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SIX AGES OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

FROM A.D. 476 TO 1878

IN SIX VOLUMES

GENERAL EDITOR: A. H. JOHNSON, M.A.

FELLOW OF ALL SOULS' COLLEGE, OXFORD

VOLUME III

THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGE

1273-1453

FOR THE HIGHER FORMS OF SCHOOLS

SIX AGES OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

FROM A.D. 476 TO 1878

IN SIX VOLUMES

EDITED BY A. H. JOHNSON, M.A.
Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford

VOL. I. THE DAWN OF MEDIÆVAL EUROPE. 475-918. By the Rev. J. H. B. MASTERMAN, M.A., Professor of History in the University of Birmingham.

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VOL. III. THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGE. 1273-1453. By ELEANOR C. LODGE, Vice-Principal and Modern History Tutor, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

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THE END OF
THE MIDDLE AGE

1273-1453

BY

ELEANOR C. LODGE

VICE-PRINCIPAL AND MODERN HISTORY TUTOR, LADY MARGARET HALL, OXFORD

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

R. LODGE, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

WITH FOURTEEN MAPS

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INTRODUCTION

THE history of Europe from 1273 to 1453 is of noteworthy interest and importance ; but it is also so extraordinarily complex that it is impossible to tell the story in orderly or chronological sequence. Europe had lost by this time such unity as was given to it in the earlier Middle Ages by the prominence of the Papacy and the Empire ; and it had not yet gained such an approach to unity as it acquired by the formation of distinct national states, whose relations with each other, whether of friendship or of hostility, render it possible to construct a history of international wars and diplomacy from the sixteenth century onwards.

The essential thing to grasp is that the period was one of transition—a time in which mediæval characteristics were decaying and modern characteristics were growing up ; but in which the

former had not disappeared and the latter were not yet strong enough to take their place. Popes and Emperors still claimed to be the joint heads of Western Christendom, and sometimes acted as if their supremacy were still recognised. But their claims were practically obsolete. Some Emperors, such as Rudolf I. and Charles IV., recognised the change and tried to devise a new policy to suit the altered times. Others, such as Henry VII. and Sigismund, talked and acted as if the old traditions were still unshaken. So, again, we find a Pope, like Boniface VIII., defying national independence in the tones of an Innocent III. or a Honorius IV.; whereas a more prudent pontiff, Martin V., evaded the control of the Council of Constance by making separate terms with the various states of Europe, and devoted himself, not so much to the task of ruling the Church, as to that of restoring the temporal power in the papal states.

It is the same with the growth of nations which ultimately shattered the mediæval conception of a united Christendom. England was the only state which was really organised in the early part of the period: and even England passed in the fifteenth century through a prolonged civil war—the Wars of the Roses—which for a time

seemed almost fatal to national unity. France underwent horrible convulsions during this period; but the dawn of better things began with the inspiring career of Joan of Arc and with the administrative reforms of the reign of Charles VII. Spain was still non-existent by 1453; but the prolonged war against the Moors had given to the various kingdoms of the peninsula such a community of interests and general character as facilitated their later union. The growth of German unity was obstructed by the endless diversity of its political organisms and by the fatal union of its crown with the shadowy dignity of the Roman Empire. But the tendency of the age towards unity and consolidation is to be traced, even at this early date, in some of the separate states of Germany—notably in Brandenburg. Italy, the teacher of Europe in art, in literature and in political philosophy, was the most hopelessly divided by its geography and by the strong individuality of many of its component parts; and Italy remained a mere geographical expression until the nineteenth century.

Like all periods of transition, the age is one of numerous and bold experiments. Many of these experiments were successful, and many failed: but the history of the failures is often as im-

portant and instructive as that of the successes. The great Slav race, which for generations had been conquered or driven back eastwards by the Germans, made a great and for a time successful effort to recover its independence and extend its power. We can trace this movement in the Hussite wars in Bohemia and the union of Poland and Lithuania under the strong house of Jagello. The Teutonic knights strove to utilise the last crusading impulse of the Middle Ages to found a great state on the Baltic. They failed, because their organisation was ill-suited for civil government. The age of crusades was over, and the united Slavs were too powerful. But the state of Prussia, after all, survived the ruin and dissolution of its creators. A notable experiment was the attempt of the famous Hanseatic League to maintain the interests of merchants and the predominance of German influence in the Baltic and the North Sea. They also failed because a federation of towns could not hold its own when national states were formed, and because the Baltic lost much of its importance when trade was diverted to the Atlantic. But their advancements were great in themselves, and their bold assertion of the power of merchants marks a great change from the military and feudal

ideals of the Middle Ages. Another interesting experiment, provoked in some measure by the strength of the Hanse towns, was the attempt to combine the Scandinavian states by the Union of Kalmar. These and other efforts of the age give it the appearance of almost kaleidoscopic variety, but all have their lesson.

The most striking experiments, however, were those in art, in literature and in science. The fifteenth century is pre-eminently the period which is known as the Renaissance, or the new birth. One side of this intellectual activity is the revival of the study of ancient learning—the hunt for manuscripts, the study of the classical languages, the exposition of the great writers of antiquity and the copying of their style. Perhaps the best representatives of this accumulative and imitative side of the Renaissance are Pope Nicolas V., the founder of the Vatican Library, and Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, afterwards also Pope as Pius II.

But the Renaissance was not only imitative : it was also creative. It emancipated men's minds from the old restraints imposed upon them. Side by side with the revival of classical learning went on the growth of national languages and literatures : of Italian in Dante, Petrarch and Boc-

caccio ; of English in Chaucer and Wyclif ; of French in a series of writers between Joinville and Commines. There was also a marvellous display of originality, especially in Italy, in painting and sculpture. It would take too long to describe the change in words, and it is far better to see it for oneself. A visit to the Italian rooms of the National Gallery and a study of well-selected photographs of Italian pictures will enable any one to trace the gradual abandonment of the stiff and lifeless forms of early art, the close study of and delight in nature, and the exercise of unfettered imagination which mark the progress of painting in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The object of this introduction is to show that the period is well worthy of study. The more it is followed out, the more fascinating it becomes. And it must never be forgotten that it is the period which begins the Renaissance and leads up to the great achievements which follow ; the Reformation in the Church ; the discovery of a new world ; the spread of education and the diffusion of literature ; the general change throughout Europe from mediæval to modern life.

R. LODGE

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1280. Martin IV., Pope.
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1303. Attack on Boniface VIII. at Anagni.
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1305. Clement V., Pope.
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1312. Matteo Visconti, Imperial Vicar in Milan.
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1354. Return of Rienzi to Rome and his death.
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Conspiracy of Marin Falier in Venice.
1355. War between Venice and Hungary.
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1356. The Golden Bull.
Battle of Poitiers.
1358. The Jacquerie.
Murder of Étienne Marcel.
1360. Peace of Bretigni (England and France).
1361. Sack of Wisby by Waldemar III.
1362. War between Denmark and the Hanse Towns.
1364. Charles V., King of France.
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1367. Battle of Navaretta or Najara.
1369. Pedro killed by Henry of Trastamare.
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1370. Treaty of Stralsund (Denmark and Hanseatic League).
1375. Death of Waldemar Atterdag.
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Clement VII. (Avignon).
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1379. John I., King of Castile.
1380. Death of Du Guesclin.
Charles VI., King of France.
1381. Peace of Turin (Venice and Genoa).
1382. Charles III., King of Naples—Succession disputed.
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1385. Charles III. of Naples, King of Hungary.
1386. Battle of Sempach.
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Jagello of Lithuania, King of Poland.
Ladislas, King of Naples.
1387. Margaret, Queen of Norway and Denmark.
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Sigismund, King of Hungary.
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1388. Battle of Nâfels.
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1389. Henry IV., King of England.
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1396. Battle of Nicopolis.
1397. Union of Kalmar.
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1402. Death of Gian Galeazzo.
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1404. Innocent VII., Pope (Rome).
1406. Gregory XII., Pope (Rome).
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1407. Murder of Duke of Orleans.
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1409. Council of Pisa.
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1410. Battle of Tannenberg.
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1411. Death of Jobst—Sigismund recognised.
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1412. Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan.
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1418. Martin V., Pope, elected at Council of Constance.
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1419. Outbreak of Hussite War.
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1420. Four Articles of Prague.
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1422. Death of Henry V. of England and Charles VI. of France.
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1424. Ziska's Bloody Year and his death.
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1425. War between Venice and Milan.
1427. Defeat of Cardinal Beaufort's Hussite Crusade.
Battle of Tauss.

1429. Orleans saved by Joan of Arc.
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1431. Summons of Council of Basle.
Eugenius IV., Pope.
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1432. Hussite deputies at Basle.
1433. Compacts with Bohemia.
Civil War in Bohemia.
1434. Battle of Lipan.
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1437. Death of Sigismund.
1438. Council of Ferrara.
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1439. Council of Florence.
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1440. Frederick III., Emperor.
1442. Alfonso of Aragon became King of Naples.
1444. Battle of Varna.
1447. Alliance between Germany and Pope Eugenius.
Nicholas V., Pope.
1449. End of Council of Basle.
1450. Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan.
1452. Coronation of Frederick III. at Rome.
1453. Battle of Castillon and end of Hundred Years' War.
Fall of Constantinople.

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¹ A list of books suitable for students will be found at the end of each chapter.

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THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGE

1273-1453

CHAPTER I

GERMANY AND THE EMPIRE, 1273-1378

BEFORE 1273 the decline of Imperial supremacy had already begun. The great Emperors of the Hohenstaufen family, Frederick Barbarossa, Henry VI. and Frederick II. had done something in the past to revive the already weakening power of the Empire and to maintain the theory of universal rule; but the fall of their dynasty was followed by disastrous disputes between rival Emperors, an epoch known as the "Great Interregnum," which did much to destroy the authority of the monarch both in Germany and in Europe; and the period now opening was marked by still further decline in the ideal of Imperial supremacy, and in domestic power.

In theory the Empire was still the Roman Empire; the Emperor was direct successor of the Cæsars, "semper Augustus," with temporal rule over the whole world. From the days of Frederick Barbarossa the title "Holy" had added a character of sanctity to the institution, had upheld the claim of the Emperor to divine right to rule over Christian society, and had placed the "Holy Roman Empire" side by side with the "Holy Catholic Church".

Pope and Emperor together were to exercise spiritual and temporal rule over the world, and to form the one bond of unity in a Europe composed of masses of feudal States.

This mediæval ideal of universal authority had always been shadowy and unreal, but not without effect. Although England, France and Spain, the most independent countries of Europe, had never really acknowledged the territorial supremacy of the Emperor, and their kings had refused to do homage for their lands, they had never failed to recognise Imperial precedence; and even in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, despite the discredit caused by the Great Interregnum, the Emperor was still looked up to as an international power, and Imperialist doctrines were still held by writers and students of the science of government. Thus in theory the Emperor claimed the right to be recognised as the superior of all European kings and rulers, but in reality, though his opinion might have had weight in the case of any question of international interest, only certain small States admitted his authority within their own borders, and the term Empire came to have a definite territorial significance. At the close of the thirteenth century, France lay outside the Imperial limits on the West, although her boundaries were more restricted than in modern days, and Provence, Burgundy and Lorraine were all strictly parts of the Empire; on the East, Poland and Hungary were still independent, and on the South part only of Italy was considered as actually Imperial land. Outside these boundaries, the Emperor might perhaps command respect for his dignity, but could certainly not enforce obedience to his authority.

There was also another aspect of the Imperial position. Ever since the tenth century the German Monarchy had been attached to the Roman Empire; or in other words the same man had always held the two dignities of German King and Roman Emperor; and this with disastrous results. The interests of the Empire and of the Kingdom of Germany were hardly ever the same, and yet each was certain to suffer from anything which hurt the other. For example, when the Emperor fought expensive wars in Italy they in no way benefited the German Kingdom, but Germany suffered very much from Imperial quarrels with the Papacy, which brought her also into discord with Rome. Again the fact that the German nobles were Imperial vassals, Princes, that is, who held their estates straight from the Emperor, gave them an exalted sense of their own dignity and made them less ready to submit to the rules which he laid down in his character of King. Above all, because the Empire was elective the German Monarchy became elective also, and this system of choosing the ruler weakened the power of the Crown so much that it was almost destroyed.

Each Emperor was supposed to go through four coronations. This, as a matter of fact, he rarely did, but the three most important crowns were generally assumed. The German crown of Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) only conferred strictly speaking the title of King of the Romans, the preliminary step for every Emperor. The crown of Burgundy was of slight account and during our period Charles IV. was the only Emperor who went to Arles to obtain it. The third crown of Italy or Lombardy was received at Milan or Monza, and, chief of all, the real Imperial crown itself could only be con-

Connection
between
the Empire
and the
German
Kingship

The four
Crowns

ferred at Rome and was held to bring with it that right of universal rule so splendid in theory, so feeble, as we have seen, in practice. Quite strictly the Emperor elect was only King of the Romans until this important ceremony had been completed, but he could exercise full powers from the time of his coronation at Aachen, and it has generally been found convenient to give him his full title from the first.

The Great
Interreg-
num, 1254-
1273

With the death of the last representative of the great family of Hohenstaufen, which for more than a century had occupied the Imperial throne, there was great hesitation on the part of the Electors to fill up the vacant office. The right of choice had now become practically centred in the hands of seven great Princes; the Archbishops of Mayence (Mainz), Trêves (Trier) and Cologne (Köln), to represent the German Church, and four lay Electors. These latter ought to have represented the four great nations of which Germany was composed, Franks, Swabians, Saxons and Bavarians; but the Duchies of Franconia and Swabia no longer existed, and the right was exercised by the Count Palatine of the Rhine and the Margrave of Brandenburg in company with the Dukes of Saxony and Bavaria. In 1256 the votes of this "Electoral College" had been divided between Richard of Cornwall, brother of Henry III. of England, and Alfonso the Wise of Castile. The former was crowned at Aachen and paid an occasional visit to Germany, but never really took up his office; the Castilian King did no more than issue an occasional proclamation. The result was, that with no restraining hand to check their encroachments and private feuds, the nobles became more unmanageable than ever, and feudalism ran rampant.

When Richard of Cornwall died in 1272, the country was in such a state of anarchy and turmoil that all parties felt the need of a real ruler ; and Pope Gregory X., who was anxious above all things to raise a new Crusade, for which a German monarch would be the best leader, refused to recognise the claims of the un-energetic Alfonso, and urged a fresh election. Therefore, in 1273, the question of a new Emperor and a new King of Germany was seriously considered, and the choice of the Electors fell on Rudolf, Count of Habsburg, a Prince who they hoped was neither strong enough nor rich enough to rouse much fear or jealousy by his elevation.

The new Emperor was a man of considerable force and independence, or, as Carlyle puts it: "Justness of insight, toughness of character and general strength of bridle-hand". Rudolf was not one of the chief Princes of Germany, but an important Count nevertheless, and from his Hawk's Castle in Switzerland (Habichtsburg or Habsburg) had spread his power widely throughout the old Duchy of Swabia. In person he was far above the average height, thin and upright, with small hands and feet, and a face whose eagle eye and hooked nose betokened strength and energy, while his thin determined lips were also capable of showing a keen sense of humour. Moderate in meat and drink and zealous in warlike enterprises, he was the darling of his soldiers and commanded general respect and admiration. His piety is shown by the story of how he lent his horse to a poor Priest who was carrying the Host to a sick man and was afraid to cross a rapid torrent, and then refused to take back an animal which had carried so sacred a burden. Something of his promptness and resource is

Rudolf I.,
1273-1292

seen in the account of his coronation at Aachen. When the new sovereign was prepared to receive the homage of his princely vassals, there was no sceptre forthcoming, and without it he could not bestow the fiefs: delay might have been dangerous, for the nobles were none too friendly; but Rudolf averted any postponement of the ceremony by seizing the Crucifix from the altar, and declaring that the sacred sign of salvation for the world could well be his sceptre.

Condition
of Ger-
many

It was over a very complicated dominion that Rudolf was called to rule. Germany was split up amongst many great Princes both spiritual and temporal. Archbishops, Bishops and Abbots held what were called Sceptre-fiefs, since they were granted to them originally by presentation of a sceptre. Lay lords, such as Dukes, Margraves, Palgraves and Graves had banner-fiefs. All claimed to have no superior but the Emperor; all asserted the right to exercise practically independent power in their own estates, to judge their own causes, levy their own taxes, and make their own wars as they wished. The breaking up of the old Duchies of Franconia and Swabia had largely increased the number of tenants-in-chief, landowners that is, holding straight from the Emperor himself; and quite insignificant nobles, small towns and even villages often claimed the head of the Empire as their immediate overlord. This multiplication of estates was aided by the very usual practice of dividing the property of a dead man amongst all his sons, instead of giving the whole to the eldest.

Chief
families of
Germany

Certain families were particularly important at this time. The Ascanian family ruled in the Mark of Brandenburg and in the Duchy of Saxony. The House of Wittelsbach was also split into two branches; the elder

possessed Upper Bavaria and the Palatinate; the younger ruled in Lower Bavaria. The Welfs held the Duchy of Brunswick; the Wettins, later possessors of Saxony, were now the lords of Meissen and Thuringia. Besides the Habsburgs themselves, there were two other families which were to become very prominent later: the House of Luxemburg in the territory of the same name, and the Hohenzollerns, the head of which—Frederick Burggrave of Nuremberg, was a cousin of Rudolf, and had been largely influential in securing his election.


The three Archbishops with electoral powers were the most important spiritual Princes, though there were many others, for most great Churchmen were territorial lords. By far the most powerful and dangerous temporal ruler of the time was Ottokar of Bohemia, who in addition to this Slav Kingdom, had taken advantage of the Interregnum to lay hands on Austria, Styria, Carinthia and Carniola, which gave him a very firm foothold in South-East Germany.


Besides Princes and Bishops, the Imperial Cities were now rising to importance. Some of the larger towns of Germany, those of the South which had prospered because of their proximity to the great trade routes; and those of the North which carried on commerical enterprises by means of the Baltic and the North Sea, were independent of all but the Emperor, were recognised as estates of the realm capable of representation in the Imperial Diet, and were called Imperial Cities. These Diets were in theory feudal Councils of the whole Empire summoned from all parts of the realm for common business and composed of all the great Princes and representatives of the Imperial towns; but they met at present

very irregularly, and had little control over the different States, amongst which they were intended to bring some sort of unity.

THE EMPIRE in 1273



Habsburg Lands 

Possessions of King Ottokar 

Rudolf's
German
policy

Rudolf showed his practical wisdom and clear sightedness by realising that it was impossible to maintain the old ambitions of the Hohenstaufen, that he would

only waste his strength in vain endeavour should he strive to regain their Italian possessions, and that his true policy was to strengthen his position in Germany, to reduce the excessive power of his Imperial vassals, and to build up a strong territorial position for his own family. To effect this it was necessary to win allies, to secure the friendship of the Pope, to crush out rivals to his power. That he intended to emphasise the national character of his policy is shown by his persistent use of German in State documents and in the prosecution of business. When a messenger from the King of Bohemia began to explain his embassy in Latin, he was interrupted by the Emperor with the words: "Lord Bishop, when you have only concern with Priests use your Latin, but amongst us speak German". Rudolf's first act was to gain friends by the marriages of his numerous family. On the day of his coronation one daughter was wedded to Lewis of the Palatine and another to Albert of Saxony. Next he turned his attention to the Pope. Rudolf never went to Rome to receive the Imperial crown, but he had a magnificent meeting with Gregory X. at Lausanne, where he formally confirmed cessions of Italian territory already made to the Pope, gave up any claims to the Angevin Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, and together with many of his Barons took the Cross, in token that he would, on the first opportunity, fulfil the Pope's most fervent wish, by undertaking a Crusade to the Holy Land. The old policy of the Hohenstaufen was finally abandoned, when the Habsburg Monarch made a treaty of friendship with Charles of Anjou, their bitterest enemy, and promised to marry his daughter Clementia to Charles' grandson. Italian schemes certainly never tempted the prudent Emperor; "Italy is like the lion's

Marriage
alliances

Meeting
with
Gregory X.
at Lau-
sanne,
Oct. 1275

cave," he was wont to say, "one sees traces of the steps of those who go thither, but never of those who return."

Relations
with Ot-
tokar of
Bohemia

After these measures Rudolf was ready to turn his attention nearer home. He felt his position in Germany would never be secure, so long as he was threatened by the enmity of Ottokar of Bohemia. Ottokar had never recognised the election of 1277; his own vote had been rejected, although as King of Bohemia he claimed the rights of an Elector, by virtue of his office of Imperial cupbearer; he had also repeatedly refused to appear at the Diet to justify his possession of the German Dukedoms of Austria, Carinthia and Carniola, and had of course never done homage. Despite the rather doubtful support of some of the Princes, the Emperor found a good many German nobles ready to fight against the Slav King, and his army was sufficiently strong to cause the capitulation of Vienna and force Ottokar to come to terms. The latter consented to do homage for Bohemia and Moravia, to renounce his claims to Austria, Styria, Carinthia and Carniola, and a double marriage was arranged between a son and daughter of each monarch.

Homage of
Ottokar

There is a story that this homage was to take place privately in a tent, and that during the ceremony the tent collapsed, revealing the proud Ottokar, magnificently dressed, on his knees before the "Pauper Count" of Habsburg in his plain leather jerkin. Such an incident, however, is not only totally improbable, but quite unnecessary as an explanation of the speedy failure of the present agreement. Neither side adhered fully to the terms, the marriage plans were never accomplished, and the discontent of many Imperial nobles, who found Rudolf less compliant than they had hoped, gave

Ottokar an opportunity; the death of Pope Gregory robbed the Emperor of another ally; and in 1278 the Bohemian King renewed war with every hope of success. The two armies met on a great plain, north of Vienna, known as the Marchfeld, and an engagement of great violence took place. Both Kings fought in the thick of the battle. Rudolf at one moment was attacked by two Knights at once, had his horse killed under him, rolled off into a stream and was only rescued just in time from this awkward situation.

Ottokar fought gallantly long after success was hopeless, but was killed treacherously in the end by two Austrian soldiers, who attacked him after his surrender, in revenge for his execution of one of their relations for brigandage; and his adversary who had commanded that his life should be spared arrived too late to save him. The Bohemian defeat was complete. The Kingdom was handed over to the guardianship of Otto Margrave of Brandenburg during the minority of the dead Ottokar's young son, Wenzel II. of Bohemia; Wenzel was married to Rudolf's daughter Guta, and his sister Agnes to a son of the Emperor; Austria and the other disputed provinces were bestowed upon Rudolf's two eldest sons, Albert and Rudolf, with the exception of Carinthia which was given to Meinhard of Tyrol, whose daughter was married to Albert. This settlement was of the greatest importance; from this date Austria has remained the hereditary possession of the House of Habsburg and its chief source of strength. The foundation was laid on which the later fortunes of that great family were to be erected.

Rudolf had done much to strengthen his family and something to consolidate the central power, but not so

Battle of
the March-
feld, 26th
Aug. 1278

Death of
Ottokar

House of
Habsburg
established
in Austria

much as he wished. In vain he endeavoured to win over the Princes by marriage alliances and the people by suppression of private war. The nobles remained obstinate, the towns objected to his Imperial taxation, and the organisation of justice and government was still defective. Above all, he was unable to effect the greatest wish of his life, the establishment of an hereditary monarchy. The Electors feared the growing strength of the Habsburgs and refused to choose his son Albert as successor. When the Emperor ended his toilsome career in 1292, Adolf of Nassau, a poor and insignificant Count, was crowned at Aachen.

Adolf of
Nassau,
1292-1298

Battle of
Goellheim,
1298

Death of
Adolf

Albert I.,
1298-1308

Adolf's rule was short. His unexpected activity and determined attempt to strengthen his position, speedily raised up enemies against him and gave a party to the disappointed Albert of Austria. Germany was divided into two camps, and the war which broke out was ended by the Battle of Goellheim. The death of Adolf, struck down some think by Albert himself, gave the victory to the latter. The Electors could no longer refuse him their votes and he was proclaimed Emperor as Albert I.

The new Sovereign was not prepossessing in appearance. Boniface VIII., when consulted as to the election, had objected to his uncouth and rustic mien. He was blind of one eye, rude and harsh of face, strong but ungrainly in figure, and his indomitable energy was tempered by no gentleness and few scruples. His character has doubtless suffered by the legends concerning his rule in Swabia, where he has been handed down to tradition as the great persecutor of the mountaineers in the district later to become Switzerland (see chapter v.). But though there may be no grounds for the accusations of heartless cruelty and oppression, he was a stern fierce

man, not easy to check when the interests of his family were at stake.

Albert's policy was a continuation of that of his father. He left Italy entirely out of account, made peace with Philip of France, and turned his whole attention to Germany. Here his plan was to support the towns against the nobles, and keep a firm hand over the most powerful of the Princes.

Policy like that of Rudolf

His chief danger lay on the side of Bohemia, whose sovereign, Wenzel II., had been elected King of Poland in 1300, and in the following year was also offered the Crown of Hungary. Albert was furious, but was saved from violent opposition by the unexpected death of King Wenzel and his only son, the last male descendants of Ottokar. Thus ended the Bohemian family of the Premyslides.

The Crown of Bohemia was elective, and by a mixture of threats and bribery, Albert secured the choice of his own son Rudolf, and hoped thereby to have secured for the Habsburgs another territory of the greatest value. King Rudolf, however, failed to abate the hostility felt by the Bohemians for the Habsburg line, and on his sudden death in 1307 the Electors, despite their promises, refused his brother Frederick the Fair and chose instead Henry of Carinthia, a brother-in-law of King Wenzel. The indignant Albert made preparations for an expedition against the Bohemians, but this was suddenly hindered by his own assassination. The murder was the work of one of his own nephews, cheated as he believed out of his rightful possessions by the close-fisted Albert, and encouraged to the deed by many discontented nobles who hated their ambitious ruler.

Rudolf of Habsburg, King of Bohemia

Murder of Albert by his nephew, 1308

Albert's sudden death again made a break in the line of Habsburg Emperors. A disputed election followed.

The French King, whose influence had been much increased by the late Emperor's friendship, put forward his own brother Charles of Valois as a rival to Albert's heir Frederick of Austria. In the end, however, the Electors were faithful to the almost universal custom of choosing a German, and voted for Henry of Luxemburg, brother of the Archbishop of Treves, who naturally gave him his support.

Henry
VII., 1308-
1313

Henry VII. was about forty years of age, a man well skilled in arms, of middle height, with fair hair and a fresh-coloured face; he was also well-educated and could speak French, German and Latin. With the new monarch quite a new turn was given to Imperial policy. Henry looked back to the glories of the Hohenstaufen. He determined to revive their claims of universal dominion and above all their headship of the Ghibelline party in Italy. Thus his reign belongs rather to the history of Italy than to that of Germany, and can be kept principally for the next chapter (see chapter ii.). One great acquisition, however, he did make in Germany, not for himself but for his son.

Italian
policy

Bohemia was not too happy under their King Henry of Carinthia. He was idle and inefficient and did nothing to quell the disorders of the country, which was in open rebellion against him. Certain of the Bohemians turned in their need to the new Emperor and proposed to bestow the Kingdom on his young son John, on condition that he should marry Elizabeth a daughter of Wenzel II. and the last survivor of the Premyslides family. This arrangement was accomplished and John of Luxemburg became King of Bohemia. This done, Henry set off without waste of time, to secure for himself the iron crown of Lombardy and the golden crown of Rome.

John of
Luxemburg
chosen
King of
Bohemia,
1310

Henry's Italian expedition left neglected Germany a prey to rival factions, and sad confusion prevailed when his death at Siena in 1313 rendered a new choice inevitable.

The election which followed the death of Henry VII. was one of peculiar difficulty. The rights of the seven Electors were more or less established, but no provision had been made for the splitting of families and territories into two parts. Two branches of the Wittelsbach stock ruled in Bavaria, there were two Margraves of Brandenburg, and Henry of Carinthia still laid claim to the Bohemian throne occupied in reality by John of Luxemburg. There were rival candidates also representing the three leading houses of the time. John of Bohemia, the late Emperor's son, was eventually rejected as too young; but that still left in the field Albert's son, Frederick the Handsome of Austria; and Lewis Duke of Upper Bavaria, a warrior of great repute. Delay of more than a year was caused by these complications, and when the election was at last made, the votes were divided between Lewis and Frederick, five being given to the former and two to the latter.

Death of
Henry
VII., 1313

Difficulties
of election

Lewis of
Bavaria
and
Frederick
of Austria
both
chosen

Neither candidate intended to give way, and both raced to Aachen to secure coronation at the traditional spot. Here again the honours were divided. Frederick won the race; but the town would not admit him, and he had to be content with a ceremony at Bonn, performed, however, by the Archbishop of Cologne to whom especially belonged the right of consecration. Lewis, on the other hand, was admitted and crowned in Aachen by the Archbishop of Mayence. Civil war followed and was waged for eight years with varying fortunes. The Austrians, Frederick and his brother Leopold, were also

Battle of
Mühldorf,
28th Sept.
1322

Victory of
Lewis

hampered by struggles in their Swabian lands, where the mountaineers were fighting for independence against Habsburg rule. At last the decisive blow was struck at Mühldorf. Lewis the Bavarian had the support of the young John of Bohemia, who is thought by some to deserve the chief credit of the victory. The towns also were principally on his side and foot soldiers played a prominent part in the fight, a sign of the gradual change which was coming in the art of war. Frederick the Handsome commanded in person on the opposite side, and fought with distinguished valour, though overpowered in the end and taken captive. The decisive turn was given to the struggle by the arrival of a fresh troop, which the Austrians welcomed as an expected re-inforcement under the young Duke Leopold, but which proved to be an addition to the enemy's forces. Lewis remained master of the field, and Frederick was sent as a prisoner to the Castle of Traussitz, not far from Nuremberg. Here he is said to have amused himself by carving sticks, and up to the present day supposed specimens of his work were still being sold to tourists in the neighbourhood. An old warrior called Schweppermann made himself a name by brave service on the victorious side, and the Emperor's words, when food was served frugally after the battle, have passed into a proverb. "Jedern Mann ein Ei, dem frommen Schweppermann zwei (An egg for every man, but two for the honest Schweppermann)."

Acquisition of
Brandenburg by
Wittelsbach House

Shortly after this victory, another stroke of good fortune helped to extend the Wittelsbach power. In 1322 Brandenburg fell vacant by the death of the last representative of the Ascanian family, and was transferred by the Emperor to his own son Lewis. This acquisition, it is true, cost the friendship of John of Bohemia,

who had hopes of his own in that direction, but danger from his estrangement was not yet obvious.

If Lewis hoped for peace and tranquillity, now that his claims were secured in Germany, he was very much mistaken. His next enemy was even more serious than the Austrian Duke, being none other than the Pope himself. The Papacy at this time was closely allied with France, some thought little more than her tool. In 1305 the Archbishop of Bordeaux had been chosen Pope, chiefly by the influence of Philip IV. ; and from his time the Papal Court had been established at Avignon ; a place which, though not actually French territory, was perilously near the lands of France. Philip must undoubtedly have proposed this change of residence, as a means of securing his own control over the head of the Church. In 1323 John XXII., the Pope at the time, declared that to him belonged the right of sanctioning an election, that Lewis therefore had taken his title of King illegally and that all his decrees so far were null and void. Going further still, he pronounced sentence of excommunication on the unsubmitive Bavarian, and expecting to find ready support from Bohemian and Austrian rivals of the Emperor, proposed a new candidate in the shape of Charles IV. of France. But he did not reckon on the growing national feeling in Germany. A wave of indignation swept through the country and Lewis turned the tables on his adversary by declaring the Pope himself deposed, on the charge of interference in Imperial Italy, and for holding heretical doctrines. This quarrel was of rather a different character from any previous dispute, it was complicated by the Pope's relations to France, and the consequent international questions which arose ; and it

Papacy at
Avignon

Quarrel
between
Lewis and
John
XXII.

was distinguished by the national feeling displayed in Germany, where Lewis was supported warmly by the Church, the towns, and the Franciscan Order.

Lewis in
Italy

Encouraged by the attitude of his country, Lewis entered on an Italian expedition, which opened very favourably. Despite the absence and opposition of the Pope, the Emperor was crowned at Rome. Two excommunicated Bishops anointed him and the crown was placed on his head by lay officials of the city; a ceremony which struck even those who took part in it as strange and doubtful. As a practical demonstration of his full Imperial power, Lewis set up a Pope of his own with the name of Nicholas V., and together they paraded the streets of the capital in triumph. The triumph was very short-lived. Lewis's partisans were of no real stability, they dropped away from him; towns which had received him gladly closed their gates upon him on his return journey; the terrified anti-Pope fled to John XXII., humbly craved for pardon and was imprisoned. The whole Imperial position in Italy was rotten to the core. Lewis never freed himself from Papal excommunication, though he made repeated efforts and hoped much from the more compliant successors of John XXII.; but they had France at their backs, and France was well-content to see Pope and Emperor at strife. The struggle had, however, important results in Germany. It led to a declaration of independence, which showed the marked decline in Papal authority. At Rense the Electors proclaimed that "since the Empire depends on God alone, he who is elected by the majority of votes can take the title of King and exercise all sovereign rights, without need of the consent or confirmation of the Pope". The German character of the

Declara-
tion of
Rense,
1338

Empire was little by little superseding the sacred and international position which had been the ideal of the Middle Ages.

The relations of Lewis the Bavarian with Edward III. were indirectly part of the Papal disputes, for the Emperor was glad to support the rival of the Pope's ally Philip VI. The English King in 1338 made a visit to Germany and was entertained with great splendour and magnificence by Lewis. The two Kings were already bound to each other by marriage ties, for the Emperor had taken as his second wife Margaret of Holland and Hainault, a sister of our own Queen Philippa. The chief result of all this parade was the rather empty honour bestowed on Edward of the office of Imperial Vicar or representative on the left bank of the Rhine, and this was almost all that England obtained from her high-sounding alliance with the Emperor.

Lewis had more on his hands than he could well manage without assisting English claims in France. During almost the whole of his reign he was at enmity with his original ally John of Bohemia; he had troubles in Lower Bavaria, Austrian relations were not cordial, his unstable and yet ambitious character was not likely to secure him firm friends and allies. His last efforts at family acquisitions brought him into new troubles. Henry of Carinthia and Tyrol had a daughter and heiress with the very unattractive name of Margaret Maultasch or "Poke-mouth". Whatever her looks may have been, her possessions were of such undoubted value that she had no lack of suitors, and after an unhappy marriage with the second son of John of Bohemia, which was ended by divorce, she was secured by Lewis for his son the Margrave of Brandenburg. A dispensa-

Relations
between
Lewis and
Edward
III.

Succession
in Tyrol

tion was required for the new marriage, and this Lewis proclaimed on his own Imperial authority, an action which stirred up anew the Papal ire, whilst there was considerable outcry in Germany itself, where the Emperor was daily becoming more and more unpopular. So strong was this feeling, that Pope Clement VI. had little difficulty in inducing five of the Electors to choose a new King of the Romans, in the person of Charles of Bohemia, son of King John, who lost his life in the same year at the battle of Crécy. Lewis was engaged in raising men and money to meet this new danger, when he was struck down by sudden death in the midst of a bear-hunt near Munich, and left the field clear for the Luxemburg candidate.

Election of
Charles
IV., 1346

Death of
Lewis,
1347

Character
and policy
of Lewis

Lewis the Bavarian had passed a long and troubled reign. He had been untiringly active, and his courage and good-humour had won him many friends in early life; but he had little real force of character or stability, and his policy was almost wholly concerned with family aggrandisement, so that one after another his supporters lost patience and their belief in him turned to contempt and suspicion. He had failed to establish his power in Italy, or to secure his rule in Germany; but he left the Wittelsbach family in a very strong territorial position. Brandenburg, Bavaria, the Palatinate, Tyrol, Hainault and Holland were all in the hands of members of that house.

Charles
IV., 1347-
1375

The character and career of Charles IV. of Luxemburg has given rise to considerable disagreement. German historians as a rule have spoken of him slightly. Amongst English writers Bryce says severely that he "legalised anarchy and called it a constitution"; and Carlyle is palpably unjust in calling him "an un-

esteemed creature, who strove to make his time peaceable in the world by giving from the Holy Roman Empire with both hands to every bull-beggar or ready-payer who applied". On the other hand Bohemian writers can scarcely praise him enough, and they thank him for all that is best in their country's history, for, writes one, "he broke down the oppressive power of the overmighty feudal lord, restored quiet and security within and without, supported justice and good-government, increased the income of the state and encouraged industry, so that in both mountain and valley skill and knowledge spread amongst the people, religion and morality prevailed throughout the land". Perhaps Maximilian I. was partly right in calling him "The Father of Bohemia but the step-father of the Empire". His best work was done without doubt in his own country, but his Imperial rule was not so despicable after all, and it was not altogether his fault that the power of the German King became less and less able to compete with the authority and privileges of the Electoral Princes.

Charles's personal appearance was not attractive. He was small, his back was slightly bent, and his head hung forwards; his face was pale with very prominent cheek-bones, and his hair and beard were thick and black. He always dressed very simply and his tunic was kilted to the knee, never worn long and flowing. He was neither a great warrior nor an impressive figure, but he was a clear-headed prudent man, a hard-worker and a far-sighted statesman; he preferred diplomacy to force and the substance of power to the show and pomp of majesty. His policy was chiefly concerned with introducing order and stability into the government of the Empire, in advancing the welfare of the country, especially of Bohemia,

Personal
appearance
and char-
acter of
Charles IV.

Policy

and in aggrandising the House of Luxemburg, which he hoped to leave in permanent possession of the Imperial dignity, based on a strong territorial position of its own.

Rivals for
the Empire

Charles had many difficulties with which to contend. His election had not been unanimous and was not undisputed. There were other applicants for the office. Edward III. was at one time considered; Albert of Austria put forward claims; Gunther of Schwarzburg, supported by the Bavarian family, was actually elected. The Emperor, however, knew how to win over his enemies, or to take advantage of any chances in his favour. He hampered the House of Wittelsbach by encouraging a sham claimant to their possessions in Brandenburg, and the Elector Palatine, head of the family, was won over by the marriage of his daughter to Charles himself; whilst his own daughter was wedded to a son of the Austrian Duke to conciliate his rivals in that direction. The Black Death, also, had diverted the country generally from political disputes; the Imperial Cities, sighing for order and quiet, were easily conciliated by grants of privileges, and finally the convenient death of Gunther in 1349 left Charles undisputed master

Charles IV.
crowned at
Rome, 1354

of the situation. His next step was a journey to Rome for the Imperial crown. There was no resemblance between Charles's attitude towards Italy and that of his father Henry VII. He went for the coronation alone and merely stayed in Rome the one day necessary for this ceremony; thus deliberately renouncing any claims to Imperial rule in the Peninsula, and arousing considerable contempt in the Italian towns of the north, which would readily have welcomed a new head of the Ghibelline party.

His return gave him the opportunity for that part of

his work which is best known, the formation of a rule for future Imperial elections, which was drawn up and published in the famous document known as the *Golden Bull*. Charles, it must be remembered, was not attempting any great change. The practice of election and all its consequent evils were thoroughly established by this time, but there were constant disputes about the actual claim to Electoral votes. Did they belong to the great fiefs themselves, or to the great families which held those fiefs, or to the Imperial offices which members of those families generally filled? What was to happen in case of the subdivision of fiefs, the splitting up of families, the abeyance of offices? All these disputed points were made clear by the Golden Bull. Elections were in future to be held at Frankfort, and a majority of votes alone was to be necessary. Electoral powers were to be exercised by the three Archbishops, of Cologne, Mayence and Treves; and by four lay Princes—the King of Bohemia, Imperial cup-bearer; the Count-Palatine, Grand Seneschal; the Duke of Saxony, Grand Marshal; and the Margrave of Brandenburg, Grand Chamberlain. Not one word was said in this important document either of Papal Sanction or Papal confirmation, and thus tacit recognition was made of the German character of the Empire and its independence from the control of the Head of the Church. In a sense the *Golden Bull* did “legalise anarchy” as Bryce puts it. It legalised Electoral control and interference; but at least it put an end to some of the worst difficulties which had beset previous elections.

Charles had plenty of scope for his diplomatic talents. He acquired what territory he could for his family, but when friendship was more important than extension of boundaries, he knew how to give way with a good

Great territorial acquisitions

grace. This was shown more especially in the case of Tyrol, which fell vacant with the death of the only son of Margaret Maultasch, and which he confirmed in the hands of the Austrian Habsburgs. For his own family he gained by purchase and diplomacy the Margravate of Brandenburg, which brought with it a second electoral vote—the principal aim of his ambitions. Silesia, Moravia, and Bohemia were already his. Luxemburg and Limburg were in the hands of a brother, with the promise of reversion to Bohemia. Marriage alliances gave hopes of future succession in Holland, Hungary and Poland. Germany was almost surrounded by hereditary estates of the Luxemburg family.

Election of Wenzel, 1376

Charles won a final and very important triumph in the election and coronation, during his lifetime, of his son Wenzel ; so that he could die with the assurance of having done what Habsburg and Wittelsbach had so far failed to effect, in laying the apparent foundation of an hereditary claim to the Imperial throne. His last advice to his son and successor was very characteristic : “ Love God and thy friends, be peaceful ; if thou canst gain anything with gentleness, avoid war about it. Show consideration and honour for others. Have the Pope, Priests and Germans as friends ; thus wilt thou live and die in peace.”

Death of Charles IV.



Results of reign

Charles had done much even though he had not been uniformly successful. He had failed to command respect in Italy. He had allowed the foundation of a very strong estate between himself and France, for Burgundy in the hands of the successors of Philip the Bold was to be a danger to future Emperors as well as to future Kings. He had been forced to acknowledge the Swabian league of Towns, although so independent a union was

THE EMPIRE in 1376



Possessions of Habsburg House
 " " Luxemburg "

 Possessions of Wittelsbach House
 Boundary of the Empire - - -

really contrary to the *Golden Bull*. He had helped to bring about the return of the Avignon Popes to Rome, and lived just long enough to see how this resulted in the great schism of the Papacy. Above all he weakened the territorial position, which he had built up with so much care, by following the general custom of division amongst his sons. Nevertheless he left behind him a Luxemburg Emperor and a formidable array of Luxemburg estates. In Bohemia he had founded the University of Prague, reformed the coinage, improved means of communication, encouraged trade and made himself beloved. His name is still remembered in that of many a town, many a bridge, many a public building. Karlstadt, Karlsbad, Karlstein and many other places remind the traveller of one of the most important of the Bohemian Kings.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS¹

Bryce : *Holy Roman Empire*.

Milman : *History of Latin Christianity*.

Alice Greenwood : *Empire and the Papacy in the Middle Ages*.

Baring-Gould : *Germany* ("Story of the Nations").

¹The additional books given at the end of each chapter are intended for the use of students. For the more advanced bibliography, see page **xxi**.

CHAPTER II

ITALY, 1273-1313

THE history of Italy during this period is one of great difficulty, since it is impossible to study it as a whole. The country was split up into separate states, independent republics and subject towns. Any sense of national unity was totally lacking; patriotism, though strong, was wholly local or even municipal.

General
character
of Italy

Several causes had tended to bring about this condition of complete disunion. Italian geography was the original and dominant reason. The long narrow shape of the Peninsula rendered communication difficult between the extremities. The country was divided from North to South by the chain of the Apennines, whilst the lateral spurs of these mountains split up the two long divisions into more or less detached portions, and the plain of Lombardy in the North was very much isolated from the rest. This natural disunion had been strengthened by the nominal subjection of Italy to the Emperors, whose dominion, however shadowy, had been sufficient to prevent the rise of any strong national power; whilst the influence of the Popes, who were temporal lords in their own estates, as well as the heads of Christendom, produced much the same effect. Add to this the fact that for years there had been a continuous struggle going on between Pope and Emperor, in which all

Italians became more or less involved, either as Guelfs supporting the Papacy, or as Ghibellines on the Imperial side, and it will be seen that party feuds were one more drop in the cup of discord and division. These party enmities and party names continued long after they had lost most of their original significance. Not only were Guelf States at war with Ghibelline Provinces, but each State was itself split up into rival factions, whose chief bond of union was common hostility to one another.

Develop-
ment of the
City State

Advance in Italy did not take the line of growth towards nationality, as was the case in countries such as England and France; but in the North, where progress was most rapid, the town tended more and more to become the unit of political life. Cities became strong centres of influence whether they were republics or under the control of some dominant family; and the large cities gradually obtained sway over the smaller towns and surrounded themselves with subject communes. By the fifteenth century the chief of these municipalities had developed into regular City States: but at the close of the thirteenth century this process was only in the making.

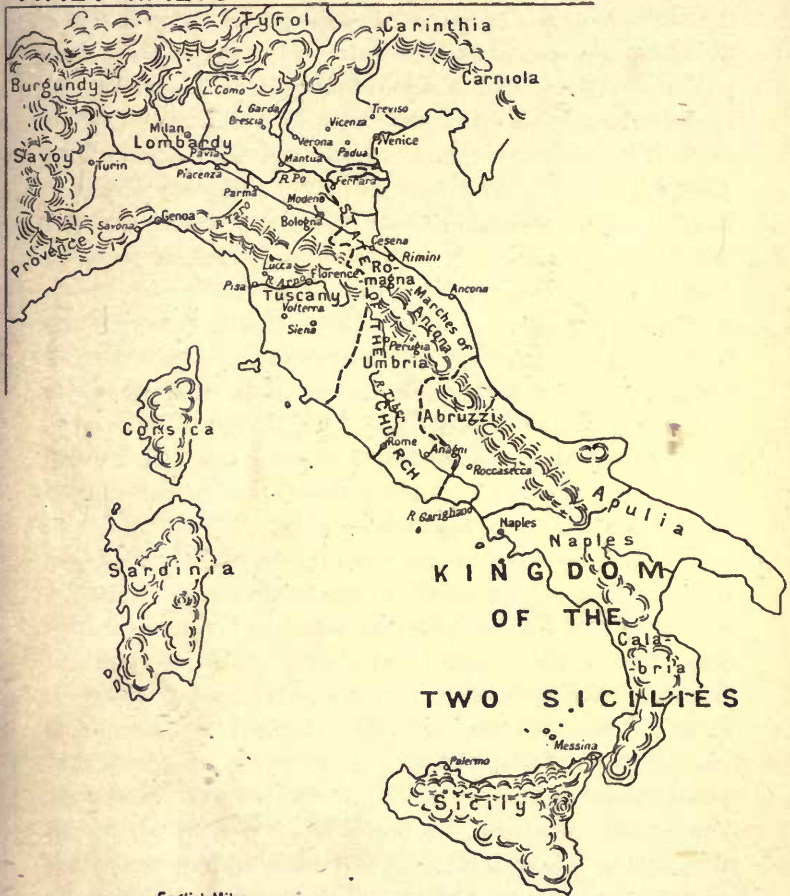
Savoy and
Piedmont

In 1273, Savoy which was in our own day to become the centre of Italian unity, was scarcely part of Italy at all. Lying to the West of the Alps and originally belonging to the Kingdom of Arles, it had split off as an almost independent Province, a fief of the Empire alone. Its rulers had indeed subsequently enriched themselves by the acquisition of Piedmont: but for the present it stood entirely aloof from the complications and difficulties of the Peninsula.

Milan

Of the Lombard cities, Milan had for a long time been by far the most prominent, It had been a republic

ITALY in 1273



English Miles
0 50 100

R.V. Sandars, Oxford, 1908.

from at least the early twelfth century, and had begun almost as soon to assert its supremacy over many of the surrounding and smaller towns. Now, at the close of the thirteenth century, the republican independence of Milan was being rapidly lost. Martino della Torre, a Guelf leader, had headed the burgesses against the nobles and made himself lord of the city (1209), only in his turn to succumb to the superior power of Otto Visconti (1277). But the period of complete Visconti supremacy as Dukes of Milan had not yet come, and the city was weakened by a protracted struggle between these two families for some time longer.

Genoa

The other chief powers in the North were Genoa and Venice. The first was important as a commercial centre, and was to become involved in trade disputes with other towns, especially Pisa and Venice; but otherwise she was fairly isolated from the history of the Peninsula, occupied with her own concerns and with quarrels between her own rival families.

Venice

Venice, the other great trading State, directed her attention almost entirely towards the East. Here lay her chief power and her commercial and maritime supremacy, which was undisputed until the rise of Genoa introduced a formidable rival and a constant source of war and quarrel. Venetian history differs from that of most Italian towns, partly owing to her peculiar constitution. A *Doge* of Venice had existed ever since the seventh century; he was a Duke elected for life, at first by the whole body of the people and in early days invested with almost supreme despotic power, though this was gradually usurped by his ambitious colleagues. By 1273 the election was in the hands of forty-one councillors chosen by a complicated system of drawing

lots from amongst the whole body of the Great Council. This Great Council had superseded the Assembly of the whole people when the growth of population had rendered such a meeting totally impossible. Though at first elective and quite representative, it had gradually changed into an exclusive hereditary aristocracy. From 1319 all form of election ceased, and it was understood that every son of a member entered the Council at the age of twenty-five. The Doge was assisted by a Senate or *Pregadi*, annually renewed by the Great Council; but he was now really under the complete control of six Ducal councillors, a sort of Ministerial Cabinet, without whom he could do nothing. From 1310 a further Committee was chosen by the Great Council, which though at first only intended for a time of emergency, became a permanent body known as the Council of Ten. This Council formed a sort of court of justice to deal with exceptional cases, and was a strong weapon in the hands of the ruling aristocracy. Later it added to its judicial functions and interfered in most affairs of State. Although the constitution of Venice was thus very oligarchical and aristocratic, in the hands, that is, of a small number of the upper classes, it was not in any sense feudal. It was one of the peculiarities of the city that no distinction existed between merchants and nobles; all the chief patricians were great traders and guildsmen, not military and territorial lords. The power of Venice had gradually increased, by the spread of commercial settlements and the subjection of surrounding lands, until the name came to include much more than the islands on the Rialto which form the city itself. It was not, however, till the fifteenth century that Venetian territory reached its full development, and that Venice became a great

mainland power, participating in Italian complications and even in European politics.

Tuscan
Towns

Tuscany, divided by the Apennines from the Lombard plain, was split up into a number of city states. Pisa, Siena, Lucca all have interesting histories, and rose to prominence at different times; but the fame of Florence has dwarfed the fame of other Tuscan towns, and gave her for a time supremacy over the whole district. The

Florence

internal history of Florence had for long been marked by a heated struggle between nobles and people for power in the government. The people had, however, one great source of strength and obtained some training in the art of governing through their craft-guilds, societies of those engaged in different crafts or industries, which were well organised and very prosperous. In 1282 a great victory was won for the popular side, by the recognition of the *Priors* or leaders of the crafts as the chief magistrates of Florence; and by the rule that the nobles must enter a guild in order to qualify for office. In 1293 a further step was taken by insisting that all officials should actually practise at the trade of their guild, while the nobles were subjected to especially severe rules in matters of justice. The triumph of the people over the nobles was now complete; but it tended to be an oligarchical triumph all the same, for power was largely monopolised by the wealthy burgesses. Some amount of democratic or popular control was however maintained, by means of the *Parlamento*, a mass-meeting of all the citizens, which had authority to alter the laws by an appointed Committee or *Balia*. The great defect of this constitution was its instability, since the governing body was changed every two months. As some remedy for this, in 1321, a consultative council

was added of twelve *Buonomini* (good men), who were to hold office for six months instead of two; and in 1323 a plan of choosing officials by lot was introduced, to satisfy the passion for equality which prevailed amongst the Florentines.

The government now consisted of:—

1. The *Signory* of nine members, known as *Priors of the Arts* (Guilds), with the *Gonfalonier of Justice* at their head. Six chosen from the *Major Arts*, the more important guilds of bankers, lawyers, merchants and so forth, and two from the *Minor Arts*, of less important trades. These were changed every two months.

2. Sixteen *Gonfaloniers of the Companies*. These were captains of the old military divisions of Florence, and were responsible for police and war.

3. Twelve *Buonomini*, chosen every six months, to give advice to the Signory. These two latter bodies were called the *Colleges*.

4. The *Council of the People*, consisting of 300 members all belonging to the Guilds, headed by the *Captain of the People*.

5. The *Commune* or Council of the *Podestá*, a body of 250 members, some of whom could be nobles.

Every two years a *Scrutiny* was held, an election of all considered worthy of office. The names of those who gained a sufficient number of votes were put into bags, and then drawn out by lot when officials were needed.

The chief glory of Florence was her pre-eminence in art and literature. If Italy was the teacher of Europe, Florence was the teacher of Italy. Endless internal struggles, family feuds and fierce warfare seem to have had little or no power to check the work of writer, painter or builder: indeed the prevailing turbulence appears to

have acted as a fresh incentive to energy, or perhaps it was the outward sign of the fiery zeal which was spreading through the people and leading to such brilliant results in the development of a literary and artistic renaissance.

States of
the Church

To the south-east of Tuscany lay the States of the Church, consolidated as a principality for the Holy See by Innocent III. and now comprising besides Rome and the Campagna, the March of Ancona and loose claims over Romagna. The Emperor Rudolf gave security to the Popes for their temporal possessions, by renouncing all claims to Imperial Sovereignty over them ; but such a territorial position, though probably a necessity at the time, brought many difficulties in its train. It was this, above all else, which tended to weaken the spiritual prestige of the Popes by involving them in the secular interests of a temporal dominion.

Kingdom
of Naples
and Sicily

In the south of the Peninsula the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, united under Norman sway in the twelfth century, was the most extensive stretch of land under one ruler which yet existed in Italy. The Hohenstaufen Emperors had gained the crown by marriage and this had been one of many causes of quarrel between themselves and the Pope of that day, who called to his assistance Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis of France. Charles by a victory over King Manfred of Sicily, and by the defeat and death of Conradin, last of the Hohenstaufen, had obtained possession of the Kingdom in 1268, and by 1273 was the most powerful Prince in Italy, bidding fair to gain ascendancy over the whole Peninsula, thanks to his own good fortune and the support of the Papacy. He was not only King of the Two Sicilies, as Naples and Sicily together are often called,

but also Imperial Vicar and Senator of Rome, whilst several towns of the North acknowledged him as lord.

In the period covered by this chapter, a few main lines of policy and progress give some sort of connection to the whole. The ambitions and eventual failure of Charles of Anjou; the continuation of Papal pretensions whilst the actual power of the Popes is gradually being lost; the attitude of the Emperors towards their old dominions, and the feeling of Italy itself in regard to the Imperial claims affect to some extent all parts of the country: while in the north the rivalry between the city states and the gradual advance of Milan, Florence and Venice are going on continuously.

In 1273 an excellent Pope sat on the throne of St. Peter. Gregory X. was above all else an advocate of peace: his highest wish was harmony throughout Christendom, which might lead to a united effort of Europe for the recovery of the Holy Land. To prepare the way for a successful crusade was the leading motive of his life. Something Gregory was able to accomplish as the peacemaker of Europe. He negotiated between the warring cities of Venice, Genoa and Bologna; he pacified for a time the struggle between Guelfs and Ghibellines, declaring the doctrine strange in those days of intolerance: "they are Ghibellines it is true but they are citizens, men, Christians".

At the Council of Lyons he succeeded, if only for a time, in uniting the Greek and Latin Churches, and inducing the Greek Emperor of Constantinople to acknowledge papal supremacy. At this same council he recognised the new Emperor Rudolf of Habsburg, who renounced his Italian pretensions and promised to head the forthcoming crusade. At the same time rules were

General
character
of Italian
History

The Popes
Gregory
X., 1271-
1276

Council of
Lyons,
1274

drawn up for future Papal Elections, which were to be solely in the hands of the Cardinals in private conclave. Thus it was hoped to secure a speedy choice and to avoid the scandals which so often accompanied the proceedings. Peace and concord seemed secure at last, when Gregory's sudden death broke up the European confederation, which he had just effected with so much labour, and left Christendom to fall back into a state of feud worse even than before. The crusade was abandoned, and the Popes who followed were little more than Italian Princes, themselves concerned far more with temporal concerns and family quarrels, than with the welfare of the Church at large. Three Popes followed one another in rapid succession. The third of these, John XXI., a scholar and a mathematician, had no love for monks or friars and was regarded with great suspicion by an age which looked on learning as a dangerous gift. When he was killed by the falling of a roof in his own palace, it was held to be a direct judgment, and visions were recounted in which the Evil One himself had been seen hewing down the supports. Next came a series of Popes representing the leading families which were struggling for power in Rome itself. Nicholas III. belonged to the great house of Orsini. His successor, Martin IV., was elected by the influence of Charles of Anjou, and merely ruled as his creature. Honorius IV. was a member of the Roman family of Savelli, and was exalted at the expense of the Orsini. This Pope, who was such a martyr to gout that he could not rise or sit or open and shut his hands unaided, invented some mechanical contrivance, which turned him and moved him and enabled him to celebrate Mass before the people. The next Pope, Nicholas IV., repre-

Death of
Gregory
X., 1276

Innocent
V., 1276
Hadrian
V., 1276
John
XXI., 1276

Nicholas
III., 1277-
1280
Martin IV.,
1280-85

Honorius
IV., 1285-
87

sented the third great family in Rome, the Colonna, who now had their turn of public honours and dignities; and party feuds rose higher than ever in the city. Nicholas
IV., 1288-
92

So disastrous were these disputes that on the death of Nicholas two years passed before a successor was fixed upon, and then a wholly new departure was made, in the choice of a holy hermit of obscure birth, who had spent his life in solitude and self-torment after the fashion of the saints of those days; a strange preparation for the public position to which he was now exalted. Celestine
V., 1294 Already worn out, both in body and mind, by the life which he had led, the Hermit protested in vain that he was unfit for the office. But the Cardinals felt that they had been divinely guided in their choice, and he was inaugurated as Celestine V., and grand Papal robes placed above his own coarse dress of sackcloth. It did not require more than a few weeks to show the Cardinals what a mistake they had made. The new Pope was totally ignorant and lacking in sense or dignity. He fell into the unscrupulous hands of Charles of Anjou, whom he believed to be a friend, and was easily duped by all who surrounded him. He gave away any dignity, created any office for which he was asked; indeed he could easily be persuaded to bestow the same post over and over again. One of the Cardinals, the ambitious Benedetto Gaetani, had peculiar influence over Celestine and is supposed to have been largely responsible for inducing him to lay down his unwelcome dignity. Rumour, indeed, says that he resorted to the unworthy trick of terrifying him in the night through a hole in the wall, and thus making him believe that a messenger from God was urging him to leave the world. Certain it is that the Pope after five months

could bear no more, announced his abdication to the Conclave, and fled back with haste to his old cave in the mountains; whilst the cunning Benedetto was chosen in his place under the name of Boniface VIII.

Boniface
VIII.,
1294-1303

With Boniface the Papacy made one last effort at universal supremacy. The new Pope owed his election largely to the influence of Charles of Naples. He is said to have gone to the monarch with these words: "King, thy Pope Celestine had the will and the means to serve thee in thy Sicilian war, but he had not the knowledge. Now if thou wilt work with thy cardinals that I may be elected Pope, I shall know, and I shall will, and I shall be able." Here then, before proceeding further, it will be as well to see what these affairs were in Sicily which required the Papal interference.

Charles of
Anjou,
King of the
two Sicilies

Charles King of Naples and Sicily was as we have already seen, the most powerful of all temporal Princes in the Italian Peninsula; but the close of his life was involved in misfortunes and humiliations by no means undeserved. French rule was hated with a fierce and bitter hatred in this Southern Kingdom, and especially in Sicily, where Charles moreover had a determined opponent in John of Procida, sometime physician to King Manfred of the Swabian line. Whether stirred by personal or purely patriotic motives, John was privately working for the downfall of the Angevin dynasty, and intriguing for this purpose with Pedro King of Aragon, who himself had a claim to the throne from his marriage with Manfred's daughter Constance of Sicily. The train was laid, therefore, although the fire was kindled by a chance spark which suddenly precipitated the explosion. On Easter Tuesday the people of Palermo, having just celebrated the evening service, were preparing to spend

Sicilian
Vespers,
31st March,
1282

the rest of the day in amusements of all sorts, when a body of French soldiery arrived, nominally to keep the peace. This in itself excited some discontent, but it was a wanton insult offered by a Frenchman to a young Sicilian girl who was passing on the arm of her betrothed, which roused the popular fury. The cry of death to the French was raised everywhere. All the long-smouldering anger of the people burst forth with unrestrained violence; the French were massacred on all sides; none, neither priests, nor women, nor little children were spared. Two thousand French are said to have perished in the *Sicilian Vespers* and these were flung for burial into an empty pit. From Palermo the excitement spread to the whole island; all Sicily was in arms and in a month no Frenchmen were left in their lost territory. The struggle begun by the people was continued by the King of Aragon. Charles vowed recovery and vengeance; "if he could live a thousand years, he would go on razing the cities, burning the lands, torturing the rebellious slaves. He would leave Sicily a blasted, barren uninhabited rock, as a warning to the present age, an example to the future." Fortunately he was never able to fulfil his threat. Pedro claimed the kingdom, and his fleet, under the celebrated Admiral Roger of Loria, defeated the French ships and captured Charles Prince of Salerno, son of the King of Naples himself.

Interference of Pedro of Aragon

Battle of Messina, 1284

In 1285 a number of deaths changed the chief actors in the struggle without ending the war. In one year King Charles himself died at Foggia. Philip of France, who had taken up arms on behalf of his brother Charles of Valois to whom the Pope had offered the crown of Aragon, fell ill in Spain and ended his days at Perpignan. Pedro, wounded in the same war, perished a few weeks

Important deaths, 1285

Alfonso
King of
Aragon

James of
Aragon
King of
Sicily

later. Martin IV., the Pope who had been so completely the creature of Charles of Anjou, likewise quitted the scene. Pedro's son Alfonso succeeded him without any difficulty in the Spanish kingdom, whilst his younger brother James was proclaimed King of Sicily. An attempt was made to end the dispute by the arbitration of Edward I. of England, and in 1288 a treaty arranged that Charles II. of Anjou should be released and assume the crown of Naples, but that Sicily should be confirmed to James of Aragon. Negotiations, however, were vain; Charles when released claimed both the Sicilies and war continued as before, and was still continuing when Boniface VIII. became Pope. Even the accession of James to the throne of Aragon and his consent to relinquish the Sicilian Kingdom did not decide the matter, for the Sicilian people resolutely refused to submit to the House of Anjou.

Frederick
of Aragon
King of
Sicily

They placed themselves under another brother of Pedro of Aragon known as Frederick, who in 1302 ended the long quarrel by a marriage with the sister of Charles of Naples. Despite promises of reversion, the restoration, that is, of Sicily on his death, the two Kingdoms remained separate under different rulers until 1442, when both came into the hands of the King of Aragon, Alfonso V.

Charles of
Valois in
Italy

From this it will be seen that Boniface, despite his promises, was not of great assistance to Charles of Naples; and it was in connection with this struggle that he summoned to Italy another foreign prince, whose interference was not limited to Sicily, and who roused universal indignation throughout the country, in which the Pope was included. This was Charles of Valois, the second son of Philip III. of France, who had already

figured as the papal nominee for the throne of Aragon. He remained, after concluding the ignominious treaty with Sicily, to turn his arms against Florence and to trample on her liberties.

Boniface made many enemies; he did all he could in Rome to degrade the proud family of Colonna—dangerous foes as he was to find to his cost. He took little trouble to restrain his violent temper and quick tongue. Whilst performing the Ash-Wednesday ceremony of scattering ashes on the heads of penitents to remind them of their end, he flung them into the eyes of a personal rival, exclaiming: "Ghibelin, remember that you are but dust, and that with the other Ghibelins your fellows you will return to dust". It was not only in Italy that the Pope brought himself into trouble; he claimed a European supremacy, which led him to interfere in all that was going forward. When Albert of Austria became Emperor in the place of Adolf of Nassau, Boniface refused to recognise him, and put the crown on his own head as a sign of his control over the Imperial election. "It is I who am Cæsar, I who am Emperor, I who will defend the rights of the Empire," he is reported to have cried. Both England and France were to be brought under his control. The clergy of all countries were only to be taxed by him, said Boniface, and by his Bull *Clericis Laicos* publicly asserted the same in France and England, where Philip IV. and Edward I. respectively were trying to make the spiritual estate share in national burdens. But in England and France the Pope met his match. The English clergy, after a long dispute, submitted to the King, and when Boniface summoned Edward to answer for his conduct in Scotland before the Papal Court, laymen and churchmen

Character
of Boni-
face VIII.

alike supported him in his refusal. With Philip IV. the quarrel was still more heated and still more important. The discontented Colonna joined hands with the French King, and a combined attack at Anagni upon the Pope, who was imprisoned in his own palace, gave a shock to the old man from which he never recovered. His subsequent restoration to Rome was followed almost immediately by his death. (See chapter iii., for details of this.) Villani, the Italian historian says of Boniface: "He was very wise both in learning and in natural wit, and a man very cautious and experienced and of great knowledge and memory; very haughty he was, and proud, and cruel towards his enemies and adversaries, and was of great heart and much feared by all people". Whatever might be the Pope's character, universal horror was excited by the treatment which he received, and it was prophesied that great troubles would come upon Philip and his lineage in consequence. Villani says again: "The judgment of God is not to be marvelled at: for albeit Pope Boniface was more worldly than was fitting to his dignity, and had done many things displeasing to God, God caused him to be punished after the fashion that we have said, and afterwards he punished the offender against him, not so much for the injury against the person of Pope Boniface, as for the sin committed against the Divine Majesty, whose countenance he represented on earth". For the time being, however, Philip seems to have had everything his own way; Benedict XI. the next Pope was reconciled with him, and Clement V., the Archbishop of Bordeaux who succeeded, was completely won over.

Death of
Boniface,
1303

Benedict
XI., 1303-
1305

Clement
V., 1305-
1314

Decline of
the Papacy

"With Boniface VIII.," says Bishop Creighton, "fell the Mediæval Papacy." Under an outward appearance

of strength decline had been steadily progressing. As Italian lords the Popes were losing some of their old prestige, and their position in Rome was constantly undermined by family jealousies. Either the Pope was supported by the Orsini, the Colonna, or the Savelli, or he was weakened by their hostility. That the Papacy was not strong enough to manage even the affairs of Italy had been shown by the unwise policy of introducing foreign aid. The summons of Charles of Anjou was the first mistake, and he soon became a rival rather than a tool. The character of many of the Popes was not calculated to exalt the respect felt for the Holy See, and when Celestine V. virtually denied his own infallibility, it was impossible that others should preserve their belief totally unshaken. Finally, the worldiness and violence of Boniface degraded the Holy Office still further, and his vexatious interference in other countries roused European hostility and national resistance. With Clement V. began that residence of the Popes at Avignon known as the "Babylonish Captivity," which diminished irrevocably their influence over Church and State alike. Rightly or wrongly they were considered for the time as mere vassals of France and treated accordingly. Later struggles and later difficulties were to hasten still further their downward career.

"Babylonish captivity,"
1305-1370

Meanwhile to turn to town history, the chief interest of the period centres round Florence, where the poet Dante was now living and working, and taking that part in political events which was to end in his banishment from home, and the casting in of his lot with that of the Ghibelline party. Tuscany throughout the latter half of the thirteenth century was still engaged in active rivalry between the two great parties of Guelf and Ghibel-

Guelfs and Ghibellines

line, success leaning to the side of the former, owing partly to the strong position won for them by Charles of Anjou who acted as Imperial Vicar. Florence for the most part was a stronghold of the Guelfs: and here at least the leading characteristic of this party came to be the support of popular government, whilst the Ghibelline represented the aristocracy. Struggle within and without was incessant. Without, the city was occupied by war with Pisa and Arezzo: over the latter she won the victory of Campalduno, where Dante fought. Within, the popular party was busy building up the democratic constitution which has already been described. By the close of the century Florence had worked her way to a very important position. All Tuscany was for the time at her feet; some towns as friends, others as subjects: at home she was tranquil, rich and ruled by a popular government; literature and art were making rapid progress.

Family
dissensions

This state of tranquillity was but short lived: family feuds broke out with renewed fury in the fourteenth century, especially between the two great houses of the Cerchi and the Donati. The former were a family of merchants, very rich but not noble; the latter were poor and aristocratic, headed by Corso Donati who is described as: "gentle of blood, beautiful in person, polished in manners, of pleasing conversation, a subtle intellect and a mind ever intent on evil". To these internal troubles worse were added by the connection of Florence with Pistoia. The latter was a small town about twenty miles distant, which was in so terrible a state of turbulence and disorder owing to the quarrels between two branches of the same family, which had taken the names of the Blacks and the Whites, that appeal was

The Blacks
and Whites

made to Florence, who accepted the government of the city for three years. This meant the introduction of the struggle between Blacks and Whites within their own walls; the Blacks became identified with the Donati, the Whites with the Cerchi. In vain the Florentine *Priors*, amongst whom at this time was the poet Dante, banished the leaders of both factions impartially: this only led to conspiracy without, and the Blacks intrigued with Charles of Valois, who willingly accepted the chance of power in Florence, and coming nominally as a peace-maker sent by the Pope, made himself master of the town and readmitted Corso Donati. Now followed a period of misery and violence far worse than before. Charles of Valois took advantage of this opportunity for extortion and oppression. The Whites were banished from Florence in great numbers: Dante was proscribed, probably for having resisted a grant of public money to the rapacious Frenchman; he left never to return. Charles stayed long enough to make a fortune and win universal hatred; he then slunk back to France, leaving Florence in a turmoil of domestic war and external intrigue, which it would take too long to attempt to disentangle. A short calm followed the death of Corso Donati, who suffered the penalty of too much success, was proscribed by the government, and murdered by his enemies; and in the same year the city succeeded in winning a repeal of the Interdict, under which they had been lying for years, by sending help to a Papal army and so once more becoming friends of the Holy See; but nothing was sufficient to quiet domestic discord. A chronicler of the time laments the evils of such a state and predicts the results that must follow. "Thus our city continues tormented; thus obstinate

Charles of
Valois in
Florence,
1301

in evil deeds remain our citizens; and what is done to-day is blamed to-morrow. O wicked citizens! Ye that have corrupted and vitiated mankind by your evil customs and unhallowed gains! Ye are those who have introduced every evil habit into the world, and now the world will reward you! The Emperor with all his power will come upon you and plunder you by sea and land."

Dante's *De Monarchia*

Many still felt that the only hope for Italy was a strong ruler, and the theory of the Mediæval Empire was not yet dead. Dante represents this view in his *De Monarchia* and all through the *Divina Commedia* also illustrations can be found of his passion for the ideal of Rome as the centre of a universal monarchy. Never for a moment would Dante deny the spiritual supremacy of the Pope; but neither would he admit Papal claims to superiority over a Roman Emperor. For one divine right over eternal life, for the other equally divine right over temporal concerns. "For peace one must rule. Mankind is most like God when at unity, for God is one; therefore under a monarchy;" and again, "Let Cæsar show towards Peter the reverence wherewith a first-born son honours his father, that, being illumined by the light of his paternal favour, he may the more excellently shine forth upon the whole world, to the rule of which he has been appointed by Him alone who is of all things, both spiritual and temporal, the King and Governor."

The Emperor
Henry VII.

With Henry of Luxemburg this Imperial idea seemed to have one more hope of success. Rudolf of Habsburg and his immediate successors had strengthened their position as German Monarchs, they had been fully occupied without asserting wider claims; Italy they had abandoned.

Invasion of
Italy, 1310

Henry VII. declared his determination to assert Imperial

rights in Italy, put down factions and receive the Crown of Rome. He came at a time of great need, and at first his success was surprising. The Lombard cities opened their gates to him, with strict impartiality he restored their exiles, whether Guelf or Ghibelline; deputies from nearly every State hastened to swear allegiance. - At Milan he received the iron crown of Lombardy; "laurel leaves in their steel, polished and shining as a sword, and with many large pearls and other stones," and the people wept tears of joy. At Genoa he was received with honour and appointed Imperial Vicar over the Republic. The real insecurity of his position was, however, soon obvious. The impressionable people welcomed his coming and rebelled against him as soon as his back was turned. The Emperor was poor and obliged to levy taxes, and this more than all else raised opposition. Florence was his most determined enemy, and Florentine intrigues were largely responsible for the insurrections against him, and a Guelfic League was formed in Tuscany with Robert King of Naples at its head. The Ghibelline city of Pisa received him indeed with great favour and supplied him with men and money for his advance to Rome. Here his coronation fell very flat, for Prince John of Naples held St. Peter's, and the ceremony performed at St. John Lateran was robbed of much of its effect. The next year was one of war for the newly crowned Emperor. He made vain attempts against Florence, devastated the country round, and made a league with Sicily and Genoa against the hostile King of Naples. Whether Henry could even for a time have made good his authority remains for ever doubtful, for worn out by exertions and an illness which he had disregarded in order not to discourage his soldiers, he died so suddenly before Siena,

Coronation
of Henry
VII. at
Rome, 1312

Death of
Henry
VII., 1313

that all believed him to have been poisoned. He had taken the Sacrament immediately before, and the rumour spread that the Priest had caused his death by administering poisoned wine.

Such a tale was all too readily believed in those days. Whatever the truth may be, with Henry perished the dream of upholding the universal authority of the Emperor; his was the last real attempt to assert such claims and Italy was left without a sovereign. Henry VII. was an able Prince, full of enthusiasm and energy inspired by the highest principles. Villani says of him that he was never depressed in adversity nor unduly elated by success, and that it was astonishing how much he achieved in so short a time and with such scant resources. The difficulties of his task must, however, have proved insurmountable in the long run. The dissensions and divisions of Italy were too deeply rooted to be healed by even the strongest authority, and Henry as a foreigner could hardly have expected universal support. The days of Imperial rule were really over. Dante was preaching a theory which had long lost any practical significance. Henry died in a noble but vain attempt to revive an obsolete ideal.

Real end of
Imperial
authority
in Italy

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Milman : *History of Latin Christianity.*

Sismondi : *Italian Republics* (Lardner's "Cabinet Cyclopædia").

CHAPTER III

FRENCH HISTORY, 1273-1328

WHEN St. Louis lay dying at Tunis in 1270, he <sup>Philip III.,
1270-1285</sup> begged his son Philip to make his subjects love him; "for I would rather a Scotsman came from Scotland and governed the people well and loyally, than that you should govern them ill". Philip III., the Bold as he has been called, was a disappointing son of so great a father: he may not have governed ill, but he has left little impress on history. He was handsome, gentle and pious, but perhaps he had been almost too scrupulously brought up. Every day he had been accustomed as a child to attend long services, to receive constant instruction, to obey and imitate his father in everything. Hence he grew up with very few ideas of his own, ready to submit to any strong will, and apt to fall under the influence of favourites, or of his determined uncle, Charles of Anjou. Nevertheless the Crown achieved something during his reign.

The part played by Monarchy in France has been a very important one. In old times the country suffered much from its feudal barons, and under the early Kings the royal power was little if at all superior to that of the great vassals, such as the Dukes of Normandy and Aquitaine, the Counts of Champagne and of Toulouse. By 1270 much had already been done to remedy this. Philip Augustus and St. Louis had added considerable territory to the Crown and had checked the power of

New lands
added to
the Crown

the nobles by strengthening royal justice, and by sending officials of their own all over France. Every gain to the Crown was a blow to the barons, and a step towards the formation of a strong central power, very necessary in those days of feudal divisions. More lands were peacefully acquired by the Crown in Philip III.'s reign. He succeeded to large territories on the death of his uncle, Alfonso of Poitiers, which gave him Poitou, Toulouse, Auvergne and part of Provence; and his son, afterwards Philip IV., added fresh gains by his marriage with the little heiress of Champagne and Navarre. The only dangerous vassals of the Crown at this time were the Duke of Brittany, the Count of Flanders, and Edward I. of England who was Duke of Guienne.

English
possessions
in France


Edward took great interest in his French possessions, and by the Treaty of Amiens secured Saintonge and Agenais, which had been held rather precariously, and through his wife, Eleanor of Castile, acquired in addition the territory of Ponthieu and Montreuil in the North of France.

War with
Aragon

Philip III. died, as his father had done, on an unsatisfactory expedition, dignified by the name of a crusade. His uncle, Charles of Anjou, just before his death, induced him to undertake a war against Pedro III. of Aragon, a personal rival of his own in the Kingdom of Sicily. The Pope, who had also suffered at Pedro's hands, offered the Crown of Aragon to a French Prince, and Philip, accepting it for his youngest son Charles of Valois, raised a large force, and proclaimed the undertaking as a Holy War. Spain has often proved fatal to its invaders. The French army was wasted by sickness and the King himself fell fatally ill. He was carried on a litter amidst pouring rain to Perpignan, where he

FRANCE in XIII Century



English Fiefs after Treaty of Amiens 1279 

Death of
Philip III.

died in 1285, having lost his life in a useless enterprise, chiefly undertaken to please his overbearing uncle.

Philip IV.,
1285-1314

Philip IV. who succeeded, the Fair or the Handsome he was called, is known as a person almost as little as his father, although his reign was very much more important. One of his courtiers has indeed left a portrait of him, but so obviously overdrawn that it does not help us much. William de Nogaret writes: "He was pure-minded, modest in face and speech; never in a passion, he hated no one, he envied no one, he loved the whole world. Full of grace and charity, pious, merciful, always following truth and justice, he never said an evil word of any one. Fervent in faith, religious in his life, building Churches, active in good works, beautiful in feature and charming in expression, agreeable to all, even to his enemies." Others speak of him less enthusiastically. The Bishop of Pamiers, who was not likely to be friendly, is reported to have said that the King was like a great horned-owl, "the finest of birds but worth nothing at all," "the handsomest man in the world but he can only look at people without speaking," "the King is not a beast, but an image". Perhaps the reason that we know so little of Philip himself is that he was so cold and so silent: great events happened in his reign, and apparently he took part in all; but what he actually said or did we do not know. He may have been a strong man who went quietly on his way whatever people thought; or he may have been a tool in the hands of his favourites and ministers, taking no active share in the great Church questions, constitutional problems and political changes of the time. In any case we know he was handsome, and we rather gather that he was obstinate.

End of
War with
Aragon

The first thing the new King had to do was to get as

best he could out of the war with Aragon. This dragged on a little while, but in the end Charles of Valois gave up his claims, and the useless struggle was dropped.

The importance of the reign rests chiefly upon three great questions. Philip's policy towards England and Flanders, interesting to us because it tended to create those strained relations which were to lead eventually to the Hundred Years' War; a memorable quarrel between King and Pope, which brought much humiliation upon the Papacy; and a great advance in the French constitution, which makes this reign an important landmark in the formation of the strong monarchical government of France.

Never so long as the English Kings clung to their French territories, was there any difficulty in finding causes of quarrel between England and France. Philip adopted a well-known trick in waiting till Edward I. was thoroughly occupied at home, and then summoning him to appear before a court of peers in Paris, on some question of disputes between Norman and Gascon sailors. The English King had his hands full in Wales and Scotland, and though he sent his brother to represent him, his own absence gave the French King the excuse and the opportunity of marching his own troops into Guienne and occupying the English possessions.

Little actual fighting resulted, but the affair is interesting because here France began her constant policy of allying with England's enemy the Scotch; while Edward, as his successors did later, joined hands with Flanders, this time with Count Guy of Dampierre, a vassal, and not a very submissive one, of the French King. Peace was finally arranged between the two countries; Edward with reluctance filled the place of his much-loved Queen Eleanor by a marriage with Philip's sister Margaret;

Relations
with Eng-
land.

Peace be-
tween Eng-
land and
France,
1298

and his son was betrothed at the same time to the little Princess Isabella. Neither party was to help its old allies, and the English quarrel gave place to a more exciting conflict between France and Flanders.

War with
Flanders

Left to its fate, Flanders was soon in the possession of the French; Count Guy and his son were imprisoned in Paris, and a Governor was sent to rule the country in the King's name. Philip made a triumphant entry into the conquered land, accompanied by his wife, and the Flemings decked in their best made so fine a show before their new lord, that Queen Joan grumbled that she found 600 queens where she expected to be the only one. Flanders was rich through her own industry and enterprise, and her townsmen were not to be ill-treated with impunity. Bruges, most important of her towns, was ordered by the Governor to lose its privileges and to have its fortifications pulled down, with the result that early one morning, while most men were still in bed, the artisans rose and fell upon the sleeping French, who perished in a massacre so wholesale that the "Matins of Bruges" have often been compared to the "Sicilian Vespers". Indignant France hastened to avenge the outrage; the nobles and proudest of French chivalry flocked into Flanders to punish the insolent burghers. At Courtrai the cavalry of France thought to mow down without trouble the Flemish foot-soldiers. In ill-considered haste, taunting with cowardice those who cautioned prudence, they rushed on the enemy, to fall pell-mell into an unexpected ditch which stretched in front of the rival army: struggling in confusion, they fell an easy prey to their despised foe, and a proof was given of the triumph of discipline over rashness, of an organised army over feudal levies: an object lesson

Matins of
Bruges,
1302

Battle of
Courtrai,
11th July,
1302

which the French would have done well to take more to heart. Four hundred golden spurs hung up in the Cathedral of Courtrai commemorated the first victory won by townsmen over mounted knights. The immediate result was the release of Count Guy, on condition that he should arrange a satisfactory peace; but he returned to prison and death, rather than allow his people to consent to Philip's humiliating terms. The following year, Battle of Mons-en-Puelle, 18th Aug. 1304 a second battle at Mons-en-Puelle ended, though not without a severe struggle, in a victory for the French, and finally a peace was made by which France gained Lille, Douai, and Béthune. Guy's son Robert was, however, released and recognised as Count. The struggle Peace with Flanders, 1305 had resulted in an arrangement bound to lead to further disputes, but it had at least shown what free cities and determined townsmen could do against royal despotism and a feudal army.

In his disputes with the Pope, Philip was extraordinarily successful. France had always been hitherto a firm Quarrel with Boniface VIII. supporter of the Papacy, a fact which renders all the more remarkable the history of this quarrel, which was to result in a blow to the Papal power from which it never completely recovered.

In 1294 the Papal throne was filled by Boniface VIII., a proud and violent man, who had obtained the office after the abdication of his predecessor the sainted Celestine V. The high ideal of Papal importance, instilled by Gregory VII. and Innocent III., had not yet been forgotten, and this in the hands of such a man as Boniface meant a claim to interfere in all matters, temporal as well as spiritual, and was likely to involve him in difficulties with any King who asserted independence, even in his own dominions. With Philip, as

with Edward of England, trouble arose on the question of clerical taxation. This had always been a rather delicate matter, and the French King had taken advantage of the permission granted by a previous Pope to collect money for the Aragon Crusade, to continue after its conclusion a demand for tithes, which he now employed for his wars with England and Flanders. The issue by Boniface of the Bull *Clericis Laicos*, declaring that no clerk was bound to pay taxes levied by a layman unless sanctioned by the Pope, was a measure to which the King of France was no more ready to submit than the King of England, and Philip replied by stopping contributions to Rome. Boniface was obliged to give way for the time, thanks to being in great difficulties on his own account. Rome at this period was dominated by two very important families, the Orsini and the Colonna, and with the latter the Pope had contrived to get on very bad terms, chiefly because he did not give them the places and the favours which they considered as their due, and which Boniface showered on his own relatives. Two of the Cardinals who were Colonna, began openly to question the Pope's title, and he replied by their deposition and the exile of the leading members of their family; this threw them into active opposition, and all enemies of Boniface found a ready helper in Philip of France.

Bull
*Clericis
Laicos*,
1296

Jubilee in
Rome, 1300

Despite dangers, the Pope was determined to uphold all his pomp and parade of power. In 1300 a grand jubilee was held at Rome, and pilgrims of all ranks flocked to the city, where Boniface was to be seen enthroned in state, with two swords carried before him as signs that he possessed both spiritual and temporal power. He laid down law to Kings and peoples, and dis-

played his haughty pride to the full : it is even said that he kicked one of the ambassadors of the King of Germany in the face, as he was stooping down to kiss the mule, on which the Head of the Church was riding. Such a temper was not likely to pave the way to peace and conciliation, and Philip's trial of the Bishop of Pamiers who had fallen under grave suspicion of disloyalty, was another cause of quarrel between the two, the Pope claiming to defend his churchman from a layman's vengeance.

The next Bull issued by Boniface was like match to tinder. The already angry King was told that he need not believe himself to be above Papal control, for only "a fool or an infidel" could think thus ; and then followed a list of royal misdeeds, seizure of Church property, debasement of the coinage and the like, with a threat that he was to be summoned before a Council of the Church to answer for his conduct. Either on purpose or by accident this Bull was burnt, and it was a very short and not very exact abstract of the same which Philip made public to the people of France, to whom doubtless he did not care to offer the whole recital of the not altogether untrue accusations. Great indignation was excited in France by the publication of this sham Bull, and a States-General being summoned—representatives, that is, of nobles, clergy and people—a joint message of remonstrance was sent to the Pope. The clergy were afraid to say much, and merely begged for unity and friendship, but nobles and burghers were hotly on the side of the King, and vowed that they would support his independence to the death. The Pope received the French ambassador at Anagni, and made fierce reply, heaping abuse on the King's Minister, Pierre Flotte:

States-
General,
1302

French
embassy
to the Pope

“‘What God has joined together let not man put asunder,’ these words, my brothers, relate to the Roman Church and the Kingdom of France. Man! what man? I mean this Achitophel who counselled Absalom against his father David, this diabolic man, blind of an eye, totally blind in brain, this man of vinegar and honey, this Pierre Flotte, this heretic! . . . he shall be punished both spiritually and temporally, but pray God the care of his punishment may be reserved to me!” The prayer of the violent old man was not literally answered, for Pierre Flotte lost his life at the Battle of Courtrai; but this great humiliation, coming just at the critical moment, gave a momentary triumph to the Pope, and he published a complete declaration of Papal power, with the threat of excommunication against all who resisted: “we announce and affirm that submission to the Roman Pontiff is a necessity of salvation to every human creature”. So ended his proclamation.

Philip was quiet for the moment, but he was soon to follow the lead of another fresh councillor, far more opposed to the Roman see than was Pierre Flotte. A new favourite, William of Nogaret, suggested the bold scheme of summoning Boniface himself before a General Council as a usurper of the holy office, a blasphemer, a heretic and an evil doer of the worst type. Nogaret's accusations were wilfully exaggerated and worked up for the occasion, but it was only too true that Boniface was totally unfitted by his ungovernable ambition and violence for the high position in which he was placed, and all France was ready to support his deposition. Possibly Nogaret did not dare to await the summons of a General Council, for which the consent of other countries had also to be obtained; in any case he joined hands secretly

Pope at-
tacked in
Anagni,
1303

with the Colonna, who had troops of men at their command, and he and Sciarra Colonna together led a force into Anagni itself, invaded the palace where the Pope was residing, and flew the Fleur-de-Lys of France from its roof. Now Boniface showed himself at his best. Deserted by all, the brave old man—he was eighty-six years of age—waited for his foes, arrayed in his robes of state, bearing the keys of St. Peter and the Holy Cross. “Betrayed as was Jesus, I shall die, but I shall die Pope,” he is reported to have said: and to Sciarra who struck him with his iron gauntlet, “Here is my head, here is my neck”. Nogaret did not wish him killed, and called upon him to thank the kindness of the King of France, who protected him from afar, through the person of himself, his representative. “Thou art one of a family of heretics,” replied the Pope calmly, alluding to his descent from the Albigenses, “I expect martyrdom at thy hands.” For three days Boniface remained a prisoner in his palace, refusing to eat for fear of poison. At the end of that time, the mob rose on his behalf, drove the French from the city, and escorted the Pope, amidst prayers and thanksgivings to his capital. But the strain and stress of his capture and his delivery had been too much for so old a man, and his mind gave way. Madly resisting all food and all religious offices, Boniface died unshriven and unconfessed, so fulfilling, according to contemporary writers, the words of his predecessor: “Thou hast claimed the throne like a fox; thou shalt reign like a lion, thou shalt die like a dog”.

The death of Boniface meant much more than the disappearance from the scene of a wicked but ill-used old man; it meant the degradation of the Papacy before the growing power of the French Crown. His suc-

Benedict
XI., 1303-
1304

cessor Benedict XI. was a man of feeble character, who tried to sooth Philip and to defend the memory of the dead Pope at one and the same time; an impossible attempt which was hindered by his death in the following year, not without grave suspicions of poison. Eleven months of intrigues and indecision followed, ended by a great triumph for France in the election to the Papal Throne of Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux, who took the name of Clement V. Whether or not it is true that Philip interviewed the future Pope before his election and dictated definite terms upon which he would agree to support him, there is no doubt as to the submissive-ness of this new head of the Church. The excommunication laid upon all who had assisted in the outrages against Boniface was removed, and the King's share in the whole matter was publicly declared to be free from all blame, and to have merely shown "a praiseworthy zeal". Even such humiliations as these were not sufficient: Clement V. was not allowed to take up his quarters in Rome. When the inheritance of Alfonso of Poitiers fell into the hands of the French King, a portion of it—the Venaissin—was adjudged to be attached to the Papal See. In Avignon, adjacent to this district, the Popes now took up their residence, a town situated actually in the County of Provence, until it was given to the Papacy in 1348, but to all intents and purposes in the Kingdom of France. With the Papal Court at Avignon it was no wonder that Europe came to despise the Pope as a minion of the French King, and this "Babylonish Captivity," as it was called, which lasted until 1376, left on the Papacy a stain which centuries could never efface.

Clement
V., 1305-
1313

"Babylonish
Captivity"

Suppres-
sion of the
Templars

Following close on the Papal quarrel, and helped on no doubt by the complete control which the King felt

he could exercise over the Church, came a very dark episode in the reign : a record of suffering and of cruelty which stands out even in an age when human life was not valued very highly, and when the infliction of bodily pain was scarcely considered a sin.

During the Crusades there had sprung up various military orders of warriors pledged to live apart, never to marry, and to spend their lives in the Holy War. Of these the Order of the Temple was the most famous.

The long white robe of the Knights, with its red cross, had figured on every battle-field of the East, and every country of Christendom had branches of the same institution. Paris was the centre of the Order. In the busiest part of the old city, north of the river, the Rue du Temple runs through what was once the quarter owning the jurisdiction of this body, and where the Temple itself stood. But every institution is liable to abuses, and pride and wealth had long been reckoned the darling sins of the Templars. There is no doubt that the Order had become enormously wealthy, their treasure was rumoured to have reached unheard of proportions, and the magnificence of the Temple rivalled that of the royal palace. The Crusades were now over, and whilst the Knights of St. John had established themselves in the Island of Rhodes, and the Teutonic Knights had found occupation for their arms in Prussia, the Templars still stood idle, a tempting prey to the greed of the French King. Partly he wanted their money, partly he envied their power, partly he feared lest the Pope should find in them a champion, possibly a little genuine belief in their depravity lay at the root of his conduct. In any case, for one reason or another Philip determined on their downfall, and when two discontented members of

the Order whispered accusations against their fellows in the royal ear, they received a ready hearing. In 1307 the Grand Master, Jacques de Molai, and all the Knights in France were arrested on the charge of denying our Lord, of worshipping an idol, and of being stained with crime and depravity unspeakable. The Pope was forced to summon a commission to examine into the case, and there followed a mockery of a trial. The wretched victims were questioned under torture, and with a few noble exceptions were driven to admit the truth of every sort of accusation, however impossible: almost without exception they retracted their admissions as soon as they were released from the agony of torture. Whatever foundation there may have been for some of the charges against them, no weight whatever can be attached to such confessions. One Templar asserted that all he had said under torture was false, but that he knew he should avow the same, if dragged as one of his fellows had been, to the stake. "I should never be able to resist the terror of the fire, I should confess that I had killed God if they wished it." All was a foregone conclusion, most of the Knights were burnt, some few, who consented to abide by their confessions, were set free to live as best they could. The Grand Master and the Preceptor of the Order were the last to perish, after seven years of imprisonment. Tortured at the first into avowals they now stood firm. "We are not guilty of those things of which we are accused, but we are guilty of having basely betrayed the Order to save our lives. The Order is pure and holy, the accusations are absurd, the confessions false." So they declared, and were burnt to death, steadfast to this declaration. Thus perished this great Order. Most of its wealth fell into the hands of the

King and his courtiers, only a part of it came into the possession of the Knights of St. John to whom it had been formally made over. In other countries suppression took place at the same time, and many Templars were captured, but it was in France alone that such horrible cruelty was exercised during the trials.

The story runs that Jacques de Molai, from the stake, summoned King and Pope to meet him before the Tribunal of God within the year. A month later Clement died after dreaming of the destruction of his Papal palace in flames; in seven months Philip, without visible disease, sank into the grave, silently as he had lived.

Death of
Clement
V., 1313,
and of
Philip IV.,
1314

We must turn to the home government of Philip IV. to understand the real importance of his reign, and its position in the history of France. He does not stand alone; his work was a continuation of that of Philip Augustus and Louis IX., but it was perhaps at this time that feudalism as a basis of government received its severest check, and that the King was able to assert most successfully his claim to be direct lord of all his subjects, not only of his tenants-in-chief, and to pose as the source and guardian of the law. In order to do this the administrative machinery was strengthened and extended. France had already been divided into *bailliages* and *sénéchaussées*, districts administered by royal officials, bailiffs in the North and seneschals in the South. Philip made no great change in this institution, but further extended the functions of these officers, mostly members or agents of the royal Council, and gained from them a knowledge of local affairs throughout the Kingdom. As representatives of royalty they had power over justice, finance and provincial administration of all sorts, and

Home
Government

Local

were able to act, therefore, as a very real check on the country nobility.

Central

To help him in central government the King had his *Cour du Roi*, and in this various important changes took place. Originally it was merely a court, such as any great lord might have to manage the affairs of his own demesne. Under Philip Augustus, in cases where nobles might be brought before it to be tried, since they had to be tried by their equals, great vassals were added and it was transformed into a court of peers. Under Louis IX. trained lawyers were introduced, and it became a more efficient part of the government, helping the King in every part of the administration, as also in justice and finance. It was the aim of Philip IV. to make this court still more efficient and still more of a check on the nobles. Every feudal baron had of course his own demesne court, and one of the great differences between French and English feudalism had been, that in France all the great nobles had rights of "high justice," could hear appeals from the courts of their sub-tenants, and could make final decisions, appeal to the King only being made in cases where the Suzerain refused to do justice, not when complaint was made against the justice which he had done. Philip IV. however, insisted on appeals being brought from the local courts of the nobles to his own court, and there were now certain cases known as *cas royaux*, which had to come in the first instance before the royal hearing: treason, infringements of safe-conduct, or of privileges granted by the King, tampering with the coinage and such like. Besides this great increase of business, the legal element in the *Cour du Roi* was very much increased, and business was more and more taken from the hands of nobles and put

into those of professional lawyers. All this work could scarcely be performed by one court. Accordingly in 1302 three divisions were established, each with its own distinct functions and separate officials. The *Conseil du Roi*, rather like our Privy Council, was chiefly to help the King in the actual administration of the country, but it still retained the right of hearing judicial appeals in the very last resort. The *Chambre des Comptes* had control of all financial business, while the judicial work was handed over to the *Parliament of Paris*, the great French law court, which did much the same work as our courts of *King's Bench* and *Common Pleas*. Later the privilege was added of registering all royal edicts; a duty at first merely formal, but which was one day to lead to claims of discussing this legislation and of objecting to it and even of vetoing it. At present, however, the *Parliament* was purely a judicial court. Philip IV. fixed this Parliament at Paris, divided it into three sections and made it meet regularly twice a year; very shortly after it was changed into a permanent body, and its members were appointed for life.

Besides strengthening the central and local machinery of administration, Philip has also made himself famous by summoning what has been called the first *States-General*; that meeting in 1302 of which we have already spoken as sending a message to Boniface VIII. National assemblies of some sort had been held in past times under the Carolingians, very probably all three orders had been summoned before under these early Monarchs, but no meeting has been fully described by the chroniclers before this one of 1302, which was more remarkable, both on account of its numbers and the importance of its business, than any which had preceded it. All tenants-

in-chief of the Crown, lay and ecclesiastical, were summoned, representatives of lower clergy also, and burgesses from all the principal towns. Possibly the example of the English Parliament of 1295 had some influence upon the composition of this Assembly. It was there, however, simply for the royal convenience and to give the King support: there was no general discussion, the meeting only lasted a day, the members were told by Pierre Flotte what was expected of them, and then each estate drew up separately, according to order, their messages of defiance to the Pope. There were other States-General later in the reign, when Philip wanted support in the affair of the Templars and for war with Flanders, but the same character was always visible: the King summoned his people, not to consult them nor to learn their wishes, but to strengthen himself by a general support, to influence the Assembly by his presence, and to bind the whole nation to his cause.

It will be seen from this account, how very closely the work of Philip IV. resembled that which Edward I. was doing almost at the same time in England. Both carried on the reforms of their predecessors instead of following new lines of their own; both diminished the power of the nobles, by undermining feudal independence and by strengthening the central administration; both turned to the people for help in their undertaking. Yet through all this resemblance there was one great underlying difference, which was to lead to widely divergent results. In France everything came from the Crown, and everything was done for the Crown: it was the Crown alone which was to gather to itself all the power and also all the responsibility. In England free local

government had been a real thing from the earliest times, and Edward made use of these free local institutions to help on his work: his Parliament was a collection of local representatives, and his policy was national not only selfish. Philip managed the localities by royal officials, he ruled the country by royal courts and subjected the nobles to royal justice; even when apparently he turned to the nation, it was merely as royal supporters, to be summoned when he needed help and simply for the purpose of giving it. Thus work so similar in appearance was to lead in England to the growth of popular government, in France to the development of the despotism of the Crown.

A word must be said before leaving Philip IV. on one very bad side of his government, namely his financial administration. Always in want of money, he resorted to very mistaken ways of raising it. He levied heavy taxes on sales of goods, thus hampering trade and commerce; he met present distress by adding to future difficulties through his system of farming out the taxes; that is, in order to gain a sum of money at the moment he sold to all sorts of people the right of levying imposts, a plan which resulted in much oppression and misery for the tax-payer. Above all, so constant was his debasement of the currency, that he earned for himself the name of the "false coiner". Unfortunately for France the methods thus adopted were continued only too faithfully by succeeding monarchs.

The immediate successors of Philip the Fair need only be shortly mentioned. His son Louis X. died without a male heir, and his daughter Joan was passed over in favour of his brother Philip V. It was the fear at this time of being ruled by a woman which led to the inven-

Financial
administra-
tion

Louis X.,
1314-1316

Philip V.,
1316-1322

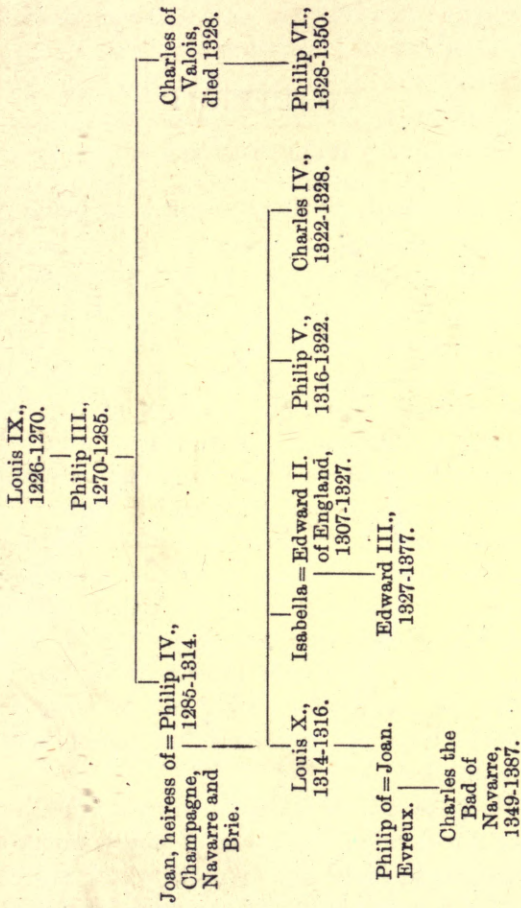
tion of a rule to prevent female succession to the throne of France. The French lawyers hunted up an old law of the Salian Franks, forbidding the inheritance of women in the Salic land; this was applied to the Crown, to suit the convenience of the moment, and dignified by the name of the *Salic law*, became regarded as an ancient rule of succession to the French Monarchy. When Philip V. died he again left only daughters, and since the third brother Charles IV. succeeded without difficulty, the idea of the exclusion of women was still further strengthened. When Charles IV. died and the direct Capet line came to an end, a far more complicated question arose, since there was a possible heir whose claims had come to him through a woman, namely Edward III. of England. The French, however, did not desire the rule of any foreign King, and the nearest heir on the male side, Philip of Valois, a cousin of the last three monarchs, was crowned as Philip VI.

Charles
IV., 1322-
1328

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Kitchin : *History of France*, vol. i.

Gustave Masson : *Mediæval France* ("Story of the Nations").



CHAPTER IV

ITALY, 1313-1378

Italy in the
fourteenth
century

THE fourteenth century seemed to bring with it some prospect of peace for Italy. In 1305 the Papal Court was transferred to Avignon in the County of Provence; in 1313 with the death of Henry VII. the last effort to assert real Imperial authority in Italy had been brought to a close. Surely some cessation of strife might be expected from the removal of the two chief rivals, the two claimants for universal rule; Italians might surely hope to work out their own salvation freed from direct interference of Pope and Emperor. If such a hope ever existed it was doomed to disappointment; the strife of Guelf and Ghibelline continued as hotly as ever; the Popes still continued to direct Italian politics, with even less knowledge than before perhaps of Italian interests; the Emperors still interfered in Italy, not so much now for their own power, not at least with the same idea of Imperial greatness, but merely as the tool of an Italian faction.

Divisions

The chief feature of Italian history in this century is as before the divided condition of the country and the consequent dissensions and disputes which resulted from it. To this is now added the absence of the Popes, their close connection with France and French interests, and the turbulent state of their own dominions, especially of Rome where families and parties warred more fiercely than ever.

In the City States of Tuscany and Lombardy, this century, still full of feuds and party strife, was particularly marked by the rise of "tyrants," or supreme ^{Tyrants} rulers, in one town after another. The tendency was for the head of the faction for the time being to gain sway by his warlike successes or skill in government, unless his subjects, tired of despotism, were able to shake themselves free from his control. Gradually the feuds of State with State were leading to the absorption of the smaller cities by their more powerful neighbours, until Venice, Milan and Florence in particular stand out amongst the rest, and form the centres of large and compact territories. As a great man or a great State comes more prominently forward, the question is always present as to whether there is a chance of uniting the whole of Italy into one dominion; but though the hope of doing this might inspire great ambitions and encourage many efforts at aggrandisement, the time was not yet come for success.

One new development appears at this period, which was to lead to disastrous results. Partly owing to the rise ^{Rise of} of despots, the old military system was gradually changed. ^{Condottieri} In former days every male inhabitant of suitable age had fought for his State when required; local bands rallied round the *carroccio* or city standard, and a martial spirit was spread throughout the whole people. A ruling tyrant, however, was not anxious to arm his subjects, and turned with relief to mercenary troops, foreigners hired to form a body-guard, who could be used to quell revolts and to maintain authority. These troops were easily collected at first, from the many soldiers left in the country after the various descents made into Italy by French or German armies. On the death of Henry

VII. some of his disbanded troops were ready to stay in the country and adopt war as their trade, and Italian citizens gradually came to prefer the payment of taxes for the support of foreign armies, to the loss of time and disturbance to work which resulted from going out to fight in person. These hired bands under *Condottieri*, leaders, that is, who made war their trade, at first almost exclusively composed of foreigners, towards the close of the century were often made up of native troops. Some young Italians did not appreciate a purely peaceful life and were eager to win renown in arms; others, the members especially of smaller and subject communes, being deprived of that share in political life which was the privilege and occupation of most members of the larger States, turned to a military career. Republics were thus forced to adopt the system of hiring soldiers. The old civic forces of infantry were quite inadequate to face the heavy cavalry, of which these new troops were generally composed, and soon all States had standing armies of mercenaries with which to fight their battles. The real danger of these mercenaries appeared when their leaders began to cast off dependence, and to form armies of their own, which lived upon the unfortunate country in time of peace, and let out their services in time of war to the highest bidder. These Great Companies were swelled after 1360 by many soldiers from France, deprived of occupation by the Treaty of Bretigny. An Englishman, John Hawkwood, whose tomb and monument can be seen in the Cathedral of Florence at the present day, won great celebrity as *condottiere* of the "White Company". Aided by these forces, the Italian States continued their old wars unceasingly; all idea of fighting for a cause, such as that of Pope or Emperor, entirely

disappeared, and each State fought openly and selfishly for its own hand, for territorial aggrandisement and for the subjection of its weaker neighbours.

In 1313, when the death of Henry VII. saved Florence from threatened destruction, the parties of Guelf and Ghibelline were almost evenly divided; both were equally selfish, and ready to adopt any expedient to increase their own ascendancy.

Robert of Naples backed up by the Papacy was leader of the Guelfs, and Florence with its dependent communes was a firm supporter of this party. The Ghibellines were strongest in the North, where the Lombard towns figured as Imperial cities; while in Tuscany, Pisa was a zealous advocate of the same policy. Many of these towns were under the power of despots, who felt that in Ghibellinism they had more hope of independence, or who derived their authority from Imperial grants. In Milan, Matteo Visconti had been made Imperial Vicar by Henry VII.; in Verona and Vicenza, Cangrande della Scala had acquired the same position. Both were very powerful lords and great supporters of the Ghibelline party.

The Republic of Pisa fell under the authority of a military leader of great strength, Ugucione della Faggiuola, who subjected Lucca also and threatened the supremacy of Florence in Tuscany to such an extent that she appealed for help to Robert of Naples. An army was formed under his brother, Philip of Tarento, to rescue Montecatini which the Pisans were besieging. Before this place a battle of great violence took place between the rival cities. The Florentines were stubborn and resisted long and resolutely; but Faggiuola was a captain of extraordinary ability and was roused

Parties of
Guelf and
Ghibelline
in four-
teenth cen-
tury

Tyrants

a Florence
and Pisa

Battle of
Monteca-
tini

to almost superhuman energy by the loss of his son in the fight. Dashing into the thickest of the fray, shouting "no prisoners, no prisoners," he inspired an attack so fierce that at last the enemy wavered, and the Pisans were left victorious on the field. The effect of this battle on the Florentines, was not so much to discourage them, as to raise a spirit of opposition to Naples, which they felt had not aided them sufficiently. They were saved from immediate danger, however, by the fall of Faggiuola, whose power had roused enemies both in Pisa and Lucca, especially one of his own generals, Castruccio Castracani. A revolt was very carefully planned to take place while the dreaded leader was midway between Pisa and Lucca. The conspirators at Pisa managed to collect all the townsmen together without exciting suspicion by means of a trick. They let loose a bull, which they pursued through the streets, until a crowd was collected in one of the squares of the town, whereupon they brandished the weapons hitherto concealed, proclaimed death to the tyrant, and heading the easily excited citizens drove Faggiuola's adherents out of the place. Lucca rose the same day; the deserted tyrant took refuge at Verona and abandoned his dream of founding a supremacy in Tuscany. In 1317 a general peace was signed between the warring States.

Ambitions
of Robert
of Naples

Robert of Naples, who had negotiated this settlement, had doubtless hopes in his turn of Tuscan supremacy, or even of the headship of Italy. He had been made Imperial Vicar by the Pope and the ruling Pontiff, John XXII., was practically his creature. Divisions in the Empire made interference from that quarter unlikely, and he was leader of the Guelf cities of Tuscany. In 1325 Florence offered him lordship over herself, an offer

which he accepted for his eldest son, Charles of Calabria, who, as was usual then, held the southern part of the Kingdom as a Duchy. This step, however, was due to danger from a new quarter, a danger which was to involve the King of Naples also, and render the execution of his designs still more difficult.

The fall of Faggiuola in Pisa was followed by the rise of Castruccio in Lucca, the most formidable of all Italian despots and the most celebrated captain of the time. Villani says of him: "This Castruccio was in person tall, dexterous and handsome; finely made, not bulky, and of a fair complexion, rather inclined to paleness: his hair was light and straight and he bore a very gracious aspect. He was a valorous and magnanimous tyrant, wise and sagacious, of an anxious and laborious mind and possessing great military talents. . . . He was very cruel in executing and torturing men, ungrateful for good offices rendered to him in his necessities, partial to new people and vain of the high station to which he had mounted." In spite of the contradictions in the character of this tyrant of Lucca, there is no doubt of his ability nor of the adoration he inspired amongst his soldiers. Successful in every enterprise he made himself master over a great part of Tuscany, and was feared by every Prince and town throughout Italy.

It was dread of Castruccio's growing power which caused Florence to put herself under Neapolitan rule; and the appeal of the Florentines to Robert of Naples led the Ghibellines in their turn to look for help from the Emperor, Lewis of Bavaria.

Lewis had been occupied until the battle of Mühldorf in struggling against the rival claimant, Frederick of Austria. The capture of Frederick at this battle secured

Castruccio
Castracani

Lewis the
Bavarian

his authority, which was rendered all the more complete by the agreement made later between the two rivals. They soon became so friendly that they are said to have eaten at the same table, shared the same bed and even talked of partitioning the Empire between them. The establishment of Lewis in Germany was a great blow to the Pope, who claimed to exercise all Imperial rights during an interregnum, and to have the power of sanctioning or rejecting an elected Emperor. The result was bitter antagonism between John XXII. and the Bavarian, who took the opportunity offered by the invitation of the Italian Ghibellines to come into Italy and receive the crowns of Lombardy and Rome.

Lewis in
Italy, 1327

Lewis' first act was to overthrow Galeazzo Visconti at Milan, despite the fact that he was his host and an important Ghibelline leader; he imprisoned him with his two sons and re-established a so-called republican government under an Imperial Governor. Castruccio Castracani was amongst the first to join the invader, he became his captain and right-hand man, and was formally declared Duke of Lucca, Pistoia and Volterra. At Rome the Emperor was crowned in the absence of the Pope by the people of Rome, in a ceremony unique and impressive. He himself, magnificently clothed in white satin, bestrode a white horse; before him rode a judge with the book of Imperial laws, and a prefect with the Imperial sword. His horse was led by the greatest nobles of Rome, their robes shining with gold. The Emperor was anointed by two excommunicated Bishops and crowned by the old Sciarra Colonna, who had been prominent in the attack on Boniface VIII. at Anagni. Castruccio was knighted on the same day and made Senator of Rome in the name of the Emperor. The

Crowned at
Rome, 1328

coronation was followed by a public deposition of Pope John XXII. as a heretic and a traitor, and the appointment of an Anti-pope under the name of Nicholas V.

The triumph of Lewis was, however, short-lived. Castruccio had to hurry North to defend his Duchy from the Florentines, and though again successful in arms, his sudden death from fever ended the terror of Florence and robbed the Emperor of his chief support. Death of Castruccio, 1328 In the same year Florence had another stroke of fortune in the death of Charles of Calabria, whose assistance was no longer necessary, and whose rule was becoming irksome. The Emperor was quite unable to make any headway alone, he was short of money and anxious to return to look after his German interests. As for his Anti-pope, he very quickly made humble submission to John XXII. and gladly renounced his precarious position. The Ghibelline party seemed threatened with destruction, but Robert of Naples was too downcast after the death of his son to head the Guelfs with any energy and left the North to struggle alone, until a foreign Power once more intervened.

This time a leader more enterprising and more romantic than Lewis of Bavaria was to make an attempt at solving the problem of Italian politics. Invasion of Italy by John of Bohemia In 1330, Brescia, besieged by Della Scala, the tyrant of Verona, sent to beg for help from John of Bohemia, who responded readily to the appeal, and threw himself with ardour into the Italian struggle.

The young King, who became so suddenly an important factor in the affairs of Italy, was son of the Emperor Henry VII., and one of the most romantic figures of the century. Handsome and chivalrous, devoted to tournaments and all knightly exercises, he was no less famous

in actual warfare and able to hold his own in court or camp. Elegant and polished in dress and manners, he was curiously out of place in half-civilised Bohemia, over which his father had given him the rule. Indeed, unless kept there by revolts amongst his turbulent nobles, he spent little time in his own dominions, but wandered about like a true knight-errant, seeking for wrongs to redress or weak causes to champion. He had aided Lewis the Bavarian at the Battle of Mühldorf, which secured him his Empire. He had made firm friendship with the King of France, a country which particularly attracted him. He had headed a Crusade against the heathen in Lithuania. He was delighted now to find new occupation for his arms, and to endeavour to continue a work in Italy which his father had died in attempting. It was a regular saying at the time, that no one could hope to carry anything through, "without the help of God and the King of Bohemia".

Successes
of John of
Bohemia

At first it seemed as though Italy had really found her saviour. Mastino della Scala retired from Brescia, where John was received with the utmost joy and enthusiasm. Banners and green branches were waved before him, music and dance accompanied his entrance. He acted with great dignity and firmness, reconciled warring parties and recalled all who had been exiled from the city. Other towns hastened to welcome a conqueror who appeared to be without any aim of personal aggrandisement, and was neither a Guelf nor a Ghibeline. Milan, Cremona, Pavia recognised him as lord; Parma, Reggio, Modena and others followed; everywhere he reconciled the rival parties and recalled all exiles irrespective of their politics. In Tuscany, however, Florence was not won over by the new-comer, but

continued to resist his advance. Meanwhile John, threatened by leagues against him in Germany and by the hostility of the Pope at Avignon, was forced to hasten back, and left his Italian conquests in the charge of his young son Charles. Friendship was soon renewed with the Emperor Lewis, in whose interests the King of Bohemia claimed to have worked, but meanwhile the Lombard towns were beginning to feel that they had more control than they had bargained for, whilst the Visconti in Milan and the Scaligers in Verona, the Gonzaga in Mantua and the Esté in Ferrara, jealous of the success of a foreign adventurer, formed a league to undermine his power.

The young Charles proved his skill and courage in the victory of San Felice, but it brought no lasting benefit to the cause, and his father returning to find both parties in league against him, gave up a useless struggle, sold his possessions, and left Italy in a state no better than that in which he had found her. So ended an episode the chief result of which was the impression which it left on the mind of John's son, the future Emperor Charles IV., who had learnt, by his experience in Italy, the evils of a divided government and of uncontrolled and independent parties. John withdrew to spend the remainder of his restless life in continuous fighting, sometimes in his own interest, sometimes in that of others. It was in a second crusade in Lithuania that he lost his eyesight, partly owing to the climate, partly owing to the ignorant treatment of his doctors. The King could not bear his misfortune to be noticed, and would not let it in any way hinder his incessant travels and career of adventure, which he continued, until at last he lost his life at Créçy, fight-

League
against
John of
Bohemia

John of
Bohemia
leaves Italy

ing for his friend Philip VI. of France. Carlyle sums him up as: "a restless, ostentatious, far-grasping, strong-handed man, who kept the world in a stir wherever he was".

In Italy, after the collapse of King John's attempt, warfare continued incessantly: sometimes one power would rise for a time to the top, only to fall in turn before another State or another leader. At first Mastino della Scala of Verona made himself supreme in the North, but was crushed by a league in which Florence and Milan played the leading part. Florence, disappointed at the little result this brought to her, called to her aid a warrior of great reputation, Walter of Brienne Duke of Athens, who was made dictator for the time, though he failed to hold his position long. Next came the extraordinary advance of Milan under the House of Visconti. Azzo Visconti had been an active opponent of John of Bohemia and greatly extended his own power by joining leagues against him. His successors one after the other added to the lands of the Duchy of Milan and increased their own importance by grand alliances abroad and unexampled atrocities at home, until it seemed with Gian Galeazzo that the height of wickedness and of power had been reached, and that a kingdom of Northern Italy might be founded under a tyrant, the recital of whose deeds still makes the blood run cold. But of this later.

The Duke
of Athens
in Flor-
ence, 1343

The Vis-
conti in
Milan

Rome

If all Italy felt that they had more chance of striking for their own advantage during the absence of the Pope, nowhere was this so obvious as in Rome itself. In the Holy City confusion and discord was worse than ever. The Orsini and the Colonna carried on their feuds and their quarrels unchecked; open warfare was often waged

in the streets; the citizens were oppressed by both parties alike and could obtain neither justice nor redress from the proud and selfish nobles. Message after message was sent to Avignon, begging the return of the Pope. John XXII. spoke of coming, but the attractions of Avignon and the influence of the French King were too great, and the whole of Romagna broke into open rebellion.

The succeeding Pope, Benedict XII., was proclaimed Senator and Captain of the Roman Republic, but though proud of the distinction he contented himself with a vain attempt to heal strife from afar. In the midst of all this misery and civil war, a curious ceremony took place in Rome, which may have helped to stir up old memories of greatness in the minds of the people, and which impressed one at least of the audience with a hope of reviving ancient glories. A fellow citizen of Dante, the poet Petrarch, whose writings were just bringing him into prominence, was crowned on the Capitol with the laurel wreath, after a lengthy examination conducted by Robert of Naples. The procession to the Senate Hall, the red-robed youths reciting Petrarch's poems to the glory of the Roman people, the Senator in green, the poet with his royal robe and laurel crown must have offered an extraordinarily impressive sight to the citizens used to the turmoil and bloodshed of private feuds.

Petrarch
crowned as
Poet in
Rome, 1341

Cola di Rienzi, a spectator of this ceremony, whose youthful mind was stored with knowledge of the past splendours of Rome and with horror at her present state of degradation, came into public notice shortly after this event. Of humble parentage, a notary by profession, he early attracted attention by his handsome person and marvellous eloquence, and was one of an embassy sent

Rise of
Rienzi

Embassy to
the Pope,
1343

to Avignon to implore the return of Clement VI. Rienzi was an inveterate opponent of the aristocrats, by whom his own brother had been ruthlessly murdered, and full of sympathy for the poor and the oppressed. His speeches before the Pope excited much notice and admiration. All through his life he had evidently the true orator's gift of swaying men by a word, an almost miraculous power of influence and attraction. The Pope honoured him with an official post in Rome, and on his return from Avignon, Rienzi set himself heart and soul to prepare the way for a democratic revolution. Little by little he won over the people. He excited their minds by speeches and allegorical pictures which showed Rome in shame and distress from which popular effort alone could raise her. To avert suspicion until his schemes were ripe, he played the buffoon before the Orsini and the Colonna, so that they never dreamed of his real character and power. When the time came he struck boldly and with promptitude. On Whitsunday, 1347, having spent the previous night in prayer and preparation, he headed a procession to the Capitol, where he had summoned a meeting of the people to consider the passing of new laws and measures of government; there he swayed the crowd by his eloquence, and proclaimed an edict of reform and retribution. With one accord the assembly hailed him as their ruler, and gave him full power over the laws and government of the Roman Republic. This revolution was accomplished without the shedding of one drop of blood: struck as by a spell, the old Senators fled and many nobles hastened from the city where their power had been undermined. Rienzi took the title of Tribune and proclaimed himself "Redeemer of the Holy Roman Republic".

Rienzi
Tribune
of the
Roman
Republic,
1347

For seven months the new ruler governed with extraordinary wisdom and success. Peace was restored, exiles recalled, justice dealt out impartially to rich and poor alike. Rome was turned from despair to the height of pride and happiness. The citizens rejoiced in the processions and display by which the Tribune impressed the public fancy. The surrounding territory acknowledged the overlordship of the Roman people and even foreign courts received letters and embassies announcing the establishment of a new power in Italy.

Rienzi's mind was full of magnificent ideas, which ^{Rienzi's} though ambitious were not wholly impracticable under ^{plans} existing circumstances. His plan was to summon to the Capitol a parliament for the whole of Italy, to proclaim the sovereignty of the Roman people, to confer Roman freedom on all Italian citizens, and to found a natural Roman Empire under an elected Emperor. It was more than merely a fascinating idea. The absence of the Pope, the weakness of the Emperor, and the divisions of Italy offered some real possibilities of success, but for two great obstacles: the character of Rienzi himself, and the instability of the Roman people. The Tribune, though a man of wonderful genius, energy and enthusiasm, was wanting in that steadiness and absolute sanity which are necessary for lasting work. Perhaps there was already a touch of madness in his genius; perhaps his mind was unhinged by his unprecedented success; perhaps he was rather too much of an orator, too little of a statesman. It is hard to believe that he was not sincere in his love for Rome and in his enthusiasm for the cause. But it would have been superhuman to have made no mistakes, and his only

real strength lay in the support of the populace, a very precarious foundation for permanent power.

For some time Rienzi's position seemed secure. The magnificent ceremonies in which he indulged and which have been looked upon as foolish acts of vanity, were probably calculated to keep himself before the public notice and to influence a people still rather like children and needing to be impressed by public spectacles. The first festival was for his knighthood. Clad in white silk embroidered with gold, the handsome Tribune passed through the town accompanied by the Papal Vicar, preceded by a sword-bearer, and with the standard in the rear. In the evening he bathed in the ancient porphyry basin in which tradition said that the Emperor Constantine had washed away both his paganism and his leprosy. After a night spent alone in the Baptistery he was solemnly knighted next day by the syndic of the people, who bound round him the girdle of his order and fastened on the spurs of gold. His coronation as Tribune, which followed, was equally magnificent. He received seven crowns to typify the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and after the ceremony he issued an edict conferring on all Italians the rights of Roman citizenship, forbidding the entry of armed forces without the consent of Pope and people, and abolishing the names of Guelf and Ghibelline.

This happened in August, and in December he was a fugitive. Perhaps Rienzi's most dangerous mistake was his treatment of the nobles. He laid hands on the leaders of the great families at a banquet, and then, with mistimed leniency set them free, after a humiliation which such men could never forgive. A force was raised against him by the Colonna, who attacked Rome,

Rienzi
knighted,
1st Aug.
1347

Crowned,
15th Aug.
1347

and although their defeat was complete, the victor lost many adherents by his triumph and by his undue exultation over the conquered. He fell at last through the desertion of the fickle people, who were annoyed by his taxation and frightened by the Papal denunciation of their leader, once the friend of the Pope. Rienzi seems to have suddenly lost heart. Without support he could do nothing and he could not bear to raise his arms against the people. On 15th December he abdicated with a suddenness which surprised friends and foes alike. Papal authority and aristocratic rule were restored on the instant, and with them the state of anarchy and disunion from which the Tribune had temporarily saved the city.

Abdication
of Rienzi,
15th Dec.
1347

Rienzi was not destined to remain for ever in obscurity. He is said to have spent the time of his absence amongst the Fraticelli, hermits dwelling in the mountains of the Abruzzi, who passed their lives in penitence and asceticism. Here tradition relates that he received a divine message through one of the brethren, urging him to take up public life once more and fetch the Emperor to Rome, since by this means alone could his Imperial dreams be realised. Undeterred by personal danger, Rienzi travelled to Prague, the residence of Charles IV., who had succeeded Lewis the Bavarian. Here he unfolded his schemes with something of his old eloquence, but with a strain of mysticism and wildness which point to his mind being unhinged by his recent life of solitude. Charles IV. was the last man to be stirred by visions of universal Empire and Italian regeneration. After keeping the ex-Tribune some time a prisoner in Bohemia, he sent him to Avignon to defend his Catholic orthodoxy and loyalty before Pope and

Rienzi in
exile

Rienzi
visits
Charles
IV., 1350

Imprisoned
by Pope Cardinals. He was again imprisoned by Clement VI.; but Innocent VI., who succeeded, thought to make use of his illustrious captive to quell the disturbances which were threatening the total destruction of the capital of the world.

State of
Rome after
fall of
Rienzi Ever since Rienzi's fall, Rome had been going from bad to worse. Innocent VI. had entrusted the rule to two Senators, an Orsini and a Colonna, but their unpopularity was increased by a famine which the populace believed to be the result of governmental regulations concerning the sale of corn. One Senator, Berthold Orsini, faced the mob and was literally buried under the heap of stones which were flung at him: successors were appointed, but order was difficult to restore. In 1353, Innocent commissioned Cardinal Albornoz, a Spanish prelate, both warrior and statesman, to do what he could, and with him sent the ex-Tribune, that his knowledge of Rome and the Romans might be turned to account.

Return of
Rienzi to
Rome and
his death,
1354 The return of Rienzi was a veritable triumph. The people remembered his past greatness and welcomed him as a deliverer. As Papal Senator he ruled with much of his old power and for a short time with extraordinary success. But Cola's position between Pope and people was totally insecure; he had little real authority and no money. It was his attempts to get money rather than the severity of his rule which brought about his final downfall. In the popular revolt which overthrew him, the cry was "Death to the traitor who has imposed the taxes," and this was the real cause of his ruin. The mob surrounded his palace, and shouted him down when he stood forth on the balcony to address them. Had he been allowed to speak, he might still

have won them over, says the Chronicler, with unbounded confidence in the eloquence of the Tribune. But he could not speak, he could only unfurl the Roman banner and point silently to the golden letters "Senatus populusque Romanus". Stones were flung at him, and wounded in the head he left the balcony, only to find the palace in flames behind him. Determined to make one more bid for life, Rienzi hastily disguised himself as a peasant escaping with plunder. Recognised as he was passing the last gate, he was seized and led back to the steps of the palace, whence he had so often pronounced condemnation upon his enemies. In silence he faced the mob, his arms crossed on his breast. None ventured to touch the man who had done so much for Rome, and silence gradually fell on the turbulent throng. It was only when he opened his lips to address the speechless crowd that a citizen, fearing his eloquence, thrust his sword through the Tribune's body. The spell was broken. Others stabbed and mangled the helpless corpse and dragged it from the Capitol. For two days it hung from a house in the Colonna quarter, an appalling spectacle. Then, by the command of the Colonna, the body was burnt by the Jews of the city and the ashes scattered abroad, that no relic might be left of the last of the Tribunes. Rienzi had done much and dreamed more; but the promise and glory of his early days were tarnished at the last by a violence and want of balance which seem to betoken a mind unhinged by visionary imaginings, and by sudden reversals of fortune sufficient to affect the strongest brain.

The feeling was more and more gaining ground, that the one thing necessary was the return of the Popes. Their lengthened absence had alienated the ^{Desire for Papal re-}turn

majority of Italians and weakened Papal authority to an unprecedented extent. The Duke of Milan cared so little for a Bull of excommunication, that he forced the unlucky legate who brought it to eat the parchment and the leaden seal. Fervent Catholics longed for the revival of reverent feelings towards a true head of the Church. Supporters of order hoped that Papal influence might be exerted in that direction. The Popes themselves felt that residence at Rome was the only hope of maintaining their secular authority.

St.
Catherine
of Siena

One of the most active advocates of Papal return was St. Catherine of Siena. This remarkable personality was one of the few instances of a saint who led an active public life, and of a woman of the people who took part in politics, and swayed nobles and rulers by her influence. Born of humble parents in Siena, Catherine as a child began to see visions and dream dreams. When still very young, she resisted the attempts of her father and mother to arrange a marriage for her and made them believe in her divine call. Without leaving her home, she gave herself up to a life of the greatest strictness and self-discipline. She spent more than half the night in prayer, and the rest on a bed of hard planks. Her days were given up to work amongst the poor and to religious exercises. During the second epidemic of plague, she laboured incessantly for the relief of the sufferers, with an utter disregard for her own safety which doubtless helped her to escape the malady. Despite her humble life and apparent lack of education, she came to know many of the chief people of the time and took the greatest interest in public events. The misfortunes of Italy filled her with grief and determination to do all in her power to alleviate them. At one

time she had great hopes of a European crusade, and wrote to the captains of condottieri urging their participation and blaming the evil of their lives. She even ventured to reprove Bernabo Visconti for the wickedness of his ways and his opposition to the Church. When Florence revolted against the Pope and was punished by excommunication, St. Catherine hastened to the city and opened negotiations with the leaders of the Republic, and it was on a mission of pacification on their behalf that she first journeyed to Avignon. It is wonderful to read of the influence exerted by this fragile being, still little more than a girl, who came from such humble surroundings to speak authoritatively to Popes and Rulers.

Gregory XI was much impressed by her speech, and held many interviews with her; but he was a weak irresolute man, very reluctant to leave the luxury and peace of Avignon for the turmoils and discomforts of life in Rome. In the end, however, St. Catherine and his conscience, aided no doubt by the fear of losing his Italian possessions for ever, prevailed to induce Gregory to undertake the journey. He re-entered his capital amidst much outward rejoicing, which, however, meant very little real support. Probably Gregory would never have stuck to the post of danger, but his sudden death ended his indecision.

The Conclave, summoned to meet for the election of a successor, was invaded by the mob, which broke through all barriers and noisily demanded a Roman as Pope. Urban VI., who eventually was chosen, was indeed an Italian, but little fitted by his proud and passionate character to rule in a time of such great difficulty. St. Catherine's last days were spent in a brave endeavour

St. Catherine
at Avignon

Return of
Pope to
Rome, 1378

Election of
Urban VI.,
1378

Death of
St.
Catherine,
1378

to quiet the revolts against Urban in Rome, and to pacify the disordered city. These efforts were too much for the little strength her life of exertion and ascetism had left her. A fall in church, probably caused by a fainting-fit, gave her some internal injury from which she never recovered, and she died at Rome amidst universal sorrow. She had only reached the age of thirty-one. Her death saved her from seeing the still greater degradation which was to be brought upon the Papacy by the long Schism. She could yet hope for the success of Urban over his rival Clement VII., who had been elected shortly after the Roman Pontiff by a section of the Cardinals, and who was holding out in Naples, supported by the Queen.

Anti-pope,
Clement
VII., 1378

Disputed
succession
in Naples,
1343

The fourteenth century was, without doubt, a period of great storm and stress throughout Italy. In the South, Naples, whose King Robert during the earlier part of the century had played so leading a part in general affairs, had been plunged at his death into a dynastic struggle. This kept her fully occupied at home, and led to important results in the future. The first house of Anjou had split into two branches; the elder branch in Hungary, the younger in Naples. When Robert of Naples died, his grand-daughter Joanna, who succeeded him, had married a Prince of the Hungarian House named Andrew, a younger brother of Lewis the Great, King of Hungary. This Andrew did not appreciate the position of King Consort, but desired to rule in his own right as representative of the elder line. Such claims were not likely to lead to harmony between the married pair, who were only sixteen years of age, and who were each flattered and urged on by rival parties. Queen Joanna, beautiful and uncontrolled,

Joanna I.,
1343-1382

was in love with her cousin Lewis of Taranto, and cared nothing for the husband to whom she had been married for purely political reasons. A conspiracy was formed against Andrew. Whether his wife was privy to it or not is still uncertain, although the case against her looks suspiciously black. He was awaked one night on pretence of important news, and fallen upon by his enemies, who strangled him with a silken cord, since there was a tradition current that he was protected by a charm from poison or from steel. The actual murderers were executed with horrible tortures by officials of the Pope, but public rumour pointed at the Queen as the true author of the deed. Her marriage with Lewis of Taranto, an open instigator of the crime, gave colour to this accusation.

The King of Hungary, furious at his brother's death, prepared to invade Naples with great force. Joanna lost heart and fled with her second husband to Provence, leaving most of her nobles to submit to the invader, who occupied the Kingdom without a blow. This new rule, however, did not long prevail in Naples. Lewis of Hungary could hardly govern the affairs of two States so widely separated, and was glad in the end to resign the Italian Province to the Queen, after a Papal court had pronounced her innocent of the death of Andrew. This ended Neapolitan difficulties for the moment, but Joanna though she had four husbands had no children, and as time went on the succession question became acute. The Queen's probable heir was Charles of Durazzo, a husband of her niece and himself a distant relation; but when rival Popes were elected in 1378 great discord arose between them, for whilst Joanna favoured the French candidate, Clement VII., Charles was an

Invasion of
Naples by
Lewis of
Hungary,
1347

Restora-
tion of
Joanna,
1351

ardent supporter of Urban VI. Joanna hated opposition and was eager for French support, for which reasons she turned to the House of Anjou in France, and declared Louis, its representative, as her heir. War broke out, in the course of which Joanna was captured, and as punishment for her crime, real or supposed, suffocated under a feather-bed by orders of the old King of Hungary. Her death left Charles of Durazzo victorious for the time being, and he was crowned King as Charles III.; the claims of Anjou, however, were not forgotten, and are important as forming a pretext for the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII. of France at the close of the fifteenth century.¹

Death of
Joanna,
1382

Venice

Venice during the fourteenth century was gradually emerging from her position of isolation and independence, and becoming more involved in Italian politics as she enlarged her territories on the mainland. At the beginning of this period, as has already been noticed, Venice was scarcely part of Italy, had no mainland territory and had turned all her strength and all her interest to maritime and commercial matters; with the result that she surpassed all rivals in naval skill and enterprise, that her eminence as a trading power was universally recognised, and that her wealth was unequalled and of world-wide renown. Petrarch writes of her ships: "They carry wine to England; honey to the Scythians; saffron, oil, linen to Assyria, Armenia, Persia and Arabia; wood to Egypt and Greece. They return laden with various merchandise, which is distributed over all Europe." Not only did the city enrich herself with trading beyond the seas; she sent goods also to Italian and German cities; and her own indus-

¹ See *Genealogical Table*,

tries, especially glass-making, copper and iron working, and bell-founding were prosperously carried on. Her government, though oligarchical and despotic, was strong and orderly. It was rich with the profits of trading dues, salt monopoly and profits of banking, and ready to look after the welfare of the city in a paternal spirit not wholly unsuccessful.

Thus Venice at the opening of the fourteenth century was rich, powerful and prosperous; but already there were signs of rocks ahead. Trade in the East was bringing her into conflict with the rising power of Genoa. Her new idea, of extending towards the West, and acquiring Italian lands, could not fail to arouse the antagonism of the great families by which Northern Italy was increasingly dominated. The first enemy of importance, whom Venice had to face, was the great lord of Verona, Mastino della Scala. The extension of his dominion in the North and his policy of imposing custom duties on her goods, alarmed the city, which was dependent on the mainland for her food-supply, and dreaded to be cut off from some of her most useful stores. In the war which followed Venice won over the Carrara, lords of Padua, to her side, began her career of expansion by the acquirement of Treviso and its district, and assisted in overthrowing the supremacy of the Scala family in Verona.

Another enemy who a little later disturbed Venetian tranquillity was Lewis of Hungary, jealous of the territory which the city had acquired in Dalmatia. Venice was not able to get so successfully out of this war, in which for the time she lost land and prestige.

Other difficulties which hampered Venice during this century came from plague and internal troubles. In

Rivalry
with Genoa

Hostility of
mainland
powers

War with
Verona,
1329

War between
Venice and
Hungary,
1355

Black
Death,
1348

1348 she suffered so terribly from the Black Death that more than half the population are said to have perished. The town passed through a ghastly period : death-boats passed along the canals, the dead bodies were flung from the windows of the neighbouring houses, and were buried together without distinction in a common grave. In no place in Italy was the mortality greater.

Conspiracy
of Marin
Falier,
1354-55

Troubles also arose from antagonism to the government, and vain attempts to shake the despotism of the Council of Ten. The most famous of these attempts was headed by the Doge himself, Marin Falier, who wished to destroy the aristocracy of the city and make himself uncontrolled ruler.

The plot was discovered through the tenderheartedness of one of the conspirators, anxious to save a friend from the coming destruction. Vengeance was prompt and impartial. Ten of the leaders of the conspiracy were hanged, and the Doge himself, whose complicity was discovered, was deprived of his ducal cap and executed. His head was struck off at the top of the marble staircase, where he and his predecessors, on entering into office, had taken their oaths of fidelity to the Republic. This act of justic placed beyond question the authority of the famous Council of Ten.

War be-
tween
Venice and
Genoa

In addition to these difficulties Venice had to face Genoa, her most dangerous enemy. Genoa certainly was no despicable rival. She had a strong maritime position on the mainland, which was strengthened by her occupation of Corsica, and she was guarded by mountains on the north from inroads of enemies from Italy ; whilst her profitable trade in the Black Sea was sufficient to rouse great jealousy in the heart of the other competitor for commerce in the East. On the other hand,

she had endless troubles from internal factions and family disputes; the Visconti in Milan were incessantly threatening her independence, and her government was less united and strong than that of Venice.

Nevertheless, Genoa reaped most advantage from the first war with her rival, which arose from quarrels in the Black Sea. She won a great naval victory off the island of Sapienza; and Venice, disheartened by the conspiracy of Marin Falier at home, concluded peace and gave up her demands. This great defeat of the Venetian fleet is said to have been presaged by all sorts of portents. Crows had fought in the rigging of the vessels before the combat, and plucked each other to death. Enormous and unknown fish had swum round the ships and swallowed seamen whole, till the crews were filled with terror. Such tales show the extent of the calamity from the horror which it excited at the time.

The next struggle between Venice and Genoa has gained the name of the War of Chioggia from the important events which happened round that town, a place commanding one end of the water-way leading from the lagoons of Venice to the open sea. The Genoese fleet captured this strong position and Venice trembled for her own safety. The honour of her rescue rests with two great Venetian seamen, Victor Pisani and Carlo Zeno, and with the Doge himself, Andrea Contarini.

At the time when Chioggia fell Pisani was in prison, suffering punishment for a recent defeat, which had been in no way his fault. The people, panic-stricken, rioted in the streets. "If you wish us to fight," they cried, "give us back our Admiral Victor Pisani; long live Victor Pisani!" The government listened to their demands

First
Genoese
War, 1350-
1355

Battle of
Sapienza,
1354

War of
Chioggia,
1378-82

and Pisani was put in command. Every Venetian vessel available was manned, and the Genoese fleet was driven back down the narrow water-way to Chioggia, where escape had been prevented by blocking the outlet to the open sea. Further measures, however, were difficult, for the greater number of the ships of Venice were away in the East under Carlo Zeno, and to retake Chioggia without them was an impossible task. Urgent messages were despatched, and the Doge was obliged to say that unless help came by the New Year he would raise the siege. On the very day fixed for the surrender, Carlo Zeno and the hoped-for armament returned, laden with provisions, and the blockade was continued. At length the combined effort of Pisani and Zeno was successful, and the whole Genoese fleet was forced to surrender for lack of supplies. The following year peace was concluded at Turin. Venice had saved her own existence, but had not been exactly successful: she had to give up Dalmatia, the Island of Tenidos and almost all the possessions she had laboriously acquired on the mainland. Despite these losses, however, the really important question had been settled to the advantage of Venice. The naval power of Genoa had received a blow from which it never recovered, and her rival was free from danger in that quarter. Internal troubles undermined the little remaining strength of the Genoese and at the close of the century France undertook to govern the once proud Republic. Venice, on the other hand, recovered from her exertions in a surprisingly short time, and her trade became more flourishing than ever. In the following period, however, her ambition was increasingly turned towards territorial expansion, to winning back and adding to her possessions on the main-

Peace of
Turin, 1381

Results of
the
struggle

land. Her later history is chiefly concerned with the new difficulties, which such a policy could not fail to bring upon her.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Milman : *History of Latin Christianity*, vols. vii. and viii.

Sismondi : *Italian Republics*.

Bulwer-Lytton : *Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes*.

CHAPTER V

RISE OF THE SWISS REPUBLIC

THE rise of the Swiss Republic, even though the old tales of Tell and the apple, of the wicked Gesler, and of the oath on the Rütli have gone for ever out of the region of history and are chiefly interesting to the students of myth and folk-lore, is still a story full of picturesque incident and striking heroism. It is a story of the banding together of sturdy mountaineers, in the days when simple country folk were held of little account, who, strong in their longing for freedom and in the love of their mountain home, were able to oppose successfully kings, nobles and trained armies, and to form an independent government which has held its own down to the present day.

Swabia

In the thirteenth century there was no such country as Switzerland. The land we now know under that name was then simply part of the old Duchy of Swabia; like the rest of Germany it belonged to the Empire, and was divided amongst various feudal lords, holding their lands as Imperial fiefs. Monasteries were very important in Swabia and much of the country belonged to them, those of Einsiedeln and St. Gall being especially renowned. Many of these religious houses had what were known as grants of immunity, which conferred the privilege of holding directly from the Empire, not from

any intermediate lord, and an Imperial bailiff was sent to supervise the administration of justice, which was, therefore, never under the control of any Count of the neighbourhood. Many great nobles also had territory in the mountain-land, which centres round the Lake of Lucerne and the upper valleys of the Rhine and the Rhone; such as the Counts of Savoy, of Geneva, of Kiburg, of Rapperswell, above all of Habsburg. On a ^{The Habs-} hill called the Wülpelsberg, not far from the town of ^{burgs} Brugg, a massive tower still stands to perpetuate the memory of the great family who dwelt in their *Habichtsburg* or Hawk's Castle, in the days before the Empire itself came under their rule.

In all this there is nothing to distinguish this Alpine ^{Southern} region from any other part of the Empire, or from any ^{Swabia} other feudal country, but it very soon began to develop characteristics of its own. A land of mountains is never quite so feudalised nor quite so dependent as a land of plains; serfdom never seems to take so deep a root; nature renders impossible the same amount of control and seignorial management. This part of Swabia was early distinguished by the growth of communes both in towns and villages. The members of these associations were bound together by the possession of certain rights and privileges and obtained to a great extent the management of their own affairs. Town communities and rural communities sprang up all over the country and sometimes the scattered inhabitants of a mountain valley would form themselves into a union of this description. Some Swabian towns were free ^{Towns} Imperial cities from the first, directly under the Emperor, and with the right of sending representatives to the Diet; others were built on the lands of churches or

lords, but were privileged, although dependent, and often shook off their subjection later. In any case they were homes of comparative freedom, and a year and a day in a chartered town gave liberty to the serf who could escape thither. In Southern Swabia the leading towns were Zurich, a free Imperial city; Lucerne, at first under the Abbey of Murbach but later independent; and Bern which obtained Imperial "immunity" on the extinction of the family of Zarringen by which it was originally founded.

Country

As the towns were protected and rendered bold by their walls, so the valleys were given security and independence by their mountains. The inhabitants of these mountain valleys, grouped into communes, were drawn closely together by common interests, by pastoral and agricultural work and by possession of rights over the *allmend* or *mark*, as the waste land between the little settlements was called, and for use of which as pasture the whole commune, as a rule, would be associated. Valley communes began to be formed in Uri, Schwitz, Unterwalden, Glarus and other districts, and little by little the inhabitants succeeded in winning recognition of their independence and obtaining charters of privileges.

Struggles
against the
nobles

The nobles were not likely to let their authority go without a struggle. There were various attempts to make the whole Duchy of Swabia into a united Principality; one great family after another tried to amass more and more territory into its own hands, but none tried harder nor with more success than the Habsburgs, whose increasing power threatened the overthrow of the free Communes. The Communes looked to the Emperor for help against the aristocracy; Uri was taken under Imperial protection in 1231, Schwitz won its

charter of immunity in 1240, and in the common fear of oppression towns and districts began the practice of banding together to obtain strength. Various leagues were formed from time to time. Bern united with Lucerne, Schwitz with Unterwalden and Uri, and then the three of them with Lucerne and Zurich. These were at first only temporary leagues, but in this linking of town and country for mutual protection, we see the true beginning of the later Confederation.

From 1254 to 1273 was the Imperial Interregnum, when, as Carlyle says, there was "No Kaiser, nay as many as three at once"; a period of terrible confusion and party strife assuredly, but nevertheless an opportunity for steady advance towards freedom, whilst the great men of the land had little time to attend to humble matters. In the end, as we have seen elsewhere, Rudolf, the head of the Habsburgs, became King of Germany and Duke of Austria as well as Emperor, a very important personage indeed. There was great fear that the whole of Southern Swabia would now come under his sway: he bought Friburg, Neuchâtel, Glarus and other places, established rights over Lucerne, and surrounded the Forest Cantons of Uri, Schwitz and Unterwalden, with a cordon of his private estates. His death in 1291 was the signal for the first "Perpetual League," in which these three, Uri, Schwitz and Unterwalden laid the foundation of the Swiss Confederation. The document commemorating this compact, the original of which is now in the Archives of Schwitz, was not exactly a declaration of independence, but a union to obtain quiet and peace, security of justice, mutual defence, and the settlement of quarrels by arbitration. It ends with the hopeful sentence: "The above-written

Rudolf of
Habsburg

First Per-
petual
League,
1291

statutes, decreed for the common weal and health, shall endure for ever, God willing". It has, indeed, never been annulled, but only gradually outgrown and superseded.

Albert of
Austria

Rudolf's son Albert, "one-eyed, loose-lipped, unbeautiful," eventually Emperor, continued his father's policy of amassing Swabian territories, but was murdered by his nephew at Brugg in 1308. The Confederates then had only to oppose Austrian Habsburgs not Emperors, the Imperial throne being occupied for a space by the House of Luxemburg, which was at enmity with the rival House of Habsburg. The cause of the actual

War with
Austrian
Habsburgs

outbreak of hostility with this formidable family was some attack made by the men of Schwitz on the Monastery of Einsiedeln, the reason of which is obscure. In consequence, Frederick Duke of Austria sent his brother Leopold to punish the mountaineers. Leopold came with an army of nobles who despised the foe and expected but little difficulty in their task. The scene of

Battle of
Morgarten,
1315

the Battle of Morgarten, where the enemies met, was not amidst very wild high mountains, but in a hill country of gentle slopes leading into Schwitz. Over the ridge of Morgarten a saddle pass formed the approach, and here the peasant army was stationed to check the Austrian advance. Leading up to it from the Lake of Aegeri was a narrow path, hemmed in by hills on either side. Leopold's army, clad in the heavy armour of those days, came carelessly along, so sure of victory that their attendants had been ordered to bring ropes to lead away the captured cattle. One man alone is recorded to have realised the danger. "You have all taken counsel how best to get into the country," said the Duke's fool, "but have given no explanation of how you are going to get

out again." Many had no need of a way out. Before the Austrians reached the pass, a detachment of peasants hurled down upon them from an advanced spur of the ridge a regular avalanche of rocks and trees, which threw them into the wildest confusion ; and at the next moment the rest of the mountaineers rushed down from the pass and turned the would-be attack into a rout. Utterly out of hand the defeated troops fled back, to be hewn down as they ran, or to be drowned in the lake into which many were driven, absolutely helpless in their heavy armour. Peasants on foot had proved themselves a match, in their own country at least, for an army of mounted knights. The battle resulted in a renewal of the League, and three years later the Habsburgs gave up their claim to interfere with the administration of the three Forest States.

Such success was almost unprecedented at that time, and it is no wonder that stories and traditions have gathered round this birth of Swiss liberty. There were certain to be recollections of Habsburg oppression, of cruel bailiffs and of peasant heroism: the slow striving for liberty has been converted, in the stories, into a sudden rising and one heroic effort ; and these stories have centred round the deed of William Tell, a deed which can be found repeated in the folklore of many northern countries, Iceland, Norway, Denmark and even England, where the ballad of William of Cloudesley recounts an almost similar event. It was more than a century and a half after Morgarten that the Tell legend first appeared in a collection of documents known as the White Book: and a later Chronicler copied it with the addition of such exact details, dates and names, that it was long looked upon as an accepted fact. The

The story
of William
Tell

story runs, that Gesler, the bailiff of Albert of Austria and a monster of wickedness, set his hat on a pole at Uri, that all passers-by might do reverence to it. Tell, who refused, was brought before him and ordered as a punishment to shoot an apple from the head of his own child: this he did successfully, but Gesler insisted on knowing why he had placed a second arrow in his quiver and promised him his life if he would answer: Tell replied that if he had shot his child he would have slain with the second arrow the bailiff himself. Despite his promise, Gesler bound Tell, and took him over the Lake of Lucerne, to leave him in a place where, as he said, he should never see sun nor moon again; but the rock is still shown at the *Tellsplatte*, whence the prisoner leapt out and made his escape: later he revenged himself by shooting Gesler in the *Hohle Gasse* at Küssnacht, and became the founder of the Federation.

There are other legends connected with the resistance of the Swiss, which have rather more foundation in fact. The secret conspiracy of Stauffacher, Fürst, Zu Frauen and Melchthal, their meetings at the Rütli, the storming of the Castle of Sarnen and many others, although probably much embroidered and placed by the Chroniclers at too late a date, are not wholly impossible and concern people who really existed. It is the story of Tell, however, which has most fired the popular imagination, and he has been so long bound up with the growth of Swiss independence, that he is likely to retain his place as national hero, despite the cold light of historical criticism.

After the Battle of Morgarten, the Confederation gained new members one by one. Lucerne was the first to join in 1330, the allies agreeing to make no new

Lucerne
joins the
League,
1330

arrangements, without the consent of the whole body. Various attempts were made to break this connection, and within Lucerne itself a conspiracy arose to crush out the patriotic party. There is a story of a boy who unwittingly became acquainted with the plot and was only given his life on condition that he told no man what he had heard, who revealed it without breaking his promise. In the Butchers' Guildhouse he found various patriots assembled, and going in he sat by the stove and began to talk to it: "Oh, stove, stove! may I speak?" The men laughed at him and thought him mad, but he went on with his tale. "Oh! stove, stove! I must make my complaint to thee, since I may speak to no man: to-night there are men gathered under the great vault at the corner, who are going to commit murder." The alarm was thus given, the conspirators were seized and the patriotic party was successfully established.

Zurich was the next to join the League, but she was not at first a very certain ally, and was inclined to play too much for her own hand. She was one of the Imperial cities, free therefore from control of count or bailiff, and with the management of her own government, which was, however, distinctly oligarchical. The *Old Burghers*, as they were called, the upper classes excluding artisans and labourers, alone had political rights in the early fourteenth century, and a Council, entirely recruited from their ranks, awarded all places and obtained all powers. Considerable discontent was caused by the despotism of this ruling body, and the more democratic party found a leader in Rudolf Brun, himself an aristocrat, but a man of great ambition, who was ready to win himself a name at the head of a popular movement.

Zurich and
Rudolf
Brun

Brun was recognised as Burgomaster, guilds were instituted into which all classes were admitted, and rich and poor were alike given political votes. The constitution was, however, far from being democratic, for the Burgomaster was almost a Dictator; but the revolution raised opponents to the town among the partisans of Austria to whom the *Old Burgher* party turned for help, and in self-defence Zurich joined the League of Uri, Schwitz, Unterwalden and Lucerne in 1351. There were fatal defects in this new alliance; for, thanks no doubt to Brun, the different parties reserved to themselves the right of making independent alliances, and also the four original members pledged themselves to support the existing government of Zurich if need should arise. The danger of such stipulations was seen in 1354, when Zurich was besieged by the Emperor Charles IV., and Brun saved the situation by hoisting the Imperial flag and declaring that the town had always been loyal to the Empire. Eventually he went so far as to make a treaty of alliance with Austria herself. It was not till after Brun's death in 1360, that Zurich was really loyal to the Confederation and could be reckoned as heart and soul with the party of independence.

Zurich
joins the
League,
1351

Glarus and
Zug join,
1352

Bern
joins,
1353

In 1352 Glarus and Zug formed the sixth and seventh members of the League, and in 1353 the adhesion of Bern completed the famous Confederation of the Eight old Cantons.

Bern had been recognised as an Imperial city by Rudolf in 1274, elected her own officers, had her own mint and market, and had been granted various privileges, such as exemption from any military service which would involve inability to return home the following night; but though privileged, her government was, on

the whole, aristocratic and military. Bern had already joined the Forest States in 1323 and won a victory with them, but the definite alliance was not made till 1353, after which time she formed a strong and much-needed bulwark on the West.

Now it was that the true war of Liberation began. The mountaineers were born soldiers and success developed in them a still more war-like spirit. In 1375, their victories over a mixed body of French and English mercenaries, led by the Lord of Coucy, helped to increase their self-confidence and ardour for battle. The invaders were called Englishmen by the peasants, or *Gugler* from the cowls (*Kugelhüte*) which many of them wore: a hillock at Butterholz, where they were repulsed, is still called the Englishmen's Hill. The chief work of the Confederates, however, was still against the House of Habsburg, and it was during this struggle that they advanced so much in unity and national policy.

Victories of
the Swiss

In 1386 Leopold of Habsburg collected a large army of nobles and mercenaries from Germany, Italy and France, with which he felt confident of crushing once and for all the insolent peasants. His plan was to march upon Lucerne, as the centre of the Confederation; and in the hot summer month of July his main force rode round the shore of the little Lake of Sempach, situated in undulating country about ten miles to the north of Lucerne.

Here followed the battle which completed the work begun at Morgarten and gave real security to Swiss independence. A band of Confederates concealed in a forest awaited the enemy, and Leopold fell into the ambush, with the result that he faced his foes on an uneven plateau, quite unsuited for cavalry fighting. The

Battle of
Sempach,
1386

Austrians dismounted and prepared to fight on foot, armed with the long spears they were accustomed to wield on horseback. The Swiss, formed in their wedge-shaped column, and armed with halberds and short weapons, were wholly unable at first to make any impression on the enemy, as they could not reach them to strike a single blow. The nobles seemed sure of victory when the tide of battle was turned as by a miracle.

Arnold von Winkelried, so the story runs, rushed upon the serried ranks of spears, seized all he could reach, and turning them into his own body, formed a gap through which his fellows could enter: once at close quarters they were able to do deadly execution with their shorter weapons. In a hand-to-hand encounter the knights were nowhere; they could scarcely move their long lances, they were almost cooked with the hot sun streaming on their heavy armour, and were totally unable to cope with the quick movements of the active and light-armed mountaineers. In vain Leopold, enraged at the ill-success of his army, plunged with reckless courage into the thickest of the fight. His fall was the signal for a general retreat. In desperate confusion knights and squires turned to fly, but overweighted as they were and unable to reach their horses, few escaped. The Confederates fell on their knees to thank God for a victory as complete as has ever been won by any army, the news of which spread like wild-fire over Europe; and all men marvelled at the defeat of such a force of chivalry.

The struggle was not yet over. There was a truce for the time, followed by another victory for the peasants at Näfels, where the men of Glarus, imitating the tactics of Morgarten, flung down stones on the advancing horsemen and then routed them with a charge down

Battle of
Näfels,
1388

the steep hill-side. Every year a pilgrimage is made to Näfels and to the Eleven Stones, which are said to mark the place where eleven times the Austrians rallied in a vain attempt to stem the victorious onslaught. Peace followed in 1389, by which the Duke of Austria gave up all his feudal claims over Lucerne, Glarus and Zug. Treaty of 1389

In 1393 the Confederates bound themselves once more together by what was known as the Convention of Sempach, and the Habsburg Dukes, despairing at last of the destruction of the League, signed a peace which was renewed in 1412 and which was the practical recognition of the Swiss Republic. Treaty of 1393

The Confederation thus formed was of a very peculiar character and by no means very definitely organised; indeed it seems extraordinary that it should have held together at all, considering the great differences which existed between the various States, and considering also that even their territory did not form one continuous whole. Uri, Schwitz, Unterwalden and Glarus, the four forest cantons, were rural communities of the purest and most typical kind; the government was in the hands of the sovereign people, who met in open air assemblies to arrange all matters of importance, and on smaller affairs delegated their powers to an elective Council. In the cities, on the contrary, the chief authority was exercised by the magistrates; Zurich was becoming more and more democratic, the burgomasters, of whom there were two, being elected every half-year; but Bern was distinctly aristocratic with a Council of Twelve chosen exclusively from the upper classes. Lucerne and Zug were something between the two. Not only were the elements of the Confederation thus diverse, but there was no real central organisation to keep them together. Character of the Confederation

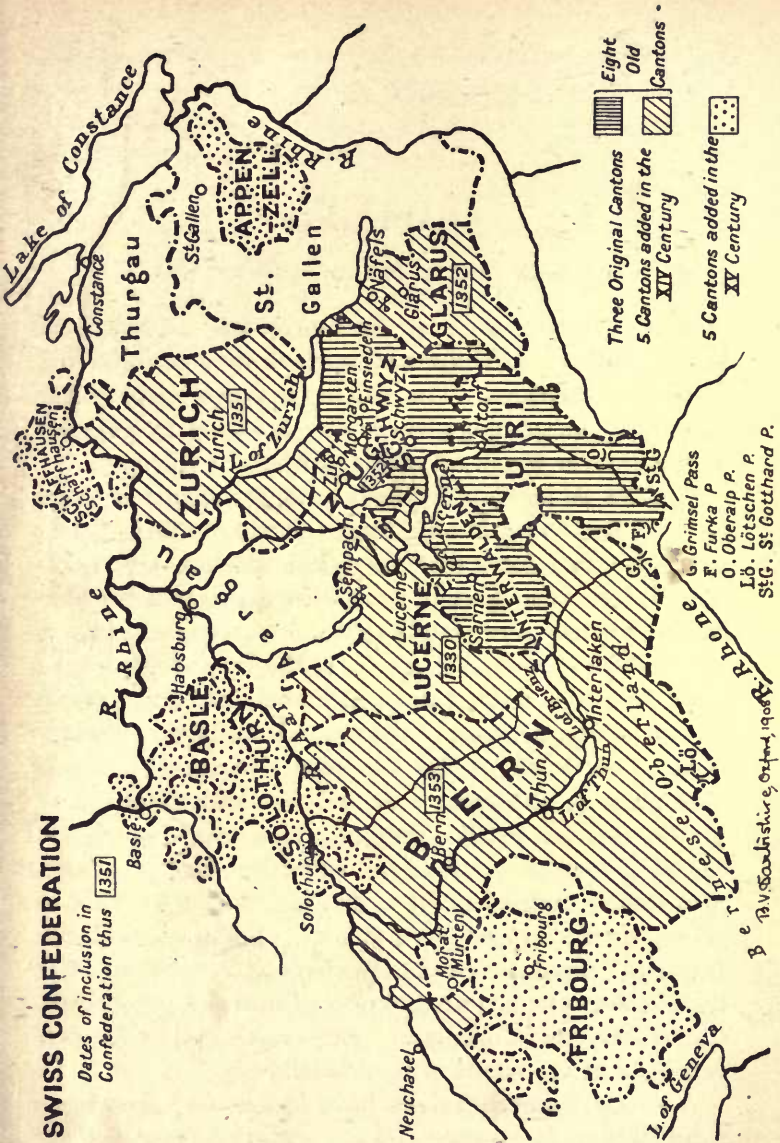
No regular Diet existed for the whole, although representatives from some of the States may have met occasionally for common business; the Leagues which united them were very varied and did not always comprise all the eight members of the Confederacy. The chief bond of union was common hostility to the Austrian Habsburgs, and common connection with the Forest States, the heart and soul of the Federation. The documents known as the Priests' Charter and the Convention of Sempach were regulations binding upon the whole body; the former chiefly to secure the national character of the clergy, the latter a military constitution containing rules as to discipline and management of future wars. That such a Confederation should have proved enduring, that it should have acquired such great military power in the succeeding period, reflects the greatest credit upon its members and upon their growing sense of nationality and patriotism.

ADDITIONAL BOOK

Hug and Stead: *Switzerland* ("Story of the Nations").

SWISS CONFEDERATION

Dates of inclusion in Confederation thus 1351



CHAPTER VI

SCHISMS IN THE PAPACY AND EMPIRE

BEFORE the close of the fourteenth century both Papacy and Empire were reaching a period of the utmost humiliation. The old order was already giving way, and the coming change was heralded by anarchy and confusion which affected the whole of Europe.

Papal
Schism,
1378-1417

In 1378, as has been already seen, the death of Pope Gregory was followed by a double election to the Papacy, which led to a forty years' struggle between rival candidates for the coveted post; a struggle in which political motives had more weight than spiritual considerations, in which the personal character of the Popes fell perhaps lower than ever before, and which could not fail to shake the whole organisation of the Church to its very foundation. The death of the Emperor Charles IV., which took place in the same year, did not lead immediately to the Schism in the Empire. His son Wenzel was accepted for the time as his successor, but he was a man totally unfitted to fill so distinguished a post, above all at such a period of difficulty. So great was the Imperial degradation under his feeble rule, that in 1400 the Electors endeavoured to depose him and put Rupert Count Palatine in his place. Empire, as well as Papacy, was thus in the hands of rival candidates.

Emperor
Wenzel,
1378-1400

Imperial
Schism,
1400-1410

Causes of
the Papal
Schism

A strong Emperor might have had some hope of settling Church dissensions. As it was, the Papal Schism

could not be healed from that quarter, and other political events helped to prolong the difficulty. The Schism was, indeed, in many respects a political question. The reluctance of France to lose the influence she had so long exerted over the Papacy at Avignon, and the desire of the Italians to have once more a Pope of their own nationality established at Rome soon gave the dispute between rival Popes almost the appearance of a struggle between France and Italy. Certainly the attitude taken up by the different Powers of Europe towards the question was decided in every case by political motives. Another important factor in the business was the disputed succession in Naples where the House of Durazzo and the House of Anjou were competing for the throne.

Joanna of Naples, it will be remembered, lost her life while resisting the claims of her niece's husband, Charles of Durazzo, and she bequeathed her crown and her quarrel to Louis of Anjou. From the first the rival Popes took up the rival parties, Urban VI. that of Charles, Clement VII. that of Louis. The deaths of these two candidates only changed the persons of the rivals, it did not end the struggle. Ladislas succeeded Charles as King of Naples and exercised a very important influence, not always of a friendly character, over the Popes at Rome. The claims of Louis II. of Anjou were still upheld by the Anti-popes at Avignon. These points are important to remember in working out the history of the Papal Schism. There were, besides, other and more complicated questions involved, and the ambition of the rival candidates was not the only obstacle to the healing of this terrible quarrel in the Church.

Perhaps had Urban VI. been of a more conciliatory

Irregu-
larity in
election

disposition, the difficulty might have been averted. When, however, the Cardinals found what an extremely unsatisfactory choice they had made, it was easy to urge that the election was invalid because done under compulsion. At the time of the Conclave when Urban was chosen, a howling mob without had not ceased to cry aloud for an Italian Pope!—a Roman Pope! and they had even broken into the palace itself, so that the Cardinals with difficulty escaped with their lives. Had the claim of compulsion been made at once, it might have been recognised as valid. The mistake arose from the fact that Urban was accepted without difficulty until his own actions rendered him obnoxious. Not till then did the Cardinals make their new choice of Clement VII.

Neither of the rival Popes had the qualities which would seem desirable for the high position to which they had been raised. They were very different to each other in character, but alike in their firm determination to maintain their rights.

Urban VI.,
1378-1389

Urban VI. was a man of extreme pride, violence and obstinacy. He preached poverty to his rich ecclesiastics and commanded that one dish alone should be allowed at their table. Worse than that, he did not attempt to curb his temper and one Cardinal was called a fool, another was told to hold his tongue, he had talked long enough. His policy was chiefly to uphold his cause against all opponents and to exalt his own family. He seems to have had no other aims nor any clear conception of how to support the Papal dignity.

Anti-Pope,
Clement
VII., 1378-
1394

Clement VII. was only thirty-six years of age, tall and commanding in appearance, far more agreeable and conciliatory in manners than his low-born rival, but a warrior rather than a churchman. As Papal legate in North

Italy he had headed bands of mercenary soldiers, and was stained by the responsibility for a pitiless massacre at Cesena. When war broke out between the two claimants, Clement, driven from Naples by a mob rising, took refuge in Avignon, where a Court was once more established. The palace there became the recognised home of the Anti-pope and a scene of great luxury and magnificence. It was this which gave France such a particular interest in the question and so strong a desire to oppose the Popes at Rome.

Europe fell into two camps. Urban was supported by Italy, with the exception of Naples; by Germany and Bohemia in return for his recognition of King Wenzel as Emperor; by England because he was hostile to France; and by Hungary whose King had claims on Naples and hoped for help. France was backed up by Scotland, always ready to take the opposite side to England; and at first they and Naples stood alone as supporters of Clement VII. Later Castile, Aragon and Navarre were won over for political reasons.

The Schism was a matter which concerned the whole of Europe, and therefore the whole of Europe had to be satisfied before any permanent conclusion could be arrived at. When one Pope died, instead of leaving his rival in possession, the different powers concerned felt that they must uphold the justice of their cause by at once filling his place. The Popes also appointed fresh Cardinals, and those Cardinals could not exist if the man to whom they owed their creation had no right to his office. If their position was genuine, the other Cardinals had no existence, and whatever election they made was of no value. This was felt equally by the Cardinals at Avignon and the Cardinals at Rome. In

Europe and
the Schism

Causes of
the long
continu-
ance of the
Schism

the same way a Pope once elected was never ready to admit the worthlessness of his own election. If he were to resign, leaving the field vacant for his rival, and this rival were not really the divinely appointed Pope, a deadly sin had been committed against the holy office. Thus political and ecclesiastical reasons combined to render the settlement of the question one of almost hopeless difficulty. The death of a Pope at Rome or at Avignon was at once followed by a new election, and the longer the Schism lasted the more complicated did its solution become.

Urban VI.
quarrels
with
Naples

Meanwhile the character and ambition of the Popes added to the troubles of Europe. Urban VI. soon lost the friendship of Charles of Naples, because he wanted to form a Southern Principality for his own very worthless nephew Butillo. When King Charles was murdered in Hungary in 1386, Urban declared that his Kingdom had lapsed to the Holy See, and refused to recognise either Charles's son Ladislas, or Louis of Anjou, the rival candidate crowned by Clement VII. Such struggles, added to quarrels with his own Cardinals, occupied most of the time of the Italian Pope, who at last ended his stormy days at Rome fighting against the magistracy of the city which he deemed too strong.

Boniface
IX. in
Rome,
1389-1404

Ladislas
recognised
as King of
Naples,
1390

The Italian Cardinals now chose Boniface IX., a man of only thirty-three, not a scholar nor a student, but of good private character and considerable ability. He hastened to pacify one enemy by recognising Ladislas as King of Naples, and he conciliated the nobles in his own estates. His ruling passion was avarice. He had, without doubt, great need for money, but his ways of obtaining it were neither dignified nor honourable and rendered him very unpopular. He sold everything;

places, privileges, permission to break all sorts of rules. He seized goods of dying Bishops, he discussed financial matters even during the celebration of Mass. In his last illness some one inquired of his health. "If I had more money I should be well enough," was the reply.

These events were not calculated to raise the credit of the Church throughout Europe. In England the government was endeavouring to check Papal power by the Statutes of Provisors and Præmunire; whilst Wycliffe and his followers were led to question the whole theory of Papal Primacy and to preach that Christ alone should be head of the Church. Even in France the Schism was awaking much disgust, and the University of Paris was busy considering plans for ending so disgraceful a controversy. It was suggested that either both Popes should abdicate, or that the question should be submitted to judges appointed equally by both sides, or to a General Council of the Church. It is said to have been partly anger at these proposals which led to the fit of apoplexy in which Clement VII. perished. Bishop Creighton writes of him: "He was not great enough to submit for the good of Christendom, nor was he small enough to fight solely for himself. Overcome by the dilemma, he died."

The Cardinals at Avignon hastily put in his place a learned Spaniard, Peter de Luna, who took the name of Benedict XIII. They did go so far as to urge that whoever was elected should promise to abdicate at once if called on to do so. "I would abdicate as easily as I take off my hat," said Peter, and he was chosen. Once Pope, however, Benedict was not so amenable. Negotiations for his abdication were begun at once. Commissions were sent to him from the University of Paris,

Papacy
much dis-
credited

Death of
Clement
VII., 1394

Benedict
XIII. at
Avignon,
1394-1423

Attempts
to end
Schism

embassies from Royal Courts. A meeting was held between the Emperor Wenzel and Charles VI. of France, "a drunkard and a madman," to consult as to plans. At last France formally withdrew her allegiance from Benedict. All was in vain. The Pope said he would confer with Boniface, but nothing more. "Tell the King of France that I will pay no heed to his ordinances, but will keep my name and papacy till death," he exclaimed on one occasion. Force was attempted when entreaties had failed, and Benedict was besieged in his palace, where, despite his capitulation, he was kept practically a prisoner for five years. Meanwhile, the Roman Pope Boniface was no readier to resign than was his rival. Wenzel had promised to secure his abdication, but he had no power to fulfil his promise, and was soon involved in difficulties of his own with a rival Emperor.

Escape of
Benedict,
1403

The position of affairs was changed shortly after, by the revival of Benedict's power. Disguised as a groom he escaped from Avignon, and with the help of the Duke of Orleans regained the obedience of France to his authority. He was able to assert his rights more firmly than ever, and to disquiet his opponent during the last year of his life.

Innocent
VII. at
Rome,
1404-1406

The death of Boniface was followed by the election of Innocent VII., who spent the two years of his office in difficulties with Roman nobles and Ladislas of Naples.

Gregory
XII. at
Rome,
1406-1415

His successor, Gregory XII., was again appointed on condition of striving for unity, and he promised to resign whenever his rival should do so.

The new Italian Pope seemed in every way fitted to bring peace to the Church, since no one could expect him to have any great ambition or love of office. Already eighty years of age, he was so thin and feeble,

that the chief fear was lest he should die before the Schism was ended. He spoke of unity with the greatest eagerness and protested that nothing should stand in his way; he would go on foot to meet his rival if horse could not carry him to the Conference. After some discussion, Savona near Genoa was agreed upon as a meeting place. Here both Popes were to come and resign their powers that a new Head of the Church might then be chosen. No sooner was this arrangement made than difficulties seemed to arise, and Gregory's eagerness began to evaporate. There was no doubt that since Genoa was in the hands of the French King, Savona was a place which would favour Benedict, and Gregory's friends terrified him with suspicions of false play. Ladislas of Naples, also, who had great influence over the old man, and had many reasons of his own for preferring the Schism, besides dread lest a new Pope chosen at Savona should favour the claims of Anjou, intrigued to prevent the Conference and to hinder Gregory's departure from Rome. The two Popes came as near to one another as Spezia and Lucca, but there they halted; neither one nor the other would advance farther. In the words of the Chronicler: "one, like a land animal, refused to approach the shore; the other, like a water beast, refused to leave the sea". Meanwhile the discovery that Benedict was secretly plotting to seize Rome during his rival's absence gave Gregory an excuse for repudiating his promise of resignation. The meeting at Savona was finally given up and in vain did the Cardinals summon both Popes to appear before a Congress at Pisa.

Proposed
Conference
at Savona

This General Council at Pisa was very important, as the first of a series of attempts to settle the affairs of

Council of
Pisa, 1409

Christendom by means of a representative body, which claimed to be actually superior to the Papacy itself. Solemn sentence was passed on the two competitors, who were declared guilty of breaking their oaths and being obstinate approvers of the long Schism. Both were pronounced to be deposed, and an obscure Friar, whose eloquence and learning had raised him to the Archbishopric of Milan, was chosen to be sole Pontiff as Alexander V. Naturally the chief result of this measure was to create three rival Popes instead of two. Alexander only survived his election a year, never even resided in Rome, which had to be won for him from the hands of Ladislas, and died vainly beseeching his Cardinals "to seek peace and ensue it".

Election of
a third
Pope,
Alexander
V.

There was very little doubt as to who would be chosen to succeed Alexander. One very energetic Cardinal, Baldassare Cossa, Legate of Bologna, had been real ruler of Pope and Conclave since the meeting at Pisa. He was supported by Louis of Anjou, and had won back Rome from Ladislas and bought over the Orsini family. No one dared to oppose him even if they wished it. Despite his disgraceful private character and the fact that the few good qualities which he possessed were wholly military and secular, John XXIII. was enthroned as infallible Head of the Church. After his conquest of Rome, the new Pope summoned a Council there, to which few went and of which strange tales are told. An owl is said to have haunted John on two occasions. First it flew at him whilst he was celebrating Mass, and the next day it appeared again in the church, with its great round eyes fixed on the Pope, and was driven out with difficulty. The superstitious felt that the bird was an omen of misfortune or a sign of divine disapproval;

John
XXIII. at
Rome,
1410-1415

even John himself was dismayed. John had, indeed, a very insecure position and many dangers. The first problem he had to face was the attitude he should adopt towards German affairs, and the Imperial Schism. To understand this it is necessary to go back a little to see what had been happening in the Empire all this time, and why succession disputes arose there also.

Germany had been passing through a period of great ^{Germany} internal disorder. Wenzel was a bad King as well as a bad Emperor, and despite the strong position in which Charles IV. had left the house of Luxemburg, many difficulties were involved in the management of their extensive and scattered territories. Wenzel succeeded ^{Character of Wenzel} his father when only eighteen years of age and possessed of very little strength of character. He was a sort of spoilt child; pleasant in appearance, affable and attractive in manner, but with no idea of either hard work or self-control. In the end, his love of eating and drinking, which he made no attempt to check, undermined health, looks and character, and changed a promising youth into a feeble and despised drunkard. He liked to surround himself with favourites and courtiers, both as companions and as assistants in the government, and these he chose as a rule from the burgher class, or from that of the petty nobility. This much angered the real aristocracy and old noble families and helped to render him increasingly unpopular.

A fact of interest for English readers in Wenzel's reign is the marriage of his sister Anne with King Richard II., which formed a very close connection between Eng- ^{Relation of Bohemia with Eng-land} land and Bohemia; this was strengthened by the growing influence of the University of Prague and its great attraction to scholars. Results of world-wide importance

arose from this connection, for the teaching of Wycliffe, which gave birth to the Lollard sect in England, had great influence in Bohemia where his writings were first published, and where John Huss in particular was attracted by his doctrines and became to a certain extent his disciple.

Possessions
of the
House of
Luxem-
burg

Wenzel succeeded to great territorial possessions, the acquirement of which had been one of the chief aims of Charles IV. He had Bohemia, Silesia and Lusatia in his own hands, Moravia was subject to him, though immediately under the rule of his two cousins, Jobst and Prokop; his younger brother Sigismund possessed Brandenburg, and marriage alliances had created possible claims to various other dominions. The first territorial question to arise was that of Poland and Hungary. Lewis the Great, King of both these countries, had only two daughters, Mary and Hedwig, and when he died Mary, who succeeded, was betrothed to Sigismund, younger brother of Wenzel. The succession was disputed by Charles of Naples, but in the end Sigismund did marry the lady and established his rights, although for the time being the Queen-mother Elizabeth kept complete control over the government. This, however, only secured Hungary; for the Poles had chosen as their elected monarch the second daughter of Lewis, Hedwig, who married Jagello of Lithuania, and founded a new dynasty in this separate Kingdom. Jagello was baptised before his marriage, taking the name of Ladislas V.; this robbed the Teutonic knights of much of their legitimate occupation, since nominally they were fighting in the North against the heathen Lithuanians, and now their foes were under a Christian King.

Polish and
Hungarian
Succession

Sigismund,
King of
Hungary,
1387

Union of
Poland and
Lithuania
under
Ladislas
V., 1386

Town War,
1387-1389,

Wenzel personally was more affected by a war be-

tween towns and nobles which he was totally unable to control, and which brought in consequence great discredit on his authority ; a discredit which tended to weaken his office as well as himself. For some time towns and townsmen had been growing in importance. They had acquired privileges and trading rights which had increased their wealth and independence, whilst the burghers were individually free and collectively strong through their guilds. Sometimes larger associations were formed with surrounding villages, which were admitted to a sort of modified citizenship. The chief enemy of the towns was the class of knights and smaller tenants, who liked to amuse themselves with pillage and private war. Such a form of entertainment was naturally extremely bad for trade, and not looked on with approval by the burgesses, who united to put down the practice. Princes and great nobles on their side were ready to support the rights of their order, and the materials for a really serious quarrel were thus at hand.

According to the *Golden Bull* of Charles IV. cities might not form leagues except for public interests. No one, however, paid much heed to paper prohibitions, and an important league was formed of the Swabian cities, to check aggressions on the part of the territorial magnates. Such a union was encouraged by the successes which Swiss peasants were winning over the Habsburgs, and in 1387 a town war actually broke out in Swabia, directed particularly against the Count of Württemberg, a very determined foe of the burghers.

In a war of sieges the townsmen knew how to get the better of their opponents, but they were not fitted for pitched battles in the open ; at Döffingen they were severely though not disgracefully defeated and their cour-

Swabian
League

Battle of
Döffingen,
1388

Peace of
Eger, 1389

age was much diminished. Wenzel had a chance of interfering in this quarrel with effect; he might have put a price on his interference and dictated satisfactory terms. This he neglected to do, and the Peace of Eger which ended the war put further arbitration in the hands of Commissioners from Swabia, Franconia, Bavaria and the Rhine, who thus did the work which the Emperor shirked.

Troubles in
Bohemia

The league of towns was followed by a league of nobles, this time against Wenzel himself and his unpopular favourites; and amongst his most determined opponents was his cousin Jobst of Moravia. This Jobst has been called by a contemporary writer the most learned prince of his time, but probably the competition for such a title was not very high; in any case the Moravian Margrave loved money even better than books, and never bought his literature, but only borrowed it. One thing Jobst did buy, however, and that was part of Brandenburg from Wenzel's brother, the poverty-stricken Sigismund, but he chiefly used this possession to gain more money by reletting portions of it, and he allowed every sort of disorder and highway robbery to continue unchecked. Now at the head of the Bohemian nobles, he made himself extremely inconvenient to Wenzel, who was taken prisoner in his own country and only freed by the exertions and the money of his brother John of Görlitz, his only whole-hearted supporter.

Stories
about
Wenzel

Possibly most of the stories which have been circulated about Wenzel in order to explain his unpopularity, are quite untrue, but they show that no shred of respect hung round his memory. According to these legends, he used to run about the streets of Prague, beating poor men and destroying statues and works of art; whilst one

of his favourite amusements was to watch the executioner at work and to superintend in person the infliction of cruel punishments, such as putting a cook who had prepared a bad dish on the spit. "What shall I write good of this Wenzel?" asks one Chronicler, "nothing. He was less the King of the Bohemians and Romans than their executioner; detested by clergy and people, by burghers and peasants, he was only beloved by the Jews." The deposition of Wenzel, however, was not a personal matter, but the result of the great disorder of Christendom, and his utter incapacity to take any strong line. He did nothing to heal the Schism and was fast letting the Empire fall to pieces. The electors wrote in 1397: "The Empire is no longer ruled by a strong hand, so that war prevails all over the country, and no one knows from whom to demand his rights". On the West the Dukes of Burgundy were becoming more and more independent, and were gradually increasing the territory under their sway; in Italy Imperial influence was totally abandoned. Wenzel himself had recognised Galeas Visconti as Duke of Milan, and this able tyrant was fast building up a large and independent Duchy in the North; whilst the submission of Genoa to the French King meant a great extension of French influence in the Peninsula. It was France again which seemed to be taking the lead in the efforts to end the Papal Schism.

In 1400 the Electors endeavoured to put a stop to the humiliation of Germany and the Empire by the deposition of Wenzel and the election of Rupert, Count Palatine. The new Emperor, if so he can be called, was a man of considerable force of character, full of activity and ambition, but totally unable to carry out his aims. "A strong heart, strong head, but short of means," as Carlyle

Wenzel
deposed
and Rupert
elected,
1400

says. For ten years he struggled to maintain his authority, and he made vain attempts to re-assert Imperial authority in Italy and to curb the overgrown power of the Milanese Visconti. His death in 1410 left the Empire, if possible, more feeble and more divided than ever, whilst he had ruined himself in the effort, and had to sell his own goods to pay his personal debts. In 1410, the Electors, unable to agree, chose as rivals to the position which Wenzel had never formally relinquished, his brother Sigismund and his cousin Jobst. Thus the Empire, like the Papacy, was the prey of three rival claimants. This, however, proved to be the end of Jobst, who died three months later, having added considerably to the general confusion with little permanent result. "He was thought a great man," wrote one Chronicler, "but there was nothing great about him but the beard."

Triple
Schism in
Empire,
1410

Sigismund,
1410-1438

Sigismund was now really Emperor. He easily came to an agreement with Wenzel, who was fond of his brother and also fond of repose. According to this arrangement, Sigismund was only to take the title of King of the Romans as long as Wenzel was alive, but this practically amounted to a complete abdication by the latter of all authority. The elder brother remained in Prague as King of Bohemia until his death in 1419. He never obtained the Imperial Crown of Rome and he left all power in the hands of his active-minded junior. Sigismund was no nonentity, whatever else he may have been. He was a mass of conceit and restless energy, and he interfered in everything, though seldom with success. He ran ceaselessly from end to end of his dominions and also to foreign lands, and wherever he went he carried with him a great idea of his own importance. On one famous occasion he made a Latin speech in which a mis-

take in gender occurred. One of his Cardinals ventured to correct him. "I am King of the Romans and above grammar," was the haughty reply; an answer which has won for him the title of "Sigismund super gram-maticam" in the pages of Carlyle.

The first undertaking of importance to which the new King turned his attention, was the healing of the Schism. John XXIII. had been very anxious to turn the dissensions in the Empire to his own advantage, and to win help, if possible, against Ladislas who remained obstinately hostile. With this end in view he sided with Sigismund at the time of the disputed election, and Germany recognised him as her spiritual head. But Sigismund, once victorious, determined to make something out of this alliance, and the Pope was forced to seal the compact by promising to submit his claims to the judgment of another General Council. This he did, trusting to his own astuteness to save his power. All depended on the place selected for the meeting, but, in a spirit of bravado, John left his legates to arrange this with Sigismund. The monarch induced them to consent to Constance as being healthy, central, roomy and convenient. Doubtless he did not add that it was an Imperial city completely under his control, where neither John nor his rivals could hope to gain any influence. The Pope must have bitterly repented his promise, when in 1414 the death of Ladislas freed him from his greatest danger and enabled him to win back Rome to his allegiance. But it was too late to turn back, and in October he set out for the place of meeting. Through Meran he went and over the snowy pass of the Arlberg whence he looked down on Constance; "a trap for foxes" he called it, with a prophetic fear

The Pope
and Sigis-
mund

Proposed
Council at
Constance

Death of
Ladislas of
Naples,
1414

of what was before him. The long Schism was to be ended at last.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Bryce: *Holy Roman Empire.*

Alice Greenwood: *Empire and the Papacy in the Middle Ages.*

Milman: *History of Latin Christianity.*

CHAPTER VII

FRENCH HISTORY, 1328-1380

I N 1328, as we have already seen, Philip VI. came to the throne, and prospects seemed bright. The new King was chivalrous and magnificent; he established a noble Court at Vincennes, held the tournaments and fêtes so dear to that age, and collected round him rulers and knights from many foreign lands. He was extremely pious, gave costly gifts to religious objects, went in person on pilgrimages, and in his home life was a good husband and an affectionate father. It remained to be seen whether he would be a good King.

Philip VI.,
1328-1350

Before turning to more interesting matters, there is one territorial change to notice, which was made on Philip's accession. Navarre, which had come by marriage to Philip the Fair, was once more separated from France and bestowed on Louis X.'s daughter Joan, whose son Charles the Bad of Navarre was to play an important part in coming events.

Navarre

Some fear was felt as to the attitude Edward III. might take up in regard to his own claim to the French throne; but none too securely established himself at this date, he consented, though with some reluctance and delay, to do homage to Philip as his suzerain for the French possessions. Possibly if there had been no other reason for war than Edward's nearness to the

Relations
with
England

Causes of
War

Alliance
between
France and
Scotland

Flanders,
and the
wool trade

throne, matters might have gone no farther; but added to the natural antagonism between French and English, inevitable so long as England clung to her lands beyond the sea, and to the personal jealousy between two rival sovereigns, there were other causes at work slowly but surely leading in the direction of war. As before, Scotland and Flanders are important in this connection. Edward III., very early in his reign, became involved in a fresh Scotch war in support of the claims of Edward Balliol against David Bruce. The Scots in favour of Bruce and independence applied for help to France, and Philip, glad of the opportunity, sent troops to their assistance. This was bad enough, the fact that the French King was turning more than longing eyes upon the Guienne territory was worse, but fear for English trade was worst of all. England in those days was particularly celebrated for her breed of sheep, of which the wool was good and long and much sought after for making into cloth. Hence the great importance of our connection with Flanders, the country above all others where weaving was most actively carried on. The Flemings wove our wool and we bought their cloth, to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. Philip was extremely jealous of the trade of England, and ready to hamper it in every way; he was also much interested in Flemish affairs. The internal condition of Flanders in this reign was rather different from what it had been during that of Philip IV. of France. The Count, Louis de Nevers, was not on good terms with his subjects, and he turned for help against them to his suzerain the King of France. One of Philip's first acts had been to defeat the Flemings in a bloody battle at Cassel, and to reinstate the Count who was all the more bound to carry

out the behests of his feudal lord. Thus when Philip wished to embarrass England he had a weapon ready to his hand, and in 1336 he obliged his vassal Louis to order the imprisonment of all English merchants in Flanders. Edward retorted by forbidding the export of wool and the import of cloth, a blow which must have been crushing to the prosperity of Flanders. The result of the measure was the rising of the towns and the traders against their ruler, and their independent alliance with England. In the town of Ghent a leader was found in the person of a rich weaver, Jacob van Artevelde, a man of great personal influence, eloquent and determined. On his advice a policy of neutrality was adopted and a commercial treaty was arranged by which English wool was once more obtained for Flemish looms. After war between England and France had actually been declared, it is said to have been Artevelde who urged Edward to proclaim himself King of the latter country. The Flemings were bound by solemn oaths to alliance with the French King, but their oaths did not give his name, and they were ready enough to obey King Edward rather than King Philip. In order, therefore, to gain their active support the Fleurs-de-lys were quartered with the English Leopards, and "the first year of our reign in France" was added to the date of all English State documents published in 1337.

There was cause enough without doubt for the outbreak of war, and the pretext stood ready to hand in Edward's claim. One of those who urged him most strongly to the undertaking was a banished Frenchman, Robert of Artois, who had taken refuge in England after condemnation by the Court of Peers. The County of Artois was claimed by Robert, who disputed the title of

Jacob van
Artevelde

Influence
of Robert
of Artois

his Aunt Matilda, the actual possessor. A trial began in 1328, but Matilda and her daughter died shortly after under such very suspicious circumstances that Robert was accused of having poisoned them: add to this that he was found to have forged documents to support his claim, and to have used magic arts against the King and his family, and it is not surprising that he was condemned to banishment, nor that when in banishment he was ready to stir up any enemies against the King who had passed sentence upon him. A quaint ballad tells how, at a great banquet, Robert offered to King Edward a dish on which lay a heron,—the most cowardly of birds, he said, for the most cowardly of monarchs. When Edward showed indignation at the taunt, he was asked how he could let a usurper enjoy his rights; and heated with enthusiasm, he and all his companions vowed to depart forthwith to assert the English claims, many young nobles covering one eye and vowing not to open it again until they had done some deed of prowess on French soil. This story is doubtless a fiction, but nevertheless a good illustration of the light way in which war was undertaken in those days, when it was almost more necessary to find an excuse for peace than an excuse for fighting, and when a campaign in an enemy's country was very like a tournament on a larger and more dangerous scale.

English
alliances

Edward, however, did not go to war unprepared. He began to form alliances and to seek for useful support. The Emperor, Lewis of Bavaria, recognised his claims and made him Imperial Vicar; an empty title enough. Although Lewis gave no actual help, his support was nevertheless important, since it enabled several vassals of the Empire to take up Edward's cause. Such were

the Dukes of Brabant and Guelders, the Margrave of Juliers, and the Count of Hainault, father of his wife, besides the Flemings of whom we have already spoken. ^{French alliances} Philip on his side had the Count of Flanders, King John of Bohemia father of the future Emperor, and several of the Princes from the Pyrenees.

The actual declaration of war was in 1337 and some ^{Declaration of War, 1337} fighting took place on the north-east frontier of France, but Philip avoided a pitched battle, and the first striking event in the struggle took place on the sea off the port of Sluys. In 1340 Edward set sail to join his ally the Count of Hainault, but the French had suspected his movements and as he approached Sluys he saw "so many vessels that their masts were like a wood, at which he greatly marvelled". These were a fleet chiefly composed of Norman ships which had already done damage on the English coast and captured one of our boats the *Christopher*. "Then began a battle fierce ^{Battle of Sluys, 1340} and hard on both sides, archers and crossbowmen shooting against one another, and men at arms fighting hand to hand boldly and bitterly: and that they might better reach one another they had great iron crooks attached to chains, which they threw into the enemy's ships and fastened them together, so that they might better board them and fight more hotly." The day ended in a victory for the English and the recovery of the *Christopher*, after which a truce put an end to the fighting for the time being. By the victory England gained a control over sea and shipping which was most useful in the coming struggle.

In the following year, events occurred in France which ^{Disputed succession in Brittany, 1341} tended greatly to benefit the English and encouraged Edward to recommence the conflict. The Duchy of Brittany

was still a very independent feudal State, almost wholly removed from royal influence. Duke John III., who had been fighting as an ally of Philip, died in 1341 leaving no children, and a succession question arose curiously like that in France itself. John's next brother had died leaving a daughter, Joan of Penthièvre, the nearest to the succession by right of birth, and she had married Charles of Blois, a nephew of the French King. A younger brother of the late Duke, however, John of Montfort, had seized the Duchy and was supported by the greater number of the Bretons themselves. A struggle began between these rival claimants, backed up by France and England. In direct opposition to their own claims, Edward supported Montfort, Philip took up the cause of Charles of Blois. Then began a long and confusing struggle of more than twenty years' duration, which constantly hampered the French King and was full of romantic incidents.

Charles of
Blois

The chief combatants themselves were striking characters. Charles of Blois, a true mediæval saint, was made up of opposing qualities. He treated his foes with cold-blooded cruelty, but he heard Mass four or five times a day, wore pebbles in his shoes and knotted ropes round his body, and once indeed when he had captured a town and his soldiers were needlessly slaying the inhabitants, he first returned thanks in the Cathedral and then stopped the massacre.

John of
Montfort
and Joan of
Flanders

John of Montfort himself played no very leading part; he was taken prisoner in the first year of the war, and died in the fourth. His wife, Joan of Flanders, "who had the courage of a man and the heart of a lion," continued the struggle. When her husband was taken she brought her little son before her supporters at Rennes

and claimed their aid. "Do not lament," she said, "for the lord you have lost; behold my little child, who will be his avenger if God so will. I have wherewithal to fight, and you shall choose a captain who will be your comforter." From town to town she went, raising the spirits of the garrisons, and finally held out in Hennebon, which was besieged by Charles of Blois. Here she herself led a surprise party which burnt the enemy's tents, and it was her determination which prevented surrender until an English reinforcement came to her help. Like Sister Anne she watched from a window for the promised succour until the moment of submission had almost come, but at last she was able to cry, "Here comes the help for which I have been longing"; and when Walter Manny and the English arrived, "she kissed him and his companions one after the other two or three times, and those who saw her might well say that 'twas a valiant dame".

It would take too long to follow Froissart through the detailed account of skirmishes and sieges which went to make up the Breton war, but it can be easily seen how a disturbance like that was a godsend to the English King, who wanted nothing more than a good entry into France through the land of Brittany.

In 1344 actual war was renewed between England and France with the sending of the Count of Derby into Guienne; but before Edward himself took active part in the struggle, he suffered a great loss in the death of his ally Jacob van Artevelde. Various causes led to his murder. Probably the leader had made himself too powerful, while struggles were arising between different trades, the fullers and the weavers being especially jealous of one another. The final impulse may have been given

Murder of
Van Arte-
velde, 1345

by news of Artevelde's conference with Edward, when it was proposed to bestow Flanders on the young Prince of Wales. In any case a riot rose in Ghent, Jacob was besieged in his house, and despite his eloquent appeal to the people, was killed without mercy. Edward, then at Sluys, sailed away "so moved and angered at the death of his friend that it would be marvel to tell," and the Count was reinstated in power.

In 1346 Edward collected a force for the help of the Count of Derby in Guienne, but partly on account of contrary winds, partly by the advice of Godefroi d'Har-court, another discontented Frenchman who had joined the English, he changed his undertaking into an invasion of the North and landed at La Hogue. The famous Crécy campaign is too well known to need a long account. Burning and pillaging, especially at Caen, and passing close to Paris at Poissy, where the Seine was crossed, the English army retreated towards the river Somme, followed closely by Philip who had started after them from his capital. Every bridge had been destroyed to hinder their passage, but by the aid of a peasant a ford at Blanchetaque was found and crossed, despite a force of the enemy stationed on the opposite bank to check the advance. Philip arriving soon after was unable to pass at the same place as it was only possible to do so whilst the tide was low. He thus lost some time by having to go round by Abbeville, so that the English army was strongly posted at Crécy before it was overtaken by the French. In the battle which followed the evils of the old military system were glaringly displayed. To meet the compact and disciplined force of the English, well supplied with archers and foot-soldiers, France had a turbulent feudal levy, each leader thinking himself above

Crécy
campaign,
1346

Battle of
Crécy, 26th
Aug. 1346

authority and supreme over his own soldiers; whilst the Genoese cross-bowmen, mercenaries despised by the French nobles, were in no way a match for the English with their long bow. Every detail of the day seemed to be to the disadvantage of the French. A storm of rain rendered the cross-bows of the Genoese, unprotected apparently from the weather, almost useless; when the sun came out with renewed brightness after the storm, it shone full in the faces of the Frenchmen; the two Marshals quarrelled before ever the battle began, and the first charge was a moment of wild confusion. The luckless mercenaries, sent to open the fray, were shot down by English archers in front and trampled on in the rear by the French cavalry which was pushed forward from behind. Nevertheless the French fought bravely if not wisely, and Edward's chaplain, writing after the fight, says modestly: "The battle was hard and lasted long, for the enemy bore themselves most nobly; but praise be to God they were discomfited and the King our adversary was put to flight". It was almost evening when the fighting began, and midnight before it was over, so that Edward camped on the field all night. Philip, forced from the battle, fled in the darkness to the Castle of Broye, which opened its gates on recognising his cry: "Open, open, Chatelain, 'tis the unfortunate King of France". Many of the highest rank perished on the field; amongst others the Count of Flanders, the Duke of Lorraine and the blind King of Bohemia, who was led by four Knights, that he might strike one blow in his friend's cause, and who was found dead still attached to his leaders. Edward, as is well known, had left the burden and the honour of the day to his young son the Black Prince, that the boy

might "win his spurs": he kissed him after the battle with words of praise: "Fair son, God give you good perseverance. You are my son indeed, for loyally have you acquitted yourself this day; well do you deserve to hold this land."

Siege of
Calais,
Sept. 1346
to Aug.
1347

From Creçy the English marched upon Calais, and for eleven months the city bore the horrors of a siege. Edward built for himself a regular town outside the walls, Villeneuve-la-Hardi he called it, where he was joined by his wife, and where the English settled themselves comfortably down with houses and shops, determined to starve out the place rather than storm it by assault. This they very effectually did, blocking it by sea and land, and though Philip came within sight of the walls he did nothing to help the brave defenders. The loss of Calais meant much to France, and as a safeguard for the Channel and the passage of their ships, its possession was a great source of strength to the English. Once more a truce ended for a time the wearisome struggle.

John the
Good,
1350-64

Shortly after these events Philip VI. died, but he was succeeded by a son of very similar character. John the Good, like John of Bohemia, owed his title rather to the fact that he was "open-handed and courteous and loved feasts and tourneys," than to being in any sense a good King. Though like his father he was no general, he was brave, chivalrous and a great admirer of all knightly deeds. His order of the Étoile, intended as an imitation of King Arthur's Round Table, and with most elaborate rules as to dress and ceremonies, expressed well the character of its founder.

Charles the
Bad of
Navarre

When the struggle was once more renewed, success again favoured the English. At this juncture Charles of Navarre becomes prominent. A grandson of Louis X.

of France, he possessed, besides his own Kingdom of Navarre, scattered estates throughout France, especially between Paris and Normandy, which rendered his friendship of great value. John realised this when he gave him his little eight-year-old daughter in marriage; but there was no making sure of the slippery King, who earned the title of "the bad" even in those days of respect for rulers. He played fast and loose with both sides, encouraging the English to renew the contest, deserting them when they did as he advised, forcing King John to endless humiliations to win him over and then proving the most uncertain of allies. At the date of the Black Prince's famous campaign of Poitiers he was for the time being a supporter of France, having been forgiven by the King for his murder of the French constable, which had threatened to create a permanent breach between them.

The chief seat of war was now the South-west. The nobles of Gascony were on the whole favourable to the cause of the English. Their country was very distinct from the rest of France, and they had been long accustomed to the rule of their distant suzerain in England, whom they found less interfering than one nearer at hand. At the present moment too they were suffering from high-handed procedure on the part of Jean d'Armagnac, a great baron of the South in the service of King John. They therefore wished the Prince of Wales to come to their help, and received him with many expressions of loyalty. After a devastating campaign in the South, in which many towns and much booty fell into his hands, the Black Prince turned northwards, with the intention of joining forces with the Duke of Lancaster, but he was met by John at the head of a very large army,

The Campaign
in Aquitaine,
1355-1356.

Battle of
Poitiers,
19th Sept.
1356

confident of cutting to pieces the small English force. Prince Edward chose his ground well not far from the town of Poitiers and there awaited attack. He was stationed on a plateau sloping down to a marshy valley, guarded from the French by a hedge along which the archers were planted, and which had one gap in it, led up to by a road. With the exception of a small force for skirmishing, the soldiers were on foot, in order to make the most of the rough ground and their defensive position, but with horses at hand to use if a charge was wanted. On Saturday, 17th September, the Prince took up his station; Sunday was spent in fruitless negotiations, conducted by the Cardinal of Perigord, an emissary of the Pope who had long been endeavouring to end the useless bloodshed. In vain, however, the Churchman rode from one army to the other suggesting terms. The Prince refused to treat: he had no power, he said, to make peace without the consent of the King his father, and the Cardinal, although he renewed the attempt next morning, could no longer command attention. Edward was busy encouraging his soldiers: "If we are small in numbers compared to the enemy let us not fear for that, for victory does not lie with the multitude but where God shall give it. If we win the day the more glory to us; if we die there are those who will avenge us." On Monday, 19th September, the battle of Poitiers was fought. It was a surprisingly easy victory; the French mistakes were very similar to those of Crécy, arising chiefly from rashness and lack of discipline, but there was also a want of firmness among the nobles, which caused them to lose the reputation for bravery which had been considered their one redeeming feature. The two French Marshals and their cavalry rode first to the

attack, but were thrown into dire confusion as they advanced up the road to the gap, by the arrows showered upon them by the archers along the hedge, and they threw into disorder and panic the troop which was advancing behind them. "Advance, Sire," advised the Prince's friend Sir John Chandos, "the day is yours; charge on the division of your adversary the King of France, for there is the heart of the business." "Forward, John," was the reply, "you will never see me retreat." The three eldest sons of the French King and their division fled before the onslaught. In the thick of the battle, John himself with his youngest son Philip, who never left his side, held out till all was lost, surrendering in the end to a Knight of Artois. "Had a quarter of his men resembled him, the day would have been for them," says Froissart, not considering that something more than courage goes to the winning of a battle.

The treatment of the captured Monarch illustrates well the best side of the chivalry of the time. John was brought to the tent where the Prince was resting after his exertions: the latter welcomed him with all honour. "He bowed low and received him as King well and wisely as he well knew how to do, and commanded wine and spices to be brought, which he himself gave to the King in sign of great love." That evening Edward gave a banquet to the chief of his prisoners, at which he served the King with his own hands and begged him not to let his defeat spoil his appetite; "for you have great reason to rejoice although the affair has not ended to your wishes, for to-day you have won for yourself a name of renown, and have surpassed all the brave warriors of your party". As usual the victory did not

lead to any great results; a truce followed and next year John was conducted to honourable captivity in England, where he hunted and feasted and enjoyed life with the best. His one return to France was after the Treaty of Bretigni, when he went back to arrange the details of the peace, and to collect his own ransom, failing in which he returned to his easy imprisonment and died in the Tower of London.

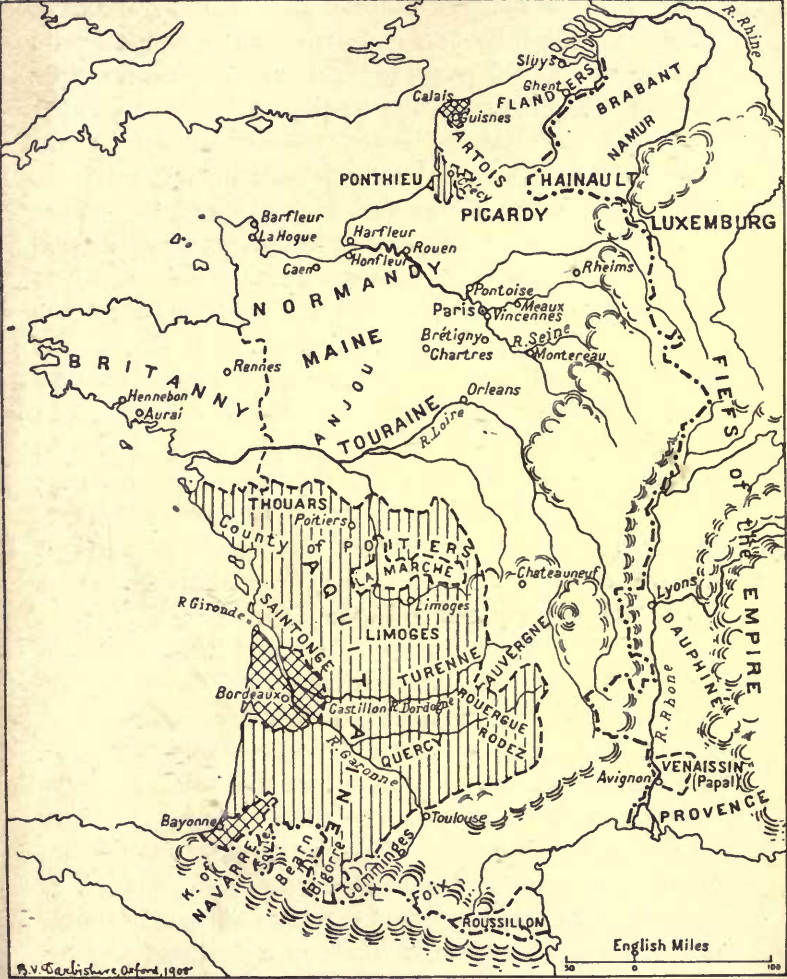
Peace of
Bretigni,
1360

This Peace which ended the first stage of the war was negotiated in 1360, when Edward had made a fresh invasion, this time in the North of France. His campaign was not very successful; the French knew better than to risk another pitched battle, and the English failed to enter into Reims or Paris. Finally, on the receipt of very bad news from Scotland telling of fresh incursions and an alliance with the Dauphin, the English King made up his mind to treat. The conference as to terms was held at the little hamlet of Bretigni near Chartres, and the Treaty was confirmed and formally signed at Calais.

The terms, although Edward gave up his claim to the throne, were of great material benefit to the English, and show that the Crown was a pretext rather than the motive of the war. In return for this renunciation Edward was to hold in full sovereignty, without homage or allegiance of any sort, Guienne, Poitou and the surrounding States of the South-west, and in the North, Ponthieu, Guisnes and Calais with its environs. France was no longer to help the Scotch nor England the Flemings. The other clauses related to the conditions of King John's release which, as we have already seen, were never carried out.

Shortly after this the Black Prince established his court in Bordeaux, the centre of his independent government as Prince of Aquitaine.

FRANCE after Peace of Brétigny 1360



English Possessions |||||

Retained in 1377 XXXX

Internal
condition
of France

A pause in the war furnishes an opportunity for considering the actual condition of the country during the struggle. Knightly deeds of arms sound romantic and picturesque in the pages of Froissart, but there was a reverse side to the picture and a very black one. As the war dragged on the King fell deeper and deeper into financial difficulties, and the mistakes already made by Philip the Fair were repeated with additions. Dues on sales continued, a *gabelle* on salt, in which the King had a monopoly and which all were forced to buy in large quantities, was introduced, and the coinage was depreciated to an unheard of extent. Meanwhile the burden fell almost wholly on the poorer classes, endless exemptions being sold or given to the rich and noble. At the close of Philip VI.'s reign pestilence came with all its horrors to augment the misery of the country. The Black Death wrought fearful havoc here as throughout all Europe, some estimate the deaths at one-half the population; in Paris when the Plague was at its worst 800 people perished in one day.

Financial
evils

Black
Death

Brig-
ands

Even royal oppression and deadly sickness were not the worst evils of the unhappy country. The armies on both sides were largely recruited from mercenary soldiers of different countries whose only livelihood was war, and when a truce for a time put an end to the struggle, these *brigands* as they were called were let loose on society, with no means of supporting themselves but pillage and extortion. The poor people fled before them as from a prairie fire, women and children sought refuge in caves and underground hiding-places, afraid to trust themselves in the light of day. Always a scourge, they were organised into regular bands or *grand companies* after the battle of Poitiers and began a career of system-

atic plundering. Establishing themselves in some feudal stronghold they not only ate up all the surrounding country, but amused their idle moments by persecuting, torturing and robbing the wretched peasants, whom they despised as rustic clods; anything they thought could be done with impunity to *Jacques Bonhomme*. These soldiers of fortune were often high-born warriors, and the French nobles themselves cared nothing for the humble tiller of the soil, except in so far as he was their own property and a part of the live-stock on their estates. Such a condition of things could not be endured for ever, and there was a murmuring and stirring throughout the country, which might have warned the selfish feudal baronage that the people had rights which would one day be asserted. The towns were the first to begin the struggle against privilege and oppression. It was a time when trade was beginning to be more considered, when Guild Associations were formed to carry it on, and the example of the Flemings and Van Artevelde may also have had some influence on the burgesses of France. It was Paris alone, however, which was able to take any leading part, the French capital being always considerably in advance of the rest of the country. The real leader of Paris was the Provost of the Merchants, who from a simple director of the trade upon the Seine, had become the chief official of the town and head of all the burgesses. In 1355 this office was filled by Étienne Marcel, a man respected by all, and chosen on several occasions as leader of the *Tiers État*, as the representatives of the towns were called in the States-General. Both Philip VI. and John had recourse to the States-General, in the hope of getting more money by their help. The spirit of

Paris and
Etienne
Marcel

growing independence is shown in the words addressed to the King by the towns as early as 1347: "Most powerful Sire, you must know by what means you have conducted your wars, in which you have lost all and gained nothing". Despite their efforts, however, they were unable to introduce improvements in the system of taxation, the nobles were too strong and equality was unattainable.

Ordinance
of 3rd
March,
1357

When the capture of King John had put the government in the hands of his eldest son Charles, a boy of eighteen, an opportunity seemed to present itself, and in 1357 a sort of Charter of Liberties was drawn up, chiefly through the agency of Marcel, which was the first real attempt to check the royal power, and to give the people a voice in government. According to this document, a commission of thirty-six, twelve chosen by each Estate, was to superintend every branch of the administration; the States-General were to meet several times in the year and to be consulted on all matters of importance; a good coinage was to be established, and never altered again without consent of the States; the nobles were to be restricted in their privileges and no private wars were to be allowed. The French historian Michelet says of this *Great Ordinance*, that it was more than a reform, it was a change of government; and that though it was a change for the better, such a step was dangerous in the face of a foreign foe. The Prince or *Dauphin*,¹ as he was called, signed the document, but it was obvious that he did so under compulsion, and

¹ Dauphiné was an old Imperial fief sold to France in 1349, from which time it was always bestowed on the eldest son of a reigning King, who thus acquired the title of *Dauphin*.

King John sent from England to annul all that the States-General had achieved.

Up till now nothing but praise can be given to Étienne Marcel; he had taken the lead against real abuses, he had raised the spirit of the Parisians and fortified the town in case of foreign attack, he had drawn up a scheme of reform, democratic but not violent. He now becomes involved in a policy less possible to defend. Once started on a career of reform it is very easy to be driven into revolution. His first mistake was to join hands with The Jacquerie, 1358 the King of Navarre, his second was to make use of the *Jacquerie*. We have already alluded to the miseries suffered by the peasantry at the hands of the nobles and the brigands; no wonder that they rose in revolt at last, and no wonder that in that revolt, they imitated only too closely the evil deeds of their own oppressors. The final impulse was given by an order to repair the feudal strongholds, a work which fell to the lot of the serfs, who saw in these castles the worst engine of their oppression and who rose in fury. The peasant was still half-civilised and brutalised by ill-treatment, and his revenge for past oppressions was appalling. Like a herd of wild beasts the *Jacques* poured over the North of France, burning, ravaging, killing; no man, woman or child was safe from their blind thirst for blood. It is possible that Étienne helped to stir up this rising, although it is certain that he disapproved strongly of its excesses: so did the leader of the peasants himself, William Calle, who tried in vain to organise a moderate revolt to obtain remedies, not vengeance. Whether responsible or no for the outbreak, Étienne encouraged an attack made by the *Jacques* on Meaux, where the Dauphin's wife and many other noble ladies had taken

refuge in strong fortifications known as the *Market*. The terror of the besieged was great, any fate they felt would be better than to fall into the hands of the enraged peasantry; but they were saved by the opportune arrival of a Gascon force returning from Prussia, who fell upon the villeins "little, black and badly armed," and saved the situation. Marcel gained little through these allies, who were put down with a severity which equalled their own excesses. Thousands suffered death, little trouble was taken to distinguish between innocent and guilty; the cry of the nobles was "Death to the villeins," and Étienne writes that cruelties were committed "worse than ever were done by Vandals or Saracens". The peasants had spoilt a good cause by ignorant violence, and the result was more oppression and worse treatment even than before.

Murder of
the Marshals

Meanwhile, within Paris itself things were going badly. Marcel had made himself head of a regular party, distinguished by the wearing of red and blue caps. One day, followed by a host of supporters, he penetrated into the Louvre to overawe the Dauphin, whom he found in the company of the two Marshals of France, Clermont and Conflans. Étienne addressed the Dauphin and blamed him for not restoring order in the Kingdom. "I would do it willingly," replied the youth boldly enough, "had I the wherewithal." Bitter words ensued, and the followers of the Provost, roused to fury, slew the two Marshals so close to the Prince's side that his robe was splashed with the blood of the murdered men. Marcel made him wear the red and blue cap to save his life, and actually dared to demand his approval; "what has been done," he declared, "was to avoid still greater peril and was by the will of the people". The

Dauphin could do nothing at the moment, but Marcel had not strengthened his own cause, and he imprudently allowed Charles to leave Paris, and so form a rallying point for all enemies of the burghers.

The defeat of the *Jacquerie* led to the downfall of the Provost. The nobles, after crushing them, remained in arms and rallied round the Regent, who was thus provided with an army for the siege of his own capital. Étienne, meanwhile, went a step farther in the wrong direction by calling the Great Companies to his help. He had enemies within the city now as well as without, and the King of Navarre was a very doubtful ally; he had brought a mercenary army for defence of Paris, but was secretly negotiating with the Dauphin, and finally withdrew with his troops to St. Denis. In these straits the Provost as a last hope planned to open the gates of Paris to Charles the Bad and to proclaim him King of France. He was found at midnight with the keys of the city by Maillart, one of his own magistrates, and in past days a trusty friend. "Étienne, Étienne, what are you doing at this hour?" he asked. "I am here to guard the city of which I have the government." "By God," was the reply, "you are here for no good at this hour"; and pointing to the keys which betrayed his purpose, Maillart slew him as a traitor with his own hands, whilst his followers overpowered those of the Provost. So perished a man whom it is very hard to judge. His early career was full of promise, but he seems to have become narrower and more selfish in his aims as time went on, until he, who had striven to give a real constitutional government to France, died in a treacherous endeavour to maintain his own ascendancy. But it is easier to condemn than to act under cir-

Siege of
Paris

Murder of
Marcel,
31st July,
1358

cumstances of so much difficulty. Étienne Marcel failed in what he had attempted, but there was no one else who even attempted it.

Charles V.,
1364-80

In 1364 the death of King John put his son, the Regent, on the throne as Charles V., a very different man from his father or grandfather. Pale and thin, delicate from a childish illness, which had also left his right hand swollen and weak so that he could not hold a lance, he was not the popular ideal of a King in those warlike days, yet he won for himself a position which neither of his predecessors had held. His surname of "the Wise" partly came from his love of books and learning, partly from his cautious and cunning character; and it is true that he ruled his country with a wisdom that had excellent results. He did nothing to strengthen the popular element in the government, the States-General only met once during his reign, but if his rule was despotic, it was capable and orderly and it gave to his subjects a feeling of security which meant more to them than democratic control. Only on its financial side can bad mistakes be found in his policy; and even here he won popularity by checking the debasement of the coinage which had done so much harm. In the struggle with the English he introduced the plan of avoiding battles, and so leaving the enemy to all the dangers of a hostile country with no great successes to compensate and to raise their spirits.

Bertrand
du Guesclin

In the war the King was ably assisted by one of the greatest soldiers of the age, who introduced into the French army some of the discipline and subordination which had been so lacking in the earlier campaigns. Bertrand du Guesclin came of a good Breton stock, though his was a younger branch of the family and in

rather humble circumstances. As a child he was so ugly, so rough and so intractable that, though the eldest son, he was disliked by his parents. His mother used to make him sit at a table by himself that she might not be annoyed by his odd face and awkward manners, and the younger brothers were served before him. On one occasion, when Bertrand was only six years old, he was so furious at this treatment that he upset the whole table and behaved like a mad thing; but a nun who was in the house soothed the boy and prophesied great things for his future, after which he was treated with a little more consideration. Many tales are told of his youth. As a boy he would drill the village children and conduct hand-to-hand battles; when he was seventeen he took part secretly in a tournament dressed in borrowed armour, and unhorsed all the knights who rode against him, except his own father with whom he refused to fight. In the end his visor was raised and he was recognised, to the intense surprise and pride of the father, who had shown him scant consideration hitherto, but who now equipped him with arms suited to his position and let him take part in knightly exercises. Bertrand's earliest military experience was in the Breton war, where by his great personal strength and courage and by the skill with which he conducted skirmishes and sieges he earned a reputation which won him knighthood, and brought him before the notice of the highest in the land, whilst he gained the love of the people by his constant resistance to the evil deeds of the brigands.

With the reign of Charles V. peace was temporarily established, and the long Breton struggle was brought to an end. At the Battle of Aurai, Sir John Chandos,

Battle of
Aurai and
end of
Breton
War, 1364

probably the ablest of all the English captains, was victorious over Du Guesclin who was taken prisoner; Charles of Blois himself was slain on the field, and the aspect of affairs thus altered. As a result, John de Montfort, son of the lion-hearted Joan, was recognised as Duke, and for a time the country was at rest.

War in
Castile

Cessation of war, however, only meant added misery to France as long as the ravages of the free companies continued, and it was partly to provide some occupation for these professional soldiers that the French King took part in a Spanish dispute. On the throne of Castile sat Pedro the Cruel, a man so hated by all that his half-brother Henry of Trastamare found ready support when he disputed his title. Pedro, amongst other ill-deeds, was reputed to have murdered his wife, a sister-in-law of Charles V., and this gave Henry an excuse for claiming his help. Bertrand, at the head of a large body of mercenaries, was sent to fight for him, whilst Pedro won over the Black Prince, who made the great mistake of his life in consenting to assist the man whom he looked upon as rightful monarch. Prince Edward and Chandos, at the head of a large force of Gascons and English, were successful at the Battle of Najara or Navaretta, captured Du Guesclin and restored Pedro. Nevertheless it was an ill day for them. As they lingered in Spain to await the promised payment for their services, which never came, the whole army was wasted with disease, and their leader brought back with him across the Pyrenees a shattered constitution and an empty purse. The former was past cure; the latter he tried to refill by a heavy hearth tax on his Principality of Aquitaine. Money he must have if he were to fulfil the promises made to his soldiers, promises which Pedro

Battle of
Navaretta,
1367

had entirely repudiated; but the expedient was fatal. The Gascons were poor and proud, the nobles were not accustomed to be taxed, and the result was an appeal to Charles V. for help in this emergency.

Pretexts were always at hand for a renewal of the war; both sides could point to unfulfilled terms in the Treaty of Bretigny, and a phase of the struggle began in which every advantage turned to the side of France. Bertrand was ransomed and made Constable, the highest military rank in the country; Chandos was killed in a skirmish, the Black Prince, soured by ill-health, lost his last chance of popularity in the South by the ghastly massacre of the inhabitants at the siege of Limoges, and went home to die. Henry of Trastamare, who with his own hands had killed Don Pedro in a quarrel, was now King of Castile, and aided the French with a fleet which blocked the coast of Aquitaine. In every respect the English were inferior to their enemy, and the end of Edward's reign saw his possessions reduced to a little territory round Bordeaux and Bayonne, and the town of Calais. Charles V. completed his successes by the final humiliation of Charles of Navarre, who, having spent his life in playing fast and loose with both sides, ended by having no friends at all, and, crushed between France and Castile, died ruined and impoverished, despoiled of all his rich territories in France.

The French King was nearing his own end; he was not to die, however, without one failure. In 1379 he tried to unite Brittany to his own demesne, with the result that he roused against himself a united and successful opposition, which re-instated John of Montfort more strongly than ever. The death of his great Constable also was a loss not easily made good. Bertrand died

Renewal of
English
War, 1368

English
disasters

Death of
Du Gues-
clin

while besieging the brigands at Châteauneuf, and the keys were given into his hands as he lay on his death-bed. "No place did he besiege which did not surrender to him, living or dead!" writes an admiring Chronicler. In a very few weeks he was followed to the grave by Charles V., young still in years, but worn out by disease. The country was left in a very different condition from that in which he found it: but, much though he had done, the seeds of future trouble were still left, in those three small pieces of English territory.

Death of
Charles V.,
1380

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Kitchin: *History of France*, vol. i.

Conan Doyle: *Sir Nigel* and *The White Company*.

Charlotte M. Yonge: *Lances of Lynwood*.

CHAPTER VIII

EMPIRE AND PAPACY, 1414-1453

THE little town of Constance saw many a strange and ^{Council of} impressive sight towards the close of the year ^{Constance,} 1414-1418. Ever since June, preparations had been in progress for the reception of the greatest Council the Middle Ages had ever known. Towards the close of the year, princes and prelates, nobles and merchants, with a mass of lesser people of all nations and all professions flocked into the place; the hill-roads shone with many-coloured processions, and the lake was gay with boats conveying great men and their followers. Not only those taking part in affairs came to the Council; Constance became the scene of an ecclesiastical conference, a political congress and a great world fair. Amusements of all sorts were held in the streets; festivities, tournaments and banquets lightened the graver business of the meeting, and an idle multitude found in it an occasion for diversion and money-making.

The Council was a great epoch in the history of the Church. Meetings had often been held before this to treat of ecclesiastical matters; Popes had summoned prelates to advise and consult; at Pisa cardinals had met to discuss the claims of rival pontiffs: but Constance was something more than these. A General Council was now asserting power to settle the claims of three rival Popes without adhering to the side of any;

it was declaring itself superior to the Papacy, and was taking into its own hands the reform of the Church. Three great questions were before this vast assemblage.

Business of
the Council

First and foremost there was the settlement of the Papal Schism, for unity must be restored to divided Christendom; secondly the whole Church, the Papacy itself, the lives of the clergy, the discipline of the monasteries, all were in need of the most stringent reform; and finally the new doctrines which were disturbing the minds of men, of which the chief teacher was John Huss, disciple of the English Wycliffe, must be rooted out, and all heretical ideas suppressed once and for ever. Such a programme, accompanied as it was by many points of minor importance, would provide work for several years to come.

Arrivals at
Constance

Amongst the great processions which were welcomed to Constance, three above all others excited universal interest. Towards the close of October came Pope John XXIII., making his way through the snow, surrounded by his cardinals, and protected by Frederick of Habsburg, the greatest prince and land-owner in that region. On Christmas Day the Emperor Sigismund arrived, travelling before day-break that he might be in time for the solemn Mass, at which he himself read the Gospel, beginning with the appropriate words: "There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus". The sermon delivered on this occasion by Peter d'Ailly must have been uncomfortable hearing for the proud Pope John, who was still hoping to maintain his position. The text taken was: "There shall be signs in the Sun and in the Moon and in the Stars". The Sun said the preacher, represented the Pope, the Moon the Emperor and the Stars the Cardinals; but unjust ambitions, evil

deeds and negligent rule would make but a phantom of the sun; and again, "The Holy Trinity of the Divine Persons is not more adorable than a Trinity of Popes is abominable," and he also stated in clear words that the Council's power was superior to that of the Pope.

Between these two arrivals a much more humble procession found its way into the town, which nevertheless met with almost as hearty a reception, for crowds flocked to meet the thin, bearded man in his simple black robes, who was escorted by three Bohemian nobles responsible for his safety. John Huss, under a promise of safety from the Emperor, had come to Constance to maintain his views before the Assembly of Christendom, and to clear himself from the charge of heresy. His safe conduct was of little avail, for shortly after his arrival he was taken from his house, despite the vehement protestations of one of the attendant nobles, and after a questioning before Pope and Cardinals, flung into a loathsome prison, which nearly caused his death; and it was only to save him for further humiliation that the conditions of his captivity were lightened for the time.

Meanwhile the position of Pope John was far from reassuring. Although still nominally the head of the Council, a murmur, ever growing more and more insistent, was making itself heard in favour of his abdication. Cardinal d'Ailly went so far as to declare that the Council had full power to force him to resign. Then followed an appalling statement, probably all too true, of the many misdeeds of the Pope, whose life had been notoriously wicked. Fearful lest this private accusation should be published to the world, John consented to abdicate, and in clear terms and with a calm demeanour he him-

Treatment
of Huss

Measures
against
John
XXIII.

self read before the Emperor and assembled Cardinals a promise to resign his power on the day that Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII. should do the same. There was general rejoicing; Sigismund, impulsive and theatrical, threw himself uncrowned at the feet of the Pope and kissed them gratefully: a proposal for the election of a successor followed at once. Doubtless John hoped to obtain his own re-election, but his character was too well-known for that. The English representative at the Council, Robert Hallam Bishop of Salisbury, exclaimed that "the Pope deserved to be burnt at the stake". Hopeless of swaying the Council, John determined to leave Constance and see what could be done elsewhere. A request to leave on account of his health having been refused, he contrived his own escape. The opportunity came when a great tournament was being held, to which all the inhabitants of the town flocked, leaving the streets deserted. The Pope in the humble disguise of a groom, rode out of the town unnoticed, and taking boat on the Rhine reached Schaffhausen, the castle of his friend Frederick of Austria, who had been privy to his flight. Terror and disorder were left behind him; some thought the Council was thereby dissolved, many feared the curse which he might lay upon the city, but others were ready to take advantage of the occasion. The Emperor denounced the Austrian Duke as a traitor, and Gerson, Chancellor of the Assembly, proclaimed the Council to be the supreme and independent authority of Christendom. A short while after, the formal deposition of John XXIII. was pronounced by the Council; and the once powerful Pope, after vain attempts to evade his pursuers, was captured and imprisoned; first at Gotleben just outside Constance, and finally in the castle

Flight of
Pope

Deposition
of John
XXIII.,
1415

of Heidelberg. When fully humiliated and no longer dangerous he was released and made a Cardinal, but his death followed immediately after.

Meanwhile John Huss had been awaiting his trial, also a prisoner at Gotleben. For some time past Bohemia had been the centre of new ideas. The whole authority of the Church had been shaken by the dissensions in the Papacy and the impossibility of respecting the Head of the spiritual world; whilst all through the Church had spread the disastrous effects of weakness at the centre. Abuses of all sorts were common; the clergy were rich and neglected their duty, they held so many posts that they could not possibly fill them all satisfactorily; people and parishes were neglected and suffering. In England during the previous century, John Wycliffe had boldly denounced the sins of the Church, had struck at the whole system of Ecclesiastical government, declared that the authority of the Pope was not only excessive but unnecessary, and attacked some of the doctrines of the Church, especially transubstantiation and prayers to saints. The writings of Wycliffe introduced into Bohemia had great influence and were eagerly studied at the University of Prague where Huss had done much to make them known. In some matters Huss did not go so far as the English teacher, particularly in the question of transubstantiation, but he also urged reformation of abuses and superstitions and especially denounced the sale of indulgences commanded by the Pope. He also wrote that Christ Himself was the Head of the Church and the Scriptures the basis of belief. There was plenty of material here for a condemnation, and from the first, despite Sigismund's worthless safe-conduct, his fate was already de-

The
Hussite
movement

Trial of
Huss

cided. Nevertheless his trial dragged on for many a long day, and Huss promised to withdraw his own opinions should the Cardinals be able to disprove them; but in total absence of proof he held his own without a waver, and refused firmly though modestly to condemn Wycliffe's teaching, or to disown his own writings. Even here Huss was not without supporters. His friend and disciple Jerome of Prague followed him to Constance, only to be flung into prison. On one occasion John of Chlum, a Bohemian noble, boldly proclaimed: "In my Castle I would have defended him for a year against all the forces of Emperor or King; how much more lords mightier than I, with Castles far more impregnable!" Sigismund basely deserted him. Perhaps it was a hard choice between giving up the man he had promised to protect, and seeing the Council, which he had done so much to collect and from which he hoped such great things, fall to pieces, its work half done. In any case his conduct was despicable even in his own eyes, and when Huss said: "Freely I came hither under the safe-conduct of the Emperor," Sigismund is said to have blushed deeply. His attitude was now, however, decided enough. Declaring that he had only promised to protect him so that he might answer his enemies' charges, and that he could not defend a heretic, he went on to say: "Far from defending you in your errors and in your contumacy, I will be the first to light the fire with my own hands". On another occasion the Emperor urged that not only Huss but all his followers should be condemned, and the whole sect exterminated root and branch.

On the 6th July, 1415, sentence was finally pronounced in the Cathedral of Constance. Sigismund

sat on the throne with Princes and Cardinals round him, and the proceedings opened with Mass, during which Huss as a heretic stood in the porch. Then followed the reading and condemnation of certain articles, said to contain the doctrines of Wycliffe and Huss. In vain he endeavoured to protest that some of the accusations were totally false. After that came the degradation— one by one his priestly robes were taken from him and his tonsure obliterated, whilst on his head was placed a tall cap of paper, covered with painted devils. Judgment was then pronounced: "The Church has no more to do with you. We deliver your body to the secular arm, your soul to the devils in hell." The secular judge pronounced the final sentence of death by burning as a heretic, and Huss went calm and unmoved, singing and praying, to his doom. "We know not," said those who stood near, "what this man may have done, we only know that his prayers to God are excellent." His ashes were flung into the lake and his clothes destroyed, that no relics might be treasured up by his sorrowing disciples, but the uselessness of such measures to efface his influence was soon to be shown.

Execution
of Huss,
6th July,
1415

The martyrdom of Huss was followed by that of Jerome of Prague, who as we have seen had followed his master to Constance and to captivity. He was treated with so much cruelty in his prison, that in sheer bodily weakness he gave way at his first examination and denied the doctrines of Wycliffe and of Huss. Soon, however, he regained his strength, and with admirable courage deliberately destroyed all hope of escape. He proclaimed his faith with an eloquence and shrewdness and a clear-headedness perfectly marvellous after a year passed in severe confinement. There was to be no doubt

Trial and
execution
of Jerome
of Prague,
1416

now as to his attitude. "This sinful retraction I now fully retract, and am resolved to maintain the tenets of Wycliffe and of John Huss to death, believing them to be the true and pure doctrine of the Gospel, even as their lives were blameless and holy". Like Huss he went calmly to the stake, and when the executioner turned to light the heaped-up pile at his back, he called to him: "Kindle it before my eyes; had I feared your fire, I should never have come to this place". He sang hymns with a steady voice until the flames leapt up around him.

Much still remained for the Council to do: the Papal question was not yet solved. John was deposed; Gregory XII. had submitted and died; Benedict still remained obstinate. He refused to come in person to defend his claims before the Council, unless he should be received as Pope; he declared that any acts of reform decreed at Constance would be null and void; and, disregarding his formal deposition, he established himself at Peniscola in Spain and kept up a shadowy Court and an imaginary authority until his death some years later. Meanwhile the Church and the Council badly needed a head, although Sigismund would gladly have carried all through on his sole authority; but the Cardinals insisted, and after some disputes a new Pope, Martin V., was chosen from the important Roman family of the Colonna. Thus ended the Schism and a temporary reaction in favour of Church authority and Papal power began, for the Council had chosen a man who would never submit to control and who meant to make his position one of real weight and importance. As Milman says: "In creating a Pope of high character it had given itself a master. It might dictate to a John XXIII., it must submit to a Martin V."

Martin V.,
1418-1425

The Council of Constance had achieved little of its great designs. There were many reasons for this failure. One great difficulty in the way of reform had been the danger of making any changes whilst the Church was still without a head. The great strength of the Papacy lay in its continuity: there had been an unbroken line of Popes claiming to be successors of St. Peter, according to tradition the first Bishop of Rome. The moderate party hesitated to take any steps which might weaken this claim and so endanger the longed-for unity of the Church. Another obstacle to Conciliar action was the difficulty of finding any policy to suit the different nations whose interests were involved. Political questions were inevitably bound up with religious, and the representatives of the various States could not agree on a common scheme of reform. The efforts of the Council had, for the time, brought peace to the Church, but only by the re-establishment of Papal despotism.

The new Pope was not a really great personality. He did not seize the unrivalled opportunity for placing himself at the head of a Church reformed, united, and spiritualised. Nevertheless, he was a wise, level-headed statesman, who knew how to recover much of the Papal authority lost in previous years, and to obtain control over the national Churches which had been struggling towards independence. His period of rule was largely occupied with re-establishing himself in Italy which was a scene of the wildest confusion. The Duke of Milan was warring in Lombardy: in Naples under Joanna II. the question of succession was giving rise to endless struggle, *condottieri* generals were fighting for one side or the other and also for themselves—Braccio and Sforza being the most important. The Pope had

Disorder in
Italy

a conference with Braccio at Florence, and it was there that he was rendered furious by the popular feeling which expressed itself in a common street song.

Braccio the Great
Conquers every State ;
Poor Pope Martin
Is not worth a farthing.

Policy of
Martin

The despised Pope, however, soon made himself respected. He re-established himself in Rome, and restored order in the turbulent city ; he recovered the States of the Church, and made his power felt in outlying countries, even in England where he appointed Cardinal Beaufort his legate, and exercised more authority than any Pope had done since Innocent III. At home his chief efforts were directed towards reforming the body of Cardinals and reducing their power, and in this he had some success ; but there were disorders in Christendom, especially the Hussite war in Bohemia, which remained a dangerous problem, and Martin summoned a Council to meet at Basle to consider this and other questions. His death, however, prevented his participation in this great assembly, and his successor Eugenius IV. was left to cope with the difficulties of the situation.

Summons
of Council
of Basle,
20th Feb.
1431

Eugenius
IV., 1431-
47

Journeys
of Sigis-
mund

The Emperor Sigismund had not been quietly residing at Constance during the whole long period of the Council. His restless spirit desired fresh fields in which to expend his energy, and when Benedict XIII. proved so obstinate, and was supported by the States of Spain and Portugal, Sigismund set out to try the effects of Imperial authority on these opponents of unity. Always short of money the Emperor sold Brandenburg to Frederick, the first of the famous Hohenzollern Margraves, confirmed Swiss

conquests in return for supplies and set out for Spain, where after long negotiations he did succeed in procuring the submission of Aragon, Castile and Navarre, followed shortly after by that of Portugal, which completed the union of the West. His return journey took him through France, where he hoped to pose as mediator in the great quarrel with England, which had just come to a head in the Battle of Agincourt.

Whilst in Paris, he was led to a display of authority which infuriated the French, and forms a good illustration of his views as to Imperial supremacy. Invited as an honoured guest to watch proceedings in the Parliament of Paris, the great French law court, a case came up in which one party was unable to be heard because unequal in rank to his adversary. Sigismund at once knighted the petitioner, as though sovereign and supreme overlord of the country. France was indignant, but England to which the Emperor next proceeded, took steps to prevent such an exercise of sovereign rights; showing that any claims of Imperial overlordship were totally out of date by this time, if indeed the English would ever have admitted them. Before Sigismund might put foot on English soil, Humphrey of Gloucester, younger brother of the King, rode into the sea sword in hand, and demanded a promise that he would perform no act of sovereignty whilst in the kingdom. The promise given, the guest was received with the greatest pomp and ceremony, magnificently lodged in the Palace of Westminster and only departed after a six months' visit and amidst signs of the greatest affection from Henry V. But although it is said that the two monarchs could scarcely tear themselves from each others arms, when farewell was said the English King had not ceased his prepara-

tions for the French war, and the Emperor had not succeeded in effecting the peace of Christendom.

At home once more, Sigismund found himself surrounded by difficulties; the very extent of his territories meant numerous enemies and want of money was a constant drawback. The story goes that on one occasion he left his dirty linen in pledge being totally unable to pay the bill for his night's lodging. His were not qualities such as fitted him for a position of such danger, in which tact as well as strength was necessary. Sigismund was in many ways a very attractive personality. Tall and handsome, with fair hair and blue eyes, he was extremely well educated and could discourse easily in Tchech, Latin, German, French and Italian; although he never forgot his Imperial dignity, he knew how to be familiar and courteous, was a very good talker and prompt at repartee. Unfortunately he had external qualities rather than solid virtues. He was lacking in real strength and perseverance and above all in stability: his word could not be trusted, and little respect could be accorded to a man who could forget his promises and break his alliances. He would have made a very good show King, but he lived at a time when burning questions needed solution, and when ceremonies and ambitious projects could not take the place of steady purpose and real hard work.

Character
of Sigis-
mund

Hussite
War, 1419-
31

The greatest danger left by the Council to Sigismund and Germany was the Hussite war. The martyrdom of Huss and Jerome had inflamed not discouraged the reforming party in Bohemia, and in 1419 open warfare broke out in Prague. One of the demands of the Bohemian reformers was the administration of the Communion in both kinds, from which they obtained

the name of *Utraquists*. The beginnings of revolt were caused when a procession, headed by a priest bearing the Chalice, had stones flung at it from a window of the townhall, whither the Utraquists had repaired to demand the release of some of their numbers. The cup was knocked from the priest's hands, and the mob, roused to sudden fury, poured into the house, slew the burgo-master and flung all the magistrates from the window on to the weapons of those below. The news of this disturbance was too much for King Wenzel weakened as he was by a life of self-indulgence. He was struck with apoplexy and died on the spot "with a great shout and roar as of a lion".

Death of
Wenzel,
1419

Sigismund was now King of Bohemia; but busy in protecting Hungary against the Turks, he took no decided steps at once to quell the Bohemian disturbance, and hoped to smooth matters over by negotiation. Perhaps had the rebels been merely disciples of the moderate teaching of Huss, this would have been possible; but a far more violent party had gradually been forming, known as Taborites. These had been organised in large open-air meetings and were anxious to break loose from all authority both of Church and Empire. Two Bohemian nobles headed this party, both of great zeal and ability. Nicholas of Husinec, a man of practical wisdom and foresight, and the one-eyed Ziska, a general and tactician of extraordinary merit. The war became a mixture of religious and political struggle; for besides taking up arms to defend their faith, the Bohemians were also fighting for their nationality against Sigismund, whom they would not recognise as their King.

Hussite
leaders

Nicholas of
Husinec
and Ziska

The long struggle which now began in real earnest falls roughly into three divisions. At first the war was

Character
of the War

Defensive defensive. The Hussites were infuriated and united by the measures taken against them, by the Crusades as they were called which were arranged by the Pope and Sigismund, and by the fact that a German army was sent to put them down, thereby inflaming their national ardour and lending vigour and purpose to their resistance. Later, from 1427 onwards, the war became offensive on their side; to hold their own it was necessary to weaken their adversaries by carrying war into the enemy's country, and the terror of their arms extended into Saxony, Silesia, Austria and even further. Finally the divisions which from the first threatened to disunite the Bohemian party became more and more numerous and accentuated, and the struggle degenerated into a civil strife between moderates and extremists which eventually enabled the Emperor to re-establish his authority and bring the war practically to a close.

The Four
Articles of
Prague

The programme of the Hussites, formulated in 1420, and recognised as a sort of creed for the whole party, was known as the Four Articles of Prague. These demanded complete liberty of preaching, communions in both kinds for laymen as well as priests, the exclusion of the clergy from temporal power and undue wealth, and the immediate repression of open sins, for commission of which the clergy should be liable to secular penalties. This was the confession of faith put forward by the moderate party, Utraquists or Praguers as they came to be called. The Taborites went much further and had more social and political aims; some amongst them advocated a regular communistic system, in which there should be no private property, but goods of all sorts should be held in common. With the proclamation of war against them, differences were for the time

forgotten in the common danger ; and in the strength of this united effort, Sigismund and the German army were driven out of Bohemia by a series of glorious victories. Three Crusades were defeated in 1420, 1421 and 1422 ; and so great was the terror inspired by the invincible Hussites that, as one Chronicler says : "The Germans had such a loathing for heretics that they could not bring themselves to strike them, or even to look them in the face".

These victories were due in great measure to the training and leadership of Ziska. He knew how to convert raw peasants into disciplined soldiers ready to hold their own against feudal forces ; he paid great attention to artillery and was one of the first generals to turn it to real account ; but above all he made use of the old war chariots and waggons according to a method all his own and totally baffling to the enemy. These waggons, attached by chains, formed a defence on the march, or a fortification for the camp, or even a weapon of offence when driven at full speed amongst the ranks of the enemy, or filled with stones and rolled down upon them from above. The waggons used to be arranged according to letters of the alphabet, and if the enemy got entangled amongst them they could never find the way out, whilst the Hussites, knowing the key, could twist through them with ease. In manœuvring and management of troops Ziska's ability was astonishing, especially when it is remembered that in 1421 a wound in his only sound eye rendered him totally blind ; he never for a moment relaxed his energetic and victorious career, but was carried into the battle on one of his celebrated waggons. In one way, indeed, this misfortune of their leader, by helping to put more re-

Hussite
victories,
1420-22

Ziska's
military
policy

sponsibility on the officers who carried out his commands, trained them all the more fully in the art of war. Ziska, unfortunately, was more of a general than a statesman, and his violent zeal embittered party strife and helped to prevent that complete union of the Hussites which might have led to an earlier settlement of the struggle.

Korybut of
Poland

Having driven Sigismund from the country, Bohemia was at first organised under a temporary government, and began to look about for a new King. The crown was offered to Ladislas of Poland, and though he refused it, he sent his nephew Korybut to assist the rebels, and he was received in Prague as ruler of the land. His position was, however, a difficult one, for Ziska and the Taborites were not really favourable, and the idea of thus establishing a Slav monarchy failed. His withdrawal was followed by terrible internal discord; the Praguers were anxious to make some sort of a compromise, and recalled Korybut, who had schemes of putting himself at the head of the moderate party and effecting a union with the Church. The Taborites were furious at the idea of making any concession, and the year 1424 is known as "Ziska's bloody year," for he turned his forces against the moderate party and wrought terrible havoc in the land. His death from plague in the same year did nothing to quiet these dissensions, but only added to divisions by splitting up the Taborite party. His special followers, "orphans" they were called to typify their grief at his loss, chiefly a social and political body, did not agree with the extreme Taborites, a religious section who denied transubstantiation and all Church control.

Civil War
between
Ziska and
the moder-
ate party,
1424

Prokop the
Great

These divisions were not yet, however, sufficient to

hinder Hussite success. A new leader appeared, Prokop the Great, a priest who never himself wielded a weapon, but who was well able to lead his troops to victory and to enforce discipline and obedience. He was of middle height, strongly built, with a very sun-burnt face, large eyes and fiery aspect; to his skill as a general he added much theological knowledge and an eloquent tongue, which he used to good purpose later at the Council of Basle. For the present, however, war was his trade and he began his career with great success in Saxony, which opened the period of offensive warfare. He also routed the new Crusading army led against the Bohemians by Cardinal Beaufort, who in vain tried to rally his panic-stricken troops, tearing the Imperial standard to pieces in his indignation at their cowardice. A further victory at Tauss in 1431 completely overpowered the fifth Crusade and ended the last effort to put down the intrepid Hussites by force of arms. The only hope now was to settle the dispute by a Council.

War carried into Saxony

Defeat of Cardinal Beaufort, 1427

It will be remembered that Martin V., just before his death, had arranged for the meeting of a great Church Council at Basle, and Cardinal Cesarini had been appointed to preside. The Council had a difficult opening, for the new Pope Eugenius IV. tried to dissolve it.

Council of Basle, 1431-1449

It was only after much controversy and great firmness on the part of the leaders of the Assembly that his opposition was withdrawn, and to this he was forced because of the dangers which surrounded him in Italy, which made him fear to arouse further enmity. The Council was deliberating whilst the Pope was escaping from a Roman revolt. This he did by the aid of a pirate, who took him down the Tiber in a crazy old boat. Eugenius lay at the bottom of this covered by a shield,

Rome revolts against Eugenius IV., 1431

while the populace ran along the bank hurling stones and shooting arrows. By daring and good luck the pirate succeeded in bringing his valuable cargo safely to a larger vessel, and the Pope at last found shelter and respect in the city of Florence.

Bohemian
deputation
to Basle,
1432

The first act of the Council of Basle was to invite the Bohemians to send a deputation to endeavour to arrange terms. In January, 1432, seven nobles and eight priests headed by Prokop the Great, and preceded by a banner with the motto "Truth conquers all," entered the city, whilst the populace flocked to gaze upon the little troop and their escort of horsemen with their strange dress and fierce faces. The conference was conducted with great moderation and considerable ability on both sides, and when argument threatened to become bitter, Cesarni knew how to pacify the disputants with extraordinary tact and wisdom. After long and difficult consultation a basis of compromise was agreed upon, and at Prague compacts were drawn up and accepted by the moderate party in Bohemia. Liberty of preaching was permitted so long as it did not exceed what ecclesiastical superiors approved; communion in both kinds was allowed to those who demanded it; crimes were to be punished "according to the law of God and the institutes of the Fathers"; but the Clergy were not to be excluded from the possession of property. Unfortunately this agreement did not meet with the approval of the more extreme party in Bohemia, and Prokop at the head of Taborites and Orphans took up arms against the moderates. At Lipan a terrible battle was fought between fellow-countrymen, which raged a whole day and a whole night. Prokop and his men refused to surrender and were cut down in tremendous numbers; the result was a victory

Compacts
with Bo-
hemia,
1433

Civil War
in Bohemia

Battle of
Lipan, 1434

for the party of conciliation, and a step towards the final settlement. There were not only religious but also political difficulties to be overcome, and it was not until 1436 that Sigismund was able to enter Prague and formally assume the Bohemian crown. The keys and seal of the town were given into his hands and he on his side delivered to the magistrates a document confirming all the old privileges and rights of the city.

Sigismund
crowned in
Bohemia,
1436

Sigismund had now obtained all his crowns. Before attending the Basle Council he had wished to add to his dignity by receiving formal coronation in Italy, and had set out in 1431 for Milan to acquire the iron crown of Lombardy. This he did; but the Duke of Milan, at that time Filippo Maria Visconti, either from fear or jealousy, would not be present at the ceremony, excusing himself on the absurd plea that if he saw Sigismund his joy would kill him. The Emperor was not on good terms with the Pope, since he was strongly in favour of the Council, which Eugenius was endeavouring to dissolve. In the end, however, they waived their differences, and Sigismund came to Rome to receive the Imperial crown. His commanding figure, smiling face and flowing beard were much admired by the Italians, and the ceremony was successfully accomplished. On the head of the Emperor was first placed a Bishop's mitre, then the golden crown, and whilst he held the Imperial sword, Eugenius bore the crucifix. They left the Church together, Sigismund leading the Papal mule for a few paces, before mounting his own more martial steed.

Coronation
in Rome

The Bohemian crown, the last which Sigismund acquired, was not altogether a peaceful possession, for though open war was ended, troubles and dissensions were to continue for many a long day, and plots were formed

against the new monarch which were encouraged by his own wife. Sigismund, however, was not long to enjoy triumphs or to struggle with dangers. His death is curiously characteristic ; a display of very real courage employed for dramatic effect. Feeling his end draw near, he first attended Mass robed and crowned in all his Imperial splendour, and when that was over grave clothes were placed above his grand vestments, and thus arrayed he awaited death seated on his throne, where on the evening of the same day he passed away. For three days his corpse was left seated according to his command : " that men might see that the lord of all the world was dead and gone ". Although it is impossible to avoid smiling at the almost childish vanity of Sigismund, and his striving after effect, it is nevertheless true that his aims were high, his schemes of peace, reformation and unity, noble and desirable ; only he was too impatient and too changeable to carry through any concerted plan. His worst fault, however, was lack of truthfulness ; his word could not be relied upon, and no good intentions could atone for such extreme untrustworthiness.

Death of
Sigismund,
9th Dec.
1437

Empire of
the East
and the
Greek
Church

All this time the Council of Basle was continuing its sessions, and more and more inclining towards attacks upon the Papal authority, despite the efforts of Cesarini to modify its violence. It was no wonder that Eugenius was ready to take the first opportunity to assert his independence. An occasion presented itself in connection with the negotiations now opened with the Greeks. John VI., head of the Eastern Empire established at Constantinople, was in a very dangerous position owing to the inroads of the Turks, who were getting nearer and nearer to his capital city, and his one hope lay in assistance from Western Europe. It had long been the

cherished wish of the Papacy to establish a union between the Eastern and Western Churches, which had only come together very temporarily in the time of Gregory X., and John in his great need for help, contemplated a sacrifice of Greek independence in return for active support. Eugenius, keenly anxious to win honour as negotiator of so great a matter, urged that the Council should transfer itself to Italy as more convenient for the Greek envoys, and when the Basle Assembly refused this proposal, he summoned a Council of his own at Ferrara to conduct the important business. The Eastern Emperor himself, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, as head of the Greek Church, came in person to the conference with twenty-two Bishops. They landed in Venice where the Doge received them with the greatest magnificence, his vessel adorned with scarlet and gold and golden lions on the prow. At Ferrara Eugenius met them, and considerable difficulty was caused over the exact ceremonial details which were to be observed. The Patriarch, for example, was furious at the idea of kissing the Pope's foot, and after a whole day had been wasted in discussing this vital question, he was let off with a salutation on the Papal cheek; even this had to be done privately, that none might be surprised. Another great difficulty was the arrangement of seats at the Council. It had been suggested that the Greeks and Latins should occupy opposite sides, and the Pope should be enthroned as a link between the two. This again offended the susceptible embassy, and in the end the Greek Emperor was given a throne facing that of the Pope, with the Patriarch behind him. This did not satisfy the Patriarch, for he was not allowed to adorn his seat with curtains as he wished, in order that it might

Council of
Ferrara,
1438

Council
transferred
to Florence

Union of
Greek and
Latin
Churches,
1439

resemble the Papal throne. At last all was set in order and the conference began. There were really no great points of doctrine in dispute between the two Churches but long hours of discussion were spent over small details and verbal differences. The real difficulty was that the Eastern Church was unwilling to submit to the Papal Supremacy, and it was only with the most extreme reluctance that this at last was done, as the only chance of help in the immediate emergency. The Council had been transferred to Florence and there in 1439 the Greeks accepted terms of union, and the Emperor consented to admit: "We recognise the Pope as sovereign pontiff, Vicegerent and vicar of Christ, shepherd and teacher of all Christians, ruler of the Church of God, saving the privileges and rights of the Patriarchs of the East". The pacification was little more than nominal. The Greeks at home were furious at the terms, no great European force was raised to oppose the Turks, and no permanent results seemed to follow the union. For Eugenius, however, the Council of Florence had been extremely advantageous. He won much prestige as the creator of unity in Christendom, and this had been done in an Italian Council completely under his authority.

Council of
Basle elects
Felix V. as
Anti-Pope,
1439

The Council of Basle had no corresponding successes to show for their work, and were stirred to fresh measures of independence. In 1439 they went so far as to depose Eugenius, and to start another Schism by electing a Pope of their own. It was necessary to choose some one with money, and they turned to Amadeus Duke of Savoy, a widower with several children and great political influence: his wife had been a daughter of Philip the Bold of Burgundy, and his daughters had been married to the Duke of Milan and the Duke of Anjou. Of late years,

however, he had withdrawn into religious seclusion, and, though still a layman, founded a sort of order, adopting a grey monkish cloak and a gold cross; although a writer of the time thinks that there was quite as much luxury as religion in his comfortable hermitage.

Amadeus accepted the offers of the Council, and took the name of Felix V., but begged that he might be allowed to keep his beard. This he was eventually induced to sacrifice, as it gave him so strange an appearance amongst all the clean-shaven Priests and Cardinals.

To meet this new difficulty, Eugenius felt that he must win the active support of Germany and the Emperor. Sigismund's death had ended the male line of the great house of Luxemburg. In accordance with his wishes, the Electors chose as his successor Albert of Austria, the representative of the famous house of Habsburg, so long excluded from the Imperial dignity. Albert was a ruler of great promise, but unfortunately he barely survived his election two years.

His death cleared the way for a very inferior successor. Frederick III., cousin of the dead monarch, belonged to the younger branch of the Habsburg family, and was a young man of an easy-going temper, which did not lead him to take a very decided policy one way or the other. Perhaps his inactivity was not altogether due to indolence. He was by no means lacking in brains, and sometimes found that to do nothing was the best way of avoiding difficulties. The Pope had a very able envoy to arrange terms of friendship with Germany. Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, who was to play a most important part in later history, had already distinguished himself at Basle and elsewhere. He came of a family noble though poor, and had been

Germany allied to the Roman Pope, 1447

Pope Nicholas V., 1447-55

End of the Council of Basle, 1449

Coronation of Frederick III. in Rome, 1452

well educated at Siena. He obtained work as secretary for various Churchmen, whom he accompanied to the Council of Basle, and his ability and extraordinary powers of persuasion led to his being employed on important embassies. He had also literary distinctions, was crowned with the laurel-wreath as Imperial poet, and is the author of a vivid account of the great events in which he took part. Owing largely to his tact and exertions, Germany was restored to obedience just before the death of Eugenius IV., and this alliance was confirmed and strengthened by the succeeding Pope Nicholas V., who was able to arrange terms almost wholly to the advantage of the Papacy. Nicholas was a very able man, who did much to restore Papal prestige, although his outward appearance was anything but impressive. He was small and insignificant, with weak legs, a harsh voice and a very pale face, disfigured by protruding lips; only his large black eyes expressed something of his commanding intellect. His Concordat with the Emperor gave the final blow to the feeble existence of the Council of Basle. Felix V., who had gained little by his empty and expensive title was readily transformed once more into Amadeus of Savoy; and the Council was quietly dissolved, having first secured its dignity by electing Nicholas as their own Pope.

In 1450 a magnificent Jubilee at Rome was the outward and visible sign of the renewed power of the Roman Pontiff. A further triumph for Nicholas was the arrival of Frederick III. in Rome for coronation at his hands.

"Formerly," writes Aeneas Sylvius, "the Imperial authority surpassed all, to-day that of the Pope is by far the greater." The ceremony was one of great

magnificence, but for Frederick it was quite an unprofitable triumph. He spent a very pleasant time in Italy, wandered happily about Rome to enjoy the sights, and bought various articles of luxury in the shops of Venice; but he had no solid result to show.

Here then we must leave Pope and Emperor. The Empire had been steadily declining. Not only were ideas of universal rule abandoned and Italy practically independent, but the disunion of Germany was a great source of weakness. Outlying possessions had been gradually lost. France had been extending her Eastern frontier; Burgundy, in the hands of an important French family, was becoming very independent; and now the Turks were threatening great danger in the East. Frederick III. was not a man to conquer difficulties; but he is important in German history nevertheless, because of his consolidation of Habsburg territories. From this time onward, with one short exception, the Imperial office remained in the hands of this family, until the Empire fell before Napoleon I. Even now the Habsburg house rules over the present Empire of Austria.

Nicholas V., on the other hand, seemed to have restored the papacy to something of its old dignity. The attempts to rule the Church by Councils, independent of and superior to the Pope, had failed. Basle was the last General Council ever held of the undivided Western Church. The Popes were strong and attempted for a time to pose as the leaders of learning and the heads of the coming Renaissance. But this victory was less complete than it appeared at the time. The Conciliar movement had failed, not so much because of Papal power, as because of the development of national

Condition
of the Em-
pire

Failure of
the Con-
ciliar move-
ment

Churches. It was this which had rendered it impossible to arrive at any satisfactory solution at Constance as well as at Basle. It was impossible to make arrangements for the whole of Christendom, when the Church in England, in France and in Germany each had its own ideas as to what was best, and each wished to maintain its own rights and independence. Thus the apparent reaction in favour of orthodoxy and Papal authority was soon to give way before national opposition and the growing desire for reform and liberty of thought. In 1453 the Protestant Revolution was very close at hand.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Bryce: *Holy Roman Empire.*

Alice Greenwood: *Empire and the Papacy in the Middle Ages.*

Milman: *History of Latin Christianity.*

CHAPTER IX

ITALY, 1382-1453

THE history of Italy, at the close of the fourteenth General character of Italian History in this period and during the fifteenth centuries, presents the same complications and difficulties as before. It is still the history of divided States, struggling for their own advancement; and yet the feuds and friendships of State with State renders it impossible to study one without the others, or to regard them as completely separate unities. A few general lines may perhaps be laid down to explain in some degree the course of events, and to act as guiding threads through the maze of Italian politics.

The Popes had now returned to the States of the Church, but with their authority considerably reduced by absence, and in constant difficulty with their Roman subjects at home, whilst Anti-Popes and the claims of the Great Councils were occupying them abroad. Thus the Pope was ready to side with any faction in Italy, which would repudiate his rival or help him to assert his temporal power, to which he more particularly devoted his energies.

Milan until 1447 was in the powerful hands of the Milan Visconti, who had established so formidable a Duchy in Lombardy that they might aspire with some hope of success to rule over all Northern Italy. Here we read

of extraordinary cunning and cruelty in member after member of this hated family, of intrigues with other cities, of absorption of smaller towns; the leading motive throughout being desire for territorial aggrandisement, and fear of any other State growing in power, above all Venice, the only dangerous rival to their dominion in the North.

Venice

Venice was now becoming more and more of an Italian power, owing to the growth of her territory on the mainland, which brought her into rivalry with Milan, and also Florence, each State being bitterly jealous of the other.

Genoa

Genoa, the old rival of Venice, could never really equal her in commerce after the war of Chioggia, though her jealousy still glowed hotly. She was in subjection for the most part, either to France or to Milan, who competed with her for supremacy, and against whom she struggled with occasional success. In 1411 she had freed herself from French rule only to acknowledge the supremacy of Milan; from the latter she obtained liberty for a short period in 1435.

Florence

Of all these States Florence had, perhaps, the most important history, but it was a history of gradual subjection and loss of liberty. At the close of the fourteenth century, the struggle between the lower and upper classes ended in the complete victory of an oligarchy under the Albizzi, which led in its turn to the more valid though more despotic authority of the Medici family, won for it in our period by the celebrated Cosimo. The external relations of Florence were chiefly determined by the desire for expansion, and by jealousy of Venice and Milan. Under Cosimo de' Medici a sort of "balance of power" policy was adopted, which enabled

Florence to more than hold her own in the struggle for wealth and importance.

Another feature peculiarly characteristic of Italian Condottieri history was the influence and power of the great *condottieri*. Such Generals as Braccio, Sforza, Piccinino, were fully as important as Dukes of Milan or Kings of Naples. All sides fought with paid armies, and success depended on ability to pay these troops, and on the good understanding which could be established with their leaders. These chiefs had become more than mere commanders of great companies; in many cases they were rewarded with castles and lands, became great feudal lords, and competed for power with the old territorial Princes. The way in which the *condottieri* fought first for one party then for another adds a further complication to the study of this perplexing but fascinating period.

Events in Naples have been alluded to from time to time in connection with other matters; but for the sake History of Naples of clearness it may be useful to repeat them shortly in one consecutive narrative.

Charles III., it will be remembered, had succeeded in Charles III., 1382-86 establishing himself on the throne of Naples and had put to death Queen Joanna I., whose adopted heir Louis of Anjou had failed to enforce his claims. Charles, not content with one Kingdom, turned his ambitions to Hungary, where the elder branch of his house had held sway. The death of Lewis the Great left the land to his daughter Maria, who was betrothed to Sigismund, younger brother of the Emperor Wenzel. The Queen-Charles and the Kingdom of Hungary dowager Elizabeth was Regent. (See Genealogical table, p. 274.) A party of Hungarian barons, discontented with this arrangement, offered the throne

to Charles. He hastened to Hungary and was actually crowned, apparently with the consent of Elizabeth and her daughter, who attended the ceremony, but showed signs of extreme grief and wept bitterly. Despite the kind treatment which they received from the new King, they never really abandoned their claims, and Elizabeth contrived the murder of the unsuspecting monarch. The assassination of Charles left the throne of Naples once more a prey to the struggles of rival claimants.

Murder of
Charles
III., 1386

Ladislav,
1386-1414

Ladislav, son of the late King, was eventually successful in holding his own against a second Louis of Anjou; but the claims of the latter were not renounced, and remained a weapon ready to the hand of any one who wished to oppose the young Neapolitan. Ladislav was a man certain to have enemies. Brave, energetic, and spirited, he had the most soaring ambition, which carried his wishes beyond Italy to the very Imperial crown itself; his banners flaunted the proud device: "Aut Caesar, aut Nihil". As a step in his desired career of aggrandisement, he seized the States of the Church, nominally as the friend of the Pope. The City of Florence determined to oppose him, and once more turned to the Angevin candidate, who was proclaimed King by the Council of Pisa, and came in person to maintain his rights. Despite a complete victory at Rocca Secca, Louis of Anjou, owing to delay in following up his success, gained nothing from the battle. Ladislav himself said: "The first day after my defeat, my Kingdom and my person were both in the power of the enemy; the second day my person was safe, but they could still if they wished have become masters of my Kingdom; the third day all fruit of the victory was lost". There was no more trouble from this quarter and not many years later Louis died at

Battle of
Rocca
Secca, 1411

Rome. Ladislas himself had but three more years to live; years chiefly occupied in quarrels with John XXIII., who was driven from Rome. His death in 1414 was followed by the expulsion of all Neapolitans from the Papal Capital.

Competition now took a new form: there were rivals not for the throne but for the hand of the Queen. Joanna II., sister of Ladislas, though far from being an attractive character, had no lack of suitors. The Count of La Marche was eventually accepted, in the hope of conciliating France; but the marriage was a failure from every point of view, and after long quarrels, ending in her husband's flight, Joanna reigned alone. The third Louis of Anjou now came forward with his claims, and was privately egged on by Pope Martin V. He soon found, however, that more than the Queen were against him. Joanna had no children and, indignant at Louis being forced upon her as her successor, determined to bring a new actor on the scene, in the person of Alfonso V., King of Aragon and Sicily. She adopted him as her heir, and he was only too eager to acquiesce in a plan which would once more unite the two Sicilies. Thus a long rivalry began between Angevin and Aragonese.

Joanna soon repented of her choice, as Alfonso was in every way too masterful. She revoked her adoption, and making Louis of Anjou Duke of Calabria, proclaimed him as her heir. He was a quiet and easy-going prince, who went to Calabria as he was ordered, and died there just before his adopted mother. Joanna had still time for another adoption, and chose last of all René of Provence, a younger brother of Louis, well known to us as father of Margaret of Anjou, wife of our own Henry VI. A year later the Queen herself departed this life

Joanna II.,
1414-1435

Attempts
of Louis
III. of
Anjou,
1420

Joanna
adopts
Alfonso of
Aragon

and after-
wards
Louis of
Anjou

Adoption
of René le
Bon, 1434

Death of
Joanna II.,
1435

and left her two adopted sons to dispute the succession. Alfonso was captured in the struggle, and carried off as prisoner to Milan; but here his attractive personality won over the Duke Filippo Visconti, who set him free and gave him help to continue the war; poor help as we now know, since he was at the moment secretly assisting the other side, for it suited him well to have his neighbours flying at each other's throats, and providing occupation for the dangerous *condottieri*. The long struggle ended at last in the establishment on the throne of Alfonso, a man of considerable ability as well as of a generosity so universal as to win him the title of "Magnanimous," and for a short time Naples and Sicily were united under the same ruler. René could never be King, but Eugenius IV. gave him a grand coronation, which possibly did something to atone for his disappointment. The two Sicilies were still being happily and quietly governed by Alfonso in 1453.

Alfonso be-
comes King
of Naples,
1435-58

History of
Milan

One result of the expedition made to Italy by the Emperor Henry VII. is not likely to be forgotten. In 1312 he appointed Matteo Visconti Imperial Vicar in the city of Milan, and so established the ascendancy of that dynasty whose name was to become the most feared and the most hated in Northern Italy. Under the descendants of Matteo, Milanese rule began to grow apace. In 1339 Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, Lodi, Piacenza, Vercelli and Novara owned her sway; Parma, Tortona, Alessandria and Asti were added a few years later, and Giovanni Visconti, the warlike Archbishop of Milan, overstepped the borders of Lombardy, by forcing the cession of Bologna in 1350, and the submission of Genoa in 1353. Milan had become the greatest power in Lombardy, had alarmed Florence and the other Tuscan

Growth of
Milan
under the
Visconti

cities, and had excited the hostility of the Pope by attacks on the States of the Church.

In 1354 the death of the Archbishop left these extensive dominions to be divided between three of his nephews, Matteo, Bernabo and Galeazzo Visconti. Matteo, however, was soon got out of the way by his

N. ITALY IN XIV CENTURY showing possessions of Gian Galeazzo Visconti



brothers, who were utterly unscrupulous; and his death was greeted with pleasure by the Milanese, who had already learned enough of his vicious character. They had gained little: in Bernabo and Galeazzo all the worst features of the Visconti were displayed. The history of this family is almost unbelievable; it is hard to realise that such monsters can ever have existed or have

Rule of
Bernabo
and Galeazzo,
1355-78

been allowed to live. One after another showed the same extraordinary combination of crafty ability, unflinching determination, a cold-blooded cruelty which defies description, coupled with the most despicable personal cowardice. It was not till a little later in Gian Galeazzo that we find these characteristics in their most exaggerated form, but Bernabo and Galeazzo were unmistakable Visconti. It was they who issued the appalling decree which sentenced criminals to forty days' torture before their execution; it was Bernabo who flung a peasant to his hounds for having killed a hare, and who forced a Papal messenger to eat in his presence the parchment, cord and leaden seal of the bull of excommunication which he had brought; it was Bernabo again who fell into such abject terror when the plague was in his capital, that he hid in a house in the forest, saw no one, and surrounded it with a barricade to pass which entailed instant death.

Gian Galeazzo, 1378-1385

Removal of Bernabo, 1335

This tyrannous coward soon reaped the reward of his crimes. In 1378 his brother died, leaving his share of Milanese territory to a son, Gian Galeazzo, the ablest and the wickedest of this able and wicked stock. The new ruler did not strike at once; on the contrary, he feigned a humility and a piety which completely misled his uncle, and then invited him to meet him on his way to a place of pilgrimage. Bernabo came all unsuspecting, only to be seized, flung into prison despite his entreaties and promptly poisoned. Gian Galeazzo, now the head of an undivided dominion, threw off the mask, boldly grasped at power, and entered on a career which brought terror to all other Italian rulers, established the supremacy of Milan, and reduced his own subjects to a dull despair, which robbed them of all

power to resist the oppression, cruelty and terror under which they groaned.

The ambition of the new tyrant was to found a Kingdom of Northern Italy, and he all but achieved his aim. Many territories had been recently lost, and these he set to work to win back with additions. The conquest of Verona and the destruction of the family of Della Scala opened the way both to Padua and Venice. Fearing for themselves, and mindful of their old quarrel with the house of Carrara in Padua, the Venetians helped Milan for the time, and Padua was forced to surrender. Supreme in Lombardy, Gian Galeazzo now threatened Tuscany, took possession of Pisa, Sienna and Perugia, and in 1395 forced Wenzel King of the Romans to confer Milan and his other possessions upon him as an hereditary Duchy. Never was the rise of any family so rapid and apparently so secure as that of the Visconti: wealth and power cover a multitude of sins, and foreign Courts were not ashamed to form marriage alliances with this race of blood-stained tyrants. A daughter of Bernabo had been married to Leopold of Habsburg, the Leopold who fell later on the field of Sempach; a sister of Gian Galeazzo to the English prince, Lionel Duke of Clarence, and the Duke himself to Isabella of France, a country which he again tried to conciliate later by wedding his own daughter Valentine to Louis of Orleans, the Duke who was afterwards murdered. The wedding-feast which was given in honour of the Duke of Clarence has been recorded, and remains as an illustration of the enormous wealth of the Visconti, and of the lavish profusion of those days. Eighteen courses appeared at this magnificent banquet. Each course was heralded by costly presents to the

Policy of
Gian Gale-
azzo

Milan
made a
Duchy,
1395

Visconti
marriage
alliances

wedded pair, sporting dogs of all kinds with costly collars, war-horses royally caparisoned, armour adorned with silver and gold, and many ornaments and precious stones. Even the food was gilded, and the table groaned beneath the weight of gilded stags, hares, pies, and game of every imaginable variety, to say nothing of wine, fruit and sweetmeats. No European monarch could possibly have spent more, even had he wished, and one doubts if any one could have eaten so much!

Francesco
Carrara the
younger

Gian Galeazzo suffered one reverse to his arms, the history of which is full of interest. After Milan had annexed Padua in 1388, Francesco Carrara the younger, who had been imprisoned at Asti, escaped with his wife, and determined to leave no stone unturned for the recovery of his possessions. They crossed the Mont Cenis in snow and first sought help in vain at Avignon; then by ship they returned to Italy, but his young wife, Taddea, ill at the time, suffered such agonies from sea-sickness that they endeavoured again to advance by land. Through hostile territories they walked in hourly fear of capture, with scarcely any food, sleeping where they dared in the woods, in barns, or in ruined churches, Taddea supported by her husband and scarcely able to put one foot before the other. They had many disappointments. At Pisa they hoped for shelter, but the Visconti's hand was there also, and they could not stay, though Francesco did get a horse for his wife and refreshments for the journey. Florence received them, but dared not give open help, and the brave young Carrara set out once more to his kinsman the Duke of Bavaria, a journey filled with sufferings and adventures. At last, with a handful of men and the promise of more to follow, he returned to Italy and advanced on Padua,

where the Milanese had a strong garrison. His numbers were too few to attack the town, but Francesco knew that the river was passable and the water low. With a few companions he crept up the river bed, scaled the wall and entered the town, whilst the attention of the defenders was distracted by shouts of peasants all round, who were devoted to Francesco, and whom he had instructed to do this in order to make the garrison believe that they were attacked by a large force. The stratagem was successful, and the town was captured by the heroic little band; more troops from Bavaria following enabled Francesco to establish himself firmly in Padua, and to force Gian Galeazzo to agree to terms. Recovery of Padua from Milan, 1392

Despite the loss of Padua, the Duke of Milan had made extraordinary progress, and when the fifteenth century began, Florence was engaged in a struggle with this formidable rival, which threatened her very existence, since she was more and more isolated and cut off from all trade communications. Despair and exhaustion were weakening Florentine resistance, when she was saved from destruction by the sudden death of her enemy from plague. A comet which appeared at the time, was regarded by the vainglorious Duke as the signal of his end. "I thank God," he said, "that He has given in the heavens a sign of my summons, that it may be known to all men." The death of Gian Galeazzo threw the Duchy into anarchy and ended his schemes for the Kingdom of Northern Italy: none of his successors was equal to such a task. War between Florence and Milan

The vast dominions, collected with so much labour, were now divided between two young sons of the dead Duke, while his widow Catherine was Regent, but she Death of Gian Galeazzo, 1402
Gian Maria and Filippo Maria, 1402-12

speedily alienated everyone by the aimless cruelties which she thought would do instead of strong rule, and the *condottieri*, more numerous and powerful than ever before, took advantage of the general disorder and began to seize towns and lands for their own use. Filippo Maria, the younger son, eventually established his supremacy, the elder, Gian Maria, whose unreasoning atrocities proclaimed him practically a madman, having been murdered by the Milanese nobles. Filippo married a woman twenty years his senior, the widow of Facino Cane, a general who had annexed certain important towns, which were thus regained; he discovered the merits of Carmagnola, a simple soldier, and made him his commander in chief; he regained Milan which had been taken when his brother was murdered, and restored the shattered Duchy.

Murder of
Gian
Maria,
1412

Filippo
Maria,
1412-47

Filippo Maria Visconti, though not without ability, was a feeble copy of his father. He was far weaker, always suspicious and afraid of decided measures. Gian Galeazzo had been a coward, he shunned arms, and shrieked at a thunder-storm, but no personal fear seemed to affect his purposes or awaken his conscience; Filippo was more of a coward all round. He dared not see his soldiers, he shrank from the very mention of death, he was always expecting treachery, and would receive no visitors. Part of his withdrawal from sight may have been due to his extreme ugliness, which made him dislike publicity. Yet with all his timidity he was still a Visconti in cruelty. He did not hesitate to get rid of his blameless wife, as soon as every advantage had been gained from the match, and his people were still tortured and oppressed.

The chief event of the fifteenth century in North

Italy was the fierce struggle which raged between Milan and Venice.

Venice all this while had not been idle. After the War of Chioggia had practically established her superiority over Genoa, she had been turning her attention more and more to extension on the mainland. The first foe with whom she was thus brought into conflict was the Lord of Padua, and on this account she had actually joined with Gian Galeazzo in his attack on the Carraresi, and was given Treviso as her share of the spoils. The death of Gian Galeazzo brought Venice and the restored State of Padua once more into rivalry, since each coveted the same portions of the dead man's territory. In this quarrel ended the life of the gallant Francesco Carrara, whose early career we have traced. Carried a captive to Venice, he was murdered in prison, defending himself to the last. The fall of this family left the Venetian Republic master of Padua, Vicenza, Verona and the surrounding districts, and a most important power in Northern Italy.

New dangers followed the new acquisitions made by Venice. The purchase of Dalmatia involved her in war with Hungary; the Paduan territories excited the jealousy of Milan. For some time a war party and a peace party had been disputing in Venice, where in 1423 the matter was brought to a head by an appeal from Florence for help against the Duke of Milan, and a threat, that failing help she would throw herself on to his side and make him King of Italy. At last after much hesitation, the new Doge, Francesco Foscari, induced the Republic to declare war; an alliance was formed with Florence, and Carmagnola, the famous *condottiere*, alienated by his former master, Filippo of

Advance of
Venice on
the main-
land

War with
Hungary

Venice
joins Flor-
ence
against
Milan,
1425

Milan, was placed at the head of the Venetian forces. The war between Venice and Milan was one between great *condottieri*. Opposed to Carmagnola were Piccinino and Malatesta, and most frequently Sforza, but he had his own game to play and changed sides when it seemed best for the success of his policy.

The Sforza

Francesco Sforza was one of the most striking figures of his day. His father, the first to take up the trade of war and found the dynasty, was a peasant of Cotilogna, a man of enormous size and strength. In 1380 he was invited by some passing soldiers, struck by his appearance, to join their ranks. He flung his pickaxe into an oak-tree; if it fell he would go on working, if it stayed he would join the troop. No pick returned, he took to the soldiers trade, and was given the nickname of Sforza or the Violent. He became a warrior of great renown, and we have already heard of him fighting in Naples, in the Papal States and elsewhere, besides acquiring territorial possessions of his own. His chief source of strength lay in his army, and the devotion which his followers always felt for him. The manner of his death helps to explain his influence over them. He lost his life fording a swift river, into which he had returned to encourage his men, after having already crossed in safety himself. Seeing a young page overpowered by the current he stooped to save him, fell from his horse, and utterly unable to swim in his heavy armour, was swept down by the flood before any could reach him. His son Francesco took command in his place, and became his equal in valour and warlike fame. Now this younger Sforza was aiming at a Principality of his own; and the son of a simple peasant was the recognised suitor for the

hand of Bianca, an illegitimate daughter of Filippo of Milan himself.

At the opening of the war all went well for Venice, and Brescia and Bergamo were added to her territories; but little by little the conduct of Carmagnola gave rise to the suspicion that he was not doing his best, that he was either secretly favouring the enemy, or that at least he was prolonging the war by his inactivity as useful

Greatest extent of Venetian dominion



for his own interests. The Government at last could stand it no longer: the general was invited to Venice, nominally for a consultation, and after being splendidly entertained was suddenly arrested, and sentenced to death by a special court. Other generals were soon found to take his place, and with varying success the war dragged on, until the death of Filippo Maria in 1447 made a sudden change in the whole situation, for with him ended the male line of the Visconti.

Execution of Carmagnola, 1432

Death of Filippo Maria Visconti, 1447

Disputed
succession
in Milan

The question now arose, how should Milan be governed? The Milanese themselves proclaimed a Republic, but there were plenty of claimants for the Duchy. Sforza was married to Filippo's daughter, and had long been planning to secure his inheritance; Venice would gladly have seized the opportunity of advancing at her rival's expense; Charles of Orleans asserted his rights as son of Valentine Visconti and grandson of Gian Galeazzo. Eventually Sforza, having gained the support of Cosimo de' Medici who preferred to see him rather than Venice master of Milan, solved the difficulty by besieging the town, and the Milanese, divided between fear of him and hatred of Venice, which might have helped them, surrendered to the formidable soldier, and recognised him as their Duke. The Venetians had lost a great opportunity and they could do nothing against the new ruler by force of arms. In 1454 the long struggle was ended by the Peace of Lodi, which deprived Venice of her latest conquests and gave her the frontier of 1428.

Francesco
Sforza,
Duke of
Milan,
1450

Peace of
Lodi, 1454

Domestic
history of
Venice

A few words must be said concerning the domestic history of the Venetian Republic during this period. Its chief feature was the decline of any real authority in the hands of the Doge and the growing supremacy of the Council of Ten. For some time past the Ducal office had been becoming more and more an empty honour, and the theory that he was the delegate of the people little but a picturesque pretence. Originally the people had been really consulted in the election, and though this had turned into a formal sanction, it was not till 1414 that the old words were omitted "This is your Doge, an it please you," and the new ruler was presented to his subjects with the bald announcement,

ITALY after the Peace of Lodi 1454



Francesco
Foscari,
Doge of
Venice

Deposition
of Foscari
by the
Council of
Ten, 1457

“Your Doge”. The history of Francesco Foscari, the first Doge to be proclaimed in this manner, illustrates clearly the real character of the office and its complete lack of authority. His son Jacopo, suspected of taking bribes and bestowing offices, was tortured and banished by the Ten. Recalled once, he was again tried, again tortured and again banished, his father refusing to interfere in his favour when the State decreed his punishment. Foscari, worn out and broken by grief, began to take less active share in public life, whereupon the all-powerful Ten demanded his resignation. In vain the Doge pointed out that such an order could only proceed from the Great Council, the Ten remained immovable, and Foscari left the palace submissive to the will of the real rulers of the city. So ends our period for Milan and Venice. In the former, Visconti tyranny has merely given place to the despotism of the Sforzas. The latter has apparently come victorious out of the war, with increase of territory and plenty of riches and splendour for the moment, but there are rocks ahead. Dangers are threatening from Turks on the East, from Italian rivals in the West, and from loss of her far famed commerce and wealth, which dwindled after the discovery of a passage round the Cape of Good Hope opened a new trade route for the vessels of Europe.

History of
Florence

We have seen in an earlier chapter that the government of Florence at the close of the thirteenth century was very democratic, largely, that is, in the hands of the people. As time went on the upper classes became more and more dissatisfied at the limitations on their power, and the wealthy burghers determined to assert their authority. In 1378 a rising of the *Ciompi*, as the lowest classes of all were called, gave opportunity for

a reaction in the opposite direction, and little by little the government fell into the hands of an oligarchy; a small number of leading citizens gained possession of all the chief offices, and by skilful management of the *Scrutinies* were able to keep themselves in power, until Florence was far from possessing a democratic Government. The rule of this oligarchy was at first most successful. Florence held her own against Milan, increased her commerce, and extended her territories; the conquest of Pisa in especial gave her access to the sea, and raised hopes of naval enterprises. Then followed a period of discontent and failure. The people excluded from power began to murmur, and especially the lower middle classes, who were growing in wealth and felt bitterly their exclusion from office. The weight of taxation also, necessary for carrying on the government, was a constant source of complaint; but above all the oligarchy itself began to split up into hostile family groups, jealous of each other's power, and intriguing for their own supremacy. Of these the most important were the Albizzi and the Medici. Rinaldo degli Albizzi headed the narrow oligarchy, which controlled the government. The Medici, rich bankers and money changers, came to be allied with the lower classes, whose favour they won partly by generous expenditure of their vast wealth. Giovanni de' Medici was looked up to as popular champion against the party in power, and he advocated fairer and better distributed taxation, but no active steps against the oligarchy were taken during his lifetime. On his deathbed he gave much good advice to his son Cosimo, his successor in wealth, and more than his successor in power. "Be compassionate to the poor and assist them with

Victory of
the olig-
archy

Rivalry be-
tween Al-
bizzi and
Medici

your alms ; to the rich be gracious and obliging, especially if in honest adversity. . . . Let your counsel be friendly not dictatorial, and be not rendered proud and arrogant by public honour or popular applause."

War with
Lucca, 1433

In 1433 an unsuccessful war for the conquest of Lucca rendered still more unpopular the party in power, and Rinaldo degli Albizzi, feeling his authority insecure and dreading Medicean influence, secured the arrest and banishment of Cosimo and his brother Lorenzo, and the exclusion of the whole family from public office. The tide soon turned, however, Rinaldo was unpopular, and in the following year he in his turn was banished,

Cosimo de'
Medici re-
called to
Florence,
1434

and Cosimo recalled with the greatest honour and signs of rejoicing. This was a great event in Florentine history, for it marks the foundation of Medicean ascendancy. Cosimo slowly but surely made himself the chief authority in the city, although he never posed as official ruler, nor did he alarm the citizens by outward pomp and ceremony. He avoided offending the lower people, and endeavoured as far as possible to level class distinctions and to favour no single faction in the State. His great ability enabled him to establish a despotism, which was all the stronger for being disguised, and from this time the foreign and domestic policy of Florence was really in his hands.

Home
policy of
Cosimo

The rule of Cosimo at home was very different from that of other Italian tyrants, such as the Visconti in Milan, for example. He aimed at complete power for himself and his dynasty ; but he achieved this by influence rather than open rule, by intrigue rather than by violence and by money not by the dagger. His immense

wealth was a great weapon in his hands ; and if he wished to punish an enemy he did so by ruining him with taxes, instead of by arrest, torture, or death. His despotism, on the whole, was based upon popular support. All this does not imply that Cosimo was unselfish and scrupulous. Nothing was allowed to stand in his way ; as he said himself, "States are not to be preserved by Paternosters" ; but he was averse from violence and would never have desired unnecessary cruelties. Communes writing after his death says, "his authority was soft and amiable and such as is necessary for a free town".

In foreign affairs Cosimo aimed at maintaining a balance of power, at not, that is, allowing any Italian State to advance to such an extent as to threaten the welfare of his own. Thus he was bound at first to adopt a policy of hostility towards Milan and the ambitions of the Visconti, and this led to an alliance with Venice, although there was little love lost between Florentines and Venetians. Again when Filippo Maria took up the cause of Alfonso in Naples, Florence threw her weight on to the side of René. In 1447 when the Duke of Milan died, Cosimo favoured the claims of Sforza, and wished to break off the Venetian alliance as no longer necessary : but this he was unable to do openly, owing to the feeling of the people, until Sforza's success in 1450, when Florence joined with Milan against Venice and Naples. Although this policy, thus shortly stated, may seem complicated and ineffective, the result in reality was to make Florence a very great power in Italy, the ally of France, and a mediator in all questions of difficulty in the Peninsula.

a Foreign
policy of
Cosimo

At the close of our epoch Cosimo de' Medici had still many years of life and power before him, and his history belongs largely to a later period.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Sismondi: *Italian Republics*.

Alethea Wiel: *Venice* ("Story of the Nations"), and *Florence*, ("Mediæval Towns Series").

CHAPTER X

HISTORY OF FRANCE, 1380-1453

THE period which followed the reign of Charles the Charles VI., 1380-1422 Wise was one of great disaster for France. The new King Charles VI. was only eleven years old on his father's death, and though a boy of considerable spirit and promise, his early introduction to the troubles, excitements and dissipations of royalty were too much for a brain naturally feeble.

His reign began with a struggle for power amongst The Princes of the Fleur de Lys his uncles. Charles V. had three brothers. The Duke of Anjou the eldest was greedy and ambitious, he stole the crown jewels and declared himself Regent. The Duke of Berri was bought off by being given the rule in Languedoc, where his cruelties and oppressions encouraged constant disquiet which kept him occupied. Philip the Bold, the boy who alone had stood by his father at Poitiers, had been rewarded with the Duchy of Burgundy, which had fallen to the Crown in 1361, and was one of the richest princes in Europe. He had married Margaret of Flanders, widow of the last Duke of Burgundy of the old house, and only child of Count Louis le Mâle, who died in 1382, leaving all his great territories in the hands of his son-in-law; an all-important fact, for it was largely on account of Flanders that Burgundy became later more attached to England than to France.

A fourth claimant for power was found in the Duke of Bourbon, brother of the late King's wife, and the selfish disputes between these "Princes of the Fleur de Lys" were not conducive to the welfare of the country.

The close of the fourteenth century was a period of popular risings in many countries; it was not only in England that Wat Tyler's Rebellion showed the strength of the people growing in opposition to feudalism. In France there were disturbances in Paris at the opening of the new reign, chiefly against the heavy taxation of the Princes; the rioters were called *Maillotins* or Hammerers, from the weapon they most frequently carried. The Government, for the time, had to yield to popular wishes. The Duke of Anjou was anxious for peace, as his whole attention was turned to Naples, on which he had claims, and in 1382 his departure to fight for his rights against Charles of Durazzo left the chief authority in the hands of Philip of Burgundy.

The Maillotins

Urged by his Uncle Philip, the young King went off with a large army to assist the Count of Flanders, once more in trouble with his subjects. The Flemings, especially those of Ghent as before, had risen against their unpopular ruler, and were headed by Philip van Artevelde, the son of their old leader, a man equally bold and determined. The rebels captured Bruges where the Count had a romantic escape, being concealed in the bed of a poor woman whilst her house was searched by his enemies, and other successes also emboldened the burgesses in their resistance. Van Artevelde, however, was not a trained warrior and he was unable to maintain his forces against the French army at Rosbecque. The story runs that before the battle he had a vision of fire in the sky, and heard sounds of war above the Flemish

French interference in Flanders

Battle of Rosbecque, 29th Nov. 1382.

camp which foretold the disaster that was to come. The horrors of the next day are unrivalled in the annals of war, and it was a ghastly introduction for the boy King to the trade of arms. The one idea of the Flemings was to obtain sheer solid strength and thus force a way through the line of their foes; with this object they linked themselves so closely together that no enemy could possibly enter their ranks, but on the other hand they themselves could scarcely strike a blow. Attacked on both sides at once, they were pressed more and more closely together till half their number died, not through the weapons of the French, but from simple suffocation. "There was a mountain of slain Flemings both long and high, and never had one seen so great a battle and so many dead with so little spilling of blood; this was because so many were stifled in the press and so shed no blood." Philip van Artevelde himself was among the slain, and Charles, satisfied with this victory, returned to his own country, where his entry into Paris was marked by a severe repression of all who had taken part in the recent rebellion. The leaders of the Maillotins were executed, the office of Provost of the Merchants abolished, and municipal liberties destroyed.

Punishment of the Maillotins

The first great event in the government came when the King declared that he was of age, and like Richard II. in England flung himself free from the control of his uncles, and began to govern with the help of old Councillors of his father; *Marmousets* the jealous nobles called them, angry at the favour shown to men of lower birth than themselves. The whole condition of affairs was changed, however, by the King's attack of madness. A combination of causes helped to bring this about. One of Charles's most trusted advisers was his Constable;

Charles declares himself of age, 1388

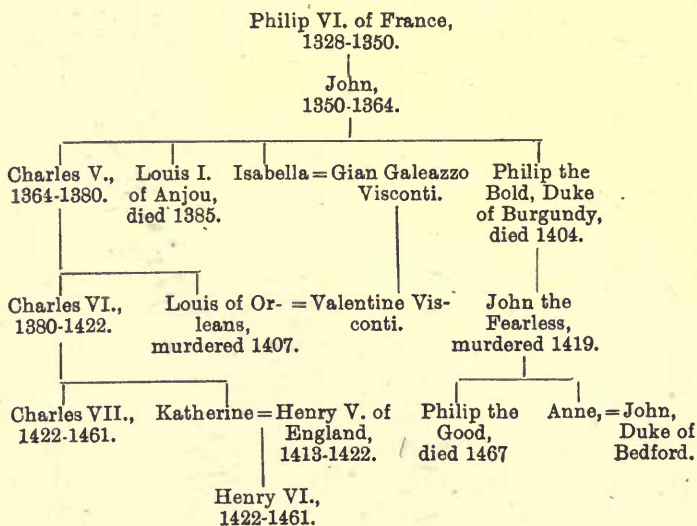
Rule of the Marmousets

Madness of Charles VI.

Olivier de Clisson: A personal enemy of Clisson, Pierre de Craon, backed up by the Duke of Brittany, determined on his removal. One night when returning with a few attendants through the narrow street of St. Catherine, the Constable was fallen upon by Pierre himself and a band of hired ruffians, who dealt him blows which felled him from his horse and as they thought killed him. He was saved by striking in his fall the half-open door of a baker's shop, where work had begun early. As he fell across the threshold, the assassins dared not enter the house, but fled in hot haste leaving him stretched unconscious. The King, to whom news of the crime was brought, flew half dressed to the assistance of his friend, found him alive and learnt the name of the would-be murderer. Medical aid was speedily procured and the Constable recovered; but Charles having failed to capture De Craon determined on the punishment of the Duke of Brittany, whom he rightly guessed to have been at the bottom of the affair. Ill and feverish himself, he disregarded the prayers of his doctors, and during the hottest summer months rode to the attack of his unruly vassal. One blazing July day, having first been startled in a wood by a madman who had seized his bridle, crying "Turn, turn, you are betrayed," he was driven out of his senses by the sudden clang of a lance which a sleepy page let fall on the helmet carried by another of his attendants. Thinking that a whole army was upon him, the King, completely crazed, drew his sword and fell upon his own followers, striking down right and left. Finally he hotly pursued his own brother the Duke of Orleans, and was only captured with great difficulty, and at last quieted, although unable to recognise any one. The attack was

violent, but it passed at last, only to be renewed by the wild career of gaiety with which his friends sought to dispel his melancholy humours. An awful accident gave the final blow to his poor wits. Dressed as wild men with clothes of skins soaked in pitch, he and five others were dancing at a marriage feast, when the Duke of Orleans with a torch, set fire to one of the inflammable dresses. The King was saved by a lady with whom he was talking and who covered him with her robe, but the other five perished in the flames which caught them all and could not be extinguished. Charles never recovered from this shock; though only completely mad at periods of the year he was never really himself. Hence a struggle ensued for power in the Kingdom, which threw the whole working of the government out of gear, and eventually left the country an easy prey to the renewed invasion of the English.

VALOIS AND BURGUNDY



Rivalry between Burgundy and Orleans

The Duke of Orleans

The two parties

John the Fearless of Burgundy

The chief rivals for the control of the government were the Duke of Burgundy, whose great territorial power has been already noticed, and Charles's brother, the Duke of Orleans. The latter was far the inferior in actual wealth and position; his lands though extensive were scattered, and his purchase of Luxemburg only involved him in expense and infuriated his rival; but he had considerable influence and an attractive personality which won him friends, despite the levity and unscrupulousness of his character. Handsome, of a ready wit, a lover of books and art, a benefactor of the Church, always gay and affable, Orleans reminds one in many ways of our own Duke Humphrey of Gloucester. As was the case in the rivalry between Gloucester and Beaufort, this quarrel meant far more than mere personal antagonism, and the two principal opponents represented the two great parties into which the Kingdom was divided. The Orleans party was that of the old feudal nobility, supporters of privilege and arbitrary power; while the Burgundians, more for the sake of opposition than from real popular leanings, were champions of municipal liberty and financial reform, thereby winning the allegiance of the Parisians. In every question that arose the two Dukes took opposite sides. Efforts were being made at the time to end the Papal schism, and while Burgundy was urging the retirement of Pope Benedict, Orleans was his staunchest supporter. In England Orleans posed as the avenger of Richard II., while Burgundy was making terms with the Lancastrian usurper. In the Empire Wenzel was backed up by Louis, his rival Rupert of the Palatinate by Philip.

This state of affairs was but little affected by the death in 1404 of Philip the Bold. His son John the Fearless

took up the same attitude, possibly with even greater animosity. The new Duke was the exact opposite of his cousin Orleans. Short and plain, built for strength rather than grace, he was silent, cautious, unattractive, and extremely ambitious. A sham reconciliation between John and Louis, when apparently "they kissed one another with tears of joy," was followed almost immediately by the final tragedy. In the Rue des Francs Bourgeois in Paris an inscription still marks the narrow passage, below overhanging eaves, where Louis of Orleans was murdered. He had been with Queen Isabella of Bavaria in Hôtel Barbette, when a pretended message from the King was brought to him. Fearing no danger he rode idly along the street, swinging his glove and singing as he went, his escort dawdling behind. Suddenly he was attacked, and, utterly defenceless, could make no resistance. This time there was to be no mistake, the body was almost cut to pieces, and a horrified woman who saw the tragedy from a neighbouring window, noticed that when all was over, a man with a cap pulled over his eyes came and said to the others: "Put out your lights, he is quite dead, let us be off". The mutilated remains were buried in a chapel, which Orleans himself had built, amidst universal horror and mourning. The coffin was borne by his uncle of Berri and his cousins, the titular King of Sicily, the Duke of Bourbon and the Duke of Burgundy. All wept, but none more bitterly than Duke John. The crime was not long a mystery; Burgundy acknowledged that it had been done by his command. "It was I, the Devil tempted me," he whispered to the old Duke of Bourbon, probably in a moment of repentance and humiliation; but though he fled after his avowal, the

Murder of
the Duke
of Orleans,
1407

deed was not regarded with universal indignation. Orleans had long ceased to be popular with the people, especially in Paris, and there was even a Master of the University who wrote in defence of the act, as the just removal of a tyrant.

Burgun-
dians and
Armagnacs

John of Burgundy, soon restored to pride and self-confidence, was able for some years to maintain his ascendancy, and through the Dauphin Louis, who was his son-in-law, became the practical ruler of the Kingdom. Vengeance, however, was only delayed, not averted. The three sons of the murdered man, too young to take the lead themselves, were joined by most of the old noble families, and especially by Bernard of Armagnac, who now became the head of the party.

Relations
with Eng-
land

France was divided into two camps, each of which took up arms, and a civil war broke out, known in history as the struggle between Armagnacs and Burgundians. The complications of this strife of parties would take too long to unravel; the results of it were seen in the great misery of Paris and the country generally, and in the extreme dearness of food and terrible poverty and distress. Above all the civil war in France was a direct cause of the new English invasion. Hitherto there had been little danger from England. Richard II., when freed from his own difficulties, had made peace with France and married the Princess Isabel. Henry IV. had had no time to spare from securing his own position; but now Henry V., young, popular and warlike, was ready to reassert the old claim at a moment's notice. John of Burgundy, for a time humbled by his rivals, began to treat with the enemy of France and offered to help him in an attack upon the dominions of the Armagnacs. Henry spent some time negotiating, but he meant war from

the first, and it did not require the Dauphin's foolish present of tennis-balls to stir up his zeal for the enterprise.

In August, 1415, he landed in Normandy with a small but well-disciplined army. Harfleur, a sort of second Calais, was taken after a determined resistance, and Henry sent a personal challenge to the Dauphin, the combat to be for the Crown itself, although, whatever the issue, Charles VI. was to retain it as long as he lived. But the question was not to be settled in this summary fashion; the challenge was disregarded and the English army set out in the direction of Calais, following a route very similar to that taken by Edward III. The strictest order was kept amongst the troops, severe penalties being imposed on all plundering and on all deeds of violence. The port was not to be reached without opposition. A large force of the French, three or four times ~~equal to~~ that of Henry, faced him near the Castle of Agincourt. and a battle was inevitable. The situation was one of the greatest danger, but the King was cool as ever. "By the God of Heaven by whose grace I stand and in whom I put my trust, I would not have another man if I could. Wottest thou not that the Lord with these few can overthrow the pride of the French." So he answered one of his followers who ventured to wish for more archers. The soldiers were in sore need of encouragement, they were weakened by sickness and poor food, and a night of pouring rain before the battle did not contribute to raise their spirits. The ground was not particularly in favour of the English, but their small numbers were skillfully disposed in a long line, all on foot even the King himself, and the archers were protected from a cavalry attack by a row of six-foot stakes planted in front of them. The French, on the other hand, were

English
invasion,
1415

Battle of
Agincourt,
25th Oct.
1415

in three solid divisions, one behind the other, for the space did not permit all their numbers to commence the fight at once. They had archers, but these were uselessly placed behind the men at arms, who had refused to allow them what was considered the place of honour in the front. Another mistake, arising from the same jealous pride, was that all the princes and nobles were in the first division, and their followers almost leaderless in the rearguard, so that no order or firmness was to be expected there. Add to this that the French had no real commander-in-chief, and it will be evident that the success of the English was not astonishing, although their courage in attacking so enormous an army is deserving of every honour. The loss of life on the French side was terrible: fighting in such close ranks the soldiers were scarcely able to defend themselves, and when the two front divisions were pressed back, the rear fled almost without striking a blow. Henry could, however, do no more that campaign, but taking ship at Calais returned to give thanks in England for his great victory.

Meanwhile the internal discord of France continued as before and utterly paralysed resistance to the foreigners: as a Parisian writing during the war says, "the nobles were far too busy to attend to the English!" The death of the King's two eldest sons made Charles Dauphin, and he was completely under the control of the Armagnac party, whilst John the Fearless had won Queen Isabel to his side. These divisions encouraged Henry, backed up also by the Emperor Sigismund, to renew the attack, and war was recommenced in 1417 with the siege of Rouen. The garrison was starved out. They were reduced, says a chronicler, "to eating dogs, cats, rats, mice and such things, so that it was

Rouen,
forced to
capitulate,
19th Jan.
1419

piteous to behold". When the attack began the poor were driven from the town to save the scanty provisions. Henry would not let them pass his lines, but provided food for them, and they lived in the dry moat whilst the siege went on. Babies were drawn up in baskets to be baptised and then let down again, and on Christmas Day a dinner was provided for them by the English King in honour of the festival. Nevertheless, despite his kindness of heart, Henry did not make war as though it were a tournament or knightly exercise; he made stiff terms with the conquered, and would listen to no plans for peace which did not give him all that Edward III. had gained at Bretigni, with Normandy in addition. Negotiations seemed to be falling through when an event occurred which practically threw France into the hands of the English.

After many efforts, peace at last seemed possible between Burgundians and Armagnacs, and the Duke of Burgundy, though not without some hesitation, consented to a meeting with the Dauphin. Tanneguy du Chatel, now the practical leader of the Armagnac party, himself silenced his fears: "My honoured lord, have no doubts; Monsieur is well pleased with you, and wishes in future to govern as you wish; and besides, you have good friends near him who love you". "We trust in your word," replied the Duke, "but see well that what you say is true, for you will do ill to betray us." "I would rather die than betray you or any one," swore the false Tanneguy; and together they rode to the meeting-place. On a bridge at Montereau barricades had been erected, and the two principals entered accompanied by a few followers. John the Fearless knelt to the Dauphin, and in this position, unable to draw his sword,

Murder of
John of
Burgundy,
10th Sept.
1419

he was struck down by a gang of men who rushed up from behind the Prince, but Tanneguy himself is said to have dealt the first blow. The murder was disastrous for the country. More than a century later, a monk showing Francis I. the great dent made by a blow in the skull of John the Fearless, said: "Sire, that is the hole through which the English entered France". John's son Philip, now Duke of Burgundy, who thought of nothing but how to avenge his father, was ready to make any terms with the English, and by his assistance the Treaty of Troyes was drawn up, the terms of which would debar the family of his father's murderer for ever from the succession. Charles VI. was to be left in possession of the Kingdom for his life, but Henry was to be Regent, was to marry the Princess Catherine and to succeed when the King died. "This seemed strange to some in France," a chronicler quaintly remarks, "but nothing else could be done for the present." With characteristic energy the English King allowed himself one day only for his marriage festivities, and when urged to hold a great tournament on the morrow replied: "Next morning we must be ready to besiege the Castle of Sens, where we shall find the enemies of our lord the King, and there can each of us joust and tourney and display his prowess and hardihood".

Treaty of
Troyes,
1420

Death of
Henry V.,
31st Aug.
1422

Henry's enemies could now be looked on as rebels, and the two years of his Regency were still years of fighting for the suppression of rebellion. In 1422, worn out by his exertions, he died at Vincennes when only thirty-five, and was mourned by French as well as English, for his rule though severe was just and orderly. Pierre de Fenin writes of the grief felt at his death, "for he was a prince of much understanding, who had

great regard for justice, so that the poor loved him above all others. Moreover he was determined to protect the lower classes against the insupportable violence and extortions of the nobles, which won him the favour and prayers of the Clergy as well as of the poor people."

Two months later the poor mad King of France at last ended his long and miserable reign. He was much lamented by his subjects, who had always kept a warm place in their hearts for the unfortunate monarch and firmly believed that he would have done great things had he only been given a mind more robust. The nobles paid no reverence to his corpse, which was accompanied to the tomb by Henry's brother the Duke of Bedford and his English followers: but the Parisians wept as the funeral procession passed through their streets. "Each cried as though at the death of their best beloved." "Ah dear Prince, never shall we see you again, never shall we have one so good." As the King's body was placed in its resting place at St. Denis, the Herald proclaimed: "God give good life to King Henry, by the grace of God, King of France and England our sovereign lord". But the people murmured when they saw the sword of the French Kings borne before Bedford as Regent for the infant English monarch.

Death of
Charles
VI., Oct.
1422

There were now two Kings in France. The English held Paris for Henry VI., a child of ten months old, who was also recognised in Picardy, Normandy, Champagne, Guienne, Gascony and the Burgundian territories. Charles VII. at Bourges had the support of Touraine, Dauphiné, Berri and Poitou. Brittany was doubtful, but eventually leant towards the French side, when Arthur of Richemont, brother of the Duke, became Constable.

Two Kings
in France

Regency of
the Duke of
Bedford

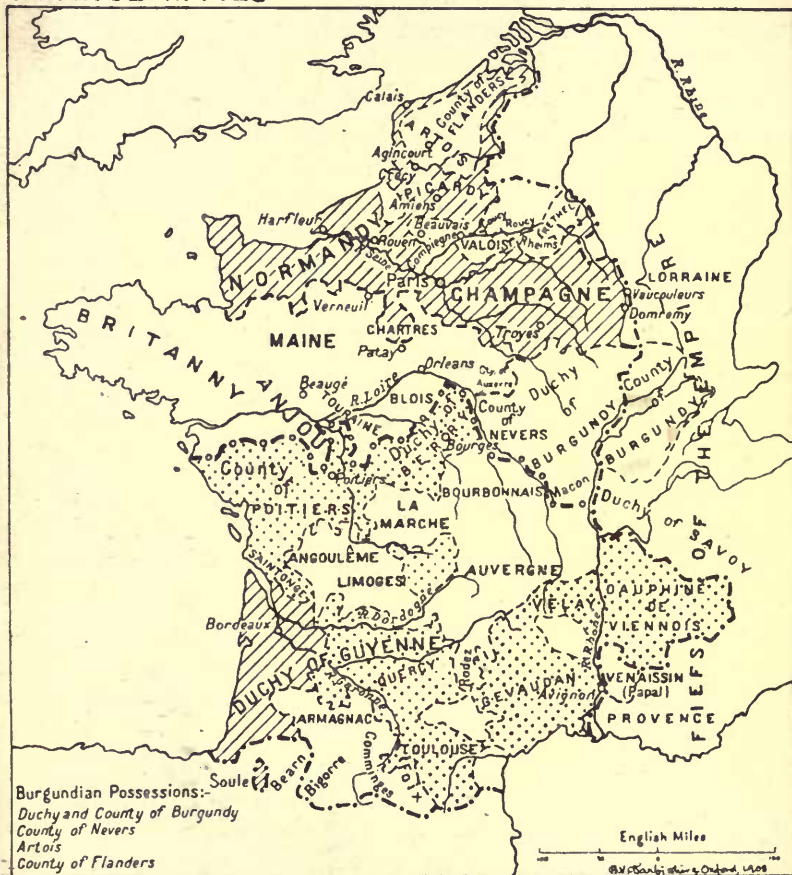
Bedford's task was no easy one. The English power rested on little but the support of Burgundy and the discords in France; even in the districts nominally under their control resistance was constant. The Regent worked his hardest to maintain his brother's conquest. He married Anne, sister of Philip of Burgundy; he strove for peace, reform and good government, ruling through French officials and according to old customs. At Verneuil, against odds almost as great as at Agincourt, he won a complete victory over a combined army of Scotch and French: but there were forces at work against which even so able a man as Bedford could not contend. Philip of Burgundy was at best a very doubtful ally; and with incredible selfishness Humphrey of Gloucester, the younger brother of Henry V., exasperated him by a marriage with Jacqueline of Hainault, a cousin of the Duke, after getting the anti-Pope to divorce her from the Duke of Brabant, to whom Philip himself had married her: more than this, he laid claim to her territories, on which her kinsman had designs on his own account. Bedford smoothed things down for the time; Jacqueline acknowledged Philip as her heir in Holland, Hainault and Zealand, and his attention became absorbed in strengthening his dominions in the direction of the Netherlands; but relations with his old allies were not made more cordial by this event.



Battle of
Verneuil,
17th Aug.
1424

Humphrey
of Glou-
cester
offends
Burgundy

English rule, however, was doomed, whether Burgundian support was retained or no. The very fact of the long war with England and the sense of a common danger were beginning to develop in France a spirit of nationality, which sooner or later was bound to sweep the foreigner out of her land. The train was laid, but a match was needed to kindle the fire; and the credit

FRANCE in 1429



Royal Domain held by Henry VI  All North of line--- obedient to him
 Royal Domain held by Charles VII 

of this must be given to the heroic Maid of Orleans, who despite her apparent failure and cruel death infused fresh life and vigour into the party of resistance, and aroused a spirit of enthusiasm throughout the country, of incalculable value.

Weak position of the French

The fortunes of France seemed at the lowest ebb when Joan of Arc appeared on the scene. Charles, under the influence of evil counsellors, was sunk in apathy and despair; the English were besieging Orleans which had lost hope of succour, and the fall of which would have delivered Touraine, Berri and Poitou, strongholds of the French party, into the hands of the English: never was help more urgently needed, and it came in the person of a young girl, inexperienced and uneducated, but inspired by love of her country and belief in her mission.

Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc was born of peasant parents in Domremy, a village on the borders of Lorraine; she had been taught to sew by her mother and had been occupied either working at home or guarding her father's sheep all her life: she had little learning but a vivid religious faith. When only twelve years of age she had heard "voices," which she believed to be those of St. Catherine and St. Margaret, bidding her leave her home and go forth to the help of the King of France to whom she should restore the Kingdom; and this order was repeated again and again. Despite the entreaties of her parents whom she dearly loved, Joan felt that she must obey the divine message; she went forth to Vaucouleurs and begged the Captain of the town to send her to Charles: "My lord captain, know that God has told me many times to go to the gentle Dauphin, who should be and is the true King of France, and that he must give me men at arms, with whose aid I shall raise the siege of

Orleans and lead him to be crowned at Rheims." After much persuasion the Captain gave her a small escort, and dressed as a man she set out for Chinon on the river Indre where Charles was then dwelling. Here, having gained admission, she went straight to the King, although he was in no way distinguished from the many nobles who surrounded him, and proffered her request. It was long before she could win favour. Eventually she was taken to Poitiers and questioned by learned doctors, to whom she answered modestly but with a shrewd sense of humour, and more than held her own. At last Charles let her go with a small force to join the French already confronting the besiegers, and she won the hearts of all by her confidence and piety. The English before Orleans had erected towers or bastilles, from which they assaulted the town, and these the rescuers had to storm. Joan first dictated a letter to the English commander demanding surrender: "If you will not do right, the Maid will act so that the French shall perform the finest deed that has ever been done in Christendom". There were days of hard fighting before the besiegers were driven off. Joan led the attacks and all marvelled that she seemed to understand the art of war like a veteran commander. At the final assault, though wounded, she bore her banner to the ramparts, and when it touched them she cried: "All is yours, enter in!"—they entered and the town was relieved. The English retreated discouraged and alarmed, Orleans welcomed her deliverer as a Saint, and all France resounded with praise and joy. Joan could not rest with her mission half fulfilled: Charles, still hesitating, was almost forced by her to Rheims, the way having been cleared by another victory at Patay. Before this battle Joan asked the Duke of

Siege of
Orleans

Siege
raised,
8th May,
1429

Battle of
Patay,
18th June,
1429

Alençon, who came to know if they should fight: "Have you your spurs?" "What!" said he, "are we to retire or to fly?" "No, indeed," she replied, "they will fly and you will need your spurs to pursue them": and it happened as she foretold.

Charles
VII.,
crowned at
Rheims,
17th July,
1429

In the Cathedral at Rheims where all previous Kings had been crowned, Charles was anointed with the holy oil, Joan standing by, standard in hand. When all was over she humbly embraced the King's knees, shedding tears of joy. "Gentle King, now the will of God has been done, for He wished that you should come to Rheims to be crowned, to show that you are the true King to whom the Kingdom ought to belong."

Capture of
Joan, 1430

Even now Joan's advice was not always followed, and sorely against her wishes the siege of Paris was abandoned, although such was the panic amongst the enemy, that a bold move had every hope of success. Weary of delay the Maid, on her own account, led a small force to Compiègne, which was being attacked by the English ally, the Duke of Burgundy. Here her courage carried her too far, and she fell into the hands of John of Luxemburg; he sold her to the English, who were overjoyed at the chance of destroying the "witch". Charles VII. stirred not a finger to save her; never can his memory be cleared from the shame of such a desertion. She was taken to Rouen, where a long trial began, conducted by the Bishop of Beauvais, a partisan of England and Burgundy; and every ingenuity was exercised to convict her of heresy and witchcraft. Through long days of questioning Joan stood firm; she would neither deny the divine nature of her message, nor let fall a word which might involve her King in blame. Her answers not only show her saintliness and courage, but dis-

Trial

play a fund of common sense and shrewdness, which were peculiarly characteristic of her. Not till the very last did she waver. Then worn out by a sermon of denunciations, terrified by the thought of the faggot and the stake, urged by a friend to save her life, she set her mark to a document which was a denial of her saints and of the sacredness of her mission. In return her life was spared and she was condemned to imprisonment for life. Her weakness was but momentary; once more encouraged by the heavenly voices, she repudiated her denial and went to her death as a relapsed heretic. In the Market Place of Rouen, on a platform high above the crowd, Joan of Arc was burnt to death. "My voices were of God, they have not deceived me," she cried as the flames rose round her. Scarcely an eye was dry amongst the spectators, even her judges wept. "We are lost, we have killed a saint," cried King Henry's secretary, in tardy horror at the deed.

Death of
Joan of
Arc, 28th
May, 1431

It was true that the English cause was lost: they themselves were losing energy and self-confidence while the French were gaining it; but the dreary struggle dragged on yet for many years. Bedford brought the young King to France, and his coronation at Paris was intended as a counter-blast to the ceremony at Rheims; but the affair was a dismal failure. No impression was made on the French, none but English took part in the service, which was performed according to English rites; above all it was accompanied by none of those gracious acts which usually graced the coronation of a new monarch, little money was distributed amongst the people and no prisoners were released. Meanwhile the Duke of Burgundy, the one weak prop of English power, was becoming more and more alienated: pos-

Coronation
of Henry
VI. at
Paris, 1431

Loss of the
Burgun-
dian alli-
ance

sibly the career of the Maid of Orleans had had some effect even on Duke Philip, assuredly he felt that it was better to be on the winning side, whilst little by little the ties which bound him to England were loosening. His sister the Duchess of Bedford had died and for once her wise husband had committed an imprudence in forming a new marriage with the young Jacquetta of Luxemburg, a vassal of Burgundy. Even the Emperor Sigismund had been won over to Charles VII. and had denounced the ambitions of Duke Philip; whilst his subjects, Parisians, Burgundians and Flemings, were all longing for peace. Just at the last one more stumbling-block was removed by the death of John of Bedford, an incalculable loss for the English, and with the Treaty of Arras the long hostility between France and Burgundy was ended for the time, the Duke being bought off by very substantial bribes. He was granted the counties of Maçon and Auxerre, the towns on the Somme which gave him a strong footing in Picardy, and he was to be free for life from all feudal subjection to Charles VII.

Treaty of
Arras, 1435

Even the King was awaking to some sort of energy, thanks, it is said, to his love for the beautiful Agnes Sorel, who stimulated his dormant ambition and cried shame on his slackness. Paris was retaken by the Constable Richemont, who had lately gone over to the side of the French, and Charles on his solemn entry into the capital, was received with heartfelt enthusiasm.

Peace party
in England

England was at this time weakened by those quarrels and divisions which were fast leading to the Wars of the Roses; and accordingly the Duke of Suffolk in 1444 negotiated a truce, which was ratified by the marriage of Henry to the famous Margaret of Anjou, a

union which was fraught with disturbing consequences to his Kingdom. The truce brought anything but peace to France, which, as after Bretigni, was wasted by bands of professional soldiers, *Écorcheurs* as they were now called, because they skinned their victims to the very shirt; but at least it gave Charles time to reconstruct his army, to restore financial order, and to get a control over the government. Thus when hostilities were renewed he was better able to face them. Bit by bit lands were recovered from the English. Normandy was retaken and by 1453 all Guienne but Bordeaux had succumbed. A last effort was made to save the port, which itself was loyal to the English rule, and Talbot, a veteran warrior eighty years of age, but still full of energy, was sent to its relief. At Castillon, however, he lost his own life and his troops were defeated. Bordeaux fell, and of all she had possessed since the twelfth century, of all the conquests of Edward III. and Henry V., nothing remained to England but the town of Calais. The Hundred Years' War was over at last.

Loss of
English
possessions
in France

Battle of
Castillon
and end of
War, 1453

The long struggle had left traces in France which could not at once be effaced. The country was wasted, depopulated, apparently ruined: but no race has more recuperative power than the French, and the energy and industry of the people rendered recovery extraordinarily rapid: above all France had become a nation, and a nation which was to take a position of the greatest prominence in the centuries to follow. Politically everything tended to establish the absolutism of the Crown; the French asked for nothing but peace and order, and gave up the liberties they had won earlier without a murmur. The nobles endeavoured feebly to resist, but the *Praguerie*, as their attempt was called, came to

Results of
the war on
France

nothing; they had been tried and found wanting; and love of country came more and more to be bound up with loyalty to the King.

Jacques
Cœur

Much of this revival of the French Monarchy was due to the counsellors of Charles VII., Charles the well-served, as he has been truly called; and these counsellors were chiefly members of the bourgeois class. Of these the best known is Jacques Cœur, a rich merchant of Bourges, where his house is still shown adorned with the device "à vaillans (two painted hearts) rien impossible". He became the King's treasurer and did much to improve the finances and to reform the currency. Amongst other changes the *taille*, formerly levied by all lords in their own estates, was made into a royal tax only to be paid to the King. For this and for his great wealth he incurred much hatred amongst the upper classes, and a case was got up against him, on the pretence that he had poisoned Agnes Sorel. Although this absurd accusation fell through, others were invented, the King did not defend him, and he was banished after being deprived of all his possessions. Another burgess, Jean Bureau, did so much work for the French artillery that, for more than a century, it was considered superior to that of any other country.

Jean
Bureau

The reign of Charles VII. left France an independent country, with a standing army¹ and an orderly government; but he passed his last years in suspicion and

¹ By the Ordinance of 1439 no one was to be allowed to raise a company of soldiers without royal licence, and all captains were to be nominated by the King. Very severe regulations were laid down against pillage; both cavalry and infantry were placed definitely under the Crown. This Ordinance could not be carried out, at once, but came into force 1445-48.

misery, disliked by the nobles, deserted by the Dauphin, the future Louis XI., and endangered by the ambitions of the Duke of Burgundy : it is even said that he starved himself to death for fear of poison. It is hard to feel any pity for a man who had shown such shameful apathy, such base ingratitude, and whose successes were wholly due to the exertion and devotion of others.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Kitchin : *History of France*, vol. i.

Charlotte M. Yonge : *The Caged Lion*.

CHAPTER XI

THE SHORES OF THE BALTIC

Importance
of the Bal-
tic

THE Baltic Sea was to the North of Europe what the Mediterranean was to the South. All the chief trade of the North was conducted along its shores; ships plied constantly from the Baltic to the North Sea and thus to Western Europe; the fishing industry, especially in the days when the strict rules of the Church rendered fish an indispensable commodity, was a great source of wealth, and it was here that herrings could be caught in the greatest numbers; the coast of Skaania, as the southern portion of the Swedish Peninsula was called, was the favourite haunt of the herring in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Important towns sprang up on the shores of the Baltic and the North Sea, and the question who should exercise control over these valuable waters and to whom should fall the lion's share of the profits of trade and fishing, became a burning one.

This political question, arising chiefly out of commercial rivalries on the West, was complicated on the southern and eastern shores by religious considerations.

Inhabi-
tants of the
Baltic
coasts

The Baltic Sea and its neighbouring waters were surrounded by three different races. The Scandinavians inhabited Denmark, Sweden and Norway; the Germans Mecklenberg and part of Pomerania, the closely con-

nected coast of the North Sea and Brandenburg, which was not far from the ocean ; while the South and East, part of Pomerania, Prussia, Lithuania, Livonia and Esthonia was the home of the Slavs, the same race which inhabited Poland and Bohemia. Long before our period begins, the Poles and Bohemians had been converted to Christianity and so had the Wends, as the Western Slavs in Pomerania were called, a country which had been practically Germanised. From the Valley of the Vistula eastwards, the Slavonic people of the coast were heathen and uncivilised. Efforts had been made from time to time to win over the Prussians and their neighbours to the Christian faith, but the work of conversion was dangerous as well as difficult, and early in the thirteenth century a Polish Duke invited a body of German Knights to aid in the task. The conquest of Prussia and the settlement of the south-eastern provinces of the Baltic were therefore begun by Germans instead of Christianised Slavs.

The Teu-
tonic Order

The Teutonic Knights thus introduced into the North were a military order, founded originally at the time of Frederick Barbarossa's Crusade to the Holy Land. After the great Emperor's death a few fragments of the German army struggled on to take part in the siege of Acre, where some pious merchants of Bremen and Lübeck formed a body of soldier-nurses to look after the sick of their own race ; and the " German Knights of St. Mary," as they were called, grew into an important order with rules very similar to those of the Templars, from whom, however, they were distinguished by the black cross which they bore on their long white mantles, while their national character was secured by the admission of none but Germans to full membership of the order.

When Palestine ceased to present opportunities for

military energy, the Teutonic Knights had made their head-quarters at Venice, and from thence they gladly came to fight against the heathens of Northern Europe. They built their fortresses of Thorn, Kulm and Marienwerder along the valley of the Vistula, and joined hands with a small military order, called the Knights of the Sword, which had already been established at Riga to force Christianity on the heathen Livonians more to the North. Conversion in the eyes of the Teutonic Knights meant conquest, the sword was their chief method of dealing with the heathen. Little by little Prussia fell under their rule, and Poland saw to her disgust a strong German military State established along the shores of the Baltic, where she would have preferred to extend her own Christianity under Slavonic rule. In the early fourteenth century, when the fate of the Templars showed what might be in store for any Military Order which could give no sufficient reason for its continued existence, the whole Teutonic body concentrated itself in Prussia, and the Grand Master made Marienburg his permanent head-quarters. From thence they conquered land to the West of the Vistula with the important towns of Elbing and Danzig; and the Emperor, glad of the extension of German influence in these important regions, confirmed their rights and took them under his special protection.

Conquest
of Prussia

The fourteenth century marks the highest point in the fortunes of the Teutonic Knights. They had great territorial power, and though Poland was a jealous rival, they were able to hold their own in wars against her; they still had the reputation of being unconquerable and the honour of fighting for Christianity against the heathen Lithuanians who were blocking their progress on the

The
Knights at
the height
of their
power
in the
fourteenth
century

Growing
dangers

Jagello of
Lithuania
becomes
King
Ladislas of
Poland,
1386

East. In this famous military order of the North, together with cold calculation of political motives, there still lingered something of the old chivalry which had inspired the early Knights; plans of valuable territorial conquest were still combined with crusading ardour and religious zeal. All youths who wished for distinction in arms were anxious to obtain some of their training amongst these white-robed warriors of the North; here we find Henry of Derby fighting, before he seized the English throne as Henry IV.; here the gallant John of Bohemia lost his eyesight in the midst of Lithuanian marshes. Towards the close of this century, however, there were signs of coming danger. The chief towns in the dominions of the Knights, such as Danzig, Elbing, Thorn and Königsberg, were members of the Hanseatic League of which we have still to speak: united that is with other German cities in a way which tended to make them very independent of their immediate rulers. Then the union of Kalmar, which placed Sweden, Norway and Denmark all under the same ruler, was a menace to the influence of the Order in the Baltic: but worse than all was the accession of Jagello of Lithuania to the throne of Poland and his acceptance of the Christian faith. It will be remembered that the death of Lewis the Great of Hungary and Poland had left his dominions to be divided between two daughters, and that Hedwig, the youngest, was invited to rule in Poland on condition that she gave her hand to the Lithuanian Duke; and this Jagello was baptised and crowned under the name of Ladislas in 1386. The union of Poland and Lithuania meant a very strong and hostile power which threatened the dominions of the Teutonic Knights, and the baptism of Jagello, followed as it was by the forced conversion of

all his heathen subjects, removed the formal pretext for the continued advance of the Northern Crusaders. In 1410 a severe defeat at Tannenberg showed at last that a Slavonic army could defeat a German one, and destroyed the belief in the impossibility of conquering the Teutonic Knights; fifty-one German banners, hung in the Church of Crakow, remained to keep alive the pride of the victors. For the time, the heroism of Henry of Plauen, the Grand Master, who held out at Marienburg despite apparently overwhelming odds, saved the Order from total destruction; but its power was badly shaken and German Territory on the Southern Baltic was falling back once more into the hands of the Slavs. Shortly after our period ends, Poland obtained the lands which the Knights had conquered to the West of the Vistula, and they were only allowed to retain their territory in Eastern Prussia as a Polish fief.

Battle of
Tannen-
berg, 1410

Peace of
Thorn
1466

While the Germans were thus competing with Slavs on the Eastern Baltic, on the West it was a question whether they or the Scandinavians should control trade in that quarter, and especially in those narrow sea passages leading round Denmark to the North Sea.

German traders and fishermen were early tempted to the shores of the Baltic as well as to the North Sea, and German towns began to spring up on other lands than their own. Thus Wisby on the Island of Gothland, the centre of the northern trade and a great seat of the fishing industry, although under Swedish rule, was to all intents and purposes a German town; Lübeck, Stralsund and Rostock were called Wendish towns, but were peopled and developed by German merchants; and there were commercial settlements of Germans in Norway, in England and in Flanders, at Bergen, London and Bruges.

Growth of
German
towns and
Settle-
ments

German
merchants
abroad

In early days no trade could be carried on safely except by associations, and men were accustomed to group themselves together for all sorts of purposes. Thus within the towns themselves merchants would combine in *Hansas* or Merchant Guilds which obtained control of all the trade of that town, and often became the chief managers of its municipal government; while on foreign soil these traders would form themselves into societies for mutual protection and mutual benefit, bands of fellow-countrymen in a strange land. Merchants in those days went themselves to look after the sale of their goods, and were often obliged to spend long periods in other countries, where they might be at a considerable disadvantage compared with the native inhabitants. It was this which rendered the foreign *hansas* so very necessary. They used to combine together to acquire what were called "factories," places where they could live and also store their goods. Over these societies officials would be placed, responsible for order and justice, and general meetings would be held for common business and for making trade regulations. In England the first *hansa* was formed in London by merchants from Cologne, and gradually other towns were allowed to enter and enjoy the same privileges. At first Hamburg and Lübeck established *hansas* of their own at Lynn on the East Coast, but at the close of the thirteenth century these three factories combined together and formed one very important German Guild in London, the *Hansa Alamanniæ*, combined of these traders both from the Baltic and the North Seas. Similar establishments flourished in Bruges, Bremen, Novgorod and other places.

Hanseatic
League

A close connection was always kept up between these

foreign settlements and the home towns, for merchants did not stay permanently abroad, but were constantly going and coming: and eventually the *hansas* in foreign lands, and the large towns with their guilds or *hansas* at home formed themselves into a league for trading purposes which has become famous in history as the Hanseatic League, and which developed into a great political as well as a trading power.

This League did not appear suddenly at a single moment; it was formed bit by bit as one town after another was induced to ally with the rest, until at last all the chief cities of North Germany and the trading settlements of Germans on Baltic shores and in more distant lands were members of this vast association and acquired the name of Hanse Towns.~

The origin of this union probably came from the alliance of Lübeck and Hamburg, the leading town on the Baltic and the leading town on the North Sea. A glance at the map will show how important was the position occupied by these two. The best way for goods to pass from one sea to the other, was either round the Danish Peninsula by water through the narrow passage of the Sound, or if the Danes hindered this passage, by land from Lübeck to Hamburg. Thus it was very necessary for these places to be in touch with one another, and they joined for mutual protection of the roads between the two. Lübeck had already made herself a great power in the Baltic, where other towns had agreed to adopt her code of trading laws, and meetings for common purposes were held from time to time within her walls. With the formation of the one *hansa* in London a further impulse was given to the union of German traders on both seas and the league grew rapidly

Chief mem-
bers of the
League

in size and importance, the fourteenth century being the period when it was most numerous, most powerful and most definitely organised. Cologne, Lübeck and Wisby each formed the centre of a group of towns, of which some of the chief were Bremen on the Weser; Hamburg on the Elbe; Wismar, Rostock, Stralsund and Greifswald on the Western shore of the Baltic; Elbing, Danzig, Thorn and Königsberg in the neighbourhood of the Vistula and Riga on the Dwina, together with the important foreign depôts already mentioned in London, Bergen, Bruges and Novgorod.

In its struggle for commercial supremacy the chief danger which the Hanseatic League had to face was the rivalry of Denmark; and this became particularly acute after Waldemar Atterdag ascended the throne in 1340.

Scandi-
navian
Kingdoms

Through all the early portion of our period, the three Scandinavian Kingdoms of Norway, Sweden and Denmark were under separate monarchs. The Crown in each was elective, though the choice was generally made from amongst the nearest heirs of the reigning family, and there was a good deal of power in the hands of the people in all three States. Denmark, on the whole, had been the most advanced of the three, and above all she had great geographical importance, commanding as she did the water-way from the Baltic to the North Sea, especially when Skaania, the southern portion of the Swedish Peninsula, was in her hands. Before the reign of Waldemar, however, Denmark had been going through a period of decline; the nobles had rebelled and deprived the Crown of almost all its power, and Magnus of Sweden had regained the Province of Skaania, and with his son Hakon on the throne of Norway threatened to become the leading power in the North. All this had been very

profitable to the Hanse Towns, who had bought valuable fishing rights from the Danish King, and who were combining for the defence of trade routes on their own account. With the accession of Waldemar, however, things were changed. He was a man of great vigour, great unscrupulousness and iron determination. The name "Atterdag" was given to him because he was so fond of saying: "I Morgen er dat Atterdag" ("the day will return to-morrow"), meaning that if he could not accomplish his purpose one day it should be done the next; and his people complained that during his reign no one had time to eat, sleep or rest.

Waldemar
III. of Den-
mark,
1340-75

At first the towns did not realise the danger which threatened them from Waldemar's energetic reconquest of Danish dominions, not even when he won back Skaania from Sweden; but in 1361 they had a rude awakening. "King Waldemar of Denmark collected a great army, and said unto them that he would lead them whither there was gold and silver enough, and where the pigs eat out of silver troughs. And he led them to Gothland, and made many knights in that land, and struck down many people, because the peasants were unarmed and unused to warfare." It was the rich town of Wisby which had excited his envy; he is said to have gone in disguise to the place and won the love of a goldsmith's daughter, who revealed to him all the defences of the city and all the treasure stores. Whether he gained his knowledge by such means or no, he certainly sacked and plundered the town and sailed away laden with booty. Little good did he get, however, from his spoils, since they were all sunk in mid-ocean, in a storm which nearly cost him his own life. This high-handed action raised up an unexpected

Sacking of
Wisby.
1361

War between Denmark and the Hanseatic League

enemy; for not only did Sweden and Norway take up arms, but the Hanse Towns combined in their first alliance for warlike purposes and raised a fleet to fall upon the treacherous Dane. Wittenborg, the Burgo-master of Lübeck, commanded the ships of the League, and when after some brilliant successes he sustained a serious defeat, his town flung him into a prison from which he was only brought for public execution; his head was cut off in the market-place of Lübeck, for failure was sternly punished in those days. The first Danish war was ended by a peace which granted freedom of commerce through the Sound and fishing rights to the Hanseatic League; but Waldemar did not keep his promises and the towns once more combined in defence of their privileges. In 1367 a large meeting was held in the Town Hall or *Hansa Room* of Cologne, and seventy-seven towns proclaimed "because of the wrongs and injuries done by the King of Denmark to the common German merchant, the cities will be his enemies and help one another faithfully". Waldemar despised his enemies and answered by a letter in rhyme little calculated to sooth their feelings; one verse runs:—

If seventy-seven ganders
Come cackling, come cackling at me;
If seventy-seven Hansers
Come crowing, come crowing at me;
Do you think I care two stivers?
Not I! I care not two stivers.

Treaty of Stralsund, 1370

The war which followed resulted in the complete triumph of the League, and the Treaty of Stralsund, which ended it, marks the high-water mark of Hanseatic power, and established the towns as a real political force in the North. Not only were trading rights granted,

but all the strongholds of Skaania were put into the hands of the League, which could thus command the passage of the Sound and control the fisheries. Finally no King was in future to ascend the Danish throne except with the consent of the towns whose privileges he was to confirm.

Meanwhile Waldemar had been more successful in his relations with Sweden. Her King Magnus was a very feeble character, and Waldemar married his daughter Margaret to Hakon of Norway, the son of Magnus, thus opening a way to great future possibilities.

In 1375 on the death of Waldemar, the Danes with the consent of the Hanseatic League chose Olaf, a little boy of five years old, son of his daughter Margaret, as their King, and in 1380 the death of Hakon put him on the throne of Norway also, whilst his mother was real ruler of both Kingdoms. Margaret was a woman of great character and ability, and so successful was her rule as Regent that when her young son died in 1387, Denmark and Norway both chose her as their Sovereign. Sweden was not long in following their example. Magnus had made himself so unpopular that in 1363 the Swedish nobles had revolted and offered the Crown to his nephew Albert of Mecklenberg, who had imprisoned his rival and put himself in his place. The new ruler was not, in the end, more satisfactory than the old, and a party of his discontented subjects now turned for help to Margaret of Denmark and Norway. Nothing was better suited to the wishes of the ambitious Queen. She sent an army which completely defeated the German troops of King Albert, and imprisoning her rival, Margaret undertook the rule of the Swedish Kingdom, and was as successful there as in her other dominions.

Olaf, King
of Den-
mark,
1375-87

Margaret,
Queen of
Denmark
and Nor-
way, 1387
1412,

and of
Sweden,
1389-1412

Union of
Kalmar,
1397

In 1397 an agreement known as the Union of Kalmar was drawn up by the Councils of the three Scandinavian Kingdoms, by which it was decreed that they should always be united under the same ruler, although each State should keep its old laws and constitutions unchanged. Margaret had adopted Eric of Pomerania her nephew as heir in her three dominions, and it was also laid down that successors should always be elected from amongst his descendants.

This Scandinavian Union might have been a considerable danger to the Hanseatic League, but as a matter of fact it was not very durable. Margaret ruled ably and firmly, but Eric was but a feeble successor. Denmark and Norway remained united until the nineteenth century, but the Swedes began very soon to rebel against the connection, and chose rulers of their own even before our period is over, although the permanent severance was not effected until later.

Gradual
decline of
Hanseatic
League

The Hanse Towns, however, had other dangers to face, and were past the height of their power by the fifteenth century: their decline was due rather to dissensions within than to enemies without. Rivalry began between the towns on the North Sea and the towns on the Baltic, and despite the strong position gained by the latter in their struggle with Denmark, they were no longer able to maintain their supremacy. This was not entirely their own fault, but partly that of the herring. For some mysterious reason the shoals of these fish, which had so long frequented the Baltic and particularly the coast of Skaania, removed themselves almost entirely to the shores of Holland, and thus helped to found the importance of the towns of the Low Countries. Amsterdam it has been said "was built

upon herrings". What was begun by the herring was completed by geographical discoveries; and when new trade routes were opened through the larger oceans, the Baltic ceased to occupy the position of importance which had been hers in the Middle Ages.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Hill : *Margaret of Denmark.*

Zimmern : *Hansa Towns.*

Sienkowitz : *The Knights of the Cross ; an Historical Romance.*

CHAPTER XII

THE SPANISH PENINSULA

General
character
of Spanish
History

THE period 1273-1453 is not one of particular interest in the history of the Spanish Peninsula. It follows an important time of progress in the early thirteenth century, when the Moors were driven back farther and farther, until the small Kingdom of Granada alone remained to them, whilst the Christian States were growing in power with this extension of territory. It is not until after 1453 that the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella formed a united Kingdom of Spain by the junction of Castile and Aragon, and that the Moors were finally driven from their last stronghold in the Peninsula.

Divisions
of Spanish
Peninsula

The history of Spain, therefore, during this period is merely an account of the separate States of which the country was composed, and of their relations with one another and with foreign Powers; it is impossible to treat it as a whole. The Spanish Peninsula in the latter half of the thirteenth century was divided into Portugal, the Christian Kingdoms of Castile, Aragon and Navarre, and the Moorish Province of Granada, which was little by little being reduced in size by the encroachments of the Christians. Castile was a very large and important Kingdom, including Galicia, the Asturias, Murcia, and a great part of Andalusia and Leon,

which had been united in 1230 by agreement for the public good. Aragon and Catalonia had been joined by marriage alliance in the twelfth century; an event of great importance for the former, as she gained in Barcelona by far the best sea-port in Spain, inhabited by the most industrious and most enterprising population of the Peninsula. Navarre was a small mountain Kingdom,

SPAIN & PORTUGAL XIV CENTURY



including part of what is now French territory on the North of the Pyrenees; and its history connects it, on the whole, rather more closely with France than with Spain.

The previous history of Spain had been one long continuous crusade against the power of the Moslem, Social condition

with the result that her nobles were all warriors pure and simple; they had never become manorial lords such as were found in other feudal countries, rulers of agricultural estates in which they were supreme over their vassals and heads of justice throughout their land. Constant war at home had also prevented them from seeking occupation in the East, and thus deprived the country of that wider outlook and the impulse towards commerce, art and learning which had been spread through Europe by the great Crusading movement. Thus Spain had advanced on her own lines. She was never really feudal as was most of the Continent, her aristocracy was military but not territorial, free towns with independent populations sprang up sooner than in any other country, and the Kingdoms of Aragon and Castile early enjoyed the benefits of a representative government, which developed from the old popular Councils of the Visigoths.

Constitu-
tion of
Castile

The government of Castile was a limited monarchy, the sovereign being hereditary from the eleventh century, although always receiving formal recognition from the *Cortes* or national parliament. This *Cortes* differed much in composition at different times, but it contained, as a rule, nobles, clergy and representatives from the towns, and it exercised control over taxation, the necessity for its consent being fully recognised. Over legislation also it had influence; sanction was required for any royal enactment and the King had to swear to obey what it decreed. It seems to have been consulted on any matter of importance and it was the honourable, if somewhat formal duty of the *Cortes*, to acknowledge the succession of the heir-apparent. Besides this Assembly, there was a smaller Council to aid the King in executive business:

this was a body, for the most part composed of hereditary nobles, though sometimes additional members were received chosen by the *Cortes* from amongst its own members. Justice was in the hands of the town judges or *Alcaldes*, but the Kings in the thirteenth century added officials of their own called *Corregidores*, and there was appeal from either of these bodies, first to the Governors of the Provinces, then to a Tribunal of *Royal Alcaldes*. In many ways this constitution much resembled that of England; only that there was no trial by jury, and no county representation such as was supplied by our Knights of the Shire.

Aragon had even a more liberal constitution than that of Castile, although at the same time it was more aristocratic. Here the *Cortes* consisted of four estates; Prelates, Barons, or *Ricosombres* as they were called (men of the State, not rich men), Knights or *Infanzones*, and the deputies of the towns. An important office in this State was that of *Justiza*, a minister responsible for the observance of the laws and the supervision of justice, which was very well administered. This good management of justice was especially secured by two rights peculiar to the government of Aragon. By a process known as *jurisfirma*, causes could be called up from any court in the realm to the supreme court of the *Justiza*. Another process known as *manifestation* was something like our own writ of Habeas Corpus; by it a man could be saved from any illegal violence, could be taken from the hands of royal officers, and his trial could be hastened. In 1283 a document known as the *General Privilege*, which has been called the Magna Carta of Aragon, contained a whole series of important provisions for the safeguard of order, justice and good government. Arbi-

Constitu-
tion of Ara-
gon

trary taxation, secret tribunals and private sentences were forbidden, the use of torture was prohibited, and the control of the *Cortes* over the whole administration was affirmed and strengthened. One great feature of Aragon was the very close union between nobles and people and the enthusiasm for liberty which both displayed; the aristocracy formed a real check on the arbitrary power of the King, and according to a Spanish writer: "fought at all times not for power, but for popular liberty".

History of
Castile

Alfonso X.,
1252-84

In 1273 Castile was in the hands of Alfonso X., or the Wise, a rival of Richard of Cornwall for the Imperial dignity, though he never possessed more than the empty title: it was his sister Eleanor who is so well known as the devoted and dearly beloved wife of our King Edward I. Alfonso was a really learned man, if not a successful King. Castile at this period was making great progress in civilisation and learning; St. Ferdinand, the previous King, had done much for his country and brought her much-needed peace: while from his time, "Moors in Castile became as scarce as foxes in Middlesex". Amongst the men of the day, none was more advanced or better educated than the King himself. He was a very many-sided genius, and his studies comprised both science and letters. A mathematician and an astronomer, he was also a poet, a musician and a linguist, perhaps above all a legislator. In astronomy he corrected some of the errors in the old calculations and helped to explain the movements of the stars; ballads he wrote of some merit and chronicles also; but the chief work of his life was the *Siete Partidas* (seven divisions), a very comprehensive code of law compiled from the Roman and Visigothic rules,

from the old local customs or *fueros*, and from the decrees of various great Councils. This celebrated work was not adopted immediately as the law of the land, but was gradually introduced in the next century and has remained ever since one of the most interesting examples of a great national Legal Code.

So much for the wisdom of Alfonso; of his reign there is little to record; his subjects and his own son Sancho IV., 1284-95 rebelled against him, and his death which placed Sancho on the throne in 1284, left Castile a prey to civil war, disorder and lack of government. Only one event of interest took place in this reign in the conquest of Tarifa from the Moors. This was the work of a famous commander known as Guzman the Good. After the city Guzman the Good saves Tarifa had been taken by the Christians, it was again besieged by the Moors, assisted by Prince John, a man of even worse character than his brother Sancho. During the operations, the young son of Guzman fell into the hands of the besiegers, and John, leading him before the walls of the town, threatened to kill him on the spot if his father did not surrender. The noble Guzman refused, and with proud defiance flung down his own knife at the foot of the cruel Prince, who slew the boy, but failed to capture the town, and he and the Moors were forced to retire.

Ferdinand IV., successor of Sancho, was no better Ferdinand IV., 1295-1312 than his father. Some success marked the early years of his reign while he was still a minor; and at this time was formed a Confederacy of burgesses known as the *Hermidad* or brotherhood, which was an attempt to control the monarch, curb the nobles and introduce some order into the administration. This Ferdinand has been surnamed "the Summoned," on account of a tradition

that his brother, whom he had unjustly condemned to death, summoned him to appear before the tribunal of God, and that within thirty days he died suddenly and without apparent cause.

Alfonso
XI., 1312-
50

Battle of
Salado,
1340

Pedro the
Cruel,
1350-69

Henry of
Trastamare
heads ris-
ing against
Pedro

Death of
Pedro,
1369

Alfonso XI. whose reign did not do much to improve the morals or remedy the disorders of the kingdom, is at least distinguished for a great victory over the Moors at the Battle of Salado, and his death from plague came at a moment when he was winning more military successes. His son, Pedro the Cruel, is the only one of this series of Kings who has left a really well-known name behind him, and his fame is one not to be envied, since it is based almost wholly on his perfectly superhuman wickedness and cruelty. Perhaps some crimes have been laid unjustly to his charge, but this does not absolve him from enough to blacken any reputation. He was married to three wives at the same time; Blanche of Bourbon he deserted directly after the ceremony and eventually murdered; Jews were constantly massacred in cold blood before his eyes; his half-brother Don Fadrique was murdered probably by his own hand, whilst staying at his own palace and under his own royal safe-conduct. It is useless to continue the enumeration of his odious deeds, which would fill many pages. The history of the revolt against him led by his half-brother Henry of Trastamare, aided by French support and the Companies under Guesclin, has been told in the chapter on French History. The Black Prince, unfortunately for his reputation, was induced by Pedro to support him, replaced him on the throne by the battle of Navaretta or Najara, and went home to die. Pedro, meanwhile, was soon involved in fresh war and finally lost his life in a hand-to-hand struggle with Henry himself, to whose

tent he had come on a mission of treachery. He had hoped to find Du Guesclin alone and to succeed in winning him over by bribery, but found instead "his brother and his executioner".

The death of the cruel tyrant was welcomed with rejoicing by the whole country, and Henry of Trastamare was willingly recognised as King. His title was disputed, however, by John of Gaunt, the son of our Edward III., who had married Constance of Castile, a daughter of Pedro; but his attempts were unsuccessful, although war continued after Henry's death against his successor John I. The English were assisted by the Portuguese, whose King Ferdinand had fought for his own claims against Henry of Trastamare, and whose son John of Portugal was now married to a daughter of John of Gaunt.

Henry II.,
1369-79

Claims of
John of
Gaunt

John I.,
1379-90

John of Gaunt and his wife took the title of King and Queen of Castile, but in the end their claims were handed over to their daughter Katherine, and her marriage to the Spanish Prince Henry ended the quarrel.

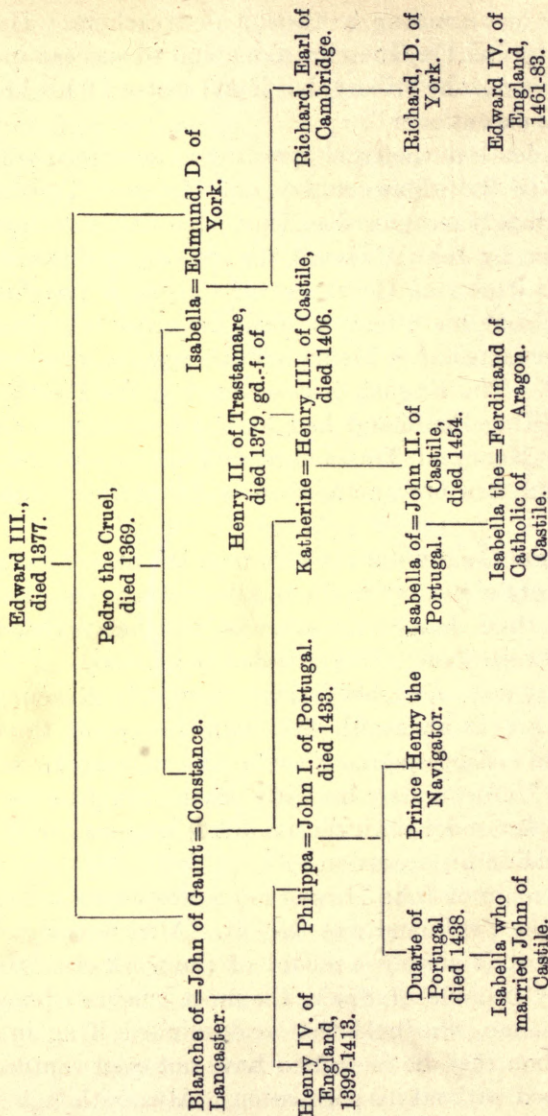
Henry succeeded his father when only eleven years old. Despite his youth the reign was one of the most peaceful and prosperous Castile had enjoyed for a long time. Unfortunately his early death brought a renewal of troubles under his little son John, who was only two years old on his accession.

Henry III.,
1390-1406

The reign of John II. was most prosperous so long as his Uncle Ferdinand was Regent. After he came of age in 1419 it is simply a record of the work of Alvaro de Luna, Constable of Spain, the most celebrated warrior of the time, who held the weak-minded King in such subjection that he is said to have not even ventured to go to bed without his permission. Alvaro, though short

John II.,
1406-54

Alvaro de
Luna



and bald, excelled all Spaniards in dancing, horsemanship and minstrelsy. He had more solid qualities also as a soldier and leader of men. His power became unbounded and his magnificence unequalled: he was not only Constable and Grand Master of the military order of Santiago, but lord of at least seventy towns and castles and by far the richest man in Spain. The favourite, however, was more famous for military glory and lordly splendour than for statesmanlike qualities, and when in 1453 his execution was forced upon the King by revolt amongst the nobles, encouraged by his own wife and son, he left the Kingdom in a weak and disorderly condition. John himself died the year after, and is only worthy of remembrance as the father of that Isabella of Castile whose marriage with Ferdinand of Aragon established in 1479 a united Kingdom of Spain, a Kingdom which was raised, under their joint rule, to a position of real importance in Europe.

Aragon, when our period begins, was still under the rule of her famous King James the Conqueror, who had freed his country from the Moors. A man of great personal strength, courage and energy, he added to his prowess on the field some knowledge of letters, and wrote his own chronicles in the Catalan dialect, one of the chief authorities for the reign that we possess. His domestic government was chiefly occupied in putting down resistance with a heavy hand, and his private life was marred by violence and licentiousness. Yet he was a strong, capable ruler, and a man who commands admiration by his vigour and force of character. Just before his death, he resigned the Crown to his son Pedro, and joined the Cistercian Order, to end his days as a monk in prayer and penitence for his sins.

History of
Aragon

James I.,
1213-76

Pedro the
Great,
1276-85

His son Pedro III. inherited a good deal of his father's ability, and won for himself the title of the Great. Since the Moors were conquered in his territory, the energy of the new King turned towards foreign parts. When the young Conradin, son of the Emperor Frederick II., fighting for the Sicilian Crown, had been seized and executed by Charles of Anjou, the glove which he flung down as a gage of defiance and vengeance was brought to the Court of Aragon; for Pedro had married a daughter of King Manfred, Constance the rightful Queen of Sicily. The suspicions of Charles and his ally the Pope were aroused by the warlike preparations the King of Aragon was making, nominally in view of an approaching crusade; when questioned on the matter the King kept his own counsel. "If I thought my right hand knew my secret," he said, "I would cut it off lest it should betray it to my left." But when the Sicilian Vespers excited the people of the island to rise in a body against their French rulers, a Spanish fleet was conveniently near at hand to take their part. After the victories of Roger de Lorea, a famous Aragonese admiral, which have already been noticed (chapter ii.), Pedro was proclaimed King of Sicily. In a truly mediæval spirit, Charles of Anjou summoned his rival to Bordeaux to settle their disputes in knightly combat: the challenge was accepted, and a rather curious episode followed. Pedro did appear at Bordeaux on the day named, but secretly and before the time, for he suspected a trap, very probably with truth. In any case, he rode round the lists to save his honour and then, disguised as a merchant, escaped back to his native country, leaving his disappointed rival to proclaim him a coward and a traitor, and to turn to other schemes for his de-

Claims of
Pedro on
the King-
dom of
Sicily

Proclaimed
King, 1282

Proposed
trial by
battle at
Bordeaux

struction. Pedro had many a trouble through his acceptance of the Sicilian Crown; excommunicated by the Pope and attacked by Philip III. of France, he died, immediately after his adversary, from wounds and a fever contracted in the war.

After the death of Pedro a series of Kings followed whose reigns have left but little permanent trace on the history of Aragon. One of them, James II., conquered Sardinia from the Genoese, whilst his brother Frederick successfully established his claims to the Kingdom of Sicily. For the most part each sovereign spent a troublous career fighting with his own turbulent nobles, who were ambitious of extending their influence over the whole conduct of government.

At the close of the fourteenth century there was a period of disputed succession, the troubles of which were encouraged by Pope Boniface IX., who was at enmity with the Spanish Kingdoms on account of their support of his rival Benedict XIII., himself a Spaniard. King ^{Martin I.,} 1395-1410 Martin, who was recognised by most of the people, is important as uniting the Kingdom of Sicily to that of ^{Sicily} Aragon. He had much trouble with this new possession, and also from revolts in Sardinia, stirred up against him by Papal intrigue. On his death; fresh succession disputes broke out, six rival candidates entering into competition for the vacant throne. ^{united to} Aragon, 1409

At so critical a time the strength of the Constitution was strikingly displayed. Government was continued ^{Disputed} by the *Justiza* and the Parliament, as the *Cortes* was ^{succession} called. The situation, however, was becoming dangerous and civil war threatened, until a Council was assembled containing representatives from the three great Provinces of which the Kingdom was composed, Valen- ⁱⁿ Aragon, 1410

cia, Catalonia and Aragon, for the purpose of considering the different claims. After an orderly and careful deliberation, the Council held a solemn meeting begun by service in the church, and announced their decision to the assembled crowd.

Ferdinand
I., 1412-16

The elected monarch was Ferdinand of Castile, a nephew of the late King Martin, and a man who had already given proof of the greatest wisdom and moderation as Regent of Castile during the minority of the feeble John II. (see p. 247). During his short reign he worked for his country with a zeal and unselfishness which did much to solve some of the worst difficulties of the time, and won for himself the title of the Honest or the Just. Troubles in Sicily and Sardinia were quieted, and marriages were made which connected Aragon with Castile and Navarre. When Ferdinand's early

Alfonso V.,
1416-58

death placed his son Alfonso V. on the throne, there was little trouble to fear in his Spanish dominions. Alfonso, therefore, turned his attention to Italy, where he inherited Sicily and Sardinia, and had hopes of succession in Naples also. His connection with this country arose from the action of Queen Joanna, who had no heirs of her own and offered to adopt him as her son and to confer on him the right of succeeding her on the throne. This offer, gladly accepted, was later recalled by the changeable Queen, who adopted instead Louis III. of Anjou, with the result that a bitter struggle ensued between the two. When Joanna died in 1435, Alfonso claimed the vacant throne, which was now disputed by René of Provence, known to us as the father of Margaret of Anjou, a younger brother of Louis who had died just before his adopted mother. Eventually the King of Aragon was successful, and ruled for the

Claims on
Naples

rest of his life as Alfonso the Magnanimous, King of Aragon and the two Sicilies. His name is better known in the history of Italy than in that of Spain (see p. 185).

Alfonso becomes King of Naples, 1442

The history of Navarre during this period is scarcely worth following in detail; but it may be well to remember that Philip the Fair united the little Kingdom to France by his marriage with Queen Joan in 1274; that in 1328, when Philip VI. succeeded in France, Navarre was once more ruled as a separate Kingdom under another Joan, mother of the well-known Charles the Bad; and that connection with Aragon was established by the marriage of Queen Blanche of Navarre to John, brother of Alfonso V. and ultimately his successor. The troubles which resulted, however, and the war between John and his son Charles extend beyond the limits of our period; and it was not until much later still that the little Kingdom lost its separate existence, the southern part being seized by Ferdinand of Castile, while the northern was in the sixteenth century united to France by the succession of Henry IV. of Navarre.

History of Navarre

United to France, 1274-1328

Aragon and Navarre

The turbulent history of these Christian Kingdoms during the present period may be wanting in interest and unity, but it introduces us to some of the actors in the European drama. It is specially connected with the history of Sicily, where the dynasty of Aragon made good its claim; with France, owing to quarrels with the House of Anjou, and with the French help given to Henry of Trastamare; and with England, whose loss of Gascony in the fourteenth century largely resulted from the disastrous alliance between Pedro and the Black Prince, and with whom war was caused by the claims of John of Gaunt to the Castilian succession. Every century also was bringing a step nearer the ultimate

union of Spain and her period of greatness, when she was to take up a position of the utmost importance both in Europe and in the New World.

Portugal

National
develop-
ment

Maritime
importance

The neighbouring Kingdom of Portugal had been struggling into a nation, partly by reason of its long wars with the Moors, partly by its resistance to Castile which was never strong enough to absorb it. In the fifteenth century the Portuguese led the way in the new development of maritime enterprise and discovery. This was largely due to Prince Henry the Navigator, son of John I. of Portugal, and grandson of our own John of Gaunt. He was determined to find a new route to India round the continent of Africa, and fitted out repeated expeditions, which explored the African coast and made many important discoveries, amongst others of the Islands of Madeira, the Canaries and the Azores. The Cape of Good Hope was not rounded during the lifetime of the enterprising Prince, but it was a Portuguese seaman who first succeeded in the attempt towards the close of the century, and opened out the new route to India. The great epoch of discovery, with all its far-reaching results, lies beyond our present period; but before 1453 Portugal was already pointing out a new road to fame and wealth.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Watts: *Spain* ("Story of the Nations").

Charlotte M. Yonge: *Christians and Moors in Spain*.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GREEK EMPIRE AND THE OTTOMAN TURKS

IN the year 1261 Baldwin, the last of those Latin Emperors who had established themselves in Constantinople at the time of the Fourth Crusade, was expelled, and the Greek Empire was revived in the hands of the family of Palaeologus: a family which was to occupy the throne of the East until Constantinople fell before the Turks.

The Empire, though restored, never regained its old strength; it was shorn of territory and surrounded by enemies, while the interlude of Latin rule had thrown the whole administrative machinery hopelessly out of gear. The hostility between the Greek or Orthodox Church, as it was also called, and that of Rome was rendered more bitter than ever. The differences in actual belief were not great. The Latin Church had added certain words to the Nicene Creed which the Greek had never adopted, and over which fierce controversy raged; the doctrine of purgatory also was rather differently regarded, and there were certain ceremonial disputes, but the really inseparable barrier was the reluctance of Eastern Emperor and Patriarch to recognise the supremacy of the Pope; and now since the conquest of Constantinople by the Latins there was an additional feeling that union was equivalent to bondage and shame-

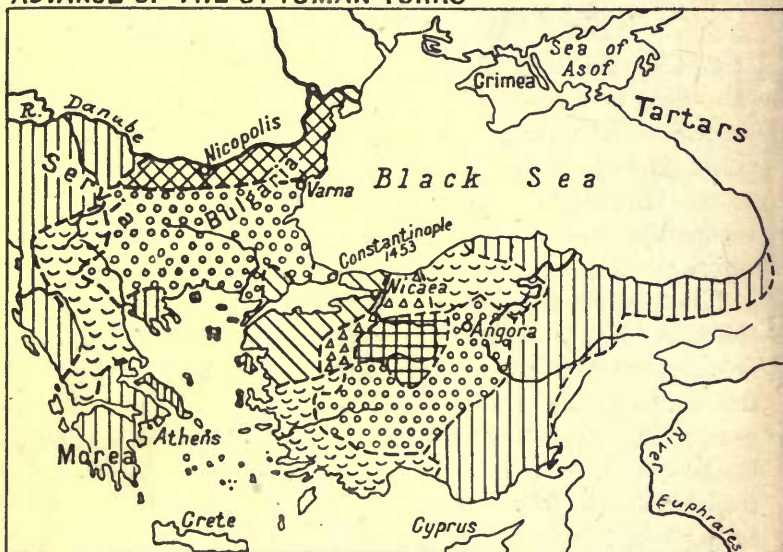
Restoration of Greek Empire, 1261

Weakness of the Eastern Empire

Disunion between Churches of East and West

ful subjection. At various times during our period attempts were made to heal the breach, but without any permanent result; the Emperor might promise one thing, but the Greeks would refuse absolutely to carry out the agreement. The most notable instances of this have already been mentioned in previous chapters, the arrange-

ADVANCE OF THE OTTOMAN TURKS



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Principality of Othman 1221

Othman 1281-1326

Bajazet 1389-1402

Acquisitions under

Orchan 1326-1360

Amurath II 1421-1450

Principality of Orhan 1360-1389

Amurath I 1360-1389

Mahomet II 1450-1481

ment with Gregory X. at the Council of Lyons, and the definite terms of union drawn up and signed at Florence between Eugenius and the Greek Emperor, John VI. Even this remained a dead letter, owing to the hostility of the whole people, and this constant antagonism pre-

vented Western Europe from making any organised effort to aid their fellow-Christians in the East against the inroads of the unbelievers. Other difficulties hastened the decline of the Eastern Empire. Her once wide-spread dominions were getting more and more over-run by hostile neighbours, (see map), and war on the borders was almost incessant; for some time also the descendants of the Latin Emperor tried to reassert their claims, and danger threatened from powerful European Princes, such as Charles I. of Anjou, and Charles of Valois, who were connected by marriage with the exiled house. To meet these pressing dangers the Emperors called in a force to their aid, which was to end by proving a more fertile source of troubles than the distant foes. After the Sicilian war was over, a number of mercenary soldiers, Spaniards of all sorts, under a soldier of fortune called Roger de Flor, were only too glad to seek occupation in the pay of the Greeks, and were known as the Catalan Grand Company. Such were the outrages and cruelties practised by these wild troops on the Emperor's subjects, that friendships soon turned to enmity, and open war broke out between Greeks and Spaniards, which only ended when in 1315 the Grand Company withdrew to fresh fields of bloodshed. It was during this Catalan War that the worst foe of the Greeks for the first time gained an entry into Europe. Amidst all the dangers which threatened the Eastern Empire, far the most formidable was the advance of the Turks. A steady flood of invasion was pouring over from Central Asia, and it was chiefly to aid in checking these on-coming hordes that Roger de Flor was invited to the East. When, however, Spanish arms were turned against their allies the Company did not hesitate to look for aid to the Moslem.

Numerous enemies .

Catalan Grand Company

Catalan War, 1306-15

Entry of Turks into Europe, 1306-7

A band of Turks crossed the Dardanelles in 1306 to attack the Empire, and never from this date was Europe entirely free from the presence of the Turk.

The Turks It was in the early thirteenth century that these inroads from Central Asia began in real earnest, and from that time onward the Turks had been driving out or destroying the Christian population of Asia Minor. The Turk has been called "a nomad and a destroyer," and settlement meant slaughter or extermination of all previous inhabitants. The barbarians came in overwhelming numbers: they required plenty of room, for they were a pastoral not an agricultural people; above all they were Mohammedans, and those who would live with them must adopt their faith and become followers of the prophet. The Christians who could not resist, therefore, fled to save their faith as well as their lives, or were forced to become tributary subjects.

**Sultan
Othman,
1299-1307**

It was a branch of these tribes, known as Ottoman Turks, which was threatening Europe and the East. In his youth, Othman, first Ottoman Sultan, dreamt a dream. He had been suing in vain for the hand of the beautiful Malkhatoum, and in his dream he saw rise from the body of this lady, first, the crescent moon, and then a magnificent tree, which grew to an immense size and spread its branches over seas and mountains, the Caucasus, Atlas and many others; whilst from its roots flowed stately rivers, the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tigris, on which vessels of all sorts sailed out to foreign lands. Then, of a sudden, he saw the leaves of this tree, changed to the form of shining sword blades, turning towards the towns below them, and above all towards the great city of Constantinople which, lying between two seas, shone like a diamond between two

emeralds, and formed the central ornament of a gigantic ring encircling the earth. On the morrow he told his dream and won the hand of his ladylove, and from this union sprang the dynasty which was to rule over the great Ottoman Empire, and was to press forward, little by little, to the brilliant diamond of the vision.

Othman has been called the founder of the dynasty : Sultan Orchan, 1326-57
 his son Orchan the founder of the Turkish nation. The latter captured Nicæa and other important places, so that his state was firmly established in the heart of Asia Minor. His rule is chiefly memorable, however, for the The Janis-saries introduction of the terrible "child tribute," and for the origin of the famous force of Janissaries, which helped to render the Turkish army so invincible. Christians who wished to purchase security and the exercise of their own worship, might do so by paying tribute, which Orchan changed into a contribution of children. A Christian village was forced to supply every year a certain number of young children, who were brought up as Mohammedans, trained with great care and employed when they grew up either in the army or in the civil administration. In the army the services of these Janissaries (new troops) were of the utmost value. From the very first the boys were educated for this and for nothing else. They were subjected to the most severe discipline ; taught to do with little food and sleep, exercised in riding and the use of arms, and above all trained to the most absolute and unquestioning obedience : only in actual war was any of the strictness of their life relaxed, and thus fighting was looked upon as their holiday time and the ideal of existence. Brought up in this way, with never a thought outside their regiment, and with certain privileges not shared by the rest of the

army, these Janissaries were inspired by an *esprit de corps* which made them a perfectly unrivalled force in the hands of the Sultan. Thus was the "victory of the Crescent secured by the children of the Cross".

Causes of
weakness
of the
Greeks
against the
Turks

The Greek Emperors had little with which to resist this formidable adversary; and they looked in vain for real help from the West. Meanwhile Constantinople itself was a prey to constant internal troubles. The government was weak, a mixture of despotism and oligarchy. The ruler was in theory absolute, but his power was hampered by the factious opposition of the nobles, who having no real position in the administration were hostile and irresponsible. His subjects were composed of all sorts of nationalities between whom little real unity existed, and this was particularly obvious in the army. The Emperor ruled over four principal races in the Balkan Peninsula, Albanians, Slavs, Greeks, and Wallachs, to which were added Catalans left behind by the Grand Company, and a large number of Venetians and Genoese, who were engaged in trade rivalries in the Levant and the Black Sea. Venice held certain States in the Morea, besides Corfu, Crete and other islands which she had gained in the fourth Crusade, whilst Genoa established herself in Asof and the Crimea, and held Pera or Galata, a suburb of Constantinople north of the Golden Horn. The history of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is one long continuous record of Greek decline and Turkish progress.

Crusade of
Sigismund

In 1396 the Christians of the West made an attempt to come to the aid of the East. A crusading force was collected under Sigismund, then King of Hungary, later elected Emperor. He was accompanied by John of Burgundy, then only Count of Nevers, who gained in this

expedition his surname of the Fearless. The Turks at this time were under a leader of great celebrity, Bajazet Sultan Bajazet, Ilderim, or the Thunderbolt, so called from the speed of his movements; and the Christians made the fatal mistake of underestimating their enemy. On the Danube at Nicopolis the two armies met, and the defeat of the Crusaders was complete and decisive. The French Knights, brave to rashness but totally undisciplined, rejected the more prudent counsel of the Hungarians, and breaking through the front ranks which faced them, charged blindly after the flying foe, only to find that the flight was feigned, and to be brought to a stand by the archers when in too great disorder to resist. At the same moment the chosen troop of Janissaries burst forth from the ambush which concealed them, and routed the remainder of the army with tremendous slaughter. Sigismund escaped by boat and only reached Constantinople and safety with great difficulty; John of Burgundy was captured and held to ransom; 300 prisoners, who refused to renounce their faith, were massacred in cold blood. Bajazet seemed invincible. He swore to press on westward until he could feed his horse on the altar of St. Peter in the heart of Rome itself. Constantinople was besieged and Christendom trembled, until a sudden diversion was created by a new horde of barbarians and the attackers became the attacked. Battle of Nicopolis, 1396

Whilst Bajazet had been winning victories over the Christians, Timour, or Tamerlane the Tartar, heading a vast host of tribes from Eastern Asia, had been ravaging Persia and Turkestan, had conquered Aleppo from the Sultan of Egypt and was now threatening the territories of Bajazet himself. In 1402 he sent a curt message to the Ottoman Sultan, commanding an instant First Turkish Siege of Constantinople

surrender of all that he had conquered from the Greeks. Bajazet sent back a reply couched in the most insulting language possible, and then hastened in person to meet his haughty rival, leaving Constantinople rejoicing in temporary safety. At Angora a battle was fought which lasted through a whole long burning July day; but at last Bajazet was captured and his army defeated. Timour dragged his illustrious prisoner with him from place to place, until in the following year death freed him from disgrace, and after two more years of victory and bloodshed his Tartar conqueror followed him to the grave.

Battle of
Angora,
28th July,
1402

Europe was saved for the time, and it was nearly half a century before danger from the Turks again became really acute. It was their renewed attacks which led John VI. to undertake his unpopular journey to Italy in search of union and support. His hope of a combined effort of Europe on his behalf was, as we have already seen, disappointed; but Christianity produced two other champions whose efforts shed some glory on the declining cause of the Eastern Empire.

John
Hunyadi

John Hunyadi, Governor of Transylvania, called the White Knight of Wallachia, headed Hungarian resistance against the Turks and won over them a series of victories on the Danube. After the Council of Florence, a Christian army recruited from various nations put itself under the leadership of Hunyadi, who was also accompanied by Ladislas, the King of Poland and Hungary, and by Cesarini the Cardinal who had done such good work at the Council of Basle. This force marched through Bulgaria and captured Varna, where they were attacked by the Turks and prepared to give battle. Here again the Christians failed from overhaste and contempt

Battle of
Varna,
11th Nov.,
1444

of the enemy. Hunyadi, who knew well the Turks and their tactics, had strictly enjoined Ladislas to maintain his position, and not to be induced to advance on an attack. His advice was in vain, for during his absence the King, brave but too impulsive, was urged by some of his followers to break this command, lest the fame of the battle should belong to the "White Knight" alone. Hunyadi, returning from a successful attack on his own side, hastened to the rescue of Ladislas, who was in the thick of the fight and struggling with the famous Janissaries themselves. The mistake was irremediable. The King himself paid for it with his life, the Christians were forced to retire, and Cardinal Cesarini was also slain either in the battle or the retreat.

Another opponent of the Turks was an Albanian Prince, George Castriot, known to history as *Scanderbeg*, a contraction of Iskender Bey or the Lord Alexander, a title given to him by the Turks. When a boy he had been delivered as a hostage to the Sultan, who brought him up as a Moslem and treated him with the greatest favour and distinction. Apparently the youth retained in secret the Christian faith, and planned to escape on the earliest opportunity. His method of doing so was marked by unscrupulousness as well as boldness. Whilst actually occupying a post of authority in the Turkish army, he seized the occasion of confusion after a defeat, to force the Commander at the point of the scimitar to sign a document, handing over to him the command of a Turkish fortress on the frontier of Albania. Armed with this he deceived the Turkish Governor, took possession, and admitted a force of Albanians in the night, who murdered the garrison. Then throwing off the mask, he put himself openly at the head of revolt in

his native country. The rest of his life was spent in rescuing Albania and harassing the Turks, but his strength was not sufficient to divert the Sultan from his one great object, the establishment of Mussulman rule in Christian Constantinople.

Last Siege
of Constantinople,
1453

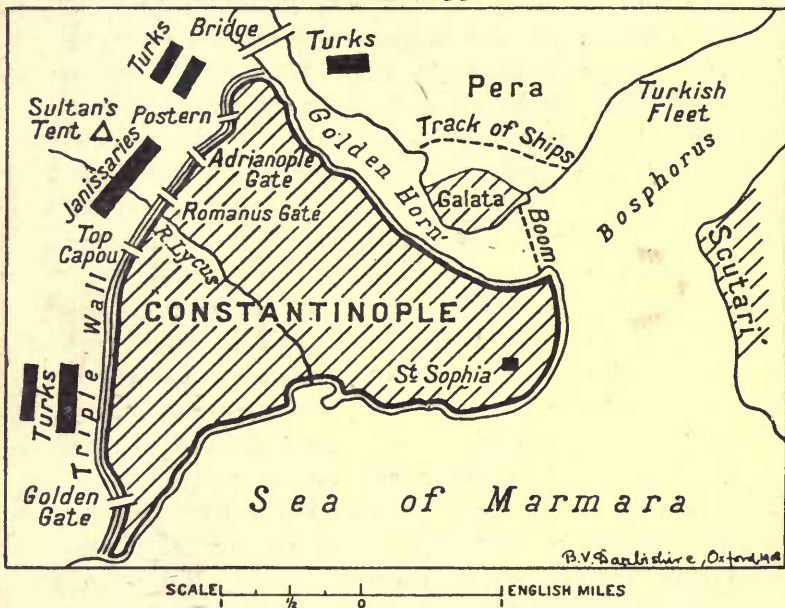
The final siege of the Greek capital was begun by the Sultan Mahomet II. in the spring of 1453; Constantine, son of John VI., was the last Christian Emperor of the East. His possessions by this time had been reduced to Constantinople itself with a strip of land about 100 miles in length behind it, and about half the peninsula of the Morea. The people over whom he ruled were demoralised by a long period of losses and disaster, and for his defence he was largely dependent on ships and men from Genoa and Venice, which were placed under the command of the famous Genoese soldier John Justiniani. Both sides were busy all through the winter of 1452 in making their preparations.

Topo-
graphy of
Constanti-
nople

The city of Constantinople formed a rough triangle, its base to landward, and its two sides bounded by the Golden Horn on the North, and the Sea of Marmora on the South. On the other side of the Golden Horn lay the Genoese settlement of Pera or Galata. Walls completely surrounded the town, while across the mouth of the Golden Horn a boom guarded the harbour against the entrance of hostile ships. On the landward side, the chief seat of danger, the walls were triple. The inner wall, forty feet in height, had higher towers at regular distances; below that at an interval of about fifty feet lay the second wall, similar but smaller, and in front of all a sort of breastwork guarded in its turn by a wide ditch. Several gates led from without into the city, besides which there were smaller military gates,

leading into the different enclosures between the walls to allow soldiers to pass into them. The defenders were too few in number to guard all these three outworks, so it was decided to meet the enemy at the second wall, as the inner wall which should have been the most

SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE 1453



defensible was not in perfect repair. In the post of greatest danger near this wall were stationed the choicest troops under Justiniani himself and the Emperor Constantine; while the admiral with his fleet stayed near the boom across the harbour.

The Emperor's forces have been estimated at about

The two
armies

8,000; Mahomet had at least 150,000 with which to invest the city, and he had collected all the Turkish vessels from the surrounding seas, sailing ships and long boats rowed by forty or fifty oarsmen, which he hoped to find even more useful than his land forces. All along the landward wall the mass of the Turkish troops were stationed. Before them they constructed a trench and palisade, that they might be protected whilst firing on the besieged; a further force was situated behind Galata, on the North of the Golden Horn. The chief feature of Mahomet's army was undoubtedly the cannon, which were to prove the insufficiency of mediæval walls to meet new-fashioned methods of attack. These huge guns, however, were still of a very unwieldy nature: they were not on wheels, but had to be embedded in the ground and fired always in the same direction; they threw huge stone balls which did enormous damage, but as a rule could not be fired more than seven times a day. One monster cannon took sixty oxen to drag it, and 200 men to march beside to keep it in place; whilst labourers had to go on before to prepare the roads for its passing and to strengthen the bridges! From a military point of view, the siege of Constantinople marks an interesting transition between the old and the new methods; for weapons of every kind were employed, both ancient and modern; not only gunpowder and cannon, but long bows, wooden shields, lances and catapults.

First as-
saults

The first attempts made by the Turks to assault the city and force the boom were failures. On the sea, indeed, their opponents won a signal success which helped to raise their spirits. Four Genoese vessels bringing provisions to the city were set upon by the mass of the

Naval vic-
tory for
the Chris-
tians

Turkish fleet just outside the Golden Horn, where both armies could watch the combat, the Sultan from the other side of the walls of Galata. The Christian ships had guarded against all dangers, and from their superior height were able to fling stones and missiles on the lower-built Turkish vessels. In vain the Sultan rode into the sea, until his long robe swept the water, calling forth impotent curses and useless advice to his admiral. Suddenly after a dead calm a favourable wind arose which carried the victorious Italian vessels safely under the protecting walls of the town. In the night they were towed over the boom, whilst the Christians made as much noise as possible with trumpets to pretend they were in huge force, so that the Turkish fleet might expect an attack and remain on the defensive. Mahomet answered by a true *tour de force*. If he could not cross the boom, he would reach the Golden Horn in some other way. Behind the walls of Galata he constructed a tramway of rollers and greased logs stretching right across the little Peninsula from the Bosphorus to the harbour, a distance of about a mile; and over this in a single night eighty ships were hauled by ropes and pulleys and oxen. Strange indeed must have been the spectacle. All the vessels were fitted out as though on sea; sails were unfurled, the rowers kept time with their oars, and shouting and music accompanied this long voyage on dry land and cheered up the spirits of the men. The Christians were horrified by the unexpected appearance of Turkish ships in their harbour and were forced to place stronger garrisons than before to guard the seaward wall. Nevertheless the defence was stout, and renewed assaults on walls and boom were again a failure; even attempts to undermine the city

Mahomet's
vessels
cross the
dry land

The
wooden
bastion

were rendered difficult by the rocky nature of the ground. Again Mahomet planned an unpleasant surprise for the Christians. In a single night a huge wooden tower was constructed, so tall as to overlook the outer walls and to render it possible to fling scaling ladders across on to it; whilst under its protection the besiegers could work at filling up the ditch in preparation for a general attack. The Emperor's forces worked hard on their side. All night they toiled at repairing the damages made by this machine on their defences, and succeeded at last in blowing up the turret itself by barrels of gunpowder placed in the ditch. Another astonishing piece of work, which the Sultan carried through in an incredibly short space of time, was the construction of a bridge across the upper portion of the Golden Horn to join the two divisions of his forces. This was made with over a thousand wine barrels, fastened together by ropes and covered with beams and planks, so that five soldiers could walk abreast on it; pontoons also could be attached to it, bearing cannon which could be used thus with a greater effect against the harbour wall.

Turkish
bridge over
the Golden
Horn

Disunion
within the
City

For seven weeks the struggle had been continuing, and within the city party and race dissensions were adding enormously to the difficulties of the defence. The Greeks themselves were divided between those who looked for help to the West and those who hated any idea of the union; Italians were disliked by the Greeks who considered them as rivals in trade, and the Italians themselves were split up into Venetians and Genoese, bitter enemies of long standing. One man, however, commanded universal admiration and was obeyed by all parties alike. Justiniani more than justified the trust

that had been placed in him, and worked ably and incessantly against the constant assaults of the foe. When the walls were battered down he constructed a stockade of sticks and stones and earth, or anything that could be got together, covered with skins to protect it from fire. But courage and resource were alike unavailing against the overwhelming numbers of the enemy, and Europe did not raise a finger to help the final struggle of the Eastern Empire. Towards the end of May the Sultan determined to attack the city on all sides at once, and thus to reap the full advantage of his superior numbers. Through the camp went the news of his promise to the soldiers: three days unhindered plunder to every man in the army, an inducement to valour fully appreciated by his troops. Within the city all felt the crisis was approaching, and the Emperor urged his followers to one more heroic effort. "Do not lose heart," he said, "but comfort yourselves with bright hopes, because, though few in number, you are skilled in warfare, strong, brave and noble, and proved in valour." On the 28th of May the last Christian service was held in the great Church of St. Sophia, which was crowded with all who could be spared from the defences. The Emperor and his followers partook of the Sacrament, and the solemn ceremony over, all went to their posts. On May the 29th, shortly after midnight, the general assault began. The defences were still strong and the defenders were determined. Again and again the besiegers hurled themselves against the stockade, again and again they were beaten off. It seemed as though the city might still be saved, when two disastrous accidents decided the fate of the day. One small gate leading to the outer enclosure had been forgotten, it was found un-

Final at-
tack

guarded by the enemy, and a body of Turks appeared unexpectedly amongst the defending garrison, and pressing into the city itself, hoisted the Turkish flag on some of the turrets. Worse than this, however, was the withdrawal of Justiniani. Wounded mortally as it proved later, he left his post and made his way to his own ship near the harbour, on which he died three days later. His disappearance was the signal for total demoralisation and despair. In vain Constantine endeavoured to rally the men and continue the defence of the stockade; the Janissaries forced their way through, and the Emperor, plunging into the thick of the fight, died in one last gallant attempt in keep back the inrush of the foe. By sunrise all resistance was ended, and the city was given over to the terrible three days of plunder which Mahomet had promised. After these, the Sultan himself made solemn entry into the city; and in St. Sophia, now a Mohammedan mosque, the faith of the prophet was proclaimed.

Death of
Emperor
Constantine

Entry of
Mahomet
II.

Results of
the Fall of
Constantinople

The fall of Constantinople marks the close of our period and an epoch in the world's history. The Eastern Empire disappeared and Turkey was established as a European State. Europe was aghast at an event she had done so little to prevent; but indirectly she was to reap good results from the immediate evil. It is not true that the fall of Constantinople introduced the study of Greek in the West: scholars, especially in Italy, were already reading and teaching the language and literature of Greece: but after 1453 the number of fugitives increased greatly, and amongst these fugitives came scholars who quickly rose to distinction in the West: the study of Greek became both more systematic and more widespread, and helped the development of

freedom of thought and the breach with old superstitions and old teaching. On the Turks themselves the result of this conquest was to make them less nomadic and more agricultural. Once established in Europe they extended their conquests westward, and became a power whose influence was to be important throughout the whole later history of the Continent.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Oman: *The Byzantine Empire* ("Story of the Nations"), and *Constantinople* ("Mediæval Towns Series").

HOUSE OF HABSBURG

Rudolf I.,
1273-1291.

Albert I.,
1298-1308.

Rudolf, King Frederick (the Handsome), Albert II. of
of Bohemia, disputed election of Austria,
Lewis of Bavaria, died 1358.
died 1307. died 1380.

Albert III. of
Austria.

Leopold of Austria, = Virida Visconti,
killed at Sempach,
1386.

Emperor Sigis-
mund

Albert IV. of
Austria.

Ernest of Styria,
died 1424.

Frederick,
died 1439.

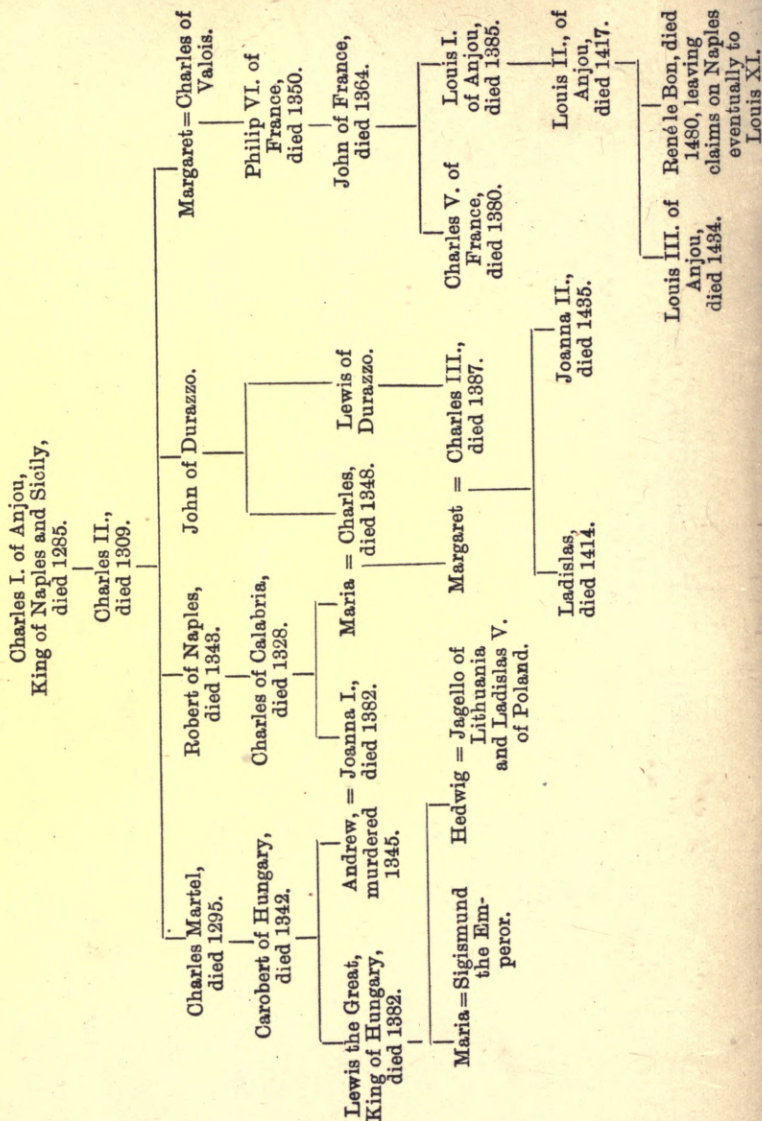
Elizabeth = Albert V. of Austria,
Emperor as Albert II.,
1438-1439.

Frederick III.,
Emperor, 1440-1493.

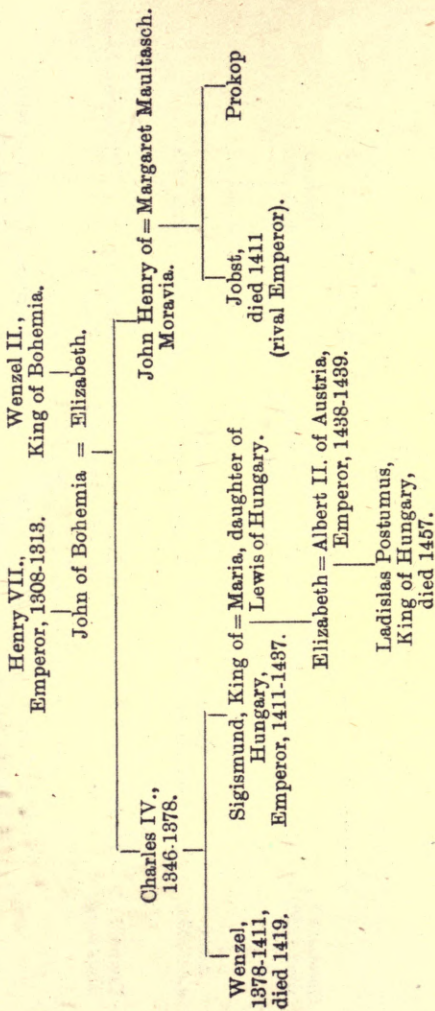
Ladislav Postumus,
died 1457.

Maximilian I.

HOUSES OF ANJOU IN NAPLES AND HUNGARY

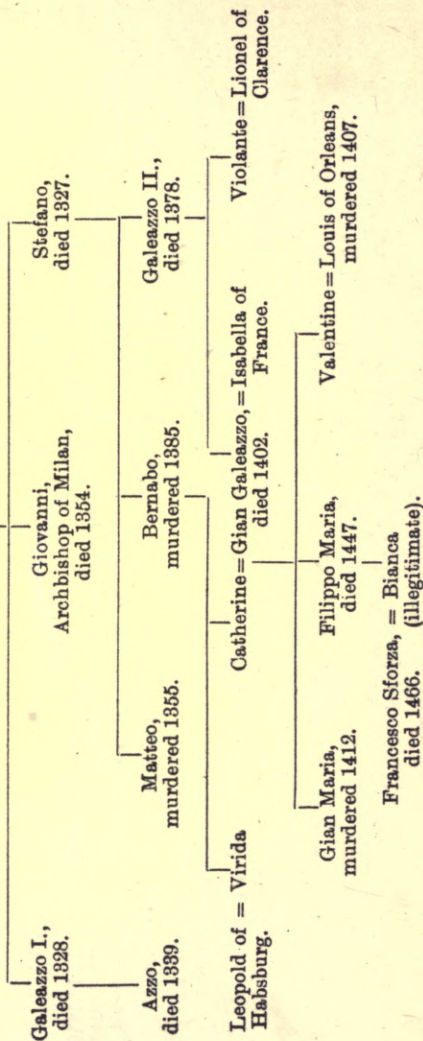


HOUSE OF LUXEMBURG

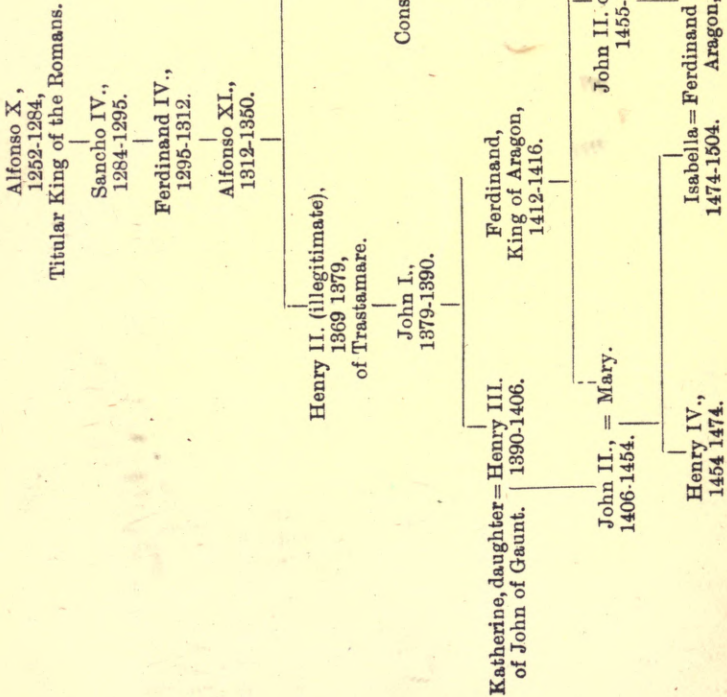


THE VISCONTI

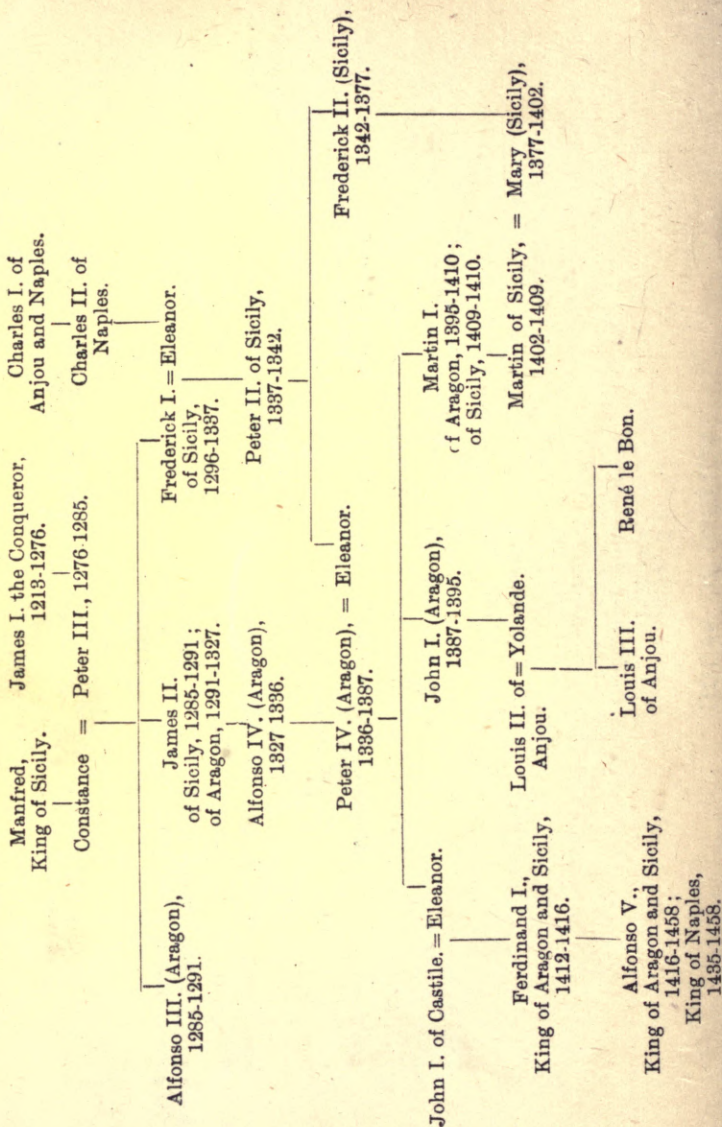
Matteo I.,
Lord of Milan,
died 1322.



HOUSE OF CASTILE



HOUSE OF ARAGON AND CONNECTION WITH SICILY



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