush Holland. He now found himself involved in a European war with Sweden only on his side.

French military genius, however, rose equal to the occasion. Franche-Comté was again occupied (1764). Turenne with brilliant strategy saved Alsace, which was held as lost (1674), and pushed on into the Palatinate, where he was killed by a cannon-ball while reconnoitring near Salzbach (1675). Condé meanwhile had been operating against strong Dutch and

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→ Spanish forces in Champagne (1674), but on Turenne's death he was despatched into Alsace, which was again threatened, and whence he drove the Imperial armies across the Rhine (1675). The naval victories of Duquesne over the united Dutch and Spanish fleets in the Mediterranean were the chief events of 1676. The next year Créqui and Luxembourg, who had replaced Turenne and Condé (now retired), carried on successful campaigns in Germany and the Netherlands, the defeat of William of Orange at Cassel and the fall of Cambrai and Saint-Omer adding great glory to the French arms.

THE TREATY OF NIMEGUEN

By this time, however, the strain of war was beginning to tell seriously on the finances, and the continually increasing burdens of taxation gave rise to discontent throughout the country and here and there to spasmodic revolts, which obliged Louis, however unwillingly, to turn his attention from military triumphs abroad to affairs at home. Another fresh factor in the situation was the action of England, which, neutral since 1674, now in 1677 entered into an active alliance with the Dutch, which was cemented by the marriage of the Stadtholder to Mary, the niece of the King. In these circumstances Louis realized the wisdom of making peace while the advantage was still decidedly in his favour, and the war was closed by the Treaty of Nimeguen (August 1678–February 1679).¹ The terms of this treaty were highly honourable and advantageous to the United Provinces, which, menaced at the outset with total destruction, now remained in possession of all their territory. Spain, on the other hand, suffered considerably. France, while relinquishing all claim to Holland, obtained the confirmation of all the benefits accruing under the Treaty of Westphalia, and in addition acquired Franche-Comté and a line of strong fortified cities of great value as frontier defences.

→ Historians are agreed that this settlement marks the meridian of Louis' reign. It was soon after this that the Parliament of

¹ To be exact, there were really three treaties : one with Holland, a second with Spain, and a third with the Emperor.

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Paris formally bestowed upon him the title of 'le Grand.' Yet, though he had emerged victorious from an unjust war, and though the supremacy of his military power and his personal prestige at home and abroad had alike been placed beyond challenge, he had in fact gained far less than he had hoped, while by his very success he had deepened the apprehensions of other European nations and consolidated the antagonism which his lust for territorial aggrandizement had first aroused. In particular he had united Holland and England against him, and had created a stubborn and implacable enemy in the Prince of Orange, soon to be called to the English throne. The "hollow and unsatisfactory" Peace of Nimeguen (as Macaulay well calls it) was therefore fraught with fresh dangers which were certain to prove the more serious by reason of the malign influence of his triumphs upon Louis himself. His vanity, his ambition, his thirst for military glory at all cost had alike been quickened. Blind to the interests of his country, he now entered upon the road which he dreamed would lead him to ever more and more transcendent successes. It proved, on the contrary, to be the road to ruin.



CHAPTER VI

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III. THE PERIOD OF DECLINE

1684-1715

THE cessation of hostilities with the settlement of Nimeguen was welcomed by all the nations which had been drawn into the Dutch war. But it put no check upon Louis' territorial ambitions. On the contrary, in Voltaire's phrase, he made a period of peace a period of conquests. Taking advantage of the ambiguities in the Treaty of Westphalia, he proceeded, now by tortuous diplomacy, now by subsidies, and now by bullying, to add to his possessions in Alsace and Franche-Comté, annexing in particular three powerful fortresses of immense strategic value—Luxemburg, Strassburg, and Casale. Naturally the suspicions of Europe, and especially of the Empire, Spain, and Italy, were again aroused by these fresh acts of usurpation, and under the influence of William of Orange a secret alliance against Louis was formed, which, though of little importance at the outset, developed later into the great coalition known as the League of Augsburg. But in the meantime Louis continued to act with unexampled arrogance as the dictator of Christendom, and, deeply as his conduct was resented, no one for the moment dared to interfere. He thus had his way, and by the Truce of Ratisbon (1684) secured the assurance of twenty years' undisputed enjoyment of his various recent acquisitions.

Just a year before this France had lost a real friend and Louis the wisest of his counsellors by the death of Colbert. That great minister had spent the last of his energies in unavailing resistance to forces which had become too strong

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for him. Once more the finances of the country lapsed into anarchy. The war had already drained the Treasury, and now money and ever more money had somehow to be found to meet the King's ever-growing extravagances—his bribes to foreign princes, his vast expenditure on costly buildings (at Trianon, Marly, Clagny, Saint-Germain, Fontainebleau, Vincennes, Versailles), on royal *fêtes* and progresses, on his mistresses and personal dissipations. It was in vain that Colbert implored him to economize, in vain that he sought to turn his master's attention from military ambitions to the needs of his people. The King was deaf to all his entreaties, and as million followed million into the abyss Colbert was driven to resort to the extortions of his precursors in order to wring money out of an impoverished and discontented peasantry, who execrated him as the author of all their sufferings. Bitterly disappointed to see his work for reform undone, he died, worn out by toil and heart-broken, in September 1683. His influence, which on the whole had been distinctly for good, had long been waning before that of his rival, Louvois, and his place in the King's confidence was now definitely taken by that unscrupulous and truculent Chauvinist, who cared nothing for the welfare of the people and everything for war and foreign conquest. As a spur always ready to prick the side of his master's intent, he was henceforth for many years to be the evil genius of the King and the country.

LOUIS' PRIVATE LIFE

Though it is fortunately no part of our business here to swell our record with details drawn from the voluminous *chroniques scandaleuses* of Louis' reign, a few words must still be devoted to the more private side of his life because of the direct bearing of this upon the course of national affairs.

Louis XIII, with all his faults, had possessed one redeeming virtue rare in high places at the time, that of personal chastity. Louis XIV, on the contrary, was as lecherous as his grandfather and even more unstable in his profligacy. Unfaithful as a lover no less than as a husband, he not only

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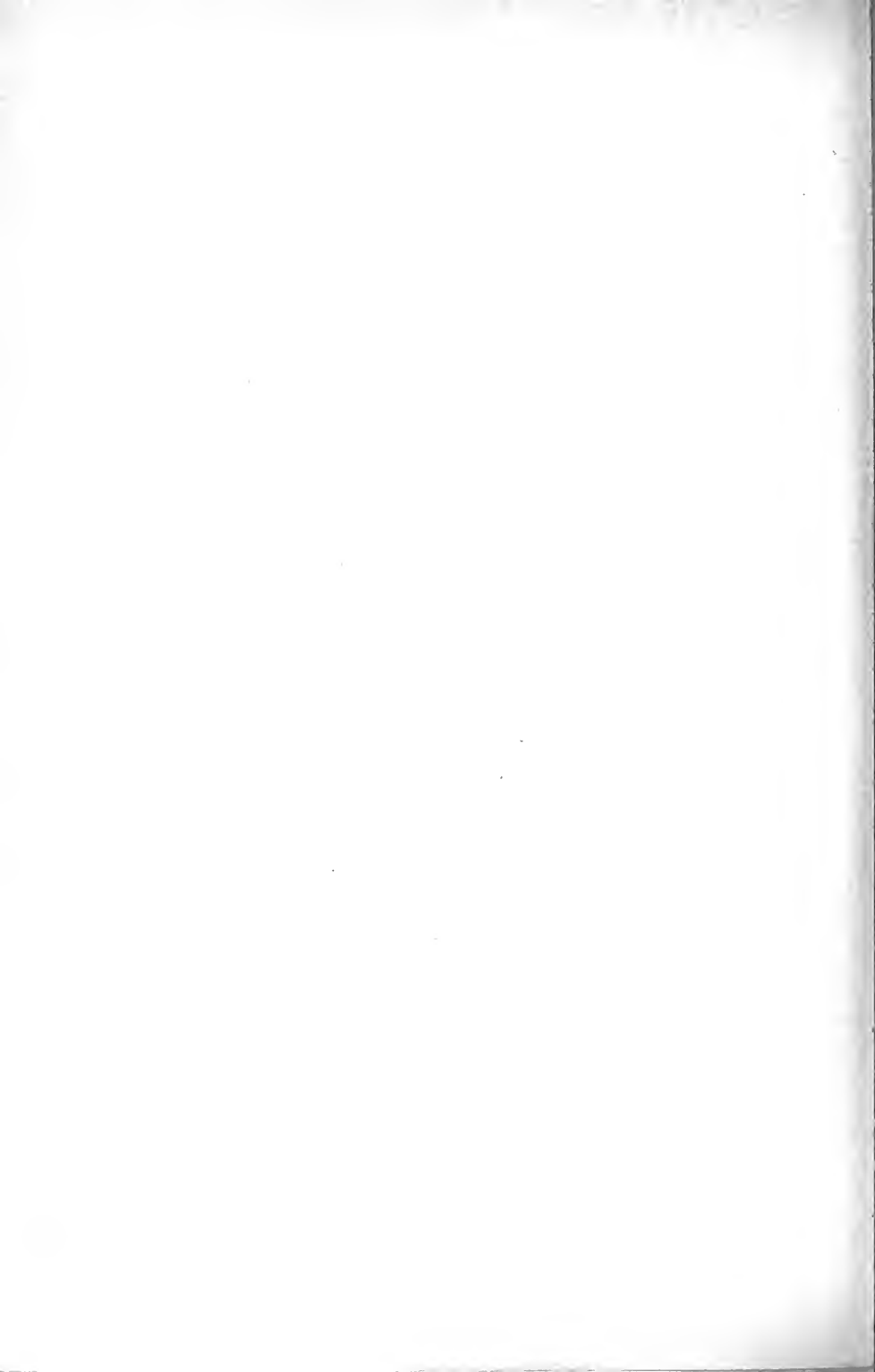
indulged his passions without check or shame, but even relieved the monotony of his more serious illicit unions with innumerable caprices which passed almost as soon as they were born. The first of his more enduring attachments was for Louise de la Vallière, a gentle, dreamy, fair-haired, blue-eyed girl, who loved her royal master with unmistakable sincerity, bore him two children, and when his fondness for her subsided retired to a Carmelite convent, where she spent the remaining thirty years of her life in austere religious devotions. She was succeeded by a woman of very different character, the haughty, ambitious, imperious Françoise-Athénaïs de Mortemart, the wife of the Marquis of Montespan. For fourteen years she remained the King's chief mistress, and no fewer than eight children were the fruit of the union—children whom Louis had the impudence to legitimize and to place on an equal footing with those of his wife. Then in turn her period of ascendancy came to a stormy close with the rise of a new power which was destined to change the current of the King's life and the whole spirit of the Court—that of the famous Mme de Maintenon. So great was the part played by this remarkable woman during the second half of Louis' reign that some account of her is indispensable to our story.

MME DE MAINTENON

Françoise d'Aubigné was the granddaughter of the distinguished Huguenot scholar and soldier Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, and was born in 1635 in the prison of Niort, where her rascally father was confined for debt. After a girlhood of adventure and struggle she married at seventeen the witty, brave, dissipated cripple—"ce joyeux et savant cul-de-jatte," as Saint-Simon calls him—the dramatist and novelist Paul Scarron, through whom she became intimate with the leaders of the literary world of Paris. On his death in 1660 she fell into obscurity, but nine years later she was appointed governess of the King's children by Mme de Montespan, a charge which she fulfilled with great wisdom and solicitude, winning their affection, and at the same time arousing the jealousy of their



59. MADAME DE MAINTENON



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mother, who before long began, and with good cause, to regard her as a dangerous rival. The struggle between the two women was long and bitter ; but by little and little, though she steadily refused to take the shortest road to the King's favour, Mme Scarron gained the royal confidence and esteem, and in 1675 she was formally presented to Court under the title of the Marquise de Maintenon.¹ This was the first decisive step toward her ultimate victory. The King's intrigue with a certain Mlle de Fontanges was a temporary check to the growth of her influence, but this was removed by the death in 1681 of that beautiful and self-willed girl after a reign of scarcely more than a year. Many violent scenes had meanwhile taken place, sometimes in the presence of royalty itself, between Mme de Maintenon and Mme de Montespan, but by this time the breach between Louis and his former mistress was generally understood by the Court. In 1683 the Queen died, and not long after—probably in December 1684—Mme de Maintenon was married to the King. The marriage was clandestine, and Madame never assumed the rank of Queen. But the secret was an open one, and her position was fully recognized even by the royal princes. Mme de Montespan none the less lingered for several years about the Court and capital. She finally retired in 1691, spent her remaining years (after the fashion of women of her class) in religious exercises, and died in 1707.

The character of Mme de Maintenon, though it has been repeatedly analysed and discussed, is still a good deal of an enigma. She was undoubtedly a woman of clear head and strong will, astute, ambitious, prudent, and cold. Scandal gathered about her earlier life, but that, in the circumstances of the time, was perhaps inevitable, and it would seem that though her lot was cast from the first among persons of the laxest morals, her own conduct, if not altogether faultless, was beyond serious reproach. It is certain at least that amid all the profligacy of the Court she was conspicuously jealous

¹ Maintenon was the name of an estate which she had recently bought, and which was made into a marquise by the King.

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of her good name. The question of her sincerity in the matter of religion is perhaps a more difficult one. She has been portrayed by adverse critics, who take their cue from the thoroughly hostile Saint-Simon, as a clever and unscrupulous hypocrite, with whom piety was simply the means to an end ; and it must, I think, be conceded that her career presents problems which can scarcely be solved on the supposition that she was always actuated by pure and disinterested motives. None the less she seems to have been a thoroughly devout woman, though her ideas of religion took an extremely disagreeable form ; and if she was shrewd enough to make capital out of her reputation for sanctity and ascetic virtue, that reputation was still deserved.

It is here then that we have to reckon with her influence upon the King. Urged on by her clerical advisers—by men like her confessor the Abbé Gobelin, Bossuet, and Bourdaloue—she undertook in earnest the task of Louis' moral reformation. Her first great success was in bringing about his reconciliation with his neglected wife. After the Queen's death and her own marriage she used her power to turn his attention more and more to matters of piety and to give a religious direction to his policy. Nor was this so remarkable an achievement as might at first sight be supposed. A worn-out rake easily becomes a devotee, and as, moreover, despite his outrageous licentiousness, Louis had always shown a strong religious bias, which had already been increasing with advancing years, Madame found a soil well prepared for the seed she was so anxious to sow. The result was a profound change not only in Louis' own life, but also in the whole tone and temper of the Court. The brilliant *fêtes* which had long been the glory of Versailles were now things of the past ; even the most profligate of the nobility found it desirable, not indeed to abandon, but at least to dissemble, their excesses, now that pensions and promotions were the reward of punctual fulfilment of the duties enjoined by the Church ; religion, as Madame herself boasted, became fashionable ; and though it was at bottom only a religion of the most empty pretence—though, in

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Saint-Simon's vivid phrase, the Court "sweated hypocrisy"—the increase in sobriety and external decency may still be counted as a gain.

LOUIS' RELIGIOUS POLICY

In another way, however, Mme de Maintenon's ascendancy was unquestionably and wholly for evil. Born a Protestant, but converted to Catholicism while a girl, she was a stiff-necked bigot in the faith of her adoption and was filled with the bitterest animus against her former co-religionists. In such a mind as Louis' piety and intolerance were inseparable, and Madame's influence helped to strengthen their union.

But here we must speak with qualification. The idea is widely current that she was herself personally and immediately responsible for those crimes of religious bigotry which have left the darkest blot on Louis' character and reign. This was not so. She stimulated his zeal for orthodoxy and an active propagandism in the cause of the Church, but otherwise her influence upon him was almost entirely indirect, and is to be sought mainly in the growth, under the new conditions which she helped to bring about, of the power of the clergy in national affairs. The prime force behind Louis' policy of reaction was the Church. Yet so despotic was the King's temper, so deeply rooted in his mind was the idea of the absolute supremacy of his will in all things, that he yielded even to ecclesiastical persuasion only when, like Macbeth's airy dagger, it marshalled him the way that he was going.

Personal feelings thus made him a resolute supporter of the liberties of the Gallican Church, which for him were identical with the prerogatives of the Crown. Twice he quarrelled with the Pope: once over the question of the *régale*, or the royal right of disposing, according to ancient custom, of the revenues and benefices of bishoprics during their vacancy; and again some years later about the privilege enjoyed by the French ambassador, in common with other ambassadors, of granting asylum to fugitives in his *hôtel* in Rome; and in each case he showed his determination to withstand any encroachment

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upon his authority even on the part of the Holy See itself. The first of these disputes, though trivial enough in itself, is important because it led to a clear statement of Gallican claims. These claims were formulated by an extraordinary assembly of clergy convened for the purpose, the moving spirit in which was the silver-tongued and servile Bossuet, who, though he never once protested against Louis' scandalous life or his unjust and wicked wars, was ready now as at all times to uphold his most extravagant theories of absolutism. Reduced to simplest terms, the famous Declaration of 1682—long regarded as the Charter of Gallicanism—was tantamount to an assertion of the supremacy of the King in Church as well as in State. The Pope, it was decreed, had no right to interfere in temporal matters; even in spiritual affairs his authority was inferior to that of the General Councils;¹ "the rules, customs, and institutions" of the national Church, which had made that Church largely independent of Rome, were to stand unchanged; while the judgment of the Pope was practically stripped of its infallibility, since it was pronounced to be conditional upon oecumenical ratification.

LOUIS AND THE HUGUENOTS

Louis' duel with Rome was, however, only a minor episode in his reign and led to no consequences of great significance. It was a very different matter when the same autocratic spirit prompted him to the destruction of every vestige of religious liberty among his subjects.

We have seen that after their political annihilation by Richelieu the Huguenots had accepted their new conditions and had settled down peacefully under the protection assured to them by the State. The great Cardinal had himself made this easy for them by his wise policy of conciliation, and in this he had been followed by Mazarin and Colbert, both of whom had fully recognized the qualities of the Huguenots as law-abiding citizens, and in particular the immense value of

¹ This article was a restatement of the decree of the Council of Constance (1414-18).

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their work in the industrial development of the country. How completely they had now abandoned their former unpatriotic ambitions is shown by the striking fact that they had taken no part in the disturbances of the Frondes. Yet, despite this radical change in the whole tenor of their life, they were still regarded with a certain amount of popular suspicion, while clerical clamour against them had never ceased. To this clamour, which grew steadily in volume and virulence after his accession to power, Louis was himself predisposed to listen. He disliked Protestantism on religious grounds, but still more on political. The Huguenots were heretics, which was bad enough; but they were also schismatics, which was ever so much worse. They were good subjects, it is true; but they still persisted in their independence in respect of creed and ecclesiastical organization, and for this reason their very existence seemed to him a perpetual challenge to his theory of absolute power. That any body of men should assume the right to worship God in ways other than those which he himself prescribed was intolerable to his arrogant spirit. His purpose was to be supreme over the consciences no less than over the actions of his people. Religious liberty was therefore for him only a subtle form of political insubordination. Such being his views, the really surprising thing is that, notwithstanding the ever-increasing pressure of the zealots at Court, his recourse to open violence should have been so long deferred.

For some years after Mazarin's death the attempt to undermine Protestantism was conducted only by peaceful methods. Missionaries were sent to preach to the heretics; dogmatic literature was distributed among them; all the arts of persuasion were employed to lead them from the error of their ways; and, to reinforce the appeal, those who yielded received handsome rewards. Only slight headway was made, however, and presently this policy of friendly propagandism was succeeded by efforts of a more aggressive character. Enactment after enactment was levelled against the privileges of the sectaries both as Protestants and as citizens. Their civil liberties were curtailed. Little by little they were excluded

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from all public employments. Many of their schools and temples were closed, and their rights of worship were interfered with. Moreover, in countless other insidious ways their position was rendered more and more intolerable; for example, mixed marriages were prohibited, and while Catholics were forbidden under heavy penalties to embrace Protestantism, Protestant children, on the other hand, were permitted to renounce their faith at the age of seven—a monstrous provision the practical purpose of which is of course sufficiently clear. Such systematic persecution was galling enough. It increased in vigour with Louis' growing bigotry under the influence of Mme de Maintenon, his confessor the Père La Chaise, and the great leader of the devout party at Court, Bossuet. In 1679 we find Mme de Maintenon writing of the King: "Il pense sérieusement à la conversion des hérétiques, et dans peu il y travaillera pour tout de bon." These words herald the harsher measures which began in the following year. To the few who deprecated such measures Bossuet had a simple and crushing reply: "Those who do not approve of the King's using violence in the matter of religion, on the ground that religion ought to be free, are guilty of blasphemy and error." More than any other man Louvois was responsible for the savagery which ensued when regiments of dragoons—notorious as the most brutal soldiers in the French army—were despatched first into the Cevennes and later into Béarn to annihilate heresy with fire and sword.

REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES

It need scarcely be said that I hold no brief for Louis, but in fairness to him it must be remembered that he was himself in all probability kept in ignorance of the worst features of such new methods for "la conversion des hérétiques." He learned only of the practical results of these *dragonnades* in the return—so it was reported to him—of many thousands of misbelievers to the fold of the true Church. Such results encouraged him to strike his great final blow at Protestantism. On October 22, 1685, a decree was promulgated formally

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revoking the Edict of Nantes. By this enactment all civil and religious privileges hitherto enjoyed by the Protestants were cancelled, their ministers were expelled the country, their schools suppressed, and their temples destroyed.

This outrageous measure was followed up by renewed *dragonnades* and much cruel persecution of the Protestants in all parts of the country, and a little later by a revolt of the Camisards¹ in the Cevennes, which lasted for some years and was not thoroughly crushed until the whole region had been devastated. But such things were commonly regarded as mere incidents, regrettable, of course, but of no importance. The act of revocation was received with almost universal rejoicing. It was, according to Bossuet, a "miracle," for the performance of which, however, the sycophant preacher was careful to divide the praise between the Almighty and His vicegerent on earth. The dying Le Tellier welcomed it with a fervent "Nunc dimitte, Domine, quia viderunt oculi mei salutem tuam." Even Mme de Sévigné, from whom a saner judgment might have been expected, wrote of it in a letter: "Nothing could be finer; no king ever did or ever will do anything so memorable." All over the country preachers and poets, academies and municipalities, combined to swell the chorus of jubilation; the only cause for regret being that the last clause of the edict still accorded to the heretics the privilege of purely private worship. Only here and there a solitary observer, like Vauban,² like Saint-Simon,

¹ So called from the *camise*, or blouse, worn by the peasants.

² Sebastien le Prestre de Vauban was a man of special distinction as the greatest military engineer of his age, and the father of the science of fortification. Altogether he conducted fifty-three successful sieges. It was he who surrounded France with a cordon of fortresses which proved to be of the utmost value in subsequent wars. Saint-Simon speaks of him, apparently without exaggeration, as "perhaps the most honest and virtuous man of his time." His wisdom as a statesman was shown in his attempts to reform many abuses during the later years of Louis' reign. Unlike most of the great soldiers of the age—Condé, for example, Turenne, Louvois—he was a kind-hearted man, with a deep respect for human life. "Sire," he once said to Louis, "I would rather save a hundred of your men than kill three thousand of the enemy."

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had the sagacity to perceive that this "crowning glory of the King's reign" was in fact a blunder of the first magnitude as well as an atrocious crime. Its moral iniquity is too flagrant to require comment. But attention should be directed to its stupidity as revealed by its economic and social bearings. In spite of severe edicts against emigration, many thousands of Protestants—Henri Martin puts the number at from 200,000 to 250,000—fled into England, Holland, and Brandenburg, carrying with them their skill and their knowledge of arts and manufactures to enrich the countries in which they sought asylum at the expense of their native land. As the industry of France had been largely in Huguenot hands, the effect of this great exodus will be obvious. Some thousands of the best French soldiers and sailors likewise passed over into the service of other Powers; while a serious loss to the moral strength of the nation was entailed by the withdrawal of so large a body of men having all the sturdy qualities of our own Puritan stock.

WAR WITH THE LEAGUE OF AUGSBURG

Having now, as he fondly believed, destroyed Protestantism in France, Louis was ready to take another disastrous step under the same combined influences of personal vanity and religious zeal. Richelieu and Mazarin had united with the Protestant nations against Spain and Austria. Louis was resolved to be the head of a Catholic Europe. Three years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes James II was driven from the English throne, and Louis' old enemy William of Orange was invited to take his place. James, who fled to France on William's approach, was warmly welcomed by Louis, who at once took up his cause as that both of Catholicism and of the absolutist principle of "the right divine of kings to govern wrong." The result was that France was soon involved in a long and tedious war with the now powerful League of Augsburg.

Fortune seemed at first to smile on James, but the fate of that foolish and cowardly king was settled by the battle of

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the Boyne (July 1690) and the great naval engagement at La Hogue (May 1692), which struck a severe blow at the power of France at sea and finally convinced Louis that his attempt to restore the Stuarts in England was doomed to failure. On the Continent campaign followed campaign with little system on either side and with no decisive result. For France the war was mainly one of defence, and the splendid fortifications which had been provided by Vauban enabled her to hold the enemy at bay on all her frontiers. Furthermore, in order to establish the barrier of an absolute desert on the east, the Palatinate was wasted and pillaged, at the direction of Louvois, with fearful barbarities which aroused the horror and indignation of Europe. Meanwhile Catinat twice routed the Duke of Savoy—at Staffarde (1690) and at Marsaglia (1693)—and Luxembourg, Turenne's successor, won notable victories in the Netherlands, at Fleurus (1690), Steenkerke (1692), and Neerwinden (1693). But, brilliant as these exploits were, they were barren of practical results, for William of Orange, though repeatedly defeated, always contrived to prevent his adversary from profiting by his success. So the war dragged on for several years longer, and then, though he had really accomplished nothing, Louis found it necessary to open negotiations for peace. France was sick of the protracted and aimless struggle. Economically the country was on the brink of ruin. In many parts the population was decreasing; industry and commerce were declining rapidly; the financial policy of Colbert's successors was reckless and suicidal; poverty and misery were universal; a dangerous spirit of discontent was abroad; and, despite the rigours of the censorship, there was much open and often daring criticism not only of the King's ministers, but even of his sacred Majesty himself. Even Louis, though his early ambitions for the welfare of his subjects had long since vanished before his dreams of conquest and glory, could hardly be blind to such omens of disaster. He was, moreover, impelled to bring the war to a close by a consideration which had greater weight with him than the appalling state of his people. It was known that the childless

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Charles II of Spain, who had been dying all his life, was now at last tottering on the brink of the grave. His death would open the question of the succession to the Spanish throne, and Louis intended that the settlement of that question should be dictated by himself. But to the end that his hands might be free, he must first break up the coalition against him, and this could be done only through peace.

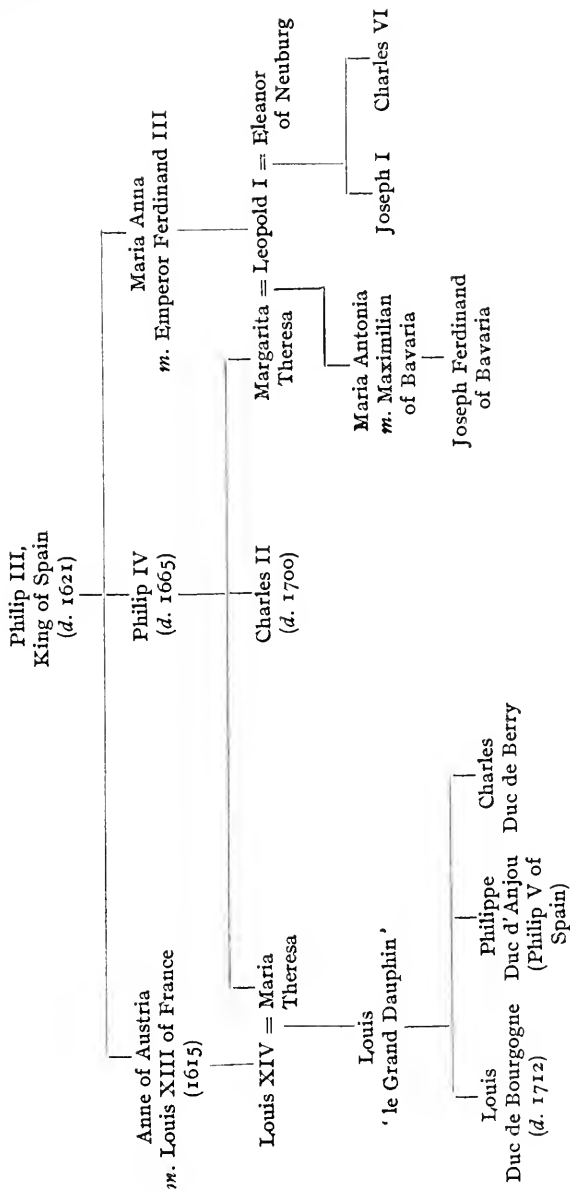
THE TREATY OF RYSWICK

It has been said that he showed great moderation and a marked desire to conciliate his enemies in the terms arranged. The implied praise is scarcely his due. As a matter of fact, these terms did not emanate from him. They were imposed upon him by his two stubborn opponents, William III and the Emperor Leopold. The Treaty of Ryswick (September 1697) was, indeed, extremely humiliating both to Louis and to France. Concessions were made in it on every side. Louis' chief foe, William, was recognized as King of England; all recent conquests in the Netherlands, Germany, and Spain, except Strassburg, were relinquished; the Dutch, though they restored the French colony of Pondicherry, were accorded an advantageous treaty of commerce and were permitted to garrison a number of important frontier or 'barrier' towns. The nine years' war had brought a certain amount of honour to French arms; but it left Louis with an impoverished country, with no gains commensurate with the losses entailed, and with a much damaged prestige.

WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION : FIRST PERIOD

Such prestige, however, he hoped to recover in the impending controversy about the succession in Spain. As Charles II would leave no issue, what would become of his immense possessions after his death? That was the question which was now agitating the chancelleries of Europe. There were three rival claimants to the throne—the Dauphin of France, the Emperor Leopold, and the Electoral Prince of Bavaria. As the table opposite will show, the Dauphin, as the grandson

GENEALOGICAL TABLE TO EXPLAIN THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

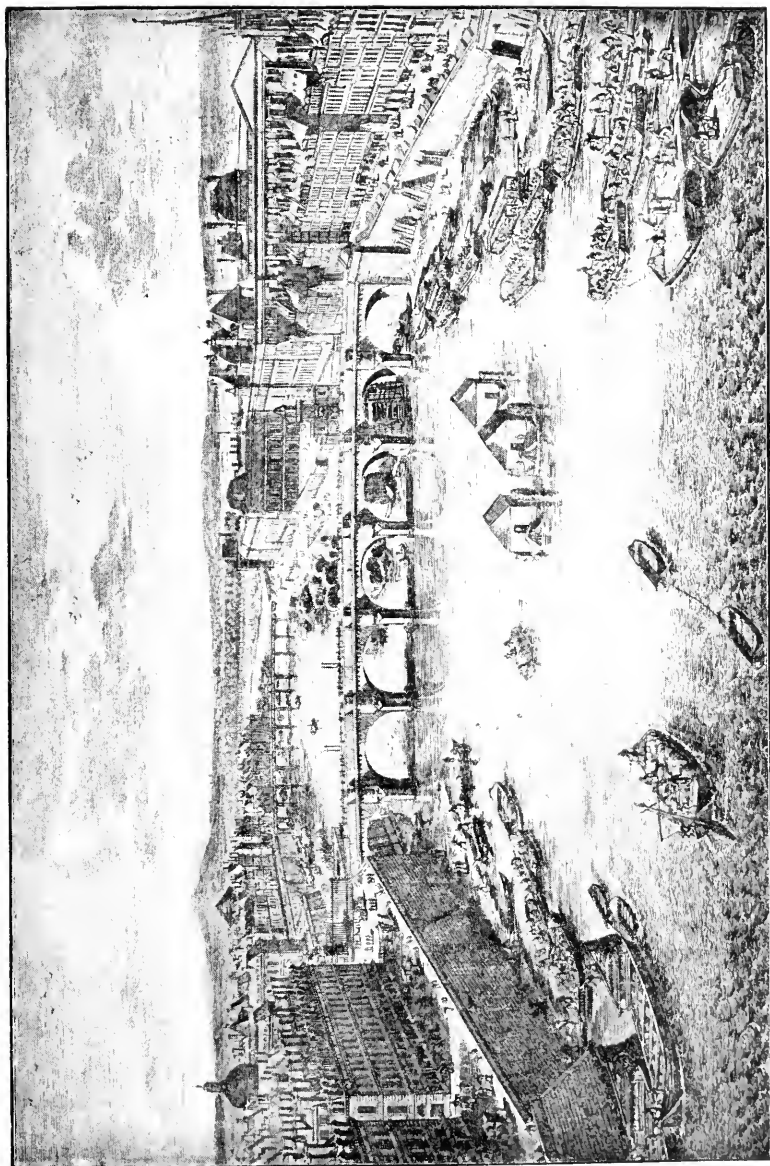


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of Philip IV, had genealogically the strongest claim; then came the Prince of Bavaria, as the great-grandson of Philip; and last of all the Emperor, as first cousin of Charles II. But against both the Dauphin and the Prince stood the acts of renunciation signed on marriage by the mother of the one and the grandmother of the other respectively. It is true that in the former case Louis, as we have seen, treated such renunciation as void, since the promised dowry remained unpaid, while in the latter the act was held invalid by the Spanish jurists themselves, because it had never been confirmed by the Cortes. But the existence of these theoretical bars made it possible for the Emperor to maintain his pretensions against the stronger claims of his two rivals.

The only peaceful solution of this complicated problem lay in the partitioning of the Spanish empire to the satisfaction not only of the contending parties, but also of the other European Powers, who were naturally anxious that the situation should not develop into a new general war. Accordingly, while the wretched Charles still lingered on from month to month and from year to year, diplomatic negotiations were proceeding which resulted in two Treaties of Partition (1698, 1700), under which the Dauphin was to receive the kingdom of Naples, the Two Sicilies, Lorraine, and a few Tuscan ports. But the dying monarch grew indignant when he learned that his dominions were thus being parcelled out behind his back and without his consent, and in order to thwart the bargainers and to secure the integrity of his empire he made a will bequeathing it in its entirety to his great-nephew, the Dauphin's second son, Philippe, Duke of Anjou. This bequest was, however, made on the express condition that Philippe should renounce on behalf of himself and his heirs all claim to the French throne. Failing such renunciation, the Spanish crown was to pass to Charles, the second son of the Emperor Leopold.

This will was executed on October 2, 1700. On November 1 Charles died. And now Louis found himself face to face with a problem of the utmost gravity. Should he stand by the last Treaty of Partition and by thus rejecting the bequest



60. VIEW OF PARIS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



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to his grandson permit the ultimate reunion of Spain and Austria? Or should he repudiate the treaty with the practical certainty of involving himself in a war with Austria, Holland, and England? He at once called a special council at Fontainebleau to consider the question. Then for three days he withheld his decision. Yet in the circumstances there could be little doubt as to the course which he would elect to take. Persuaded that in any event war was inevitable and that, as one of his ministers is reported to have put it, it would be better to fight for the whole than for the part, he formally presented the Duke of Anjou to the Court as the new King of Spain.

This decision meant the aggrandizement of the Bourbon dynasty, and was therefore viewed with hostile eyes by the nations concerned to maintain the balance of power. But war might still have been averted but for the fact that Louis was now guilty of two amazing blunders which revealed at once his intolerable arrogance and his utter want of any sense of honour. In the first place he violated the express condition of Charles II's will by allowing his grandson to ascend the throne of Spain while reserving his contingent right to that of France. In the second place, in defiance of the Treaty of Ryswick, he seized the barrier fortresses in the Netherlands and recognized the eldest son of James II (now just dead) as King of England—an insult which stung the English people to the quick. By these insensate acts he precipitated a struggle for which France, still suffering from the terrible strain of the last war, was very poorly prepared. Once more he had rashly challenged the strength of Western Europe. Against him he had England, Holland, Austria, and the Empire, united in the Grand Alliance of The Hague; on his side only the Elector of Bavaria and the Dukes of Modena and Savoy; for though Spain was of course nominally with him she had neither soldiers nor money for his practical support. Louis had thus to meet a formidable coalition almost single-handed. Nor was this the only disquieting feature in his situation. The balance of intellect was also against him. The great admini-

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strators and captains who had done so much for the glory of the early years of his reign—Colbert, Louvois, Condé, Turenne—had now passed away, and they had left no competent successors. On the other hand, though William III died immediately after the outbreak of hostilities, the allies had a very strong statesman in Anthony Heinsius, Grand Pensionary of Holland, and able generals in the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, the greatest soldiers of their time.

The War of the Spanish Succession lasted from 1701 till 1714, and was fought out in Italy, on the Rhine, in the Netherlands, and in Spain.

The record of the first three years is one of fluctuating fortunes, with gains and losses now on one side and now on the other. In Italy the early progress of Prince Eugene was arrested by the Duke of Vendôme, who in turn was checked by the defection of the Duke of Savoy. Catinat and Villars operated with success against the Imperial forces on the Rhine, but were unable to carry out their plan of marching on Vienna. Marlborough, in the meantime, commanding the allied English and Dutch armies, drove the French from a number of their border strongholds in the Spanish Netherlands, and by the capture of Venloo, Liège, and other important places, secured Holland against the menace of immediate invasion. But on the whole, and despite the fact that the revolt of the Protestants in the Cévennes was an additional source of embarrassment to the Government, the balance of advantage during the first stage of the war was with the French.

SECOND PERIOD

In 1704, however, the tide of fortune suddenly changed. In the spring of that year Louis determined to make a supreme effort to reach Vienna, and thus strike a fatal blow at the heart of the Empire. In order to frustrate this design, Marlborough and Eugene joined forces in Bavaria, and in August gained what Marlborough himself described as "a glorious victory" over the French and Bavarians at Blenheim. The immediate result of this decisive battle was that the French

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were compelled to evacuate Germany and retire across the Rhine. Then the two commanders separated, Marlborough returning to the Netherlands and Eugene to Italy. The former inflicted an overwhelming defeat on the incompetent Villeroi at Ramillies in 1706. In the same year Prince Eugene obtained a complete victory over the equally incompetent Marsin before Turin. These reverses meant the loss to France of the greater part of Brabant and Piedmont. Two years later Marlborough and Eugene, once more united, routed the French at Oudenarde. The capitulation of Ghent, Bruges, and Lille, which followed, exposed the north-east frontier of France to the allies.

Meanwhile events were moving rapidly in the remaining theatre of war. In 1704 Gibraltar was captured by an English fleet under Sir George Rooke. In 1705 Barcelona surrendered to Lord Peterborough. In 1706 the Earl of Galway entered Madrid and the Archduke Charles was proclaimed king. The situation in Spain was, however, saved by the remarkable loyalty of the people to Philip V.

Such a succession of reverses would in itself have been enough to bring even the imperious Louis to his senses. But misfortunes abroad were not his only cause for uneasiness. The condition of things at home was becoming more and more appalling. Exhausted France seemed to be on the raw edge of ruin. The finances were in hopeless disorder; poverty was universal; even the Court began to feel the pinch of want. Then came bad harvests, the fearful winter of 1709, general famine, and the consequent increase of misery among all classes. In such circumstances Louis realized that one course only was open to him. Already after Ramillies there had been talk of peace, but chiefly through the opposition of Marlborough it had come to nothing. Louis now once more opened negotiations.

Unfortunately, however, the successes of the allies had made them as overbearing as Louis himself had been at the very height of his power, and nothing short of his complete humiliation would satisfy them. They demanded not only that he should surrender Luxemburg, Namur, Charleroi,

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Strassburg, and other important places, but that he should also cede the whole of Spain to the Archduke Charles, undertaking, if necessary, to join with them in driving Philip out of his kingdom. On such conditions a truce of two months was to be granted, after which definite terms of peace were to be discussed on the basis proposed.

In making these demands the allies simply overreached themselves. They were, indeed, so excessive that even in his extremity Louis could not possibly entertain them. The personal rebuff he might have accepted, for there is no doubt that at the moment his spirit was chastened. But he could hardly be expected to consent to fight against his own grandson in the interests of Austria and to see France reduced to second rank among the nations. As events proved, the English Whig Government were guilty of grave miscalculations in their attempt to force such conditions upon him. The situation was eminently favourable to them ; but they lost their advantage by insisting upon terms which practically compelled Louis to continue the struggle.

As it was, Louis surprised them by breaking off negotiations and throwing himself once more into war. Then he did an astonishing thing. For the first and only time in his life he cast the principles of absolutism to the winds and made a direct appeal to the French nation. In a circular letter which he sent broadcast throughout the kingdom he asked his people to judge between himself and his enemies. He told them of his own desire for peace and of his efforts to secure it, of his willingness to make humiliating sacrifices to that great end, and of the obvious determination of the allies to crush France altogether. " Although," he wrote, " my tenderness for my people is not less keen than that which I feel for my own children ; although I share all the evils which the war has made my faithful people suffer, and have shown that I desire sincerely to bring them the enjoyment of peace, I am convinced that they will themselves refuse to accept conditions equally contrary to justice and to the honour of the French name." This appeal instantly justified itself. Its effect was remarkable.

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The heart of the nation was touched. A great wave of patriotic enthusiasm swept over the country. The people forgot that Louis had himself plunged them into disaster. They made his war their own. He now had a united France behind him—a France goaded by misery and nerved by desperation—as he entered upon the last stage of the long struggle.

CLOSING PERIOD OF THE WAR

The result was that he was now able to put a larger army into the field than ever before during the war. The allies, well aware of this new effort, made the most elaborate preparations for the coming campaign. But their former triumphs were not to be repeated. At Malplaquet, in 1709, Marlborough and Eugene were indeed victorious, but they bought success at such an enormous cost that Villars was able to write to the King: "If God vouchsafe that we lose such another battle Your Majesty may count your enemies destroyed." The following year Vendôme's victory at Villaviciosa settled Philip firmly on the Spanish throne. The allies, who believed that France had been finally vanquished, were amazed at this unexpected national revival. By this time, moreover, other influences were at work in Louis' favour. England, which had long been the mainstay of the Grand Alliance, was fast losing interest in the war. The elections of 1710 resulted in the return to the House of Commons of a strong Tory majority pledged to vote against its continuance. Marlborough, too, lost his influence with the Queen. Then an event occurred which gave the new Tory ministers Harley and Bolingbroke a good excuse to seek for peace. The death of the Emperor Joseph I left the Imperial crown to the Archduke Charles. This changed the complexion of European affairs, for if the new Emperor were now to be placed on the Spanish throne his accession would mean the union of Spain and the Empire, and therefore the disturbance of that balance of power which it was the policy of England to maintain. Nothing definite was done for the moment, but though the war continued the end was really in sight. After many months of negotiations

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peace with England and Holland was at last signed at Utrecht on April 11, 1713. Even now, however, Austria and Germany did not relinquish the struggle, and it was only in the following year, after an unsuccessful campaign of Eugene against Villars, that peace was concluded with the Emperor by the Treaty of Rastadt.

By these treaties, the terms of which were widely different from those which the allies had sought to dictate a few years before, the Spanish monarchy was confirmed in the French line of the Bourbons, and thus Louis gained one great point for which he had been fighting, though a formal renunciation of Philip's claims to the French throne was made by both Louis and his grandson. Spain, however, lost her possessions in Italy and the Netherlands, while the Dutch, far as they were from realizing all that they had hoped, obtained the security of a barrier in the Austrian Netherlands between them and France. As a minor result of the treaties Prussia was recognized as an independent Power. England's share of the spoil was represented by Gibraltar, Minorca, and in the New World the Hudson Bay Territory, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia. England, moreover, received Louis' solemn assurance that he would give no support to the Jacobites and would acknowledge Queen Anne and the Protestant succession.

CLOSING YEARS OF LOUIS' REIGN

Though the English people as a whole were glad enough to be done with the war, the Treaty of Utrecht was severely criticized by them at the time. It was very generally considered that, whether through weakness or want of skill, Harley and Bolingbroke had proved no match for the French diplomatists, and that the concessions which they had obtained were a very inadequate return for Marlborough's brilliant victories. But we are not now concerned with the English side of the account. The question for us is, what was the net result of the treaty to Louis himself? The answer clearly is, that on a superficial view such result was, in the circumstances, extraordinarily favourable. France had emerged far

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more easily than was to have been anticipated from a conflict which for a time had threatened her very existence. She lost no part of her European territory ; her boundaries remained as before ; the cession of her claims in America had apparently little importance ; and she maintained her prestige by securing the Bourbon dynasty in Spain. Externally regarded, indeed, she still seemed to keep her premier place among the nations. But closer examination shows that after all her losses were very considerable. If much of her old glory survived, her actual power was practically gone. Nor was this the worst. Internally she had suffered terribly from the war. Public credit was shattered. Huge burdens of debt had been piled up. The desperate expedients—forced loans, paper money, incessant increase of taxation—by which the Government attempted to cope with the financial situation, in the nature of things only intensified the evils they were designed to remedy. The population had been greatly reduced both by the war itself and by the disease and poverty which followed in its train. Commerce and industry were ruined. Large portions of the country were desolate and the peasant classes were on the edge of starvation. Such was the price which the nation had to pay for its monarch's ambitions, and the consequence was precisely what was to have been expected. The outburst of popular loyalty which had followed Louis' appeal quickly spent its force. It would be almost an anachronism to speak as yet of any public spirit in France. But though the masses of the people had little chance of expressing their feelings and no chance at all of translating them into practical form, unrest and sullen discontent were universal.

The clouds of national disaster thus gathered about Louis' closing years. Other troubles of a more personal character added to the growing gloom. His son, Louis the Dauphin, now a man of fifty, died of smallpox during the great epidemic which ravaged Europe in 1711. He was the only survivor of the King's legitimate children. The Dauphin's eldest son, the Duke of Burgundy, an intelligent and public-spirited

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prince of whom high hopes were entertained,¹ succumbed to malignant fever the next year, only a week after his wife, Adélaïde of Savoy, who had been a great favourite of Louis. Then their eldest son, the Duke of Brittany, followed them to the grave, leaving a second son, Louis, Duke of Anjou, born in 1710, as heir to the throne. These domestic afflictions deeply affected the old King, whose own health was by this time sadly shaken. In the summer of 1715 he was attacked by an ulcer in the leg. Badly treated by the Court physician, the disease soon spread; during August he grew steadily worse; and on September 1 death relieved him from his sufferings.

Louis faced the end with characteristic dignity and complete composure. So long as consciousness remained he was still unmistakably the King. "I thought," he said to those about him, almost at the last, "that it would be more difficult to die." All through his painful illness, and especially when all hope of recovery had been abandoned, his mind was constantly occupied with religion. His only anxiety was for the forgiveness of his sins. He prayed much and earnestly; found great comfort in the rites of the Church; and told Mme de Maintenon that his one consolation in leaving her was the hope of a happy reunion in eternity.

Yet it is evident that he felt regret, perhaps even something like remorse, as he looked back over his long career. "Death," said Madame to him, "is difficult for those only who have restitution to make." "Ah," was his reply, "in the matter of restitution I owe none as an individual, but for all that I owe to the kingdom I hope in the mercy of God."² He had the little Dauphin, the future Louis XV, brought to his bedside and in the advice which he gave him the note of self-reproach is very clear. "My dear child, you are about to become the greatest king in the world. Never forget the obligations which you have to God. Do not imitate me in my wars. Try to

¹ He had been the pupil of Fénelon, and it was for his instruction that the *Aventures de Télémaque* were written.

² *Journal de Dangeau*, t. iii, pp. 112, 113.

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maintain peace always with your neighbours, and to help [soulager] your people as much as you possibly can, as I have had the misfortune not to be able to do owing to necessities of State. Follow always good counsels, and remember that it is to God that you owe all that you are."

So died Louis le Grand, within a few days of his seventy-seventh birthday, and after a reign of seventy-two years. For half a century he had been a magnificent figure on the world's stage, and he transmitted a magnificent name to future times—a name which has power over the imagination still. Hence the glory which even to-day clings about his memory in the pages of those historians who are dazzled by the brilliancy of his presence and immediate surroundings, and whose attention is fixed rather on Versailles than on France. But the splendour grows dim when we remember that despite his repeated boast that he was a Frenchman even more than a king, he had ruthlessly sacrificed the welfare of his people to the satisfaction of his personal ambitions. To his panegyrists, who praise his reign as the most wonderful in history, it is sufficient answer that with almost unparalleled opportunities to show the world what a great king could really be, he left the realm he had ruled so long worn out, disheartened, saddled with debt, crippled in its resources, steeped in misery, and seething with discontent. In the light of after events it is easy to see that by his despotism and misgovernment he sowed the seeds of the Revolution.

CHAPTER VII

'LE GRAND SIÈCLE'

WE must now glance rapidly at French culture during the period covered by the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, which French historians call 'le Grand Siècle.' It must be understood, however, that we shall here confine ourselves to such aspects of a very large subject as have direct interest for us in connexion with our general narrative.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

It has been pointed out by Lanson that "the organization of the aristocratic class into a *société mondaine*"—in other words, the transformation of the feudal nobility into a *noblesse de cour*, with new intellectual interests and new ideals of life—was one of the chief facts in the social history of the age of Louis XIII. The establishment of such a society having its roots in the Court and the capital exerted a dominating influence over literature and art. It meant the first step in the centralization of culture as an inevitable sequel to the centralization of government; and this centralization was in turn largely responsible for the complete triumph of classicism.

One important result of the new social conditions was the rise of the *salons*, which played so conspicuous a part in the evolution of manners and taste during the first half of the seventeenth century. The most celebrated of these was that presided over by Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise of Rambouillet, and afterward by her daughter Julie d'Angennes, in the Hôtel de Rambouillet, in the Rue Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre, not far from the Palais-Royal. The fame of this *salon* continued for more than fifty years—roughly, from 1610 to 1664, though its most brilliant period extended only till

LE GRAND SIÈCLE

about 1645, during which time it was frequented by most of the 'lions' and 'lionesses' of the day and was the great centre of the literary life of the metropolis. The influence of these *salons* was at first in various ways for good. The tendency which they represented and strengthened was one toward real refinement, and was much needed at a time when manners were still characterized by the rudeness bred by many years of war and social disturbance. They sought to substitute the tone of the drawing-room for that of the camp, to check coarseness of behaviour and vulgarity of speech, to introduce an interest in intellectual things, to purify the language and foster the art of conversation. Even the luxury in which they indulged—as in the *chambre bleue* of Arthénice,¹ with its many lamps, its art treasures, its perfumed air, its magnificent baskets of flowers²—was not without its aesthetic effect. But in course of time the primary movement spent its force, the period of debased imitation set in, and all sorts of extravagances supervened. From about 1650 onward *bureaux d'esprit* sprang up in large numbers in Paris and in many provincial cities, in the ranks alike of the aristocracy and the wealthier *bourgeoisie*, and in these the principles and habits of the first great *salons* were exaggerated and travestied till they lost all semblance with their originals. Then began the mania for the absurdest affectations—for gallantry of the most strained and vapidly sentimental kind; for an ultra-refinement of manners which deliberately repudiated everything suggestive of naturalness and simplicity; for over-subtlety of taste and for a preciosity in language which, rejecting intelligibility as the business of the 'vulgar herd,' soon degenerated into a ridiculous jargon. This was the stage reached in the history of the decay of the *salons* when Molière, then just established in Paris, produced in 1659 his sparkling little satire, *Les Précieuses ridicules*.

The general influence of the *salons* on literature was of course

¹ That is, Mme de Rambouillet, Arthénice being an anagram of Catherine.

² See the description in Mlle de Scudéry's *Le Grand Cyrus*, 8e Partie, Livre I.

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similar to that which they exerted on manners. As it was fundamentally a feminine influence—for the new developments in society were accompanied by the rise of women for a time into a position of acknowledged supremacy—it told in the direction of delicacy and fastidiousness of taste. The result was the practical elimination of both the licence and the pedantry by which the literature of the sixteenth century had been characterized, though, as an offset to these gains, together with the licence and the pedantry much of the old vigour and raciness also disappeared. But though the *salons* thus left their mark on the tone and style of contemporary literature their direct effect upon it was very small. Such effect is to be sought chiefly in the lighter kinds of poetry—as in that of Voiture, long one of the principal ornaments of the Hôtel de Rambouillet—and in the prolix romances of Honoré d'Urfé (*Astrée*, 1610–19), Gomberville (*Polixandre*, 1632), La Calprenède (*Cassandre*, 1642–45; *Cléopâtre*, 1647), and Mlle de Scudéry (*Le Grand Cyrus*, 1649–53; *Clélie*, 1654–61), in whose interminable pages, with their exaggerated gallantry, their high-flown sentiment, and their casuistry of love, a generation of *précieuses* saw an ideal representation of themselves. These romances for a time enjoyed an astonishing popularity, even outside the limits of their special public; they were eagerly read by every one who read anything at all, and were universally regarded “comme des chefs-d'œuvre de notre langue.”¹ But before long they inspired reaction in the form of the inevitable burlesque. As early as 1622, in his *Vraie Histoire comique de Francion*, and five years later in his *Berger extravagant*, Charles Sorel began to parody the *roman à la mode*, as a little more than a century before Cervantes in Spain had parodied the romances of chivalry. But Scarron's *Roman comique* (1649), a lively tale of the adventures of a company of strolling players, is the masterpiece of this particular movement. From such a work as this, with its vivid pictures of provincial manners, the transition was easy to the realistic story of ‘vulgar’ life as represented in the *Roman bourgeois*

¹ Boileau, *Les Héros de Roman : Discours*.

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(1666) of Furetière. A little later Mme de La Fayette's *Princesse de Clèves* marks the transformation of the romance of gallantry into the psychological novel of love (1678).

THE FRENCH ACADEMY

Incidentally the establishment of the *salons* led to one result of the utmost importance in the subsequent history of French culture. A small group of men, following the example of the ladies with their receptions, began in 1626 to meet regularly at the house of one of their number, the King's secretary, Valentin Conrart, for literary discussion and the interchange of views. "There they conversed familiarly, as though on the occasion of an ordinary visit, and if any one of the company had produced a work, as often happened, he willingly communicated it to the others, who freely gave him their opinion of it."¹ One of this little society, Boisrobert, carried information of its proceedings to Richelieu, who, piquing himself on his literary tastes, and realizing the advantage of having such a body of men of letters at his disposal, offered to organize them into a public institution with an official status. This was the origin of the Académie Française, definitely established under letters patent from Louis XIII in January 1635. As Matthew Arnold has said in his well-known essay *The Literary Influence of Academies*, Richelieu "designed his new creation to do duty as a supreme court of literature," as "a sovereign organ of the highest literary opinion," and as "a recognized authority in matters of intellectual tone and taste." Of its influence as such for good and evil this is not the place to speak. The only point which we have here to emphasize is that the foundation of the Academy represents the final stage in the development of absolutism in the field of culture. With it the age of authority in literature definitely began. An artificial unity—the unity of classicism—was imposed on literature as by an inexorable law from without, and individuality was subjected to repressive rule. One of the Academy's first acts was to condemn

¹ Pellisson, *Histoire de l'Académie*.

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Corneille's waywardness in the composition of *Le Cid*. Its principal task for many years was the preparation of a dictionary which would fix and standardize the language and protect it against the encroachments of eccentricity.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE COURT IN LITERATURE

Though the *salons* had themselves marked the movement toward centralization, yet, like the literature in general of the first half of the seventeenth century—like the *romans d'aventures*, for example, and the greater plays of Corneille—they had exhibited much of the individualistic spirit of the Fronde. This spirit, however, now disappeared entirely when under Louis XIV the influence of the *salons* was displaced by that of the Court, and even the capital became intellectually a suburb of Versailles. During the great days of the 'Roi Soleil'—the days when the supremacy of the Crown was finally placed beyond challenge, when the Parliaments were silenced and the once haughty nobles were reduced to pliant courtiers—it was Versailles which gave the law in literature as in everything else. The result is shown particularly in the so-called classic tragedy of the Grand Siècle, which now reached its formal perfection in the work of Racine. In this classic tragedy, as has been well said, "the personages have to speak, not as befits their real feelings, character, and situations, but as is proper in the presence of a king and a court; not truth, nature, and beauty, but etiquette is the highest law of dramatic art."¹ Goethe, referring specifically to Racine, put his finger on the same point: "I can easily conceive," says Wilhelm Meister, "how people of high standing and exalted rank must value a poet who has painted so excellently and truly the circumstances of their lofty station. . . . In reading his plays, I can always figure to myself the poet as living at a splendid court, with a great king before his eyes, in constant intercourse with distinguished persons."² Even in comedy, always in the nature of things more popular and independent

¹ Strauss, *Voltaire : Sechs Vorträge*, p. 74.

² *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (trans. Carlyle), Book III, chap. viii.



61. MOLIÈRE



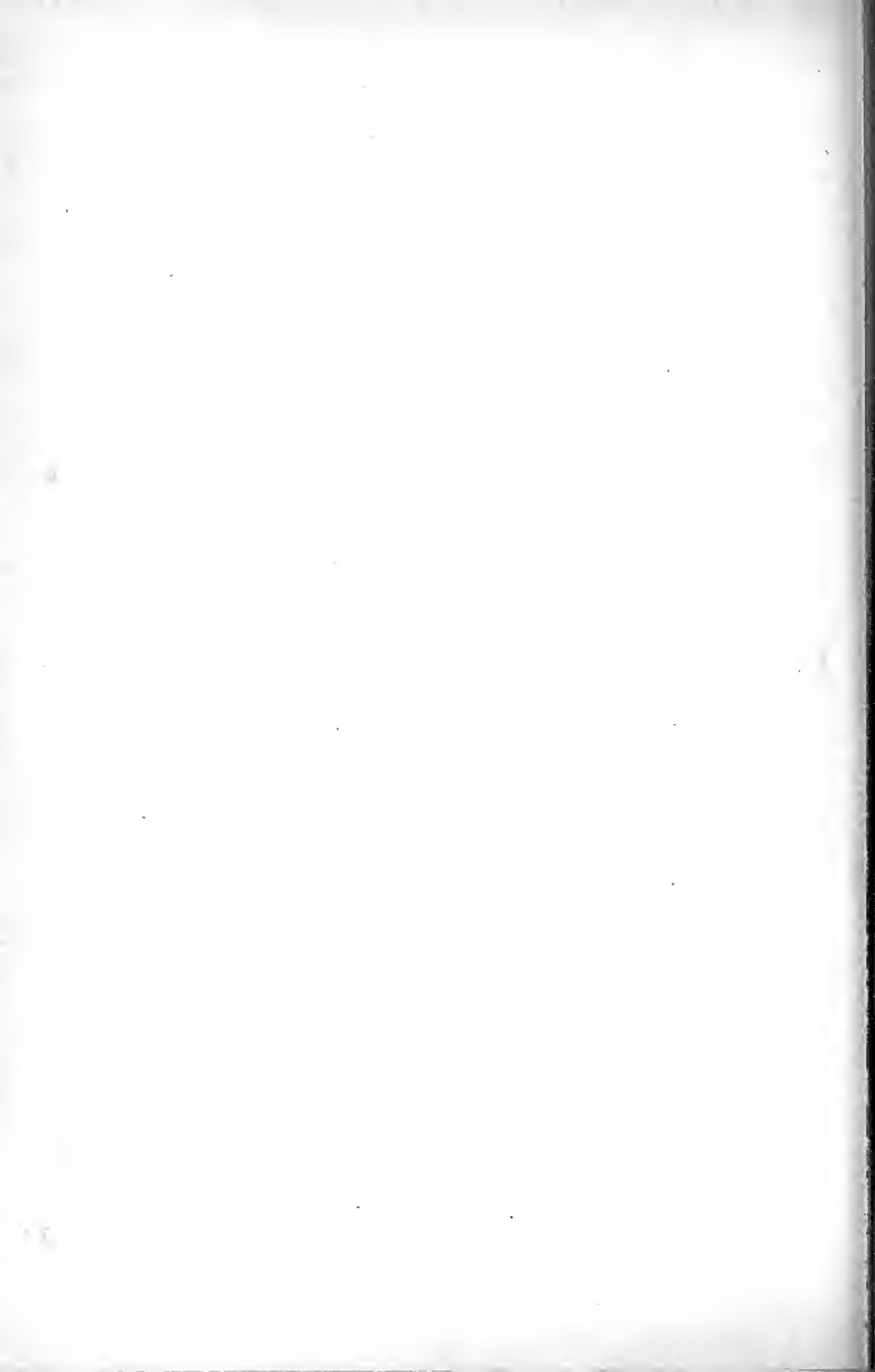
62. RACINE



63. BOSSUET



64. FÉNELON



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than tragedy, the Court had become the final arbiter of taste. "Étudiez la cour et connoissez la ville," was Boileau's advice to the comic writer,¹ and he praises Molière for having followed it. And indeed Molière himself was fully aware of the importance of the doctrine, however much he might at times be inclined to demur to it. In his *Critique de l'École des Femmes* Dorante tells Lycidas that "the great test of all your comedies is the judgment of the Court; it is the taste of the Court that you must study if you would learn the art of succeeding."

ABSOLUTISM AND CLASSICISM

The culmination of classicism in French literature during the seventeenth century must therefore be regarded as something more than the triumph of certain formal principles heralded in poetry by Malherbe, who "réduisit la Muse aux règles du devoir," and codified by Chapelain and "the law-giver of Parnassus," Boileau. It may from our point of view be interpreted as the necessary concomitant of centralization and the establishment of autocracy in the State. The literature of the Grand Siècle was very brilliant, and however little it may on the whole appeal to our present tastes, we can still admire its fine balance, its courtly elegance, its combined force and dignity. At the same time it is impossible not to see that it is stamped to its disadvantage with the impress of the environment by which it was shaped. Its unity was obtained at the cost of originality and independence; the restraints to which it submitted led inevitably to the suppression of individuality and the life which individuality alone can give to art.

Yet the spirit of revolt against these restraints was by no means dead. It must be remembered that first the *salons* and after them the Academy had exercised a democratic influence in one important direction: the *salons* by introducing men of letters—even those who, like Voiture, were "without a grandfather"—on a familiar footing into the society of the nobility, the Academy by giving official recog-

¹ *L'Art poétique*, Chant III.

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dition to an aristocracy of intellect. Moreover, most of the writers to whom Louis XIV extended his special favour—Racine, Molière, Boileau, for example—belonged to the *bourgeoisie*.¹ These are facts to be noted, though, save as they show the extent to which literature was now obtaining an independent standing, their immediate significance is not very great. Meanwhile, quite early in the century we can detect the beginnings of a *bourgeois* reaction against the consolidating classic tradition, and this reaction we can follow as the century runs its course in the transformation of romance, on the stage (as in much of the comedy of Molière), in the *Contes* and *Fables* of La Fontaine (who, like Molière, enriched his style from a popular vocabulary unacknowledged by the Academy), and, despite their classic derivation, in *Les Caractères* of La Bruyère. It was, however, in one curious episode of the closing part of Louis XIV's reign—the period of disaster and decline—that a tendency toward the breaking up of the artificial unity of the classical *régime* was first clearly apparent. The episode in question is known in French literary history as the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, and its importance lies in the fact that the supremacy of Greek and Latin antiquity, which was one of the corner-stones of classicism, was now for the first time definitely challenged. It is a piquant detail that the controversy, which for some eighteen years divided French critics into two hostile camps, originated in a poem—*Le Siècle de Louis XIV*—which Charles Perrault read to the Academy on January 27, 1687, to glorify the age of the Grand Monarque. Such a purpose itself was of course eminently laudable. But it happened that Perrault was so led away by enthusiasm for his subject that in a moment of special temerity he actually ventured to compare, and to its advantage, the age of Louis with the most brilliant epoch of Roman history :

¹ Cp. *ante*, p. 370. He was in fact glad to strengthen the influence of such men as a counterpoise to that of the aristocracy. "Here I am," he once remarked, "dining with Molière, whom my officers do not think good enough company for them."

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La belle antiquité fut toujours vénérable,
Mais je ne crus jamais qu'elle fut adorable.
Je vois les anciens sans plier les genoux.
Ils sont grands, il est vrai, mais hommes comme nous;
Et l'on peut comparer, sans craindre d'être injuste,
Le Siècle de Louis au beau Siècle d'Auguste.

It was this bold claim on behalf of the present against the past which was the immediate cause of the outburst which followed. Of course the discussion led to no definite results. But the doctrine of the divine right of the ancients was badly shaken by it; the complacency of dogmatism was disturbed; while the conception of the relativity of literature which was now broached, and which was manifestly fatal to the old theory of finality, brought with it a bracing sense of the possibility of progress, which in turn was certain to foster the spirit of individual experiment and adventure. We should doubtless be guilty of over-ingenuity in attempting to postulate any direct connexion between this revolt against the unity of classicism and the changing political conditions of the closing decades of Louis XIV's reign. But it is at least suggestive that as the consolidation of the principles of classicism into a dogmatic creed was coincident with the firm establishment of absolute monarchy, so the rise of disruptive forces in literature synchronized with the beginnings of its decline.

THE ART OF THE GRAND SIÈCLE

Classicism and the aristocratic spirit meanwhile triumphed in the art of the Grand Siècle even more completely than in its literature, and more than literature that art was characterized not only by the superficial elegance and the uniformity which were the notes of the current taste, but also by the concomitant coldness and pomposity. Here too the influence of the Court, especially after the accession of Louis XIV, was clearer and more direct. Though it was an age of great activity in building both in Paris and throughout the country, the fine arts owed almost everything to the munificence and extravagance of the King. Merely the patron of men of letters, he was the chief employer of the most famous architects, painters, and

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sculptors of the day, whose talents were largely absorbed by work on his innumerable palaces, while the nobility and wealthy magistrates and merchants who also engaged their services or the services of their pupils or imitators naturally fashioned their taste on that of his Majesty. The tendency to uniformity was further strengthened by the foundation of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1648 and of that of Architecture in 1671. Hence, as we should anticipate, the art of the period is everywhere stamped with the marks of the dominant sumptuous yet frigid Court style. We can see this in the architectural work of the younger Mansart in the vast palace of Versailles and the *châteaux* of the Grand Trianon and Marly; of Claude Perrault (brother of Charles) in the colonnade of the Louvre and the Paris Observatory; of Libéral Bruant in the Hôtel and chapel of the Invalides. We can see it equally in the sculpture of Pierre Puget, "le Michel-Ange français," of Girardon, of Antoine Coysevox and his pupils Nicolas and Guillaume Coustou, and in the grandiose canvases of Eustache Le Sueur and Charles Le Brun, Louis' premier Court painter and for many years his official Director of Fine Arts.¹ But as art was thus more closely connected than literature with the personality of the King, so in turn it registered more rapidly the waning of the King's power. When political and financial disaster made it impossible for Louis to continue to lavish enormous sums on the satisfaction of his own private tastes, his influence over artists necessarily declined. This meant the emancipation of art from autocratic control.

MUSIC

A few words may be added on the music of the Grand Siècle. Louis XIII was passionately fond of music—a taste which he transmitted to his son—and *ballets*, or entertainments in which singing, dancing, and spectacle were combined, were a favourite diversion of his Court. Under Mazarin a new

¹ It should perhaps be pointed out in passing that the two really great French painters of the seventeenth century, Claude Gelée, whom we know as Claude Lorrain, and Nicolas Poussin, spent their lives in Italy, and hardly belong to the history of French art.

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type of musical drama was introduced in the Italian opera, but this did not displace the older native form, which was brought to perfection by the Florentine Giovanni Battista Lulli, who wrote music for some of the *comédies-ballets* of Molière. Such amusements continued to be popular during the early years of Louis XIV's reign, and many of the great lords and ladies, and even the sovereign himself, were accustomed to take part in them. In 1669, however, the Abbé Perrin obtained from the King a patent for the establishment of a Royal Academy of Music, and under the influence of this French grand opera arose on the Italian model. Perrin himself provided the libretto of what may be regarded as the first work in the new style, the *Pomone* (1671) of Robert Cambert. But Lulli, who was quick to perceive the possibilities of this style, and who enjoyed under royal patent a monopoly for the production of opera in Paris from 1672 till his death in 1687, is rightly considered its real founder. Under him and his immediate successors, Colasse, Charpentier, and Campra, grand opera flourished greatly in the capital. Their efforts did not, indeed, result in a truly national school of music, which did not come into existence till the appearance of Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* in 1733. But it may be noted that from the first French opera was distinguished by its attention to dramatic rhetoric and declamation, a feature in which we may detect the influence of the tragic stage. On the whole, the music of the period, like its other arts, reflected the taste of the Court, upon which in the main it depended, and as a consequence it was marked by the same general characteristics of classicism.

SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

Science as a matter of course was far less affected by royal patronage than either literature or art, but it may still be noted that its activity was stimulated and its work organized by the foundation of the Academy of Sciences in 1666. In addition to a considerable number of brilliant native-born investigators in the various branches of research—among them

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Descartes, Fermat, Pascal, Boulliau, Picard, Lefèvre, Tournefort, and Mariotte—several foreign scientists of great distinction—notably Cassini, the first Director of the Observatory, Huyghens, and Rømer—whom Louis invited to Paris, contributed in no small degree to the intellectual glory of his reign. By the very nature of its objects and methods, however, the science of the seventeenth century, like that of all other times, stood for freedom and independence, and was thus implicitly, if not actively, the enemy of absolutism. The same remark may be made, though with some qualification, about the philosophy of the time, as represented in particular by the work of Descartes, whose *Discours de la Méthode* (1637) occupies an epoch-making place in the history of thought. It is true that in its subjection of feeling and imagination to the rule of reason and in its attempt to suppress the vagaries of individual speculation the spirit of Cartesianism was at one with that of classicism; indeed, some historians have gone so far as to regard it as an accessory influence in the development of the classical ideal.¹ Yet its deeper significance seems to me to lie in the fact that it is the first attempt made by any modern thinker to work out a philosophic system on the basis of pure reason and in entire independence of scholastic tradition and theological dogma. The importance of this point will be understood if we remember that the University of Paris was still the fanatical supporter of the old Aristotelianism, and that later, under Louis XIV, the teaching of Cartesianism was prohibited throughout France. In the same way the revolt against Aristotelianism in the *Exercitationes paradoxicae adversus Aristotelem* (1624) of Pierre Gassendi is also historically noteworthy.

RELIGION : JANSENISM

Such protest against despotic authority in thought reappears in a different form in the religious history of the seventeenth

¹ As the philosophy of John Locke, which practically displaced that of Descartes during the eighteenth century, was undoubtedly an accessory influence in breaking up that ideal. Cp. Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, pp. 80-81.

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century. Of the revolt of Protestantism and its suppression enough has already been said. But a short account must be given of another movement which, though only remotely connected with Protestantism, possesses from our present point of view something of the same interest.

In 1638 a Dutch theologian, Cornelius Jansen, died at Ypres, of which place he was bishop, leaving behind him the manuscript of a bulky treatise, entitled *Augustinus*, which was published two years later. Primarily an elaborate commentary on the writings of Augustine, this work incidentally showed that the teachings of that great father regarding Grace, Free Will, and Predestination were at variance with accepted Catholic dogma, and especially with the ideas of the Jesuits. For this reason the Jesuits at once rose in arms against it and succeeded in securing its condemnation as heretical, first by the Sorbonne and afterward by the Pope. Jansen's views none the less spread through France and gained a good many partisans, who were attracted to them not only on the doctrinal side, but also because their ascetic spirit provided a corrective to Jesuitical laxity. The great centre of Jansenism was, however, the community of Port-Royal. A convent of that name belonging to the order of Cistercian nuns had been founded during the reign of Philippe-Auguste—an absurd legend said by that king himself—some eighteen miles west of Paris. In 1608 this was reformed and reorganized under the most rigorous discipline by the Abbess Jacqueline-Marie Arnauld, better known by her official title of 'La Mère Angélique.' Then in 1626 the nuns were transferred to a new convent in Paris, while the old establishment—Port-Royal-des-Champs, as it was called—was occupied by a lay community which included among its many men of light and leading several members of the large and distinguished Arnauld family,¹ Claude Lancelot, Fontaine, Antoine Le Maître,

¹ One of these, Antoine, 'le grand Arnauld,' was the son of Antoine, an advocate of great eloquence, who had pleaded on behalf of the Parliament of Paris in 1593 for the expulsion of the Jesuits on a charge of having instigated an attempt on the life of Henri IV. This the Jesuits never forgot or forgave; hence their special animosity against the whole Arnauld family.

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Pierre Nicole, Jean Duvergier de Hauranne—otherwise M. de Saint-Cyran—who had been a personal friend of Jansen, and last, but not least, the great Pascal. The *solitaires* spent many hours of each day in prayer, meditation, and spiritual exercises, but a portion of their time was also given to manual labour and to the work of a school attached to their establishment, for the use of which in the course of time many well-known educational manuals were produced. This community came presently to be identified with Jansenism, and out of it sprang that masterpiece of polemical literature, which is also one of the foundation books of French prose, Pascal's *Lettres provinciales*, written in 1656 and 1657 during the period of their author's retreat. But though the Jesuits were unable to answer this merciless exposure of their casuistry, they had still the weight of authority on their side. On the condemnation of the *Augustinus* by Rome in 1650 the Jansenists had indeed submitted, but they had taken the ground that the five heretical propositions alleged to have been extracted from the book were not actually to be found in it. But this view, set forth by Antoine Arnauld, was in turn condemned by the Sorbonne, who, moreover, expelled Arnauld himself and some sixty other doctors suspected of Jansenist opinions, and in 1656 a further decree against the *Augustinus* was obtained from Alexander VII. By this time, though Jansenism showed no signs of becoming widely popular or influential, it had revealed a stubborn tenacity of life, and had already begun to arouse the wrath of the civil authorities, who were quite ready to be persuaded that even if it were not actually Calvinism in disguise,¹ in its case, as in the case of Protestantism, independence in religion was certain to be associated with independence in politics. Hence when Louis XIV came to power he was already strongly biased against it. In 1664 Péréfixe, Archbishop of Paris, endeavoured to obtain a settlement of

¹ This was a favourite charge of the Jesuits. As a matter of fact the leaders of Jansenism were devout Catholics. The one point of connexion between their theology and that of the Calvinists was the Augustinian doctrine of grace.

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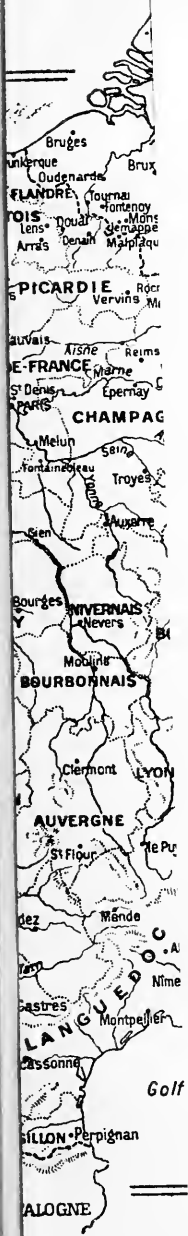
the acrimonious controversy, but was thwarted by the unexpected resistance of the nuns of Port-Royal, who refused to sign the formulary acknowledging the actual presence in Jansen's book of the heresies already condemned by Rome. Thereupon the recalcitrants were deprived of the sacraments and otherwise punished. Persecution failing to bring them to terms, Pope Alexander proposed a commission of inquiry into the whole matter, but this was resented by the King and many of the clergy as an infringement of the rights of the Gallican Church. Then in 1669 Clement IX, Alexander's successor, restored "the peace of the Church" by a compromise under which, while the five heretical propositions still in question were again condemned, the question whether they were or were not to be found in the *Augustinus* was allowed to pass under "reverent silence." But the peace thus secured was only temporary. Many of the more rigid Jansenists, under the leadership of Arnauld, presently emigrated to the Low Countries, while the Jesuits, tireless in their hostility to the hated sect, as they gained increasing power over the King, so wrought upon his growing bigotry that at length, it was said, he came to hate a Jansenist more even than a Protestant or an atheist. Such was his mood when in 1705 theological controversy broke out afresh over a book of reflections on the New Testament by Père Quesnel of the Oratory. A systematic persecution of the Jansenists followed, in the course of which Port-Royal was razed to the ground, its community dispersed, and its work brought to an end. Finally, under the influence of his Jesuit confessor, Père La Chaise, Louis was induced to appeal to the Pope, Clement XI, who in 1713 issued the bull *Unigenitus*, condemning 101 propositions extracted from Quesnel's pages. This, however, led to further trouble. Cardinal de Noailles, now Archbishop of Paris, who had been a warm admirer of the book, refused to publish the bull in his diocese, and even prepared to enter upon a struggle in respect of it with King and Pope. The death of Louis left the controversy still unsettled. But meanwhile the last years of his reign had witnessed the practical destruction of

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Jansenism as well as of Protestantism throughout the country. In the sphere of religion the King's fanaticism impelled him at all costs to assert his will for the maintenance of that unity which had elsewhere been disturbed by the waning of his prestige.

One other movement of French religious thought during the seventeenth century, though of relatively little importance, deserves passing mention—that known as Quietism. The leading spirit in this form of mysticism was Mme Guyon (1648–1717), who was twice imprisoned in the Bastille (1688, 1695–1702) on charges of sharing the heresies of the Spanish mystic Molinos. Fénelon, who had been touched by her influence, and whose generous nature had been stirred by the cruelty of the outcry against her, stepped forward in her defence, and this brought him into collision with his former friend Bossuet. The bitter quarrel between these two famous prelates for a time greatly agitated the Court, but ultimately Bossuet prevailed, and through Louis obtained the Pope's condemnation of Fénelon's position. In this controversy we have yet one more phase of the struggle for liberty against the forces of absolutism. Quietism, like our own Quakerism, was essentially individualistic, and though in political theory Fénelon was almost as strong a supporter of autocracy as Bossuet himself,¹ in this particular case, as it happened, he stood indirectly for the rights of the conscience against Bossuet, here as always the upholder of tradition and authority.

¹ See Fénelon's plea for paternalism in his *Plan de Gouvernement* and *Essai philosophique sur le Gouvernement civil*, and *op. the Politique tirée de l'Écriture sainte*, in which Bossuet deduces the system of Louis XIV from the Bible.





CHAPTER VIII

LOUIS XV

I. THE REGENCY

1715-1723

LOUIS XV was a child of five and a half when his great-grandfather's death placed him upon the throne, and France was therefore once more, and for the third time in succession, faced by the problems of a minority. As the young King's mother was dead, the duties of the regency devolved by long-standing tradition upon his nearest male relative, Philippe, Duke of Orléans.¹ Louis XIV, however, had distrusted the Duke on account both of his moral character and of his political views, which were openly opposed to his own, and he had therefore sought by will to impose restrictions upon his authority. By that document, executed in August 1714, a Council of Regency was appointed in which the Regent himself was to have one vote only, while the important rôles of custodian of the sovereign and commander of the household troops were entrusted to his personal enemy, the Duke of Maine, one of Louis' bastard children by Mme de Montespan. But this attempt on the part of the Great Monarch to rule France from his grave failed as completely as that of his father had done seventy-two years before. At seven in the morning of September 2, the day after his death, the Parliament of Paris met to read and consider the will which had been confided to its keeping. Thereupon the Duke of Orléans lodged a protest against it, taking the ground that its provisions conflicted with

¹ Philip V of Spain, the King's uncle, was in fact his nearest male relative, but he had renounced all his rights as a French prince under the Treaty of Utrecht.

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precedent and with the specific promises of the late King to himself. The Duke of Maine made a feeble effort to maintain his position, but his rival easily carried the day. Without a single dissentient voice the Parliament annulled the will, and Orléans was declared Regent with unlimited powers. In return for its unanimous support Orléans restored to the Parliament the right of remonstrance before the registration of edicts, which had been in abeyance for more than forty years.

The contempt for the memory of the once all-potent King shown by this utter disregard of his last wishes is indicative not only of the spirit of the Parliament but also of the popular feeling of the hour. The sun which at its meridian had blazed with unparalleled splendour had set amid the black clouds of national disaster. France had long been weary of one who, as a bitter satirical poem put it, had caused her to shed so many tears during his lifetime that she had none left for his death. The people groaned under the burdens which his selfish lust for power had imposed upon them, and were ready to welcome any change which gave even the faintest promise of relief. Whatever otherwise might be thought of the Regent, therefore, he had this much in his favour, that he was known to be hostile to the principles and policy of the *régime* which, happily for the country, had now at last come to an end.

THE REGENT: HIS CHARACTER AND POLICY

In personal appearance and in many of his characteristics Philippe d'Orléans resembled, as he loved to be told, his famous grandfather, Henri IV. Witty, affable, good-hearted, easy of access, fond of company, free from prejudices, impatient of formality and tradition, he was richly endowed with the qualities which make for popularity and smooth the way to success. He was also a man of parts and culture and was interested in many things—literature, music, painting, mechanics, chemistry, medicine—of which he was wont to discourse with the ease and assurance of a connoisseur. His political opinions, too, were marked by unusual breadth and enlightenment. As he told the Parliament of Paris when he

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demanded the abrogation of his uncle's will, his one desire as Regent would be "to relieve the people, re-establish the finances, maintain peace at home and abroad, restore union and tranquillity in the Church, and work with all the application of which I am capable for everything that can render the State prosperous"; and though, of course, such language may be heavily discounted as rhetoric for the occasion, there is no reason to doubt that it was the honest expression of his aims. That he was a friend of toleration is shown by the fact that he at once released many victims of ecclesiastical bigotry who had been thrown into the Bastille and Vincennes under *lettres de cachet* during the closing years of the late King's reign. It is even probable that he would have re-introduced religious liberty into France by a revival of the Edict of Nantes, had he not been dissuaded by the arguments of his friend the upright but narrow-minded Duke of Saint-Simon.¹ As it was, he yielded in this all-important matter against his own better judgment, and in so doing gave signal proof of that radical weakness of nature which was always to make his rule ineffective. Excellent as were his intentions, he lacked the concentration and the strength of purpose necessary to make his will prevail. Hence, despite his advanced opinions and his genuine desire for reform, he accomplished little of lasting good during the eight years of his administration. To some extent also the scandalous profligacy of his private life was an additional element in his failure. Instead of concealing his vices he took a cynical pleasure in flaunting them before the public gaze, and even the none too sensitive taste of his contemporaries was shocked by the orgies in which he and his *roués* indulged at the Palais-Royal. How far his personal influence and the credit of his office suffered directly in consequence may be a question; but it is certain that his excesses undermined both his mental and physical powers and brought him to an early grave.

¹ Though at the time of the revocation Saint-Simon had himself seen that Louis XIV's policy was a mistake. His arguments, such as they are, are set forth in his *Mémoires*, t. xii, pp. 83 ff.

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The new *régime* was inaugurated by a sweeping change in the political system. Louis XIV, as we have seen, had entrusted the executive details of government to six ministers—four Secretaries of State, a Chancellor, and a Controller-General of Finances. These officials were now replaced by seven administrative councils acting under the supreme control of the Conseil Général de Régence, each composed of ten members, and charged respectively with the management of the finances, the army, the navy, commerce, domestic affairs, foreign affairs, and religion. The object of this innovation was to break down the despotic power which the old system had placed in the hands of individual advisers of the Crown. For this reason, and because it seemed to provide a check upon absolutism, it was regarded by liberal thinkers as a step in the right direction. At the same time it really represented an aristocratic revival. One feature of Louis XIV's ministerial policy which had been specially objectionable to the nobility was the quality of the ministers themselves, who had habitually been men of middle-class extraction. According to the express statement of Saint-Simon, the great champion of the aristocracy, by whom the new system had been devised, the councils were intended to destroy such predominant middle-class influence at the very centre of the State, and to lead ultimately to the substitution of the nobility for the lawyers and the *bourgeoisie*. The fate of the scheme was, however, sealed before the anticipated results began to appear. Many of the aristocratic members of the councils were appointed only because for one or another reason the Regent was anxious to find places for them, and were utterly unfitted by character and training to take any intelligent part in the business confided to their charge; a hopeless incompatibility of temper and aims was from the outset apparent between those of the *noblesse d'épée* and those of the *noblesse de robe*; trivial disputes absorbed the time and energy which should have been given to matters of urgent concern; and, as even Saint-Simon was soon forced to admit, the whole plan proved a failure. The experiment was, however, continued for three years of ever-

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increasing confusion. Then in 1718 the councils were dissolved and the Secretaries of State restored. This return to the policy of Louis XIV was accompanied by a further movement of reaction. Encouraged by the declaration of the Regent in the session of September 2, the Parliament of Paris had proceeded to avail itself of the right of remonstrance in a way which brought it into sharp conflict with the Government. Recourse was then had to the unfailing 'bed of justice' (August 1718), and the Parliament was reduced to silence.

THE FINANCIAL SITUATION

The struggle which thus ended in the discomfiture of the *noblesse de robe* arose over the question of the finances, which was, at the opening of the Regency, of all questions the one most vital to the interests of the country. Louis XIV had bequeathed to his successor a burden of debt amounting in round figures to something like three thousand millions of livres, while for the first year of his administration the Regent had to face a deficit of 78 millions. So desperate was now the outlook that Saint-Simon advised the Government, as the shortest cut to safety, to repudiate its obligations and declare itself bankrupt. This suggestion the Regent rejected, but he found it difficult to propose any other in its place. Then the Duke of Noailles, the real power in the Conseil des Finances, though not its nominal president, took the matter in hand. The expedients which he tried were such as had been used many times before. Offices and Court appointments were suppressed, *rentes* reduced, Government securities written down, the value of the currency lowered on pretext of recoinage, and a Chamber of Justice instituted for the control of the farmers-general and the punishment of those found guilty of fraud. By these measures, several of which, as will be seen, were of more than doubtful honesty, some slight improvement in the situation was obtained. But it was very slight, and the best that Noailles could promise the Regent was that, given eleven years of peace and retrenchment, he would make the receipts balance the expenditure. Such deferred

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hope did not satisfy the Regent, who was impatient for immediate results. After three years of struggle with a problem which was really beyond his capacity, Noailles threw up his task in disgust. His retirement left the way open for the great financial magician of the Regency, the famous John Law.

JOHN LAW AND THE 'SYSTEM'

The son of a well-to-do goldsmith, Law was born in Edinburgh in 1671. His father gave him a good education, and already as a boy he displayed unusual acuteness of mind and a special aptitude for mathematics. But these qualities were unfortunately combined with a fondness for gambling and dissipation. At twenty he left Edinburgh for London, where for a time he lived the life of a fashionable young buck about town; but having killed a man in a duel and barely escaped hanging, he sought safety in Amsterdam. There he devoted himself with much ardour to the study of banking, as a result of which he was led to formulate his theories regarding the immediate dependence of wealth on commerce and of commerce on speculation. Eager to make these theories public, he returned to Edinburgh in 1700 for the express purpose of laying them before the Scottish banks. But the Scottish banks refused to have anything to do with them, and the disappointed projector went back to the Continent. For some years he wandered about from country to country, gambling, speculating, winning money and spending it as fast as it was won, and all the while making futile attempts to interest now this Government and now that in his schemes. Finally in 1716 he drifted again to Paris, where on several former visits he had already gained the Regent's favour alike by his intellectual brilliancy and by his dissolute habits. It was the moment when the finances of France were in such a hopeless state that even a more prudent man than the Duke of Orléans might well have been ready to give ear to the solicitations of one who was so firmly convinced as Law undoubtedly was of the absolute soundness of his ideas, and who had, moreover,

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such an extraordinary faculty for making them attractive to others. The Duke listened, was soon persuaded that such ideas were at least deserving of a practical trial, and allowed his new adviser to have his way.

It is no longer disputed that, though much that was fallacious and chimerical entered into Law's grandiose schemes, many of his fundamental principles were as true as they were then novel. This, however, is a matter which we are not called upon here to discuss, as our present concern is simply with the actual facts of his experiment and its results. Briefly stated, then, his principal object was the institution of an enormous national credit system by means of State banks and the plentiful use of a paper currency. His argument was that the abundance of currency was the ultimate source of a nation's wealth, and its deficiency of a nation's poverty, and that the multiplication of the circulating medium was therefore the one thing necessary for the general revival of commerce and industry. But though the establishment of such a credit system was the first step toward the realization of his plans, another project of vaster reach and even more revolutionary character—a project which, as he told the Regent, would "surprise Europe"—was already in his mind. He looked forward to the time when, enriched by its banking enterprises, the State itself in its corporate capacity should absorb the energies of its citizens and become the chief if not the only trading power in the land.

Law's opening move was modest enough. In May 1716, under the authority of letters patent from the Government, he started a private bank in his own house, in the Place Louis-le-Grand. The functions of this institution were rigorously regulated, and at the outset its management was most conservative, the issue of its notes being kept well within the limits of its actual capital. As these notes, moreover, were good, whenever presented, for their face value on the day of issue, they had an advantage over the coinage of the realm, which was continually fluctuating owing to the Government's unwise tamperings with it. Hence the bank soon disarmed

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much of the criticism with which it was at first assailed, and in particular gained the favour of the merchants by the proved utility of its operations. It is true that d'Argenson, Noailles' successor in the Conseil des Finances, and the Parliament of Paris, were strongly antagonistic to it; but the protection of the Regent made it immune from their attacks and it steadily increased in popularity until, in December 1718, it was transformed, as the Banque Royale, into a public institution with the support and under the control of the State. Soon after this, however, ominous changes began to appear in its administration. The issue of its notes was gradually increased in excess not only of the assets of the Bank, but even of the entire coinage of the realm, and such notes thus became practically inconvertible, or an actual substitute for specie. An edict that all sums above 600 francs must henceforth be paid only in gold or notes gave the notes, owing to the deficiency of gold, a forced circulation. Moreover, the character of these notes was altered in one important respect. Instead of being definite undertakings on the part of the Bank that it would redeem them on presentation at a stated value, they became mere promises to pay such and such sums in coin, and in this way they were made subject to the fluctuations of specie itself. Such changes might well have aroused the suspicions of thoughtful people regarding the stability of the Government enterprise, but faith in Law was so strong that for the time being the credit of the Bank did not suffer much.

Meanwhile Law had begun to work toward the achievement of his vaguer ulterior aims. He had told the Regent that he would make his adopted country the supreme commercial power in the world, and now that internal credit had been re-established he believed that the time had come for the demonstration of his grand ideas regarding foreign trade. Accordingly in August 1717 he founded under royal letters patent, and on the general lines of similar companies in England and Holland, the Compagnie d'Occident (commonly called the Compagnie du Mississippi) for the development and exploitation



65. PHILIPPE OF ORLÉANS



66. JOHN LAW



67. CARDINAL DUBOIS



68. CARDINAL ALBERONI



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of the resources of the province of Louisiana.¹ For nearly two years this company was carefully nursed by him. Then he proceeded to extend his operations. In May 1719 he obtained the monopoly of trade in the East formerly enjoyed under franchise by the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* and the *Compagnie de Chine*, and amalgamated these enterprises with his own under the comprehensive title of the *Compagnie des Indes*. At the same time the Bank and the Company were consolidated, Law himself becoming the manager of both. Nor was the fertility of his brain even yet exhausted. In August of the same year the company took over the farming of the taxes on an annual payment of 52 million livres and undertook to fund the national debt by advancing fifteen hundred million livres for its liquidation at an interest of 3 per cent. Furthermore, the management of the Mint, which carried the right of coinage, and the Government monopoly of tobacco, were acquired by it. In financing these gigantic schemes Law exhibited great skill and daring, but the enormous increase of capital demanded by them compelled him to multiply both shares and paper money to an extent which, though it seemed justified at the time, was in the long run to prove disastrous. For the moment, however, the popular mind was fascinated by the possibilities of the 'System,' as Law's various projects had come collectively to be called. His original programme of colonial development and foreign commerce was sound enough, and had it been carried out in a proper and businesslike spirit its success would probably have been assured. But for such success many years of steady and patient labour would have been necessary, and people whose imaginations had been fired by visions of immediate and hitherto undreamed-of wealth were in no mood to wait. At the beginning the Company had been viewed with considerable distrust, and its shares had been taken up so slowly

¹ The colony of Louisiana, so named in honour of Louis XIV, had been established by La Salle in 1682, but thus far little or nothing had been done with it. The city of New Orleans, laid out in 1717-18, was named after the Regent.

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that two years after its organization they were still quoted below par. But in the spring of 1719 the entire enterprise and the attitude of the public toward it underwent a sudden and sensational change. Reports began to circulate of the fabulous resources of the Mississippi valley, of its inexhaustible mines of gold and silver, of its mountains of precious stones. Few people knew anything about the actual conditions of this mysterious land beyond the sea ; fewer still took the trouble to inquire. It was enough that, in Law's own phrase, " the gates of wealth " were " now open to the world." Avarice and credulity went hand in hand, and the most fantastic rumours found ready credence. Then the contagious fever of speculation broke out and rapidly spread through all classes of society from highest to lowest. The shares of the Company had been issued at 500 livres, and thus far they had never changed hands at that figure. Now they leapt up to 10,000 livres, to 15,000, to 20,000. While some of those who purchased at these inflated prices did so as an investment, even more bought only to sell again. Stock gambling thus began on an unparalleled scale, and the centre which for the convenience of jobbers was established in the Rue Quincampoix (and which was in fact the origin of the Bourse) was from early morning to the close of day the scene of the wildest excitement. There and in the Rue Vivienne, where Law's magnificent new premises were situated, noblemen and lackeys, grave doctors from the Sorbonne and women of fashion, jostled each other in the surging crowd, for the common mania had turned all heads. Those who were poor made haste to be rich ; those who were rich—like the Duke of Bourbon and the Prince of Conti—were no less eager to add to their already great possessions. Men of property disposed of their lands and houses in order to place the proceeds in the hands of the mighty conjurer who would multiply them a thousandfold ; at the other end of the scale valets, cooks, and ladies' maids launched their wages and savings on the same adventurous career. At first, as was natural, the fever affected Paris only ; but it quickly spread to the provinces, and ere long crowds of adven-

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turers poured into the capital from all parts of the country, and even from other lands, all bent on the same errand, the very seats on the coaches which ran into Paris being sold at a premium and engaged long in advance. During 1719, it is computed, the population of the metropolis was swollen by the influx of a quarter of a million strangers, while house property in the neighbourhood of the Rue Quincampoix rose to twenty times its normal value, and even attics in the same district commanded extraordinary rents. When colossal fortunes could be made by boot-blacks and waiters, and a man in luck might in a few days become a millionaire, and any one of the commonest intelligence might turn the changes of the market to his own account to the tune of 40,000 livres,¹ it is not in the least surprising that the originator of the 'System' should be universally regarded as the benefactor of the people and the saviour of the State. Nor is it in the least surprising that all this sudden inrush of apparent wealth should have led to an immense inflation of prices, and on the part of those who had been miraculously enriched to almost incredible extravagance and prodigality. These results might have been anticipated. What does surprise us is the fact that not in France alone, but in other countries also, this factitious opulence, which had practically nothing behind it and was the creation only of artificial values, should have been mistaken for real prosperity and judged accordingly. Even in England it was very generally believed that Law's new *régime* would prove the ruin of English commerce and colonial power.

COLLAPSE OF THE 'SYSTEM'

Events soon showed, however, that in this matter there was not the slightest ground for alarm. The great Mississippi Bubble was pricked even more rapidly than it had been blown. In January 1720, on abjuring his Protestantism, hitherto his one obstacle to office, Law became Controller-General of

¹ This is the sum reported to have been made one day by a clerk on the advance in the market price of shares while he was at dinner.

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Finances. At this point he reached the zenith of his personal fortunes and for the moment seemed to wield an almost despotic power. But already he had begun to realize, if others had not, the absolutely unsound condition of his undertakings. He had not himself foreseen the universal speculation in shares which had turned the 'System' into a gigantic gamble, the inevitable consequence of which, as he now perceived, would be the total destruction of public confidence in it. Even while the madness had been at its height there had been frequent and violent, though temporary, drops in the value of the Company's shares. Presently a general downward tendency became apparent, and by the spring of 1720 this was marked enough to cause widespread consternation. Law struggled hard to check the rot which now set in. He issued a series of extraordinary edicts forbidding the use of coin, except in small payments, and its accumulation in the hands of private persons; requiring such private persons to deposit all their precious metals with the Bank; prohibiting under heavy penalties the use of diamonds and gold and silver plate. The purpose of these edicts, and of others of similar import and no less tyrannical, was to bolster up the tottering credit of the 'System' and to enforce the circulation of the Government notes; but very naturally they failed of their effect. In May 1720 Law found himself, therefore, driven to an even more drastic measure—the arbitrary lowering of the value both of the Bank bills and of the shares. This, however, was taken as a declaration of approaching bankruptcy, and though it was almost immediately revoked, the evil impression it produced could not now be obliterated. To sustain the falling market after this blunder was impossible. The crowds which a few months before had rushed to the Rue Vivienne and the Rue Quincampoix in the hope of obtaining at any price some of the Company's securities were now as eager to get rid of those which they held. Then the Bank refused to cash its notes, though, for the purpose of relieving distress, an effort was made to redeem those of small value—ten livres or under—which were chiefly in the hands of the poorer classes.

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The panic which ensued was accompanied by great disorder, many scenes of violence and several dastardly crimes, and Law, who was now execrated as extravagantly as he had recently been idolized, himself went in danger of his life. The climax was reached on July 17, when 15,000 persons gathered by three in the morning about the premises of the Bank, and sixteen men and women were suffocated or crushed to death before the day was out. Utterly discredited, the 'System' soon collapsed completely, and the Bank, which, properly managed, would have been of immense advantage to the country, failed with the general visionary schemes of which it had unfortunately been made a part.¹ Surrounded by enemies and deserted by all his friends with the solitary exception of the Regent, Law escaped from the fury of the populace by flight to Brussels. But though he thus eluded their violence he was pursued by their malice. The story soon got wind that he had been clever enough to enrich himself at the expense of his dupes, and that he had contrived to smuggle a vast quantity of bullion out of the country he had pillaged. This, however, was pure fabrication. Law's conduct must be condemned in many respects, but simple justice demands that we should record the fact that he left France a ruined man. After brief sojourns in Belgium, Denmark, and England he made his way to Italy, and died, poor and forgotten, in Venice, in 1729.

The failure of the 'System' inevitably brought a great deal of confusion and distress in its train, and matters were made worse by the harsh and unjust methods adopted by the Government in its liquidation. Little of permanent importance was accomplished by it for the financial credit of the State. On the other hand, the institution of the Bank undoubtedly gave a considerable impulse to agriculture, commerce, and industry,

¹ A terrible pestilence which in this year, 1720, ravaged Marseille and large portions of Provence, and which claimed some 80,000 victims, was interpreted by many persons of a pious turn of mind as a divine punishment sent upon France for its sins in connexion with the Mississippi Bubble. Like most 'providential dispensations,' however, it was visited upon the wrong people.

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and helped in this way to restore the prosperity of the country. More indirectly, the effect of the 'System' was also seen on the social side. The extravagant habits and the rage for luxury which had been fostered by it survived its ruin with mischievous results in the private life of the people. At the same time some traditional prejudices received a rude shock. The fortunes made, if not always kept, by people of the most obscure origin, and the miraculous change which money produced in their status, were bound to disturb popular ideas regarding the relations of the classes and the sanctity of rank ; a great object-lesson, which was not likely to be soon forgotten, was thus given in the value of wealth and its influence ; while, concurrently, the nobles themselves lost something of their prestige by reason of the prominent and not very heroic part which many of them had taken in the rush for riches. Though doubtless we must be on our guard against the temptation to exaggerate the importance of these things, we may fairly include such far-reaching consequences of Law's work among the many forces which already in the early eighteenth century were beginning to undermine the manners and sentiments of the Old Régime.

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE REGENCY : DUBOIS

While the commercial and economic destinies of France were thus under the control of Law, its foreign policy was being directed by the second of the Regent's chief advisers, the Abbé Dubois. Like Law, Guillaume Dubois was of humble extraction, for he was the son of an apothecary-physician of Brive-la-Gaillarde, in the province of Limousin, where he was born in 1656. Entering the Church, he became at twenty-seven one of the tutors, and at thirty-one the preceptor, of the Duke of Orléans (then Duke of Chartres), over whose mind he soon obtained a strong and, as it proved, a lasting influence. When his former pupil became Regent, Dubois was a man of sixty, but it was at this point that his real career began. Though he was too obscure for a seat on any of the councils, the Regent's favour opened a way for him, and it was not

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long before the impotence of the councils gave him an opportunity of demonstrating his worth. Even before their suppression he was practically at the head of foreign affairs. On the restoration of government by secretaries he was appointed to the charge of that department. In due course he became Archbishop of Cambrai, then cardinal, and ultimately Prime Minister—the first since Mazarin.

The lurid portrait of Dubois painted by Saint-Simon, who holds him up to obloquy as the very "scum of the people" and a perfect monster of depravity, though long accepted by historians, is now known to be a mere caricature. But while he was free from the particular vices which the bitter annalist ascribed to him, he had faults enough of a different kind, for he was ambitious, avaricious, greedy of place and power, and utterly unscrupulous in the pursuit of his ends.

While not a great statesman, Dubois was a clever politician, and the situation which the French Government had to face at the opening of the Regency was one which demanded all his dexterity and tact. The Treaty of Utrecht had left the relations of the Great Powers in a state of dangerous instability. Between France and Spain in particular the tension was already extreme. Philip V, not without cause, suspected the Regent of having cherished designs upon his throne, while on his own side he was known to be dissatisfied with the settlement which had deprived him and his heirs of all title to the crown of France. In these circumstances peace between the two countries could scarcely be maintained. Left to himself, indeed, Philip, too feeble-minded for independent action, would probably have allowed himself to dream and drift. But he was egged on by his domineering second wife, Elizabeth Farnese, and by his Prime Minister, the ambitious but giddy and incompetent Cardinal Alberoni. These two Italians were determined to recover for Spain the possessions in Italy which had been ceded to Austria under the Treaty of Utrecht. To this end Alberoni began to intrigue among the Powers, even attempting by promises of important commercial concessions to purchase the help of England and Holland in his proposed

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aggressive policy against the Emperor and the Regent. But this design was frustrated by the skill and energy of Dubois, who by personal interviews with Lord Stanhope, the English minister, at The Hague, and with George I at Hanover, contrived to bring about an understanding between France and England which, with the subsequent accession of Holland, became a new Triple Alliance (January 1717). The object of this compact was to uphold the Treaty of Utrecht, especially in respect of the question of succession to both the French and English thrones. But while in return for George I's support against Philip in France the Regent engaged to drive the Stuart Pretender from French soil, where he had taken refuge after the failure of the rising of 1715, he also undertook to demolish the fortifications which Louis XIV had begun at Mardyck to take the place of those of Dunkerque. Though this undertaking was in fact in complete accord with the spirit of the Treaty of Utrecht, it was the principal ground for the violent attacks which were made upon Dubois and the Regent, who were accused of having bought the protection of England with the humiliation of their own country. It has even been stated on the authority of Saint-Simon and d'Argenson that Dubois was a secret pensioner of England and had been bribed by English gold—an allegation which, however, may be dismissed. The terms of the Triple Alliance show, indeed, how far France had fallen from her former high estate in the councils of Europe, and its unpopularity at the moment is therefore quite intelligible. But such terms were the best that could be obtained in the circumstances and were justified by results. Those who condemn Dubois' policy forget that it saved France from a repetition of the cruel and useless wars from which she was only beginning to recover.

WAR WITH SPAIN

Notwithstanding, however, the new complexion which the Triple Alliance put on European affairs, Alberoni was still resolved to drive the Austrians out of Italy. A few months only after the coalition had been formed a Spanish fleet

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descended upon the island of Sardinia and hostilities broke out between Spain and Austria. In the hope of preserving the tranquillity of Europe, George I and the Regent attempted to mediate between the belligerents, but without success. Then in July 1718 Austria joined France, England, and Holland, and the Triple became the Quadruple Alliance. A general war was precipitated by the action of Spain in seizing Sicily in open violation of the Treaty of Utrecht. On August 11, 1718, the English fleet under Admiral Byng annihilated the Spanish armada off Cape Passaro. In March of the following year a French army under the Duke of Berwick (a bastard son of James II) swept across the frontier and overran Spain, meeting little resistance on its victorious march. Alberoni meanwhile made desperate efforts to check his enemies' successes by stirring up insurrection in Brittany and despatching a small expedition to Scotland in behalf of the Pretender. When nothing came of these designs he sought by the most fantastic proposals to detach Orléans from the alliance. But by this time Philip and his queen had become fully convinced of the folly of the adventure on which they had embarked, and the war soon came to a close. In December 1719 Alberoni was dismissed and banished. In February 1720 Philip proclaimed his acceptance of the provisions of the Quadruple Alliance. Then the reconciliation of France and Spain was sealed by engagements of marriage between the little Infanta (then a child of three) and Louis XV, and between Philip's eldest son and the Regent's daughter.

THE CONSPIRACY OF CELLAMARE

One episode of this brief Franco-Spanish war has a certain interest on account of its domestic bearings. By the action of the Parliament of Paris in yielding to the demands of the Duke of Orléans, the Duke of Maine, as we have seen, had been deprived of all the privileges granted to him by his father's will. Two years later both he and his younger brother the Count of Toulouse (also a son of Mme de Montespan) were further removed from the line of succession and from the

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precedence which they had enjoyed over all the nobles save the princes of the blood.¹ As unambitious as he was cowardly and incompetent, Maine, however much he might grumble, seemed willing to submit to these insults without active protest. Not so his wife, Anne-Bénédicte de Bourbon, a granddaughter of the Great Condé, and a woman of energetic nature and resolute will. Though the society which she gathered about her in her magnificent *château* at Sceaux was chiefly devoted to amusement, literature, and the lighter arts, she continued to nurse her hatred of the Regent, and as soon as the opportunity arose her little court became a centre of anti-Orléanist agitation. Under the direction of Alberoni, the discontent of her circle was utilized by the Spanish ambassador, Cellamare, in the hope that a conspiracy might be fomented potent enough to embarrass the Government, and perhaps even to accomplish the overthrow of the Regent and Dubois (1718). The plot, however, turned out to be a sorry farce. Though the principal conspirators were sent to prison, the Government showed its absolute contempt for them and their machinations by ordering their release after only a few months. A more serious view was naturally taken of Cellamare's abuse of his privileged position, and he was promptly sent out of the country.²

THE CLOSE OF THE REGENCY

The conclusion of the war with Spain was the last important event of the Regency. In October 1722 Louis XV was crowned at Reims; on February 16, 1723, he attained his legal majority and nominally assumed the prerogatives and duties of kingship. This change, however, made little difference to the government of the country, for Dubois, now Prime Minister, remained in actual power till his death in the following August. The

¹ By an edict of 1714 Louis XIV had declared his legitimized sons competent to succeed to the throne in the event of the failure of legitimate heirs.

² It must be remembered that though hostilities had already begun between England and Spain, war between France and Spain was not declared till early in 1719. This explains the presence of the Spanish ambassador in France at the time of the conspiracy.

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Duke of Orléans then became Prime Minister in his turn. But his tenure of office was very brief. His health had recently been failing fast under the incessant strain of his profligate life, and he had again and again been warned that only a radical change in his habits could save him from utter collapse. He refused to listen to advice, and, persisting in his excesses, died suddenly of the long-expected stroke of apoplexy on December 2, 1723. He was only forty-nine.

So ended a period which, brief as it was, holds a place of considerable importance in French history. On a casual view it might indeed seem that the Regency, though it attempted much, actually accomplished nothing. Its efforts to revolutionize the administration of the country were abortive. Its experiments with the finances, though under different conditions they might have been successful, were ruined by the extravagances of the 'System.' Yet both politically and financially the old ideas had been badly shaken by even such a temporary break in firmly established tradition. Subsequent events were to provide the proof of this by showing that though the ancient forms remained the spirit which animated them was already undergoing a change. Absolute monarchy was to exist in France for more than sixty years longer ; but the half-century of Louis XV's inglorious reign is the prelude to its decay.

CHAPTER IX

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II. THE MONARCHY

1723-1774

THE Duke of Orléans' successor in the Premiership was his cousin the Duke of Bourbon, a haughty, selfish man, who had no qualifications for the position and was, moreover, entirely under the thumb of his mistress, the ambitious and corrupt Mme de Prie. The principal event of his brief administration was the marriage of the King. In the event of Louis' death without issue the crown would have passed into the Orléans family, and this contingency the new Prime Minister, who hated the Orléans family with the bitterest hatred, was determined at all costs to avert. It will be remembered that Louis was already affianced to the Infanta of Spain, who was then in fact being educated in Paris for her future *rôle*. But as she was only a child of six some years would have to elapse before the marriage could take place, and Bourbon was too impatient to brook such delay. He therefore decided, even at the risk of provoking Spain, to break off the engagement and seek another bride. Accordingly the little Infanta was sent home (October 1724) and the royal marriage market scrutinized for a substitute. Many names were discussed. Finally the choice fell upon Marie Leszcynska, the daughter of Stanislaus, the exiled King of Poland, who was then living in obscurity at Weissenburg, in Alsace. The selection seemed a curious one, for the match had no diplomatic advantages. But the Duke and Mme de Prie had a good personal reason for arranging it. As the future Queen would owe her elevation entirely to them, they counted that her

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gratitude would make her their willing tool. The marriage was solemnized by procuration in the cathedral of Strassburg on August 15, 1725. Marie, who was seven years older than her husband, was neither beautiful nor brilliant, but she was a pious woman, though a good deal of a precisian. Had Louis been susceptible to good, she might have exercised a wholesome influence over his mind. As it was, the relations between the two were never cordial, and Marie was soon little more than a cipher at her own Court.

Apart from this marriage and some ill-advised tamperings with the finances and the laws against begging and theft, Bourbon distinguished himself chiefly by his religious intolerance. Reactionaries had found the Regent deaf to their clamours for harsher measures against the Protestants, who after Louis XIV's death had shown signs of reviving activity. With Bourbon they easily had their way. The declaration of May 1724 not only renewed the edicts of the late King, but even destroyed the right of private worship which the heretics had still enjoyed. Fresh persecutions followed and emigration recommenced.

THE MINISTRY OF CARDINAL FLEURY

Strong, however, as Bourbon's position appeared, he did not long keep the confidence of the King. Both he and Mme de Prie were hated at Court and throughout the country, and it was a relief to all outside their own narrow circle when in June 1726 they were dismissed. His place as chief minister in fact though not in name (for the title he refused to accept) was at once taken by Cardinal Fleury, whose administration, though he was already nearly seventy-three at the time, was to last for seventeen years. The son of a tax-receiver of Lodève, in Languedoc, André-Hercule de Fleury had in the last year of Louis XIV's reign been appointed preceptor to the little Dauphin, who soon came to exhibit for him as near an approach to affection as he was capable of feeling for any living creature. Had he chosen to assert himself Fleury might undoubtedly have claimed the Premiership on Orléans' death.

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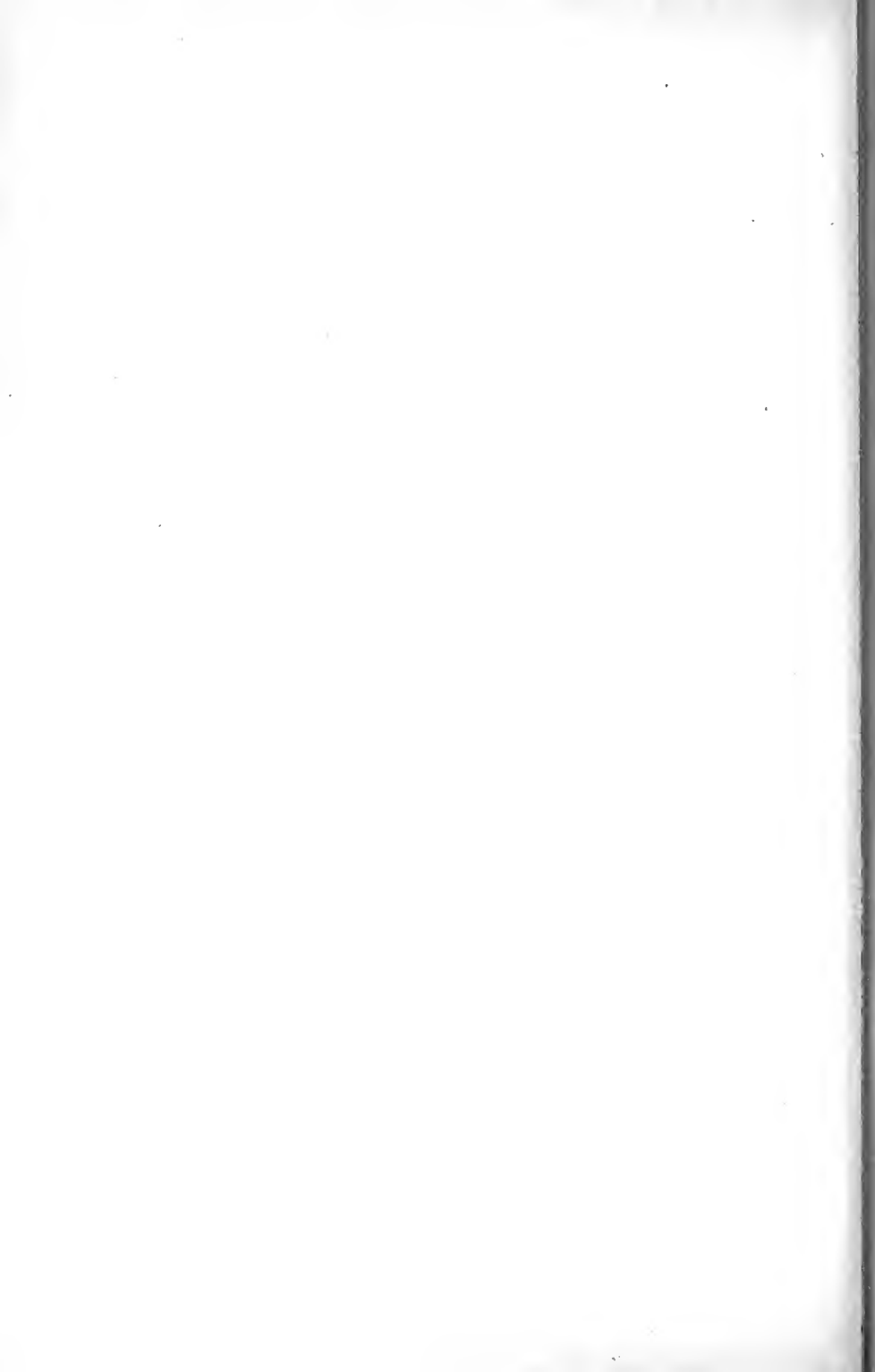
Whether from timidity or from lack of ambition, he stood aside and allowed Bourbon to step into the vacant place. At the same time he retained his personal influence over the King, and it was largely through him that Bourbon's disgrace was brought about.

The change of ministry was a great advantage to the country, for, though by no means brilliant, Fleury was an upright and public-spirited man. His natural diffidence was manifest throughout his conduct of affairs, but if he made no noteworthy experiments in reform he practised thrift, honesty, and businesslike methods, while by his pacific counsels he succeeded in allaying the irritation of Spain over the broken marriage contract. As a result of his policy a marked improvement in the national condition soon became apparent. In only one way was the domestic calm disturbed, and that was through a renewal of religious strife. The immediate cause of this was the condemnation of the venerable Bishop of Senes for a pastoral supposed to be tainted with Jansenist heresy (1727). There was a strong current of popular feeling in favour of the Jansenist party, not because the people at large cared one jot about its theology, but because of the implacable hostility of the Jesuits toward it. It was natural, therefore, that the Parliament of Paris should support the Bishop against the Sorbonnè. This brought the Parliament into conflict with the Crown over the bull *Unigenitus* (1730). Meanwhile the capital was thrown into a state of intense excitement by an extraordinary outburst of religious mania. A certain Deacon Pâris, a prominent Jansenist whose life had been spent in the most extreme asceticism, died in 1727, and soon after his death rumours began to get afloat concerning miracles which were alleged to be occurring at his grave in the cemetery of Saint-Médard. Such stories grew apace despite the efforts of the ecclesiastical authorities to discredit them, and before long great crowds were flocking daily to the scene. Among these crowds were many fanatics who were seized with a kind of contagious hysteria, and whose violent contortions, disgusting gesticulations, and wild prayers and prophesyings earned

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for them the name of *convulsionnaires*. At length the situation became so serious that the Government had to interfere, and in January 1732 the cemetery was closed. The biting epigram which announced that the King had forbidden God to perform any further miracles¹ may be taken as an index of intelligent opinion on the subject. Jansenism had been fast degenerating since the great days of Arnauld and Pascal, and this outburst of fanaticism brought it into general disrepute. Voltaire declared that the grave of Deacon Pâris was that of Jansenism as well.

THE WAR OF THE POLISH SUCCESSION

Soon after this France was once more involved in war. In September 1733 the throne of Poland was left vacant by the death of Augustus II. The Polish monarchy was elective, and two candidates presented themselves: Stanislaus, the exiled sovereign, and the late King's son, Augustus, Elector of Saxony. Stanislaus was elected; but Russia and Prussia refused to recognize him and proclaimed the Elector of Saxony in his stead. Anxious as Fleury was to preserve peace, he was overborne by the bellicose party at Court who held that France was bound to support their own King's father-in-law. The War of the Polish Succession which resulted lasted from 1733 to 1738. So far as Poland itself was concerned the issue was quickly settled. The Russians seized Warsaw and marched upon Dantzic; the miserable expeditionary force sent out by Fleury failed completely to arrest their progress; Stanislaus fled in haste back to France, and his cause collapsed. But these disasters were offset by substantial gains in the war against Austria, in which France had Savoy and Spain as allies. Two armies were despatched: the one under Berwick to the Rhine, the other under Villars, the last of the great generation of Louis XIV's captains, into Italy. Berwick seized Kehl and laid siege to Philipsburg, where, however, he was killed. Villars died at Turin, at eighty-one, regretting

¹ " De par le roi, défense à Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu."

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that, unlike Berwick, who had always been more lucky than himself, he had not fallen in battle. But the French were victorious at Parma and Guastalla, while the Spaniards occupied Naples and Sicily. These successes gave the pacific Fleury the eagerly awaited opportunity to open negotiations for peace, and the war died down, though it was not till 1738 that it was formally closed by the Treaty of Vienna. Details of the distribution of the territorial spoils among the allies need not detain us. It is enough to record that Stanislaus, in compensation for the loss of Poland, was granted the duchy of Lorraine, with the proviso that on his death it should be united in perpetuity to France,¹ while Francis, the Duke of Lorraine, who was dispossessed to make place for him, received Tuscany in exchange.

THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION

Fleury was satisfied with a peace which for France was not without honour, but within a couple of years of its conclusion fresh clouds began to gather upon the European horizon. In October 1740 the Emperor Charles VI, Archduke of Austria, died, leaving no male issue, but a daughter, Maria Theresa, then in her twenty-fourth year. Though it was, of course, out of the question that she should aspire to the Imperial crown, her father had done his utmost to secure for her the inheritance of his Austrian dominions, and in this he was confident that he had succeeded, the Pragmatic Sanction in which in 1713 he had proclaimed her right having been formally accepted by all the principal rulers save the Elector of Bavaria, who was himself a rival claimant. No sooner was he in his grave, however, than the consenting parties found the required loophole in their agreement and began a diplomatic scramble for the possessions of the young Archduchess—a course which they felt safe in adopting since they had to deal with a woman whose husband (Francis, formerly of Lorraine and now of Tuscany) was a negligible prince, and whose country was in a state of military and financial decay. At this point, however,

¹ This occurred in 1766.

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a fresh turn was given to affairs by the sudden appearance of the new King of Prussia, Frederick II, who, with the decision of purpose and cynical disregard of morality which together were to characterize his actions throughout his career, trumped up a claim to a portion of Silesia, invaded the province, and defeated the Austrians at Mollwitz (1741) and Chotusitz (1742). This piece of shameless aggression roused the war passion throughout Europe. Poor old Fleury exerted all his efforts to keep France out of the coming struggle, but he was now too senile to withstand the powerful influence of the hot-headed and ambitious Belle-Isle and the anti-Austrian party. Against his own judgment, therefore, he made common cause with Bavaria, Prussia, Saxony, Spain, Sardinia, and Poland in repudiating the Pragmatic Sanction. The War of the Austrian Succession opened favourably for the allies, and Maria Theresa, basely abandoned by those who should have been her friends, had to seek refuge in Hungary, where her eloquent appeal to their sympathies aroused the entire people in her support. Then by the timely cession of Silesia she detached Frederick from the coalition; Saxony and Sardinia followed; while Spain became entangled in a maritime war with England, which, like Holland, now abandoned its neutrality and openly declared for the Archduchess. The result of these shifting conditions was the practical isolation of France, and Belle-Isle's army in Bohemia was at once placed in serious peril, out of which, however, the Marshal contrived to extricate himself by a forced march in which he sacrificed 1200 men but lost neither cannon nor flag. At this juncture Cardinal Fleury died, in his ninetieth year (January 1743), and Louis announced his intention to imitate his great-grandfather by governing henceforth without a Prime Minister. The gravity of the situation rousing him for a moment from his customary lethargy, he took command of his army after the defeat of the French by the English at Dettingen (1743), but at Metz was struck down by an illness which almost proved fatal, and again retired from the scene. Disturbed by the successes of Austria, Frederick now turned against Maria Theresa and

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invaded Bohemia, but the prospects of European peace were none the less vastly improved by the election of Maria's husband as Emperor. France was furious at the course which things had taken, yet though no possible gain could now accrue to her from the continuance of the war, she was compelled to fight on in the hope of obtaining honourable terms of peace. Victory crowned her efforts in Flanders at Fontenoy (1745), Raucoux (1746), and Lawfeld (1747), but elsewhere the balance of results was against her on both land and sea. It was therefore a relief to Frenchmen of all classes and opinions when the preliminaries of peace were at length signed at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. This unjust and bloody war had on the whole been creditable to the national arms, though much of its glory redounded to the foreign commander, Maurice de Saxe.¹ But its chief results to France were the elevation of Prussia to a place among the foremost Powers and the addition of twelve hundred million livres to the public debt.

The period immediately following the Treaty of Aix was, however, one of extraordinary prosperity throughout Europe,² and even France, with her astonishing vitality, began to recover rapidly from the strain. Yet, as Frederick declared, the peace was only a truce, which gave the combatants time to take breath and prepare to renew the conflict under more favourable conditions. Seven years passed, and then a general struggle was once more precipitated by a collision between France and England. Owing to the colonial rivalries of these two countries, the recent war had spread to India and North America, and in neither of these distant theatres had hostilities ever completely ceased. Despite the unwise methods too often adopted by her statesmen, the power of France beyond the sea had long been growing fast, and her various colonial possessions—in the Ile Bourbon, the Ile-de-France, the Antilles, Canada, Louisiana, and India (though here the enterprise of Dupleix had been frustrated by Clive and ruined by Dupleix' recall and disgrace in 1754)—gave encouraging signs for still

¹ Illegitimate son of Augustus II of Poland.

² Voltaire, *Le Siècle de Louis XV.*

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further success. Such signs, accompanied as they were by the efforts of the French to revive their long-neglected marine, aroused the jealousy of England. The consequent tension was particularly marked in North America, where disputes regarding boundaries, notably in Acadia and along the western frontiers of the thirteen colonies, were of continual occurrence. One of these came to a head in 1754, when a series of encounters (in which, it is interesting to note, young George Washington played a conspicuous part) took place in the Ohio valley. Angry representations were exchanged between the two Governments, but it was not till 1756 that peace was formally broken.

THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR

Distant as was their field, the hostilities which now commenced in earnest disturbed the equilibrium of Europe. Maria Theresa, though she had accepted the settlement of Aix, had done so only under compulsion, and had continued to nurse her grievances and her desire for revenge. Frederick, aware of her designs, had meanwhile kept his army ready for instant action. Both France and Britain were also preparing to enter the pending conflict, the latter on the side of Prussia, the former, together with Russia, Sweden, and most of the German states, as an ally of Austria, her hereditary foe. Such was the disposition of the antagonists when in 1756 began the desperate Seven Years' War, which has a twofold significance in history because it was the closing struggle at once between Austria and Prussia for the possession of Silesia and between France and England for colonial supremacy and the command of the sea. Having obtained by bribery information of the combination which was being formed against him, Frederick with his characteristic promptitude again anticipated his enemies and in August 1756 invaded Saxony, where he carried everything before him. Two French armies at once took the field, one of which overwhelmed Cumberland, 'the Butcher,' at Hastenbeck and Klosterzeven (1757), while the other was routed by Frederick at Rossbach

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(1757). Thenceforth the continental war was fought out on two separate lines. Frederick, engaging the Austrians and Russians in the region of the Elbe and the Oder, exhibited tireless energy and consummate military genius; yet his campaigns of 1758-60 were on the whole unfortunate, and in the winter of 1761-62 he was brought so near to the end of his resources that his position seemed almost desperate. But the death of the Tsarina Elizabeth in 1762 removed Russia from the list of his enemies, and from this point on the tide ran entirely in his favour. In the meantime in the valley of the Rhine the French, operating against the Anglo-Hanoverians, were now victors and now vanquished, now able to push forward into Germany and now forced to retreat. All through they displayed their usual dash and valour, but their armies were in poor condition, ill-equipped and ill-disciplined; their officers were in general careless and incompetent; while their chief command had suffered seriously by the substitution through a boudoir intrigue of the Prince of Soubise and the Duke of Richelieu for that really fine old soldier, Marshal d'Estrées.

For France, however, the colonial war was of infinitely greater moment than the continental. In this wider field the struggle opened auspiciously, for a French fleet defeated the English under Byng in the Mediterranean (1756); Minorca was captured; while Montcalm in Canada broke the English invasion and repulsed Abercrombie at Ticonderoga. But in 1757 the course of events underwent a decisive change. Despite George II's dislike of him, Pitt was now firmly established in power, and carried the war forward with the utmost vigour and sagacity, while on the other hand the government of France, now practically in the hands of the King's mistress and her creatures, was steadily going from bad to worse. An attempt to gain strength by the union of the two chief branches of the Bourbons in the Family Compact with Spain (1761) failed entirely to stem the tide of British successes; indeed, the main result of this secret agreement was to involve Spain in the growing reverses of France. In Canada, after a brief

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but heroic resistance on the part of the *habitants*, Wolfe's victory on the Plains of Abraham (1759), the fall of Quebec, and the capture of Montreal (1760) virtually closed the history of French dominion in North America. In India Lally-Tollendal, deserted by the fleet, was forced back into Pondicherry and compelled to surrender after a splendid defence of nearly a year, and the doom of French power in Asia was also sealed.

The Seven Years' War, having exhausted all the combatants, was closed in 1763 by the Treaty of Hubertsburg between Prussia and Austria and that of Paris between France and Britain. On the continental side the gigantic struggle had accomplished nothing; for it made no alteration in the map of Europe and "not a hamlet . . . changed its ruler" as a result of all its waste and carnage.¹ In its colonial aspects, on the other hand, its consequences were vast and far-reaching. In plain terms, its chief issue for France was the practical destruction of her power beyond the seas. She was, indeed, permitted to retain a few possessions of little value in the West Indies, and those in India as they had existed before 1749, but her colonial development was arrested and her commerce crippled. Moreover, she was compelled to cede Louisiana to Spain as an indemnity for Spain's losses under the Family Compact, and, as a last drop of bitterness in the cup of her humiliation, to guarantee the demolition of the fortifications of Dunkerque. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the Treaty of Paris was the most cruel blow that French pride had received in modern times. It is certain that with its signature France sank lower in the eyes of the world than at any moment since the Wars of Religion. Nor was this all. National disaster and disgrace deeply affected the imagination of the sensitive French people themselves and intensified their growing bitterness against their Government. The Seven Years' War has therefore to be included among the many causes which were now co-operating to bring about the debasement of the monarchy in the judgment of the nation.

¹ J. B. Perkins, *France under Louis XV*, vol. ii, p. 177.

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THE CHARACTER OF LOUIS XV

Even more potent among such causes, however, we have to reckon the character and conduct of the monarch himself and of those into whose hands he allowed the control of the State to lapse. Louis XV seems to have been born with a thoroughly vicious disposition. It is hardly too much to say that he was a moral pervert. As a child he showed himself singularly callous and cruel, his principal pleasure being the killing of little birds, while all through life he indulged his lust for blood in forms of sport which were little better than organized slaughter. Utterly selfish and indolent, he evinced, save on a few rare occasions, no interest in either domestic or foreign affairs. The ruin of his country and the miseries of his people left him unmoved; "Cela durera bien autant que moi," he is reported to have said; and again, "Après moi le déluge"; and if these were not the actual phrases used by him they will serve to express his feeling. His temperament was, indeed, so sluggish that even the external trappings of kingship gave him no pleasure. The splendours of the Court in which Louis XIV had found satisfaction were to him a weariness. From youth to age he suffered from terrible listlessness and boredom, out of which his main escape was into debaucheries which have made his name infamous even in the annals of kings. Yet many as were his amours he never exhibited the slightest trace of genuine passion in any of them. His sensuality had nothing poetic about it; it was merely one aspect of a hopelessly brutal and depraved nature.

THE MARQUISE OF POMPADOUR

Of all the women who figure in the record of his reign one deserves some attention because she belongs to the history of France as well as to that of the Court. Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, afterward the Marquise of Pompadour, was married at twenty to a certain Le Normant d'Étioles, and at twenty-four became the King's mistress and the ruling star at



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Versailles. She was a woman of great beauty and charm, and of rather unusual intellectual endowments; vivacious and witty; a devotee of art, a lover of pretty things, a good musician and an admirable actress. But in temper she was cold ("froide comme une macreuse"); her mind was corrupt; and from first to last she made the favour of the King the means for the satisfaction of her greed and ambitions. Had she been content to be simply the arbiter of fashion and taste she would have done comparatively little harm. Unhappily she aspired to political power, quickly obtained control of public affairs, filled the most important offices with her favourites, made her creatures ministers, appointed and dismissed generals, and even interfered with the conduct of campaigns. Thus she was for a while practically the Prime Minister of France, ruling in accordance with her whims and caprices, and this at a critical time when the destinies of Prussia were being shaped by Frederick and those of England by Pitt. That during the nineteen years of what she herself called her 'reign' she absorbed something like thirty-six million livres from the State Treasury is a further fact to be set down in her account. Nor did her grasp upon the government relax till the very day of her death in 1764, though long before that popular hatred of her had been unceasingly discharging itself in lampoons, satires, and '*poissardes*,' for which many a wit was sent to the Bastille. For as her own health and charms failed she accepted her change of position from royal mistress to *amie nécessaire*, and, resolved at whatever cost to maintain her hold upon the King, descended even to pander to his vices by acting the part of procuress to the harem which he had established in the notorious Parc-aux-Cerfs behind Versailles. Yet, disastrous as was her rule, the country she had plundered gained little when she made way for the even more disreputable Mme du Barry. This handsome, coarse, vulgar woman, whose tastes were entirely for money, dress, and jewels, whose rapacity was almost incredible, and who bled the Treasury of some twelve million livres while the State was tottering on the verge of bankruptcy, contrived to

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tickle the jaded appetites of the worn-out debauchee of sixty, and remained supreme over him till his death.

DECLINE OF THE MONARCHY

In these circumstances what chance was there that the monarch would retain even a shred of the respect of his subjects, or that the divinity which had long hedged the French throne would survive so many and such rude assaults? In his youth Louis had been the object of much popular affection. On Fleury's death high hopes had been entertained of his personal rule. During his serious illness a little later the country was stirred to its depths with anxiety; his recovery was hailed with transports of joy; even the sovereign, surprised out of his apathy, was fain to ask—as well he might—what he had done to be so beloved. It was at this time, indeed, that the surname was bestowed upon him which was afterward to gain such a cynical significance—that of 'Bien-aimé.' But the mood of the nation changed rapidly after the Peace of Aix, when the Government became the plaything of scheming courtiers and dissolute women, and the King's unpopularity thenceforth grew apace until it had developed into the bitterest hatred. A sentimental reaction in his favour set in, it is true, when in January 1757 his life was attempted by a half-crazy valet named Damiens. But it was only momentary. As years went on and he sank lower and lower into the slough of debauchery, the abominations connected with his private life combined with the reckless misrule of those who nominally governed in his behalf to intensify the loathing with which he was everywhere regarded. It was during these years that France came clearly to realize that the figure she had worshipped as God's anointed was only a monstrous idol of clay.

THE MINISTRY OF THE DUKE OF CHOISEUL

The one comparatively bright spot in the thirty years from Fleury's death to the end of the reign was the period of the ministry of the Duke of Choiseul, between 1758 and 1770.

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Choiseul owed his elevation to Mme de Pompadour, but though for a time he depended upon backstairs influences he gradually made himself secure enough to act independently. He was not a great statesman nor a very scrupulous one; but he was a man of ideas; he had the national interest at heart; and if he lacked stability he had plenty of courage. His chief ambition was to restore the prestige of the country in the councils of Europe, but the fact that two years after his retirement Russia, Prussia, and Austria partitioned Poland among them without troubling to consult France is proof that his efforts met with only a measure of success. In order to seal the Austrian alliance he arranged a marriage between the Dauphin and Marie-Antoinette, Maria Theresa's daughter (1770). He introduced various useful reforms in the army, the navy, and the finances, developed trade and industry at home, and, convinced that all was not yet lost abroad, set himself to the task of reviving what was left of the French colonial empire and the mercantile marine. The purchase of Corsica from Genoa (1767-68)—an acquisition of great importance for naval purposes—was another step in his foreign policy. These measures, and still more the suppression of the order of the Jesuits, rendered him extremely popular. But he made enemies at Court, especially after Mme de Pompadour's death, and his temerity in opposing the all-powerful Mme du Barry led to his downfall. On December 24, 1770, he received his dismissal, and retired at once to his estate at Chanteloup. The demonstration which attended his departure showed that the popular sympathies were all on his side. Cheering crowds followed his carriage to the gates, and his portrait was sold in the streets.

CLOSING YEARS OF LOUIS' REIGN

After this the government of France passed into the hands of a triumvirate composed of the Duke of Aiguillon as Foreign Minister, the Abbé Terray as Controller-General of Finances, and the Chancellor Maupeou. The chief event of their combined rule, which lasted till the King's death, was the

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suppression of the Parliaments. Since the Regency the Parliament of Paris had renewed its old practice of interfering in political affairs, and had thus more than once come into serious collision with the Court. Meanwhile, however, it enjoyed so much popularity by reason both of its resistance to arbitrary taxation and its uncompromising opposition to the Jesuits that on the last of these occasions, in December 1756, it was only the diversion of feeling caused by Damiens' attempted murder of the King which prevented a rising of the people in its favour. On the other hand, like the provincial Parliaments, it was hated by the philosophic party for its despotism and bigotry.¹ Such was the situation when Maupeou, who had himself been its president, was installed as Chancellor. For several years a violent quarrel had been raging between the Parliament of Brittany and Aiguillon, then governor of the province, who was accused by it of extortion. In this quarrel the local magistrature had the support of the Parliament of Paris. Louis took a strong line against the combination, asserting in language which echoed that often held by his great-grandfather his own sole and sovereign power; but all the same Aiguillon was recalled and cited before the Parliament of Paris. It was while the trial was dragging on its weary course that Choiseul's dismissal occurred. Then, under the advice of Mme du Barry and the triumvirate, the King annulled the proceedings. The provincial Parliaments joined that of Paris in a vigorous protest against this arbitrary act, and the dispute thus became generalized into a conflict of principles. Upon this Maupeou determined to crush all resistance to the Crown by a *coup d'état*. On the night of January 19-20, 1771, the magistrates of the Parlia-

¹ It must be remembered that the Parliament of Paris condemned Rousseau's works to be burnt and Voltaire's publishers to severe punishment, behaved with brutal injustice in the case of Lally-Tollendal, and sent La Barre and d'Étallonde to the stake for alleged insults to the crucifix. The record of the provincial Parliaments was as bad. That of Toulouse rendered itself specially infamous by the persecution of the Protestants and the judicial murder of the Huguenot Calas, in whose case Voltaire made such a splendid fight in the cause of humanity.

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ment were visited by *mousquetaires*, who summarily demanded their subjection to the King. Those who refused—113 in all—were exiled from Paris under *lettres de cachet*. This action was followed in April by the suppression of the Parliaments throughout the country, their place being taken by new judicial bodies popularly known as the 'Parlements Maupeou.'

Save for this effort to preserve the empty show of absolutism amid the wreckage of its reality, the maladministration of the triumvirate is noteworthy only for the cynical dishonesty of Terray in dealing with the finances. Now that the check imposed by the Parliament of Paris was removed, the King and his mistress squandered the public money more recklessly than ever, and the Controller was driven to all sorts of extremities to meet their incessant needs. Widespread ruin and disorder were the general results of his measures. It happened that bad harvests and great scarcity of food at this time brought the people in many provinces to the verge of starvation. Terray not only prohibited the free circulation of grain throughout the country, but even manœuvred a 'corner' in it, thus making enormous profits out of the nation's misery. Then the story got abroad that Louis himself was the principal party to this infamous *pacte de famine*. Actual proof of the allegation is wanting, though it seems to be well founded; at any rate, the people believed it, and their minds were inflamed with impotent rage against their King.

Callously indifferent to this ever-growing hatred, Louis continued his way of life unchanged to the end. On April 28 he was taken suddenly ill; his malady developed into smallpox; and of this loathsome disease he died on May 10, having, as we are solemnly informed, evinced at the last a truly Christian penitence. So passed Louis le Bien-aimé; so appropriately closed what has been justly described as the most disgraceful reign in French history. It is significant that while in general the great dignitaries of the Church, after their sycophantic wont, eulogized the dead reprobate in the customary tone of

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nauseating flattery, one at least, the Bishop of Alais, boldly spoke of the evil example he had set to his subjects. As for the nation at large, it received the news of his death with universal satisfaction. His obsequies were made the occasion of popular rejoicings, and his memory was lampooned in ballads and pasquinades.

CHAPTER X

LOUIS XVI

FROM HIS ACCESSION TO 1789

WHEN the late King's grandson ascended the throne in his twentieth year¹ it was a critical hour both for the sovereign and for France. For many years, as observers like Montesquieu had clearly seen,² the country had been drifting toward revolution. While the authority of the Crown was still absolute in name, it was matter of common knowledge that Louis XV himself had been little more than a puppet in the hands of corrupt women and rapacious officials, and the personal prestige of the monarchy had thus been fatally discredited. Meanwhile symptoms of dangerous unrest were everywhere apparent. Vague discontent was being sharpened into a specific sense of injustice. The wrongs and miseries of the people were being openly discussed and the misdoings of the Government boldly challenged. The air was filled with talk and speculation, and the theories of the philosophers were freely bandied about the streets.³ Even at Court a conflict was already arising between old ideas and new, while outside aristocratic circles, and especially among thoughtful members of the middle classes, the general reaction against all the principles on which the ancient order had rested was steadily growing in strength and volume. The situation

¹ Louis XVI was the only surviving son of Louis XV's only son, Louis of France, who had died in 1765.

² See, *e.g.*, his letters of April 13, 1752, and December 25, 1753.

³ A traveller who at the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI returned to France after some years of absence was asked what change he noticed in the nation. "None," he replied, "except that what used to be talked about in the drawing-rooms is now repeated in the streets" (Taine, *L'Ancien Régime*, Eng. trans., p. 317).

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was therefore one which demanded in the ruler called upon to face its problems a combination of the highest qualities of statesmanship—sagacity, judgment, energy, tact, decision. Unfortunately these were the qualities in which Louis XVI was conspicuously wanting. Of vigorous physique, fond of manly exercises, yet finding particular pleasure in mechanical pursuits, such as lock-making, this ill-starred king was for the rest a man of simple tastes, temperate, decent in his private life, and sincerely religious. He had, moreover, a thoroughly good heart and was honestly desirous of ministering to the welfare of his people. But he was at the same time feeble in character, unintelligent, narrow-minded, timid, and irresolute. As M. Albert Sorel has said of him, he knew how to do many things—to love, to pardon, to suffer, to die; but he did not know how to reign. This essential weakness was his individual contribution to the destructive forces of his time. To a large extent, of course, he paid the penalty of his predecessors' sins; he came too late to undo the mischief which they had done, and where they had sown the wind he had to reap the whirlwind for his harvest. Yet we cannot ignore the fact that his own pitiful inefficiency was one cause of his tragic failure.

MARIE-ANTOINETTE

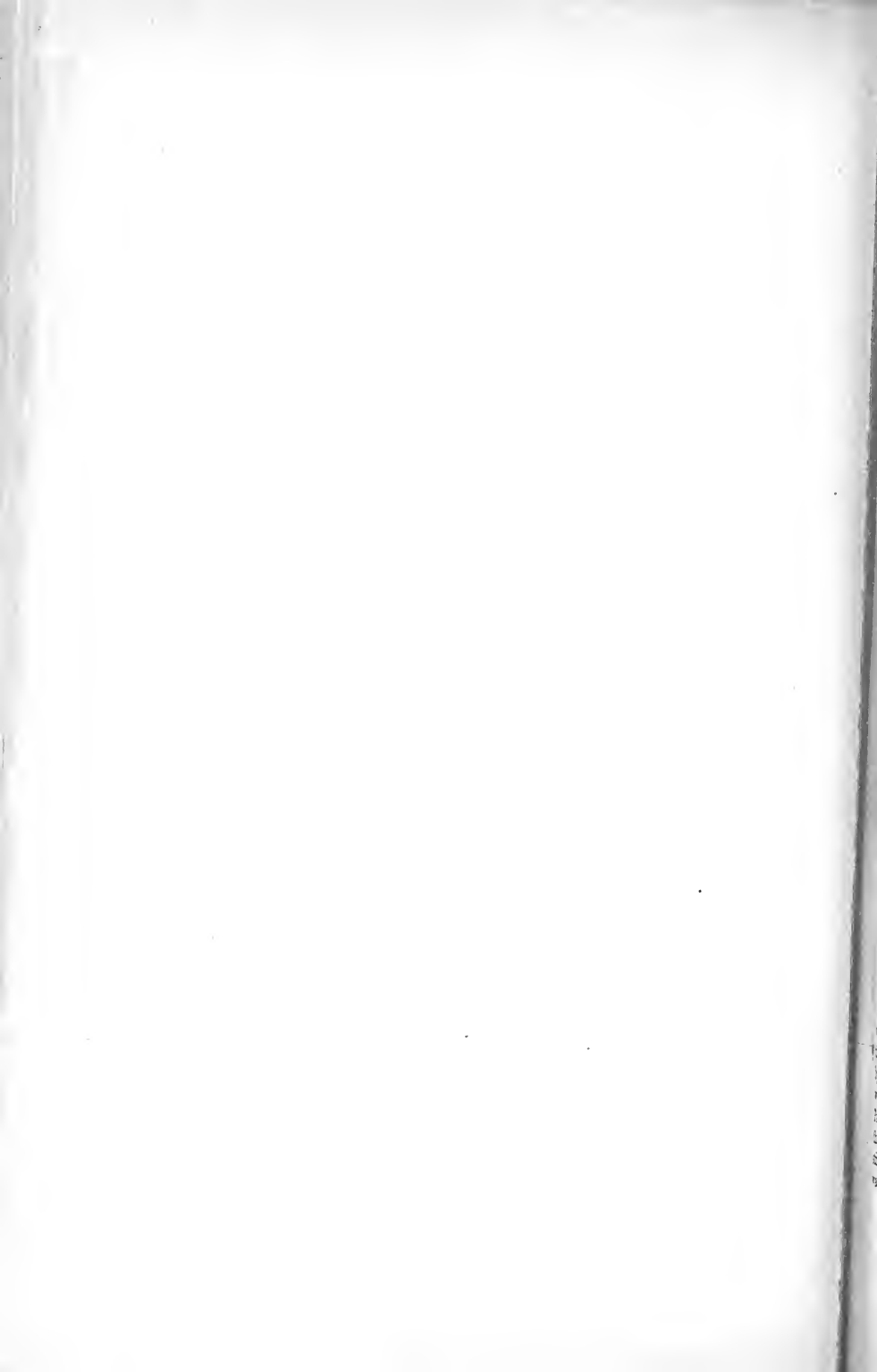
The evil influence exerted over him directly and indirectly by his wife must also be emphasized. From the very outset Marie-Antoinette, as an Austrian princess, had been unpopular in France, and her unpopularity increased as she came, not without reason, to be suspected of caring much more about the country of her birth than about that of her adoption. Barely fifteen at the time of her marriage, four years before Louis' accession, she brought with her to the formal and punctilious Court of Versailles the freer manners to which she had been accustomed at home, and by her rather reckless disregard of etiquette and convention created scandals by which her reputation suffered. There was, indeed, no real ground for the charges whispered against her, but none the



72. LOUIS XVI



73. MARIE-ANTOINETTE



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less, like the famous affair of the diamond necklace some years later,¹ they gave a convenient handle to prejudice. As she grew older, however, and especially after she became Queen, though she lost little of her frivolity, other and more injurious elements in her character came to the surface. She now showed herself self-willed, supercilious, and domineering. Conscious of possessing far more strength of mind and purpose than her husband, she arrogated to herself the prerogatives of royalty. Henceforth she was always interfering, and in general most injudiciously, in State affairs and State appointments, until her meddlesome habits even aroused the anxiety of her mother and called forth a private reproof from her brother, the Emperor Joseph. Educated as she had been in the severest principles of absolutism, she carried with her into her new environment a spirit of obstinate hostility to all liberal ideas, and in respect of every effort made toward reform constituted herself the leader of the obstructionists and the reactionaries. Thus as she gained more and more power over Louis' sluggish mind she used that power almost entirely for evil. As to-day we look back into the last years of the Old Régime through the medium of after-events, our recollection of Marie-Antoinette's terrible fate and of the courage with which she met it is apt to turn the edge of our judgment. The impartial historian has still to record that this haughty and unyielding woman must in the measure of her influence be held responsible for blunders which in their consequences were as serious as crimes.

Louis' first act as King was to dismiss Mme du Barry, and, with the help of the Count of Maurepas, whom he placed at the head of his Council, to make a clean sweep of the trium-

¹ The affair of the diamond necklace (1784-85), the chief actors in which were a notorious adventuress named Jeanne de la Motte, her husband, and the vain and fatuous Cardinal de Rohan, was a plot to obtain possession by false pretences of a wonderful necklace originally meant for Mme du Barry, who, however, had been banished before its completion. The populace of Paris, who were well aware of the Queen's inordinate extravagance, imagined that she was herself privy to the conspiracy, and this erroneous view greatly stimulated their animus against her at a time when for other reasons she was generally detested.

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virate. This was all for the good. But the choice of Prime Minister was ill-advised. Maurepas, who had held various offices under Louis XV years before, and in 1749 had been exiled for an epigram on Mme de Pompadour, was now a man of seventy-three, clever in a superficial way, but frivolous and cynical, and therefore very obviously not the right person, in the circumstances, to be entrusted with the destinies of the country. As changeable as a weathercock, he had neither settled convictions nor definite policy, and merely toyed with public opinion. Even he, however, soon perceived that stronger heads were required, and he therefore called to his aid, along with several other counsellors, the well-known publicist Turgot, first as Minister of Marine and then (August 1774) as Controller-General of Finances, and Turgot's ardent admirer, Malesherbes.

THE MINISTRY OF TURGOT

Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot was born in Paris in 1727, and after a brilliant career at the Sorbonne abandoned his original intention of entering the Church, devoted himself to the law, and soon began to make a mark by writings which gave him a place of distinction among the economists and the *philosophes* of the time. In 1761 he was appointed Intendant of Limoges, a position which he held for thirteen years, during which time he laboured hard and patiently to ameliorate the condition of the people of Limousin, then sunk in poverty, ignorance, and vice, by the introduction of a number of social and economic reforms which he had already worked out in theory. His transference to the Ministry of Finances then provided him with the opportunity of trying on a large scale and for the whole of France the experiments which he had made with success on a small scale and in a single province. In the memorable letter which he addressed to the King on taking office, he briefly outlined his policy :

“Your Majesty has been good enough to permit me to place on record the engagement you have taken upon you to sustain me in the execution of those plans of economy

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which are at all times, and to-day more than ever, of an indispensable necessity. . . . At this moment, Sire, I confine myself to recalling to you these three words : No Bankruptcy ; No Increase of Taxes ; No Loans. No bankruptcy, either avowed or disguised by illegal reductions. No increase of taxes, the reason for this being in the condition of your people, and still more in that of Your Majesty's own generous heart. No loans, because every loan diminishes always the free revenue and necessitates at the end of a certain time either bankruptcy or the increase of taxes. . . . To meet these points there is but one means. It is to reduce expenditure below revenue, and sufficiently below it to ensure each year a saving of twenty millions [of livres] to be applied in the redemption of old debts. Without that, the first gunshot will force the State to bankruptcy."

His programme of financial and economic reform was boldly conceived and comprehensive, for it included reduction in the cost of collecting the taxes ; the suppression of many abuses in their incidence and distribution, and in particular the destruction of the immunities of the privileged classes ; the substitution for various feudal dues, such as the *corvée* (or forced labour of peasants on public roads), of a regular impost on landed property ; free trade in grain throughout the kingdom ; the removal of the vexatious fiscal barriers (*douanes intérieures*) which prevented natural commercial intercourse between province and province ; and the abolition of the old trade guilds (*jurandes*), which had long exercised a vicious control over labour. Nor do these measures exhaust the list of his enterprises. He also outlined a system of national education and a scheme of interconnected elective assemblies, beginning with the parish and ending with the State, the functions of which, however, were to be, not legislative, but merely deliberative ; while in a proposal for the ratification of Protestant marriages he took what he meant to be the first step in a general policy of religious toleration.

At the outset this great minister had the support of the King, who once remarked : " Je vois bien qu'il n'y a que

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M. Turgot et moi qui aimons le peuple." But, as his letter to Louis shows, he had clearly foreseen the antagonism which he was certain to arouse among those—and they were many—whose advantage lay in the maintenance of the evils he had set out to attack. Before long he had the nobles, the higher clergy, the farmers of taxes, the great financiers, the trading corporations, ranged in a solid mass against him. The corn riots of 1775, deliberately fomented, it is believed, by his opponents, weakened his influence in the country at large. A little later he came into conflict with the Parliament of Paris, which, together with the provincial Parliaments, had been restored, against his advice, by Maurepas, and was now behaving as factiously as ever. Then the Queen, who disliked his liberalism and was determined to thwart his plans, began to intrigue against him with the ever-jealous Maurepas. Louis was too weak to resist so much pressure, and especially that brought to bear upon him by his wife, and he was the more ready to yield because, though he warmly approved of Turgot's policy, his religious prejudices were ruffled by his free-thinking: however admirable his statesmanship, the important fact remained that he did not go to Mass! Turgot, on his side, though the very incarnation of integrity, was neither conciliatory nor tactful enough to deal successfully with so many powerful foes; his relations with the King were soon strained to breaking-point; and on May 12, 1776, he was dismissed, having held office for just twenty months. His removal was accompanied by the resignation of the high-minded and public-spirited Malesherbes, who in earlier years as president of the Cour des Aides and censor of the press had laboured indefatigably in the cause of justice and toleration, and who as minister had given his friend substantial help in his work for reform.

The fall of Turgot was hailed with delight by the Court and viewed with consternation by Voltaire, Condorcet, and the whole philosophic party, who rightly saw in it an irreparable misfortune to the country. What might have happened had he been allowed a free hand in the carrying out of his programme

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it is of course idle to speculate. But the judgment of history is that his dismissal was Louis' gravest mistake and the real crisis of his reign. "With him," as M. Sorel has well said, "vanished all hope of recasting the Government in its ancient mould."¹

THE MINISTRY OF NECKER

Reaction triumphed all along the line under the brief rule of Turgot's successor, Clugny: the *corvée* was re-established, the *jurandes* restored, and free trade in grain suppressed. Then, as the finances were again lapsing into absolute anarchy, and all that Clugny could propose to meet the swelling deficit was a State lottery, Maurepas called to his aid the great banker Jacques Necker, who had already lent money to the Government and had distinguished himself as a writer by a pamphlet in opposition to Turgot's free-trade policy. Though Swiss by birth, Necker had made his fortune in Paris, where the *salon* of his wife, the charming and accomplished Suzanne Curchod,² had long been a centre of intellectual activity, but the fact that he was a foreigner and a Protestant debarred him from a seat in the Council, and he took office, not as Controller-General, but as Director, first of the Treasury (1776) and then of the finances (1777). A vain and showy man, he was at the same time honest and hard-working, and his thorough business training stood him in good stead. Rejecting all the doctrinaire schemes of Turgot, of which his practical temper made him contemptuous, he addressed himself to the task of readjusting the taxes, introducing more order and system into their administration, and devising various expedients to meet the liabilities of the State, one of which, a new loan (January 1778), proved a great success.

WAR WITH ENGLAND

Unfortunately for Necker, his difficulties were greatly increased by a new turn in foreign affairs. On July 4, 1776,

¹ *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, t. i, p. 213.

² Who earlier in life had been engaged to Gibbon. The only daughter of M. and Mme Necker became famous in literary history as Mme de Staël.

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the British colonies in North America proclaimed their independence and entered upon the struggle which was to end in the establishment of the United States. Hatred of Britain and a rankling sense of humiliation left by the memory of the Seven Years' War made the cause of the colonists immensely popular in France, but the influence first of Turgot and then of Necker and the natural antipathy of the King ("dont le métier était d'être royaliste") to an association with republicanism prevented the Government for some time from entering the lists against its ancient foe. Finally, however, the diplomacy of Franklin and the clamour of the nation carried the day, and in February 1778 two treaties, one of commerce, the other of defensive alliance, were signed with the United States. The inevitable result was that France and England were soon again at war. The astonishing power of Choiseul's strengthened fleet was now apparent; during the first stages of the war, indeed, the French navy had practical command of the sea, to the enormous advantage of the American forces in their own campaigns, though Rodney's decisive victory over de Grasse off Jamaica in April 1782 ultimately restored the supremacy of the British flag. Meanwhile, however, Senegal, Gambia, Sierra Leone, St Vincent, Grenada, Demerara, St Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, Tobago, and Minorca had successively fallen into the hands of the French, while British dominion in India was also threatened by Admiral de Suffren's capture of Trincomalee. By this time, thoroughly beaten in the field, overweighed by a European coalition, and badly shaken by dissensions at home, England was glad to acknowledge the independence of her former colonies and to bring the war to a close. Under the Treaty of Versailles (1783) most of the territory acquired by the belligerents was reciprocally restored; but France was allowed to retain various possessions in India, the Antilles, and Africa, while the articles in the Treaties of Utrecht and Paris respecting the fortifications of Dunkerque were cancelled. Moreover, the moral prestige of the nation in the eyes of the world was now in large measure retrieved. Not without justification it was felt that the part which France

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had played in the American War of Independence had wiped out the disgrace of the ruinous Seven Years' War.

None the less such success, notable as it was, did nothing to benefit the Government or the country. On the contrary, the additional strain which had necessarily been imposed on the finances only aggravated internal evils. Necker wrestled manfully with his hopeless task, and managed to provide the sinews of war. But before the end came he had himself fallen from power. His policy of retrenchment had made him obnoxious to the Queen. His attempted reforms had aroused the hostility of many vested interests. In reply to his critics he published in 1781 a famous document, entitled *Compte rendu au Roi*, in which he undertook to provide a plain statement of the nation's position and incidentally to justify his own methods. This work created an immense sensation, but while it had the effect its author intended of inducing capitalists to lend money to the State, it also stirred up a host of enemies against him. In order to strengthen his position he now demanded from Maurepas a seat in the Council. This was refused on the score of his religion. Upon this he resigned (May 1781) and retired to Geneva, followed by the regrets of all patriotic Frenchmen, who regarded his departure as a public calamity.

THE EVE OF DISASTER : CALONNE

Necker's labours represent the last serious efforts of Louis' Government to set their house in order and avert the impending catastrophe. Once more relieved of the irritating interference of reforming ministers, the careless Court abandoned itself afresh to its frivolous pleasures in utter indifference to any day of reckoning which might possibly be in store. Turgot and Necker alike had preached economy. The Queen herself now set the pace for a renewed orgy of extravagance. Favours and pensions were multiplied; the festivities at Versailles were on a scale of extraordinary magnificence; money was even squandered on new palaces at Saint-Cloud and Rambouillet. Then when Marie-Antoinette and her little group

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of intimates grew weary for the moment of the excitement and dissipation they retired together to the Petit Trianon, where they milked the cows, fished in the lake, and, like shepherds and shepherdesses out of a conventional pastoral, amused themselves in playing at rustic simplicity. In the meantime the poor King, too feeble to check what he did not approve, lived very much apart, spending most of his time in hunting and lock-making.

For the rest, in those actively responsible for his government there was no longer either statesmanship or honesty. Maurepas died within a few months of Necker's resignation, and no new Prime Minister was appointed. But the control of the finances, after a couple of insignificant stop-gaps had demonstrated their own futility, was entrusted to Charles-Alexandre de Calonne, who held the position from November 1783 till April 1787. Calonne was a clever but totally unscrupulous man, who could juggle with figures in a way to dazzle the uninitiated, but was wholly destitute of political wisdom. He captivated the vacillating King, however, by his charming manners and easy, seductive speech, and made himself popular with the Queen and the Court by discarding the parsimonious counsels of his precursors and openly encouraging extravagance on the ground that a general display of wealth was necessary to attract capital for the loans with which he designed to carry on the business of the State. Then when, having borrowed 487 millions of livres, he found himself unable any longer to live from hand to mouth, by a sudden right-about-face he turned reformer, and laid before the King a plan for the readjustment of taxation. "But this is Necker pure and simple!" said Louis in his astonishment. "Sire," replied Calonne with calm effrontery, "I could not possibly offer you anything better." Naturally this absolute change of policy turned his former supporters at Court into foes. But in the hope of bearing down all opposition he advised the King to convene an Assembly of Notables, who should, of course, be merely the nominees and creatures of the Crown. Already there was a widespread movement for the revival of

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the States-General, but this suggestion was too revolutionary to be considered, and Calonne persevered in his own design, hoping in this way at once to satisfy public opinion and to make his own position secure. The Notables accordingly met in February 1787. In his characteristically optimistic speech to them the Controller first painted a rosy picture of the prosperity of the country and then passed on to outline the schemes by which he proposed to meet the appalling deficit to which he had to confess. But the Notables did not prove as amenable as he had anticipated. They refused to entertain his suggestions; and the more advanced among them—prominent among whom was La Fayette, who had imbibed liberal ideas while fighting for Washington in America—insisted on an appeal to the States-General. As Louis himself now abandoned him, Calonne's tenure of office came to an ignominious close.

LOMÉNIE DE BRIENNE AS MINISTER OF FINANCE

Calonne's collapse would have been an immense advantage to the country had there been any better man ready to take his place. But things were little likely to improve under the rule of his successor, the ambitious, vulgar, and short-sighted Archbishop of Toulouse, Loménie de Brienne, who owed his position mainly to the influence of the Queen. The country was now seething with excitement; talk of reforms of the most radical kind filled the air; the demand for the convocation of the States-General grew more and more insistent. But, heedless of these unmistakable omens of approaching storm, Brienne resolved to use the power of the King, whose personal popularity was still undiminished, to enforce his own schemes. The Notables were therefore dismissed and the edicts of the new Controller submitted to the Parliament of Paris. Then began the last struggle between that body and the Crown. The Parliament's reply was that neither the King nor the Parliament itself was competent to levy the taxes proposed, and that "the nation represented by the States-General alone had the power to grant to the King such subsidies

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as had been proved absolutely necessary." This was a direct challenge in uncompromising terms to royal authority. Plucking up his courage to meet it, Louis summoned the refractory magistrates to Versailles, and there, by the traditional method of the 'bed of justice,' compelled them to register the edicts in question. The next day, however, the Parliament declared that this enforced registration was null and void. The King's rejoinder, again according to long-standing precedent, was to send the Parliament into exile (August 15, 1787). But the time had now gone by when by these ancient devices absolutism could assert itself with safety and effect. It was useless for the distracted King to fall back upon the doctrine of his autocracy, and to reply to protests regarding the legality of his procedure with an impatient "C'est légal parce que je le veux." Words like these would have been well enough on the lips of the fourteenth Louis; on those of the sixteenth they were an empty boast. Public agitation now assumed dangerous proportions. Though, as it happened, the disputed edicts really aimed at the equalizing of taxation, the public at large were indifferent to this aspect of the matter, seeing in the King's treatment of the Parliament only a despotic attempt on the part of the Crown to deprive the nation of a voice in the management of its own affairs. The disgraced magistrates were followed out of the city by excited crowds. The elder of the King's brothers, the Count of Provence ('Monsieur'), who had expressed democratic opinions in the Assembly of Notables, received an enthusiastic welcome when he appeared in the streets. On the other hand, the press teemed with pamphlets against the Government, with satires, with caricatures. The King himself was on the whole immune from these attacks. But the hatred of Marie-Antoinette—'l'Autrichienne,' 'Madame Déficit'—was so intense that, at the request of the police, who dreaded violence, she no longer showed herself in the capital.

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THE LAST MONTHS OF THE OLD RÉGIME

The perplexity of the Government was now so great that it had to abandon its despotic tone and resort to compromise. Negotiations were opened with the exiled Parliament at Troyes, which at length consented to register the edicts after they had been amended in various particulars. Upon this the Parliament returned to Paris amid the acclamations of the populace (November 1787). But the same old question of registration arose over the very next edicts which were presented, and at this point the Government decided to have recourse to heroic measures and to crush the opposition of the magistrates once and for all by what was virtually, if not in form, a repetition of Maupeou's *coup d'état*. On May 8 the Parliament was summoned to Versailles, where a comprehensive programme of reform was laid before it, which it was required to accept on the spot. This programme contained many admirable proposals. But it also included a plan for the transference of the extra-judicial functions assumed by the Parliament to a new body—the Cour Plénière—which was to be instituted for the purpose. The outcry which followed the proclamation of these edicts was loud enough to convince the King and his advisers that they had totally misjudged the force and direction of public opinion. The Parliament stood solid in its resistance to the Government. A demand for the immediate convocation of the States-General arose all over the land. Feeling in the provinces ran so high that in many places—as in Dauphiné and Brittany—there were rioting and disorder. Before this outburst of popular anger the King, with national bankruptcy staring him in the face, was forced to recoil. To the very last he clung to the hope that the appeal to the country might yet be avoided. But in May 1788 a proclamation was issued convening the States for the following spring.

In the midst of all this excitement Brienne had held to office, but public hostility at length became so strong that he was forced to resign. The nation had long been clamouring

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for the recall of Necker. Much against his will the King had to give way on this point also. But Necker did nothing to allay the passions of the country, nor did his temporary measures arouse any interest either in the capital or outside. Through the memorable winter of 1788-89 all France, on the tiptoe of expectation, was awaiting the one great event—the meeting of its ancient representative parliament—which, as was universally believed, was to inaugurate a new era of freedom, justice, and prosperity for the entire people.

BOOK V

THE REVOLUTION AND THE EMPIRE

1789-1815

CHAPTER I PRELIMINARY

“THE Revolution,” wrote de Tocqueville, “was not a fortuitous event. If it had not taken place, the old social structure would equally have fallen, sooner in one place and later in another ; only it would have crumbled away by degrees, instead of falling with a crash.”¹ “Long before the final crash,” wrote Taine, France was “in a state of dissolution.”² The truth of these statements must be apparent to any one who follows the course of French history during the eighteenth century, even in such broad outlines as alone have been possible to us here. But a few pages of recapitulation and addition may be desirable before we pass on to the crash itself.

THE DECAY OF ABSOLUTISM

In the last years of the Old Régime the fabric of Louis XIV's political system was still standing intact. In accordance with the principles finally formulated by him, the monarchy was absolute ; no limitation of any kind was imposed upon its authority ; the King was an irresponsible ruler ; he could make peace or war of his own volition ; the whole internal administration was in his hands ; he was superior to all the

¹ *On the State of Society in France before the Revolution*, English trans., p. 25.

² *L'Ancien Régime*, Livre I, chap. iv.

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machinery of law, which with his arbitrary *lettres de cachet* he could override at his will. No public opinion was recognized; no vestige of popular liberty remained. Religious freedom had disappeared with the suppression of the Huguenots; the States-General had been almost forgotten; even the Parliaments had at length been virtually silenced. Yet, as we have seen, though the forms of absolutism endured, the monarchy had fallen into decrepitude. The ruinous wars of Louis XIV and the shameless orgies of his successor, with all the financial disasters which these had alike entailed, had not only fatally discredited the Crown itself in the eyes of the nation, but had even aroused adverse criticism regarding the principles upon which the whole political system rested. "The opinion gains ground everywhere," wrote a trustworthy exponent of the general feeling as early as 1757, "that absolute monarchy is the worst conceivable form of government."¹ That opinion grew rapidly in the decades which followed. To the extent to which their own interests were bound up with its maintenance, the clergy and the nobility supported autocracy, but the middle classes were already openly hostile to it. They saw clearly how many reforms were needed by the country, and at the same time understood perfectly well how, one and all, such reforms would receive uncompromising opposition from a despotism which was concerned only to safeguard its own power.

THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES

None the less forces were silently at work beneath the unchanging surface of things which no arbitrary authority could check and which made the continuance of the existing system impossible. This, as we can now see, was very obviously the case with the social order. The dividing lines between the so-called privileged classes—the clergy and the

¹ D'Argenson, *Journal*. It may be of interest to recall the fact that Goldsmith, who was in France just before this, was convinced by what he saw that the French were "imperceptibly vindicating themselves into freedom" (*The Citizen of the World*, Letter LVI).

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nobility—and the *bourgeoisie*—the merchants, traders, and professional men—were almost as sharply drawn as ever. The clergy were still protected by the wealthy and powerful corporation to which they belonged; the nobles continued to form a definite casté, with many hereditary rights to which they clung, though their original feudal semi-independence of the Crown, and with this their feudal duties, had long since disappeared. But neither the clergy nor the nobility now held their ground unchallenged. The middle classes had begun to emerge as a new force in society after the final overthrow of the aristocracy in the Frondes, and with the development of commerce and industry during the eighteenth century they increased steadily in wealth, influence, and prestige. Even intellectual leadership now passed more and more into their hands, as wealth created leisure, and leisure brought with it fresh opportunities and tastes. It is a significant fact that while the young nobles, after the fashion of their fathers, were still spending their time in acquiring the gentlemanly arts of fencing, riding, and dancing, the serious work of education was going on among the *bourgeoisie*. “In the eighteenth century the great majority of the students in the colleges were the sons of citizens.”¹ The real meaning of this new social movement was apparent at the time only to a few keen observers here and there, like Voltaire.² But there is ample evidence in general literature of the growing self-consciousness of the trading classes in regard to their importance in the State. It is noteworthy that on the stage they now begin to displace the aristocracy and to occupy the *premier plan*. In Sedaine’s masterpiece, to cite only one example, Vanderk, the merchant, defends and eulogizes his calling in language which recalls that already used in more industrial and democratic England by Steele’s Sealand and Lillo’s Thorowgood.³

¹ Babeau, *La Bourgeoisie d’Autrefois*, p. 369.

² *Le Siècle de Louis XV.*

³ *Le Philosophe sans le Savoir*, Act II, Scene IV. The democratization of literature in France had begun, as we have seen, in the later seventeenth century (*ante*, pp. 409-411). In the later eighteenth century it was largely a literature of the middle classes. Hence the significance of the fact that

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In the very nature of things it was impossible that the Third Estate, thus increasing not only in power but also in the sense of power, should continue to acquiesce silently in the inequalities of a system which profited by their labours and wealth while it denied to them rights to which their labours and wealth entitled them.

THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE

The growing discontent of the *bourgeoisie* was therefore manifestly an element of danger in the established order. Another element existed in the as yet wholly ignored and inarticulate mass beneath the *bourgeoisie*—the mass composed of the artisan classes in the towns and the peasantry in the country. The condition of the urban workman was servile and wretched ; he toiled hard for wages which scarcely sufficed to keep him out of want ; he was oppressed by the guilds, which largely controlled his fate ; he had little chance to rise above the narrow limitations of his precarious lot. That of the rural peasantry was even worse, for they lived as a rule from hand to mouth in a state of abject and hopeless misery. In their case, indeed, the hardships entailed by the old feudal system had in many ways been increased rather than diminished by the changes which were taking place elsewhere. In the old days the resident noble had been to some extent responsible for the welfare of the locality whose seigneur he was. Now the wealthy aristocracy flocked to Paris and Versailles, abandoning their feudal duties though they maintained their feudal claims, while those—and their number was large—whose poverty compelled them to live on their own soil were seldom able, even where they were willing, to fulfil their nominal obligations to their fiefs. In many instances, indeed, they were driven by their poverty to sell or farm out their seigniorial rights ; whence arose all the abuses of non-resident ownership and the curse of the middleman.

it was now greatly influenced by certain English writings—*e.g.*, the *Spectator*, the novels of Defoe and Richardson, the plays of Lillo and Moore—in which the ideas and sentiments of the middle classes were clearly expressed.

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At the same time all local affairs not directly connected with the old feudal relationships had passed under the control of the Crown as represented by the intendant, his deputies, and a whole army of minor officials, whose arbitrary power had become an intolerable despotism, from which there was no appeal. So complete and so far-reaching was the bureaucratic system that not a parish rate could be levied and not a church steeple repaired without the authority of the central Government. Beneath the crushing burden of this petty but uncontrolled officialism the whole country groaned in impotent unrest.

In any estimate of the forces behind the Revolution the greatest stress must be laid upon the deplorable state of the masses of the French people.¹ As the eighteenth century advanced their sufferings continued to increase; in the last years of the Old Régime they had become acute. Agriculture, impeded by the complications of the antiquated land-system and by the dense ignorance of the farmers and peasants themselves, had everywhere long been at a standstill, save that in many parts it was retrogressive. The failure of a single harvest—and in the circumstances failure often occurred—meant literal starvation for thousands who depended on the soil, and famine and disease claimed so many victims that in some of the provinces the population was actually declining. Thus far little resolute effort had been made to grapple with these terrible facts, and would-be reformers, like Turgot, had found the obstructionists too much for them. Charity was unorganized; there was no regular poor relief; and repeated attempts to fix the price of food resulted in more harm than good. Destitution and despair produced their inevitable consequences. Bread riots were frequent all over the country. Beggars, vagabonds, and criminals multiplied. Murders, highway robberies, burglaries, smuggling, and poaching increased. The severest measures were adopted to stamp out these evils,

¹ For detailed evidence, for which no place can be found in a brief sketch, see, e.g., Arthur Young's well-known *Travels in France* and Taine's *L'Ancien Régime*, Livre V.

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and hundreds of persons were yearly imprisoned, sent to the galleys, or hanged. But vice and crime bred so fast that justice was unable to keep pace with them. A special feature of the situation which must also be recognized was the incessant influx of the vagrant, the disorderly, and the felonious into the towns, particularly, of course, into Paris. This is a fact to be borne in mind, for its direct connexion with the excesses of the rabble during the progress of the Revolution.

TAXATION UNDER THE OLD RÉGIME

But we have not yet touched the real tap-root of all these evils. To reach that we must turn to the question of taxation. Again and again in the preceding pages we have had to speak, with almost monotonous iteration, of the financial anarchy of the country and of the shifts and devices of successive ministers, wise and unwise, to meet the ever-recurring problem of deficits and threatened bankruptcy. It was to consider this problem that, as we remember, the States-General were called together: a fact which shows that its critical character and the need of radical methods in the handling of it had at length been appreciated by the Government. And indeed it would seem that, revolution or no revolution, drastic action could not well be deferred, for the whole system of taxation from first to last was clumsy, wasteful, oppressive, and almost incredibly unjust. Some of the taxes were farmed: that is, the right to collect them was purchased for an annual payment in the lump by speculative contractors, who then made their profit out of them, with the result that, as we have seen, a large part of the nominal yield went into the pockets of the middlemen. Others, like the *taille*, the *capitation*, and the *vingtième*, were kept in the hands of the agents of the central Government, who, however, in assessing and levying them proved themselves as rapacious and as merciless as the tax-farmers themselves.¹

¹ The arbitrary reassessment every year of the *taille* (a tax on land and house property) by these agents was one of the most flagrant abuses of the time. It operated as a direct check upon thrift and industry. A case is

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But the most vicious feature of the system was not its complexity nor its absurdity, nor even the brutalities which accompanied its administration, but its monstrous injustice. As members of the privileged classes, the clergy and the nobility enjoyed complete exemption from many of the taxes, while on all sorts of pretexts they contrived to evade their proper share in respect of others to which they were nominally liable.¹ This was, of course, a standing grievance with the *bourgeoisie*. But many of the *bourgeoisie* of the towns acquired some of the privileges of their superiors by purchasing various offices, created for traffic by the State, which carried certain immunities with them. The consequence of this iniquitous condition of things was that the weak were crushed to benefit the strong and the poor bled to relieve the rich. The more capable a man was of contributing to the nation's expenses, the less, as Taine points out, he was required to contribute: "the heaviest burden of the load finally falls on the most indigent and most laborious class, on the small proprietor cultivating his own field, on the simple artisan with nothing but his tools and his hands, and, in general, on the inhabitants of villages."² Two of the most abominable taxes which thus ground the poor demand particular mention—the *gabelle* and the *corvée*. The former, which was farmed, was an impost on salt,³ and was all the more vexatious because the purchase of this article in specified quantities was made compulsory in the interests of the State, which held the monopoly of it. No

recorded of a peasant begging his landlord not to mend the roof of his cottage, since this sign of increasing prosperity would inevitably mean an increase in the *taille*.

¹ Thus they were exempt from the *taille* itself, and though they paid the *capitation* (a property tax dating from the end of the seventeenth century), they gradually managed to elude the burden to the extent, it is calculated, of contributing only one-eighth of their real dues. Even in the reign of Louis XIV Vauban had declared that the "two bleeding wounds" of the country were "the army of tax-gatherers and the mismanagement and confusion of their business" and "the army of privileged persons who claim to be free from the ordinary taxation of the realm."

² *Op. cit.*, Livre V, chap. ii.

³ For the origin of this see *ante*, p. 185.

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tax caused more widespread discontent, and thousands of persons were punished with brutal severity for inability to pay or attempts to elude it by smuggling. The *corvée*, which was no less hateful, was a survival from feudal times ; it was a tax, not on property, but on life,¹ the peasants being obliged for a certain number of days in the year to give their time and labour in making and repairing roads, and in other work required of them either by their lord (*corvée seigneuriale*) or by the State (*corvée royale*). And in the meantime the burdens of the poor were increased and the financial demoralization of the country completed by multitudinous indirect taxes in one and another form. Province was separated from province by high tariff walls, the internal custom imposts being levied with such rigour that even artisans who crossed the Rhone—say, from Dauphiné into Languedoc—on their way to work had to pay on the day's food which they carried in their pockets, while the exorbitant *octrois* of the larger towns and the heavy excise duties on such articles of common consumption as candles, fuel, wine, grain, and flour artificially enhanced the prices of the prime necessities of life.

INTELLECTUAL FORERUNNERS OF THE REVOLUTION

Such in brief outline were some of the social and financial conditions in France which were clearly making for a great crisis during the later eighteenth century. It remains for us to glance at the intellectual movement of the time in its bearings upon the Revolution.

A prominent place in that movement must be assigned to the new school of political economists, or Physiocrats, on account of their direct advocacy of specific financial reforms. Many of the cardinal doctrines of this school had been anticipated quite early in the century by Vauban in his *Dîme royale* (published in 1707), a book which he vainly attempted to bring to the notice of Louis XIV. But its real founder and leader was François Quesnay, who for some years was medical adviser to Mme de Pompadour, and at the time of his death in 1774

¹ Though in some parts a pecuniary tax was substituted.

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was first physician to the King ; while after Quesnay its chief adherents were the Marquis of Mirabeau (father of a more famous son), Lemercier de la Rivière, author of *L'Ordre naturel et essentiel des Sociétés politiques*, the Abbé Morellet, and, finally, Turgot, whose attempts as Intendant of Limousin and Finance Minister to put the theories of the school into practice have already been described. Those theories were deduced from certain abstract principles. Societies should rest on natural foundations and should be governed by natural laws, interference with which can lead only to disaster. Hence the attack of the Physiocrats upon the *jurandes* and the *douanes intérieures*, their insistence upon the complete freedom of labour and trade, and their famous formula, "Laissez faire, laissez aller." Holding as they did that land is the one ultimate source of all wealth, they argued that agriculture is the only enterprise that really increases the wealth of a community ; industry merely transforms and commerce merely circulates that which agriculture produces. Their proposed readjustment of the whole financial system followed from these data. The Physiocrats were not political radicals ; Quesnay, for example, explicitly maintained the necessity of an intelligent despotism. But their teachings were openly hostile to the immunities of the privileged classes and to the entire economic structure of the Old Régime.

The theories of the Physiocrats, however, necessarily appealed only to a limited public. For the wider development of the subversive movement in eighteenth-century thought we have to turn to general literature. Attempts have been made by some recent historians to minimize the influence of the so-called intellectual forerunners of the Revolution, and it is possible, indeed, that the direct effect of their writings has occasionally been exaggerated. Yet indirectly, by making men think about many things as they had never thought before, and by stimulating a spirit of unrest, inquiry, and criticism which in the long run was bound to be fatal to the dogmatic foundations of the traditional order, they certainly helped to prepare the way for the great upheaval and to form "the generation

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of '89." The *philosophes* and their unattached followers were not responsible for the Revolution ; but without reference to them no account of the forces behind it would be complete.

The great forerunner of the philosophic party was Montesquieu, whose *Esprit des Loix* (1748) laid the foundations of the modern science of jurisprudence. In that monumental and epoch-making work Montesquieu undertakes a systematic study, historical and comparative, of the principal forms of government and the aims and methods of legislation ; but though this study is conducted with critical impartiality, it is none the less an argument against despotism and the whole theory of 'divine right' as expounded by Bossuet, and in favour of regulated freedom and a constitutional monarchy on the English model. Twenty-seven years before this, in a work of a very different character, the *Lettres persanes* (1721), the great jurist had already turned his pungent wit upon the manners, customs, and beliefs of society under the Regency. Beneath the brilliant badinage of this " most serious of frivolous books " there is much searching and deadly criticism not only of the social conventions but even of the political institutions of the time.

Three years after the appearance of *L'Esprit des Loix* Denis Diderot, with the assistance of the celebrated mathematician d'Alembert, began the publication of one of the most important works of the century, the *Encyclopédie*. The successive volumes of this immense undertaking (which was not completed till 1765) were made the occasion of violent attacks by the conservatives in Church and State ; repeated efforts were made to prohibit its circulation ; and Diderot himself, as its leading spirit, was in continual danger of prosecution and imprisonment. These facts show that the real meaning of the *Encyclopédie* was fully appreciated by those who were anxious at all costs to stop the spread of the new ideas. It was, indeed, the first great systematic work of the rising philosophic party, and the first organized expression of the principles for which they stood. The editors had been successful in gathering about them a body of writers who represented the most

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advanced knowledge of their time in their own special subjects, and were, moreover, known for their sympathy with liberty, enlightenment, and progress; these collaborators included such men as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Holbach, Morellet, Condorcet, Quesnay, and Turgot. As an encyclopaedia it was, of course, primarily a repository of information. But incidentally it was much more than this. It was also a vast storehouse of facts and theories for those who were in any way engaged in doing battle with the forces of oppression and obscurantism. All questions—social, political, philosophical, religious—were treated in it with an entire freedom from the bias of tradition and with scant respect for “the wisdom of our ancestors” and the sanctity of the past. Its temper was aggressively modern. Even the large place given in it to science, industry, and the useful arts was significant of its progressive spirit.

While much, however, was done by the *Encyclopédie* to disseminate this spirit, it was the consummate man of letters Voltaire who by the magic of his brilliant style, his abounding wit, and his unflagging vivacity did most to popularize the ideas of the philosophic party, of which for some forty years he was the acknowledged leader. Many erroneous views are current in this country about Voltaire, who commonly figures in general thought as an iconoclastic radical and the very incarnation of the Mephistophelian spirit of denial. In fact, he was in many respects strongly conservative. He accepted civilization, even the civilization of his time, with gratitude, and humorously protested against Rousseau's propaganda of “back to nature.” He was not in revolt against society. He had little sympathy with the masses. Nor was he in any true sense a democrat. While his early residence in England (1726–29) had taught him to admire the political freedom which that country enjoyed under its limited monarchy,¹ his

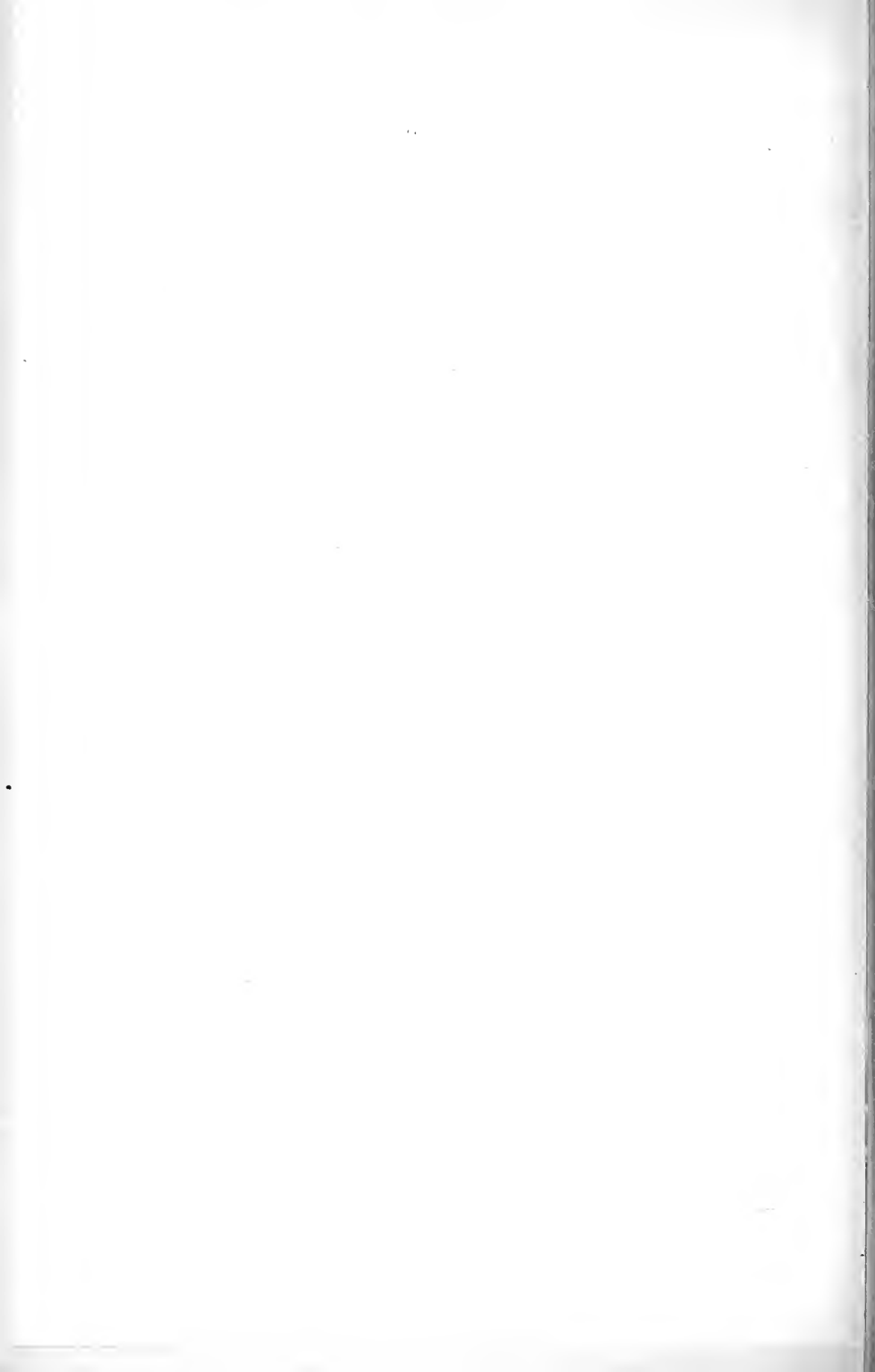
¹ See in particular his *Lettres philosophiques* or *Lettres sur les Anglais* (1734), in which he eulogizes the political system of England, and under the veil of this eulogy delivers a telling, though indirect, attack upon the despotism which crushed down the life of France. The polemical point of this little



74. VOLTAIRE



75. ROUSSEAU



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later sojourn in Prussia and his relations with Frederick the Great had impressed him with the importance of the strong man. For France he desired a peaceful revolution only—a fundamental change in men's minds, and not any radical change in the political or social system. Voltaire certainly had no new gospel to propound for the salvation of the human race. But he was none the less one of the great liberalizing and progressive forces of his century, because from first to last he was the fearless champion of tolerance and freedom of thought. His attack was delivered in particular against what is unreasonable—against injustice, oppression, superstition, war, and the lust of war. "God and Liberty"—the phrase which he used, in English, in giving his blessing to Franklin's little grandson—was his watchword. Hence the lifelong campaign which he carried on against the Church, which was for him the embodiment of everything which he most abhorred. His incessant and often venomous assaults upon the whole system and creed of ecclesiastical Christianity are chiefly responsible for the antipathy with which he is frequently regarded by pious people even in our own day. But when we remember what the French Church of the eighteenth century really was—a vast and powerful organization which fattened upon the public wealth while it refused to bear its share of the public burdens; when we remember that its bigoted obscurantism and tyrannous insistence upon the minutiae of dogma were accompanied by widespread moral laxity and by open profligacy in its high places; when we remember the ferocity of its persecuting spirit as expressed, for example, in the hideous tragedies of the Calas family and La Barre: when we remember these things, we realize how much justification there was for Voltaire's clarion call, "Écrasez l'Infâme!"

Yet, immense as was Voltaire's prestige and the power which he wielded as the foremost European man of letters book was well understood. The Parliament of Paris condemned it to be burned "as scandalous, contrary to religion, to morality, and to the respect due to authority."

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of his age, the premier place among the precursors of the Revolution does not after all belong to him. That place is incontestably occupied by Rousseau, who, according to the testimony of Mallet du Pan, "had a hundred times more readers among the middle and lower classes than Voltaire." The names of the two men are closely associated in everyday thought and speech, and even in the pages of literary history. It is necessary, therefore, to lay stress on the fact that they had hardly an idea or ideal in common. At several important points in particular they stand in the sharpest contrast. Voltaire was by temper an aristocrat. By sentiment as by birth Rousseau was entirely plebeian. Voltaire had no quarrel with even a decadent civilization, the absurdities of which he satirized but which he sought neither to undo nor to reconstruct. In his absolute antagonism to civilization Rousseau was at once reactionary and Utopian. Voltaire, as I have said, knew nothing of the zeal for practical reform. Rousseau, in his odd fashion, was a practical reformer through and through, and in endeavouring to destroy existing institutions was always haunted by the vision of a better and purer social state and inspired by the desire to help toward its realization. His wild, paradoxical, inconsistent teachings penetrated down to the very root of things. Even the famous tirade against all the boasted arts and refinements of civilization with which he startled the public in his prize essay of 1749, and which he renewed in different forms in later writings, hopelessly unsound and fantastic as it was, had at least the merit of forcing upon the minds of his readers the essential contrast between the *real* man and the *factitious* man—between "l'homme de nature," or man as beneficent nature intended him to be, and "l'homme de l'homme," or man as he has been perverted by the malign influences of an artificial society. His evangel of a "return to nature," though at bottom flagrantly absurd, at least suggested the need of simplification and the possibility of a reversion to a saner mode of life. "By his passionate protest against what man has actually 'made of man'; by his vehement and oft-repeated attack upon

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concrete abuses; by his prophetic denunciation of the greed, callousness, and depravity of those who sat in high places; by his eloquent appeals on behalf of the poor, toiling, down-trodden masses, 'groaning without hope under the burden of oppressions,' he lifted high the standard of the new democracy."¹ In his educational treatise, *Émile*, he presented a new type of manhood, and strove to show how it might be produced by the application of that principle of "following nature" which he there illustrates in detail. In his *Contrat social* he worked out a political system based on the sovereignty of the people, and in that "fundamental book" of the Revolution (as Lamartine called it) provided his contemporaries with a manual and a programme. And here, if nowhere else in the later eighteenth century, we have to reckon not only with the general but also with the specific effect of literature upon life. Rousseau did not desire the Revolution, though he foresaw it;² he would himself have been shocked by the course that it pursued; yet it cannot be questioned that he did much to bring it about. Throughout the entire Revolutionary period, as I have elsewhere said, "veneration for his memory was almost unbounded, and he was popularly idolized as the typical friend of virtue and liberty—the writer who beyond all others had shown himself the enemy of tyrants and the advocate of the people. The result was the development of a regular Rousseau cult. His portrait was conspicuous in public exhibitions; statues were erected to him; a street in Paris in which he had lived for eight years was rechristened by his name; on the 20th Vendémiaire, An III, a splendid fête was held in his honour, and the remains of 'the man of virtue and of truth' were borne in triumph to the Panthéon. And while he thus entered everywhere into the imagination of the Revolution, he directly and profoundly influenced those who were mainly responsible for its destinies.

¹ The quotation is from my own *Rousseau and Naturalism in Life and Thought*, p. 231.

² See the prophetic passage, "We are approaching a crisis and a period of revolutions," etc., in *Émile*, Livre III.

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He himself had taken pains to qualify his doctrine of the omnipotence of the sovereign people. His disciples took the doctrine, stripped it of the qualifications, and made it the corner-stone of their paper constitutions. As early as 1788 . . . Mallet du Pan heard Marat reading and commenting upon the *Contrat social* in a public promenade, amid the applause of an enthusiastic audience, and he adds to his record of the incident that he would find difficulty in mentioning a single Revolutionist 'who was not transported by these anarchistic theories and did not burn with desire to realize them.' Robespierre in particular took Rousseau as his guide in politics, and deliberately fashioned his style upon the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, which he always kept on a table beside him. The debates in the Assemblies are full of references to and echoes from the master's writings. His doctrines furnished the basis for the Jacobins' effort to reconstruct society; and the ground-plan of both those great features of their programme—the scheme of State religion and that of public education—is to be found in *Émile*." ¹

We must not, however, take further space for the consideration of the preliminaries of the Revolution. Incomplete as it has necessarily been, this inquiry should serve its purpose as a general introduction to the events of those few momentous years upon the narrative of which we are now prepared to enter.

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 248–250.

CHAPTER II

THE STATES-GENERAL AND THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

MAY 1789-SEPTEMBER 1791

THE convocation of the States-General determined, a problem of great importance at once arose. Fully conscious of their place in the community, the Third Estate demanded that as they immensely outnumbered the other two orders they should have at least double the number of representatives, and that, moreover, the three orders should vote together, since unless this were done their numerical superiority would count for nothing.¹ These demands were resisted by the privileged classes, who saw that if they were granted the predominance of power would pass to the *bourgeoisie*. Vacillating as usual, the Government consulted first the Parliament of Paris and then an Assembly of Notables convened (November 1788) for the purpose, and in each case the advice given was, in effect, that the procedure of 1614 should be followed. The pressure of public opinion was, however, too great to be withstood, and the King in council issued a decree (December 1788) granting the request of the commons for double representation, but relegating the question of "vote par ordre ou par tête" to the consideration of the assembly itself.

THE MEETING OF THE STATES-GENERAL

On May 5, 1789, the States-General met in the Salle des Menus Plaisirs at Versailles—a strange setting for the first scene of the Revolutionary drama. The King, accompanied

¹ See in particular the famous pamphlet of Abbé Siéyès, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-État?* in which the claims of the commons were powerfully set forth.

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by the Queen and attended by a splendid retinue of courtiers, opened the ceremony with a brief speech in which he invited the assembly to consider the general situation and expressed his "tender interest" in the national welfare. Barentin, the Keeper of the Seals, followed with vague promises of the equalization of taxation. Then Necker consumed two hours in reading a detailed but not wholly candid memoir on the financial condition of the country. This closed the first day's proceedings, which left the deputies of the Third Estate disappointed and ill at ease. They had expected a definite lead from the Government in their coming work of reform. One thing only had been made clear: the Government had no such lead to offer.

The next day the struggle for power began over the deferred question of procedure. The commons insisted that as the three orders formed a single assembly they should deliberate and vote together, and in this contention they had the support of some of the lower clergy, men of plebeian origin whose sympathies were with the class to which they belonged. But the rest of the clergy and the nobles refused. Five weeks were wasted in this initial quarrel, while popular excitement was growing daily in Paris and the provinces and the Court party looked on delighted, hoping that the apparent deadlock would mean the humiliating collapse of the States. At length, weary of futile *pourparlers*, negotiations, and conferences, the Third Estate resolved to take matters into their own hands, and on June 12 they sent a final invitation to the other two orders to join them in the ratification of the mandates (*pouvoirs*), the preliminary business over which the dispute had arisen. Only a few of the clergy responded. Then in a stormy session on the night of June 16-17 the Third Estate decided to act independently, and forthwith organized itself into an *Assemblée Nationale*. This decisive action impressed the clergy, who by a narrow majority voted to unite with the commons. But it alarmed the Court. The King was strongly urged by those about him to dissolve the States. He chose rather to announce (with perhaps some shadowy recollection

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of the old 'beds of justice' in his mind) that he would deliver his sovereign will to them in person; but meanwhile, with the intention of preventing any further meeting of the in-subordinate deputies, the hall at Versailles was shut against them on the childish pretext that it must be prepared for the coming royal session. Such, however, was now the temper of the deputies that this foolish trick served only to stiffen their purpose. Excluded by the military from their hall, they transferred themselves to the old tennis-court not far away, and there amid scenes of tremendous enthusiasm they swore a solemn oath to remain in session "until the constitution of the kingdom be established and affirmed on solid foundations." It seems almost incredible that the next day the tennis-court was in turn closed to them, the Count of Artois, the younger of the King's two brothers, having suddenly discovered that he wanted it for a game. But the *curé* of Saint-Louis placed his church at their disposal, and there their deliberations were continued.

At the royal session on June 23 the King, though he appeared "triste et morne," took a high tone: he declared it to be his will that the orders should meet separately, annulled the resolutions of the commons, and reminded the Assembly of the questions which they had been called to consider. This done he rose and retired. The nobles, elated at their victory, also dispersed. But the commons remained behind in "gloomy silence." Then came a dramatic moment. Henri de Dreux-Brézé, Grand Master of the Ceremonies, reappeared on the scene, and, addressing himself to Bailly, as president of the self-constituted Assembly, reiterated his Majesty's command. Bailly, though pale, stood firm. But Mirabeau, stepping forward, boldly defied the Crown in words which were soon to ring through France; ¹ after which, on a motion by Mirabeau,

¹ There are various slightly differing versions of this famous allocution. That given by Mirabeau himself in his *Lettres à ses Commettants*, runs: "Je déclare que, si l'on vous a chargé de nous faire sortir d'ici, vous devez demander des ordres pour employer la force, car nous ne quitterons nos places que par la puissance des baïonnettes." The often quoted "Allez dire à votre maître" appears to be unauthentic.

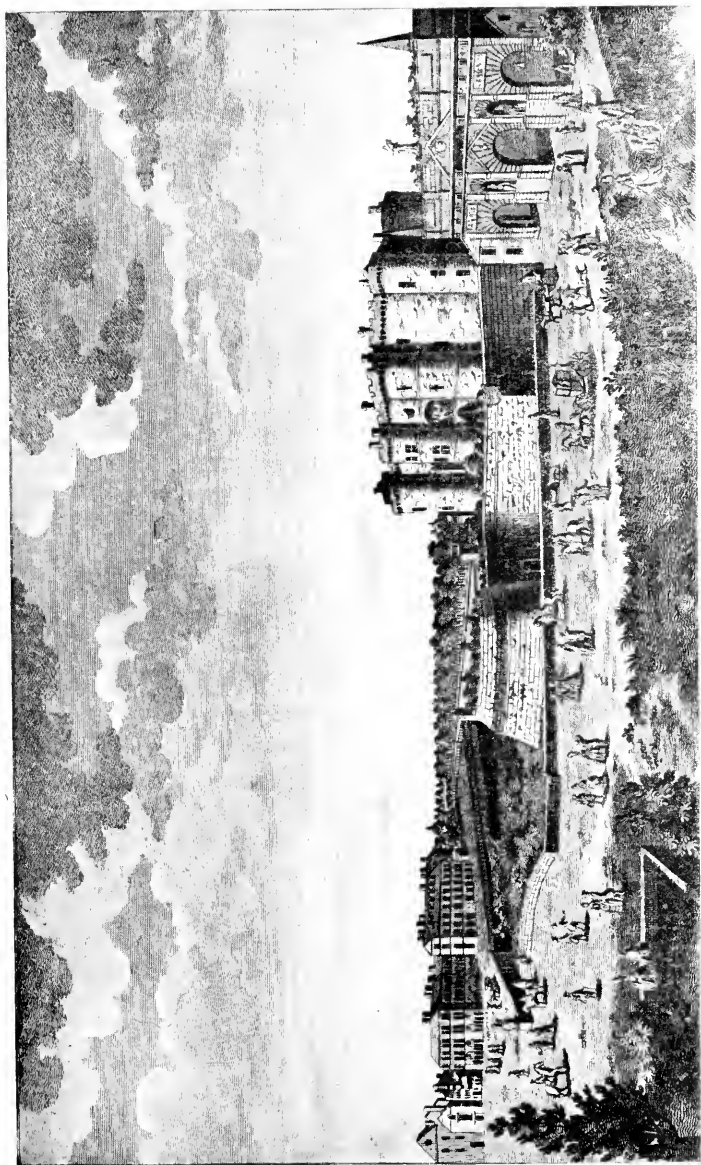
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the Assembly decreed the inviolability of all its members. Before this open resistance to his authority, reinforced as it was by the threatening growth of popular excitement in the capital, the King recoiled, and a few days later the clergy and the nobility received a royal order to combine with the commons. The family being now complete (as Bailly put it), the *Assemblée Nationale*, under the new title of *Assemblée Nationale Constituante* (July 9), addressed itself to the task of framing a Constitution.

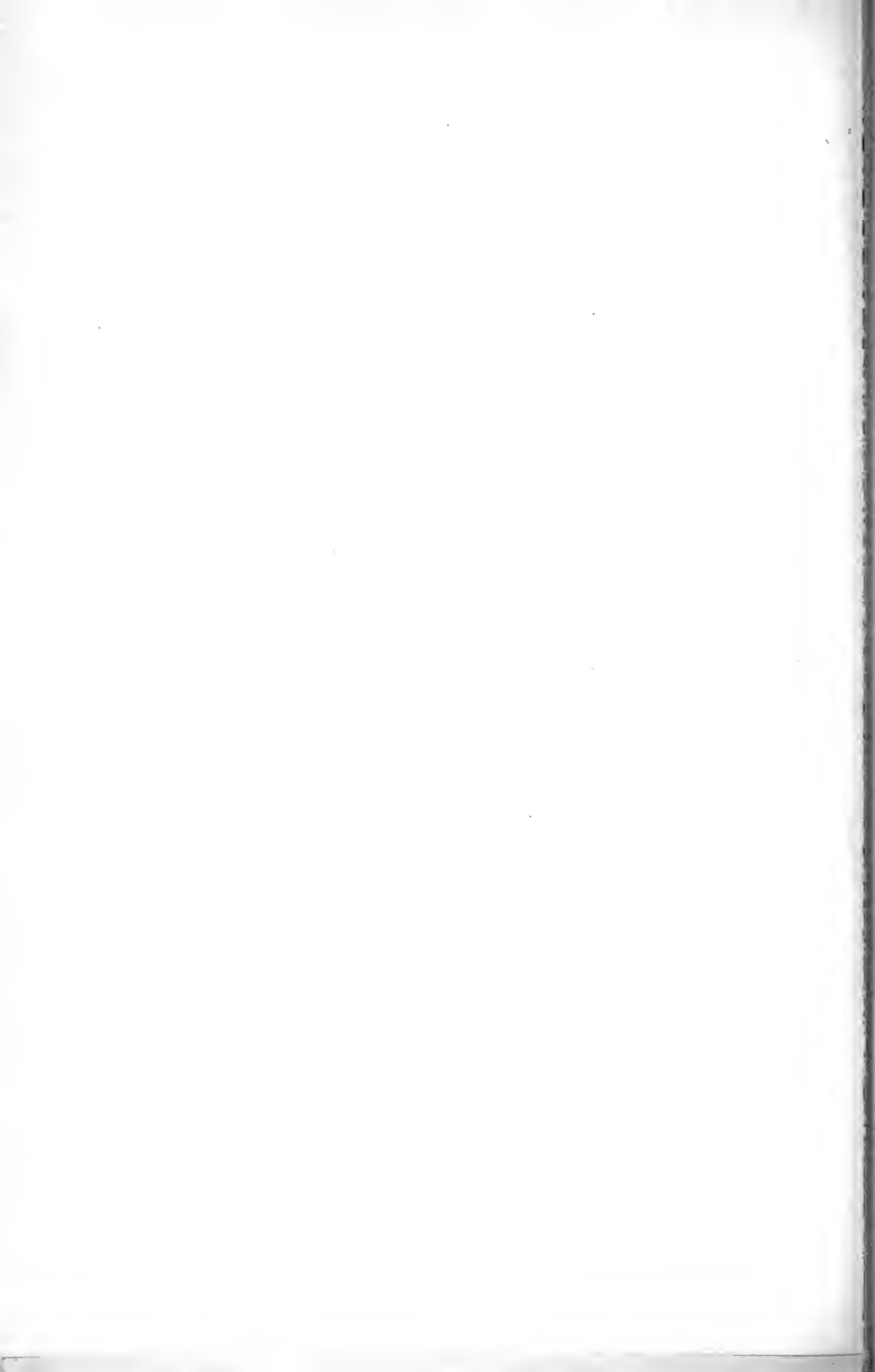
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This victory of the Third Estate was, however, bitterly resented at Court, and especially by the Queen and the Count of Artois, who urged Louis to take immediate steps for the recovery of the power which he had weakly allowed to slip through his fingers. As the disturbances in Paris were still increasing, they persuaded him to use these as an excuse to mass large bodies of troops, which would presently be of service in a movement of reaction, in the vicinity of the capital and Versailles, and the loyalty of the French soldiers being considered doubtful, these troops were mainly Swiss and German mercenaries. This provocative action naturally made a very bad impression, and the Assembly protested, but vainly, against it. Then on July 11, still under pressure from the same ill-advisers, the King proceeded to an even more serious mistake—the dismissal of Necker. The Controller-General had done little indeed to enlist the sympathies of the reformers, but he was known to have held aloof from the reactionaries and had been conspicuous by his absence from the royal session, and now his disgrace, which had all the appearance of a blow struck at the cause of progress, made him the hero of the hour. News of it fell like a thunderbolt on the Assembly and spread like fire through the city, everywhere arousing the wildest excitement. On Sunday, the 12th, enormous crowds gathered early in the great centre of popular commotion, the gardens of the *Palais-Royal*, where they were stirred to fever-heat by the eloquence of a young advocate from Picardy,

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76. THE BASTILLE



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Camille Desmoulins, a man who could sway multitudes, though he had given up his profession on account of a stutter. The busts of Necker and the Duke of Orléans (whose proclaimed liberalism had caught the popular fancy) were paraded through the streets, while—a more dangerous symptom of coming trouble—the shops of the armourers were broken open and plundered of their weapons.¹ The next day general lawlessness prevailed, and the rabble, now swollen by vast numbers of roughs and criminals who then infested Paris, made a successful attack upon the Hôtel des Invalides and seized the old guns, sabres, and cannon stored there. Meanwhile, hastily summoned by tocsin, the electors of the city formed themselves into a *municipalité insurrectionnelle* and established a *milice bourgeoise*, which a few days later became the Garde Nationale, with La Fayette in command. These measures, however, did nothing to restore order, and on the 14th the revolt culminated in a grand assault upon the Bastille, long regarded as the stronghold and symbol of tyranny, which was captured after some hours of fierce fighting. De Launay, the governor, and several of his officers were slain, and Flesselles, the provost of the merchants, who was accused of deceiving the people with false promises of arms, shared the same fate. Then the mob surged through the streets bearing the heads of their victims stuck on pikes, and finished the day in an orgy of triumph.

This event filled the Court party with consternation, for already they perceived something of its significance. "C'est une grande émeute!" exclaimed the King, when he was aroused from sleep to hear the news. "Non, sire," replied the news-bearer, the Duke of La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, "c'est une grande révolution." Once more the King yielded. Three days later he entered Paris to be reconciled to his people, received from Bailly, its mayor, the keys of the city and the *cocarde* of the National Guard,² and shortly afterward gave

¹ This is the usual version. It has, however, been maintained that the gunsmiths voluntarily distributed weapons among the crowd.

² Composed of red and blue, the municipal colours of Paris, and white, the old badge of the monarchy.

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orders for the withdrawal of the foreign troops and the recall of Necker.

Suppressed for the moment, rioting broke out again on the 22nd, when Joseph-François Foulon, formerly Intendant of Paris, who, it was reported, had once declared that if the people were hungry they could eat hay, was hunted out of his hiding-place at Vitry, brought into the city, and hung on a lamp-iron in the Place de Grève, despite the efforts of Bailly and La Fayette to save him. By this time, however, not Paris only but the whole of France was in a state of upheaval. In many parts excitement took the form of a regular *jacquerie*. Bands of peasants, reinforced by bandits and ruffians of all descriptions, and goaded to madness by the scarcity of food, swept about the country, setting fire to *châteaux* and monasteries, and destroying the archives which legalized the iniquities of the old feudal system. In many of the large cities also there were serious mob-risings, with which the authorities were impotent to cope owing to the open sympathy of the military with the rioters. These events staggered the Assembly and drove it into reckless action which proved at once its generous impulses and its utter want of practical statesmanship. In the night session of August 4-5, by a series of sweeping resolutions, it voted the abolition of all existing privileges, and thus made an end of the old order, the King himself, in his new *rôle* of 'Restaurateur de la Liberté française,' giving his assent to the destruction of the ultimate foundations of his own power.

Whatever beneficial effect this promise of a new era may have been designed to produce on public opinion, however, the grim fact remained that Paris and the whole country were alike starving and were alike smouldering in an aimless discontent which at any moment might flame out afresh. This discontent was further stimulated by the emigration of the aristocracy, which had already begun, by doubts concerning the real sentiments of the vacillating King, and by the common knowledge that he was surrounded by advisers implacably hostile to the popular cause. Only a few weeks later—it was

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at the end of September—the regiment of Flanders was called to Versailles, where its arrival was made the occasion of a royalist demonstration on the part of the King's body-guard. This incident was the signal for further tumult, the popular anger being increased by the exhaustion of the supplies of bread and flour in the bakers' shops. The trouble came to a head on October 5, when a vast crowd of famished men and women, armed with guns and pikes, marched to Versailles, with cries of "Du pain! Du pain!" and early next morning penetrated into the palace shouting threats against the Queen, who was saved only by the devotion of the royalist soldiers and the opportune arrival of La Fayette and the National Guard.¹ As the immediate result of this new explosion, the King capitulated to the representations of the Assembly that his presence in Paris alone would satisfy the people. He and his family were accordingly conducted to the Tuileries, where they remained, practically as hostages to the nation, while the Assembly, also established in Paris in a building adjacent to the Tuileries, proceeded to its business of reconstruction.

That, while the old order of things could be destroyed in a night, the task of devising a new order to take its place proved long and arduous it is hardly necessary to say. No sooner was the actual work begun than rival schools of thought rose into prominence; the Assembly was broken up into groups; and the want of any organized machinery inevitably led to confusion and a terrible waste of time in endless debates over the shadowy abstractions of political theory. It would, however, be impossible for us here to attempt to follow the Constitution-makers through the tortuous course of their deliberations. Nor can we pause to take account of the personalities who emerged from the general mass, and of whom some were soon to pass from the public eye, while others were destined to achieve world-wide notoriety: the

¹ The actual origin of the events of October 5-6 is a subject of controversy, and many theories have been propounded in regard to them. But we cannot here discuss the obscure question whether the rising was merely spontaneous or whether it was deliberately planned, and, if so, by whom and for what purpose.

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Abbé Maury, the Abbé de Montesquieu, Cazalès, and Malouet, for example, among the royalists ; Lally-Tollendal, Clermont-Tonnerre, La Rochefoucauld, among the liberal aristocracy ; the *curé* Grégoire and Maurice de Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, among the clergy ; Honoré-Gabriel Riquetti de Mirabeau, the one great statesman of the early Revolutionary period ; Robespierre, the sad-faced deputy from Arras, Rœderer, Pétion, and Barnave, of the Extreme Left ; and many others, too numerous even to mention. A very brief outline of the final results of the labours of the Assembly must suffice for present purposes.

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1791

The theoretical foundations of the Constitution were provided by the Declaration of the Rights of Man (October 2), in which the Rousseauite principles were laid down that " all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation " and that " the law is the expression of the general will." In accordance with these principles the Crown was deprived of all its former authority ; but the King was retained as executive head of the State, without initiative except in the case of peace and war, though with a right of veto, which, however, was only suspensive—that is, it was valid only through the life of two consecutive legislatures. On the other hand, all legislative power was entrusted to a Legislative Assembly, elected every two years by Primary Assemblies, which in turn were elected by Secondary Assemblies, composed of all active citizens ; an active citizen being defined as a Frenchman (born or naturalized) over twenty-five, who paid in direct taxes a sum equal to three days' wages, and who was, moreover, obliged to serve in the National Guard. All public offices were thrown open to all citizens, irrespective of class or religion, though a small property qualification was required. Titles of nobility were abolished. The liberty of the press and of religion was guaranteed. The old division of France into provinces was annulled, and with it all local Parliaments, privileges, laws, customs, and peculiarities of administration, and a uniform system of

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departments, eighty-three in number, was established, each department being subdivided into districts (later called *arrondissements*), cantons, and communes, locally governed throughout by elective bodies. The judicial machinery of the country was completely reconstituted; the ancient Parliaments disappeared; a system of tribunals was devised, beginning with that of the Justice de la Paix in each commune and ending with the Cour de Cassation in Paris, the judges (by a mistaken application of the democratic principle) being, with few exceptions, elected for short periods only. The laws were recast; arbitrary imprisonment, torture, and other abuses were suppressed; trial by jury was introduced in criminal causes. Equally radical were the changes made in the economic and industrial conditions of the country, for freedom of trade was secured by the abolition of all guilds and corporations, internal custom walls were swept away, and uniformity of weights and measures was established. With more temerity than wisdom the Assembly also laid violent hands on the Church, the whole hierarchy of which was rearranged on a civil and elective basis under the control of the State, while its property was taken over for the use and benefit of the nation. In regard to the finances, as the new Government was manifestly obliged to assume all the debts and responsibilities of the old, greater caution was necessary. Utterly discredited by his helplessness, Necker retired in September 1790, having by a last effort induced the Assembly to impose an extraordinary income tax, the payment of which was to be spread over three years. But it soon became apparent that this would prove a failure, and the difficulties of the situation were increased both by the rapid rise in expenses under the new administration and by the fall in the national income. Many of the most vexatious of the old taxes were abolished and a general readjustment attempted, while a small poll-tax and a very heavy land tax were levied; a part of the property of the Church was offered for sale for public purposes; and—as a desperate device intended in the first instance only as a means of tiding over temporary

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troubles—paper money was issued in the form known as *assignats*.¹

LOUIS AND THE CONSTITUTION

In the meantime outside the Assembly the revolutionary tide was rising rapidly. Not only public opinion but even the sentiments and actions of the Assembly itself were largely swayed by the fast-increasing power of certain political organizations known as clubs, which met regularly in the capital: the Eighty-nine Club, composed of such moderate men as Siéyès and La Fayette; the Jacobin Club, of which Mirabeau, Lameth, Duport, and Barnave were for the moment the most prominent members; the Cordelier Club, led by Danton.² The Paris press, too, teeming with pamphlets and journals, was now exercising an inflammatory influence. Amid these distractions and dangers the feeble King continued to pose publicly as the willing ally of those who were engaged in reducing him to impotence, as when on July 14, 1790—the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille—he swore allegiance to the new Constitution in the grandiose Fête de

¹ *Assignats* were first introduced to facilitate the disposal of the Church and Crown lands which had been taken over by the State, and these *biens nationaux*, and later the confiscated property of the *émigrés*, were the security behind them. The original issue of 1790 amounted to 400 millions of livres, but further issues soon followed, till the sum reached over 45 thousand millions. The result was that the value of the *assignat* at once began to decline, and as public confidence was thus destroyed its depreciation was more and more rapid. In June 1793 one silver franc was worth three francs in paper; in August the ratio was one to six. Though the Government took the most drastic measures to maintain the forced currency at its face value, the inevitable decline continued, till in March 1796 a 24-franc gold piece purchased 7200 francs in *assignats*. Later in the same year the *assignats* were redeemed at one-thirtieth of their nominal value, and a new form of paper money, called *mandats territoriaux*, was substituted. But as these *mandats* in turn quickly depreciated, they did not save the financial situation. In 1797, having caused widespread ruin, the whole disastrous system of paper credit was brought to an end.

² Both the Club des Jacobins and the Club des Cordeliers derived their names from the ancient convents which respectively formed their places of meeting: that of the Jacobins being in the Rue Saint-Honoré, that of the Cordeliers (the strictest branch of the Franciscan Order) in the Rue de l'École de Médecin.



77. MIRABEAU



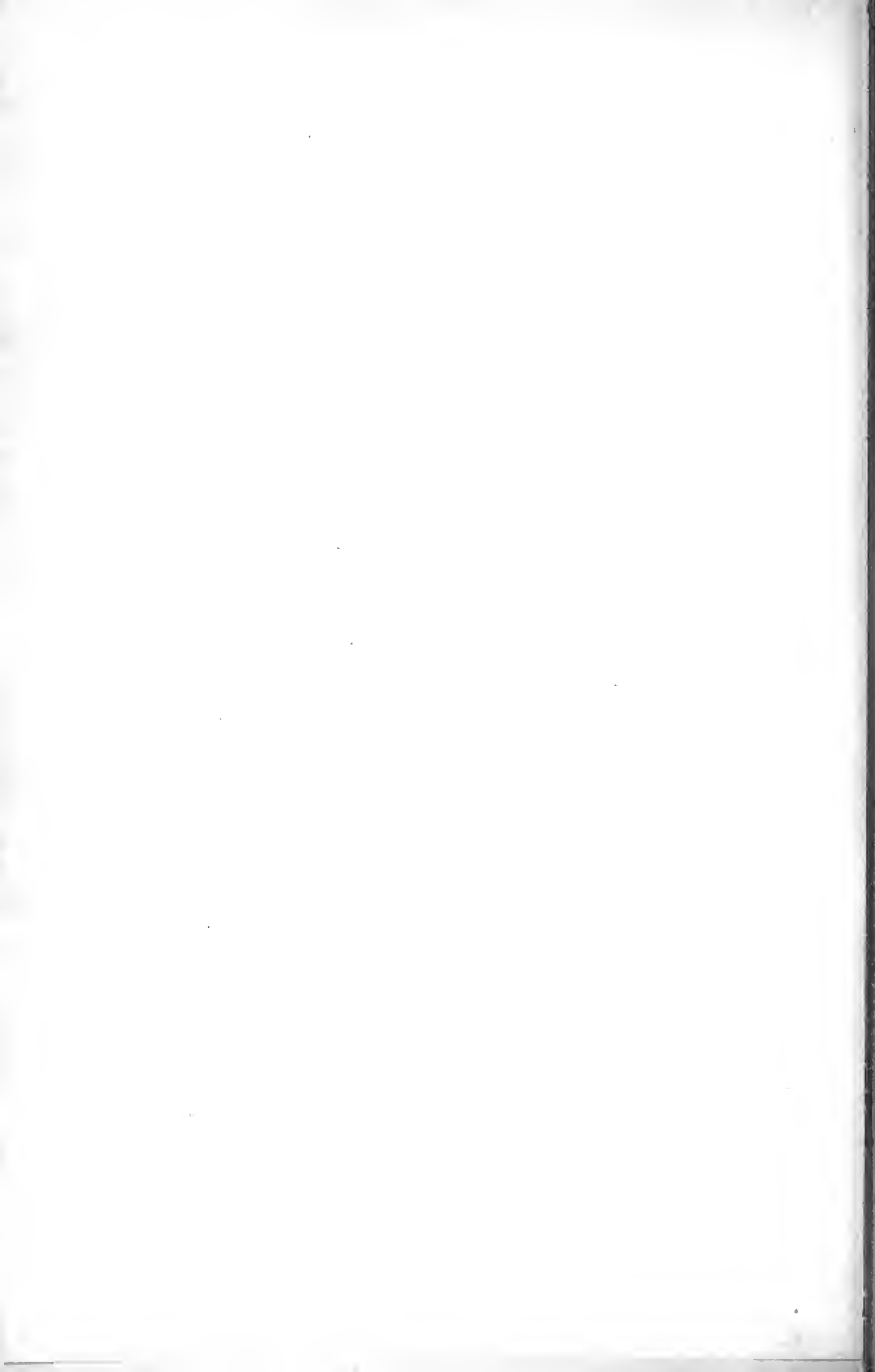
78. ROBESPIERRE



79. DANTON



80. MARAT



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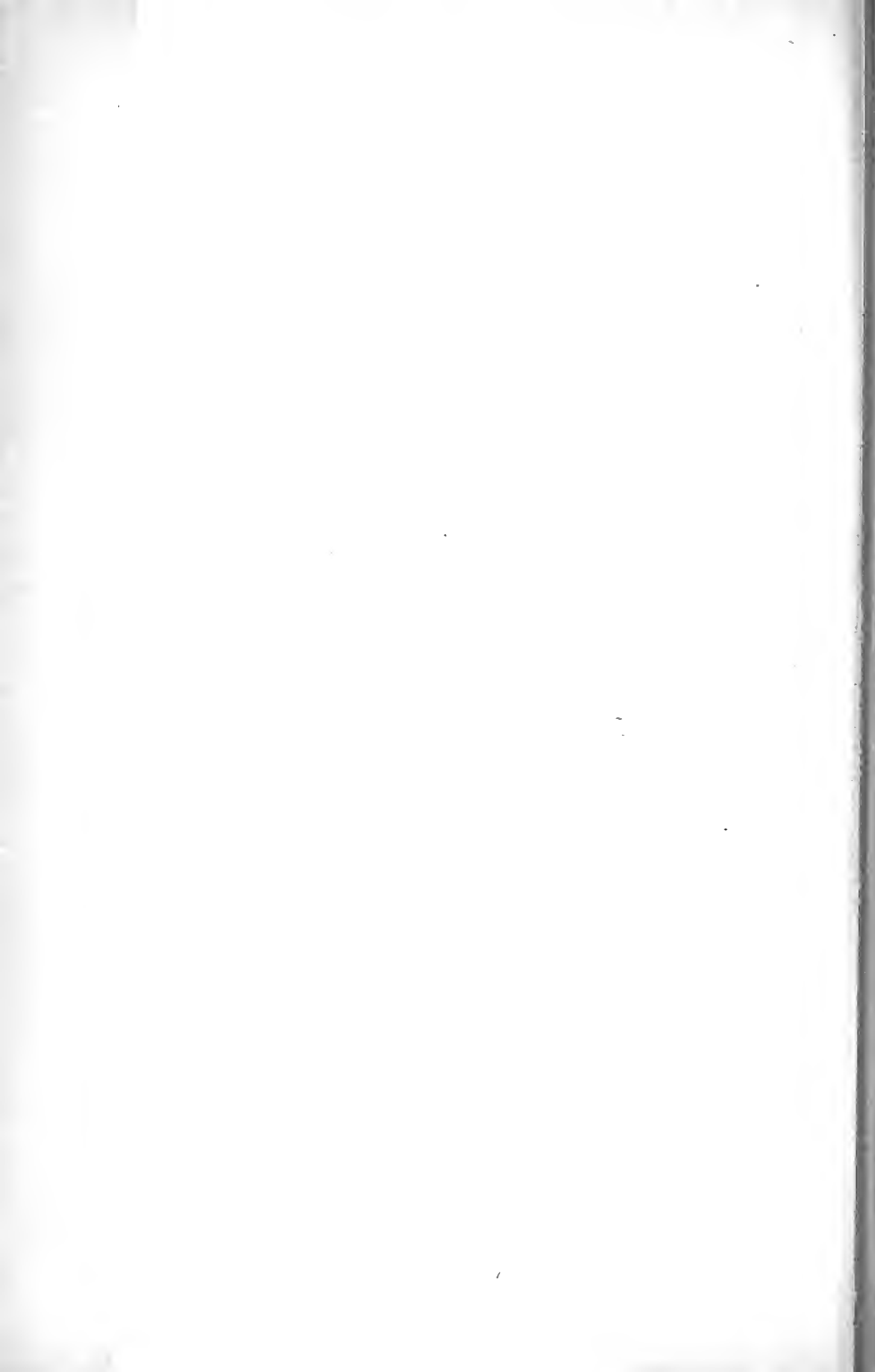
la Fédération in the Champ de Mars. Privately, however, with a duplicity which was one cause of his undoing, he was watching for every chance to escape from the toils in which he was entangled. It was for this reason that early in the summer of 1790 he was induced to enter into secret negotiations with Mirabeau, who alone seemed capable, if indeed any man was capable, of saving the monarchy. That great and far-sighted statesman, notwithstanding the deplorable excesses of his stormy life, had exerted the enormous power of his magnetic personality and splendid eloquence on the side of moderation and order. At once a lover of liberty and a believer in strong government, he clung tenaciously to the political ideas which he had imbibed in England, and fought hard against the extreme democrats for the maintenance of some of the prerogatives of the Crown and for various other principles—like that of a double chamber on the English model—which he regarded as necessary bulwarks against anarchy. His premature death—he was only forty-two—in April 1791 meant, as he himself said, “the ruin of the monarchy”; it deprived France of the only man who was really capable of grappling with the situation, and Louis himself of his one strong and sagacious adviser. Shortly after this, driven to desperation by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, from which he had vainly tried to withhold his assent, the wretched King, under his consort’s inspiration, resolved to seek safety in flight. This fatally foolish step was attempted on the evening of June 20; but the plans miscarried, and the royal fugitives, whose objective was Metz, got as far only as Varennes, where they were arrested, and whence, under special escort, they were brought back to Paris.¹ Already there were suspicions of intrigues between the Court and foreign Powers with a view to the intervention of the latter in the interests of the monarchy. These suspicions were now turned into a certainty, for Louis had been unwise enough to leave behind

¹ It may be mentioned in passing that the King’s brother, the Count of Provence (afterward Louis XVIII) also fled on the same night, but his plans were better laid and executed, and he reached Brussels in safety.

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him a lengthy proclamation in which his hostility to the new Constitution was made perfectly clear. The extremists, led by the Cordeliers, at once raised a cry for his deposition, and on July 17 a demonstration in favour of a republic had to be suppressed by La Fayette and the National Guard. Though the Assembly refused to listen to this clamour, it temporarily assumed the executive functions of the Crown while it brought its labours to a close. Then on September 14 these functions were restored on Louis' formal acceptance of the now completed Constitution. On the 30th the Assembly dissolved.





CHAPTER III

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

OCTOBER 1791—SEPTEMBER 1792

“SIRE,” said the president, addressing the King in the last session of the Constituent Assembly, “your Majesty has ended the Revolution.” Those who applauded these words were sanguine enough to believe that the national crisis was now over and the peace and welfare of the country assured. Yet the Constitution of 1791, which was regarded as the foundation of a new and permanent order, was destined to last for less than a year and to disappear in a welter of anarchy.

By a quixotic and singularly ill-advised act of self-denial the Constituent Assembly had resolved that none of its members should be eligible for a seat in the first Legislature. The deputies who thus voted themselves out of power were actuated by various motives, in some cases good, in others bad; but, whatever their intentions, the result was most unfortunate. There were a few at least among them who had learned something of the business of politics from practical experience and whose influence might therefore have been of advantage in the next council of the nation. As it was, the Legislative Assembly which met on October 1, 1791, was composed of new men, many young, all untried, and nearly all without even an elementary knowledge of public affairs.

COMPOSITION OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

In this unstable combination of unpromising elements the party lines were soon defined. The Right was occupied by the Feuillants (so called from the club at which they held

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their meetings), of whom the most important were General Mathieu Dumas, Girardin (who boasted of his former friendship with "the virtuous Rousseau"), and Théodore de Lameth, and who honestly desired the maintenance of the throne and the consolidation of the new order. Outside the Assembly these "constitutional royalists" had the strong support of men like La Fayette and Barnave, but as a parliamentary party they lacked organization, leadership, and programme. Opposed to them on the Left was a more compact group which gradually formed about certain deputies from the department of the Gironde—the great orator Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, Grangeneuve, Ducos; this group hence came to be designated the Girondins, though at first they were known as Brissotins, from the Quaker-like humanitarian Jean-Pierre Brissot, who was soon recognized as their chief. Among other prominent members of the party were Pétion, Mayor of Paris, the Marseillais Barbaroux, Isnard, Louvet (of dubious fame in literature as the author of *Le Chevalier de Faublas*), and the celebrated philosopher Condorcet. With an ardent love of their country and a passion for liberty nourished on classical antiquity and the heroic pages of Plutarch, these men were moderate republicans whose antagonism to the monarchy, while in part bred of their profound distrust of the Court, had its root, like all their political sentiments, in theoretical principle. Essentially visionaries and idealists, they lived in a Utopian world of noble but fantastic abstractions, and while they had plenty of character and ability, they possessed none of the qualities requisite for practical statesmanship. Yet their high-pitched enthusiasm and fervid rhetoric greatly impressed the neutral Centre of the Assembly and gave them a predominant power in debate. Just above them, on the Extreme Left, in an elevated position which later (February 1792) came to be called 'la Montagne,' sat a handful of deputies—the chief among them being the ex-Capuchin Chabot, Basire, and Merlin de Thionville—who were the representatives in the Assembly of the uncompromising republicanism of the Cordelier and Jacobin Clubs outside. Numerically weak, they soon made

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themselves conspicuous by the violence alike of their opinions and of their language. At the outset these extremists, who formed the nucleus of what was soon to be the Jacobin party, gave a general support to the Brissotins, but the rapid course of events soon led them to take an independent line.

THE WORK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Assembly was faced by many and grave difficulties. There was serious trouble with the non-jurant priests (*prêtres insermentés*), who, strengthened by the Pope's condemnation of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, were stirring up discontent among the orthodox Catholics throughout the country. The emigration of the aristocracy had been going on rapidly, and large numbers of nobles were now gathered at Brussels, Coblenz, Mainz, Trèves, and other places on or near the frontier, where they were busy intriguing for a foreign invasion of France which, as they fondly hoped, would restore them to their former rights. Though their haughty behaviour and characteristic indifference to everything save their own interests made them unpopular in the Court circles in which they had found hospitality, their perpetual agitations were naturally regarded as a source of danger at home. Moreover, even apart from any question of their influence, the foreign situation was menacing. The Revolution, though at first treated with contempt as a mere flash in the pan, began to arouse something like consternation among the crowned heads and diplomatists of Europe as its real importance came to be appreciated. After the fiasco of Louis' attempted flight the King of Prussia and the Emperor Leopold (Marie-Antoinette's brother) had in the Declaration of Pillnitz (August 27, 1791) formally announced that the position of the King of France was a matter of common concern to all the sovereigns of Europe, and that if necessary they would not hesitate to interfere in his behalf. His acceptance of the Constitution, it is true, had for the moment deprived them of all pretext for action, but the menace of invasion remained, and the tension was increased by the widespread

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belief that if not the King himself, at any rate Marie-Antoinette and her party at Court—the 'Austrian Committee' as it was called—were secretly conspiring with foreign potentates against the hard-won liberties of the French people.

In these circumstances the Assembly proceeded at once to measures the severity of which was held to be justified by the perilous condition of the country. The recalcitrant clergy were required to take the oath of allegiance, failing which they were to be expelled from their livings; the King's brother (the Count of Provence) and the emigrant nobles were summoned to return to France before a given date under pain otherwise of death and the confiscation of their property. Except in regard to his brother, however, the King, exercising his power of suspensive veto, refused to sanction these decrees, and in the crisis which was caused by his unexpected action he would certainly have had the support of the constitutional party had not renewed strain in the relations of France and Austria over the question of the *émigrés* given their opponents an advantage which they were quick to seize. For several reasons the Girondins had fixed their minds on war: they were, to begin with, convinced that the sovereigns of Europe, with the connivance of the Court, were combining together to crush the popular cause; they believed that a European conflict would place Louis in a position of hopeless embarrassment and thus favour the success of republican ideas at home; while at the same time they cherished the characteristically chimerical dream that it would spread these ideas among the enslaved peoples of other lands and make the "tyrants" of the world "tremble on their thrones of clay." In their demand for war they were joined by La Fayette and a few of the constitutionalists, who, looking at the matter from the diametrically opposed point of view, satisfied themselves that war would in fact help to restore the prestige of the Crown, for which very reason the Jacobins, on the other hand, declared strongly against it. This was the first serious disagreement between the moderate Republicans and their advanced allies, and it quickly developed into the fiercest antagonism. The

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popularity of the idea of war in the country at large, however, gave additional driving power to the eloquence of the Girondins in the Assembly, and before long they were strong enough to force the King to dismiss his pacifist Feuillant ministers and to replace them with adherents of their own. Of this new ministry the most important members were Charles-François Dumouriez, who held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, and Jean-Marie Roland de la Platière, who was in charge of the Interior.¹ The former, who had served with distinction in the Seven Years' War, was more of a soldier than a statesman. The latter, an ex-Constituent, was the very embodiment of integrity and honour, but narrow, pedantic, conceited, and unsympathetic. His own personality was, however, entirely overshadowed by that of his much younger wife, a woman of striking beauty and charm, whose *salon* was the chief centre of the Girondin party, and who exercised an enormous influence in their councils. Ardent, impulsive, enthusiastic, of noble spirit but unbalanced mind, and a curious blend of Spartan austerity and romantic sentimentalism, of the temper of Plutarch and of Rousseau, Mme Roland was a characteristic type of the peculiar idealism which she did so much to inspire.

THE WAR WITH AUSTRIA AND THE OVERTHROW OF THE MONARCHY

The purpose of the Girondins was soon achieved. Dumouriez' curt demand that Austria should cease mobilizing troops on the French frontier was met by an unsatisfactory reply from the new Emperor, Francis II, who had just succeeded his father, and on April 20, 1792, war against Austria was declared.

The French plan was to conduct a defensive campaign on the natural frontiers and to take the offensive in the Netherlands. Hostilities opened, however, with a series of reverses which, though really due to the rawness of the soldiers and the inexperience of their leaders, were at once attributed to

¹ It must be remembered that, according to the new Constitution, no member of the Legislature was eligible for a place in the Government, and that the ministry was thus composed of outsiders.

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treason ; the clubs and journals were loud in their accusations against the Court ; Marat, in his *Ami du Peuple*, voiced the violent animus of the lowest classes by demanding " five or six hundred heads to assure the repose and happiness of France." Pétion, as Mayor of Paris, had already armed the populace against any emergency, and the peace of the city was seriously threatened by the bands of *sans-culottes* who swarmed in the streets. All this clamour alarmed the Assembly, which in order to deprive the King of his military support disbanded his guard, at the same time resolving to create at Soissons a camp of 20,000 federal soldiers, drawn from all the cantons, which was to protect the Legislature against any possible enemies within the gates.¹ The King, though he consented to the removal of his guard, vetoed both the formation of a camp and the deportation of the non-jurant clergy which had also been decreed, and, irritated by an impertinent letter of protest addressed to him by Roland (though in fact written by Mme Roland), dismissed his Girondin ministers and filled their places with friends of La Fayette. These events again inflamed the passions of the populace, and on June 20—the anniversary of the 'tennis-court oath'—some 20,000 armed men and women, mainly from the suburbs of Saint-Antoine and Saint-Marceau, having first invaded and terrorized the Assembly, marched on to the Tuileries, the doors of which they were proceeding to break down with hatchets when the King himself appeared, calm and collected, before the shouting and gesticulating rabble. A butcher named Legendre thereupon read to him a petition demanding the sanction of the decrees. Louis replied with dignity that that was neither the time nor the place for him to consider such a request, and that he would act in strict accordance with the Constitution ; but he placed on his head the *bonnet rouge* which was the badge of the Commune and drank a glass of wine to the health of

¹ During their march across France and into Paris the *fédérés* from Marseille sang the famous *Hymne à l'Armée du Rhin*, which from this circumstance came to be known, as it always will be known, as the *Marseillaise*, though it was actually composed a few weeks before at Strassburg by a young officer of the engineers, Rouget de Lisle.

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the people. At the end of two hours Pétion arrived on the scene and the demonstration closed. During the whole of that critical time Mme Élisabeth, the King's sister, shared his danger with equal coolness and courage, while Marie-Antoinette, with her children, remained in concealment under the protection of a few devoted adherents, and was thus saved from the fury of the women, whose insults and threats were specially directed against her.

This riot, for which neither the Girondins nor the Jacobin chiefs were responsible, created a slight rally in the King's favour among the *bourgeoisie*, who warmly approved of La Fayette's action in demanding the punishment of the ring-leaders. But public attention was now distracted by foreign affairs. For meanwhile the reverses of the French arms continued; Austria had been joined by Prussia and Sardinia; and on July 25 the Duke of Brunswick, as commander of the main army of invasion, issued a violent manifesto in which he announced that the object of the allies was nothing less than the suppression of anarchy in France and the restoration of the ancient monarchy. This inpolitic proclamation caused the deepest indignation throughout the country, which was everywhere stirred to the highest pitch of martial fervour. Already the Assembly had solemnly declared the country in danger (July 11) and had called for volunteers, and large numbers now responded to the appeal. This patriotic enthusiasm was, however, accompanied in the capital by a tremendous outburst of anger against the King, whose secret understanding with Austria was held to be beyond dispute, and who was accordingly execrated as the worst of the nation's enemies. This gave the insurrectionary sections the opportunity for which they had been waiting, and a carefully prepared rising was the result. On August 9 and 10 an armed crowd from the faubourgs took possession of the Hôtel de Ville, where they murdered Mandat, the commander of the National Guard, and early the next morning an attack was made on the Tuileries, the Swiss guard of which was cut to pieces. The King and his family sought refuge in the Assembly,

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but the Assembly was impotent to protect them. Even its proposal to lodge them in the Luxembourg was rejected by the Commune, which insisted that they should remain in its own hands, and imprisoned them in the tower of the Temple. Bowing before the storm, the 284 deputies who were brave enough to keep their places decreed the suspension of the King, the convocation of a National Convention to settle the problems which this step entailed, and in the meantime the appointment of a council to perform the functions of the royal executive.

The overthrow of the monarchy was at the same time the defeat of the Assembly, and both had been brought about by the Commune of Paris, which had emerged triumphant in the struggle. Roland and his colleagues returned to office, but the real victor for the moment was a young lawyer of Arcis-sur-Aube, who had been practising in Paris when the Revolution began, had rapidly risen into prominence as an agitator against the party of La Fayette, and now entered the Executive Council as Minister of Justice. A man of really great parts, a genuine patriot and lover of liberty, Georges-Jacques Danton was mainly instrumental in rousing the national spirit in that hour of imminent danger from foreign foes, and the value of the work which he thus accomplished must never be forgotten. Unfortunately, however, he did not hesitate at violence; he had no scruples about means when a given object was to be attained; and thus he was ready to condone, though he did not directly inspire, the terrible events which immediately followed the collapse of the throne.

But though Louis was now powerless in the hands of the Commune, the country's perils increased. La Fayette, having vainly endeavoured to induce his soldiers to march to the King's rescue, abandoned his army and fled across the frontier. His desertion weakened the French forces; the allies advanced rapidly; and when the news came that first Longwy (August 23) and then Verdun (September 27) had been captured by the Austrians, who had thus opened the way to Paris itself, the city was seized with panic. Then followed the

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most hideous scene of the early Revolutionary drama, when bands of assassins, hired by the Commune, invaded the prisons, at that time crowded with supposed royalist sympathizers, and for five days and nights systematically butchered their inmates (September 2-7). For the most part the women were spared, but among those who perished was the beautiful Mme de Lamballe, who gave her life for her allegiance to her friend the Queen, and whose head, carried through the streets on a pike, was exhibited to Marie-Antoinette before a window in the Temple.

While, however, the last days of the now quite helpless Assembly were stained by the excesses of this first portent of the later 'Terror, Dumouriez' success in throwing back the Austrians at Valmy showed that the tide of war was now taking a turn in favour of France. This notable victory was won on September 20. The next day the Legislative Assembly gave place to the National Convention, which meanwhile had been elected by universal suffrage.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER 1792—OCTOBER 1795

IN its first session the National Convention made absolute the Assembly's provisional decree of deposition against the King and formally proclaimed the abolition of royalty in France. Then, pending the establishment of the new machinery of the Republic, to devise which a special committee was appointed, it assumed all the functions and responsibilities of government.

THE GIRONDINS AND THE JACOBINS

Within and without the situation was critical. The country was in a state of commotion. Many important administrative questions had to be settled. A fresh constitution had to be prepared. At the same time there was a great war to be carried on against a league of powerful enemies by whom the very existence of the nation was imperilled. Yet of the 782 deputies of whom the new assembly was composed, and of whom about one-third had already sat in one or other of the preceding bodies, the vast majority, forming the Centre, or 'Plaine,' approached their gigantic task with no definite views and no plan of action. For the time being, therefore, these uncertain and ill-prepared legislators—these *crapauds du marais*, as they were contemptuously called—counted little except through their votes. But in the meanwhile the dissensions which already separated the two sections of the former Left—now sharply distinguished as Girondins and Jacobins—had developed into a fierce hostility, and for the first nine months of its existence the Convention was the scene

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of violent contentions, which culminated in a life-and-death struggle between them. Their rivalry was at bottom perhaps a matter less of specific principles than of temper and personalities. Yet their differences at certain points were clearly marked. The Girondins, who now occupied the Right, though they clung to their vague abstractions and formulas, were on the whole anxious to temporize, and as the advocates of moderation they were for the moment the main hope of the middle classes throughout the country, who desired to uphold property and order. The Jacobins, or Party of the Mountain, on the other hand, were radicals of the most uncompromising kind who did not scruple to push theory to the last extreme in practice and frankly appealed to the passions of the Parisian mob. The two parties thus represented two successive waves in the revolutionary movement. The Third Estate had been the chief gainers from the events of '89 onward; the Constitution of 1791 had been wholly in their favour, and they would now have been well satisfied to leave things as they were. Not so the lower classes, who, though relieved, indeed, from the crushing burdens of the Old Régime, had otherwise profited far less than they had expected from the past two years of change. The original middle-class party—the party formerly led by men like La Fayette, Bailly, Barnave, and the Lameths—had now merged in the amorphous and impotent Plaine. But its place was to some extent taken by the Girondins, who, despite their anti-monarchical and anti-clerical doctrines, tried in their turn to arrest the forces of destruction, while on their side the Jacobins proclaimed the necessity of a further extension of the Revolution in the interests of the proletariat, whose cause they had made their own. On another closely connected issue too they were hopelessly divided. The Girondins, deriving their support from the provinces, stood for the independence of the Convention and the rights of the departments against the domination of the Commune of Paris. The Jacobins, who depended upon the Commune, advocated a strongly centralized government and the supremacy of the capital in the State.

However much they might differ among themselves on

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particular points, and however fluctuating might be their policy, the Girondins, who included most of the Brissotins of the Assembly, were fairly homogeneous in character and sentiments. The Jacobins, on the contrary, were a motley crowd whose disparate elements were temporarily held together only by a common hatred of their rivals and a common passion for power. Three outstanding personalities, each of whom had his special followers and satellites, exercised at the outset a dominating though divided influence over them: Danton, "the Mirabeau of the *sans-culottes*," a tower of strength in the hour of peril and the very incarnation of the audacity which he preached; the "incorruptible" Robespierre, narrow-minded, ambitious, relentless, intense, the dupe of his own phrases, cold-bloodedly cruel, as events were soon to prove, yet with all his priggishness and conceit absolutely sincere; and the gloomy demagogue Marat, whose overheated imagination saw plots and traitors everywhere, and whose diatribes in his *Ami du Peuple* were hardly distinguishable from the ravings of homicidal mania. Among other members of the Mountain already or soon to be conspicuous it will suffice to mention Camille Desmoulins, Danton's devoted admirer and friend; Saint-Just and Couthon, both, like their leader Robespierre, fanatical idealists of the school of Rousseau; the bloodthirsty Billaud-Varenes; the infamous Collot-d'Herbois; the eccentric Anacharsis Cloots, "orator of the human race," who even at that time of windy rhetoric contrived to attract attention by his amazing loquacity; Fabre d'Églantine, the poet; David, the painter; and Philippe, Duke of Orléans, presently to be known as Philippe-Égalité.

THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF THE KING

As soon as the Convention settled down to business the struggle of the parties began with the demand of the Gironde for the punishment of the assassins in the recent massacres, for the arraignment of Robespierre and Marat on a charge of aiming at a dictatorship, and for the formation of a strong guard to protect the Convention against the Commune. The

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Jacobins retaliated by counter-accusations against the Gironde of desiring to establish a federal republic whereby the departments would be brought into conflict with the capital and the unity of the nation destroyed. Over these matters weeks were consumed in unseemly wrangles and recriminations. At length, early in November, the committee appointed to investigate the conduct of the fallen King presented its report; the Mountain forced on the Convention the consideration of his fate; and after much discussion the argument of Robespierre and Saint-Just that he should be put to death without process of law was rejected, and it was decreed that he should be tried by the Convention itself as the representative of the French people. Accordingly, on December 11, Louis Capet, as he was now called, was brought to the bar of the Assembly and impeached for conspiracy against public liberty and national safety, his defence being entrusted to the veteran Malesherbes, Tronchet, formerly a distinguished member of the Parliament of Paris, and a young and eloquent advocate from Bordeaux named Desèze. On December 26 the trial was concluded, but it was not till January 7, 1793, that the voting commenced, in the presence of disorderly crowds who packed the galleries and overawed and intimidated the deputies with their clamour and threats. On the initial question of Louis' guilt the Convention was unanimous; the proposal that its judgment should be submitted to the ratification of the people was rejected by 424 votes against 283; by the narrow majority of 53 the death penalty was decreed; again by a narrow majority, this time of 70, it was resolved that no respite should be given. All through the debates on these questions the essential weakness of the Girondins was conspicuous. They had joined in declaring Louis' guilt; their leaders had voted for his death; but they had done their utmost to save him from the scaffold by endeavouring to secure a referendum; and their attempt to obtain a delay in the execution of the sentence was a last desperate effort on their part to escape from the logical consequences of their own action.

The final step in these protracted proceedings was taken

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on January 19. On the 21st the sentence was duly carried out in what had till recently been the Place Louis XV and was now the Place de la Révolution. The deposed monarch had borne the hardships of imprisonment with pious resignation, and during his trial had comported himself with simple dignity. Nor did his courage fail him at the supreme moment. Stepping to the front of the scaffold, he began a speech to the people protesting his innocence, but his voice, though strong and firm, was drowned in the rolling of drums, and a few moments later his head fell beneath the knife of the guillotine.

The execution of Louis created a profound sensation throughout Europe, and greatly increased the dangers of the Republic by multiplying and uniting its foreign foes. The defeat of the Austrians in the last days of the Assembly had been followed by striking successes on the Rhine, in Savoy, and in Nice, and Dumouriez' victory at Jemappes (November 6, 1792) had placed Belgium in the power of the French. But this triumphant progress was checked when early in 1793 England, Holland, Spain, and the Germanic Confederation joined Austria and Prussia in a coalition, and at once assumed the offensive. In February and March a series of reverses overtook the French arms; the invasion of Holland was abandoned; and Dumouriez' defeat at Neerwinden (March 18) entailed the loss of Belgium. That able but adventurous general had saved the country in a moment of special danger; but he was known to be dissatisfied with the course which things were taking in the Convention; the latter, aware of his royalist leanings, despatched commissioners to arrest him in camp; and, like La Fayette before him, he deserted his army and sought refuge with the enemy. The menace of foreign invasion thus reappeared. At the same time there were serious troubles at home. The provinces were disaffected, and in the west, where Catholic and monarchical feelings were strong, reaction against the new order manifested itself in the beginnings of an insurrection in Vendée, soon to develop into civil war.

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ORGANIZATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

While these events were in progress Danton made an heroic attempt to reconcile the contending factions in the Convention in the interests of unity, but their quarrels continued to increase in bitterness, and as the Jacobins gained ground the position of the Girondins became more and more critical. It was now indeed war to the knife between them and the Commune of Paris, for while they denounced the disorders of the populace, the populace replied with demonstrations against them and clamour for their expulsion. In the meantime, dominated by the Mountain, the Convention quickly organized the machinery of the Revolutionary Government, and in so doing created the formidable instruments of despotism which were to become so famous a little later in the Reign of Terror. A Revolutionary Tribunal was established, endowed with extraordinary powers for the summary treatment of "traitors, conspirators, and anti-revolutionists." A central Committee of General Security (*Sûreté Générale*) was charged with the task of hunting out political crime and sending suspected persons before the Tribunal, while similar bodies were organized in all the communes of the country. The full authority of the executive was vested in another committee—that of Public Safety (*Salut Public*)—which stood outside of and above the law and exercised absolute control over all departments of administration; while members of the Convention, armed with dictatorial powers, were sent out "on mission," some to superintend the operations of the armies in the field, others to carry out the orders of the Government in the provinces. Energetic action was also taken for the prosecution of the war; a further issue of two milliards of *assignats* was decreed, and an order was made for a fresh levy of 300,000 men, to be raised, voluntary recruits failing, by conscription.

FALL OF THE GIRONDINS

Immensely strengthened by these measures, the Jacobins pressed their attacks upon the Girondins with renewed vigour.

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Robespierre accused them of complicity with Dumouriez. As a counter-move they made a second attempt to crush Marat, whom they succeeded in sending to the Revolutionary Tribunal; but the charge against him was dismissed and his acquittal was followed by a tremendous outburst of popular enthusiasm. Amid all this excitement many social and economic questions were forced upon the Convention by the scarcity of food and the sufferings of the poor, and much time was spent in debates about capital and property which in the main had little result, though severe laws were enacted against those who trafficked in the currency, and a maximum was established to regulate the price of provisions according to a sliding scale (May 3). These conditions and events still further inflamed the passions of the mob against the Girondins, whose leaders had opposed the demands of the Commune for exceptional legislation. As the weeks went by the agitation in the capital grew apace; Marat in *L'Ami du Peuple* continued to rave for the blood of the "anti-patriots"; and even he was now outdone in violence by the editor of *Le Père Duchesne*, the atrocious and contemptible Hébert, whose ribaldry and obscenity made him the idol of the lowest elements in the rabble. Threatened risings in the south and west in favour of the Girondins did little to check the fury of the metropolis against them, and their futile endeavour to silence Hébert brought the fast-gathering storm to a head. At the end of May the sections of the city formed themselves into a *municipalité insurrectionnelle*, and the Convention was invaded by 30,000 armed men, against whom it vainly tried to preserve at least the fiction of independence. For three days it remained in a state of siege; an attempt made by its members to escape was frustrated by Hanriot, the drunken but resolute commander of the National Guard, and Marat with a hundred patriots conducted them back to their hall. On June 2 the Mountain triumphed, and the arrest of the twenty-two leaders of the Gironde was decreed.

This was the signal for many serious outbreaks in the provinces; Lyon, Marseille, Bordeaux, Toulon, Grenoble, Caen, and other important cities became centres of anti-

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Jacobin risings; the royalist reaction made rapid progress in Vendée, where the insurgents, under their heroic peasant chief Cathelineau, swept everything before them. At the same time the allies scored some notable successes on the northern and eastern frontiers; Metz, Valenciennes, and Condé were captured; the ports of France were blockaded by the English fleet. Already one of the great figures of the Mountain had disappeared—Marat, assassinated (July 13) by the young avenger Charlotte Corday, who had travelled from Caen on her self-appointed mission and cheerfully paid the price of her deed on the scaffold. For the moment Danton and Robespierre were rivals for power; but though Danton worked hard to save the nation and did lion's service in its cause, the movement of events was entirely in favour of Robespierre.

Confronted by these many perils, the Convention rose to the occasion with promptitude and unflinching courage, and before long the situation was completely changed. The revolts in the provinces were suppressed. The Vendéans, whose onward rush had brought them to the walls of Nantes, were thrown back in disorder, though it was not till the end of the year that they were decisively beaten by Kléber and Marceau. Fresh levies were raised and new generals appointed for the foreign campaigns; apathy and misunderstandings weakened the coalition; the tide turned again, and by the autumn all danger of invasion was once more averted. Whatever judgment we may otherwise pass upon the members of the Revolutionary Government, their splendid and successful defence of the country in that dark hour of imminent disaster must always be remembered to their credit.

THE REIGN OF TERROR

Unfortunately, however, there was another side to their activity. To conciliate public opinion a new Constitution, delegating unlimited authority to the sovereign people, was hurriedly prepared, but when deputations waited upon the Convention with demands that it should at once be put in force the reply was that the provisional machinery of govern-

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ment must continue till the end of the war. Thus, while extreme democracy was admitted on paper, an autocratic bureaucracy was maintained in practice. The Committee of Public Safety, now reconstituted, with Danton left out, and with Couthon, Saint-Just, Robespierre, and very shortly Collot-d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes among its members, remained in absolute control of affairs and proceeded to carry out the policy which has made it infamous in the annals of despotism. On September 17 the notorious *Loi des Suspects* was enacted, under the terms of which 'suspected persons' were so defined as to include all who even in the most negative way could be deemed hostile to, or even lukewarm in their attitude toward, the Republic, liberty, and 'civism.' With this the Reign of Terror, which really dates from the formation of the Committee of Public Safety, began in earnest. The law itself was sweeping enough, but in practice it was stretched even beyond its nominal intention. Paris, and indeed the whole of France, was thrown into a fever of suspicion; no one was safe; men and women were arrested and imprisoned without cause or motive; the Revolutionary Tribunal, now enlarged and vested with increased powers, worked with frenzied activity to 'purify' the country; the guillotine was in daily use. The first important victim of the new system was Marie-Antoinette, who on October 16 met her fate with a noble dignity which goes far to blind us to her many and grievous faults. On the 31st the twenty-one members of the Gironde proscribed in June went to the scaffold singing the *Marseillaise*.¹ Philippe-Égalité followed on November 6; Mme Roland on the 8th; Bailly on the 11th. Among other prominent persons whose heads fell beneath the knife during the next few months were the Princess Élisabeth (the late King's sister); the once all-powerful Mme du Barry; the generals Luckner, Houchard, Custine, and Beauharnais; the Constituent Barnave; the poets Roucher and André Chénier; the chemist Lavoisier;

¹ Others among the leading Girondins who met with violent ends were Salles, Guadet, and Barbaroux, who were guillotined and Pétion, Buzot, Roland, and Condorcet, who committed suicide.

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and the former minister Malesherbes. Nor was the Terror confined to the capital. Its atrocities were even more appalling in some of the provinces. Collot-d'Herbois, Fouché, and Couthon, sent to Lyon to punish that city for its recent revolt, accomplished their mission with merciless destruction and slaughter. At Nantes, Carrier, the agent of the Convention, finding that even at the rate of several hundred executions a day the guillotine was still too slow to keep pace with the Tribunal, devised a system of wholesale drownings (*noyades*) and shootings (*fusillades*), which enabled him to account for some 15,000 persons in the space of four months. Only less monstrous were the excesses committed by Tallien at Bordeaux, by Barras and Fréron at Toulon, and by Joseph Lebon at Arras.

After the fall of the Gironde, however, the Mountain itself began to break up into factions, and a conflict soon arose between Hébert and the Commune of Paris on the one hand and Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety on the other. The Hébertists, or *enragés*, who advocated the extremest measures of Terror, were for the moment in the ascendant, and it was chiefly at their dictation that the Convention abolished Christianity by introducing a new Republican calendar¹ and establishing a Cult of Reason, which was inaugurated on October 10 in Notre-Dame, when the Goddess of Reason, impersonated by a handsome young actress of the Opera, took the place of the "ci-devant sainte Vierge." But the situation was soon complicated by the rise of a new party of *indulgents*. Early in December Camille Desmoulins began in his new paper, *Le Vieux Cordelier*, to denounce the policy of bloodshed and to plead for clemency. At first his main effort was directed against the *enragés*. But

¹ This calendar was dated from September 22, 1792, the first day of the Republic. The year was divided into twelve months: Vendémiaire, Brumaire, Frumaire (autumn); Nivôse, Pluviôse, Ventôse (winter); Germinal, Floréal, Prairial (spring); Messidor, Thermidor, Fructidor (summer). Each month had three weeks and each week ten days; and every tenth day (*décadi*) was a day of rest. The remaining five days of the year were festivals (*sans-culottides*); the extra sixth day of leap-year was the Festival of the Revolution.

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before long he turned also upon the Committee of Public Safety. Robespierre, who had hitherto encouraged him, now found himself caught between two fires. In this critical juncture he showed his usual timidity, but his loyal henchman Saint-Just provided the practical energy which he lacked and at once carried the war into the Hébertist camp. The Hébertists thereupon endeavoured to organize a popular rising against the Government. But Paris was growing weary of insurrections; the attempt failed; and Hébert himself, the *procureur* Chaumette, Anacharsis Cloots, and other members of the party, nineteen in all, were guillotined (March 24–April 14, 1794). In the meantime, Danton, who had retired in disgust to Arcis-sur-Aube, returned to Paris, where he at first supported Robespierre against the *enragés*. But he soon threw in his lot with Desmoulins. Upon this Saint-Just proceeded to eliminate the Dantonists (as the Moderates were now called), as he had already eliminated the Hébertists. On April 2–4 both Danton and Desmoulins were tried before the Tribunal. Danton made a tremendous fight against his accusers, and for the moment it seemed possible that he might even arouse the uncertain passions of the multitude in his favour. But Saint-Just had his way, and Danton fell a victim to the tyranny he had done so much to organize. He and Desmoulins went to the scaffold together (April 5), and a number of their followers, including Chabot, Fabre d'Églantine, Basire, Hérault de Séchelles, and Philippeaux, shared their fate.

This triumph of the Committee meant the practical dictatorship of Robespierre, with Saint-Just and Couthon as his supporters; for the Commune was now reduced to subjection; the Convention was cowed; while even the clubs and *cafés* of the city were silenced and paralysed. The policy of Terror was now pursued with even greater fury, the final stage—the Grande Terreur—opening with the atrocious decree of 22 Prairial (June 10), which swept away the last remnants of legality in the proceedings of the Tribunal and practically deprived suspected persons of all right of defence. After this

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"heads fell like slates," and men, women, and even children perished in batches in an indiscriminating butchery, at the rate of thirty, forty, and even fifty a day. At the same time Robespierre seized the opportunity which was now presented to him to realize his religious ideal. A sentimental deist after the fashion of Rousseau's Savoyard Vicar, he had recoiled horrified from the atheism of Hébert and the Cult of Reason. In pursuance of a policy which had already sent Gobel, the renegade Archbishop of Paris, to the guillotine, those suspected of atheism were now brought before the Tribunal, while the people of France were called upon to accept as the creed of the State the doctrines of the existence of a Supreme Being, the immortality of the soul, and the moral duty of man. On 20 Prairial (June 8)—two days only before the ferocious decree just mentioned—Robespierre himself took the chief part in a solemn farce in the garden of the Tuileries to celebrate the introduction of the new religion. The details of the ceremony were almost incredibly childish. But the climax of absurdity was reached shortly afterward when a crazy old spiritualist, named Catherine Théot, announced that she was the Mother of God and that Robespierre was the new saviour of the world.

FALL OF ROBESPIERRE: THE THERMIDORIAN REACTION

Robespierre's ascendancy was, however, destined to be very brief. Many of his colleagues dreaded him or were jealous of his pretensions. Beneath the surface in city and Convention alike a tide of feeling was rising fast against the senseless brutalities of the despotic *régime*. If any excuse could ever have been urged for Terrorism it was provided by the national danger. But that danger had been destroyed by the successes of the French armies in all the theatres of war, and when news reached Paris of Jourdan's great victory over the Austrians at Fleurus (June 26, 1794) and the reoccupation of Belgium the temper of the public underwent a radical change. Timid, unpractical, wholly lacking in political insight and in resolution, Robespierre was powerless to stand up

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against the growing hostility which now became apparent. Saint-Just, indeed, made frantic efforts to choke it before it could become dangerous. But his ill-timed demand for a recognized dictatorship, which was of course understood to refer to Robespierre, and Robespierre's own threats of summary vengeance against his enemies, only served to frighten the Convention into action. All parties—the survivors of the Dantonists and the Hébertists, the remnant of the Gironde, the Moderates of the Centre—combined against the tyrant who menaced them all. A short, fierce struggle ensued, in which Robespierre endeavoured to defeat the Convention with the help of the Commune and the National Guard. But on 9 Thermidor (July 27), amid scenes of wild excitement, the Convention rose against him and ordered his arrest. The Jacobin Club and the Commune made one more effort to save their hero, but the insurrection collapsed. On July 28 Robespierre, Saint-Just, Couthon, and nineteen of their supporters went to the guillotine; seventy-one members of the Commune followed the next day; twelve again the day after; and by this final outburst of 'Terror the Terror itself was virtually brought to a close.

Vergniaud's prophecy of sixteen months before—that the Revolution, like Saturn, would successively devour all its children—had now been fulfilled. In the reaction which followed the triumph of the 'Thermidorians' there was, indeed, serious danger lest the principles of the Revolution should be forgotten, and the Convention itself found it necessary to affirm the existence of the Revolutionary Government. That Government was, however, greatly modified. The Committee of Public Safety and the Tribunal were reorganized with curtailed powers; the law of 22 Prairial was repealed; the Convention assumed the functions of administration; the Commune was abolished. At the same time a systematic attack was directed against the defeated Mountaineers, who were not even now prepared to yield without further struggle—an attack carried on outside by the *Orateur du Peuple* of the former Cordelier Fréron, and other journals, and by groups

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of young men—*jeunes gens, la jeunesse dorée, les Muscadins*—who vowed vengeance upon *sans-culottisme* and paraded the streets armed with heavy sticks, assaulting the Jacobins and breaking up their meetings. On November 12 that great centre of popular agitation the Jacobin Club was closed. On December 8 seventy-three Girondins who had fled from Paris on the fall of their party were recalled. In the March following a determined attempt was made to suppress the demagogues who were still stirring up trouble; two of the most notorious of them, Billaud-Varenes and Collot-d'Herbois, were transported to Cayenne; and this would also have been the fate of Barère and Vadier, but that the former contrived to escape from prison, while the latter found safety in hiding. During the winter of 1794-95, with the ruinous fall in the value of the *assignats* and the enormous rise in the price of food, there was much distress and discontent throughout the country, and these led to disturbances in Paris, which, fomented by the Jacobins, culminated in the bread riots of 12 Germinal (April 1, 1795) and the rising of 1 Prairial (May 20). But though the second of these movements assumed very formidable proportions, it was finally quelled by the National Guard. Thereupon six prominent members of the Mountain were sent to the scaffold and the power of the extreme Jacobins was broken. On the other hand, there was serious danger from royalist reaction in the provinces. In the south a *Terreur Blanche* was organized, and fearful reprisals taken for the excesses of the *Terreur Rouge*, while civil war was renewed in Vendée, where the native insurgents were reinforced by *émigrés*, who saw in the Thermidorian triumph the promise of the restoration of the Old Régime.

Amid all these internal troubles, however, the successes of the French armies continued, and by the Treaties of Basel (April 5 and July 22, 1795) peace was made with Spain and Prussia on terms which included the recognition of the national Government by these two Powers. Coincidentally the failure of an emigrant descent, aided by England, upon Quiberon (July 21) brought about the collapse of the royalist revolt in the west.

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END OF THE CONVENTION

In the meantime the new Constitution was completed—that of Year III—to take the place of the Jacobin Constitution of 1793, which still remained on paper. This Constitution was adopted on 5 Fructidor (August 22).

But the career of the Convention, tempestuous throughout, was not to close without one more storm. The new Constitution, the chief provisions of which were already known to the public, was welcomed by the reactionaries because they saw in it the opportunity of making a clean sweep of the Conventionals and so preparing the way for a counter-revolution. To obviate this danger and to perpetuate its own power the Convention on 5 and 13 Fructidor (August 22 and 30) decreed that two-thirds of the coming legislature must be composed of its own members. These decrees were accepted by the provinces and embodied in the final proclamation of 1 Vendémiaire (September 23). But in Paris they aroused the deepest indignation among the malcontents. On 13 Vendémiaire (October 5) there was a serious rising of the sections, and some 40,000 insurgents marched to the Tuileries, where the Convention was in session. But there they found a body of troops under the command of a young Corsican named Buonaparte ready to receive them, and at the first “whiff of grapeshot” they broke and dispersed. That same day Barras was able to assure the assembly that the Government was safe.

Three weeks later the National Convention dissolved. In tracing the course of events during the three years of its existence we have been compelled to fix our attention mainly on the forces of destruction which it let loose. But we must not forget that it did much constructive work of a valuable kind. Not only did it save the country from foreign foes, but it also began to lay the foundations of a new France. During the Jacobin ascendancy, indeed, it passed much legislation of a wildly communistic character; but its permanent contributions to progress must be sought elsewhere. It established a standard metrical system of weights and measures.

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It introduced a system of public education. The Polytechnic School, the Institute of France, the Conservatory of Arts and Crafts, the Conservatory of Music, the Museum of Natural History, were its creation. All these things are to its credit. Another more general remark must also be made. The struggles, intrigues, anarchy, and bloodshed which marked the period of its rule are not hastily to be set down to the account of liberty and democracy. A people born and bred in servitude is never likely in the moment of its emancipation to exhibit those virtues of patience and self-restraint which only the discipline of ordered freedom can foster, and the worst abuses of the Reign of Terror are really to be regarded as the inevitable aftermath of the evils of the Old Régime.¹

¹ It is greatly to his credit that our own Wordsworth, notwithstanding his recoil to Toryism, perceived this (*Prelude*, Book X, ll. 470 ff.). It was also perceived by Shelley (Preface to *The Revolt of Islam*) and by the Swedish poet Tegner.

CHAPTER V

THE DIRECTORY

OCTOBER 1795—NOVEMBER 1799

THE Constitution of Year III was the work of the Moderate Republican party and bore many traces of the spirit of reaction. The avowed object of its framers was to establish a "Government of the best," and they were evidently convinced that this could not be attained without the abandonment of many of the principles of pure democracy. Universal suffrage was suppressed, the franchise was limited by the reintroduction of a property qualification, and the method of election by two degrees, which had been a prominent feature of the Constitution of 1791, was restored. The abuses to which a single chamber is liable having been amply demonstrated by recent events, the bicameral system was adopted. The Legislature was composed of a Corps Législatif, or Council of Five Hundred, and a Council of Ancients, consisting of half that number. The lower house, members of which had to be at least thirty years of age, initiated all legislation. The main function of the upper house, which was elected by the lower, and to which married men or widowers of forty or over were alone eligible, was to exercise the suspensive veto which the Constitution of 1791 had entrusted to the King. Fear of royalty being still so strong that any suggestion of a single head or president of the Republic was obviously inadmissible, the executive authority was lodged in the hands of five Directors, who were selected by the Ancients from a list submitted to them by the Five Hundred. These Directors, who had also to be over forty, retired one by one yearly and were ineligible for re-election.

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The complete separation of the legislative and executive powers, which had been a curious obsession with previous Constitution-makers, was maintained. No member of either chamber could hold any executive office, and the Directory was independent alike of the Legislature and of public opinion. The first Directors were Larévellière-Lépeaux, Rewbell, Letourneur, Barras, and Carnot, all ex-Conventionals who had voted for the death of the King, and were therefore regarded as whole-heartedly committed to the Republic.

FRANCE DURING THE DIRECTORY

The preamble to the new Constitution was conceived in a singularly didactic spirit, and expressly emphasized the importance of personal morality in the State. "No one," it declared, "can be a good citizen unless he is a good son, a good father, a good brother, a good friend, and a good husband." Such platitudes were well meant, but the social history of the next few years provides a strange commentary upon them. For the period of the Directory was in fact a period of dissolution. After the long strain of fierce passions and deadly struggles a sweeping reaction set in. Pleasure became 'the order of the day.' "Chacun," wrote Mallet du Pan in 1796, "ne pense plus qu'à jouir, boire, et manger." A frenzy of extravagance and a rage for luxury and ostentation seized the wealthier classes. Gambling and speculation were universal. The *salon* was again in full swing, but as a centre, not of intellectual interests, but of dissipation. The public gardens and places of popular resort, the theatres, the ball-rooms, the restaurants which now sprang up in Paris, were thronged. The mania for Graeco-Roman antiquity, which had formerly bred men like Vergniaud and women like Mme de Roland, now inspired what was supposed to be a 'classic' revival in dress, and the fashions of the women were grotesquely eccentric and often audaciously indecent. From top to bottom of the social scale there was a loosening of the national fibre. Morals and manners were alike depraved. The number of divorces increased enormously, and everywhere the marriage tie and

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the sanctities of family and home were cynically derided. At the same time in public life dishonesty was general and corruption and venality flourished unchecked. This political rot must in particular be recognized on account of its direct connexion with what was soon to follow. It prepared the way for military despotism, and especially for the dominating personality who now rose rapidly into prominence, and was shortly to become not only the controlling force in the destinies of France, but also the greatest figure on the European stage.

THE RISE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Napoleone Buonaparte—in the Gallicized form of the name which he presently adopted, Napoléon Bonaparte¹—sprang from an Italian stock, and was born in Ajaccio, Corsica, on August 15, 1769, little more than a year after his native island had been annexed to France. At the age of nine he was placed in the College of Autun, where he remained three months in order to learn French enough to enable him to take up his studies, first at the Military School in Brienne, which he entered in April 1779, and later in the Military College in Paris, to which he was transferred in October 1784. On passing his final examinations in September 1785 he obtained his commission as second-lieutenant in the artillery. Then for some years he led a life of poverty and struggle, incidentally gaining a reputation as a firebrand through his activity on the Republican side in the revolutionary disturbances in Corsica. He was in Paris in the summer of 1792; saw the procession of *sans-culottes* to the Tuileries on June 20 ("Why did they let those blackguards get in there?" he exclaimed to his friend Bourrienne, who was with him); and was also an eye-witness of the more serious affair of August 10. These events seem to have destroyed his youthful dreams of democracy and liberty. Yet he perceived quite clearly that it would be to his present advantage to ally himself with the 'patriots,' and with his characteristic want of principle he accordingly espoused

¹ It will be seen, however, that, in accordance with established English custom, I henceforth write the name Napoleon without the accent.

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the Jacobin cause, which he supported with pen as well as sword. He first made his mark by the conspicuous part which he took in the crushing of the anti-Jacobin rebellion at Toulon, his reward being promotion to the rank of brigadier-general. The fall of Robespierre threatened to involve him in irretrievable disaster, and even when he was released from Fort Carré, near Antibes, where he was imprisoned for thirteen days with the shadow of the guillotine hanging over him, it seemed for the moment that his career as a soldier had practically come to an end. But the course of political events soon brought a sensational change in his prospects. On the outbreak of the reactionary movement against the Constitution of Year III he was asked by Barras, to whom he had attached himself, to take the second command of the army of the Convention. Only the day before he had said to Junot: "If only these sectionaries would put me at their head I would make short work of the Convention!" But in the true spirit of the soldier of fortune he seized his chance, and his success in scattering the sections on 13 Vendémiaire and so saving the Government made him the man of the hour. His advancement was now rapid, and he was soon Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Interior. He further strengthened his political position by marrying on March 9, 1796, a woman of considerable influence in the inner circles of the Directory—Marie-Joséphine-Rose Tascher de la Pagerie, widow of the guillotined general Alexandre de Beauharnais.

Meanwhile Carnot, who was still at the head of military affairs, as he had been under the Convention, had decided to push the war against Austria, in accordance with a comprehensive plan of action, in three directions, one army, under Jourdan, operating in the north-east, a second, under Moreau, on the Rhine, while a third, the command of which was given to Bonaparte, was to invade Italy. The German campaigns collapsed; but Bonaparte's expedition was a series of brilliant successes, in which he amazed the world by his supreme military genius, his marvellous fertility in resource, the boldness of his strategy, the bewildering rapidity of his movements, and the resolution

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with which he carried out his ideas. Crossing the Alps he quickly overran Piedmont; forced the King of Sardinia to sign the armistice of Cherasco (April 1796); drove the Austrians before him to the Adda; entered Milan (May 15); gained victory after victory, notably in the great battles of Arcola (November 1796) and Rivoli (January 1797); made himself master of Northern Italy; reduced the Pope to submission; and crowned the triumphs of eighteen months with the Treaty of Campo Formio (October 17, 1797), by which Austria ceded the Netherlands to France, acknowledged the independence of the new republics of Genoa and Lombardy, and recognized the natural frontier of France on the left bank of the Rhine.

While, however, the young conqueror's dramatic success naturally gave satisfaction to the 'Cinq Sires' in Paris, it provided them also with good ground for alarm. Already he had made them uneasy by his restlessness, his ambition, and his intriguing spirit, and it was indeed in part because they recognized in him an element of danger to their peace at home that they had sent him to Italy. But his conduct in Italy had served to increase the strain in their relationship. He had made it only too evident that though he was nominally working for them, he really despised them. Throughout his campaign he had persistently acted on his own initiative in diplomatic as well as in military matters; he had either not waited for instructions from headquarters or had coolly ignored them when they did not happen to fit in with his own views; and in his dealings with foreign Powers he had boldly usurped the authority which properly belonged to the central Government alone. Such behaviour was manifestly disquieting. On his triumphant return to Paris he was officially welcomed by the Directors in a grand ceremony in the court of the Luxembourg (December 10); but when his craving for adventure prompted him to fresh undertakings, they were only too willing to agree to his gigantic scheme for the conquest of Egypt, because, whatever might be its issue, it had the advantage of getting him once more out of their way.

The expedition to Egypt, which had as its ultimate object

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the destruction of English supremacy in the East, proved, however, a grandiose failure. Sailing from Toulon on May 19, 1798, Bonaparte seized Malta (June 11), occupied Alexandria (July 2), overthrew the Mamelukes in the Battle of the Pyramids (July 21), and entered Cairo (July 23). But Nelson's annihilation of his fleet in the Bay of Aboukir (August 1) upset all his plans and put him into a position of great difficulty. His communications by sea cut off, he was now compelled to seek a way out by land. He therefore struck out for Syria, captured Gaza and Jaffa, and defeated the Turks at Mount Thabor (April 16, 1799). But his rebuff at Saint-Jean-d'Acre, after sixty-one days of siege and fourteen assaults upon the city, finally shattered his dream of Eastern empire. By this time his army was greatly reduced by hardship and pestilence and was in a pitiable state of exhaustion. He therefore turned back to Cairo. There he received the first news from home which had reached him for six months, and it was news of a kind to stir him to instant action. The arms of the Republic had suffered serious reverses in a fresh war against a European coalition; France was threatened by Anglo-Russian forces; the whole country was in a ferment of political unrest; the Directory was discredited and tottering to its fall. Bonaparte saw that, in his own phrase, "the pear was ripe," and he resolved to grasp it without delay. Basely abandoning his army and leaving his subordinate Kléber to face certain disaster, he made a perilous journey to France, barely escaping the English cruisers on the way, landed on October 9 at Saint-Raphaël (where fifteen years later he was to re-embark for Elba), travelled hurriedly through Aix, Avignon, Valence, and Lyon, amid the acclamations of an excited people, and reached Paris on the 16th.

THE 18TH BRUMAIRE

The internal history of the Directory during the five years of its existence had been a record of steady decay. At the outset the Executive was badly harassed by the old financial difficulty, which it attempted to overcome by an issue of

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mandats territoriaux (exchangeable for land) to replace the now exploded *assignats*, and by other desperate devices. These, however, were only temporary expedients, and the continued strain of war, though to some extent relieved by the huge sums which Bonaparte sent home as the proceeds of his plunder in Italy, was felt as time went on with ever-increasing severity. Political trouble was also rife. There was a new rising, encouraged by England, in Vendée, which was, however, suppressed by Hoche (February–March 1796); and a popular revolt under the Collectivist leader, Babœuf (May 1796). The Royalists, too, were active. The elections of Year V brought into the councils a large body of deputies avowedly anxious for the restoration of the monarchy, and a Bourbon sympathizer, Barthélemy, at the same time entered the Directory.¹ This led to the *coup d'état* of 18 Fructidor (September 4, 1797), by which the Republican Directors Barras, Laréveillière-Lépeaux, and Rewbell, with the help of their supporters in the councils, made a clearance of their enemies, many of whom were exiled, while Barthélemy and his associate Carnot had to fly the country. A second *coup d'état* on 22 Floréal, Year VI (May 11, 1798), was directed against the Jacobins, to whom the new elections had been favourable. By such unconstitutional violence the feeble Government attempted to cover up its weakness. But by thus overriding the will of the people, as well as by other acts of despotism—such as the renewed persecution of the priests, forced loans, and the gagging of the Press—it succeeded only in alienating nearly all classes throughout the country, and when Bonaparte arrived in Paris it was evident that its doom was sealed. This was his opportunity. His immense popularity made him confident that he could carry the country with him, and he determined to turn the situation to his own advantage. Siéyès, now a member of the Directory and the only one who really counted, was even then meditating the

¹ The son of Louis XVI, known as Louis XVII, had died in the Temple in 1795. The late King's brother, the Count of Provence, was now, therefore, the pretender to the throne.

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destruction of what was left of the Constitution of Year III. Bonaparte resolved to use him as his tool. A second Director, Ducos, was brought into the plot. A majority of both councils could be depended upon to support the conspirators when the critical moment came. It was certain that the military would follow the man who was pre-eminently the soldiers' hero. Everything being thus in readiness, a mythical Jacobin plot was concocted in order that, as a matter of precaution, the Legislature might be isolated at Saint-Cloud,¹ and Bonaparte was placed in command of the guards which were supposedly to assure its safety. On 18 Brumaire (November 9, 1799) the councils accordingly met at Saint-Cloud, and there, after some hours of wild tumult, during which Bonaparte himself was almost torn to pieces by the infuriated Republicans, they were overwhelmed by the military, whose rolling drums finally drowned the voices of the representatives of the people, and the Directory was at an end.

¹ This was in accordance with a clause in the Constitution providing for the removal of the Legislature from Paris in case of danger from the populace.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONSULATE

NOVEMBER 1799—MAY 1804

THOUGH the scheme of the new Constitution—that of Year VIII—was drawn up by Siéyès (whose original design was a miracle of philosophical ingenuity), and though all its details were discussed by two commissions appointed for the purpose, it was in essence the work of Bonaparte himself, who took good care that nothing should be included in it which conflicted with his own views or would be likely to check his ambitions. Under the form of a republic, indeed, it introduced the thin end of the wedge of absolutism. The Executive was composed of three consuls, all elected for ten years, and all eligible for re-election. It was part of Bonaparte's plan that the Executive should be supreme in the State; it was equally part of his plan that he should be supreme in the Executive; and accordingly the full authority of government was vested in him as First Consul, while his colleagues were allowed only a "consultative voice" in affairs. The legislative machinery was extremely complex, but it was cunningly devised to place the largest possible measure of power in his hands. The Executive alone could initiate legislation. The legislation proposed by it was then drafted by a Conseil d'État, and passed through an intricate course of procedure in a Tribunat and a Corps Législatif, the former of which was a chamber for discussion, the latter for voting. There was also a Senate, whose function it was to safeguard the Constitution, which had therefore the right to annul any legislation which it pronounced unconstitutional, and which thus provided a further obstacle to the expression of public opinion through the laws. But indeed little of public opinion

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could now find its way through the network of the electoral system. The electors of each commune chose *notabilités communales*, in the ratio of one in ten of their number; these in turn chose, in the same ratio, *notabilités départementales*; these again *notabilités nationales*; and it was from these *notabilités nationales* that the Senate selected the Legislature. The Senate itself, appointed in the first instance by the Executive, was to be recruited by itself from a triple list presented by the Corps Législatif, the Tribunat, and the First Consul. With the First Consul also rested the nomination of ministers and other important functionaries of administration. Such was the basis of the Constitution promulgated on December 24, 1799. Then, by a supplementary enactment of 28 Pluviôse (February 17, 1800), the whole internal machinery of the country was remodelled in harmony with these fundamental principles, and extreme centralization—a centralization even greater than that which had prevailed under Louis XIV—was obtained by means of prefects, sub-prefects, and mayors, all of whom were the nominees of the Government. It will therefore be seen that though the empty phraseology of republicanism was still employed, the merest shadow of popular institutions was now left to France. All real power was vested in the First Consul, who as head at once of the army and of the State became in reality if not in name supreme dictator.

Bonaparte's associates in the Executive were Cambacérès, formerly a member of the Plaine in the Convention, and Lebrun, who years before had been a coadjutor of the Chancellor Maupeou. Siéyès became President and Ducos a member of the Senate.

WAR WITH AUSTRIA AND ENGLAND: THE PEACE OF AMIENS

On assuming power Bonaparte, conceding to the sentiment of the people, made overtures of peace to Austria and England, now the only active enemies of France, but he was glad when these were rejected, for his mind was set upon the continuance

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of war. There were already two armies in the field: one, under Moreau, on the Rhine, the other, under Masséna, on the Italian Riviera. But Bonaparte did not propose that either of these generals should reap the glory of the coming campaign. In the greatest secrecy he accordingly assembled a third army between Geneva and Lausanne, of which he took command in person in May 1800, and with which he made his famous passage across the Alps by way of the Great St Bernard. His sudden appearance on the plains of Lombardy (for it was as if he had dropped from the clouds) took the Austrians by surprise, and at Marengo (June 14) he inflicted a crushing defeat upon them. An armistice was then arranged, and after a campaign of forty days Bonaparte hurried back to Paris, where he was welcomed with the wildest enthusiasm. It was not, however, till after Moreau's victory at Hohenlinden (December 3) that the war with Austria was actually brought to a close. Meanwhile Nelson's naval successes and the almost total destruction of the French fleet frustrated his design of isolating England, and when the League of Neutrals, which had been formed to keep the seas open against Britain, collapsed, he found himself compelled to come to terms with his one remaining foe, who was herself weary of the long and fruitless struggle. General peace was then concluded by a number of treaties, of which the most important were those of Lunéville (January 1801) and Amiens (March 1802). The former ratified the Treaty of Campo Formio and made a few additional concessions to France. The latter, which was intended to settle the points in dispute between France, England, Spain, and Holland, provided for an all-round readjustment of the colonial possessions of these Powers and for the evacuation by France of Egypt, the Two Sicilies, and the Papal States. France gained in particular by the recovery of her lost colonies, and by the recognition, save as specified, of her Continental acquisitions.

The pacification of Europe and the restoration of France to a paramount place among the nations contributed enormously to Bonaparte's prestige, and he was now the idol of

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the great mass of the people. His immense popularity enabled him to take another step upward on the ladder of his ambitions. In May 1802 the Senate extended his tenure of office by a further period of ten years, as "a signal mark of national gratitude." On August 2 he was proclaimed Consul for life. This change was, of course, made at his dictation. To assure his position, however, he had it referred to a *plébiscite*, and it was accepted by an overwhelming majority of the electors. In the revision of the Constitution which followed the tendency toward the further development of absolutism was very evident. The powers of the Senate, which was little more than an instrument of the Executive, were greatly extended. Those of the Legislature were correspondingly curtailed. The First Consul also obtained in various ways an even firmer control of all departments of administration.

NAPOLEON'S ADMINISTRATION AS FIRST CONSUL

It must, however, be remembered that it was not Bonaparte's military achievements alone which magnetized the French people and made them willing to acknowledge him as their master. He brought to the whole country, long distracted by anarchy and now impatient of the weakness of incompetent rulers, the blessings of a strong government. At the outset he had made a stirring appeal for unity: "There are no longer," he declared, "Jacobins or Moderates or Royalists; there are only Frenchmen." This struck a note to which the nation was quick to respond. Then, with the amazing energy which characterized him, he set his hand to the task of restoring order and reviving prosperity. His ambition was "to build and to build solidly," and whatever judgment we may pass upon some of the features of his policy it must be admitted that it showed constructive statesmanship of the highest kind. He reorganized the finances in ways which ensured a combination of stability and elasticity, and founded the Bank of France. He systematized education by the creation of a number of important special institutions and by the linking up of the schools and colleges throughout the country with

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the central university in Paris. He gave great attention to the development of agriculture and industry; built ports, harbours, and bridges, dug canals, laid out public roads. He appointed a commission to undertake the unification of the laws in what later was to be the gigantic *Code Civil* or *Code Napoléon*. He also re-established the Church in France. The Constitution of Year VIII had granted complete religious toleration, and even the *prêtres insermentés* were allowed to perform their rites. But religion was divorced from the State, derived no support from it, and gave it no help, and in the general confusion which prevailed public worship had fallen into abeyance in many parts of the country. Though himself cynically indifferent to religion, Bonaparte had a keen sense of its public utility; "Those who govern," he held, "should employ it to influence men"; and with this end in view he negotiated a Concordat with the Pope (July 1801) by which he made the Gallican Church once more a State Church. This was an excellent stroke of policy, for—in a measure at least—it conciliated the Holy See, it delighted the great body of devout Catholics, and it detached the clergy from the Royalist cause. At the same time Protestantism and Judaism were also transformed into State religions. Practically the whole religious organization of France was thus brought under the control of the Government.

Yet though the country at large seemed satisfied with the First Consul's rule, his pretensions did not pass unchallenged. Here and there the yoke of despotism was felt to gall. The feeble efforts of the Legislature to resist the encroachments of arbitrary power were, indeed, put down with a strong hand; the Tribunat was soon reduced to submission; the malcontent Press was effectually silenced. But there were still Jacobin irreconcilables who hated Bonaparte as an autocrat, and fervent Legitimists who despised him as an upstart and a usurper, and from both he incurred danger. One night in October 1800 an attempt was made by a gang of Republicans to stab him as he entered the Opera House. Before the close of the year a more serious plot against his life, organized by the Chouan

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leader Georges Cadoudal, almost succeeded. Though Bonaparte knew that this plot was of Royalist origin, he used it as the occasion for a ruthless attack upon the Jacobins, whom for the moment he was most anxious to crush, and many prominent members of the party, whose innocence was of course patent, were transported forthwith to Cayenne. By such tyrannical measures he stamped out all signs of discontent, and little occurred to disturb the domestic tranquillity of the country till the last months of the Consulate.

But though internal calm was secured the peace of Europe was soon broken. On both sides of the Channel the Treaty of Amiens was regarded as only temporary and the renewal of hostilities as merely a matter of time and circumstance. Bonaparte's ambition to make himself master of Europe was already manifest, and his course was followed with the utmost vigilance by the jealous Power which saw its own interests threatened by every fresh move which he made in his great game of aggression. His attempt to suppress the negro insurrection in San Domingo under Toussaint-Louverture, in 1802, though it ended in failure, was taken as evidence of his intention to establish a French colonial empire. His actions on the Continent were still more provocative, for he annexed Piedmont and the island of Elba and made them into French departments, took possession of Parma on the death of its duke, assumed the presidency of the Cisalpine Republic, 'mediated' with an army of 30,000 men in the disturbances of the Helvetic Confederation, and interfered in the affairs of the ecclesiastical principalities of Germany. England replied to these acts of usurpation by refusing to evacuate Malta in accordance with her undertaking, and seized all merchant vessels sailing under the French or Dutch flag. Bonaparte retaliated by invading the Electorate of Hanover. At the same time he hastened forward the preparations which he was already making at Boulogne for an invasion of England, while the British Government began to seek Continental allies.

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ROYALIST PLOTS: EXECUTION OF THE DUKE OF ENGHIEU

At this point the Bourbon party saw their opportunity to make one more attempt to destroy the man who now alone seemed to stand in their way, and a conspiracy was hatched in London, with the connivance of the British Cabinet, of which the leading agents were Georges Cadoudal, who since his previous failure had attached himself to the Count of Artois, and the ex-general and traitor Charles Pichegru. But their plans were discovered (January–March 1804); Pichegru committed suicide; Cadoudal was sent to the scaffold; while Moreau, who had been implicated in the proceedings, was found guilty on insufficient evidence and sentenced to two years' imprisonment—a sentence which was, however, commuted to banishment. But the mere suppression of the plot did not satisfy Bonaparte, who was determined by one tremendous blow to terrorize the Royalists into subjection. Accordingly by his orders the young Duke of Enghien, the heir of the Condé family, was in the meantime seized in the castle of Ettenheim, on the Rhine, where he was then living in absolute privacy, hurriedly conveyed to Vincennes, tried before an irregular military commission, condemned to death, and shot at once (March 21, 1804). Though it is true that the Duke had formerly been in the emigrant corps of his grandfather, the Prince of Condé, there was not a vestige of proof that he was even privy to Cadoudal's designs. But this did not matter to Bonaparte. Nor did it matter to him that his arrest involved the violation of the neutrality of the duchy of Baden. This judicial murder of an innocent man was intended as an object-lesson to show the Bourbons, as Bonaparte himself said, "of what we are capable." It served at least as an object-lesson to show the world that he was capable of defying the plainest principles of morality when by so doing he believed that he could attain a desired end. It would appear, though evidence on the point is conflicting, that he afterward came to realize that his action was a blunder. It

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was certainly a dastardly crime, and as such it remains one of the blackest blots upon his memory.

TRANSFORMATION OF THE CONSULATE INTO THE EMPIRE

The renewal of Royalist activity, however, served his purpose. Ever since his appointment as Consul for life Bonaparte had been carefully preparing the way for the final move which he had long had in contemplation—the transformation of his authority into an hereditary right. Already the matter had been discussed in the Conseil d'État. The Royalist danger was now made a pretext for bringing it to a head. The Senate formally proposed that the Republic should be converted into an Empire, and a motion to that effect was carried in the Tribunat with only one dissentient voice—that of Carnot.¹ This was on the 3rd of May. On the 18th the Senate decreed that the title of Emperor should be conferred upon the "citoyen Premier Consul," and should be transmissible to his descendants. On November 6 the decree was ratified by a *plébiscite*, and Napoleone Buonaparte, the Corsican soldier of fortune, became Napoléon I, Emperor of the French.

¹ After the 18th Brumaire Carnot had returned from Germany, where he had been living in exile since the *coup d'état* of the 18th Fructidor.

CHAPTER VII

THE EMPIRE

1804-1815

THE coronation of the Emperor took place in Notre-Dame on December 2, 1804. Napoleon was a master of spectacular effects and knew their value in impressing the popular imagination, and the ceremony was as imposing as money and consummate stage-management could make it. Europe was astonished that Pius VII should have consented to cross the Alps to give in person the papal benediction, for there was no precedent for such a course, and it was the more surprising because the Pope had only recently expressed his abhorrence at the murder of the Duke of Enghien. But it was significant of Napoleon's arrogant temper that when the supreme moment came he refused to receive the symbol of his power even from the hands of the Pontiff. Though his Holiness stood by in readiness to perform the actual rite, the new Emperor himself took the crown and placed it upon his own head. He exhibited the same contempt of the Church when six months later in the Duomo of Milan he crowned himself King of Italy (May 26, 1805).

THE IMPERIAL CONSTITUTION

The Consular Constitution was now modified to meet the new conditions. The imperial title was made hereditary in the male line of the Bonaparte family, in accordance with the Salic Law, and as Napoleon himself was childless it was decreed that in the event of his leaving no son the crown should pass to a collateral branch, first to that of his elder brother, Joseph, and, this failing, to that of his younger brother, Louis. Such

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alterations as were made in the Senate, the Corps Législatif, and the Tribunat were all in the direction of the further consolidation of his individual power. Later revisions of the Constitution were all devised for the same end, as when in 1807 the Tribunat was suppressed altogether.

Though the transformation of the Consulate into the Empire made little difference to the actual machinery of government, it was marked by a great change in all its accessory circumstances. The ideal of democratic simplicity, which, if only as an ideal, had survived even the decadence of the Directory, was now abandoned, and the pomp of the Old Régime was revived. Already as First Consul Napoleon had begun to break with the social habits and fashions of the Republic; "The Directory," he declared, "had been too simple, and for this reason it had not been respected"; and under Citoyenne Joséphine's leadership the Tuileries had begun to assume the appearance of a Court. Nor did he believe that the French people, however much they might talk and theorize, really cared anything about equality. "Men are fond of toys and are led by them," was his reply to the doctrinaires who grumbled when he founded a Legion of Honour for the reward of special services to the State. With the establishment of the Empire the new order of things was inaugurated in earnest. High-sounding titles were distributed with a lavish hand. The Emperor's brothers and sisters became princes and princesses; Joseph, the Grand Elector; Louis, Constable of France; Napoleon's former colleagues in the Consulate, Cambacérès and Lebrun, the one Arch-Chancellor, the other Arch-Treasurer; his principal generals were given the rank of marshals; and there were also a Grand Almoner, a Grand Chamberlain (Talleyrand), a Grand Master of the Hounds, a Grand Master of the Horse, a Grand Master of the Palace, a Grand Master of the Ceremonies. These were merely personal distinctions. But before long the regular hierarchy of a new hereditary nobility was called into existence, with princes, dukes, counts, barons, and chevaliers; though there was this much of difference between the new aristocracy and the old, that the

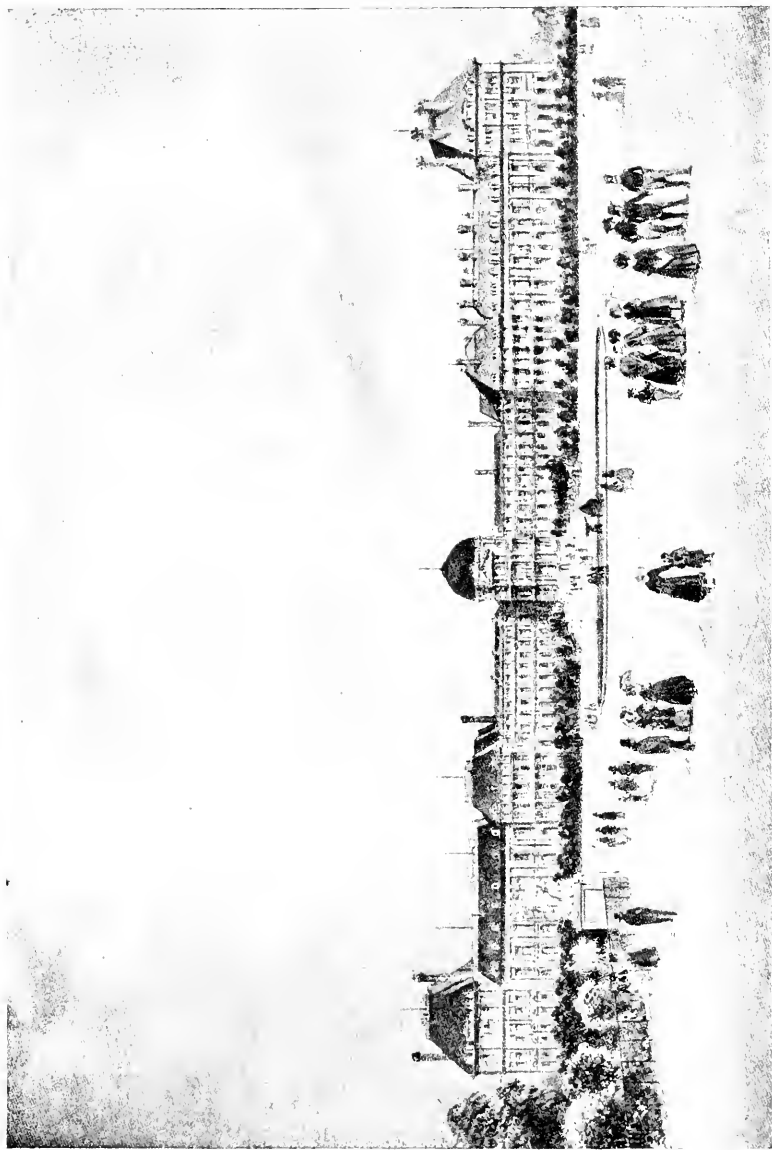
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new depended upon individual merit in one or another form, and not upon titles "long and dark, Drawn from the mouldy rolls of Noah's ark." Jealous of his dignity as a man risen from the ranks and an intruder among the potentates of the world, the parvenu Emperor was determined that he should at least be surrounded by all the splendours and appurtenances of royalty. The strictest etiquette now reigned where formerly republican freedom had prevailed; the rules of precedence were enforced with punctilious exactitude; gentlemen-in-waiting, ladies-in-waiting, pages, maids of honour abounded; State functions were numerous and were on a scale of the utmost magnificence; and the Court of the Tuileries soon outrivalled in brilliancy the Courts of the other European capitals.

THE THIRD COALITION : THE TREATY OF PRESBURG

At the time when the change of government occurred, it will be remembered, war between France and England, though not yet formally declared, had already been practically begun by acts of hostility on one and the other side. Napoleon was then bent on his great scheme for the conquest of England, the country which throughout his career he always regarded as the most formidable of his enemies. From the heights of Ambleteuse he had gazed across at the faint lines of the English coast, and, struck by their nearness, had rushed to the hasty conclusion that the Pas-de-Calais was only "un fossé qui sera franchi lorsqu'on aura l'audace de le tenter." He now resolved to make the attempt, and "to plant the Imperial eagle on the Tower of London." To this end he hastened forward his preparations, gathering a great flotilla on the north coast and establishing a vast camp at Boulogne, where for months his troops were kept ready and in splendid training. But Pitt returned to office at the moment when the danger of a French invasion of England seemed most acute, and to avert this menace, and at the same time to ensure the maintenance of a European equilibrium, he succeeded in forming the Third Coalition against France, the allies of Great Britain being

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81. THE PALACE OF THE TUILERIES



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Austria, Russia, Sweden, and Naples. Hostilities began at once in several theatres of war. The camp at Boulogne was broken up, and Napoleon, at the head of the finest army in Europe, marched across the German states in utter disregard of all considerations of neutrality, threw himself upon the Austrians, who were completely baffled by his brilliant strategy, defeated them in several battles, and forced them to capitulate at Ulm (October 17, 1805). There news reached him that the French fleet had been annihilated by Nelson at Trafalgar (October 21). This meant, as he knew, that England was once more in absolute control of the sea and that all his chimerical schemes of invasion would have to be abandoned. Undeterred by this set-back, however, he pushed on toward Vienna, and in the great battle of Austerlitz, where Tsar and Kaiser commanded their troops in person, he routed the combined Russian and Austrian forces (December 2).

This magnificent victory, which he afterward regarded as the "masterpiece" among all his battles, led to the Treaty of Presburg (December 26), which gave the world a signal proof not only of his skill in diplomacy, but also of his overwhelming ambition and imperial aims. The possessions of Austria were cut up according to his sovereign will; the Holy Roman Empire was dissolved, and out of its ruins a new Confederation of the Rhine was organized under his own official protectorship. Then he distributed the spoils of conquest among those whom he chose specially to recognize and reward, and thus constituted a number of feudal states over which he himself held suzerainty as a new Charlemagne. Joseph Bonaparte became King of Naples; Louis King of Holland; the duchy of Guastalla was given to his sister Pauline; the Grand Duchy of Berg to Murat, husband of his sister Caroline; the duchy of Lucques to his sister Élisabeth; the principalities of Neuchâtel, Benevento, and Ponte-Corvo to Berthier, Talleyrand, and Bernadotte respectively. At the same time numerous other dukedoms with foreign territorial titles were created for the most illustrious of his marshals, though these carried with them no political significance.

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FOURTH COALITION : THE TREATY OF TILSIT

Neither Russia nor England had joined Austria in the Peace of Presburg. There had, indeed, been *pourparlers* with the British Cabinet, which had been broken off on the death of Fox (September 1806), and negotiations with the Tsar, which also came to nothing. And now Prussia, which had hitherto held aloof, offended by the violation of its neutrality, by the formation of the Rhenish Confederation, and by Napoleon's high-handed disregard of its interests in treating with the other Powers, joined England, Russia, and Sweden in a Fourth Coalition. The war in Prussia was of very brief duration. Following his usual practice, Napoleon anticipated his enemy by at once taking the offensive; the Prussian army was practically destroyed at Jena and Auerstädt (October 14); on the 27th the conqueror entered Berlin. But the Russian campaign which followed presented many and serious difficulties. The dangerous political state of Poland compelled Napoleon to proceed with great caution. The severe weather impeded his movements. He lost heavily in a number of preliminary engagements before deciding to take up his winter quarters before the Vistula; and though he gained a striking victory at Eylau (February 8, 1807), it was a victory very dearly bought and, as Ney said, "sans résultat." When summer came, however, he was able to renew the charge with better hope of success, and at Friedland (June 14) he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Russians and a remnant of their Prussian allies. Influenced in part by his realization of the fact that further resistance would for the time be useless, and in part by his growing irritation against England, Alexander I was now ready to come to terms; an interview took place between the two Emperors on an island in the river Niemen; and on July 7-9, 1807, the Peace of Tilsit was signed. This treaty revealed Napoleon as the arbiter of Northern Europe. Prussia suffered under it by the loss of nearly half its possessions, out of a portion of which a new kingdom was carved between the Elbe and the Rhine—the kingdom of Westphalia—

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which was bestowed on Napoleon's youngest brother—the only one still unprovided with a crown—Jérôme. Anxious, on the other hand, to placate Russia, Napoleon allowed the Tsar the privilege of seizing Finland and, if he desired, the Ottoman provinces on the Danube. The Treaty of Tilsit marks the real if not the apparent zenith of Napoleon's power. He was now something more than Emperor of the French. He was the head of a confederation of vassal princes, many of whom by birth or marriage were members of his own family, and his grand dream of a universal empire seemed within measurable distance of realization.

NAPOLEON'S STRUGGLE WITH ENGLAND : THE PENINSULAR WAR

There was, however, a dash of bitterness in his cup of success. England remained unsubdued. To attack that stubborn Power within its own island fastness was now impossible. He determined, therefore, to crush it by isolating it from the rest of Europe. It was in Berlin in November 1806 that he inaugurated what is known as the Continental System, by which all states belonging to his empire or under his influence were to close their ports to British ships, all British merchandise was declared contraband of war, and all trade in British goods was absolutely prohibited. Other decrees strengthening this blockade followed in 1807 and 1808. Most of the European Governments were in fact coerced into joining the System, which in France itself was readily accepted because it promised an artificial stimulation of national industry. But in the sequel it proved a costly mistake. England was able to make effective reprisals; France suffered more from the protective policy than her intended victim; and the other nations soon grew restive under the crippling limitations imposed upon their commerce and the losses which ensued. The System was, indeed, a powerful factor in creating a general European hostility to the great dictator, and in thus precipitating the disasters which ultimately led to his downfall.

His lust for conquest unsatiated, Napoleon now turned his

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eyes to the south. Portugal was the only part of Western Europe where English influence still prevailed, and though under his threats it consented to join the System to the extent of closing its ports against the British, it refused to yield to his further demand for the confiscation of British property within its territory. Upon this he entered into a treaty with Spain for the partition of the Portuguese monarchy, and Junot, invading the country, captured Lisbon without striking a blow (November 1807). But, as was very soon apparent, this was only the first step in a deep-laid scheme. England meanwhile had caused much indignation by the unjustifiable bombardment of Copenhagen (September 1807), which brought Denmark and even Austria into the Blockade ; but Napoleon threw away the advantage which he had thus gained by two astonishing blunders. The Pope had refused both to join the System and to recognize Joseph Bonaparte as King of Naples. Napoleon thereupon occupied Rome (April 1808) and took possession of the Papal States. This unscrupulous act, which aroused the feelings of Catholic Europe against him, was his first mistake. His second was fraught with far more serious consequences. The Spanish Court was rent with intrigues and quarrels. Ostensibly to assist in the adjustment of internal differences, he sent Murat with an army of 80,000 men into Spain ; then Madrid was seized (March 23) ; and by a combination of force and perfidy the Bourbon dynasty was overthrown and the Spanish monarchy was handed over to Joseph Bonaparte, who in turn ceded the crown of Naples to Murat. The Spanish *junta* accepted this monstrous piece of jugglery. Not so the Spanish people, who were furious at such an outrage upon their independence and dignity, and too late Napoleon learned what it was to have, not an army, nor a Government, but a whole nation against him. In a few weeks the entire country was in revolt, and before long Portugal followed her neighbour by rising against the foreign tyrant. The French, defeated at Saragossa and Valencia, were forced to capitulate at Baylen (July 21), while their further reverse at the hands of the British under Sir Arthur Wellesley at Vimiera compelled

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them to evacuate Portuguese territory. Napoleon himself had now to hasten to the scene with reinforcements, and by his victories at Durango, Burgos, Espinosa, and Tudela (November 1808) he re-established his brother in Madrid, while shortly afterward Soult drove the British back in the north. But events in other parts of Europe made it impossible for the Emperor to continue the campaign in person, and as it was his successes led to no definite results. This was the beginning only of the disastrous Peninsular War, which was henceforth to divide his attention, to drain his strength, and to be a permanent source of embarrassment to him in his other operations. The treacherous seizure of Spain may, indeed, be regarded as the decisive turning-point in his fortunes. Talleyrand saw this at the time. At St Helena Napoleon himself admitted it.

FIFTH COALITION : THE TREATY OF SCHÖNBRUNN

The first consequence of his fatal miscalculations was soon apparent. While he was engaged in the south, Austria snatched at her chance, declared war, and was joined by England, Spain, and Portugal in the Fifth Coalition. Hurrying back from the Peninsula, Napoleon defeated the Archduke Charles at Abensberg and Eckmühl (April 1809) and entered Vienna (May 13), but was foiled in his attempt to cross the Danube, and at Aspern suffered his first important reverse (May 21 and 22). The victory at Wagram, however, restored his advantage (July 6), and Austria once more accepted peace under the Treaty of Schönbrunn (October 14), by which various portions of its territory were consigned to Bavaria, Saxony, and Russia, while Illyria was absorbed by France. The Napoleonic Empire was further enlarged by the definite annexation of the Papal States (May 1809). A little later, disputes having arisen between them over the Blockade, Napoleon compelled his brother Louis to abdicate, and Holland was turned into a French province (1810). This, with the subsequent addition of Westphalia, gave him complete control of the seaboard from the Rhine to the Elbe, and enabled him to pursue his anti-

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British policy with increased vigour. Against these successes, however, had to be set the unfavourable course of the campaign in the Peninsula, where Soult had failed to reconquer Portugal and Ney had been driven out of Galicia.

NAPOLEON'S MARRIAGE WITH MARIE-LOUISE

Shortly after the conclusion of peace with Austria Napoleon took a momentous step which for some time past he had had in contemplation. He annulled his marriage with Josephine. Their union of fourteen years had been shaken by many storms; there were countless infidelities on the husband's side; and the record of their relations is one of perpetual jealousies, quarrels, and reconciliations. But it was no merely domestic motive that prompted him now to divorce the woman whom he had once loved with passionate ardour. He was ambitious to found a dynasty, and this ambition had been frustrated by the fact that his marriage had been childless. His first purpose in contracting a fresh marriage, therefore, was to obtain an heir to his throne. But he had also other ends in view. He intended that that marriage should give him a legitimate standing in the inner circle of European royalty, where, as he knew, he was still regarded as an upstart and an adventurer, and that furthermore it should have a distinct diplomatic value. There was at first some thought of a Russian alliance. But his choice fell finally upon Austria, and in March 1810 he took as his second wife the Archduchess Maria Louisa. The marriage was not popular in France, nor did it lead to any permanent change in the attitude or policy of Austria toward him. But it gave him an heir. On March 20, 1811, the Empress bore him a son, to whom, in accordance with the tradition of the medieval Empire, he at once gave the title of King of Rome.

THE NAPOLEONIC EMPIRE

The Napoleonic Empire had now reached its greatest extent. It spread on all sides far beyond the natural boundaries of France, and included no fewer than 130 departments. Rome

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and Florence, Amsterdam and Hamburg were capital cities of French prefectures. The Illyrian provinces and the Ionian Isles were dependencies. The kingdoms of Naples, Westphalia, and Spain, governed by members of his family, were vassal states. Switzerland had submitted to his 'mediation.' Saxony, Bavaria, Würtemberg, and the whole Confederation of the Rhine were under his protectorship. But this immense imperial structure, imposing as it looked, had no real stability. It was merely an artificial aggregation, which defied alike geography, history, popular sentiment, and national interests, and was held together only by force. Already the unwieldy fabric, reared by the sword, began to show signs of decay as the grievous results of the Continental System became more and more apparent and commercial troubles stimulated political unrest. Even in France itself there were many evidences of growing dissatisfaction, and, as Napoleon and his advisers realized, the once idolized conqueror was fast losing his personal hold upon his subjects. With trade stagnating under the influence of the Blockade, with financial apprehension spreading among the moneyed classes, with discontent developing rapidly in the masses of the population, the whole country, now awakened from its intoxicating dream of military glory, began to feel acutely the terrific burdens which military glory imposed upon it and to murmur at incessant wars undertaken only to gratify one man's lust for territorial aggrandizement, and involving ever-increasing holocausts of victims. In these circumstances the worst sides of Napoleon's character came to the front. Every indication of opposition to his imperial will served only to make him more arrogant and more callous. He was determined to maintain the position which he had gained for himself, even though, as he said, the heavens might fall. "I have made for myself an empire and I will keep it," he told an envoy of his brother Lucien, and in the spirit of that declaration he now acted in utter defiance of all considerations of national interest and of humanity. For the retention of his prestige abroad he relied upon brute force. At home he did his best to stifle public opinion. The

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Press was placed under the most rigorous censorship, an elaborate system of espionage was organized by the Government police, and swift vengeance descended upon all who by word or deed incurred the ruthless despot's displeasure.

THE INVASION OF RUSSIA

The Peninsular War was now at its height, and his settled conviction that the only serious factor in the stubborn resistance of the Spanish people was the British army made Napoleon more than ever determined not only to pursue but even to extend his unpopular and dangerous Blockade policy. He therefore called upon the Tsar to support him in increasing the stringency of the System. But the Tsar, alarmed by Napoleon's recent annexations in the north-east, irritated by his dealings with Poland, and now further estranged by the Austrian marriage, replied that while he would continue to fulfil his engagements under the Treaty of Tilsit he could not accede to the further demand regarding the enforcement of the Blockade against neutral countries. This refusal led to the fatal war with Russia, upon which, curiously blind to the stupendous difficulties which it entailed, Napoleon entered with an overweening self-confidence born of almost unbroken success. He expected to repeat the sensational triumphs of a few years before and to march into Petersburg as he had formerly marched into Berlin and Vienna. But his pride soon received a fall. With an enormous army—the largest which had taken the field in modern times—he embarked on the general invasion of Russia, crossed the Niemen (June 24, 1812), occupied Vilna (28th), and entered Smolensk (August 17). The Russians, retreating before him, lured him farther and farther on into the depths of a country which they laid waste as they went. At Borodino (September 7) he gained a bloody but indecisive victory. Moscow capitulated on September 14. But still, to his astonishment and chagrin, the Tsar remained silent. There he waited week after week in the vain hope of receiving overtures of peace, and then, realizing that it would be impossible for him to provision his troops through

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the long winter now at hand, he was compelled to give orders for a general retreat (October 19). The horrors of that retreat have often been described and we must not linger on them here. Frost, famine, disease, and battle did their deadly work in his already depleted army, and only a straggling crowd of ragged and exhausted men finally made its way into Vilna. Napoleon himself, leaving the wreck of his forces behind him, hurried back to Paris, where he arrived on December 17, his prestige fatally shaken in the eyes of his own country and of all the world.

SIXTH COALITION : ABDICATION OF NAPOLEON

There he found himself faced by grave difficulties. The British commander, Wellesley, now Viscount Wellington, had more than recovered all the ground lost in previous campaigns, and was now threatening the French frontier. But even more serious dangers elsewhere prevented him from turning his attention to the Peninsula. The fiasco of the Russian expedition was the signal for a fresh coalition—the sixth—in which England, Prussia, the German States, Spain, Portugal, Russia, and Sweden were soon joined by Austria, which, in view of the political situation, was willing to throw all family sentiments to the winds. With an army largely composed of young and untried conscripts Napoleon beat the allies at Lützen (May 2, 1813), at Bautzen (May 21 and 22), and at Dresden (August 26 and 27), but at Leipzig (October 16–18) he suffered a tremendous and irreparable defeat. The armies of Blücher and Schwartzberg were now on the Rhine; Wellington was on the southern borders; and for the first time in his life Napoleon had to act on the defensive. At this critical juncture he could have saved the country by listening to the allies' proposals for peace. But he was not thinking of the country; he was thinking of himself; and in the madness of his pride he refused to yield. The invasion of France from east and south followed with such rapidity that even he was taken by surprise. He put up a determined fight against the overwhelming odds which were now against him,

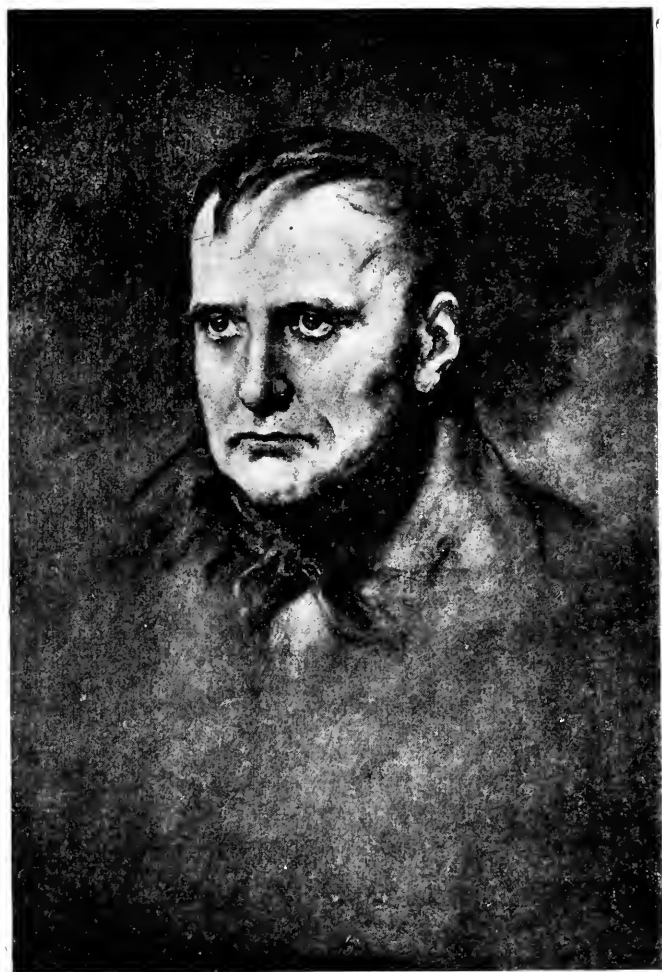
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and was successful in a number of engagements. But on March 31, 1814, the allies entered Paris, and he was compelled to accept his defeat. To the last moment he hoped that terms might be arranged under which his crown might pass to his son. However, nothing but absolute abdication would satisfy his victorious enemies. On April 3 the Senate decreed his deposition; the brother of Louis XVI, the Count of Provence, was called to the vacant throne; and the new order was ratified by the Powers by the first Treaty of Paris (May 30), which further reduced France to her pre-Revolutionary frontiers. It was recognized, of course, that Napoleon himself must be exiled from France, and he was granted the kingship of the little island of Elba, where, it was considered, he could still play at sovereignty without endangering the rest of the world.

THE FIRST RESTORATION AND 'THE HUNDRED DAYS': WATERLOO

The first Bourbon restoration lasted less than a year. Louis XVIII's proclamation and the Charter of June 4 were intended to conciliate public opinion by numerous concessions to the principles of liberty and popular government. But they also made it clear that he regarded himself as King by divine right, and that such concessions were offered only in accordance with his own personal will. This to begin with created a bad impression. Moreover, he was followed by a large number of emigrant nobles and clergy who were set on regaining their former privileges, and under whose influence the weak monarch adopted a policy of intolerance against the Imperialists, the Republicans, and the Protestants. In these circumstances the new Government quickly forfeited the confidence of the country; a feeling of resentment spread among the people; while the army in particular was disgusted by the appointment to high posts of men who had only recently been fighting against France. Then the Congress of Vienna, which met (November 1, 1814) with the avowed purpose of undoing the work of the Revolution, was soon busy dividing among

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the squabbling Powers the spoils of Napoleon's dismembered dominions, and these proceedings further exasperated the French nation and caused a revulsion of sentiment in favour of the fallen despot. Napoleon in exile had been kept informed of the course of events on the Continent, and, aware of this revulsion, resolved to strike a daring blow for the recovery of his power. On the night of February 26, 1815, he succeeded in escaping from Elba, landed on March 3 near Cannes, and at once set out for Paris. Perils beset the earlier stages of his adventure; but the army rallied to him; his journey from Grenoble to Paris was a triumphal progress; and on the 26th he entered the capital amid scenes of frantic enthusiasm. Louis XVIII fled at his approach and sought asylum in Ghent, while the European Governments were filled with consternation by the sudden reappearance of the terrible Corsican upon the scene. At this point he had one great advantage which he was quick to seize: he was able to pose as the liberator of France from the yoke of her foreign enemies and the defender of her democracy against the reactionary Holy Alliance. To make good his position he hastily drafted a new Constitution embodying the democratic principles which hitherto he had arrogantly repudiated. But the promises of 'the Hundred Days' (March 20-June 28) were never to come to fulfilment. The Congress of Vienna at once issued a proclamation in which he was denounced as "an enemy and disturber of the peace of the world." The Coalition was revived. A concerted scheme of action was devised to crush him before he had the chance to regain his strength. Two armies were soon in the field: a mixed force under Wellington in Belgium and a Prussian force under Blücher on the Rhine. Instantly, in accordance with his old tactics, he conceived the bold plan of throwing himself between these two armies, defeating them separately, and then marching into Brussels. Had his powers of execution been equal to his strategical skill he might even now have issued from the struggle victorious. But though his genius was still unimpaired, his old dash and fire were gone, and Waterloo (June 18) was the grave of all his hopes.

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His second abdication followed ; another Treaty of Paris was signed ; Louis XVIII returned to his capital under the protection of Wellington ; while Napoleon was exiled to the island of St Helena, where he died on May 5, 1821.

THE PLACE OF NAPOLEON IN HISTORY

The career of Napoleon Bonaparte is one of the most amazing in history, and it is not surprising that a vast legend should have grown up about him, through the mists of which, like some Brocken spectre, he looms a figure of almost super-human proportions. It must, however, be remembered that the dramatic success which dazzled the world at the time and has long imposed upon the imaginations of men was in a measure due to the co-operation of circumstances. He was born into an age which provided him with exceptional opportunities for the play of his powers, and but for the fact that the Revolution came to a head just at the moment when he himself reached manhood it is certain that the Corsican adventurer would have filled a comparatively small place in history. Yet, all allowances made, we have still to recognize to the full the peculiar combination of personal qualities which enabled him to carve his way to fortune : his iron constitution, his stupendous genius, his versatility, his inflexible will, his monstrous egotism, his fatalistic faith in himself and his star, his utter callousness, his supreme contempt of humanity and the laws of morality (which he once brutally declared were not made for him), his complete indifference to everything except his own ambitions and interests. Great as a man Napoleon was not ; but he was unquestionably great as a soldier and an administrator. As an epoch-maker his importance is incontestable. His dream of empire, it is true, soon vanished, leaving nothing but an evil memory behind it, but many of the solid results of his statesmanship remain. We are not, of course, to judge him by his belated effort during ' the Hundred Days ' to found a really democratic empire. That was simply a desperate attempt to rally the nation to his side in his final struggle with his personal enemies. Yet in a large sense he was a

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potent force in the general movement of the world toward democracy. A generation which witnessed the astonishing spectacle of a man who had risen from a sub-lieutenancy bowling over the ancient dynasties like so many ninepins and distributing crowns among the members of his own family necessarily had its faith in the divine right of kings very rudely shaken. His career of conquest was inspired only by his own inordinate lust for power. But it broke up the foundations of feudal Europe, and thus opened a new chapter in modern history.¹

¹ For a fuller account of Napoleon's life and a detailed analysis of his character I may be permitted to refer the reader to my book *The Man Napoleon*, upon which I have not hesitated to draw from time to time in writing the foregoing pages.

BOOK VI

FRANCE SINCE 1815

CHAPTER I

THE RESTORATION

1815-1848

THE history of France since 1815 properly forms the subject of an independent volume. But though the substantial part of my task is now completed, I purpose still to give a brief outline of the general course of events from the overthrow of the First Empire to the foundation of the Third Republic.

THE REIGN OF LOUIS XVIII

France paid heavily for the second Restoration. An enormous indemnity was exacted by the allies; 150,000 foreign soldiers were quartered for a specified period upon her soil; her rivals were strengthened geographically at her expense; while the cession of important strategical territory exposed her badly on her frontiers. Such was the lamentable end of a quarter of a century's military glory and aggrandizement. Altogether the treaty which confirmed Louis XVIII's position on the throne left the country weaker in respect of its neighbours and of Europe at large than it had been at any time for more than a hundred years.

The domestic situation was no less unsatisfactory. Louis, though a Bourbon, had learned something from recent experiences, and on the advice of wiser counsellors than those who had misled him only a few months before—of such men, for example, as Lally-Tollendal, Talleyrand, and Châteaubriand—he had issued from Cambrai a proclamation in which he had frankly acknowledged his former errors. By this tactful

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proceeding he had sought to gain the confidence of the general public. At the same time he had made a bid for the support of those who still held by the principles of the Revolution—the Liberals as they now came to be called—by general promises based on the Charter of 1814. But the Liberals, who, to begin with, hated the memory of the Bourbons, and thoroughly despised the new King as a ruler who had been set up by foreign Powers, were soon incensed by the vindictive policy of the Government toward those who had sided with the late Emperor during 'the Hundred Days.' The execution of several famous marshals of the Empire, including Ney; the banishment of other prominent persons who had been connected with Napoleon's final *coup d'état*; the establishment of *cours prévôtales* for the punishment of political crime; the massacre of Imperialists and Protestants in the south in a White Terror which the authorities did little to check: all these events quickly alienated the Republican anti-Bourbons and drove them into making common cause with the Bonapartists. On the other hand, the 'Ultras'—the extreme Royalists and Clericals—who had returned from their second exile with their minds more firmly bent than ever on the revival of the Old Régime, were determined to annul the Charter which had been accepted as the basis of the Restoration. The nation was thus divided, as Louis himself said, into "two peoples," and political passions ran high. In this difficult situation the King did his utmost to steer a middle course between the contending parties, and, realizing that for the moment his chief danger lay in the injudicious zeal of his rabid supporters—of those who were "plus royalistes que le roi"—he contrived, under the advice of his principal minister Decazes, and by a kind of *coup d'état*, to rid himself of the 'Ultras' (September 1816). After this the new machinery of government—composed of King, hereditary chamber, and elected chamber, on the English model—worked for a time smoothly enough. But the steady, though slow, progress of the Liberal movement, as shown in legislation, exasperated the 'Ultras,' and at length began to frighten the King. Then

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an event occurred which strengthened the hands of the malcontents. On February 13, 1820, the Duke of Berry (second son of Louis' brother, the Count of Artois) was stabbed to death by a man named Louvel. Though the assassin persisted, even on the scaffold, in his assertion that he had no accomplices, the Royalists attributed his crime to the influence of Liberal ideas, and thus made political capital out of it. The King, now thoroughly alarmed, dismissed Decazes, and embarked upon a comprehensively reactionary policy. Under the ministry of Decazes' successor, Villèle, a number of measures were introduced which struck at the root of constitutional government. Changes already made in the electoral system had greatly increased the power of the aristocracy, and now the liberty of the subject was curtailed, a severe censorship of the Press re-established, while the old alliance of throne and altar was renewed, and the growing power of the Church was attested by the suppression of courses by Liberal professors in the university and the practical transference of public instruction to the clergy. At the same time the invasion of Spain (1823), undertaken, under pressure of the fanatical Catholics and the Holy Alliance, to restore Ferdinand VII and absolutism in that country, was a further demonstration of the reactionary and obscurantist tendencies which were now in the ascendant. These tendencies were greatly stimulated and were largely guided by an association known as the Congregation, which after the Restoration was very active in the cause of the throne and the altar, and which wielded immense influence in the administration, the Chambers, the army, and the schools. But, deep as was the resentment of the Liberals, their constitutional power was broken, and they were thus reduced to secret machinations. During the last three years of Louis' reign there were no fewer than eight conspiracies against the Government.

THE REIGN OF CHARLES X

Louis XVIII died on September 16, 1824, and was succeeded by his brother, the Count of Artois, under the title of Charles X,

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A man of sixty-seven, the new King was too old as well as too obstinately fixed in his prejudices to adapt himself to the changed conditions of the time, and more even than his predecessor he exhibited the proverbial incapacity of the Bourbons both to forget and to learn. In the early stages of the Revolution he had been one of the most active members of the Court party of reaction; he had headed the first emigration of the nobility after the fall of the Bastille; in the intrigues of the *émigrés* with foreign Powers he had shown himself both foolish and cowardly; and now he openly boasted that the opinions which he had held in 1789 were still unchanged. Already in the last years of Louis' reign he had led the priests and the 'Ultras' in their unconstitutional policy, and though on ascending the throne he took the oath of allegiance to the Charter his determination to recover the prerogatives of the old monarchy was soon apparent. He began by demanding from the Chambers an indemnity of a milliard francs for the *émigrés* whose property had been confiscated during the Revolution, together with laws for the re-establishment of primogeniture, the punishment of sacrilege with death, and the further restriction of the newspaper press. Curiously enough, while the Chamber of Deputies slavishly acceded to all his demands the peers resisted his attempted encroachments upon the rights of the nation. At the same time the general discontent which his conduct aroused was increased by the ever-growing domination of the priests, who specially hated the Charter because it recognized the principle of religious toleration; and even the excitement caused by the part which France took, conjointly with England and Russia, in the liberation of the Greeks from the Turks (1827-29) did not suffice to obscure the significance of the constitutional struggle at home. The elections of 1827 resulted in a substantial majority against the Government, and Villèle was compelled to resign. A new ministry was then formed under a Moderate statesman, Martignac (1828), who began with a policy of general compromise, but the concessions which he made to the Left in restoring the freedom of the Press and of university teaching

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and in striking a blow at the power of the Jesuits angered the King and the now dominant Clerical party. The ministry of Martignac was then replaced by one of 'Ultras,' which included the incompetent Prince of Polignac, a former *émigré*, the Count of Bourmont, a traitor to Napoleon at Waterloo, and La Bourdonnaye, one of the most notorious reactionaries of 1815 (August 1829). The formation of such a Cabinet was a challenge to the country, and even the most moderate journals warned the King that he was courting disaster. But Charles was deaf to all advice except that tendered him by counsellors as stubborn and unenlightened as himself. In his speech from the throne he emphasized the supremacy of his sovereign will. To this speech a reply was made in the form of a remonstrance signed by 221 deputies. Charles retaliated by first proroguing and then dissolving the Chamber (May 16, 1830). In the elections which followed the protesting deputies were all returned (June 13). Meanwhile the success of an expedition to Algiers, undertaken to punish an insult to the French consul (June-July), encouraged Charles to persist in the violation of his constitutional pledges, and in July he issued a series of ordinances restoring the censorship of the Press, again dissolving the Chamber, and introducing fundamental changes in the electoral system. According to the preamble, these decrees were designed to check "the turbulent democracy which has invaded even our laws and tends to displace legitimate authority." But at this point the perverse King was to discover that he had at last overreached himself. Paris rose in arms, and at the end of three days' fighting (July 27-29) he was forced to abandon the struggle. After six years of futile effort to set back the hands of the clock he quitted France, to pass the short remaining term of his life (he died in 1836) in exile.

THE REIGN OF LOUIS-PHILIPPE

Charles had abdicated in favour of his grandson, the Duke of Bordeaux, later known as the Count of Chambord.¹ But

¹ Posthumous son of the murdered Duke of Berry.

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France had now had more than enough of the main line of the Bourbons and was glad to break finally with "the men of 1815." The Chamber of Deputies, assuming the right to act on behalf of the nation, accordingly turned to the younger branch of the family and tendered the crown to the Duke of Orléans. But this invitation was made contingent upon the condition that all claim to divine right should be waived and that the doctrine of sovereignty as formulated in 1789 should be the basis of the compact between the King and his subjects. This condition was accepted, and on August 9, under the title of Louis-Philippe, the Duke was proclaimed "King of the French by the Grace of God and the Will of the People." Little change was made in the provisions of the Charter, but the principle of hereditary succession in the Chamber of Peers was annulled, the liberty of the Press was restored, and Catholicism was deprived of its privileged position as the religion of the State, though it was still officially recognized as that "of the majority of the French people." At the same time the lowering of the property qualification for the Parliamentary franchise at once increased the influence of the middle classes.

The eldest son of Philippe-Égalité, Louis-Philippe as a very young man (he was born in 1773) had shown his sympathy with liberal ideas in the early days of the Revolution. He had been a member of the National Guard and of the Jacobin Club; he had joined his father in renouncing his titles; he had fought with distinction in the wars of the Republic; but, alive to his danger after the defeat at Neerwinden, he, like his chief Dumouriez, had fled the country. He had then lived for a time in the United States and for fifteen years in England, and on the fall of Napoleon he had returned to France and to the possession of his great estates. His succession to the throne was now warmly welcomed by the moderate part of the nation, who regarded him as pre-eminently fitted by position and character to assume the headship of the State, and, in the words of Thiers, as the only possible safeguard in the circumstances "against a republic and its inevitable

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tempests." A man of much ability, he made himself generally popular by the grace and familiar ease of his manners, while his domestic virtues and simple tastes won the good opinion in particular of the *bourgeoisie*.

The new Government had, however, to run the gauntlet of opposition from the irreconcilables on both sides. The Legitimists looked upon the King as a usurper, but though in 1832 the Duchess of Berry made a vain attempt to arouse Vendée in behalf of her son, their hostility was of comparatively little practical importance. The Republicans, thwarted in their hopes of returning to the principles of 1793, were far more formidable. The Revolution of July⁹ had not only revived the democratic tradition at home, but had also helped to bring about a renaissance of Liberalism in other parts of Europe—in Switzerland, in Germany, in Spain, in Italy, even in England—and the progress of events in these countries reacted strongly on popular sentiment in France. Moreover, the influence of Republican ideas over the artisan classes was greatly increased by the spread of the socialistic teachings of Saint-Simon and Fourier and the widening breach between capital and labour. Industrial discontent was now rife, and such discontent, uniting itself with political unrest, often assumed a directly anti-dynastic character. For many years there were frequent disturbances—several of them serious—in the streets of Paris and other cities, while Lyon was twice the scene of bloody insurrections (1831, 1834). A little later, when these popular movements had for the moment been checked by force, the Government had to face yet a third peril—that arising from the activity of the Bonapartist party. Napoleon's son, the Duke of Reichstadt, died in 1832, and though he had been politically a nonentity, his death was a relief to the Orléanists. But it opened the way for the new head of the house, Louis Bonaparte's son, Prince Louis-Napoléon, who twice appeared in the rôle of pretender to his uncle's throne (1836, 1840).

At the outset Louis-Philippe was practically committed to the 'parti du mouvement,' or Progressive party; but little

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by little the necessity of asserting his authority against the subversive forces at work about him drove him back upon the 'parti de résistance' and a policy of compromise. He thus came to identify the interests of the throne more and more with those of the wealthy middle classes, upon whom in the main he had to rely; whence the nickname of 'Roi Citoyen,' and the description of his rule as that of the 'juste milieu.' He pleased the *bourgeoisie* because he had the material welfare of the country at heart, and France enjoyed remarkable prosperity during his reign. But such prosperity was accompanied by the inevitable evils of plutocracy. The middle classes, now that the established franchise system gave them a political ascendancy, showed themselves as jealous of their own power and privileges as the aristocracy had been in the days of the Old Régime; legislation on fiscal and social questions was almost entirely in their favour; and the result was that the proletariat, realizing that they were practically ignored by the Government, which had shut them out from all constitutional part in public affairs, found vent for their vindictive feelings in perpetual agitation. Hence the organization of secret societies with revolutionary aims and the growing influence of uncompromising democrats like Louis Blanc, Ledru-Rollin, and Lamennais. In the conflicts which often ensued the authorities acted with an increasing severity, which in turn served only to inspire fresh opposition.

Though himself a peace-loving king, whose purpose throughout was to live as much as possible on good terms with all his neighbours—even, it was often alleged, at the cost of his own and the nation's dignity—Louis-Philippe was none the less willing to resort to the old device of diverting popular attention from domestic troubles by a spirited foreign policy. But the conquest of Algiers and the intervention in Egypt in support of Mehemet Ali, though they appealed to the martial spirit of the country, did nothing to arrest the progress of internal demoralization. After the dismissal of the chauvinistic Thiers (October 1840) Guizot became the King's chief adviser, and under his influence the Government set itself obstinately

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against all demands for the correction of even the most flagrant abuses in the existing system. In 1842 the death of the Duke of Orléans as the result of a carriage accident removed the chief hope of the Liberal party, and as it left his son, a child of four, heir to the throne, it also gave fresh encouragement to the Legitimists. At the same time the credit of the Government was ruined both by its utter indifference to public opinion and by the scandalous administrative and electoral corruption which now prevailed unchecked. Agitation for reforms became general, and when the Government persisted in its policy of absolute inactivity, and by means of wholesale bribery contrived to maintain a majority in the Chamber, the *réformistes* organized a campaign of banquets throughout the country for the ventilation of their views. One of these banquets was fixed to take place in the twelfth arrondissement of Paris on February 22, 1848. This was at the last moment prohibited by the authorities. Then the storm which had long been gathering instantly broke. On the 23rd there was a rising of the industrial population of the faubourgs, and even the National Guard welcomed the insurgents with responsive cries of "Vive la Réforme!" The Guizot Cabinet resigned. A new ministry was hastily summoned under Odilon Barrot, the most popular of the Liberal leaders. But it was now too late to save the dynasty. On the 24th Louis-Philippe abdicated in favour of his infant son, the Count of Paris, and, seeking safety in flight, made his way to England, where he died two years later (August 26, 1850).

CHAPTER II

THE SECOND REPUBLIC

1848-1852

THE Revolution of February occurred so suddenly that it took all parties by surprise, and more than all perhaps the moderate reformers, who, anxious as they were for change, had neither foreseen nor desired the overthrow of the monarchy. A Provisional Government was hurriedly formed, which set aside the claims of the Count of Paris (involving as these did the serious perils of a regency), proclaimed a republic, and decreed the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, to be elected by universal suffrage, to settle the foundations of the new order. By thus at a single stroke of the pen changing the electorate from one of 220,000 to one of over nine millions and placing the destinies of the country directly in the hands of the masses—a proceeding which aroused the misgivings of some even of the most convinced democrats—the Government gave evidence at once of its romantic idealism and of its profound simplicity. The same combination of qualities was no less glaringly shown in the manifesto to the Powers in which Lamartine, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, announced that France could no longer hold herself bound by the treaties of 1815, but that “the prudence of the Republic is for Europe a better and more honourable guarantee than the letter of treaties which have been so often violated or modified.”

EARLY DIFFICULTIES OF THE REPUBLIC: THE DAYS OF THE BARRICADES

The provinces accepted the Revolution quite peacefully, and in the country in general it did little to interrupt the ordinary

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course of life. In Paris, on the contrary, it was followed by an outburst of hostility between two contending parties which represented diametrically opposed tendencies in those who had together brought it about. On the one hand there were those who regarded the Revolution as a change only in the political system of the State and who desired to reconstruct that system as far as possible on the basis of existing institutions. On the other hand, there were the Socialists, for whom the political revolution was only the first step in an industrial revolution which should result in a complete reorganization of society. The dislocation of trade and commerce and the serious financial panic which were among the first consequences of the upheaval of February, with the widespread unemployment and misery which these in turn entailed among the working classes, greatly aided the propaganda of the Socialist leaders, who succeeded in extorting from the Provisional Government a formal recognition of their principle of 'the right to work'; and Louis Blanc, whose *Organisation du Travail* (1840) had done much to popularize this principle, and who was now a member of the Government, was authorized to open in the Luxembourg a 'Commission de Gouvernement pour les Travailleurs,' while at the same time Marie, the Minister of Public Works, began the establishment of 'Ateliers nationaux,' or National Workshops. But though for the moment the Anti-Socialists had to give way, it was not long before they recovered their ground. The elections for the Constituent Assembly in April resulted unexpectedly in a strong majority for the Moderate Republicans, only thirty-four *députés ouvriers* being returned, and on May 9, the Provisional Government having resigned, the executive was entrusted to a Commission of Five—Arago, Garnier-Pagès, Marie, Lamartine, and Ledru-Rollin—all of whom, in varying degrees, were now opposed to the Socialist programme. But though their hopes of realizing their ideal state by peaceful means were thus rudely checked, the Socialists were not prepared to yield without a struggle. On May 15, on pretext of presenting petitions in favour of Poland, an armed mob,

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led by Blanqui, Raspail, and Barbès, invaded the Assembly, which was now in session, and, after demanding the imposition of an extraordinary tax on the rich, marched to the Hôtel de Ville, where they endeavoured to set up a new Government. The insurgents were, however, dispersed by the National Guard and peace was restored, but only for the moment. By this time the policy of 'work for all' was proving itself a costly failure, and the rush of workmen from all parts of France to swell the ranks of the unemployed in Paris under the red flag of the Socialist party now constituted a serious danger to public order. The executive therefore decided to ~~close the National Workshops~~; but the course which they adopted to compass their object was singularly injudicious: they decreed that all workmen should be summarily dismissed and that those between eighteen and twenty-five who were physically fit for military service should be forced to enlist in the army. This was on June 21. An insurrection of a very formidable character at once ensued. On the 23rd barricades were raised across the main streets of Paris and in the faubourgs; on the 24th the city was declared to be in a state of siege; urgent demands for the reinforcement of the National Guard were despatched into the departments; the Five Commissioners placed their resignations in the hands of the Assembly, and all their executive functions were immediately transferred to General Cavaignac, the Minister for War, who was appointed Dictator. For four days the battle raged with terrible bloodshed on both sides, among the 5000 slain being seven generals, two deputies, and the Archbishop of Paris, Mgr Affre, who was shot near the Bastille in a vain attempt to pacify the crowd. At length Cavaignac's troops were victorious, but the Republic emerged badly weakened from the brief storm of civil war. Determined to crush the Socialist party once and for all, the Government deported several thousands of the rioters. By this severity they completed the alienation of the working classes, who felt that they had been betrayed by false promises. Already they had exasperated the peasantry by a new land tax which they had

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hastily imposed to meet the crying needs of an empty Treasury. Even the *bourgeoisie* were discontented and alarmed by the commercial disasters which the Revolution of February had brought in its train.

THE RISE OF LOUIS-NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE

The trend of opinion in the country was soon shown in a very striking way. The new Constitution, promulgated on November 4, 1848, provided for a Council of State to elaborate projects of law, but gave the actual legislative power to an Assembly of 750 members elected for three years by direct universal suffrage, and the executive power to a President who was to be chosen—also by direct universal suffrage—for four years, and who was to nominate his own ministers, who would be responsible to him alone. There were three candidates for the Presidency, the Socialists selecting Ledru-Rollin, the Republicans General Cavaignac, and the recently revived Imperialist party Prince Louis Bonaparte. The real contest was, however, between the General and the Prince, and the Prince was elected, in round figures, by five and a half million votes against a million and a half cast for his opponent.

Charles-Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, the son of Napoleon's younger brother Louis, was now a man of forty. Brought up at Arenberg, Switzerland, by his mother Hortense (Josephine's daughter by her first marriage with Alexandre de Beauharnais) and educated at the Gymnasium at Augsburg, he had early exhibited his taste for study and the proneness of his mind toward a curious kind of political mysticism. In 1830 he took part in the revolt of the Romagna against the rule of the Pope, after which he returned to Switzerland and to his life of meditation. He now also entered upon a career of authorship, publishing in the next few years his *Rêveries politiques*, *Projet de Constitution*, and *Considérations politiques et militaires sur la Suisse*, besides a *Manuel d'Artillerie*, on the strength of which he was given a captain's commission in the Bernese army. Much brooding over the Napoleonic legend had already inspired him with fantastic ideas regarding the rôle he might

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yet be destined to play as the inheritor of his uncle's name and the representative of the great imperial traditions of his house. Twice, as we have noted, he had sought to turn to advantage the instability of Louis-Philippe's Government, once at Strassburg in 1836, and again at Boulogne in 1840—the year in which the memory of the Empire was revived by the removal of the first Napoleon's remains from St Helena to their present resting-place under the great dome of the Hôtel des Invalides. Both these attempts were grotesque failures which earned for their leader the reputation of a giddy and ineffective adventurer. He still, however, kept up his political propaganda through the Press, and his *Idées Napoléoniennes*, published in London in 1839, though the rest of Europe refused to take it seriously, ran through numerous editions in France. After the fiasco at Boulogne he was captured while endeavouring to make his way back to England, and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in the fortress of Ham, in the department of the Somme, where he continued to write and publish, and whence in May 1846 he contrived to escape, seeking asylum once more in England. Many of the theories which he had propounded in his writings were well calculated, as he had intended, to appeal to the working classes, and thus the Revolution of February 1848 gave him the opportunity for which he had so long been waiting. He now hurried to France, where he was warmly welcomed by the malcontents in general, but especially by those who believed that the time was ripe for a Bonapartist revival. His election to the Constituent Assembly by four constituencies and to the Legislative Assembly by five was a signal proof of his popularity and of the continued potency of the name of Napoleon over the imagination of a people who, despite the catastrophe in which it had ended, had not yet forgotten the glories of the Empire. His subsequent election to the Presidency was furthermore a protest on the part of the conservative middle classes against the fatal blunders of the men whom the Revolution had for the moment placed in power. The small landowners throughout the country, the

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manufacturers and tradesmen of the towns, voted for him in a body because to them he stood as the promise of law, order, settled times, the abandonment of wild socialistic dreams, the renaissance of material prosperity. On taking the oath of office the President was careful to sound the required note: it was his one purpose, he declared, to establish "a Government just and firm, animated by a sincere love of progress and neither reactionary nor Utopian." But, like the oath of allegiance to the Republic, by which they were preceded, these words were soon forgotten. History was now about to repeat itself. The Presidency was for Louis Bonaparte, as the Consulate had been for his uncle, only a first step toward the realization of his personal ambitions.

THE PRESIDENCY OF LOUIS BONAPARTE

The record of the next three years is one mainly of ceaseless and indecisive struggles among the various factions of the Assembly and of the President's tortuous devices for turning their dissensions to his own account. The Legislative, which met in May 1849, though extremely heterogeneous in composition, was in its totality far less liberal than the Constituent had been, and it soon gave evidence of a general tendency toward reaction. It readily endorsed the President's intervention in Italian affairs for the purpose of putting down the republican movement in Rome and restoring Pius IX to temporal power, a course which had led to an ineffective rising of protest under Ledru-Rollin (June 1849). It then proceeded to various measures which were intended to ensure order and fortify the authority of the executive, such as the suppression of political clubs and associations, which had again become influential, as in the days of the first Revolution, the regulation of the Press by the exaction of guarantees for good behaviour, the re-establishment of the educational privileges of the Church, and (under the law of May 31, 1850) the restriction of the suffrage by the practical disenfranchisement of three million voters belonging to the industrial classes. These enactments, which were chiefly directed against the

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Republicans, encouraged the Monarchists, who were now becoming increasingly active, and though the attempt which they made after the death of Louis-Philippe to fuse the interests of Legitimists and Orléanists came to nothing, their ardour caused great uneasiness throughout the country. Favoured by these circumstances, as well as by the everlasting internal feuds of the Assembly, the wily President began to pose as the popular leader and protector of the rights and prosperity of the people against the factions which were bent only on their own selfish ends. He rightly judged that the Monarchists had little following among the masses and that the feelings of the nation might easily be aroused by a carefully prepared revival of the Napoleonic tradition, and accordingly he devoted himself to the task of educating public opinion by personal tours through the provinces and clever speeches skilfully adjusted to the varying interests of the different sections of the community. In October 1850, on his return from one of these tours, he stopped to review the troops at Satory, near Versailles, and in the course of the ceremony cries of "Vive Napoléon!" "Vive l'Empereur!" were raised by the regiment of cavalry. A reprimand from the commander, General Changarnier, followed, on the ground that soldiers under arms were not permitted to make any political demonstration. The incident, insignificant in itself, was utilized by the President for the purpose of dismissing Changarnier, whose sympathies were known to be Monarchical, and of alarming the Republicans by rumours of a Monarchical plot. Conflicts now arose between Louis Bonaparte and the Assembly over various questions, including that of a revision of the Constitution and the abrogation of the article which provided that on the completion of his term of office the President should not be immediately eligible for re-election; and Bonaparte made a great bid for popular support by proposing the repeal of the electoral law of May 31 and the restoration of universal suffrage. This proposal was rejected by the Assembly, which was meanwhile weakened and discredited by its incessant quarrels and intrigues, and Bonaparte was now convinced that the time had come

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when he might safely attempt to make himself master of the situation.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

Accordingly, on the night of December 1-2, 1851, a carefully planned *coup d'état* was carried out, and the next morning the inhabitants of Paris found the walls of their city placarded with proclamations dissolving the Assembly, repealing the law of May 31, and calling upon the people to pronounce by *plébiscite* their opinions regarding a new Constitution. At the same time the principal party leaders in the Assembly and some seventy prominent Republican citizens were arrested, and the approaches to the Assembly itself and all the offices of the Republican newspapers were occupied by the military. In Paris itself resistance was organized against these monstrous proceedings by a committee of which Victor Hugo was a leading member, but the mass of the population remained singularly indifferent and the attempted rising was quickly quelled by force. The disturbances which followed in some of the departments were also suppressed with the utmost severity, and many thousands of those who had participated in them, or who for any reasons were regarded as "pernicious elements," were imprisoned, banished, or deported "pour cause de sûreté générale." Then on December 20-21 a *plébiscite* was taken on the resolution that "the people desires the maintenance of the authority of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte and delegates to him the necessary powers for the framing of a Constitution on the basis established in his proclamation of December 2." Nearly seven and a half million electors voted in the affirmative, only 640,000 odd in the negative; and thus the nation at large acquiesced in a crime which violated all the President's solemn constitutional pledges, but which, according to his own statement, "had no other end but to spare France and Europe perhaps years of troubles and misfortunes."

The new Constitution of January 14, 1852, prepared by Louis Bonaparte himself, was in the main a reproduction of

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that of Year VIII, and like its prototype was designed to place in the hands of the chief executive officer—whose term of power was extended to ten years—an authority which was almost absolute. But, as might have been anticipated, the consequences of the 2nd of December were similar to those which had followed the 18th Brumaire. Another provincial tour undertaken for the further education of public opinion, and on his return from which he was enthusiastically welcomed in Paris with shouts of “Vive l'Empereur!” satisfied the Prince President (as he was now called) that the success of his former appeal to the people was certain to be repeated. On November 7, 1852, the Senate recommended the re-establishment of the Empire; a *plébiscite* on the 21st and 22nd resulted in what was practically a unanimous verdict in its favour; and on December 2 Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte was proclaimed Emperor of the French under the title of Napoléon III.¹

¹ In the following pages I spell Napoleon's name without the accent, as in the case of the first Napoleon.

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND EMPIRE

1852-1870

THE re-establishment of the Empire was the result of the combination of many causes. The dread of anarchy was widespread; the country at large was keenly alive to the danger of Monarchist intrigues, against which a republic appeared to provide no efficient protection; the spectre of Socialism continued to frighten the peasantry as well as the *bourgeoisie*; the industrial masses were encouraged to look for consideration from a ruler whose writings had shown so much sympathy with their aims; while the moneyed classes, the Bourse, and the vested interests in general, still mindful of the financial disasters which had attended the Revolution of 1848, and more concerned about material welfare than about political forms, were ready to welcome any change which promised a Government of stability and order. Thus the Empire gained universal support because it held out different hopes to different sections of the community, the fact that these different hopes were in many cases incompatible with one another being for the moment overlooked. Such were some of the practical forces at work in the great transformation scene of 1852, and to these must be added one of a more sentimental character—the force which had already helped to raise Louis Bonaparte first to the Presidency of the Republic and then to the brief dictatorship which had heralded his accession to the Imperial throne. “My power is in an immortal name,” he told Lord Malmesbury, when that nobleman visited him in the fortress of Ham.¹ In his public

¹ Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*.

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speeches as President he had made frequent allusion to the "great name" which he bore. It was a name, as he well knew, to conjure with still, and even if the Prince Consort was guilty of some exaggeration when he wrote to Queen Victoria that it was "the last thing left to a Frenchman's faith,"¹ it gave to its possessor a unique hold upon the minds of his countrymen.

THE CHARACTER OF NAPOLEON III

The Second Empire was, however, a very different thing from the First, in part because all the conditions were different, in part, very obviously, because of the immeasurable difference in the characters of the two Emperors. Save in their ambitions, their unscrupulousness, and their fatalistic belief in their destiny, there was indeed very little resemblance between them. With all his glaring defects, the first Napoleon was a man of enormous genius, dominating personality, and consummate administrative powers, positive in temper, practical, resolute, a wonderful judge of men, and, till he was finally ruined by success and over-confidence, clear-headed and keen-sighted. The third Napoleon was not only a dwarf by comparison with his "ancestor," as he was fond of calling him, but intellectually and morally he was cast in another mould. Courage and audacity he had in plenty, but he lacked the steadiness which comes from fixity of purpose, and was at once headstrong and vacillating. The habitual expression of his face, which was that rather of the student than of the man of action, and the somewhat languid look in his half-closed eyes, suggested a certain radical weakness in his composition, and though he was undeniably clever and astute his doctrinaire and visionary tendencies continually militated against his efficiency as a statesman. In the words of de Tocqueville, "his intelligence was incoherent, confused, filled with ill-adjusted thoughts ["de pensées mal appareillées"], which he borrowed sometimes from the example of Napoleon, sometimes from the theories of the Socialists, sometimes even

¹ Theodore Martin, *Life of the Prince Consort*.

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from his recollections of England, where he had lived." Amid all the uncertainties of his mind, however, he held fast to the one idea which from early life had obsessed him—that of the predestined mission of his family begun by his uncle, and, as he was firmly convinced, to be carried forward by himself. This idea not only exercised a malign influence over much of his domestic policy, but also inspired him with a continual restlessness in foreign affairs and led him to perpetual plottings and schemings, which ended by arousing the distrust of all Europe. He was, moreover, unfortunate in his choice of confidential advisers. His wife, the Empress Eugénie, the daughter of a grandee of Spain, whom he married in 1853, gained great popularity by works of piety and charity, and did much to ensure the success of the Empire on the social side, but she was pronouncedly Clerical and Ultramontane in sympathies, and was thus necessarily allied with the forces of reaction. His chief counsellors and supporters—his reputed half-brother, the Duke of Morny,¹ the Duke of Persigny, and the advocate Eugène Rouher—were all men who in various ways encouraged him in what was most unwise in his administration.

INTERNAL POLICY OF THE EMPIRE

The Imperial Constitution, though of course changed somewhat in form, did not differ materially from that of January 1852, which had already concentrated all the powers of the State in the hands of the President-Dictator. Everything necessary was now done not only to establish an *empire autoritaire*, with the Emperor as absolute monarch in fact if not in name, but also to destroy opposition by crushing public opinion. The Chambers were reduced to impotence. The newspaper press was rigorously supervised and crippled by a number of onerous conditions, and even books were subjected to censorship. National education was regulated throughout,

¹ The generally accepted statement that the Duke was the natural son of General de Flahaut and Queen Hortense, though not actually proved, appears to be well founded.



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and the teaching of philosophy in the *lycées* prohibited. The right of public meeting and that of free speech were suppressed. A surveillance of suspects was introduced, and Orsini's plot against the Emperor in January 1858, though purely Italian in origin, was made an excuse for a drastic *Loi de Sûreté générale*, which in political matters did away altogether with the formality of trial. For the first seven years of the new *régime*, indeed, no vestige of liberty existed in France. The absolutism of the sovereign was complete.

None the less the Emperor continued to pose as the representative of the democracy which of its free will had raised him to the throne, and the guardian of the interests which it had entrusted to his charge. Believing that a prosperous nation will almost certainly be a contented nation and that a people whose material welfare is assured will not be likely to trouble much about its lost political privileges, he sought to secure his power by a return to the utilitarian policy of 1840. This policy he had already adopted at the time of his dictatorship, it had figured prominently in his programme, and as benevolent despot he now pursued it with such success that France for a time flourished greatly under his rule. Agriculture was encouraged by Chambers and agricultural shows (*comices*), as well as by the substitution of modern scientific methods for the antiquated processes hitherto in vogue. Commerce and industry were carefully fostered. The banking system was developed and adapted to the new popular needs, and the *Crédit Foncier* and *Crédit Mobilier* were created. The railways of the country were extended and reorganized. Numerous institutions of a philanthropic character were established. Vast public works were undertaken; Paris was practically transformed under the direction of Baron Haussmann; and many of the other great cities of the land followed the example of the metropolis, to the immense advantage of their sanitary condition and the health of their inhabitants. In all these ways the material interests of the country were engaged and satisfied; commercial and financial enterprise was stimulated; comfort and luxury increased; and the two

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great exhibitions of 1855 and 1867, which drew enormous crowds of visitors to the capital, served to give a grandiose demonstration to the world of the nation's wealth and apparent prosperity. Had things really been as well with France as they seemed, her general condition would have been satisfactory indeed.

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE EMPIRE

At the same time, "having," as the Prince Consort put it, "deprived the people of any active participation in the government and having reduced them to passive spectators," the Emperor was "bound to keep up the spectacle,"¹ and while his domestic policy was directed to their social well-being, his foreign policy provided them with the excitement of martial adventure. The Crimean War (1854-56), the nominal cause of which was the Tsar's designs upon Constantinople, had the advantage of bringing him into close relations with Great Britain, and of thus giving him a more settled position among the Powers. It also secured the support of all parties in the State, and therefore aided national consolidation. But while its success contributed to his prestige, it quickened his ambitions and prompted him to further interference in European affairs. The expedition to Italy (1859), undertaken as it ostensibly was to release the peninsula from the yoke of Austria, was indeed inspired, in part at least, by generous aims, but the essential weakness of the Emperor's character was revealed both in its conduct and in its results. With his habitual rashness he plunged into the war without making any adequate preparations for it or pausing to calculate its remoter consequences, and thus committed himself to a programme which he soon found it impossible to carry out. In his proclamation of May 3 he announced his intention of making Italy "free from the Alps to the Adriatic." Two months later, alarmed by the unforeseen dangers of the Italian revolutionary movement itself and by the threatening attitude of Prussia on the Rhine, he suddenly abandoned an enterprise

¹ Theodore Martin, *op. cit.*

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which he had scarcely begun, and came to terms with Austria in the preliminary agreement of Villafranca (July 9), which was confirmed by the Treaty of Zurich (November 10). This humiliating collapse of his self-imposed 'mission'—a collapse which he endeavoured to excuse by reference to difficulties which he ought to have taken into account at the outset—left the Italians disappointed, their French supporters ill at ease, and the Italian question in a condition to become a fruitful source of future trouble; while the annexation by France of Savoy and Nice, though accepted by a popular vote of their inhabitants, gave a sinister complexion to the Emperor's action and aroused the suspicions of Europe by suggesting a revival of the first Napoleon's territorial ambitions. The net results of the ill-advised Italian expedition were therefore entirely evil at home and abroad. Still worse were those which followed the disastrous Mexican War (1861-67). This war began with a combined hostile demonstration on the part of France, Spain, and England to force the republic to fulfil its financial obligations to its creditors in these countries; but misunderstandings arose between France and her allies; Spain and England retired from the expedition; and the Emperor, in defiance of the joint convention of the three Powers that there should be no interference in Mexican affairs, then proceeded to the accomplishment of his ulterior purpose—the overthrow of the republic and the establishment of an empire, dependent on France, of which the Archduke Maximilian of Austria (younger brother of Francis Joseph) should be head. In an evil hour for himself Maximilian accepted the nomination, and, relying implicitly upon Napoleon's pledges, embarked upon an enterprise for which he was soon to pay with his life. For here again Napoleon had been guilty of fatal miscalculations. The French army encountered unexpected trouble with the republicans under their president, Juarez, who, though beaten in the field, was able to fall back upon the harassing methods of guerrilla warfare; the anger of the United States was stirred by the attempt of a European potentate to set up as a dictator on American soil; the protests

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of President Johnson became more and more peremptory; the injudicious behaviour of the Archduke himself added to the difficulties of the situation; and in the end Napoleon, heedless of his solemn promises, recalled his army and cynically abandoned Maximilian to his fate.¹ The Mexican adventure, which in its origin was largely mixed up with the machinations of a group of unscrupulous financiers with whom the Duke of Morny was in league, had never been popular in France, where, indeed, it had found little support outside the Clerical party, and its dishonourable conclusion struck a bad blow at the Emperor's now fast declining influence.

CHANGES IN INTERNAL POLICY AFTER 1860

In the meantime great changes were in progress in the machinery of the State. After a few years of domestic order and general prosperity the people of the country began to grow restive in their subjection and to evince a desire to have some voice in the management of their own affairs. Then came the Italian War, which gave much offence to the Clerical party, the chief pillar of autocracy, and the commercial treaty with Great Britain (January 1860), which, by interfering with the protective system, incensed the mercantile classes. Alarmed by the antagonism to his rule which now became apparent, Napoleon realized the need of conciliating Liberal opinion, and in November 1860, as a first move in this direction, he granted to the Chambers the right to discuss the annual speech from the throne, and authorized the publication in the *Journal officiel* of full reports of all Parliamentary proceedings. The effect of these concessions was, however, to stimulate the activity of the dissidents, Republican and Liberal, and the financial crisis which followed the Civil War in the United States, the complications which arose in connexion with the Polish question and the Schleswig-Holstein question, and the tragic fiasco in Mexico, by damaging the Government con-

¹ The unfortunate Archduke, who refused to leave with the French troops, was presently betrayed by his enemies and shot by order of a court-martial (June 19, 1867).

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tributed greatly to their fast-growing power. Unable to ignore the pressing demands for more and more political liberty, backed as these were by the most unmistakable manifestations of the nation's sentiments, the Emperor, though repeatedly checked by Rouher and the reactionaries, gave way point by point. At length, the elections of 1869 having resulted in an overwhelming majority for the various parties of opposition, he completed the transformation of the *empire autoritaire* into an *empire libéral* by proclaiming the substitution of a constitutional monarchy for the system of personal government. This change was submitted to the people, and on the 8th of May 7,259,000 voted in its favour and 1,572,000 against it, while there were no fewer than 1,900,000 abstentions. The throne and its succession (his son, the Prince Imperial, was now a boy of thirteen) were thus assured, and Napoleon himself, though ill and in low spirits at the time, professed to be satisfied. On May 21, 1870, a reunion of the two Chambers was held in the Salle des États in the Tuileries—the last State function, as it proved, of the reign—and the Emperor, accompanied by his family, took his seat on the dais to receive the felicitations and homage of his subjects. “In supporting the Empire by more than seven millions of suffrages,” said President Schneider, “France says to you : ‘Sire, the country is with you ; advance confidently in the path of progress, and establish liberty based on respect for the laws and Constitution.’ France places the cause of liberty under the protection of your dynasty.” And the Emperor replied in the same strain : “Who can be opposed to the progressive march of a dynasty founded by a great people in the midst of political disturbance and fortified by liberty ?” Those, however, who knew the reality of the situation could scarcely be deceived by such a polite exchange of high-sounding but hollow phrases. Napoleon's power was already crumbling, and a blow from without was soon to lay it in the dust. Less than four months after this imposing scene the Empire was in ruins and the Emperor himself was a prisoner of war.

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THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

The diplomatic origin of the terrible Franco-Prussian War, which was to bring about this catastrophe and to change the face of Europe, has to be sought in the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty of 1864, in which France and England alike played a part which redounded to the credit neither of their honour nor of their sagacity. Allowed a free hand by these Powers, Prussia and Austria united to make war on Denmark for the possession of the Baltic Duchies; then the two thieves fell out over their booty, as Bismarck had foreseen and intended from the first, and the war between them which followed was quickly ended by the decisive Prussian victory between Sadowa and Königgrätz (July 1866). The absorption of the Duchies, Hanover, a large part of Hesse, Nassau, and the free city of Frankfort, which was effected by the Treaty of Prague, was the first step in Bismarck's policy for the unification of Germany in the interests of the hegemony of Prussia. Too late Napoleon perceived the gravity of the situation which his own weakness and duplicity had helped to create. He attempted to restore the disturbed equilibrium by the purchase from Holland of the duchy of Luxemburg, but once more his plans were frustrated by Bismarck. The relations of France and Prussia were now strained to breaking-point, and on both sides of the Rhine the feeling was general that war was imminent. Bismarck, who had everything in readiness, resolved to force the quarrel and precipitate a crisis while, as he well knew, France was still unprepared, and he found an occasion in the question of the succession to the vacant throne of Spain. This throne had been offered to a kinsman of the King of Prussia, Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, and accepted by him with the King's consent. The proposed arrangement was, however, regarded as an insult by the French Government, which very naturally objected to the establishment of a branch of the Prussian dynasty on its south-west frontier. A protest was therefore made to the King of Prussia; the King yielded, and Leopold withdrew from the candidature. But Napoleon

THE SECOND EMPIRE

and his Foreign Minister, the Duke of Gramont, were not satisfied with their victory, and insisted that William I should give guarantees that at no future time should such a candidature be renewed. In taking this course they were obviously inviting war. But this they did of set purpose. It was in vain for the peace party to counsel patience and moderation; in vain for Thiers to utter his memorable words of warning, "Il faut réfléchir avant de prendre une décision." Feeling against Prussia ran high in France; and Napoleon knew it. He knew that a war with Prussia would be popular; he saw in it the one thing needful to bolster up his tottering Empire; the Empress Eugénie had set her heart upon it for the sake of her son, whose prospects, she believed, could be secured only by some striking military success.¹ In these circumstances peace could hardly have been maintained even had the temper of Prussia been favourable. But still the Imperial Government hesitated to cast the die. Then, by a characteristic stroke of cunning, Bismarck contrived to entrap France into the declaration which he desired (July 15), and France plunged into war without forces in the least adequate to the occasion, without organization, without munitions, without allies. The issue was immediately put out of doubt. Weissenburg, Reichshofen, Forbach, Borny, Gravelotte, Vionville, mark the stages in the brief and unequal conflict, which terminated on September 1-2 at Sedan, where the Emperor, who had marched to the relief of Bazaine, shut up in Metz, surrendered in person with his entire army of 83,000 men. In less than six weeks the Empire was completely overthrown; the Emperor was conveyed, a prisoner, to Wilhelmshöhe, where he was detained till the conclusion of peace;² Paris was besieged and starved into capitulation; and in the end France had to submit to the cruel and humiliating terms imposed by its remorseless conqueror—terms which, as every one knows, included the cession of Alsace and Lorraine.

¹ For the direct influence of the Empress in bringing about the war see the *Souvenirs* of General du Barrail.

² He then joined the ex-Empress, who had taken refuge at Chislehurst, Kent, and there he died in 1873.

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THIRD REPUBLIC

Out of the welter which ensued emerged the Third Republic (February 1871), upon the history of which we do not propose here to enter. We have thus to close our long story on the note of disaster. In doing so, however, let us not forget that that disaster was not irreparable. For the great country whose destinies we have followed through many a terrible crisis in its evolution the hour of apparent prostration was in fact only the hour of rebirth. France once more gave magnificent proof to the world of the sterling qualities of her democracy, her unimpaired vitality, her marvellous recuperative power. Shaken as she was, she rose from her humiliation with splendid courage and in the sublime faith that the future was still hers. We know to-day how triumphantly that faith has been justified.

LIST OF IMPORTANT DATES

The numbers in parentheses indicate the page in the text in which the subject is first dealt with

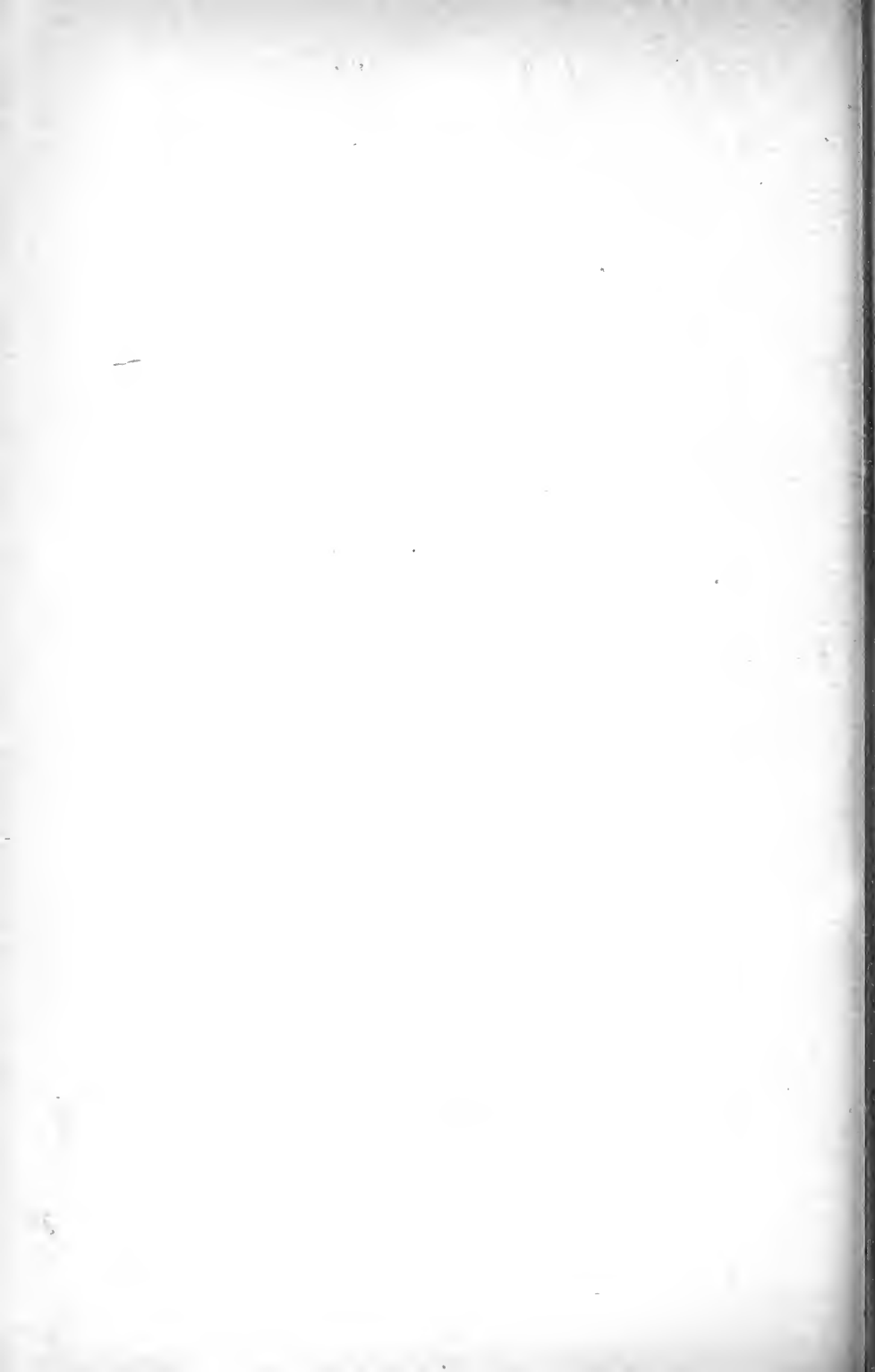
- B.C. 57-52. Caesar's conquest of Gaul (6-9).
A.D. 451. Attila defeated by Aetius (12).
481. Clovis becomes King of the Salian Franks (16).
496. Clovis embraces Christianity (17).
732. Charles Martel defeats the Arabs near Poitiers (30).
751. End of the Meroving dynasty (31).
771. Charlemagne becomes sole King of the Franks (34).
800. Charlemagne crowned Emperor (37).
843. Treaty of Verdun (49).
987. Establishment of the Capetian dynasty (51).
1095. Beginning of the First Crusade (80).
1099. Capture of Jerusalem (85).
1152. Aliénor of Guyenne marries Henry II of England. Rise
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1715. Death of Louis XIV (402).
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1716-20. John Law's 'System' (425).
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1723. Louis XIII assumes independent power (436).
1726-43. Ministry of Fleury (439).
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