

**CHRISTENDOM AND THE CRUSADES**

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**§ 1**

LET us turn again now from this intellectual renaissance in the cradle of the ancient civilizations to the affairs of the Western world. We have described the complete economic, social, and political break up of the Roman imperial system in the west, the confusion and darkness that followed in the sixth and seventh centuries, and the struggles of such men as Cassiodorus to keep alight the flame of human learning amidst these windy confusions. For a time it would be idle to write of states and rulers. Smaller or greater adventurers seized a castle or a countryside and ruled an uncertain area. The British Islands, for instance, were split up amidst a multitude of rulers; numerous Keltic chiefs in Ireland and Scotland and Wales and Cornwall fought and prevailed over and succumbed to each other; the English invaders were also divided into a number of fluctuating "kingdoms," Kent, Wessex, Essex, Sussex, Mercia, Northumbria, and East Anglia, which were constantly at war with one another. So it was over most of the Western world. Here a bishop would be the monarch, as {v2-041} Gregory the Great was in Rome; here a town or a group of towns would be under the rule of the duke or prince of this or that. Amidst the vast ruins of the city of Rome half-independent families of quasi-noble adventurers and their retainers maintained themselves. The Pope kept a sort of general predominance there, but he was sometimes more than balanced by a "Duke of Rome." The great arena of the Colosseum had been made into a privately-owned castle, and so too had the vast circular tomb of the Emperor Hadrian; and the adventurers who had possession of these strongholds and their partisans waylaid each other and fought and bickered in the ruinous streets of the once imperial city. The tomb of Hadrian was known after the days of Gregory the Great as the Castle of St. Angelo, the Castle of the Holy Angel, because when he was crossing the bridge over the Tiber on his way to St. Peter's to pray against the great pestilence which was devastating the city, he had had a vision of a great angel standing over the dark mass of the mausoleum and sheathing a

sword, and he had known then that his prayers would be answered. This Castle of St. Angelo played a very important part in Roman affairs during this age of disorder.

Spain was in much the same state of political fragmentation as Italy or France or Britain; and in Spain the old feud of Carthaginian and Roman was still continued in the bitter hostility of their descendants and heirs, the Jew and the Christian. So that when the power of the Caliph had swept along the North African coast to the Straits of Gibraltar, it found in the Spanish Jews ready helpers in its invasion of Europe. A Moslem army of Arabs and of Berbers, the nomadic Hamitic people of the African desert and mountain hinterland who had been converted to Islam, crossed and defeated the West Goths in a great battle in 711. In a few years the whole country was in their possession.

In 720 Islam had reached the Pyrenees, and had pushed round their eastern end into France; and for a time it seemed that the faith was likely to subjugate Gaul as easily as it had subjugated the Spanish peninsula. But presently it struck against something hard, a new kingdom of the Franks, which had been consolidating itself for some two centuries in the Rhineland and North France.{v2-042}

Of this Frankish kingdom, the precursor of France and Germany, which formed the western bulwark of Europe against the faith of Muhammad, as the Byzantine Empire behind the Taurus Mountains formed the eastern, we shall now have much to tell; but first we must give some account of the new system of social groupings out of which it arose.

## § 2

It is necessary that the reader should have a definite idea of the social condition of western Europe in the eighth century. It was not a barbarism. Eastern Europe was still barbaric and savage; things had progressed but little beyond the state of affairs described by Gibbon in his account of the mission of Priscus to Attila (see vol. i, p. 557). But western Europe was a shattered civilization, without law, without administration, with roads destroyed and education disorganized, but still with great numbers of people with civilized ideas and habits and traditions. It was a time of confusion, of brigandage, of crimes unpunished and universal insecurity. It is very interesting to trace how out of the universal mêlée, the beginnings of a new order appeared. In a modern breakdown there would probably be the formation of local vigilance societies, which would combine and restore a police administration and a roughly democratic rule. But in the broken-down western empire of the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, men's ideas turned rather to leaders than to committees, and the centres about which affairs crystallized were here barbaric chiefs, here a vigorous

bishop or some surviving claimant to a Roman official position, here a long-recognized landowner or man of ancient family, and here again some vigorous usurper of power. No solitary man was safe. So men were forced to link themselves with others, preferably people stronger than themselves. The lonely man chose the most powerful and active person in his district and became *his* man. The freeman or the weak lordling of a petty territory linked himself to some more powerful lord. The protection of that lord (or the danger of his hostility) became more considerable with every such accession. So very rapidly there went on a process of political crystallization in the confused and lawless sea into which the Western Empire had liquefied. These natural associations and alliances of protector and subordinates grew very rapidly into a system, *the feudal system*, traces of which are still to be found in the social structure of every European community west of Russia.

This process speedily took on technical forms and laws of its own. In such a country as Gaul it was already well in progress in the days of insecurity *before* the barbarian tribes broke into the empire as conquerors. The Franks when they came into Gaul brought with them an institution, which we have already noted in the case of the Macedonians, and which was probably of very wide distribution among the Nordic people, the gathering about the chief or war king of a body of young men of good family, the companions or *comitatus*, his counts or captains. It was natural in the case of invading peoples that the relations of a weak lord to a strong lord should take on the relations of a count to his king, and that a conquering chief should divide seized and confiscated estates among his companions. From the side of the decaying empire there came to feudalism the idea of the grouping for mutual protection of men and estates; from the Teutonic side came the notions of knightly association, devotion, and personal service. The former was the economic side of the institution, the latter the chivalrous.

The analogy of the aggregation of feudal groupings with crystallization is a very close one. As the historian watches the whirling and eddying confusion of the fourth and fifth century in Western Europe, he begins to perceive the appearance of these pyramidal growths of heads and subordinates and sub-subordinates, which jostle against one another, branch, dissolve again, or coalesce. "We use the term 'feudal system' for convenience' sake, but with a degree of impropriety if it conveys the meaning 'systematic.' Feudalism in its most flourishing age was anything but systematic. It was confusion roughly organized. Great diversity prevailed everywhere, and we should not be surprised to find some different fact or custom in every lordship. Anglo-Norman feudalism attained in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a logical

completeness and a uniformity of practice which, in the feudal age proper, can hardly be found elsewhere through so large a territory....



“The foundation of the feudal relationship proper was the *fief*,<sup>{v2-044}</sup> which was usually land, but might be any desirable thing, as an office, a revenue in money or kind, the right to collect a toll, or operate a mill. In return for the fief, the man became the *vassal* of his lord; he knelt before him, and, with his hands between his lord’s hands, promised him fealty and service.... The faithful performance of all the duties he had assumed in homage constituted the vassal’s right and title to his fief. So long as they were fulfilled, he, and his heir after him, held the fief as his property, practically and in relation to all under-tenants as if he were the owner. In the ceremony of homage and investiture, which is the creative contract of feudalism, the obligations assumed by the two parties were, as a rule, not specified in exact terms. They were determined by local custom.... In many points of detail the vassal’s services differed widely in different parts of the feudal<sup>{v2-045}</sup> world. We may say, however, that they fall into two classes, general and specific. The general included all that might come under the idea of loyalty, seeking the lord’s interests, keeping his secrets, betraying the plans of his enemies, protecting his family, etc. The specific services are capable of more definite statement, and they usually received exact definition in custom and sometimes in written documents. The most characteristic of these was the military service, which included appearance in the field on summons with a certain force, often armed in a specified way, and remaining a specified length of time. It often included also the duty of guarding the lord’s castle, and of holding one’s own castle subject to the plans of the lord for the defence of his fief....



“Theoretically regarded, feudalism covered Europe with a network of these fiefs, rising in graded ranks one above the other from the smallest, the knight’s fee, at the bottom, to the king at the top, who was the supreme landowner, or who held the kingdom from God....”[\[335\]](#)

But this was the theory that was superimposed upon the established facts. The reality of feudalism was its voluntary co-operation.

“The feudal state was one in which, it has been said, private law had usurped the place of public law.” But rather is it truer that public law had failed and vanished and private law had come in to fill the vacuum. Public duty had become private obligation.

### § 3

We have already mentioned various kingdoms of the barbarian tribes who set up a more or less flimsy dominion over this or that area amidst the débris of the empire, the kingdoms of the Suevi and West Goths in Spain, the East-Gothic kingdom in Italy, and the Italian Lombard kingdom which succeeded the Goths after Justinian had expelled the latter and after the great pestilence had devastated Italy. The Frankish kingdom was another such barbarian power which arose first in what is now Belgium, and which spread southward to the Loire, but it developed far more strength and solidarity than any of the others. It was the first real state to emerge from the universal wreckage. It became at last a wide and vigorous political reality, and from it are derived two great powers of modern Europe, France and the German Empire. Its founder was Clovis (481-511), who began as a small king in Belgium and ended with his southern frontiers nearly at the Pyrenees. He divided his kingdom among his four sons, but the Franks retained a tradition of unity in spite of this division, and for a time fraternal wars for a single control united rather than divided them. A more serious split

arose, however, through the Latinization of the Western Franks, who occupied Romanized Gaul and who learnt to speak the corrupt Latin of the subject population, while the Franks of the Rhineland retained their Low German speech. At a low level of civilization, differences in language cause very powerful political strains. For a hundred and fifty years the Frankish world was split in two, Neustria, the nucleus of France, speaking a Latinish speech, which became at{v2-047} last the French language we know, and Austrasia, the Rhineland, which remained German. [336]

We will not tell here of the decay of the dynasty, the Merovingian dynasty, founded by Clovis; nor how in Austrasia a certain court official, the Mayor of the Palace, gradually became the king *de facto* and used the real king as a puppet. The position of Mayor of the Palace also became hereditary in the seventh century, and in 687 a certain Pepin of Heristhal, the Austrasian Mayor of the Palace, had conquered Neustria and reunited all the Franks. He was followed in 714 by his son, Charles Martel, who also bore no higher title than mayor of the palace. (His poor little Merovingian kings do not matter in the slightest degree to us here.) It was this Charles Martel who stopped the Moslems. They had pushed as far as Tours when he met them, and in a great battle between that place and Poitiers (732) utterly defeated them and broke their spirit. Thereafter the Pyrenees remained their utmost boundary; they came no further into Western Europe.

Charles Martel divided his power between two sons, but one resigned and went into a monastery, leaving his brother Pepin sole ruler. This Pepin it was who finally extinguished the descendants of Clovis. He sent to the Pope to ask who was the true king of the Franks, the man who held the power or the man who wore the crown; and the Pope, who was in need of a supporter, decided in favour of the Mayor of the Palace. So Pepin was chosen king at a gathering of the Frankish nobles in the Merovingian capital Soissons, and anointed and crowned. That was in 751. The Franco-Germany he united was consolidated by his son Charlemagne. It held together until the death of his grandson Louis (840), and then France and Germany broke away again—to the great injury of mankind. It was not a difference of race or{v2-048} temperament, it was a difference of language and tradition that split these Frankish peoples asunder.

That old separation of Neustria and Austrasia still works out in bitter consequences. In 1916 the ancient conflict of Neustria and Austrasia had broken out into war once more. In the August of that year the present writer visited Soissons, and crossed the temporary wooden bridge that had been built by the English after the Battle of the Aisne from the main part of the town to the suburb of Saint Médard. Canvas screens protected passengers upon the bridge from the observation of the German

sharpshooters who were sniping from their trenches down the curve of the river. He went with his guides across a field and along by the wall of an orchard in which a German shell exploded as he passed. So he reached the battered buildings that stand upon the site of the ancient abbey of Saint Médard, in which the last Merovingian was deposed and Pepin the Short was crowned in his stead. Beneath these ancient buildings there were great crypts, very useful as dug-outs—for the German advanced lines were not more than a couple of hundred yards away. The sturdy French soldier lads were cooking and resting in these shelters, and lying down to sleep among the stone coffins that had held the bones of their Merovingian kings.

#### **§ 4**

The populations over which Charles Martel and King Pepin ruled were at very different levels of civilization in different districts. To the west and south the bulk of the people consisted of Latinized and Christian Kelts; in the central regions these rulers had to deal with such more or less Christianized Germans as the Franks and Burgundians and Alemanni; to the northeast were still pagan Frisians and Saxons; to the east were the Bavarians, recently Christianized through the activities of St. Boniface; and to the east of them again pagan Slavs and Avars. The “Paganism” of the Germans and Slavs was very similar to the primitive religion of the Greeks; it was a manly religion in which temple, priest, and sacrifices played a small part, and its gods were like men, a kind of “school prefects” of more powerful beings who interfered impulsively and irregularly in human affairs. The{v2-049} Germans had a Jupiter in Odin, a Mars in Thor, a Venus in Freya, and so on. Throughout the seventh and eighth centuries a steady process of conversion to Christianity went on amidst these German and Slavonic tribes.



It will be interesting to English-speaking readers to note that the most zealous and successful missionaries among the Saxons and Frisians came from England. Christianity was twice planted in the British Isles. It was already there while Britain was a part of the Roman Empire; a martyr, St. Alban, gave his name to the town of St. Albans, and nearly every visitor to Canterbury has also visited little Old St. Martin's church, which was used during the Roman times. From Britain, as we have already said, Christianity spread beyond the imperial boundaries into Ireland—the chief missionary was St. Patrick—and there was a vigorous monastic movement with which are connected the names of St. Columba and the religious settlements of Iona. Then in the fifth and sixth centuries came the fierce and pagan English, and they cut off the early Church of Ireland from the main body of Christianity. In the seventh century Christian missionaries were converting the English, both in the north from Ireland and in the south from Rome. The Rome mission was sent by Pope Gregory the Great just at the close of the sixth century. The story goes that he saw English boys for sale in the Roman slave market, though it is a little difficult to understand how they got there. They were very fair and good-looking. In answer to his inquiries, he was told that they were Angles. "Not Angles, but Angels," said he, "had they but the gospel."

The mission worked through the seventh century. Before that century was over, most of the English were Christians; though Mercia, the central English kingdom, held out stoutly against the priests and for the ancient faith and ways. And there was a swift progress in learning upon the part of these new converts. The monasteries of the

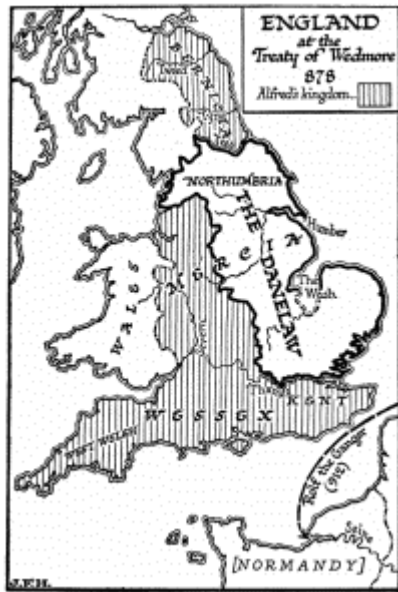
kingdom of Northumbria in the north of England became a centre of light and learning. Theodore of Tarsus was one of the earliest archbishops of Canterbury (669-690). “While Greek was utterly unknown in the west of Europe, it was mastered by some of the pupils of Theodore. The monasteries contained many monks who were excellent scholars. Most famous of all was Bede, known as the Venerable Bede (673-735), a monk of Jarrow (on Tyne). He had for his pupils the six hundred monks of that monastery, besides the many strangers who came to hear him. He gradually mastered all the learning of his day, and left at his death forty-five volumes of his writings, the most important of which are ‘The Ecclesiastical History of the English’ and his translation of the Gospel of John into English.<sup>{v2-051}</sup> His writings were widely known and used throughout Europe. He reckoned all dates from the birth of Christ, and through his works the use of Christian chronology became common in Europe. Owing to the large number of monasteries and monks in Northumbria, that part of England was for a time far in advance of the south in civilization.”[\[337\]](#)

In the seventh and eighth centuries we find the English missionaries active upon the eastern frontiers of the Frankish kingdom. Chief among these was St. Boniface (680-755), who was born at Crediton, in Devonshire, who converted the Frisians, Thuringians, and Hessians, and who was martyred in Holland.

Both in England and on the Continent the ascendant rulers seized upon Christianity as a unifying force to cement their conquests. Christianity became a banner for aggressive chiefs—as it did in Uganda in Africa in the bloody days before that country was annexed to the British Empire. After Pepin, who died in 768, came two sons, Charles and another, who divided his kingdom; but the brother of Charles died in 771, and Charles then became sole king (771-814) of the growing realm of the Franks. This Charles is known in history as Charles the Great, or Charlemagne. As in the case of Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar, posterity has enormously exaggerated his memory. He made his wars of aggression definitely religious wars. All the world of north-western Europe, which is now Great Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, and Norway and Sweden, was in the ninth century an arena of bitter conflict between the old faith and the new. Whole nations were converted to Christianity by the sword just as Islam in Arabia, Central Asia, and Africa had converted whole nations a century or so before.

With fire and sword Charlemagne preached the Gospel of the Cross to the Saxons, Bohemians, and as far as the Danube into what is now Hungary; he carried the same teaching down the Adriatic Coast through what is now Dalmatia, and drove the Moslems back from the Pyrenees as far as Barcelona.

Moreover, he it was who sheltered Egbert, an exile from Wessex in England, and assisted him presently to establish himself as King in Wessex (802). Egbert subdued the Britons in Cornwall, as Charlemagne conquered the Britons of Brittany, and, by a series of wars, which he continued after the death of his Frankish patron, made himself at last the first King of all England (828).



But the attacks of Charlemagne upon the last strongholds of paganism provoked a vigorous reaction on the part of the unconverted. The Christianized English had retained very little of the seamanship that had brought them from the mainland, and the Franks had not yet become seamen. As the Christian propaganda of Charlemagne swept towards the shores of the North and Baltic seas, the pagans were driven to the sea. They retaliated for the Christian persecutions with plundering raids and expeditions against the northern coasts of France and against Christian England. These pagan Saxons and English of the mainland and their kindred from Denmark and Norway are the Danes and Northmen of our national histories. They were also called Vikings, which means “inlet-men,” because they came from the deep inlets of the Scandinavian coast. They came in long black galleys, making little use of sails. Most of our information about these wars and invasions of the pagan Vikings is derived from Christian sources, and so we have abundant information of the massacres and atrocities of their raids and very little about the cruelties inflicted upon their pagan brethren, the Saxons, at the hands of Charlemagne. Their animus against

the cross and against monks and nuns was extreme. They delighted in the burning of monasteries and nunneries and the slaughter of their inmates.

Throughout the period between the fifth and the ninth centuries these Vikings or Northmen were learning seamanship, becoming bolder, and ranging further. They braved the northern seas until the icy shores of Greenland were a familiar haunt, and by the ninth century they had settlements (of which Europe in general knew nothing) in America. In the tenth and eleventh centuries many of their sagas began to be written down in Iceland. They saw the world in terms of valiant adventure. They assailed the walrus, the bear, and the whale. In their imaginations a great and rich city to the south, a sort of confusion of Rome and Byzantium, loomed large. They called it "Miklagård" (Michael's court) or Micklegarth. The magnetism of Micklegarth was to draw the descendants of these Northmen down into the Mediterranean by two routes, by the west and also across Russia from the Baltic, as we shall tell later. By the Russian route went also the kindred Swedes.

So long as Charlemagne and Egbert lived, the Vikings were no more than raiders; but as the ninth century wore on, these raids developed into organized invasions. In several districts of England the hold of Christianity was by no means firm as yet. In Mercia in particular the pagan Northmen found sympathy and help. By 886 the Danes had conquered a fair part of England and the English king, Alfred the Great, had recognized their rule over their conquests, the Dane-law, in the pact he made with Guthrum their leader. A little later, in 912, another expedition under Rolf the Ganger established itself upon the coast of France in the region that was known henceforth as Normandy (= Northman-dy). But of how there was presently a fresh conquest of England by the Danes and how finally the Duke of Normandy became King of England, we cannot tell at any length. There were very small racial and social differences between Angle, Saxon, Jute, Dane, or Norman; and though these changes loom large in the imaginations of the English, they are seen to be very slight rufflings indeed of the stream of history when we measure them by the standards of a greater world. The issue between Christianity and paganism vanished presently from the struggle. By the Treaty of Wedmore the Danes agreed to be baptized if they were assured of their conquests; and the descendants of Rolf in Normandy were not merely Christianized, but they learnt to speak French from the more civilized people about them, forgetting their own Norse tongue. Of much greater significance in the history of mankind are the relations of Charlemagne with his neighbours to the south and east, and to the imperial tradition.



Through Charlemagne the tradition of the Roman Cæsar was revived in Europe.<sup>[339]</sup> The Roman Empire was dead and decaying; the Byzantine Empire was far gone in decay; but the education and mentality of Europe had sunken to a level at which new creative political ideas were probably impossible. In all Europe there survived not a tithe of the speculative vigour that we find in the Athenian literature of the fifth century B.C. There was no power to postulate a new occasion or to conceive and organize a novel political method. Official Christianity had long overlaid and accustomed itself to ignore those strange teachings of Jesus of Nazareth{v2-056} from which it had arisen. The Roman Church, clinging tenaciously to its possession of the title of *pontifex maximus*, had long since abandoned its appointed task of achieving the Kingdom of Heaven. It was preoccupied with the revival of Roman ascendancy on earth, which it conceived of as its inheritance. It had become a political body, using the faith and needs of simple men to forward its schemes. Europe drifted towards a dreary imitation and revival of the misconceived failures of the past. For eleven centuries from Charlemagne onwards, “Emperors” and “Cæsars” of this line and that come and go in the history of Europe like fancies in a disordered mind. We shall have to tell of a great process of mental growth in Europe, of enlarged horizons and accumulating power, but it was a process that went on independently of, and in spite of, the political forms of the time, until at last it shattered those forms altogether. Europe during those eleven centuries of the imitation Cæsars which began with Charlemagne, and which closed only in the monstrous bloodshed of 1914-1918, has been like a busy factory owned by a somnambulist, who is sometimes quite unimportant and sometimes disastrously in the way. Or rather than a somnambulist, let us say by a corpse that magically simulates a kind of life. The Roman Empire

staggers, sprawls, is thrust off the stage, and reappears, and—if we may carry the image one step further—it is the Church of Rome which plays the part of the magician and keeps this corpse alive.

And throughout the whole period there is always a struggle going on for the control of the corpse between the spiritual and various temporal powers. We have already noted the spirit of St. Augustine's *City of God*. It was a book which we know Charlemagne read, or had read to him—for his literary accomplishments are rather questionable. He conceived of this Christian Empire as being ruled and maintained in its orthodoxy by some such great Cæsar as himself. He was to rule even the Pope. But at Rome the view taken of the revived empire differed a little from that. There the view taken was that the Christian Cæsar must be anointed and guided by the Pope—who would even have the power to excommunicate and depose him. Even in the time of Charlemagne this divergence of view was apparent. In the following centuries it became acute.{v2-057}

The idea of the empire dawned only very gradually upon the mind of Charlemagne. At first he was simply the ruler of his father's kingdom of the Franks, and his powers were fully occupied in struggles with the Saxons and Bavarians, and with the Slavs to the east of them, with the Moslem in Spain, and with various insurrections in his own dominions. And as the result of a quarrel with the King of Lombardy, his father-in-law, he conquered Lombardy and North Italy. We have noted the establishment of the Lombards in North Italy about 570 after the great pestilence, and after the overthrow of the East Gothic kings by Justinian. These Lombards had always been a danger and a fear to the Popes, and there had been an alliance between Pope and Frankish King against them in the time of Pepin. Now Charlemagne completely subjugated Lombardy (774), sent his father-in-law to a monastery, and carried his conquests beyond the present north-eastern boundaries of Italy into Dalmatia in 776. In 781 he caused one of his sons, Pepin, who did not outlive him, to be crowned King of Italy in Rome.

There was a new Pope, Leo III, in 795, who seems from the first to have resolved to make Charlemagne emperor. Hitherto the court at Byzantium had possessed a certain indefinite authority over the Pope. Strong emperors like Justinian had bullied the Popes and obliged them to come to Constantinople; weak emperors had annoyed them ineffectively. The idea of a breach, both secular and religious, with Constantinople had long been entertained at the Lateran,[\[340\]](#) and in the Frankish power there seemed to be just the support that was necessary if Constantinople was to be defied. So at his accession Leo III sent the keys of the tomb of St. Peter and a banner to Charlemagne as the symbols of his sovereignty in Rome as King of Italy.

Very soon the Pope had to appeal to the protection he had chosen. He was unpopular in Rome; he was attacked and ill-treated in the streets during a procession, and obliged to fly to Germany (799). Eginhard says his eyes were gouged out and his tongue cut off; he seems, however, to have had both eyes and tongue again a year later. Charlemagne brought him back and reinstated him (800).{v2-058}

Then occurred a very important scene. On Christmas Day, in the year 800, as Charles was rising from prayer in the Church of St. Peter, the Pope, who had everything in readiness, clapped a crown upon his head and hailed him Cæsar and Augustus. There was great popular applause. But Eginhard, the friend and biographer of Charlemagne, says that the new emperor was by no means pleased by this coup of Pope Leo's. If he had known this was to happen, he said, "he would not have entered the church, great festival though it was." No doubt he had been thinking and talking of making himself emperor, but he had evidently not intended that the Pope should make him emperor. He had had some idea of marrying the Empress Irene, who at that time reigned in Constantinople, and so becoming monarch of both Eastern and Western Empires. He was now obliged to accept the title in the manner that Leo III had adopted as a gift from the Pope, and in a way that estranged Constantinople and secured the separation of Rome from the Byzantine Church.

At first Byzantium was unwilling to recognize the imperial title of Charlemagne. But in 810 a great disaster fell upon the Byzantine Empire. The pagan Bulgarians, under their Prince Krum (802-814), defeated and destroyed the armies of the Emperor Nicephorus, whose skull became a drinking-cup for Krum. The greater part of the Balkan peninsula was conquered by these people. (The Bulgarian and the English nations thus became established as political unities almost simultaneously.) After this misfortune Byzantium was in no position to dispute this revival of the empire in the West, and in 812 Charlemagne was formally recognized by Byzantine envoys as Emperor and Augustus.

So the Empire of Rome, which had died at the hands of Odoacer in 476, rose again in 800 as the "Holy Roman Empire." While its physical strength lay north of the Alps, the centre of its idea was Rome. It was therefore from the beginning a divided thing of uncertain power, a claim and an argument rather than a necessary reality. The German sword was always clattering over the Alps into Italy, and missions and legates toiling over in the reverse direction. But the Germans could never hold Italy permanently, because they could not stand the malaria that the ruined, neglected,{v2-059} undrained country fostered. And in Rome, as well as in several other of the cities of Italy, there smouldered a more ancient tradition, the tradition of the aristocratic republic, hostile to both Emperor and Pope.

## § 6

In spite of the fact that we have a life of him written by his contemporary, Eginhard,<sup>[341]</sup> the character and personality of Charlemagne are difficult to visualize. Eginhard lacks vividness; he tells many particulars, but not the particulars that make a man live again in the record. Charlemagne, he says, was a tall man, with a rather feeble voice; and he had bright eyes and a long nose. "The top of his head was round," whatever that may mean, and his hair was "white." He had a thick, rather short neck, and "his belly too prominent." He wore a tunic with a silver border, and gartered hose. He had a blue cloak, and was always girt with his sword, hilt and belt being of gold and silver. He was evidently a man of great activity, one imagines him moving quickly, and his numerous love affairs did not interfere at all with his incessant military and political labours. He had numerous wives and mistresses. He took much exercise, was fond of pomp and religious ceremonies, and gave generously. He was a man of very miscellaneous activity and great intellectual enterprise, and with a self-confidence that is rather suggestive of William II, the ex-German Emperor, the last, perhaps for ever, of this series of imitation Cæsars in Europe which Charlemagne began.

The mental life that Eginhard records of him is interesting, because it not only gives glimpses of a curious character, but serves as a sample of the intellectuality of the time. He could read probably; at meals he "listened to music or reading," but we are told that he had not acquired the art of writing; "he used to keep his writing-book and tablets under his pillow, that when he had leisure he might practise his hand in forming letters, but he made little progress in an art begun too late in life." He had, however, a real respect for learning and a real desire for knowledge, and he did his utmost to attract men of learning to his court. Among others who came was Alcuin, a learned Englishman. All those learned men were, of course, clergymen, there being no other learned men, and naturally they gave a strongly clerical tinge to the information they imparted to their master. At his court, which was usually at Aix-la-Chapelle or Mayence, he maintained in the winter months a curious institution called his "school," in which he and his erudite associates affected to lay aside all thoughts of worldly position, assumed names taken from the classical writers or from Holy Writ, and discoursed upon theology and literature. Charlemagne himself was "David." He developed a considerable knowledge of theology, and it is to him that we must ascribe the addition of the words *filioque* to the Nicene Creed (see chap, xxx, § 8), an addition that finally split the Latin and Greek Churches asunder. But it is more than doubtful if he had any such separation in mind. He wanted to add a word or so to the

creed, just as the Emperor William II wanted to write operas and paint pictures,[\[342\]](#) and he took up what was originally a Spanish innovation.

Of his organization of his empire there is little to be said here. He was far too restless and busy to consider the quality of his successor or the condition of political stability, and the most noteworthy thing in this relationship is that he particularly schooled his son and successor, Louis the Pious (814-840), to take the crown from the altar and *crown himself*. But Louis the Pious was too pious to adhere to those instructions when the Pope made an objection.

The legislation of Charlemagne was greatly coloured by Bible reading; he knew his Bible well, as the times went; and it is characteristic of him that after he had been crowned emperor he required every male subject above the age of twelve to renew his oath of allegiance, and to undertake to be not simply a good subject, but a good Christian. To refuse baptism or to retract after baptism was a crime punishable by death. He did much to encourage architecture, and imported many Italian architects, chiefly from Ravenna, to whom we owe that pleasant Byzantine style that still at Worms and Cologne and elsewhere delights the{v2-061} tourist in the Rhineland.[\[343\]](#) He founded a number of cathedrals and monastic schools, did much to encourage the study of classical Latin, and was a distinguished amateur of church music. The possibility of his talking Latin and understanding Greek is open to discussion; probably he talked French-Latin. Frankish, however, was his habitual tongue. He made a collection of old German songs and tales, but these were destroyed by his successor Louis the Pious on account of their paganism.

He corresponded with Haroun-al-Raschid, the Abbasid Caliph at Bagdad, who was not perhaps the less friendly to him on account of his vigorous handling of the Omayyad Arabs in Spain. Gibbon supposes that this “public correspondence was founded on vanity,” and that “their remote situation left no room for a competition of interest.” But with the Byzantine Empire between them in the East, and the independent caliphate of Spain in the West, and a common danger in the Turks of the great plains, they had three very excellent reasons for cordiality. Haroun-al-Raschid, says Gibbon, sent Charlemagne by his ambassadors a splendid tent, a water clock, an elephant, and the keys of the Holy Sepulchre. The last item suggests that Charlemagne was to some extent regarded by the Saracen monarch as the protector of the Christians and Christian properties in his dominions. Some historians declare explicitly that there was a treaty to that effect.[\[344\]](#)

The Empire of Charlemagne did not outlive his son and successor, Louis the Pious. It fell apart into its main constituents. The Latinized Keltic and Frankish population of Gaul begins now to be recognizable as France, though this France was broken up into a number of dukedoms and principalities, often with no more than a nominal unity; the German-speaking peoples between the Rhine and the Slavs to the east similarly begin to develop an even more fragmentary intimation of Germany. When at length a real emperor reappears in Western Europe (962), he is not a {v2-062}Frank, but a Saxon; the conquered in Germany have become the masters.

It is impossible here to trace the events of the ninth and tenth centuries in any detail, the alliances, the treacheries, the claims and acquisitions. Everywhere there was lawlessness, war, and a struggle for power. In 987 the nominal kingdom of France passed from the hands of the Carolingians, the last descendants of Charlemagne, into the hands of Hugh Capet, who founded a new dynasty. Most of his alleged subordinates were in fact independent, and willing to make war on the king at the slightest provocation. The dominions of the Duke of Normandy, for example, were more extensive and more powerful than the patrimony of Hugh Capet. Almost the only unity of this France over which the king exercised a nominal authority lay in the common resolution of its great provinces to resist incorporation in any empire dominated either by a German ruler or by the Pope. Apart from the simple organization dictated by that common will, France was a mosaic of practically independent nobles. It was an era of castle-building and fortification, and what was called “private war” throughout all Europe.

The state of Rome in the tenth century is almost indescribable. The decay of the Empire of Charlemagne left the Pope without a protector, threatened by Byzantium and the Saracens (who had taken Sicily), and face to face with the unruly nobles of Rome. Among the most powerful of these were two women, Theodora and Marozia, mother and daughter,[\[345\]](#) who in succession held the Castle of St. Angelo (§ 1), which Theophylact, the patrician husband of Theodora, had seized with most of the temporal power of the Pope; these two women were as bold, unscrupulous, and dissolute as any male prince of the time could have been, and they are abused by historians as though they were ten times worse. Marozia seized and imprisoned Pope John X (928), who speedily died under her care. She subsequently made her illegitimate son pope, under the title of John XI. After him her grandson, John XII, filled the chair of St. Peter. Gibbon’s account of the manners and morals of John XII takes refuge at last beneath a veil of Latin footnotes. This Pope, John XII, was finally degraded by the new German{v2-063} Emperor Otto, who came over the Alps and down into Italy to be crowned in 962.[\[346\]](#)

This new line of Saxon emperors, which thus comes into prominence, sprang from a certain Henry the Fowler, who was elected King of Germany by an assembly of German nobles, princes, and prelates in 919. In 936 he was succeeded as King by his son, Otto I, surnamed the Great, who was also elected to be his successor at Aix-la-Chapelle, and who finally descended upon Rome at the invitation of John XII, to be crowned emperor in 962. His subsequent degradation of John was forced upon him by that Pope's treachery. With his assumption of the imperial dignity, Otto I did not so much overcome Rome as restore the ancient tussle of Pope and Emperor for ascendancy to something like decency and dignity again. Otto I was followed by Otto II (973-983), and he again by a third Otto (983-1002).[\[347\]](#)

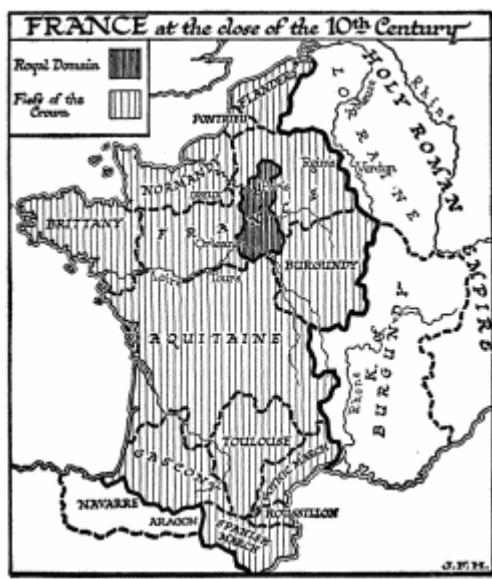
The struggle between the Emperor and the Pope for ascendancy over the Holy Roman Empire plays a large part in the history of the early Middle Ages, and we shall have presently to sketch its chief phases. Though the Church never sank quite to the level of John XII again, nevertheless the story fluctuates through phases of great violence, confusion, and intrigue. Yet the outer history of Christendom is not the whole history of Christendom. That the Lateran was as cunning, foolish, and criminal as most other contemporary courts has to be recorded; but, if we are to keep due proportions in this history, it must not be unduly emphasized. We must remember that through all those ages, leaving profound consequences, but leaving no conspicuous records upon the historian's page, countless men and women were touched by that Spirit of Jesus which still lived and lives still at the core of Christianity, that they led lives that were on the whole gracious and helpful, and that they did unselfish and devoted deeds. Through those ages such lives cleared the air and made a better world possible. Just as in the Moslem world the Spirit of Islam generation by generation produced its crop of courage, integrity, and kindness.

## § 8

While the Holy Roman Empire and the kingdoms of France and England were thus appearing amidst the extreme political fragmentation of the civilization of Western Europe, both that civilization and the Byzantine Empire were being subjected to a threefold attack: from the Saracen powers, from the Northmen, and, more slowly developed and most formidable of all, from a new westward thrust of the Turkish peoples through South Russia, and also by way of Armenia and the Empire of Bagdad from Central Asia.

After the overthrow of the Omayyads by the Abbasid dynasty, the strength of the Saracenic impulse against Europe diminished. Islam was no longer united. Spain was under a separate Omayyad Caliph, North Africa, though nominally subject to the

Abbasids, was really independent, and presently (969) Egypt became a separate power with a Shiite Caliph of its own, a pretender claiming descent from Ali and Fatima (the Fatimite Caliphate). These Egyptian Fatimites, the green flag Moslems, were fanatics in comparison with the Abbasids, and did much to embitter the genial relations of Islam and Christianity. They took Jerusalem, and interfered with the Christian access to the Holy Sepulchre. On the other side of the shrunken Abbasid domain there was also a Shiite kingdom in Persia. The chief Saracen conquest in the ninth century was Sicily; but this was not overrun in the grand old style in a year or so, but subjugated tediously through a long century, and with many set-backs. The Spanish Saracens disputed in Sicily with the Saracens from Africa. In Spain the Saracens were giving ground before a renascent Christian effort. Nevertheless, the Byzantine Empire and Western Christendom were still so weak upon the Mediterranean Sea that the Saracen raiders and pirates from North Africa were able to raid almost unchallenged in South Italy and the Greek Islands.



But now a new force was appearing in the Mediterranean. We have already remarked that the Roman Empire never extended itself to the shores of the Baltic Sea, nor had ever the vigour to push itself into Denmark. The Nordic Aryan peoples of these neglected regions learnt much from the empire that was unable to subdue them; as we have already noted in § 4, they developed the art of shipbuilding and became bold seamen; they spread across the North Sea to the west, and across the Baltic and up the Russian rivers into the very heart of what is now Russia. One of their earliest settlements in Russia was Novgorod the Great. There is the same trouble and

confusion for the student of history with these northern tribes as there is with the Scythians of classical times, and with the Hunnish Turkish peoples of Eastern and Central Asia. They appear under a great variety of names, they change and intermingle. In the case of Britain, for example, the Angles, the Saxons, and Jutes conquered most of what is now England in the fifth and sixth centuries; the Danes, a second wave of practically the same people, followed in the eighth and ninth; and in 1013 a Danish King, Canute, reigned in England, and not only over England, but over Denmark and Norway. For a time, under Canute and his sons, it seemed possible that a great confederation of the Northmen might have established itself. Then in 1066 a third wave of the same people flowed over England from the "Norman" state in France, where the Northmen had been settled since the days of Rolf the Ganger (912), and where they had learnt to speak French. William, Duke of Normandy, became the William the Conqueror (1066) of English history. Practically, from the standpoint of universal history, all these peoples were the same people, waves of one Nordic stock. These waves were not only flowing westward, but eastward. Already we have noted (chap, xxix, § 4), a very interesting earlier movement of the same peoples under the name of Goths from the Baltic to the Black Sea. We have traced the splitting of these Goths into the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths, and the adventurous wanderings that ended at last in the Ostrogoth kingdom in Italy and the Visigoth states in Spain. In the ninth century a second movement of the Northmen across Russia was going on at the same time that their establishments in England and their dukedom of Normandy were coming into existence. The populations of South Scotland, England, East Ireland, Flanders, Normandy, and the Russias have more elements in common than we are accustomed to recognize. All are fundamentally Gothic and Nordic peoples. These "Russian" Norsemen travelled in the summer-time, using the river{v2-067} routes that abounded in Russia; they carried their ships by portages from the northward-running rivers to those flowing southward. They appeared as pirates, raiders, and traders both upon the Caspian and the Black Sea. The Arabic chroniclers note their apparition upon the Caspian, and give them the name of Russians. They raided Persia, and threatened Constantinople with a great fleet of small craft (in 865, 904, 941, and 1043).[\[348\]](#) One of these Northmen, Rurik (*circa* 850), established himself as the ruler of Novgorod and Kiev, and laid the foundations of modern Russia. The fighting qualities of the Russian Vikings were speedily appreciated at Constantinople; the Greeks called them Varangians, and an Imperial Varangian bodyguard was formed. After the conquest of England by the Normans (1066), a number of Danes and English were driven into exile and joined these Russian Varangians, apparently finding few obstacles to intercourse in their speech and habits.

Meanwhile the Normans from Normandy were also finding their way into the Mediterranean from the West. They came first as mercenaries, and later as independent invaders; and they came mainly, not, it is to be noted, by sea, but in scattered bands by land. They came through the Rhineland and Italy partly in the search for warlike employment and loot, partly as pilgrims. For the ninth and tenth centuries saw a great development of pilgrimage. These Normans, as they grew powerful, discovered themselves such rapacious and vigorous robbers that they forced the Eastern Emperor and the Pope into a feeble and ineffective alliance against them (1053). They defeated and captured and were pardoned by the Pope; they established themselves in Calabria and South Italy, conquered Sicily from the Saracens (1060-1090), and under Robert Guiscard, who had entered Italy as a pilgrim adventurer and began his career as a brigand in Calabria, threatened the Byzantine Empire itself (1081). His army, which contained a contingent of Sicilian Moslems, crossed from Brindisi to Epirus in the reverse direction to that in which Pyrrhus had crossed to attack the Roman Republic, thirteen centuries before (275 B.C.). He laid siege to the Byzantine stronghold of Durazzo.{v2-068}



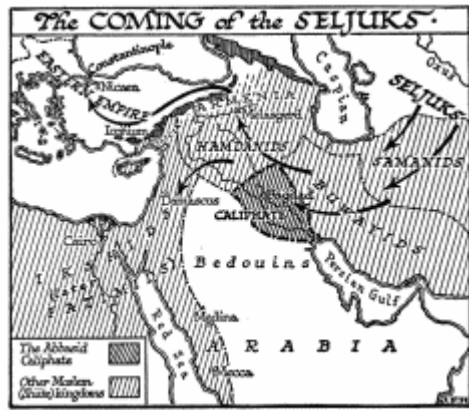
{v2-069}

Robert captured Durazzo (1082), but the pressure of affairs in Italy recalled him, and ultimately put an end to this first Norman attack upon the Empire of Byzantium leaving

the way open for the rule of a comparatively vigorous Comnenian dynasty (1081-1204). In Italy, amidst conflicts too complex for us to tell here, it fell to Robert Guiscard to besiege and sack Rome (1084); and Gibbon notes with quiet satisfaction the presence of a large contingent of Sicilian Moslems amongst the looters. There were in the twelfth century three other Norman attacks upon the Eastern power, one by the son of Robert Guiscard, and the two others directly from Sicily by sea....

But neither the Saracens nor the Normans pounded quite so heavily against the old empire at Byzantium or against the Holy Roman Empire, the vamped-up Roman Empire of the West, as did the double thrust from the Turanian centres in Central Asia, of which we must now tell. We have already noted (chap. xxix, § 5) the westward movement of the Avars, and the Turkish Magyars who followed in their track. From the days of Pepin I onward, the Frankish power and its successors in Germany were in conflict with these Eastern raiders along all the Eastern borderlands. Charlemagne held and punished them, and established some sort of overlordship as far east as the Carpathians; but amidst the enfeeblement that followed his death, these peoples, more or less blended now in the accounts under the name of Hungarians, led by the Magyars, re-established their complete freedom again, and raided yearly, often as far as the Rhine. They destroyed, Gibbon notes, the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland, and the town of Bremen. Their great raiding period was between 900 and 950. Their biggest effort, through Germany right into France, thence over the Alps and home again by North Italy, was in 938-9.

Thrust southward by these disturbances, and by others to be presently noted, the Bulgarians, as we have told in § 5, established themselves under Krum, between the Danube and Constantinople. Originally a Turkish people, the Bulgarians, since their first appearance in the east of Russia, had become by repeated admixture almost entirely Slavonic in race and language. For some time after their establishment in Bulgaria they remained pagan. Their king, Boris (852-884), entertained Moslem envoys, and seems to have contemplated an adhesion to Islam, but finally he married a Byzantine princess, and handed himself and his people over to the Christian faith.



The Hungarians were drubbed into a certain respect for civilization by Henry the Fowler, the elected King of Germany, and Otto the First, the first Saxon emperor, in the tenth century. But they did not decide to adopt Christianity until about A.D. 1000. Though they were Christianized, they retained their own Turko-Finnic language (Magyar), and they retain it to this day.

Bulgarians and Hungarians do not, however, exhaust the catalogue of the peoples whose westward movements embodied the Turkish thrust across South Russia. Behind the Hungarians and Bulgarians thrust the Khazars, a Turkish people, with whom were mingled a very considerable proportion of Jews who had been expelled from Constantinople, and who had mixed with them and made many proselytes. To these Jewish Khazars are to be ascribed the great settlements of Jews in Poland and Russia.<sup>[349]</sup> Behind the Khazars again, and overrunning them, were the Petschenegs (or Patzinaks), a savage Turkish people who are first heard of in the ninth century, and who were destined to dissolve and vanish as the kindred Huns did five centuries before. And while the trend of all these peoples was westward, we have, when we are thinking of the present population of these South Russian regions, to remember also the coming and going of the Northmen between the Baltic and the Black Sea, who interwove with the Turkish migrants like warp and woof, and bear in mind also that there was a considerable Slavonic population, the heirs and descendants of Scythians, Sarmatians, and the like, already established in these restless, lawless, but fertile areas. All these races mixed with and reacted upon one another. The universal prevalence of Slavonic languages, except in Hungary, shows that the population remained predominantly Slav. And in what is now Roumania, for all the passage of peoples, and in spite of conquest after conquest, the tradition and inheritance of the Roman provinces of Dacia and Mœsia Inferior still kept a Latin speech and memory alive.

But this direct thrust of the Turkish peoples against Christendom to the north of the Black Sea was, in the end, not nearly so important as their indirect thrust south of it through the empire of the Caliph. We cannot deal here with the tribes and dissensions of the Turkish peoples of Turkestan, nor with the particular causes that brought to the fore the tribes under the rule of the Seljuk clan. In the eleventh century these Seljuk Turks broke with irresistible force not in one army, but in a group of armies, and under two brothers, into the decaying fragments of the Moslem Empire. For Islam had long ceased to be one empire. The orthodox Sunnite Abbasid rule had shrunken to what was once Babylonia; and even in Bagdad the Caliph was the mere creature of his Turkish palace guards. A sort of mayor of the palace, a Turk, was the real ruler. East of the Caliph, in Persia, and west of him in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, were Shiite heretics. The Seljuk Turks were orthodox Sunnites; they now swept down upon and conquered the Shiite rulers and upstarts, and established themselves as the protectors of the Bagdad Caliph, taking over the temporal powers of the mayor of the palace. Very early they conquered Armenia from the Greeks, and then, breaking the bounds that had restrained the power of Islam for four centuries, they swept on to the conquest of Asia Minor, almost to the gates of Constantinople. The mountain barrier of Cilicia that had held the Moslem so long had been turned by the conquest of Armenia from the northeast. Under Alp Arslan, who had united all the Seljuk power in his own hands, the Turks utterly smashed the Byzantine army at the battle of Manzikert, or Melasgird (1071). The effect of this battle upon people's imaginations was very great. Islam, which had appeared far gone in decay, which had been divided religiously and politically, was suddenly discovered to have risen again, and it was the secure old Byzantine Empire that seemed on the brink of dissolution. The loss of Asia Minor was very swift. The Seljuks established themselves at Iconium (Konia), in what is now Anatolia. In a little while they were in possession of the fortress of Nicæa over against the capital.

## § 9

We have already told of the attack of the Normans upon the Byzantine Empire from the west, and of the battle of Durazzo (1081); and we have noted that Constantinople had still vivid memories of the Russian sea raids (1043). Bulgaria, it is true, had been tamed, but there was heavy and uncertain warfare going on with the Petschenegs. North and west, the emperor's hands were full. This swift advance of the Turks into country that had been so long securely Byzantine must have seemed like the approach of final disaster. The Eastern Emperor, Michael VII, under the pressure of these convergent dangers, took a step that probably seemed both to himself and to Rome of the utmost political significance. He appealed to the Pope, Gregory VII, for

assistance. His appeal was repeated still more urgently by his successor, Alexius Comnenus, to Pope Urban II.

To the counsellors of Rome this must have presented itself as a supreme opportunity for the assertion of the headship of the Pope over the entire Christian world.{v2-073}

In this history we have traced the growth of this idea of a religious government of Christendom—and through Christendom of mankind—and we have shown how naturally and how necessarily, because of the tradition of world empire, it found a centre at Rome. The Pope of Rome was the only Western patriarch; he was the religious head of a vast region in which the ruling tongue was Latin; the other patriarchs of the Orthodox Church spoke Greek, and so were inaudible throughout his domains; and the two words *Filioque*, which had been added to the Latin creed (see chap. xxx, § 8, and chap. xxxiii, § 6), had split off the Byzantine Christians by one of those impalpable and elusive doctrinal points upon which there is no reconciliation. (The final rupture was in 1054.) The life of the Lateran changed in its quality with every occupant of the chair of St. Peter: sometimes papal Rome was a den of corruption and uncleanness, as it had been in the days of John XII; sometimes it was pervaded by the influence of widely thinking and nobly thinking men. But behind the Pope was the assembly of the cardinals, priests, and a great number of highly educated officials, who never, even in the darkest and wildest days, lost sight altogether of the very grand idea of a divine world dominion, of a peace of Christ throughout the earth that St. Augustine had expressed. Through all the Middle Ages that idea was the guiding influence in Rome. For a time, perhaps, mean minds would prevail there, and in the affairs of the world Rome would play the part of a greedy, treacherous, and insanely cunning old woman; followed a phase of masculine and quite worldly astuteness perhaps, or a phase of exaltation. Came an interlude of fanaticism or pedantry, when all the pressure was upon exact doctrine. Or there was a moral collapse, and the Lateran became the throne of some sensuous or æsthetic autocrat, ready to sell every hope or honour the Church could give for money to spend upon pleasure or display. Yet, on the whole, the papal ship kept its course, and came presently into the wind again.

In this period to which we have now come, the period of the eleventh century, we discover a Rome dominated by the personality of an exceptionally great statesman, Hildebrand, who occupied various official positions under a succession of Popes, and finally became Pope himself under the name of Gregory VII (1073-1085).{v2-074} We find that under his influence, vice, sloth, and corruption have been swept out of the Church, that the method of electing the Popes has been reformed, and that a great struggle has been waged with the Emperor upon the manifestly vital question of

“investitures,” the question whether Pope or temporal monarch should have the decisive voice in the appointment of the bishops in their domains. Hitherto the Roman clergy had been able to marry; but now, to detach them effectually from the world and to make them more completely the instruments of the church, celibacy was imposed upon all priests....[\[350\]](#)

Gregory VII had been prevented by his struggle over the investitures from any effectual answer to the first appeal from Byzantium; but he had left a worthy successor in Urban II (1087-1099); and when the letter of Alexius came to hand, Urban seized at once upon the opportunity it afforded for drawing together all the thoughts and forces of Western Europe into one passion and purpose. Thereby he might hope to end the private warfare that prevailed, and find a proper outlet for the immense energy of the Normans. He saw, too, an opportunity of thrusting the Byzantine power and Church aside, and extending the influence of the Latin Church over Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. The envoys of Alexius were heard at a church council, hastily summoned at Piacenza (= Placentia), and next year (1095), at Clermont, Urban held a second great council, in which all the slowly gathered strength of the Church was organized for a universal war propaganda against the Moslems. Private war, all war among Christians, was to cease until the infidel had been swept back and the site of the Holy Sepulchre was again in Christian hands.

The fervour of the response enables us to understand the great work of creative organization that had been done in Western Europe in the previous five centuries. In the beginning of the seventh century we saw Western Europe as a chaos of social and political fragments, with no common idea nor hope, a system shattered almost to a dust of self-seeking individuals. Now in the dawn of the eleventh century there is everywhere a common belief, a linking idea, to which men may devote themselves, and by which they can co-operate together in a universal enterprise. We{v2-075} realize that, in spite of much weakness and intellectual and moral unsoundness, to this extent the Christian Church has *worked*. We are able to measure the evil phases of tenth-century Rome, the scandals, the filthiness, the murders and violence, at their proper value by the scale of this fact. No doubt also all over Christendom there had been many lazy, evil, and foolish priests; but it is manifest that this task of teaching and co-ordination that had been accomplished could have been accomplished only through a great multitude of right-living priests and monks and nuns. A new and greater amphictyony, the amphictyony of Christendom, had come into the world, and it had been built by thousands of anonymous, faithful lives.

And this response to the appeal of Urban the Second was not confined only to what we should call educated people. It was not simply knights and princes who were

willing to go upon this crusade. Side by side with the figure of Urban we must put the figure of Peter the Hermit, a type novel to Europe, albeit a little reminiscent of the Hebrew prophets. This man appeared preaching the crusade to the common people. He told a story—whether truthful or untruthful hardly matters in this connection—of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, of the wanton destruction at the Holy Sepulchre by the Seljuk Turks, who took it in 1073, and of the exactions, brutalities, and deliberate cruelties practised upon the Christian pilgrims to the Holy Places. Barefooted, clad in a coarse garment, riding on an ass, and bearing a huge cross, this man travelled about France and Germany, and everywhere harangued vast crowds in church or street or market-place.

Here for the first time we discover Europe with an idea and a soul! Here is a universal response of indignation of the story of a remote wrong, a swift understanding of a common cause for rich and poor alike. You cannot imagine this thing happening in the Empire of Augustus Cæsar, or indeed in any previous state in the world's history. Something of the kind might perhaps have been possible in the far smaller world of Hellas, or in Arabia before Islam. But this movement affected nations, kingdoms, tongues, and peoples. It is clear that we are dealing with something new that has come into the world, a new clear connection of the common interest with the consciousness of the common man.{v2-076}

## **§ 10**

From the very first this flaming enthusiasm was mixed with baser elements. There was the cold and calculated scheme of the free and ambitious Latin Church to subdue and replace the emperor-ruled Byzantine Church; there was the freebooting instinct of the Normans, who were tearing Italy to pieces, which turned readily enough to a new and richer world of plunder; and there was something in the multitude who now turned their faces east, something deeper than love in the human composition, namely, fear-born hate, that the impassioned appeals of the propagandists and the exaggeration of the horrors and cruelties of the infidel had fanned into flame. And there were still other forces; the intolerant Seljuks and the intolerant Fatimites lay now an impassable barrier across the eastward trade of Genoa and Venice that had hitherto flowed through Bagdad and Aleppo, or through Egypt. They must force open these closed channels, unless Constantinople and the Black Sea route were to monopolize Eastern trade altogether. Moreover, in 1094 and 1095 there had been a pestilence and famine from the Scheldt to Bohemia, and there was great social disorganization. "No wonder," says Mr. Ernest Barker, "that a stream of emigration set towards the East, such as would in modern times flow towards a newly discovered goldfield—a stream carrying in its turbid waters much refuse, tramps and bankrupts,

camp-followers and hucksters, fugitive monks and escaped villeins, and marked by the same motley grouping, the same fever of life, the same alternations of affluence and beggary, which mark the rush for a goldfield to-day.”

But these were secondary contributory causes. The fact of predominant interest to the historian of mankind is this *will to crusade* suddenly revealed as a new mass possibility in human affairs.



The story of the crusades abounds in such romantic and picturesque detail that the writer of an Outline of History must ride his pen upon the curb through this alluring field. The first forces to move eastward were great crowds of undisciplined people rather than armies, and they sought to make their way by the valley of the Danube, and thence southward to Constantinople.{v2-077}

This was the “people’s crusade.” Never before in the whole history of the world had there been such a spectacle as these masses of practically leaderless people moved by an idea. It was a very crude idea. When they got among foreigners, they do not seem to have realized that they were not already among the infidel. Two great mobs, the advance guard of the expedition, committed such excesses in Hungary, where the language must have been incomprehensible to them, as to provoke the Hungarians to destroy them. They were massacred. A third host began with a great pogrom of the Jews in the Rhineland—for the Christian blood was up—and this multitude was also dispersed in Hungary. Two other hosts under Peter got through and reached Constantinople, to the astonishment and dismay of the Emperor Alexius. They looted and committed outrages as they came,{v2-078} and at last he shipped them across the Bosphorus, to be massacred rather than defeated by the Seljuks (1096).

This first unhappy appearance of the “people” as people in modern European history was followed in 1097 by the organized forces of the First Crusade. They came by diverse routes from France, Normandy, Flanders, England, Southern Italy, and Sicily, and the will and power of them were the Normans. They crossed the Bosphorus and captured Nicæa, which Alexius snatched away from them before they could loot it. They then went on by much the same route as Alexander the Great, through the Cilician Gates, leaving the Turks in Konia unconquered, past the battle-fields of the Issus, and so to Antioch, which they took after nearly a year’s siege. Then they defeated a great relieving army from Mosul. A large part of the Crusaders remained in Antioch, a smaller force under Godfrey of Bouillon (in Belgium) went on to Jerusalem. “After a little more than a month’s siege, the city was finally captured (July 15). The slaughter was terrible; the blood of the conquered ran down the streets, until men splashed in blood as they rode. At nightfall, ‘sobbing for excess of joy,’ the crusaders came to the Sepulchre from their treading of the wine-press, and put their blood-stained hands together in prayer. So, on that day of July, the First Crusade came to an end.”[\[351\]](#)

The authority of the Patriarch of Jerusalem was at once seized upon by the Latin clergy with the expedition, and the Orthodox Christians found themselves in rather a worse case under Latin rule than under the Turk. There were already Latin principalities established at Antioch and Edessa, and there began a struggle for ascendancy between these various courts and kings, and an unsuccessful attempt to make Jerusalem a property of the Pope. These are complications beyond our present scope.

Let us quote, however, a characteristic passage from Gibbon:—

“In a style less grave than that of history, I should perhaps compare the Emperor Alexius to the jackal, who is said to follow the steps and to devour the leavings of the lion. Whatever had been his fears and toils in the passage of the First Crusade, they were amply recompensed by the subsequent benefits which he derived from the exploits of the Franks. His dexterity and vigilance secured their first conquest of Nicæa, and from this threatening station the Turks were compelled to evacuate the neighbourhood of Constantinople. While the Crusaders, with blind valour, advanced into the midland countries of Asia, the crafty Greek improved the favourable occasion when the emirs of the sea coast were recalled to the standard of the Sultan. The Turks were driven from the isles of Rhodes and Chios; the cities of Ephesus and Smyrna, of Sardes, Philadelphia, and Laodicea were restored to the empire, which Alexius enlarged from the Hellespont to the banks of the Mæander and the rocky shores of Pamphylia. The churches resumed their splendour; the towns were rebuilt and fortified; and the desert country was peopled with colonies of Christians, who were

gently removed from the more distant and dangerous frontier. In these paternal cares we may forgive Alexius, if we forget the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre; but, by the Latins, he was stigmatized with the foul reproach of treason and desertion. They had sworn fidelity and obedience to his throne; but *he* had promised to assist their enterprise in person, or at least, with his troops and treasures; his base retreat dissolved their obligations; and the sword, which had been the instrument of their victory, was the pledge and title of their just independence. It does not appear that the emperor attempted to revive his obsolete claims over the kingdom of Jerusalem, but the borders of Cilicia and Syria were more recent in his possession and more accessible to his arms. The great army of the Crusaders was annihilated or dispersed; the principality of Antioch was left without a head, by the surprise and captivity of Bohemond; his ransom had oppressed him with a heavy debt; and his Norman followers were insufficient to repel the hostilities of the Greeks and Turks. In this distress, Bohemond embraced a magnanimous resolution, of leaving the defence of Antioch to his kinsman, the faithful Tancred; of arming the West against the Byzantine Empire, and of executing the design which he inherited from the lessons and example of his father Guiscard. His embarkation was clandestine; and if we may credit a tale of the Princess Anna, he passed the hostile sea closely secreted in a coffin. (Anna Comnena adds, that to complete the imitation, he was shut up with a dead cock; and condescends to wonder how the barbarian could endure{v2-080} the confinement and putrefaction. This absurd tale is unknown to the Latins.) But his reception in France was dignified by the public applause and his marriage with the king's daughter; his return was glorious, since the bravest spirits of the age enlisted under his veteran command; and he repassed the Adriatic at the head of five thousand horse and forty thousand foot, assembled from the most remote climates of Europe. The strength of Durazzo and prudence of Alexius, the progress of famine and approach of winter, eluded his ambitious hopes; and the venal confederates were seduced from his standard. A treaty of peace suspended the fears of the Greeks."

We have dealt thus lengthily with the First Crusade, because it displays completely the quality of all these expeditions. The reality of the struggle between the Latin and the Byzantine system became more and more nakedly apparent. In 1101 came reinforcements, in which the fleet of the mercantile republics of Venice and Genoa played a prominent part, and the power of the kingdom of Jerusalem was extended. The year 1147 saw a Second Crusade, in which both the Emperor Conrad III and King Louis of France participated. It was a much more stately and far less successful and enthusiastic expedition than its predecessor. It had been provoked by the fall of Edessa to the Moslems in 1144. One large division of Germans, instead of going to the

Holy Land, attacked and subjugated the still pagan Wends east of the Elbe. This, the Pope agreed, counted as crusading, and so did the capture of Lisbon, and the foundation of the Christian kingdom of Portugal by the Flemish and English contingents.

In 1169 a Kurdish adventurer, named Saladin, became ruler of Egypt, in which country the Shiite heresy had now fallen before a Sunnite revival. This Saladin reunited the efforts of Egypt and Bagdad, and preached a Jihad, a Holy War, a counter-crusade, of all the Moslems against the Christians. This Jihad excited almost as much feeling in Islam as the First Crusade had done in Christendom. It was now a case of crusader against crusader; and in 1187 Jerusalem was retaken. This provoked the Third Crusade (1189). This also was a grand affair, planned jointly by the Emperor Frederick I (known better as Frederick Barbarossa), the King of France, and the King of England (who at that time<sup>v2-081</sup> owned many of the fairest French provinces). The papacy played a secondary part in this expedition; it was in one of its phases of enfeeblement; and the crusade was the most courtly, chivalrous, and romantic of all. Religious bitterness was mitigated by the idea of knightly gallantry, which obsessed both Saladin and Richard I (1189-1199) of England (Cœur-de-Lion), and the lover of romance may very well turn to the romances about this period for its flavour. The crusade saved the principality of Antioch for a time, but failed to retake Jerusalem. The Christians, however, remained in possession of the seacoast of Palestine.

By the time of the Third Crusade, the magic and wonder had gone out of these movements altogether. The common people had found them out. Men went, but only kings and nobles straggled back; and that often only after heavy taxation for a ransom. The idea of the crusades was cheapened by their too frequent and trivial use. Whenever the Pope quarrelled with anyone now, he called for a crusade, until the word ceased to mean anything but an attempt to give flavour to an unpalatable civil war. There was a crusade against the heretics in the south of France, one against John (King of England), one against the Emperor Frederick II. The Popes did not understand the necessity of dignity to the papacy. They had achieved a moral ascendancy in Christendom. Forthwith they began to fritter it away. They not only cheapened the idea of the crusades, but they made their tremendous power of excommunication, of putting people outside all the sacraments, hopes, and comforts of religion, ridiculous by using it in mere disputes of policy. Frederick II was not only crusaded against, but excommunicated—without visible injury. He was excommunicated again in 1239, and a third time in 1245.<sup>[352]</sup>

The bulk of the Fourth Crusade never reached the Holy Land at all. It started from Venice (1202), captured Zara, encamped at Constantinople (1203), and finally, in

1204, stormed the city. It was frankly a combined attack on the Byzantine Empire. Venice took much of the coasts and islands of the empire, and a Latin, Baldwin of Flanders, was set up as emperor in Constantinople. The Latin and Greek Churches were declared to be reunited, and Latin emperors ruled as conquerors in Constantinople from 1204 to 1261.

In 1212 occurred a dreadful thing, a children's crusade. An excitement that could no longer affect sane adults was spread among the children in the south of France and in the Rhone Valley. A crowd of many thousands of French boys marched to Marseilles; they were then lured on board ship by slave traders, who sold them into slavery in Egypt. The Rhineland children tramped into Italy, many perishing by the way, and there dispersed. Pope Innocent III made great capital out of this strange business. "The very children put us to shame," he said; and sought to whip up enthusiasm for a Fifth Crusade. This crusade aimed at the conquest of Egypt, because Jerusalem was now held by the Egyptian Sultan; its remnants returned in 1221, after an inglorious evacuation of its one capture, Damietta, with the Jerusalem vestiges of the True Cross as a sort of consolation concession on the part of the victor. We have already noted the earlier adventures of this venerable relic before the days of Muhammad in chap. xxxi, § 2, when it was carried off by Chosroes II to Ctesiphon, and recovered by the Emperor Heraclius. Fragments of the True Cross, however, had always been in Rome at the church of S. Croce-in-Gerusalemme, since the days of the Empress Helena (the mother of Constantine the Great) to whom, says the legend, its hiding-place had been revealed in a vision during her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. [\[353\]](#)

The Sixth Crusade (1229) was a crusade bordering upon absurdity. The Emperor Frederick II had promised to go upon a crusade, and evaded his vow. He had made a false start and returned. He was probably bored by the mere idea of a crusade. But the vow had been part of the bargain by which he secured the support of Pope Innocent III in his election as emperor. He busied himself in reorganizing the government of his Sicilian kingdom, though he had given the Pope to understand that he would relinquish these possessions if he became emperor; and the Pope was anxious to stop this process of consolidation by sending him to the Holy Land. The Pope did not want Frederick II, or any German emperor at all in Italy, because he himself wished to rule Italy. As Frederick II remained evasive, Gregory IX excommunicated him, proclaimed a crusade against him, and invaded his dominions in Italy (1228). Whereupon the Emperor sailed with an army to the Holy Land. There he had a meeting with the Sultan of Egypt (the Emperor spoke six languages freely, including Arabic); and it would seem these two gentlemen, both of sceptical opinions, exchanged views of a congenial sort, discussed the Pope in a worldly spirit, debated the Mongolian rush

westward, which threatened them both alike, and agreed finally to a commercial convention, and the surrender of a part of the kingdom of Jerusalem to Frederick. This indeed was a new sort of crusade, a crusade by private treaty. As this astonishing crusader had been excommunicated, he had to indulge in a purely secular coronation in Jerusalem, taking the crown from the altar with his own hand, in a church from which all the clergy had gone. Probably there was no one to show him the Holy Places; indeed these were presently all put under an interdict by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and locked up; manifestly the affair differed altogether in spirit from the red onslaught of the First Crusade. It had not even the kindly sociability of the Caliph Omar's visit six hundred years before. Frederick II rode out of Jerusalem almost alone, returned from this unromantic success to Italy, put his affairs there in order very rapidly, chased the papal armies out of his possessions, and obliged the Pope to give him absolution from his excommunication (1230). This Sixth Crusade was indeed not only the *reductio ad absurdum* of crusades, but of papal excommunications. Of this Frederick II we shall tell more in a later section, because he was very typical of certain new forces that were coming into European affairs.

The Christians lost Jerusalem again in 1244; it was taken from them very easily by the Sultan of Egypt when they attempted an intrigue against him. This provoked the Seventh Crusade, the Crusade of St. Louis, King of France (Louis IX), who was taken prisoner in Egypt and ransomed in 1250. Not until 1918, when it fell to a mixed force of French, British, and Indian troops, did Jerusalem slip once more from the Moslem grasp....

One more crusade remains to be noted, an expedition to Tunis by this same Louis IX, who died of fever there.

## §11

The essential interest of the crusades for the historian of mankind lies in the wave of emotion, of unifying feeling, that animated the first. Thereafter these expeditions became more and more an established process, and less and less vital events. The First Crusade was an occurrence like the discovery of America; the later ones were more and more like a trip across the Atlantic. In the eleventh century, the idea of the crusade must have been like a strange and wonderful light in the sky; in the thirteenth one can imagine honest burghers saying in tones of protest, "What! *another* crusade!" The experience of St. Louis in Egypt is not like a fresh experience for mankind; it is much more like a round of golf over some well-known links, a round that was dogged by misfortune. It is an insignificant series of events. The interest of life had shifted to other directions.

The beginning of the crusades displays all Europe saturated by a naïve Christianity, and ready to follow the leading of the Pope trustfully and simply. The scandals of the Lateran during its evil days, with which we are all so familiar now, were practically unknown outside Rome. And Gregory VII and Urban II had redeemed all that. But intellectually and morally their successors at the Lateran and the Vatican [\[354\]](#) were not equal to their opportunities. The strength of the papacy lay in the faith men had in it, and it used that faith so carelessly as to enfeeble it. Rome has always had too much of the shrewdness of the priest and too little of the power of the prophet. So that while the eleventh century was a century of ignorant and confiding men, the thirteenth was an age of knowing and disillusioned men. It was a far more civilized and profoundly sceptical world.

The bishops, priests, and the monastic institutions of Latin Christendom before the days of Gregory VII had been perhaps rather loosely linked together and very variable in quality; but it is clear that they were, as a rule, intensely intimate with the people among whom they found themselves, and with much of the spirit of Jesus still alive in them; they were trusted, and they had enormous power *within the conscience of their followers*. The church, in comparison with its later state, was more in the hands of local laymen and the local ruler; it lacked its later universality. The energetic bracing up of the church organization by Gregory VII, which was designed to increase the central power of Rome, broke many subtle filaments between priest and monastery on the one hand, and the country-side about them on the other. Men of faith and wisdom believe in growth and their fellow men; but priests, even such priests as Gregory VII, believe in the false “efficiency” of an imposed discipline. The squabble over investitures made every prince in Christendom suspicious of the bishops as agents of a foreign power; this suspicion filtered down to the parishes. The political enterprises of the papacy necessitated an increasing demand for money. Already in the thirteenth century it was being said everywhere that the priests were not good men, that they were always hunting for money.

In the days of ignorance there had been an extraordinary willingness to believe the Catholic priesthood good and wise. Relatively it was better and wiser in those days. Great powers beyond her spiritual functions had been entrusted to the church, and very extraordinary freedoms. Of this confidence the fullest advantage had been taken. In the Middle Ages the church had become a state within the state. It had its own law courts. Cases involving not merely priests, but monks, students, crusaders, widows, orphans, and the helpless, were reserved for the clerical courts; and whenever the rites or rules of the church were involved, there the church claimed jurisdiction over such matters as wills, marriages, oaths, and of course over heresy, sorcery, and

blasphemy. There were numerous clerical prisons in which offenders might pine all their lives. The Pope was the supreme law-giver of Christendom, and his court at Rome the final and decisive court of appeal. And the church levied taxes; it had not only vast properties and a great income from fees, but it imposed a tax of a tenth, the tithe, upon its subjects. It did not call for this as a pious benefaction; it demanded it as a right. The clergy, on the other hand, were now claiming exemption from lay taxation.

This attempt to trade upon their peculiar prestige and evade their share in fiscal burdens was certainly one very considerable factor in the growing dissatisfaction with the clergy. Apart from any question of justice, it was impolitic. It made taxes seem ten times more burthensome to those who had to pay. It made everyone feel the immunities of the church. And a still more extravagant and unwise claim made by the church was the claim to the power of *dispensation*. The Pope might in many instances set aside the laws of the church in individual cases; he might allow cousins to marry, permit a man to have two wives, or release anyone from a vow. But to do such things is to admit that the laws affected are not based upon necessity and an inherent righteousness; that they are in fact restrictive and vexatious. The law-giver, of all beings, most owes the law allegiance. He of all men should behave as though the law compelled him. But it is the universal weakness of mankind that what we are given to administer we presently imagine we own.

## § 12

The Emperor Frederick II is a very convenient example of the sort of doubter and rebel the thirteenth century could produce. It may be interesting to tell a little of this intelligent and cynical man. He was the son of the German Emperor, Henry VI, and grandson of Frederick Barbarossa, and his mother was the daughter of Roger I, the Norman King of Sicily. He inherited this kingdom in 1198, when he was four years old; his mother was his guardian for six months, and when she died, Pope Innocent III (1198 to 1216) became regent and guardian. He seems to have had an exceptionally good and remarkably mixed education, and his accomplishments earned him the flattering title of *Stupor mundi*, the amazement of the world. The result of getting an Arabic view of Christianity, and a Christian view of Islam, was to make him believe that all religions were impostures, a view held perhaps by many a stifled observer in the Age of Faith. But he talked about his views; his blasphemies and heresies are on record. Growing up under the arrogant rule of Innocent III, who never seems to have realized that his ward had come of age, he developed a slightly humorous evasiveness. It was the papal policy to prevent any fresh coalescence of the power of Germany and Italy, and it was equally Frederick's determination to get whatever he could. When presently opportunity offered him the imperial crown of

Germany, he secured the Pope's support by agreeing, if he were elected, to relinquish his possessions in Sicily and South Italy, and to put down heresy in Germany. For Innocent III was one of the great persecuting Popes, an able, grasping, and aggressive man. (For a Pope, he was exceptionally young. He became Pope at thirty-seven.) It was Innocent who had preached a cruel crusade against the heretics in the south of France, a crusade that presently became a looting expedition beyond his control. So soon as Frederick was elected emperor (1211), [355] Innocent pressed for the performance of the vows and promises he had wrung from his dutiful ward. The clergy were to be freed from lay jurisdiction and from taxation, and exemplary cruelties were to be practised upon the heretics. None of which things Frederick did. As we have already told, he would not even relinquish Sicily. He liked Sicily as a place of residence better than he liked Germany.

Innocent III died baffled in 1216, and his successor, Honorius III, effected nothing. Honorius was succeeded by Gregory IX (1227), who evidently came to the papal throne with a nervous resolution to master this perplexing young man. He excommunicated him at once for failing to start upon his crusade, which was now twelve years overdue; and he denounced his vices, heresies, and general offences in a public letter (1227). To this Frederick replied in a far abler document addressed to all the princes of Europe, a document of extreme importance in history, because it is the first clear statement of the issue between the pretensions of the Pope to be absolute ruler of all Christendom, and the claims of the secular rulers. [356] This conflict had always been smouldering; it had broken out here in one form, and there in another; but now Frederick put it in clear general terms upon which men could combine together.

Having delivered this blow, he departed upon the pacific crusade of which we have already told. In 1239, Gregory IX was excommunicating him for a second time, and renewing that warfare of public abuse in which the papacy had already suffered severely. The controversy was revived after Gregory IX was dead, when Innocent IV was Pope; and again a devastating letter, which men were bound to remember, was written by Frederick against the church. He denounced the pride and irreligion of the clergy, and ascribed all the corruptions of the time to their pride and wealth. He proposed to his fellow princes a general confiscation of church property—for the good of the church. It was a suggestion that never afterwards left the imagination of the European princes.

We will not go on to tell of his last years or of the disaster at Parma, due to his carelessness, which cast a shadow of failure over his end. The particular events of his life are far less significant than its general atmosphere. It is possible to piece together

something of his court life in Sicily. He is described towards the end of his life as “red, bald, and short-sighted”; but his features were good and pleasing. He was luxurious in his way of living, and fond of beautiful things. He is described as licentious. But it is clear that his mind was not satisfied by religious scepticism, and that he was a man of very effectual curiosity and inquiry. He gathered Jewish and Moslem as well as Christian philosophers at his court, and he did much to irrigate the Italian mind with Saracenic influences. Through him Arabic numerals and algebra were introduced to Christian students, and among other philosophers at his court was Michael Scott, who translated portions of Aristotle and the commentaries thereon of the great Arab philosopher Averroes (of Cordoba). In 1224 Frederick founded the University of Naples, and he enlarged and enriched the great medical school at Salerno University, the most ancient of universities.{v2-089} He also founded a zoological garden. He left a book on hawking, which shows him to have been an acute observer of the habits of birds, and he was one of the first Italians to write Italian verse. Italian poetry was indeed born at his court. He has been called by an able writer, “the first of the moderns,” and the phrase expresses aptly the unprejudiced detachment of his intellectual side. His was an all-round originality. During a gold shortage he introduced and made a success of a coinage of stamped leather, bearing his promise to pay in gold, a sort of leather bank-note issue.[357]

In spite of the torrent of abuse and calumny in which Frederick was drenched, he left a profound impression upon the popular imagination. He is still remembered in South Italy almost as vividly as is Napoleon I by the peasants of France; he is the “Gran Federigo.” And German scholars declare[358] that, in spite of Frederick’s manifest dislike for Germany, it is he, and not Frederick I, Frederick Barbarossa, to whom that German legend originally attached—that legend which represents a great monarch slumbering in a deep cavern, his beard grown round a stone table, against a day of awakening when the world will be restored by him from an extremity of disorder to peace. Afterwards, it seems, the story was transferred to the Crusader Barbarossa, the grandfather of Frederick II.

A difficult child was Frederick II for Mother Church, and he was only the precursor of many such difficult children. The princes and educated gentlemen throughout Europe read his letters and discussed them. The more enterprising university students found, marked, and digested the Arabic Aristotle he had made accessible to them in Latin. Salerno cast a baleful light upon Rome. All sorts of men must have been impressed by the futility of the excommunications and interdicts that were levelled at Frederick.{v2-090}

§ 13[359]

We have said that Innocent III never seemed to realize that his ward, Frederick II, was growing up. It is equally true that the papacy never seemed to realize that Europe was growing up. It is impossible for an intelligent modern student of history not to sympathize with the underlying idea of the papal court, with the idea of one universal rule of righteousness keeping the peace of the earth, and not to recognize the many elements of nobility that entered into the Lateran policy. Sooner or later mankind must come to one universal peace, unless our race is to be destroyed by the increasing power of its own destructive inventions; and that universal peace must needs take the form of a government, that is to say a law-sustaining organization, in the best sense of the word religious; a government ruling men through the educated co-ordination of their minds in a common conception of human history and human destiny.

The papacy we must now recognize as the first clearly conscious attempt to provide such a government in the world. We cannot too earnestly examine its deficiencies and inadequacies, for every lesson we can draw from them is necessarily of the greatest value to us in forming our ideas of our own international relationships. We have tried to suggest the main factors in the breakdown of the Roman Republic, and it now behoves us to attempt a diagnosis of the failure of the Roman Church to secure and organize the good will of mankind.

The first thing that will strike the student is the intermittence of the efforts of the church to establish the world City of God. The policy of the church was not wholeheartedly and continuously set upon that end. It was only now and then that some fine personality or some group of fine personalities dominated it in that direction. The kingdom of God that Jesus of Nazareth had preached was overlaid, as we have explained, almost from the beginning by the doctrines and ceremonial traditions of an earlier age, and of an intellectually inferior type. Christianity almost from its commencement ceased to be purely prophetic and creative. It entangled itself with archaic traditions of human sacrifice, with Mithraic blood-cleansing, with priestcraft as ancient as human society, and with elaborate doctrines about the structure of the divinity. The gory forefinger of the Etruscan pontifex maximus emphasized the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth; the mental complexity of the Alexandrian Greek entangled them. In the inevitable jangle of these incompatibles the church had become dogmatic. In despair of other solutions to its intellectual discords it had resorted to arbitrary authority. Its priests and bishops were more and more men moulded to creeds and dogmas and set procedures; by the time they became cardinals or popes they were usually oldish men, habituated to a politic struggle for immediate ends and no longer capable of world-wide views. They no longer wanted to

see the Kingdom of God established in the hearts of men—they had forgotten about that; they wanted to see the power of the church, which was their own power, dominating men. They were prepared to bargain even with the hates and fears and lusts in men's hearts to ensure that power. And it was just because many of them probably doubted secretly of the entire soundness of their vast and elaborate doctrinal fabric, that they would brook no discussion of it. They were intolerant of questions or dissent, not because they were sure of their faith, but because they were not. They wanted conformity for reasons of policy. By the thirteenth century the church was evidently already morbidly anxious about the gnawing doubts that might presently lay the whole structure of its pretensions in ruins. It had no serenity of soul. It was hunting everywhere for heretics as timid old ladies are said to look under beds and in cupboards for burglars before retiring for the night.

We have already mentioned (chap, xxxi, § 5) the Persian Mani who was crucified and flayed in the year 277. His way of representing the struggle between good and evil was as a struggle between a power of light which was, as it were, in rebellion against a power of darkness inherent in the universe. All these profound mysteries are necessarily represented by symbols and poetic expressions, and the ideas of Mani still find a response in many intellectual temperaments to-day. One may hear Manichæan doctrines from many Christian pulpits. But the orthodox Catholic symbol was a different one. These Manichæan ideas had spread very widely in Europe, and particularly in Bulgaria and the south of France. In the south of France the people who held them were called the Cathars or Albigenses. Their ideas jarred so little with the essentials of Christianity that they believed themselves to be devout Christians. As a body they lived lives of conspicuous virtue and purity in a violent, undisciplined, and vicious age. But they questioned the doctrinal soundness of Rome and the orthodox interpretation of the Bible. They thought Jesus was a rebel against the cruelty of the God of the Old Testament, and not his harmonious son. Closely associated with the Albigenses were the Waldenses, the followers of a man called Waldo, who seems to have been quite soundly Catholic in his theology, but equally offensive to the church because he denounced the riches and luxury of the clergy. This was enough for the Lateran, and so we have the spectacle of Innocent III preaching a crusade against these unfortunate sectaries, and permitting the enlistment of every wandering scoundrel at loose ends to carry fire and sword and rape and every conceivable outrage among the most peaceful subjects of the King of France. The accounts of the cruelties and abominations of this crusade are far more terrible to read than any account of Christian martyrdoms by the pagans, and they have the added horror of being indisputably true.

This black and pitiless intolerance was an evil spirit to be mixed into the project of a rule of God on earth. This was a spirit entirely counter to that of Jesus of Nazareth. We do not hear of his smacking the faces or wringing the wrists of recalcitrant or unresponsive disciples. But the Popes during their centuries of power were always raging against the slightest reflection upon the intellectual sufficiency of the church.

And the intolerance of the church was not confined to religious matters. The shrewd, pompous, irascible, and rather malignant old men who manifestly constituted a dominant majority in the councils of the church, resented any knowledge but their own knowledge, and distrusted any thought at all that they did not correct and control. They set themselves to restrain science, of which they were evidently jealous. Any mental activity but their own struck them as being insolent. Later on they were to have a great struggle upon the question of the earth's position in space, and whether it moved round the sun or not. This was really not the business of the church at all. She might very well have left to reason the things that are reason's, but she seems to have been impelled by an inner necessity to estrange the intellectual conscience in men.

Had this intolerance sprung from a real intensity of conviction it would have been bad enough, but it was accompanied by a scarcely disguised contempt for the intelligence and mental dignity of the common man that makes it far less acceptable to our modern judgments, and which no doubt made it far less acceptable to the free spirits of the time. We have told quite dispassionately the policy of the Roman church towards her troubled sister in the East. Many of the tools and expedients she used were abominable. In her treatment of her own people a streak of real cynicism is visible. She destroyed her prestige by disregarding her own teaching of righteousness. Of dispensations we have already spoken (§ 11). Her crowning folly in the sixteenth century was the sale of *indulgences*, whereby the sufferings of the soul in purgatory could be commuted for a money payment. But the spirit that led at last to this shameless and, as it proved, disastrous proceeding, was already very evident in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Long before the seed of criticism that Frederick II had sown had germinated in men's minds and produced its inevitable crop of rebellion, there was apparent a strong feeling in Christendom that all was not well with the spiritual atmosphere. There began movements, movements that nowadays we should call "revivalist," within the church, that implied rather than uttered a criticism of the sufficiency of her existing methods and organization. Men sought fresh forms of righteous living outside the monasteries and priesthood. One notable figure is that of St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226). We cannot tell here in any detail of how this pleasant young gentleman gave up

all the amenities and ease of his life and went forth to seek God; the opening of the story is not unlike the early experiences of Gautama Buddha. He had a sudden conversion in the midst of a life of pleasure, and, taking a vow of extreme poverty, he gave himself up to an imitation of the life of Christ, and to the service of the sick and wretched, and more particularly to the service of the lepers, who then abounded in Italy. He was joined by great multitudes of disciples, and so the first Friars of the Franciscan Order came into existence. An order of women devotees was set up beside the original confraternity, and in addition great numbers of men and women were brought into less formal association. He preached, unmolested by the Moslems, be it noted, in Egypt and Palestine, though the Fifth Crusade was then in progress. His relations with the church are still a matter for discussion. [360] His work had been sanctioned by Pope Innocent III, but while he was in the East there was a reconstitution of his order, intensifying its discipline and substituting authority for responsive impulse, and as a consequence of these changes he resigned its headship. To the end he clung passionately to the ideal of poverty, but he was hardly dead before the order was holding property through trustees and building a great church and monastery to his memory at Assisi. The disciplines of the order that were applied after his death to his immediate associates are scarcely to be distinguished from a persecution; several of the more conspicuous zealots for simplicity were scourged, others were imprisoned, one was killed while attempting to escape, and Brother Bernard, the "first disciple," passed a year in the woods and hills, hunted like a wild beast.

This struggle within the Franciscan Order is a very interesting one, because it foreshadows the great troubles that were coming to Christendom. All through the thirteenth century a section of the Franciscans were straining at the rule of the church, and in 1318 four of them were burnt alive at Marseilles as incorrigible heretics. There seems to have been little difference between the teaching and spirit of St. Francis and that of Waldo in the twelfth century, the founder of the murdered sect of Waldenses. Both were passionately enthusiastic for the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. But while Waldo rebelled against the church, St. Francis did his best to be a good child of the church, and his comment on the spirit of official Christianity was only implicit. But both were instances of an outbreak of conscience against authority and the ordinary procedure of the church. And it is plain that in the second instance, as in the first, the church scented rebellion.

A very different character to St. Francis was the Spaniard St. Dominic (1170-1221), who was, of all things, orthodox. He had a passion for the argumentative conversion of heretics, and he was commissioned by Pope Innocent III to go and preach to the

Albigenses. His work went on side by side with the fighting and massacres of the crusade; whom Dominic could not convert, Innocent's crusader slew; yet his very activities and the recognition and encouragement of his order by the Pope witness to the rising tide of discussion, and to the persuasion even of the papacy that force was no remedy. In several respects the development of the Black Friars or Dominicans—the Franciscans were the Grey Friars—shows the Roman church at the parting of the ways, committing itself more and more deeply to organized dogma, and so to a hopeless conflict with the quickening intelligence and courage of mankind. She whose one duty was to lead, chose to compel. The last discourse of St. Dominic to the heretics he had sought to convert is preserved to us. It is a signpost in history. It betrays the fatal exasperation of a man who has lost his faith in the power of truth because *his* truth has not prevailed. "For many years," he said, "I have exhorted you in vain, with gentleness, preaching, praying, and weeping. But according to the proverb of my country, 'where blessing can accomplish nothing, blows may avail.' We shall rouse against you princes and prelates, who, alas! will arm nations and kingdoms against this land ... and thus blows will avail where blessings and gentleness have been powerless."[\[361\]](#)

The thirteenth century saw the development of a new institution in the church, the papal Inquisition. Before this time it had been customary for the Pope to make occasional inquests or inquiries into heresy in this region or that, but now Innocent III saw in the new order of the Dominicans a powerful instrument of suppression. The Inquisition was organized as a standing inquiry under their direction, and with fire and torment the church set itself, through this instrument, to assail and weaken the human conscience in which its sole hope of world dominion resided. Before the thirteenth century the penalty of death had been inflicted but rarely upon heretics and unbelievers. Now in a hundred market-places in Europe the dignitaries of the church watched the blackened bodies of its antagonists, for the most part poor and insignificant people, burn and sink pitifully, and their own great mission to mankind burn and sink with them into dust and ashes.

The beginnings of the Franciscans and the Dominicans were but two among many of the new forces that were arising in Christendom, either to help or shatter the church, as its own wisdom might decide. Those two orders the church did assimilate and use, though with a little violence in the case of the former. But other forces were more frankly disobedient and critical. A century and a half later came Wycliffe (1320-1384). He was a learned doctor at Oxford; for a time he was Master of Balliol; and he held various livings in the church. Quite late in his life he began a series of outspoken criticisms of the corruption of the clergy and the unwisdom of the church. He

organized a number of poor priests, the Wycliffites, to spread his ideas throughout England; and in order that people should judge between the church and himself, he translated the Bible into English. He was a more learned and far abler man than either St. Francis or St. Dominic. He had supporters in high places and a great following among the people; and though Rome raged against him, and ordered his imprisonment, he died a free man, still administering the Sacraments as parish priest of Lutterworth. But the black and ancient spirit that was leading the Catholic church to its destruction would not let his bones rest in his grave. By a decree of the Council of Constance in 1415, his remains were ordered to be dug up and burnt, an order which was carried out at the command of Pope Martin V by Bishop Fleming in 1428. This desecration was not the act of some isolated fanatic; it was the official act of the church.

#### **§ 14**

The history of the papacy is confusing to the general reader because of the multitude and abundance of the Popes. They mostly began to reign as old men, and their reigns were short, averaging less than two years each. But certain of the Popes stand out and supply convenient handles for the student to grasp. Such were Gregory I (590-604) the Great, the first monkish Pope, the friend of Benedict, the sender of the English mission. Other noteworthy Popes are Leo III (795-816), who crowned Charlemagne, the scandalous Popes John XI (931-936) and John XII (955-963), which latter was deposed by the Emperor Otto I, and the great Hildebrand, who ended his days as Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), and who did so much by establishing the celibacy of the clergy, and insisting upon the supremacy of the church over kings and princes, to centralize the power of the church in Rome. The next Pope but one after Gregory VII was Urban II (1087-1099), the Pope of the First Crusade. The period from the time of Gregory VII onward for a century and a half, was the great period of ambition and effort for the church. There was a real sustained attempt to unite all Christendom under a purified and reorganized church.

The setting up of Latin kingdoms in Syria and the Holy Land, in religious communion with Rome, after the First Crusade, marked the opening stage of a conquest of Eastern Christianity by Rome that reached its climax during the Latin rule in Constantinople (1204-1261).

In 1176, at Venice, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (Frederick I) knelt to the Pope Alexander III, recognized his spiritual supremacy, and swore fealty to him. But after the death of Alexander III, in 1181, the peculiar weakness of the papacy, its liability to fall to old and enfeebled men, became manifest. Five Popes tottered to the Lateran to

die within the space of ten years. Only with Innocent III (1198-1216) did another vigorous Pope take up the great policy of the City of God.

Under Innocent III, the guardian of that Emperor Frederick II, whose career we have already studied in §§ 10 and 12, and the five Popes who followed him, the Pope of Rome came nearer to being the monarch of a united Christendom than he had ever been before, and was ever to be again. The empire was weakened by internal dissensions, Constantinople was in Latin hands, from Bulgaria to Ireland and from Norway to Sicily and Jerusalem the Pope was supreme. Yet this supremacy was more apparent than real. For, as we have seen, while in the time of Urban the power of faith was strong in all Christian Europe, in the time of Innocent III the papacy had lost its hold upon the hearts of princes, and the faith and conscience of the common people was turning against a merely political and aggressive church.

The church in the thirteenth century was extending its legal power in the world, and losing its grip upon men's consciences. It was becoming less persuasive and more violent. No intelligent man can tell of this process or read of this process of failure without very mingled feelings. The church had sheltered and formed a new Europe throughout the long ages of European darkness and chaos; it had been the matrix in which the new civilization had been cast. But this new-formed civilization was impelled to grow by its own inherent vitality, and the church lacked sufficient power of growth and accommodation. The time was fast approaching when this matrix was to be broken.

The first striking intimation of the decay of the living and sustaining forces of the papacy appeared when presently the Popes came into conflict with the growing power of the French king. During the lifetime of the Emperor Frederick II, Germany fell into disunion, and the French king began to play the rôle of guard, supporter, and rival to the Pope that had hitherto fallen to the Hohenstaufen emperors. A series of Popes pursued the policy of supporting the French monarchs. French princes were established in the kingdom of Sicily and Naples, with the support and approval of Rome, and the French kings saw before them the possibility of restoring and ruling the Empire of Charlemagne. When, however, the German interregnum after the death of Frederick II, the last of the Hohenstaufens, came to an end and Rudolf of Habsburg was elected first Habsburg Emperor (1273), the policy of the Lateran began to fluctuate between France and Germany, veering about with the sympathies of each successive Pope. In the East in 1261 the Greeks recaptured Constantinople from the Latin emperors, and the founder of the new Greek dynasty, Michael Palæologus, Michael VIII, after some unreal tentatives of reconciliation with the Pope, broke away

from the Roman communion altogether, and with that, and the fall of the Latin kingdoms in Asia, the eastward ascendancy of the Popes came to an end.{v2-099}

In 1294 Boniface VIII became Pope. He was an Italian, hostile to the French, and full of a sense of the great traditions and mission of Rome. For a time he carried things with a high hand. In 1300 he held a jubilee, and a vast multitude of pilgrims assembled in Rome. "So great was the influx of money into the papal treasury, that two assistants were kept busy with rakes collecting the offerings that were deposited at the tomb of St. Peter." [362] But this festival was a delusive triumph. It is easier to raise a host of excursionists than a band of crusaders. Boniface came into conflict with the French king in 1302, and in 1303, as he was about to pronounce sentence of excommunication against that monarch, he was surprised and arrested in his own ancestral palace, at Anagni, by Guillaume de Nogaret. This agent from the French king forced an entrance into the palace, made his way into the bedroom of the frightened Pope—he was lying in bed with a cross in his hands—and heaped threats and insults upon him. The Pope was liberated a day or so later by the townspeople, and returned to Rome; but there he was seized upon and again made prisoner by the Orsini family, and in a few weeks' time the shocked and disillusioned old man died a prisoner in their hands.

The people of Anagni did resent the first outrage, and rose against Nogaret to liberate Boniface, but then Anagni was the Pope's native town. The important point to note is that the French king, in this rough treatment of the head of Christendom, was acting with the full approval of his people; he had summoned a council of the Three Estates of France (lords, church, and commons) and gained their consent before proceeding to extremities. Neither in Italy, Germany, nor England was there the slightest general manifestation of disapproval at this free handling of the sovereign pontiff. The idea of Christendom had decayed until its power over the minds of men had gone.

Throughout the fourteenth century the papacy did nothing to recover its moral sway. The next Pope elected, Clement V, was a Frenchman, the choice of King Philip of France. He never came to Rome. He set up his court in the town of Avignon, which then belonged not to France, but to the Papal See, though embedded in French territory, and there his successors remained{v2-100} until 1377, when Pope Gregory XI returned to the Vatican palace in Rome. But Gregory XI did not take the sympathies of the whole church with him. Many of the cardinals were of French origin, and their habits and associations were rooted deep at Avignon. When in 1378 Gregory XI died, and an Italian, Urban VI, was elected, these dissentient cardinals declared the election invalid, and elected another Pope, the anti-Pope, Clement VII. This split is called the Great Schism. The Popes remained in Rome, and all the anti-French

powers, the Emperor, the King of England, Hungary, Poland, and the North of Europe were loyal to them. The anti-Popes, on the other hand, continued in Avignon, and were supported by the King of France, his ally the King of Scotland, Spain, Portugal, and various German princes. Each Pope excommunicated and cursed the adherents of his rival, so that by one standard or another all Christendom was damned during this time (1378-1417). The lamentable effect of this split upon the solidarity of Christendom it is impossible to exaggerate. Is it any marvel that such men as Wycliffe began to teach men to think on their own account when the fountain of truth thus squirted against itself? In 1417 the Great Schism was healed at the Council of Constance, the same council that dug up and burnt Wycliffe's bones, and which, as we shall tell later, caused the burning of John Huss; at this council, Pope and anti-Pope resigned or were swept aside, and Martin V became the sole Pope of a formally reunited but spiritually very badly strained Christendom.

How later on the Council of Basle (1437) led to a fresh schism, and to further anti-Popes, we cannot relate here.

Such, briefly, is the story of the great centuries of papal ascendancy and papal decline. It is the story of the failure to achieve the very noble and splendid idea of a unified and religious world. We have pointed out in the previous section how greatly the inheritance of a complex dogmatic theology encumbered the church in this its ambitious adventure. It had too much theology, and not enough religion. But it may not be idle to point out here how much the individual insufficiency of the Popes also contributed to the collapse of its scheme and dignity. There was no such level of education in the world as to provide a succession of {v2-101} cardinals and popes with the breadth of knowledge and outlook needed for the task they had undertaken; they were not sufficiently educated for their task, and only a few, by sheer force of genius, transcended that defect. And, as we have already pointed out, they were, when at last they got to power, too old to use it. Before they could grasp the situation they had to control, most of them were dead. It would be interesting to speculate how far it would have tilted the balance in favour of the church if the cardinals had retired at fifty, and if no one could have been elected Pope after fifty-five. This would have lengthened the average reign of each Pope, and enormously increased the continuity of the policy of the church. And it is perhaps possible that a more perfect system of selecting the cardinals, who were the electors and counsellors of the Pope, might have been devised. The rules and ways by which men reach power are of very great importance in human affairs. The psychology of the ruler is a science that has still to be properly studied. We have seen the Roman Republic wrecked, and here we see the church failing in its world mission very largely through ineffective electoral methods.{v2-103}

## BOOK VII

### THE MONGOL EMPIRES OF THE LAND WAYS AND THE NEW EMPIRES OF THE SEA WAYS{v2-105}

#### XXXIV

### THE GREAT EMPIRE OF JENGIS KHAN AND HIS SUCCESSORS

#### (The Age of the Land Ways)

§ 1. *Asia at the end of the Twelfth Century.* § 2. *The Rise and Victories of the Mongols.* § 3. *The Travels of Marco Polo.* § 4. *The Ottoman Turks and Constantinople.* § 5. *Why the Mongols were not Christianized.* § 5A. *Kublai Khan founds the Yuan Dynasty.* § 5B. *The Mongols Revert to Tribalism.* § 5C. *The Kipchak Empire and the Tsar of Muscovy.* § 5D. *Timurlane.* § 5E. *The Mongol Empire of India.* § 5F. *The Mongols and the Gipsies.*

#### § 1

WE have to tell now of the last and greatest of all the raids of nomadism upon the civilizations of the East and West. We have traced in this history the development side by side of these two ways of living, and we have pointed out that as the civilizations grew more extensive and better organized, the arms, the mobility, and the intelligence of the nomads also improved. The nomad was not simply an uncivilized man, he was a man specialized and specializing along his own line. From the very beginning of history the nomad and the settled people have been in reaction. We have told of the Semitic and Elamite raids upon Sumeria; we have seen the Western empire smashed by the nomads of the great plains and Persia conquered and Byzantium shaken by the nomads of Arabia. Whenever civilization seems to be choking amidst its weeds of wealth and debt and servitude, when its faiths seem rotting into cynicism and its powers of further growth are hopelessly entangled in effete formulæ, the nomad drives in like a plough to break up the festering stagnation and release the{v2-106} world to new beginnings. The Mongol aggression, which began with the thirteenth century, was the greatest, and so far it has been the last, of all these destructive reploughings of human association.

From entire obscurity the Mongols came very suddenly into history towards the close of the twelfth century. They appeared in the country to the north of China, in the land of origin of the Huns and Turks, and they were manifestly of the same strain as these peoples. They were gathered together under a chief, with whose name we will not tax

the memory of the reader; under his son Jengis Khan their power grew with extraordinary swiftness.

The reader will already have an idea of the gradual breaking up of the original unity of Islam. In the beginning of the thirteenth century there were a number of separate and discordant Moslem states in Western Asia. There was Egypt (with Palestine and much of Syria) under the successors of Saladin, there was the Seljuk power in Asia Minor, there was still an Abbasid caliphate in Bagdad, and to the east of this again there had grown up a very considerable empire, the Kharismian empire, that of the Turkish princes from Khiva who had conquered a number of fragmentary Seljuk principalities and reigned from the Ganges Valley to the Tigris. They had but an insecure hold on the Persian and Indian populations.



The state of the Chinese civilization was equally inviting to an enterprising invader. One last glimpse of China in this history was in the seventh century during the opening years of the Tang dynasty, when that shrewd and able emperor Tai-tsung was weighing the respective merits of Nestorian Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and the teachings of Lao Tse, and on the whole inclining to the opinion that Lao Tse was as good a teacher as any. We have described his reception of the traveller Yuan Chwang. Tai-tsung tolerated all religions, but several of his successors conducted a pitiless persecution of the Buddhist faith; it flourished in spite of these persecutions, and its monasteries played a somewhat analogous part in at first sustaining learning and afterwards retarding it, that the Christian monastic organization did in the West. By the tenth century the great Tang dynasty was in an extreme state of decay; the usual degenerative process through a series of voluptuaries and incapables had

gone on, and China broke up again politically into a variable number of contending states, "The age of the Ten States," an age of confusion that lasted through the first half of the tenth century. Then arose a dynasty, the Northern Sung (960-1127), which established a sort of unity, but which was in constant struggle with a number of Hunnish peoples from the north who were pressing down the eastern coast. For a time one of these peoples, the Khitan, prevailed. In the twelfth century these people had been subjugated and had given place to another Hunnish empire, the empire of the Kin, with its capital at Peking and its southern boundary south of Hwangho. The Sung empire shrank before this Kin empire. In 1138 the capital was shifted from Nanking, which was now too close to the northern frontier, to the city of Han Chau on the coast. From 1127 onward to 1295, the Sung dynasty is known as the Southern Sung. To the northwest of its territories there was now the Tartar empire of the Hsia; to the north, the Kin empire, both states in which the Chinese population was under rulers in whom nomadic traditions were still strong. So that here on the east also the main masses of Asiatic mankind were under uncongenial rulers and ready to accept, if not to welcome, the arrival of a conqueror.

Northern India we have already noted was also a conquered country at the opening of the thirteenth century. It was at first a part of the Khivan empire, but in 1206 an adventurous ruler, Kutub, who had been a slave and who had risen as a slave to be governor of the Indian province, set up a separate Moslem state of Hindustan in Delhi. Brahminism had long since ousted Buddhism from India, but the converts to Islam were still but a small ruling minority in the land.

Such was the political state of Asia when Jenghis Khan began to consolidate his power among the nomads in the country between Lakes Balkash and Baikal in the beginning of the thirteenth century.

## § 2

The career of conquest of Jenghis Khan and his immediate successors astounded the world, and probably astounded no one more than these Mongol Khans themselves.{v2-109}

The Mongols were in the twelfth century a tribe subject to those Kin who had conquered Northeast China. They were a horde of nomadic horsemen living in tents, and subsisting mainly upon mare's milk products and meat. Their occupations were pasturage and hunting, varied by war. They drifted northward as the snows melted for summer pasture, and southward to winter pasture after the custom of the steppes. Their military education began with a successful insurrection against the Kin. The empire of Kin had the resources of half China behind it, and in the struggle the

Mongols learnt very much of the military science of the Chinese. By the end of the twelfth century they were already a fighting tribe of exceptional quality.

The opening years of the career of Jenghis were spent in developing his military machine, in assimilating the Mongols and the associated tribes about them into one organized army. His first considerable extension of power was westward, when the Tartar Kirghis and the Uigurs (who were the Tartar people of the Tarim basin) were not so much conquered as induced to join his organization. He then attacked the Kin empire and took Pekin (1214). The Khitan people, who had been so recently subdued by the Kin, threw in their fortunes with his, and were of very great help to him. The settled Chinese population went on sowing and reaping and trading during this change of masters without lending its weight to either side.

We have already mentioned the very recent Kharismian empire of Turkestan, Persia, and North India. This empire extended eastward to Kashgar, and it must have seemed one of the most progressive and hopeful empires of the time. Jenghis Khan, while still engaged in this war with the Kin empire, sent envoys to Kharismia. They were put to death, an almost incredible stupidity. The Kharismian government, to use the political jargon of to-day, had decided not to “recognize” Jenghis Khan, and took this spirited course with him. Thereupon (1218) the great host of horsemen that Jenghis Khan had consolidated and disciplined swept over the Pamirs and down into Turkestan. It was well armed, and probably it had some guns and gunpowder for siege work—for the Chinese were certainly using gunpowder at this time, and the Mongols learnt its use from them. Kashgar, Khokand, Bokhara fell and then Samarkand, the capital of the Kharismian empire. Thereafter nothing held the Mongols in the Kharismian territories. They swept westward to the Caspian, and southward as far as Lahore. To the north of the Caspian a Mongol army encountered a Russian force from Kieff. There was a series of battles, in which the Russian armies were finally defeated and the Grand Duke of Kieff taken prisoner. So it was the Mongols appeared on the northern shores of the Black Sea. A panic swept Constantinople, which set itself to reconstruct its fortifications. Meanwhile other armies were engaged in the conquest of the empire of the Hsia in China. This was annexed, and only the southern part of the Kin empire remained unsubdued. In 1227 Jenghis Khan died in the midst of a career of triumph. His empire reached already from the Pacific to the Dnieper. And it was an empire still vigorously expanding.

Like all the empires founded by nomads, it was, to begin with, purely a military and administrative empire, a framework rather than a rule. It centred on the personality of the monarch, and its relations with the mass of the populations over which it ruled was simply one of taxation for the maintenance of the horde. But Jenghis Khan had

called to his aid a very able and experienced administrator of the Kin empire, who was learned in all the traditions and science of the Chinese. This statesman, Yelü Chutsai, was able to carry on the affairs of the Mongols long after the death of Jenghis Khan, and there can be little doubt that he is one of the great political heroes of history. He tempered the barbaric ferocity of his masters, and saved innumerable cities and works of art from destruction. He collected archives and inscriptions, and when he was accused of corruption, his sole wealth was found to consist of documents and a few musical instruments. To him perhaps quite as much as to Jenghis is the efficiency of the Mongol military machine to be ascribed. Under Jenghis, we may note further, we find the completest religious toleration established across the entire breadth of Asia.



At the death of Jenghis the capital of the new empire was still in the great barbaric town of Karakorum in Mongolia. There an assembly of Mongol leaders elected Ogdai Khan, the son of Jenghis, as his successor. The war against the vestiges of the Kin empire{v2-112} was prosecuted until Kin was altogether subdued (1234). The Chinese empire to the south under the Sung dynasty helped the Mongols in this task, so destroying their own bulwark against the universal conquerors. The Mongol hosts then swept right across Asia to Russia (1235), an amazing march. Kieff was destroyed in 1240, and nearly all Russia became tributary to the Mongols. Poland was ravaged, and a mixed army of Poles and Germans was annihilated at the battle of Liegnitz in Lower Silesia in 1241. The Emperor Frederick II does not seem to have made any great efforts to stay the advancing tide.

“It is only recently,” says Bury, in his notes to Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, “that European history has begun to understand that the successes of the Mongol army which overran Poland and occupied Hungary in the spring of A.D. 1241

were won by consummate strategy and were not due to a mere overwhelming superiority of numbers. But this fact has not yet become a matter of common knowledge; the vulgar opinion which represents the Tartars as a wild horde carrying all before them solely by their multitude, and galloping through Eastern Europe without a strategic plan, rushing at all obstacles and overcoming them by mere weight, still prevails....

“It was wonderful how punctually and effectually the arrangements of the commander were carried out in operations extending from the Lower Vistula to Transylvania. Such a campaign was quite beyond the power of any European army of the time, and it was beyond the vision of any European commander. There was no general in Europe, from Frederick II downward, who was not a tyro in strategy compared to Subutai. It should also be noticed that the Mongols embarked upon the enterprise with full knowledge of the political situation of Hungary and the condition of Poland—they had taken care to inform themselves by a well-organized system of spies; on the other hand, the Hungarians and Christian powers, like childish barbarians, knew hardly anything about their enemies.”

But though the Mongols were victorious at Liegnitz, they did not continue their drive westward. They were getting into woodlands and hilly country, which did not suit their tactics; and so they turned southward and prepared to settle in Hungary, massacring or assimilating the kindred Magyar, even as these had previously massacred and assimilated the mixed Scythians and Avars and Huns before them. From the Hungarian plain they would probably have made raids west and south as the Hungarians had done in the ninth century, the Avars in the seventh and eighth, and the Huns in the fifth. But in Asia the Mongols were fighting a stiff war of conquest against the Sung, and they were also raiding Persia and Asia Minor; Ogdai died suddenly, and in 1242 there was trouble about the succession, and recalled by this, the undefeated hosts of Mongols began to pour back across Hungary and Rumania towards the east.

To the great relief of Europe the dynastic troubles at Karakorum lasted for some years, and this vast new empire showed signs of splitting up. Mangu Khan became the Great Khan in 1251, and he nominated his brother Kublai Khan as Governor-General of China. Slowly but surely the entire Sung empire was subjugated, and as it was subjugated the eastern Mongols became more and more Chinese in their culture and methods. Tibet was invaded and devastated by Mangu, and Persia and Syria invaded in good earnest. Another brother of Mangu, Hulagu, was in command of this latter war. He turned his arms against the caliphate and captured Bagdad, in which city he perpetrated a massacre of the entire population. Bagdad was still the religious capital of Islam, and the Mongols had become bitterly hostile to the Moslems. This hostility

exacerbated the natural discord of nomad and townsman. In 1259 Mangu died, and in 1260—for it took the best part of a year for the Mongol leaders to gather from the extremities of this vast empire, from Hungary and Syria and Scind and China—Kublai was elected Great Khan. He was already deeply interested in Chinese affairs; he made his capital Pekin instead of Karakorum, and Persia, Syria, and Asia Minor became virtually independent under his brother Hulagu, while the hordes of Mongols in Russia and Asia next to Russia, and various smaller Mongol groups in Turkestan became also practically separate. Kublai died in 1294, and with his death even the titular supremacy of the Great Khan disappeared.

At the death of Kublai there was a main Mongol empire, with Pekin as its capital, including all China and Mongolia; there was{v2-114} a second great Mongol empire, that of Kipchak in Russia; there was a third in Persia, that founded by Hulagu, the Ilkhan empire, to which the Seljuk Turks in Asia Minor were tributary; there was a Siberian state between Kipchak and Mongolia; and another separate state “Great Turkey” in Turkestan. It is particularly remarkable that India beyond the Punjab was never invaded by the Mongols during this period, and that an army under the Sultan of Egypt completely defeated Ketboga, Hulagu’s general, in Palestine (1260), and stopped them from entering Africa. By 1260 the impulse of Mongol conquest had already passed its zenith. Thereafter the Mongol story is one of division and decay.

The Mongol dynasty that Kublai Khan had founded in China, the Yuan dynasty, lasted from 1280 until 1368. Later on a recrudescence of Mongolian energy in Western Asia was destined to create a still more enduring monarchy in India.

### § 3

Now this story of Mongolian conquests is surely the most remarkable in all history. The conquests of Alexander the Great cannot compare with them in extent. And their effect in diffusing and broadening men’s ideas, though such things are more difficult to estimate, is at least comparable to the spread of the Hellenic civilization which is associated with Alexander’s adventure. For a time all Asia and Western Europe enjoyed an open intercourse; all the roads were temporarily open, and representatives of every nation appeared at the court of Karakorum. The barriers between Europe and Asia set up by the religious feud of Christianity and Islam were lowered. Great hopes were entertained by the papacy for the conversion of the Mongols to Christianity. Their only religion so far had been Shamanism, a primitive paganism. Envoys of the Pope, Buddhist priests from India, Parisian and Italian and Chinese artificers, Byzantine and Armenian merchants, mingled with Arab officials and Persian and Indian astronomers and mathematicians at the Mongol court. We hear too much in history of the

campaigns and massacres of the Mongols, and not enough of their indubitable curiosity and zest for learning. Not perhaps as an originaive people, but as transmitters of knowledge and method their in{v2-116}fluence upon the world's history has been enormous. And everything one can learn of the vague and romantic personalities of Jengis or Kublai tends to confirm the impression that these men were built upon a larger scale, and were at least as understanding and creative monarchs as either that flamboyant but egotistical figure Alexander the Great, or that raiser of political ghosts, that energetic but illiterate theologian, Charlemagne.



The missionary enterprises of the papacy in Mongolia ended in failure. Christianity was losing its persuasive power. The Mongols had no prejudice against Christianity; they evidently preferred it at first to Islam; but the missions that came to them were manifestly using the power in the great teachings of Jesus to advance the vast claims of the Pope to world dominion. Christianity so vitiated was not good enough for the Mongol mind. To make the empire of the Mongols part of the kingdom of God might have appealed to them; but not to make it a fief of a group of French and Italian priests, whose claims were as gigantic as their powers and outlook were feeble, who were now the creatures of the Emperor of Germany, now the nominees of the King of France, and now the victims of their own petty spites and vanities. In 1269 Kublai Khan sent a mission to the Pope with the evident intention of finding some common mode of action with Western Christendom. He asked that a hundred men of learning and ability should be sent to his court to establish an understanding. His mission found the Western world popeless, and engaged in one of those disputes about the succession that are so frequent in the history of the papacy. For two years there was no pope at all. When at last a pope was appointed, he despatched two Dominican friars to convert the greatest power in Asia to his rule! Those worthy men were

appalled by the length and hardship of the journey before them, and found an early excuse for abandoning the expedition.

But this abortive mission was only one of a number of attempts to communicate, and always they were feeble and feeble-spirited attempts, with nothing of the conquering fire of the earlier Christian missions. Innocent IV had already sent some Dominicans to Karakorum, and Saint Louis of France had also despatched missionaries and relics by way of Persia; Mangu Khan had{v2-117} numerous Nestorian Christians at his court, and subsequent papal envoys actually reached Pekin. We hear of the appointment of various legates and bishops to the East, but many of these seem to have lost themselves and perhaps their lives before they reached China. There was a papal legate in Pekin in 1346, but he seems to have been a mere papal diplomatist. With the downfall of the Mongolian (Yuan) dynasty (1368), the dwindling opportunity of the Christian missions passed altogether. The house of Yuan was followed by that of Ming, a strongly nationalist Chinese dynasty, at first very hostile to all foreigners. There may have been a massacre of the Christian missions. Until the later days of the Mings (1644) little more is heard of Christianity, whether Nestorian or Catholic, in China. Then a fresh and rather more successful attempt to propagate Catholic Christianity in China was made by the Jesuits, but this second missionary wave reached China by the sea.

In the year 1298 a naval battle occurred between the Genoese and the Venetians, in which the latter were defeated. Among the 7000 prisoners taken by the Genoese was a Venetian gentleman named Marco Polo, who had been a great traveller, and who was very generally believed by his neighbours to be given to exaggeration. He had taken part in that first mission to Kublai Khan, and had gone on when the two Dominicans turned back. While this Marco Polo was a prisoner in Genoa, he beguiled his tedium by talking of his travels to a certain writer named Rusticiano, who wrote them down. We will not enter here into the vexed question of the exact authenticity of Rusticiano's story—we do not certainly know in what language it was written—but there can be no doubt of the general truth of this remarkable narrative, which became enormously popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with all men of active intelligence. *The Travels of Marco Polo* is one of the great books of history. It opens this world of the thirteenth century, this century which saw the reign of Frederick II and the beginnings of the Inquisition, to our imaginations as no mere historian's chronicle can do. It led directly to the discovery of America.

It begins by telling of the journey of Marco's father, Nicolo Polo, and uncle, Maffeo Polo, to China. These two were Venetian{v2-118} merchants of standing, living in Constantinople, and somewhen about 1260 they went to the Crimea and thence to

Kazan; from that place they journeyed to Bokhara, and at Bokhara they fell in with a party of envoys from Kublai Khan in China to his brother Hulagu in Persia. These envoys pressed them to come on to the Great Khan, who at that time had never seen men of the "Latin" peoples. They went on; and it is clear they made a very favourable impression upon Kublai, and interested him greatly in the civilization of Christendom. They were made the bearers of that request for a hundred teachers and learned men, "intelligent men acquainted with the Seven Arts, able to enter into controversy and able clearly to prove to idolaters and other kinds of folk that the Law of Christ was best," to which we have just alluded. But when they returned Christendom was in a phase of confusion, and it was only after a delay of two years that they got their authorization to start for China again in the company of those two faint-hearted Dominicans. They took with them young Marco, and it is due to his presence and the boredom of his subsequent captivity at Genoa that this most interesting experience has been preserved to us.

The three Polos started by way of Palestine and not by the Crimea, as in the previous expedition. They had with them a gold tablet and other indications from the Great Khan that must have greatly facilitated their journey. The Great Khan had asked for some oil from the lamp that burns in the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; and so thither they first went, and then by way of Cilicia into Armenia. They went thus far north because the Sultan of Egypt was raiding the Ilkhan domains at this time. Thence they came by way of Mesopotamia to Ormuz on the Persian Gulf, as if they contemplated a sea voyage. At Ormuz they met merchants from India. For some reason they did not take ship, but instead turned northward through the Persian deserts, and so by way of Balkh over the Pamir to Kashgar, and by way of Kotan and the Lob Nor (so following in the footsteps of Yuan Chwang) into the Hwangho Valley and on to Pekin. Pekin Polo calls "Cambulac"; Northern China, "Cathay" (= Khitan); and Southern China of the former Sung dynasty, "Manzi." At Pekin was the Great Khan, and they were hospitably entertained. Marco particularly pleased Kublai; he was young and clever, and it is clear he had mastered the Tartar language very thoroughly. He was given an official position and sent on several missions, chiefly in South-west China. The tale he had to tell of vast stretches of smiling and prosperous country, "all the way excellent hostelries for travellers," and "fine vineyards, fields, and gardens," of "many abbeys" of Buddhist monks, of manufactures of "cloth of silk and gold and many fine taffetas," a "constant succession of cities and boroughs," and so on, first roused the incredulity and then fired the imagination of all Europe. He told of Burmah, and of its great armies with hundreds of elephants, and how these animals were defeated by the Mongol bowmen, and also of the Mongol conquest of Pegu. He told of Japan, and greatly

exaggerated the amount of gold in that country. And, still more wonderful, he told of Christians and Christian rulers in China, and of a certain “Prester John,” John the Priest, who was the “king” of a Christian people. Those people he had not seen. Apparently they were a tribe of Nestorian Tartars in Mongolia. An understandable excitement probably made Rusticiano over-emphasize what must have seemed to him the greatest marvel of the whole story, and Prester John became one of the most stimulating legends of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It encouraged European enterprise enormously to think that far away in China was a community of their co-religionists, presumably ready to welcome and assist them. For three years Marco ruled the city of Yang-chow as governor, and he probably impressed the Chinese inhabitants as being very little more of a foreigner than any Tartar would have been. He may also have been sent on a mission to India. Chinese records mention a certain Polo attached to the imperial council in 1277, a very valuable confirmation of the general truth of the Polo story.

The Polos had taken about three and a half years to get to China. They stayed there upwards of sixteen. Then they began to feel homesick. They were the protégés of Kublai, and possibly they felt that his favours roused a certain envy that might have disagreeable results after his death. They sought his permission to return. For a time he refused it, and then an opportunity occurred. Argon, the Ilkhan monarch of Persia, the grandson of Hulagu, Kublai’s brother, had lost his Mongol wife, and on her deathbed had promised not to wed any other woman but a Mongol of her own tribe. He sent ambassadors to Peking, and a suitable princess was selected, a girl of seventeen. To spare her the fatigues of the caravan route, it was decided to send her by sea with a suitable escort. The “Barons” in charge of her asked for the company of the Polos because these latter were experienced travellers and sage men, and the Polos snatched at this opportunity of getting homeward. The expedition sailed from some port on the east of South China; they stayed long in Sumatra and South India, and they reached Persia after a voyage of two years. They delivered the young lady safely to Argon’s successor—for Argon was dead—and she married Argon’s son. The Polos then went by Tabriz to Trebizond, sailed to Constantinople, and got back to Venice about 1295. It is related that the returned travellers, dressed in Tartar garb, were refused admission to their own house. It was some time before they could establish their identity. Many people who admitted that, were still inclined to look askance at them as shabby wanderers; and, in order to dispel such doubts, they gave a great feast, and when it was at its height they had their old padded suits brought to them, dismissed the servants, and then ripped open these garments, whereupon an incredible display of “rubies, sapphires, carbuncles, emeralds, and diamonds”

poured out before the dazzled company. Even after this, Marco's accounts of the size and population of China were received with much furtive mockery. The wits nicknamed him *Il Milione*, because he was always talking of millions of people and millions of ducats.

Such was the story that raised eyebrows first in Venice and then throughout the Western world. The European literature, and especially the European romance of the fifteenth century, echoes with the names in Marco Polo's story, with Cathay and Cambulac and the like.

#### **§ 4**

These travels of Marco Polo were only the beginning of a very considerable intercourse. That intercourse was to bring many revolutionary ideas and many revolutionary things to Europe, including a greatly extended use of paper and printing from blocks, the almost equally revolutionary use of gunpowder in warfare, and the mariner's compass which was to release the European shipping from navigation by coasting. The popular imagination has always been disposed to ascribe every such striking result to Marco Polo. He has become the type and symbol for all such interchanges. As a matter of fact, there is no evidence that he had any share in these three importations. There were many mute Marco Polos who never met their Rusticianos, and history has not preserved their names. Before we go on, however, to describe the great widening of the mental horizons of Europe that was now beginning, and to which this book of travels was to contribute very materially, it will be convenient first to note a curious side consequence of the great Mongol conquests, the appearance of the Ottoman Turks upon the Dardanelles, and next to state in general terms the breaking up and development of the several parts of the empire of Jengis Khan.

The Ottoman Turks were a little band of fugitives who fled southwesterly before the first invasion of Western Turkestan by Jengis. They made their long way from Central Asia, over deserts and mountains and through alien populations, seeking some new lands in which they might settle. "A small band of alien herdsmen," says Sir Mark Sykes, "wandering unchecked through crusades and counter-crusades, principalities, empires, and states. Where they camped, how they moved and preserved their flocks and herds, where they found pasture, how they made their peace with the various chiefs through whose territories they passed, are questions which one may well ask in wonder."

They found a resting-place at last and kindred and congenial neighbours on the tablelands of Asia Minor among the Seljuk Turks. Most of this country, the modern

Anatolia, was now largely Turkish in speech and Moslem in religion, except that there was a considerable proportion of Greeks, Jews, and Armenians in the town populations. No doubt the various strains of Hittite, Phrygian, Trojan, Lydian, Ionian Greek, Cimmerian, Galatian, and Italian (from the Pergamus times) still flowed in the blood of the people, but they had long since forgotten these ancestral elements. They were indeed much the same blend of ancient Mediterranean dark-whites, Nordic Aryans, Semites and Mongolians as were the inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula, but they believed themselves to be a pure Turanian race, and altogether superior to the Christians on the other side of the Bosphorus.

Gradually the Ottoman Turks became important, and at last dominant among the small principalities into which the Seljuk empire, the empire of "Roum," had fallen. Their relations with the dwindling empire of Constantinople remained for some centuries tolerantly hostile. They made no attack upon the Bosphorus, but they got a footing in Europe at the Dardanelles, and, using this route, the route of Xerxes and not the route of Darius, they pushed their way steadily into Macedonia, Epirus, Illyria, Yugo-Slavia, and Bulgaria. In the Serbs (Yugo-Slavs) and Bulgarians the Turks found people very like themselves in culture and, though neither side recognized it, probably very similar in racial admixture, with a little less of the dark Mediterranean and Mongolian strains than the Turks and a trifle more of the Nordic element. But these Balkan peoples were Christians, and bitterly divided among themselves. The Turks on the other hand spoke one language; they had a greater sense of unity, they had the Moslem habits of temperance and frugality, and they were on the whole better soldiers. They converted what they could of the conquered people to Islam; the Christians they disarmed, and conferred upon them the monopoly of tax-paying. Gradually the Ottoman princes consolidated an empire that reached from the Taurus mountains in the east to Hungary and Roumania in the west. Adrianople became their chief city. They surrounded the shrunken empire of Constantinople on every side.

The Ottomans organized a standing military force, the Janissaries, rather on the lines of the Mamelukes who dominated Egypt. "These troops were formed of levies of Christian youths to the extent of one thousand per annum, who were affiliated to the Bektashi order of dervishes, and though at first not obliged to embrace Islam, were one and all strongly imbued with the mystic and fraternal ideas of the confraternity to which they were attached. Highly paid, well disciplined, a close and jealous secret society, the Janissaries provided the newly formed Ottoman state with a patriotic force of trained infantry soldiers, which, in an age of light cavalry and hired companies of mercenaries, was an invaluable asset....[\[363\]](#)



“The relations between the Ottoman Sultans and the Emperors has been singular in the annals of Moslem and Christian states. The Turks had been involved in the family and dynastic quarrels of the Imperial City, were bound by ties of blood to the ruling families, frequently supplied troops for the defence of Constantinople, and on occasion hired parts of its garrison to assist them in their various campaigns; the sons of the Emperors and Byzantine statesmen even accompanied the Turkish forces in the field, yet the Ottomans never ceased to annex Imperial territories and cities both in Asia and Thrace. This curious intercourse between the House of Osman and the Imperial government had a profound effect on both institutions; the Greeks grew more and more debased and demoralized by the shifts and tricks that their military weakness obliged them to adopt towards their neighbours, the Turks were corrupted by the alien atmosphere of intrigue and treachery which crept into their domestic life. Fratricide and parricide, the two crimes which most frequently stained the annals of the Imperial Palace, eventually formed a part of the policy of the Ottoman dynasty. One of the sons of Murad I embarked on an intrigue with Andronicus, the son of the Greek Emperor, to murder their respective fathers....

“The Byzantine found it more easy to negotiate with the Ottoman Pasha than with the Pope. For years the Turks and Byzantines had intermarried, and hunted in couples in strange by-paths of diplomacy. The Ottoman had played the Bulgar and the Serb of Europe against the Emperor, just as the Emperor had played the Asiatic Amir against the Sultan; the Greek and Turkish Royal Princes had mutually agreed to hold each other’s rivals as prisoners and hostages; in fact, Turk and Byzantine policy had so intertwined that it is difficult to say whether the Turks regarded the Greeks as their allies, enemies, or subjects, or whether the Greeks looked upon the Turks as their tyrants, destroyers, or protectors....”[\[364\]](#)

It was in 1453, under the Ottoman Sultan, Muhammad II, that Constantinople at last fell to the Moslems. He attacked it from the European side, and with a great power of artillery. The Greek Emperor was killed, and there was much looting and massacre. The great church of Saint Sophia which Justinian the Great had built (532) was plundered of its treasures and turned at once into a mosque. This event sent a wave of excitement throughout Europe, and an attempt was made to organize a crusade, but the days of the crusades were past.



Says Sir Mark Sykes: "To the Turks the capture of Constantinople was a crowning mercy and yet a fatal blow. Constantinople had been the tutor and polisher of the Turks. So long as the Ottomans could draw science, learning, philosophy, art, and tolerance from a living fountain of civilization in the heart of their dominions, so long had the Ottomans not only brute force, but intellectual power. So long as the Ottoman Empire had in Constantinople a free port, a market, a centre of world finance, a pool of gold, an exchange, so long did the Ottomans never lack for money and financial support. Muhammad was a great statesman, the moment he entered Constantinople he endeavoured to stay the damage his ambition had done; he supported the patriarch, he conciliated the Greeks, he did all he could to continue Constantinople the city of the Emperors ... but the fatal step had been taken; Constantinople as the city of the Sultans was Constantinople no more; the markets died away, the culture and civilization fled, the complex finance faded from sight; and the Turks had lost their governors and their support. On the other hand, the corruptions of Byzantium remained, the bureaucracy, the eunuchs, the palace guards, the spies, the bribers, go-betweens—all these the Ottomans took over, and all these

survived in luxuriant life. The Turks, in taking Stambul, let slip a treasure and gained a pestilence....”

Muhammad’s ambition was not sated by the capture of Constantinople. He set his eyes also upon Rome. He captured and looted the Italian town of Otranto, and it is probable that a very vigorous and perhaps successful attempt to conquer Italy—for the peninsula was divided against itself—was averted only by his death (1481). His sons engaged in fratricidal strife. Under Bayezid II (1481-1512), his successor, war was carried into Poland, and most of Greece was conquered. Selim (1512-1520), the son of Bayezid, extended the Ottoman power over Armenia and conquered Egypt. In Egypt, the last Abbasid Caliph was living under the protection of the Mameluke Sultan—for the Fatimite caliphate was a thing of the past. Selim bought the title of Caliph from this last degenerate Abbasid, and acquired the sacred banner and other relics of the Prophet. So the Ottoman Sultan became also Caliph of all Islam. Selim was followed by Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), who conquered Bagdad in the east and the greater part of Hungary in the west, and very nearly captured Vienna. His fleets also took Algiers, and inflicted a number of reverses upon the Venetians. In most of his warfare with the empire he was in alliance with the French. Under him the Ottoman power reached its zenith.

## § 5

Let us now very briefly run over the subsequent development of the main masses of the empire of the Great Khan. In no case{v2-127} did Christianity succeed in capturing the imagination of these Mongol states. Christianity was in a phase of moral and intellectual insolvency, without any collective faith, energy, or honour; we have told of the wretched brace of timid Dominicans which was the Pope’s reply to the appeal of Kublai Khan, and we have noted the general failure of the overland mission of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. That apostolic passion that could win whole nations to the Kingdom of Heaven was dead in the church.

In 1305, as we have told, the Pope became the kept pontiff of the French king. All the craft and policy of the Popes of the thirteenth century to oust the Emperor from Italy had only served to let in the French to replace him. From 1305 to 1377 the Popes remained at Avignon; and such slight missionary effort as they made was merely a part of the strategy of Western European politics.[\[365\]](#) In 1377 the Pope Gregory XI did indeed re-enter Rome and die there, but the French cardinals split off from the others at the election of his successor, and two Popes were elected, one at Avignon and one at Rome. This split, the Great Schism, lasted from 1378 to 1418. Each Pope cursed the other, and put all his supporters under an interdict. Such was the state of Christianity,

and such were now the custodians of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. All Asia was white unto harvest, but there was no effort to reap it.

When at last the church was reunited and missionary energy returned with the foundation of the order of the Jesuits, the days of opportunity were over. The possibility of a world-wide moral unification of East and West through Christianity had passed away. The Mongols in China and Central Asia turned to Buddhism; in South Russia, Western Turkestan, and the Ilkhan Empire they embraced Islam.

#### **§ 5A**

In China the Mongols were already saturated with Chinese civilization by the time of Kublai. After 1280 the Chinese annals treat Kublai as a Chinese monarch, the founder of the Yuan dynasty (1280-1368). This Mongol dynasty was finally over-thrown{v2-128} by a Chinese nationalist movement which set up the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), a cultivated and artistic line of emperors, ruling until a northern people, the Manchus, who were the same as the Kin whom Jengis had overthrown, conquered China and established a dynasty which gave way only to a native republican form of government in 1912.

It was the Manchus who obliged the Chinese to wear pig-tails as a mark of submission. The pigtailed Chinaman is quite a recent, and now a vanished figure in history.

#### **§ 5B**

In the Pamirs, in much of Eastern and Western Turkestan, and to the north, the Mongols dropped back towards the tribal conditions from which they had been lifted by Jengis. It is possible to trace the dwindling succession of many of the small Kans who became independent during this period, almost down to the present time. The Kalmuks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries founded a considerable empire, but dynastic troubles broke it up before it had extended its power beyond Central Asia. The Chinese recovered Eastern Turkestan from them about 1757.

Tibet was more and more closely linked with China, and became the great home of Buddhism and Buddhist monasticism.

Over most of the area of Western Central Asia and Persia and Mesopotamia, the ancient distinction of nomad and settled population remains to this day. The townsmen despise and cheat the nomads, the nomads ill-treat and despise the townfolk.

#### **§ 5C**

The Mongols of the great realm of Kipchak remained nomadic, and grazed their stock across the wide plains of South Russia and Western Asia adjacent to Russia. They became not very devout Moslems, retaining many traces of their earlier barbaric Shamanism. Their chief Khan was the Khan of the Golden Horde. To the west, over large tracts of open country, and more particularly in what is now known as Ukraina, the old Scythian population, Slavs with a Mongol admixture, reverted to a similar nomadic life. These Christian nomads, the Cossacks, formed a sort of frontier screen against the Tartars, and their free and adventurous life was so attractive to the peasants of Poland and Lithuania that severe laws had to be passed to prevent a vast migration from the ploughlands to the steppes. The serf-owning landlords of Poland regarded the Cossacks with considerable hostility on this account, and war was as frequent between the Polish chivalry and the Cossacks as it was between the latter and the Tartars. [\[366\]](#)

In the empire of Kipchak, as in Turkestan almost up to the present time, while the nomads roamed over wide areas, a number of towns and cultivated regions sustained a settled population which usually paid tribute to the nomad Khan. In such towns as Kieff, Moscow, and the like, the pre-Mongol, Christian town life went on under Russian dukes or Tartar governors, who collected the tribute for the Khan of the Golden Horde. The Grand Duke of Moscow gained the confidence of the Khan, and gradually, under his authority, obtained an ascendancy over many of his fellow tributaries. In the fifteenth century, under its grand duke, Ivan III, Ivan the Great (1462-1505), Moscow threw off its Mongol allegiance and refused to pay tribute any longer (1480). The successors of Constantine no longer reigned in Constantinople, and Ivan took possession of the Byzantine double-headed eagle for his arms. He claimed to be the heir to Byzantium because of his marriage (1472) with Zoe Palæologus of the imperial line. This ambitious grand dukedom of Moscow assailed and subjugated the ancient Northman trading republic of Novgorod to the north, and so the foundations of the modern Russian Empire were laid and a link with the mercantile life of the Baltic established. Ivan III did not, however, carry his claim to be the heir of the Christian rulers of Constantinople to the extent of assuming the imperial title. This step was taken by his grandson, Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible, because of his insane cruelties; 1533-1584). Although the ruler of Moscow thus came to be called Tsar (Cæsar), his tradition was in many respects Tartar rather than European; he was autocratic after the unlimited Asiatic pattern, and the form of Christianity he affected was the Eastern, court-ruled, "orthodox" form, which had reached Russia long before the Mongol conquest, by means of Bulgarian missionaries from Constantinople.

To the west of the domains of Kipchak, outside the range of Mongol rule, a second centre of Slav consolidation had been set up during the tenth and eleventh centuries in Poland. The Mongol wave had washed over Poland, but had never subjugated it. Poland was not “orthodox,” but Roman Catholic in religion; it used the Latin alphabet instead of the strange Russian letters, and its monarch never assumed an absolute independence of the Emperor. Poland was in fact in its origins an outlying part of Christendom and of the Holy Empire; Russia never was anything of the sort.

## **§ 5D**

The nature and development of the empire of the Ilkhans in Persia, Mesopotamia, and Syria is perhaps the most interesting of all the stories of these Mongol powers, because in this region nomadism really did attempt, and really did to a very considerable degree succeed in its attempt to stamp a settled civilized system out of existence. When Jengis Khan first invaded China, we are told that there was a serious discussion among the Mongol chiefs whether all the towns and settled populations should not be destroyed. To these simple practitioners of the open-air life the settled populations seemed corrupt, crowded, vicious, effeminate, dangerous, and incomprehensible; a detestable human efflorescence upon what would otherwise have been good pasture. They had no use whatever for the towns. The early Franks and the Anglo-Saxon conquerors of South Britain had much the same feeling towards townsmen. But it was only under Hulagu in Mesopotamia that these ideas seem to have been embodied in a deliberate policy. The Mongols here did not only burn and massacre; they destroyed the irrigation system that had endured for at least eight thousand years, and with that the mother civilization of all the Western world came to an end. Since the days of the priest-kings of Sumeria there had been a continuous cultivation in these fertile regions, an accumulation of tradition, a great population, a succession of busy cities, Eridu, Nippur, Babylon, Nineveh, Ctesiphon, Bagdad. Now the fertility ceased. Mesopotamia became a land of ruins and desolation, through which great waters ran to waste, or overflowed their banks to make malarious swamps. Later on Mosul and Bagdad revived feebly as second-rate towns....



But for the defeat and death of Hulagu's general Kitboga in Palestine (1260), the same fate might have overtaken Egypt. But Egypt was now a Turkish sultanate; it was dominated by a body of soldiers, the Mamelukes, whose ranks, like those of their imitators, the Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire, were recruited and kept vigorous by the purchase and training of boy slaves. A capable Sultan such men would obey; a weak or evil one they would replace. Under this ascendancy Egypt remained an independent power until 1517, when it fell to the Ottoman Turks.

The first destructive vigour of Hulagu's Mongols soon subsided, but in the fifteenth century a last tornado of nomadism arose in Western Turkestan under the leadership of a certain Timur the Lame, or Timurlane. He was descended in the female line from Jengis Khan. He established himself in Samarkand, and spread his authority over Kipchak (Turkestan to South Russia), Siberia, and southward as far as the Indus. He assumed the title of Great Khan in 1369. He was a nomad of the savage school, and he created an empire of desolation from North India to Syria. Pyramids of skulls were his particular architectural fancy; after the storming of Ispahan he made one of 70,000. His ambition was to restore the empire of Jengis Khan as he conceived it, a project in which he completely failed. He spread destruction far and wide; the Ottoman Turks—it was before the taking of Constantinople and their days of greatness—and Egypt paid him tribute; the Punjab he devastated; and Delhi surrendered to him. After Delhi had surrendered, however, he made a frightful massacre of its inhabitants. At the time of his death (1405) very little remained to witness to his power but a name of horror, ruins, and desolated countries, and a shrunken and impoverished domain in Persia.

The dynasty founded by Timur in Persia was extinguished by another Turkoman horde fifty years later.{v2-133}