

STORIES FROM GERMAN HISTORY

FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO THE YEAR 1648

BY
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ASSISTANT MISTRESS GILL'S HIGH SCHOOL, SKIPTON-ON-CLAYTON

*"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power."*
TENNYSON



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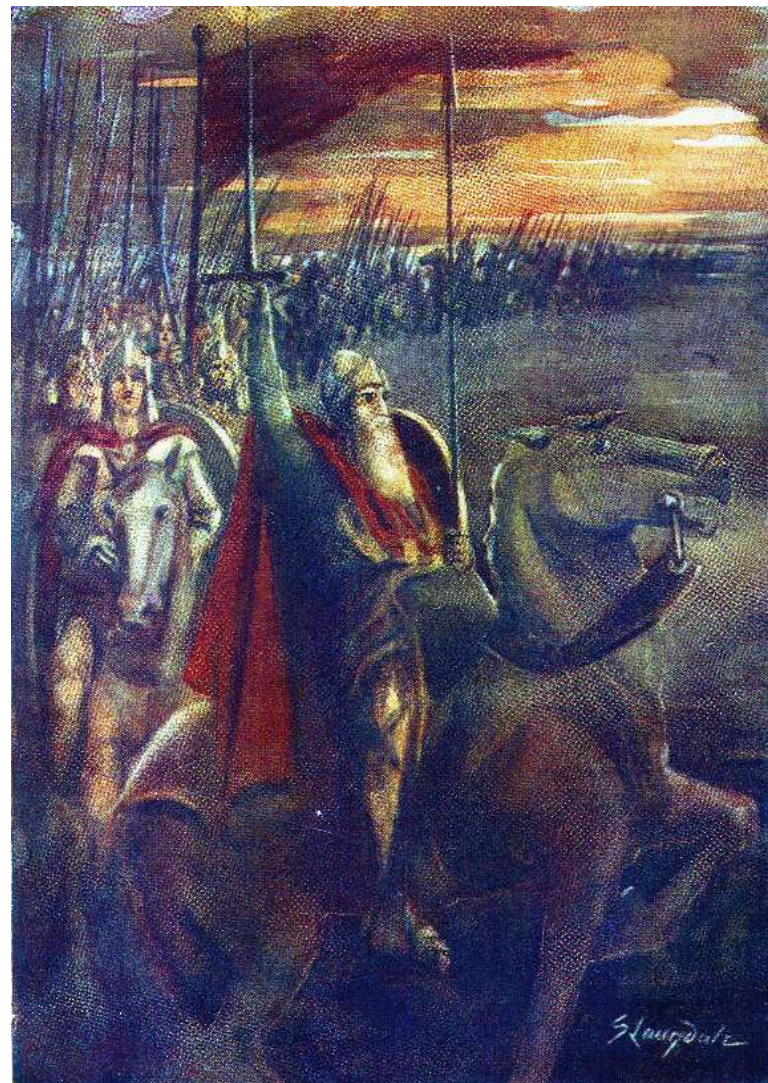
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CHARLEMAGNE

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CHAPTER I

THE ANCIENT GERMANS AND THEIR STRUGGLE WITH ROME

I

The name of Julius Caesar, warrior and conqueror, has been renowned through the ages, and its fame has suffered no eclipse to this day. In the earlier part of the century before the birth of Jesus Christ, Cesar reduced to submission a large part of Europe, securely established the foundations of the Roman Empire, and was penetrating into Asia and North Africa when he was struck down in the year 44 B.C. After his death his nephew, the Emperor Augustus, who succeeded him, sent governors to rule all those broad lands that had become subject to Rome.

Augustus was still Emperor when Jesus Christ was born. The country of the Jews formed part of his realm, and he it was who took that census of his people which caused Joseph and Mary to journey to Bethlehem. One of the governors whom Augustus sent to rule in Palestine was Pontius Pilate, the judge who delivered Christ to suffer death at the hands of the Jews.

Now the Romans were ever a warlike and ambitious race, and they sought to extend the empire won by Julius Caesar, never resting from their labour of conquest, never seeking content in the blessings of peace. And having subdued many tribes in Gaul, they found themselves confronted by the race to which they gave the name of Germans.

The territory of the Germans was large, extending from the frozen Baltic and the North Sea southward to the Danube,

and from the Rhine to the Vistula and even beyond, into the land which we now call Russia.

Impenetrable forests covered the land; huge oak, pine, and beech trees formed giant barriers which were rendered the more mysterious by the dense fog and mist peculiar to that damp, cold country. And through the gloomy forests, underneath the giant trees, flowed great rivers, with here and there waterfalls and torrents which gave sound and life to the vast wilderness. But in the desolate tracts that lay far remote from these large rivers, and from the cultivated lands, the country was mainly swamp where black mud oozed from moss and rushes, and silence brooded over the misty scene.

Imagination could conceive no land more desolate than the grey, cold forests of ancient Germany. Wolves and big brown bears lurked in the shadows, huge wild oxen emerged to drink at the rivers, fierce boars multiplied undisturbed under the cover, and in the air eagle and falcon wheeled and screamed above their nests among the rocks.

The Germans who inhabited this land were tall and very powerfully built, they had bright blue eyes, fair complexions and flaxen hair, which the freemen wore uncut and flowing loosely on the shoulders.

The clothing of both sexes was very simple, consisting of a sleeveless woollen tunic which covered only the body, leaving arms and legs entirely unprotected. In the winter they also wore a cloak of wool, fastened with a brooch, or, more simply, with a sharp spike of thorn. In some parts of the country, in place of the woollen garments, the men wore skins of animals, so arranged that the grinning tusks of the boar or the horns of the wild ox rested on the head and enhanced the fierceness of the gleaming eyes beneath.

The Germans did not dwell in numbers, side by side in towns and villages, but each chose a lonely stream and meadow, and built a single farm; sometimes a tiny hamlet of two or three such dwellings would appear.

Their houses were primitive huts of mud and timber, thatched with straw or rushes, and surrounded by a palisade of tree trunks or a hedge of thorn, protection alike from beast and than.

Over the doorway and at the gates hung antlers of deer, horses' skulls or ox-horns, trophies of the forest hunting, supposed to ward off from the dwelling evil spirits who might send disease on, man or beast, blight on crops, or defeat in war and council.

The interior of the dwelling of one large room, at the further end of which a fire burned under the large cauldron hanging from a chain. Chimney or window there was none. The smoke found a way through a small hole in the roof, or wound in lazy clouds around the blackened timbers of the ceiling. Seats for the master and his guests were placed beside the hearth, and rough benches round the walls served for the family and slaves.

Here they lived, eating the wild berries, roots, and herbs of the forest, the flesh of wild animals and the products of their fields. For they cultivated oats and barley, and their wealth consisted of large flocks of sheep, small, stunted cattle, and swift, shaggy ponies, small in size but hardy and strong.

War was the ancient Germans' joy. They knew no fear, and in the heat of battle they would fling aside their shields, rushing unprotected on the foe. They fought with sword and lance, and happy was the youth who, perfected in the use of weapons, received publicly the arms of a full-grown man, and henceforth took his place beside his father in the fight. Even the women would not be left at home in time of war, but accompanied their husbands, shouting encouragement to the valiant, urging on the lingerer with taunts and screaming defiance at the foe.

In times of peace the men and boys were occupied in hunting bear and boar, wolf and deer. These furnished them

with skins for clothes and bedding, horns which they bound with silver and used as drinking-vessels, and flesh to eat.

The care of the household and children, together with the cultivation of crops, was left in the hands of the women, who also superintended the work of the slaves; the latter farmed the land for their lords, retaining a small proportion of the products for their own use.

The Germans were brave in war, faithful to their lords and kinsmen, to their wife and family, honest in dealing, and so truthful that even their enemies declared of them that their word was as good as an oath. Their love of freedom was intense and their hospitality unbounded. To no guest was shelter ever refused, and if the father of the family found himself unable to offer what his guest desired, he would speed him on his way with parting gifts, or lead him in safety to another farm, where he would be gladly received and furnished with the best that the household could afford.

The defects of the German character were great laziness and a passion for gambling and strong drink.

wine was unknown except to the few who lived near the navigable rivers and could exchange their goods for the precious casks that came from sunnier lands, for the German climate, generally speaking, was too raw and cold for the cultivation of the vine.

But from their own grain and heather-honey they brewed strong beer and heady mead. It was thought no shame for warriors and huntsmen, when their tasks were done, to throw themselves upon the bearskins and spend days and nights in one long riot of excess. Then it was that tongues were loosened, voices rose hoarse and angry in quarrel, old feuds broke forth once more, and only too often blood was shed.

At their banquets, when these did not degenerate into orgies of drunkenness, the Germans deliberated questions of war and government, or reconciled foes and adjusted differences. All matters of importance were discussed twice,

first over the drinking-horn, when the warriors met in the evening, and once more in the morning, when, after a night's sleep, sober reason and judgment crept forth from their hiding-places into the light of day. Horse-racing and dice-throwing the Germans loved so dearly that nothing was too sacred to be staked upon them. In the heat of excitement, cattle and horses, field and house, stores and weapons were heedlessly wagered. When these were gone, the gambler staked his slaves, his children and his wife, and, when nothing else remained, would even pledge his own personal freedom. Many a mighty warrior shore off the golden locks, the glory of the freeman, and became the chattel of a weaker man as the result of one night's drinking and one hour with the dice-box. His very fatherland was sacrificed, for slaves were frequently sold away into foreign lands.

The majority of the slaves who served the German freemen were, however, prisoners taken in battle or children of such prisoners. They were chattels that could be bought or sold at will, but, as they were treated with kindness, their state was not one of misery. They were not permitted to bear arms or serve in war, but followed the despised pursuit of agriculture, under the superintendence of the mistress of the house. The German women were treated with respect. They were believed to possess something of divinity within their natures, and to be endowed by the gods with wondrous gifts of prophecy and second sight.

Men seldom married before thirty or women before twenty years of age, and the bride brought no dowry to her husband, but, on the contrary, was purchased from her relatives by gifts of cattle or land. The bridegroom then presented to her for her own use a fully equipped charger, a shield and a spear, the signs of her future companionship in war and in the chase.

Not only did she rule in house and field, superintending the work of slaves, the bringing up of children, and the care of the sick, but the German wife was welcomed to

the council, and her advice on public matters listened to with respect. Even to the fiercest fight she followed, mounted on her charger, joining in the wild battle-songs which struck such dismay into the hearts of foes, encouraging her husband and her sons to deeds of valour and tending their wounds.



AN ANCIENT GERMAN FAMILY.

Every freeman capable of bearing arms was summoned to the fight, and the bravest and most experienced warrior was selected as leader. Warlike youths gathered round him to form his household guard, and, placing their hands between his, would swear to be his men come weal come woe. They

marched to war behind him, singing a rousing battle-chant, their shields held up before their lips to render the sound more terrible, then with wild and desperate cries flung themselves upon the foe. Leaders and men vied with each other in the accomplishment of heroic deeds. If the leader fell, his youthful band of followers fought until death. To return from the battle where the chief had fallen was a deed of shame that would stain and darken all the remaining years of life, and there was no young warrior but would sooner choose death upon the field. For if he lived he must wander alone into exile, since return to his home would result in his seizure by his own tribe, who would bind him to a tree and leave him to perish, or cast him into one of the bottomless morasses to die the death of the coward and the craven.

All the freemen possessed the right of attending the gatherings of their council, which met upon each new moon or full moon, and there deliberated on all matters that concerned the welfare of the tribe. The German noblemen and leaders were those distinguished for their wealth of possessions or courage in war and the hunt, and it was they who summoned the council of freemen.

The meeting-place was in the open air, usually under the shadow of some ancient tree. All came armed, since the bearing of arms was the sign of freedom, and the warriors expressed their approval by a simultaneous clash of sword and shield. Dissent was shown by a murmur. When war was declared, a messenger would run from farm to farm bearing an arrow or a short white staff, at the sight of which all hastened to the appointed meeting-place.

When quarrels arose between individuals, they were decided by single combat before witnesses. All other misdeeds, such as theft or murder, could be settled by a fine.

Although the German tribes hated the restraint of social life to such a degree that they would not live in towns nor even in villages, they recognized that some sort of unity was necessary for mutual protection and defence. So several

farms would join to form a hamlet, the occupants owning the land in common, and casting lots each year to decide who should till the different fields. They worked the land till it became unfruitful, when they allowed it to lie fallow for a time. If the community grew too large for the land, young families would either travel further afield or else clear more ground round the homestead by chopping down the trees or simply setting them on fire.

Several hamlets formed a district, and several districts formed a tribe. The German nation, if we may call it so, consisted of numerous tribes who were entirely independent, often quarrelling and waging war on each other, but similar in customs, in organization and religion.

II

The religion of the Germans was a deification of the various forces of nature, and was similar to, although not identical with, the faith of the Norsemen. They worshipped many gods, but made neither images nor idols.

Their universe consisted of the home of the giants; the home of the dead, a dark and misty region presided over by the awful goddess Hela, whither passed the souls of those who did not fall in battle; and the earth, which was supported in the middle region by a mighty ash-tree. The earth was flat, and round it coiled a great serpent, which men call the sea. Sometimes the serpent stretched itself and crawled over part of the land, and then there were floods.

Above the world hung the rainbow, with gates at each end where it touched the earth; these were guarded by the gods, so the tribes believed. At the top was Valhalla, abode of the immortals.

The father of the gods was Woden, or Odin, who corresponds to the Jupiter of the Romans and Zeus of the

Greeks. He was a mighty, ancient man with one eye, since he was God of the Sun, and a long flowing beard. He wore a blue mantle covered with stars. Two ravens perched on his shoulders, who took long flights each day, and, returning at even, whispered in his ears all that took place on the earth. Two fierce wolves lay at his feet, who were his constant companions, and whom he fed with wild boars' flesh.

Sometimes, mounted on his white steed, Odin would descend into the battle in order to help his chosen heroes. At such times he was clad in shining helmet and golden breastplate. His wolves raced at his side and threw themselves upon the bodies of the dead. His daughters, the Valkyries, gigantic war-maidens, were present at each fight, singling out the warriors who were 'fey' or doomed to death. At other times Father Odin would draw his cloak around him, the hood deep over his face, and would descend invisible to the huts of mortal men, watching all their actions and proving good and bad. With some he left his blessing, but to those whose deeds were evil he meted out fitting punishment, especially to those who had shut the door against wanderers and strangers.

Sometimes he rushed through the air as the Wild Huntsman, with stampede of thundering horses' hoofs and clamour of fierce wolves.

He it was who invented runes, mystic symbols carved on wood by which the Germans first began to express their thoughts in writing. The word 'rune' is probably derived from an ancient verb which means 'to whisper,' for the records thus preserved were chiefly wondrous names of might and spells to guard from harm, such as men speak with bated breath. Odin was called the All-Father. He guided the fates of men and of battles, ruled the world, granted victory, and received heroes who had fallen in war into his Valhalla, or Hall of the Slain. Here they spent a happy eternity, fighting all the day, their wounds being healed at sunset to enable them to spend the night in feasting and carousing.

The day that was kept sacred to his worship was Wodensday, or Wednesday. Frigga, the wife of Odin, dwelt beside him on his throne, guiding the fates of mortals in the world. She was the protectress of domestic life, and at Christmas descended to the homes of men, spindle in hand, to examine the work of housewives and reward industry or punish sloth according to desert.

The German tribes paid homage to the thunder in the person of Thor, the red-bearded son of Odin, who rumbled through the clouds in a chariot drawn by goats, and struck lightning from them with a blow of his stone hammer. He was much revered by the farmer, since the fruitful rain was his gift.

Tiw, the war-god, was invoked in the wild chants which the tribes sang as they marched into battle, and their gratitude for victory was expressed in stately dances to his honour after the field was won.

The blessings of spring were personified in the goddess Ostara, whose festival of Easter, so dear to the Germans after the long cold winters in the forest, is still called after her name. Offerings of eggs were made to Ostara because she was goddess of the beginning of things, and to this day her favourite animal the hare is said to bring the Easter eggs to the little children of Germany.

But dearest of all to those who dwelt in the cold, dark forests was Balder, the God of Light, son of Odin the sun-god, the beloved of the immortals.

His mother Frigga loved him so tenderly that she required an oath of allegiance to him from all things on the earth. Only the mistletoe she forgot when she visited each one. And the evil God of Fire, Loki the Cruel, put an arrow of the fatal twig into the hand of Balder's blind brother Roder, so that he shot unknowingly, and killed his brother the Light, and darkness, which had never been known before, now passes freely over the earth.

Beside these forces of nature, the ancient Germans saw a host of supernatural beings who peopled this world. Dwarfs dwelt in the mountains, guarding mines of red gold, nymphs hid in the streams and rivers, and mischievous elves played tricks on mortals who had incurred their displeasure.

No temples were erected in honour of these gods, for they seemed to the Germans too sublime to dwell in temples made with human hands, but the worshippers met together in groves and under trees, sacrificing animals and even human captives, and praying to their divinities for help. A firm belief in a future life formed part of the Germans' creed, for they thought that Odin would receive into Valhalla the warriors who fell bravely in battle, only the cowards and the sinful being shut out from the joys of the gods, to wander through eternity in the dark, cold realm of Hela under the middle-earth.

III

Such were the German tribes whom the great Julius Caesar encountered on his victorious march in the year 55 B. C., when he crossed the Rhine by a bridge of boats, and spent eighteen days in Germany, ravaging and burning the farms of the inhabitants.

Nor was this the first encounter between the two peoples, for already during nearly fifty years armies had met with doubtful success in their struggles with these fierce and resolute barbarians. They were ambitious to bring into subjection so hardy a race, being amazed at their wild courage in battle; for not only had the German warriors fought to the death, but their wives had defended the camps, and, when all was lost, had slain their children and themselves rather than fall into the hands of the foe. Last of all, the Romans had had to fight the very dogs that guarded the bodies of their masters before they could call the field their own.

It is not strange that such a nation won the admiration of Julius Caesar and his countrymen. They induced German

warriors to serve with the Romans, the practice became common, and in the end German tribesmen formed the flower of the Roman army.

This, however, is to anticipate later history. In the meantime Julius Caesar returned to Rome to oppose Pompey and his other enemies there, and the German tribes remained unmolested until the reign of the Emperor Augustus, who sent his stepson Drusus with mighty armies to bring them under his sway.

Drusus made three successful expeditions into the heart of Germany, cut a canal to connect the Rhine and the Yssel, sailed along the coast of the North Sea, and built no fewer than fifty fortresses along the banks of the River Rhine.

Had he lived long, he would no doubt have conquered a considerable part of Germany, but as he was preparing to cross the River Elbe we are told that a gigantic woman of stern and menacing aspect suddenly barred his path, exclaiming: "Thou insatiable robber! Whither wouldst thou go? Depart! The end of thy misdeeds and of thy life is at hand."

Shaken and dismayed, Drusus retreated, and within thirty days he died through a fall from his horse.

But the German tribes were to tremble before a still more terrible invader. This was Drusus' brother Tiberius, a man of skill and cunning, who knew how to stir up internal strife, setting tribe against tribe, winning over chiefs with bribes of gold or positions in his army, until with comparatively little bloodshed he brought all the peoples between the Rhine and the Elbe under his sway.

The northern district was committed to the care of Quintilius Varus, a leader of much experience, who made military roads, repaired the castles built by Drusus, and established courts of justice presided over by Roman judges.

The freedom-loving Germans were treated like serfs, for foreign governors administered the law, enforced the use

of the Latin tongue, condemned them to shameful punishments, such as beating with rods, and even claimed the right of putting free-born men to death.

Now among the tribe of the Cherusci was a young warrior named Hermann, or Armin, whom the Romans knew as Arminius, a soldier who had served like so many of his countrymen in the armies of Rome. There he had learnt not only the arts of war and civilization, but a deep-rooted hatred of the arrogant conquerors.

Hermann was of noble birth, possessed much talent and spirit, and a fiery eloquence of speech capable of rousing the rude warriors of the north to fierce enthusiasm.

On his return to his native land, Hermann found his countrymen oppressed by Roman masters and divided tribe against tribe, sullen revenge smouldering in their hearts. So, all unsuspected by Varus, he travelled about from place to place, assembling warriors at midnight in the deep recesses of the forests, addressing them in words that stirred to hope and resolution, and binding them to unity among themselves with mystic ceremonies and oaths unto the gods of the land.

Thus the tribes prepared for war, and in the year 9 of the present era the opportunity presented itself; for Varus received news of a revolt some distance away toward the east, and immediately announced his intention of proceeding to the spot at the head of three legions of soldiers, Hermann himself being one of their number. But as Varus advanced he encountered many difficulties, for roads were discovered to be blocked by trunks of trees, spears were hurled at him by invisible enemies hidden in the thickets, heavy autumnal rains increased the discomforts of slippery woodland paths, and chill mists numbed the limbs of the Roman soldiers, accustomed to the sunny skies of Italy. Varus commanded all the superfluous baggage to be burnt, in order to lighten his columns, and, at last, after three days of intense suffering, the army reached an open space in the Teutoburg Forest, not far from the town now called Detmold, on the River Lippe. Here

the legions were brought to a sudden halt, for the hardy Germans, light-armed and active, sprang upon them, heedless of rain and swampy ground. The Romans fought bravely as ever, but, weak from the toilsome march and encumbered with their heavy armour, they slipped in the mud and fell, losing their standards, and infantry as well as cavalry were literally cut to pieces.

Realizing that the day was lost, Varus threw himself upon his sword, and many a noble Roman followed his example; those that remained alive were taken captive, to be sold into slavery or offered as sacrifices to the gods of the German tribes.

At Rome the tidings of the disaster caused panic and dismay. The Emperor Augustus, now an aged man, for days wandered aimlessly through the splendid apartments of his palace. "Varus I Varus I Give me back my legions!" he wailed, and, in terror lest the Germans should march on Rome itself, he prepared to strengthen his armies. But his people, thoroughly disheartened, refused to serve any more against those terrible barbarians. It was not until several years later that an army was raised to proceed under Germanicus, son of Drusus, to the spot in the Teutoburg Forest where their countrymen had fallen.

There they found the bones of the dead still whitening the ground, and an army of fierce Germans ready to repeat their exploits of five years before. The bones were collected by the Romans and reverently burnt on a funeral pyre, while Germanicus in a fierce harangue exhorted his men to avenge their fallen comrades and the shame that they had suffered. He then led the Romans against the German centre, which gave way; but barbarian warriors sprang up all around, and only with extreme difficulty did Germanicus manage to secure his retreat. Twice again the next year he renewed the attack, but with such indifferent results that the Emperor Tiberius, who had now succeeded Augustus on the throne, commanded his immediate return.

"There have been enough," he said, "of victories and conquests. The Germans may now be safely left to their own feuds, which in the end will destroy them more effectively than Roman swords."

So the Romans built a great boundary wall near the Rhine to hem the barbarians in; along the line were towers and fortresses, and towns grew up there, such as Strasburg, Cologne, and Coblenz. They traded with the Germans for horses and cattle, furs, yellow amber, and the beautiful golden hair of their wives, which the Roman ladies wore with pride, bleaching their raven locks to the same hue. And in return the Romans gave gold and silver ornaments and sweet southern wine. They also taught the Germans how to convert the sunniest and most sheltered slopes of land into vineyards, and how to grow many of the southern vegetables and fruit. The brave Hermann was slain by the treachery of his own relatives when only thirty-seven years of age, and after his death the old disunion broke out anew among the tribes. But for many years there was peace between Germany and Rome, until the increase in their population led the northerners to wander once more and seek new territory for their homes.

CHAPTER II

ALARIC THE GOTH AND ATILA THE HUN

I

Since Hermann's great victory over the Romans, their mighty emperors had ceased to dream of conquering the German tribes, and had been obliged to rest within their own territories, content if they could guard them on every side from invasion by the victors. So the tables were turned, and proud Rome, only too thankful to be able to retain what she had already conquered, busied herself in shaking off these wild tribesmen, who, like angry hornets, stung and worried painfully, swarming in upon her in numbers seemingly without end.

The German tribes had learnt a lesson of great worth. They had found that unity was strength, and that it was only by unity they could hope to oppose successfully the trained legions of Rome. So they banded themselves together, Franks and Goths and Saxons and many others, not only to strengthen their fighting forces by alliances with kindred tribes, but to fortify their positions of defence. Huge walls were built, deep moats were dug and ramparts raised, the remains of which may be seen to this day.

The Goths who lived on the eastern side of the German realm waxed strong and great and acted as a bulwark between the Roman Empire and the weaker German tribes. So large indeed did this tribe grow that they were regarded by their allies as two tribes, and were known among them as the Ostrogoths and Visigoths, or Eastern and Western Goths. The name Goths was probably derived not from the locality in which they then lived, but from the situation of their ancient home, for they were not really a Germanic tribe, nor native to

the German land, but were Scandinavians who had made their way across the frozen Baltic, seeking more fertile lands.

The religion of the Goths resembled that of other northern races. 'By the hammer of Thor' was a favourite oath with these mighty warriors of old. The memory of their gods and goddesses is preserved in the names of the days—Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are the days dedicated to the worship of Tiw, Woden, Thor and Freya. Near Upsala, which is now one of the university towns of Sweden, there once existed a vast temple sacred to these gods. It was believed that Woden delighted in the blood of human sacrifice, and now the temple lay a dark and gloomy wood, where among the tree-roots and from out the moss gleamed white the skulls and bones of victims of his altars. For centuries these lay there, grim witnesses to a nation's blind groping in the dark for a god of truth and light, until the temple was finally destroyed in the eleventh century by Ingo, King of Sweden. When the Goths migrated and came in contact with the eastern provinces of Rome, they early adopted the Christian faith. Perhaps they were the first race from German soil to do so, for it is believed that even in the days of Constantine, Gothic bishops were present at the Council of Nice held in the year 825.

The great apostle of the Goths was their bishop, Ulphilas, whose fierce and fiery eloquence lashed into enthusiasm the hardy warriors of the north. He wished to translate the Scriptures into the Gothic tongue, but was confronted with difficulties before which any ordinary man would have yielded in despair.

Not so the gallant bishop of the Goths. His first step was to compose an alphabet and introduce new symbols for the Gothic sounds that did not exist in the Greek or Latin. The Goths cared nothing for the learning of monks and shavelings, and the hands that grasped the spear and sword scorned to wield the pen. So Ulphilas laboured at his task till it was done, and in the university at Upsala there may be seen to-day a

most beautiful manuscript copy of the Scriptures traced in silver letters upon purple vellum. It is called the 'Silver Manuscript' and is the oldest specimen of writing in any Germanic dialect. Omissions in the books of Kings and Chronicles are noticeable, for Ulphilas dared not tell his countrymen the stories of ancient warfare, knowing well that this would appeal to their rude nature more than the love of Christ. They would have listened greedily to the exploits of Israelite conquerors and have followed in their steps, slaying Amalekites and Philistines and driving the foe before them from Aroer even unto Dan, forgetting and ignoring the gentle words of exhortation to mercy and to forgiveness of these foes. Such was the Gothic race which was indeed to prove the terror of the Roman Empire.

At one time the Western Goths quarrelled with their eastern brethren, and formed a close alliance with their dreaded Roman foes, serving in their armies under the leadership of men of their own race.

In the fourth century, the Roman Empire was divided into two parts, and the sons of the Emperor Theodosius reigned, one at Rome and the other at Constantinople. Among the Goths at the court of the Eastern Emperor was a young warrior named Marie, who was, by the will of his countrymen, elected commander of the Gothic forces. It was a happy choice, for when the Huns poured into the land, conquering and reducing the Eastern Goths to submission, the Western Goths, with Alaric at their head, repulsed them.

Not content, however, with his victories over the heathen invaders, Alaric soon found a pretext for turning against the Romans. Impatient at the delay of payment of money due to him for the support of his troops, he placed himself at their head, assumed the title of King, and broke into Greece, marching through Thessaly, Macedonia, Thrace and Illyria, wasting and burning as he went. The Emperor Honorius dispatched a Roman army to check his advance, but Alaric cleverly evaded it, and all that was gained was a truce

and a promise of cessation of hostilities from the Goths in return for a strip of land in Illyria, where they settled peacefully for a season. This peace did not last long. In the year 400 Alaric made an attempt to cross the Alps into Italy and failed, but he tried again the following year, with good success. Then it was that the Romans were forced to withdraw their troops from Britain and the Rhine to face the Goths in Italy, for Alaric had swept on, carrying all before him on his march.

He ignored the Western Emperor Honorius, and passed him by as he lay entrenched within the fortress of Ravenna, surrounded by a maze of swamps and bogs. Appearing before the walls of Rome, the mighty Goth summoned the inhabitants to surrender. Horror and dismay clutched the heart of every Roman, for since the days of Brennus, more than seven hundred years earlier, no barbarian conqueror had set his foot within the sacred streets of their city. The warlike spirit of the ancient Romans was long dead, so they had recourse to bluster, striving to hide their fears. "Countless as sands on yonder seashore are the inhabitants of Rome," they boasted. "All are skilled in use of arms. All are bold in play of sword."

Alaric merely laughed and glanced keenly at the men and their defences. Then the Romans sued for peace, but Alaric replied that he would spare the city only on condition that he received 5000 pounds' weight of gold, 80,000 pounds' weight of silver and a proportionate quantity of spoil.

The Romans remonstrated with him in despair. "Such a sacrifice would beggar us," they pleaded. "What should we have left?"

"Your lives," curtly replied Alaric.

"We are still numberless as the sands," they threatened.

"Come out, then, quickly," responded the Goth. "The thicker the grass, the more easily it is mown."

Remonstrances and threats were alike in vain. Proud Rome was obliged to submit, emptying herself of her treasures, and, true to his promise, Alaric and his Goths withdrew from the city walls; without committing any act of violence. He retraced his steps to Ravenna, and lay before it some months, but finding the city impregnable he raised the siege, and during the next year once more appeared before the walls of Rome. An old story relates that he sent three hundred Germans in the garb of slaves as presents to the Roman nobles, and that these men opened the gates of the city. Be that as it may, the year 410 saw barbarians once more within the precincts of the sacred city, not in the guise of slaves nor as prisoners, but as conquerors, slaying and destroying on every hand.

Yet the Goths behaved with greater moderation than might have been expected from a race so rude and wild. Christianity had taught them to restrain their cruel instincts, and they did not slay wantonly nor rejoice in cutting down those who were defenceless. They spared the weak, the priests and fugitives, and, contrary to all expectations, did not fire the city of Rome.

It was said that their departure was hastened in the following manner. A certain Goth entered the house of a woman, intending to plunder, and found within her dwelling magnificent sacred vessels of silver and gold from one of the Roman churches, which had been entrusted to the woman to keep, the priests thinking that no Goth would seek booty in the house of a poor widow. When the woman explained to the intruder the sanctity of the treasure, he left her house immediately and reported the matter to his king.

Alaric commanded that the vessels should be carried back into the church, and reverently placed on the altar. So pleased were the Romans at this instance of piety that they joined in the procession with rejoicing and song, and this sign of unity so astonished the Goths that they desisted from their work, and plundered no more.

The Emperor Honorius was greatly relieved at this. He was a feeble man, whose sole pleasure consisted in feeding his cocks and hens. When he heard of the threatened doom of the imperial city he was much disturbed, since his favourite cock was also called 'Rome,' and he considered it an evil omen for the bird. But as the days passed on and it was only the city that suffered and not the cock, his confidence was restored.

Flushed with success and laden with booty, Alaric now swept on into Southern Italy, embarking forces on board ship for Sicily and Northern Africa. His fleet, however, was wrecked at Messina during a violent hurricane, and he himself soon afterward died, in the year 410, in the thirty-fourth year of his age.

So perished Alaric, the great king of the Visigoths, in the flower of his youth, in the pride of his strength, in the hour of victory. No one knows his resting-place, for in accordance with ancient custom, his followers bore his body to the bed of the River Bassano, which they had temporarily diverted from its course. Dressed in armour and seated on his horse, he was buried in the channel, and, as soon as the body had been deposited in its resting-place, the waters were released from their sluices and allowed to rush back into their ancient bed. The prisoners who had been employed in the work were put to death, that all knowledge of Alaric's sepulchre might be lost. No man should learn its whereabouts, no foe disturb his rest.

II

A new king led back the Western Goths to Gaul, founding there another kingdom, which spread its borders far and wide, even over Spain, and endured three hundred years, to yield at last before advancing Moors. Truly the wild Germanic tribes proved the scourge of Europe, their very names a terror to frighten disobedient children and a memory at which the boldest warrior shuddered and drew nearer to his

rude hearthstone. From their homes, north and east of the Danube and the Rhine, where the Germans had settled in the days of Augustus, Emperor of Rome, tribe after tribe moved southward and westward, till they gradually overran the greater part of the Roman Empire. The Goths swept over the Balkan Peninsula, down into Greece and Italy, and appeared in the sacred city of their mighty Roman lords, defying them in splendid insolence, and, stripping them of their boasted treasures, swept on to further conquests. The Burgundians moved to a new home in the valley of the Upper Rhine, until, defeated in battle by Hunnish tribes, they abandoned their position for one on the banks of the Rhone.

The Vandals too left their strongholds between Vistula and Oder, and, led by their new king, Genseric, had penetrated even into North Africa, winning there a realm, from which place of vantage they made expeditions into Italy, sadly harassing the declining power of Rome. Even to the City of the Seven Hills they penetrated, carrying off such treasures as had remained after the devastation of Alaric the Goth. Thousands of Roman nobles were dragged away to live the lives of servants or of slaves. Treasures of art from temple and palace, stately pillars and splendid carvings were carried bodily to their ships, and thence conveyed to Africa to adorn a kingdom that continued its sway for at least a hundred years. Sad it is to find that many of these ships foundered at sea under the weight of their precious height, and the blue waves of the Mediterranean hide priceless beauty for ever lost to the world. Thus the Vandals earned for themselves a name which has never perished, and to this day 'vandalism' stands for wanton destruction and pillage of beautiful things by those who have no feeling for their beauty and no conception of its value to the world.

The Goths themselves were next attacked by a wild and barbarous race called the Huns, who poured in upon them and resisted all attempts to press them back. The Huns originally had lived on the steppes or boundless plains which

lie between Russia and China in the country which we now call Siberia. An ancient Roman writer, Ammianus Marcellinus, has left us a description of them which calls before the mind a picture of a people truly terrible in their ferocity. They were short, thick-set, broad-shouldered and so hideous that he compared them to wild beasts waddling heavily on hind legs, or to the grinning images carved on the posts of bridges. Their hair was black and bristling, their skin a dingy, yellowish hue, and their little eyes, set slantwise in the face like those of Chinamen, glared wildly, separated by a flat and ugly nose. No dwelling-place they knew, but from their very childhood they roamed the plains on horses, from which they were inseparable, eating, drinking, even sleeping in the saddle. Their food consisted of roots and raw flesh. They did not cook their meat, but laid it like a saddle on their horses' backs, and after a wild chase across the plains the savage warrior would draw his dinner from under him and tear it to pieces with his teeth. They lived entirely in the open air, in hunger and thirst, in cold and heat. Their wives and little ones were dragged after them in carts. Their greatest joy was battle, into which they rushed with howling like that of ferocious beasts. Without order or plan they charged, showering arrows, hacking and hewing with sword and knife, and, casting slings of rope around the necks of their enemies, they would drag them choked and mangled from the field. Such was the race that poured in upon the Goths in the fifth century after Christ. Fearful was the destruction that accompanied the Huns' advance, and terrible the desolation that remained, when, like a wave of the sea, the wild army swept onward in unrelenting might. The most famous of their leaders was the king who appears in early German epics as 'Etzel,' but who is best known to later generations as Attila, 'the Scourge of God.' A scourge in truth he was to the Roman Empire as to the German tribes.

Attila, the king of the warriors renowned throughout the world for their brutal hideousness of form, was himself no less ugly than his followers. Short and squat, large-headed and

flat-nosed, his face scarred with the self-inflicted wounds by which the Huns checked any growth of beard, his wild eyes rolling fiercely in his head, he yet looked every inch a king, and when he turned his gaze on them, men quailed and dropped their glance. Surrounded by a band of kings and princes, rulers of tribes whom he had forced into submission, he delighted in proving his power. They trembled beneath his eye, started guiltily when he stirred, and hastened in servile obedience to his command.

In his capital in Hungary he maintained a kingly state. There his palace rose amid a large village of retainers' dwellings, like them built of wood, but unlike them of noble dimensions with lofty halls and rich furnishing. In his own home he loved to display his splendour, watching sourly, but well content, as his guests ate, from dishes of gold and silver, the daintiest fare to the music of minstrels, who sang and played and provoked laughter with merry tales. Amid the scene of riot and excess sat Attila the Scourge of God, dark-browed and gloomy. No jest could call a smile to his grim lips. He served his guests on gold and silver, but would suffer only the coarser viands to be prepared for his own eating, and those upon the simplest wooden platter. A true Hun, he ate no bread himself, but lived entirely upon flesh. His clothing and the equipment of his horses were plain in the extreme, but his kingly bearing and wondrous dignity of movement, despite his ill-formed body, marked him out to every eye as a leader among men. His decrees struck terror to the heart of nations. Men said that when he thrust his sword into the earth, a hundred tribes would tremble, and Rome and Constantinople shudder in their far-off fastnesses. He himself it was who assumed the title the Scourge of God, the chosen chastiser of the human race, and truly in every land in which he set his foot he was a scourge of terror and a rod of chastisement.

It is said that a poor cowherd brought to Attila a rusty blade which had wounded his cow as it lay concealed beneath the earth, and that the great warrior had seized the sword and

boldly proclaimed himself holder of the weapon of the God of War, and from that time his rough tribesmen not only feared and revered him, but actually believed him half divine, and endowed with supernatural force by 'the God of War himself, whom they were accustomed to worship under the symbol of a sword.

The boldest of his warriors dared not look him in the face. They followed his lead with the blind faith of perfect devotion, and spread such destruction through the nations that Attila himself boasted grimly that where his horse's hoofs had trod no grass would grow. He gathered strength like some gigantic forest-tree, spreading its huge arms and grappling the earth in vice-like roots. By the middle of the fifth century his power extended from the borders of Asia far into Germany itself, and he had drawn to his standard all the various families of Huns, together with numerous Germanic tribes whom he had encountered on his way.

After defeating the Ostrogoths he attacked Constantinople itself, and was only induced to leave the city by the offer of large bribes. After this he turned and entered Gaul. Old writers say that his army numbered more than half a million warriors, and covered the earth as the locusts darken the plains. Before him lay fair cities and prosperous lands, behind him a dark track of smoking ruins told of desolation fulfilled.

Stung to madness and despair, his enemies gathered round. Goths, Franks and Romans fought side by side against this common foe, and on the plain of prance, where to-day the city of Chalons stands, was fought, in the year 451, the furious battle that decided whether Europe should belong to the hardy Germanic tribes or to the barbaric Huns. Old sagas tell of conflict fierce and long, of 200,000 warriors who lay dead upon the field, of the spirits of the dead wrestling three days in the air with the souls of unseen foes, but Attila the Scourge of God was beaten and thrust back. With bowed head and eyes smouldering with baffled fury he rode suddenly from the field.

His nerve was gone. Fears waited henceforth around his path, ghosts waved and beckoned and nightly terrors made sleep hideous.



THE MEETING OF LEO I AND ATTLA.

Yet once more he rallied his forces, crossed the Alps and broke into Northern Italy. The inhabitants of Aquileia fled before his face to the marshy islands near the mouth of the River Brenta, founding thus in flight and terror the lovely city of Venice, Bride of the Adriatic Sea. Attila swept on toward Rome, but his march was no longer the triumphant sweep of a wave of devastation. A broken and baffled man, he was haunted by superstitious terrors and hindered on his course. Disease too broke out among his army and prevented its advance. As he lay encamped by the lovely Lake Garda, a deputation from Rome approached and begged an audience of the fierce barbaric king. And Attila the Scourge of God watched sullenly the train that now appeared before his throne. Led by the cross, the sign of our redemption, came Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, and after him a long procession of monks and priests chanting the penitential psalms. Leo entered the tent of Attila, and pleaded his cause so sadly and

persuasively that the fierce Hun, fascinated by so much saintliness and sweetness, promised to take warning from the fate of Marie the Goth and not only to spare Rome but evacuate Italy.

It is said that as Attila watched the train of holy priests, a fixed and terrified expression stole into his eyes. He half rose from his seat with a guttural exclamation, stretched out a trembling hand, pointed, and fell back, one arm across his face. For there behind the saintly band he saw in light appear the forms of the apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul. Grave and terrible was the gleam of anger in their eyes, and Attila the Scourge of God shrank from them and slunk away—away from the blue skies and glittering lakes of Italy, northward to the cold mists and whistling winds of the gloomy German forests; and there he died.

His end was fearful, and came with painful suddenness on the night of his marriage with the fair Burgundian lady, Ildico. He had retired late to rest, drunk with wine, as was the barbarous custom of the Huns, and on the following morning his warriors found him struggling in the agonies of death. Some said that Ildico stabbed him in the breast, others thought that an artery had burst, for blood flowed from mouth and nose. Soon the wild, fierce spirit fled from the tired body and Attila passed away. They took up the body reverently, mindful of his wonderful renown, and laid it on his bed, covering it with rich silken robes. His warriors filed past the bier and rode round and round the royal tent on horseback, chanting their rude funeral hymns in lamentation for the mighty dead, and gashing their faces with their knives.

They buried him with great pomp, placing his body in a golden coffin, which was enclosed in one of silver, and again in one of iron. The whole army followed the leader to his grave, and as soon as they drew nigh the spot, the huge coffin was consigned to the care of captives taken in war. By their hands it was lowered in the earth, together with the dead king's

arms and horse and many treasures, and then the captives were slain, that no man might know the place where Attila was laid.

The domination of Italy now passed definitely into German hands. In 476 Odoacer, a powerful chief of the Heruli tribe, dethroned the feeble Roman Emperor, and ruled in his place with the title of King of Italy. But his rule soon gave place to that of the nobler tribe of Ostrogoths, who extended their may under the leadership of the great Theodoric.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF THE FRANKS

I

During the fifth century after Christ, restless tribes wandered in many directions seeking new homes. Goths and Vandals, Huns and Norsemen, Angles and Saxons found fuller scope for their energies and broader lands for their increasing populations. In Western Germany the nation of the Franks was rapidly rising into power. When first heard of in history the Franks were settled along the banks of the Lower Rhine between Cologne and the North Sea. In the early part of the fifth century, they occupied the district now known as Belgium and the region to the east of it. Their many tribes were merged gradually into one another, until all were at last united under the sway of either the Salian or Ripuarian Franks.

The Salian Franks were governed by the Salk law, by which the succession to the throne was limited to males. Their royal family traced its descent back to a monarch whom they called Pharamond. One of Pharamond's descendants was called Merowig or Meroveus, and after him the Frankish royal family were called the Merovingian line.

A descendant of Merowig was Clovis, who toward the end of the fifth century pushed the kingdom of the Franks westward into the land which we now call France as far as the Loire. Here he came into collision with the lingering remains of the ancient Roman Empire, and expelled the Romans from Soissons, where a pro-consul was still ruling. He learned from them many useful customs, one of which was the use of coinage. Clovis was an ambitious and unscrupulous man. Beginning by making alliances with his relations who were rulers of various Frankish tribes, he next proceeded to get rid

of them. His treatment of Sigbert, his cousin, who ruled the neighbourhood of Cologne, may be cited as a specimen of his methods.

To Sigbert's son Clovis sent the following message "Thy father Sigbert is old and weak, and limps on one foot. If he were dead, the realm would be thine. My friendship would protect thee from harm." The son listened to these treacherous words, and caused his father to be murdered during the night as he slept, after which he sent messengers to Clovis, offering him a share of the wealth that the dead king had left behind. When the ambassador of Clovis appeared, he was shown great chests of treasure, but as the wicked son bent over one of these, the better to display its contents, the ambassador brought the heavy lid down on his head with much force and killed him. Thus perished the man who had slain his father, and another obstacle was removed from the path of Clovis, who thereupon appeared in Cologne and was elected king. When he had exterminated all the relatives he could find, Clovis lamented aloud that he had neither friend nor kinsman in the world. By this means he lured his remaining relatives from their various hiding-places, and when they came forward with professions of friendship, they found themselves trapped.

In spite of war and deeds of violence on all hands, it was in the reign of Clovis that Christianity made headway among the Franks. Clovis himself had married a Christian lady, Clothilde, daughter of a Burgundian king, who long and vainly endeavoured to persuade him to renounce the worship of Thor and Odin. He allowed her to have the first-born child baptized, but blamed the god of the Christians for its death, which occurred soon afterward. When their second child became seriously ill, immediately after baptism, Clovis reproached the Queen for her foolishness; but Clothilde prayed earnestly for the child's life, and as it recovered the King was somewhat appeased. While fighting against the Alemanni in the year 496, Clovis himself renounced idolatry in favour of the Christian religion. Convinced that Odin fought for his

enemies, he determined to throw off his allegiance to that deity, and vowed to serve the god of the Christians if He would fight for him and grant him victory. In fulfilment of this vow, Clovis afterward received baptism from the hands of Remigius, Bishop of Rheims, who admonished him in these words: "Bow thy neck and pray to that which thou didst burn, and burn that to which thou didst formerly pray." Other German peoples were Christians also, but had embraced the Arian heresy—that is, the doctrine of a certain Alexandrian priest named Arius, who died in the year 886. He had preached a different conception of Christ's nature and of the relations of the three persons of the Trinity from that sanctioned by Rome. Orthodox Christians regarded these Arians as even worse than heathens, and this feeling prevented the Romans from intermarrying with the Germans, and retarded German progress in other ways.

The conversion of Clovis brought about an alliance between the Frankish kingdom and the Holy See that was of great importance for the history of Germany. It is from the *History of the Franks*, written by Gregory of Tours, that we derive most of our knowledge of Clovis and his descendants. Before he died, in the year 511, Clovis had made himself king of all the Franks and lord of the Alemanni, Visigoths, Burgundians and Thuringians. His kingdom embraced the whole of Gaul and a considerable portion of Germany. He made his capital at Paris, and may be called the founder of the great Frankish kingdom.

At Paris, in his palace and its neighbourhood, dwelt the most powerful of the King's knights. They were given no salary for their services, but rewarded with gifts of arms and horses, and of lands, which they held as a fief from the King. Many held various offices about his person. The knight who superintended the royal stables was known as the Marshal, the Chancellor acted as secretary, the Steward had charge of the catering for the Household, and the Chamberlain watched over the servants and guarded the treasures of the King. All these

officers were in their turn controlled by the *Major Domus*, or Mayor of the Palace.

After the death of Clovis, the kingdom of the Franks was divided among his four sons, and for over a hundred years the history of the Merovingian dynasty is one series of quarrels and horrible murders. In spite of its evil rulers, the nation nevertheless continued to develop, and had no neighbours strong enough to disturb its unity. In the days of the last Merovingian kings, men groaned under oppression, and sighed for a monarch who might deliver them from the hands of robber barons and greedy courtiers, for the feeble figure-head who sat upon the throne clasped the sceptre with nerveless fingers that scarcely retained their hold. The miserable weakness of Childeric the Third and his predecessors was naturally not without consequences. Only too gladly had these monarchs relinquished their various duties, and allowed them to pass into the hands of servants, who thus rose to greater and greater power upon the ruins of their master's authority. Certain officers of the Household gained in this manner unlimited control in peace as well as in war.

The sovereigns themselves had been only too glad to entrust the cares of State to able ministers, while they themselves, to quote Gregory of Tours, "gormandized like brute beasts," with no thought for their unhappy subjects except that they occasionally signed State documents or appeared in royal robes on days of public ceremony. One day in the year certainly the people saw their king, and that was at the great annual review of troops. According to ancient custom the King was conveyed to the scene in a chariot drawn by oxen, and descending, took his place on a throne set upon the open plain in full view of all his subjects.

First among the officers in the Royal Household was the so-called Mayor of the Palace, whom historians name in the Latin tongue the *Major Domus*. This officer stood next to the King in time of peace, held chief command in war, and for

nearly a hundred years was the real ruler of the Franks under the feeble, useless Merovingian kings. This position steadily grew in importance, for it had been held by able men, to whom the kings had gladly entrusted troublesome duties, whom the nobles willingly supported by common consent, and whose leadership was sanctioned by the Church in return for privileges and endowments secured.

One of the greatest Mayors of the Palace was the famous Charles Martel, 'the scourge of the Saracens.' During his term of office there appeared in Europe a formidable foe, the Arabs, or Saracens, and for a time it seemed as if the fate of the whole continent hung in the balance. The Arabs lived in Arabia on the eastern side of the Red Sea, and about one hundred and fifty years before the invasion of Europe their great prophet, Mohammed, had lived and preached, leaving behind him a nation of worshippers devoted to his teaching. A poor and nomad people, the Arabs had never left their land before, but after the death of Mohammed, they determined to go forth and conquer the world, converting the nations to their faith. They invaded Persia, Egypt, Northern Africa and most of Spain. If the conquered people became Mohammedans, they were treated with kindness, if they refused, they were made slaves or even put to death.

Having conquered Spain, the Arabs advanced upon France, where Charles, the Mayor of the Palace, went forth to meet them. In the great battle of Tours, in the year 782, 800,000 Arabs were killed, and Charles earned the name of 'Martel' or 'the Hammer.' In vain did the Arabs, mounted on fleet Barbary horses, rush to the charge, shrieking their wild battle-cry of 'Allah and Mohammed!' Reckless of danger, since death in war against Christians meant an eternity of happiness, they fought dauntlessly, but the Franks were better armed and better disciplined, and mowed them down like grass.

Christendom was saved, and the Arabs driven back over the Pyrenees. After this mighty victory Charles Martel's

influence was greater than ever, and he was henceforth known as Duke of the Franks.

In his days the office of Mayor of the Palace had already gained so sure a footing as to be recognized as hereditary, so upon his death, in the year 741, he was succeeded in it by his son, Pippin the Short.

II

Pippin was no man to be despised, small though he was in body. Indeed, deficiency in height did not prevent him from being the most powerful warrior of his day.

Once when the courtiers were amusing themselves by witnessing a conflict between a lion and a bull, the idle conversation reverted to the diminutive Pippin, and the nobles present made merry at his expense.

Without a word the resolute Mayor entered the arena, where the lion had even then thrown the huge bull to the ground, and with one powerful stroke of his sword he severed the mighty head of the lion from its body. A second stroke and the head of the prostrate bull rolled in the dust, while a murmur of awe ran through the throng.

"David was small," said Pippin the Short, "but nevertheless he slew the mocking giant who made merry at his size." The nobles were much impressed, and respected the man for what he was. The feeble Childeric's authority continued to dwindle until he became a mere puppet on the throne. Finally Pippin, the Mayor of the Palace, sent messengers to Rome charged to seek out Pope Zachareias and say to him: "Who deserves to be King of the Franks: he who rules the realm, or he who bears the name of King?" And the Pope replied: "He who rules the realm ought also to bear the name of King." Fortified with the Holy Father's support, they took the useless Childeric from his throne. His long yellow hair, sign of

kingship, was shorn from his head, and Pippin the Short sent him away to serve God as a monk in a cloister, since he was incapable of serving Him as king. Pippin the Mayor was then elected King of the Franks, in full assembly of the people, at Soissons, in the year 751. Thus passed the last of the Merovingian kings; the family of Pippin being known henceforth as the Carolingians, from the name of Charles Martel, his warlike father. Pippin ruled well and wisely, and did not forget to show his gratitude to the Pope who had befriended him. He went with an army into Italy, and conquered a strip of land new Rome from the Lombards, which he presented as an offering to the Pope, in return for which Pope Zachareias bestowed upon Pippin the title of Protector of the Holy City. This was the origin of the States of the Church. The Holy Father would have wondered much, however, had he inquired more particularly into the state of Christianity among the Franks. They had indeed been partially converted, for during the eighth century pious missionaries from England, Scotland and Ireland had set foot upon the shore of their ancient fatherland to preach the gospel of Christ. But these priests were few in number, and the men whom they taught were wild and ignorant, so that among the Franks the services of the Church were often blended with heathen rites, and the crucifix erected side by side with the image of Thor the Thunderer.

The most famous of these Christian missionaries was a certain Anglo-Saxon monk named Winfried, who, according to the fashion of those days, was known by the name of Bonifacius.

A native of Wessex in Britain, he was consumed with desire to preach the word of God among the heathen, and in the year 715 landed on the coast of Friesland with his gospel tidings.

There he was at first apparently successful, for Ratbod, the Duke of the Frisians, listened with interest to his teaching, and at last prayed for baptism at his hands. But with one foot

in the river in which the holy rite was to be celebrated, he turned and asked Bonifacius whether he would see his own Frisian forefathers in heaven one day. Bonifacius answered: "No. They were heathens and come not therefore to the kingdom of heaven." Whereupon Ratbod drew his foot from the water, declaring that he would go to his own fathers when he died, wherever they might be.



PIPPIN AND THE BULL.

Disheartened and repulsed on every side, Bonifacius returned to Britain, but his zeal soon drove him afield again, and in 718 he went to Rome, and, with the Holy Father's

authority, set forth once more to preach the gospel to the Germans. There he found warrior-bishops whose interests were centred in the courts of earthly kings and the bloody field of battle, ignorant priests who could neither read nor explain the faith which they professed, and hordes of heathen savages howling round the altar stones of their ferocious gods.

"I am in the position of a mastiff," he wrote in one of his letters, "which sees the thieves and murderers breaking into his master's house; but having none to help him, can do little more than groan and growl.

He saw at once that the support of both Pope and King must be secured before he could bring light and peace to a land of such darkness and blood.

"Without aid from the Prince of the Franks," he wrote, "I can neither rule the people, nor protect the priests and deacons, monks and nuns, whom I have brought hither with me from England; nor can I without his commands, and penalties to enforce obedience unto the same, hope to put an end to their heathenish practices and sacrifices to idols."

The Holy Father at Rome, Pope Gregory, recommended him to Charles Martel and, the royal aid once granted, Bonifacius threw himself passionately into the work of reform. He founded many monasteries, the most famous of which was the Cloister of Fulda, so that they might send out teachers to aid him in his work, and having reorganized the Chris Church among the Franks, he turned his attention to the conversion of the many heathen tribes harboured by the dark forests of the North. Fearless of danger, he would suddenly appear like a whirlwind in their midst, eyes aflame with anger, words of fierce denunciation on his lips, and with his own hands would hurl down the stones of the altars sacred to heathen gods, around which the seething multitude howled and gnashed upon him in their wrath. At other times he would hew down with hasty strokes the sacred tree under which dark and bloody rites were celebrated, while the superstitious savages stayed their hands and looked for thunderbolts to fall and

flames to consume this enemy of all that they and their fathers had held most sacred. But when no god appeared in wrath to avenge this insult to his altar, they gazed in stupid wonder on the lonely monk, whose daring they could not but admire, and listened to the words of wisdom that he spoke.

So he lived and laboured in that land, aided by the support of Charles Martel and the Holy Father at Rome, and afterwards of Pippin the King, until, in his seventieth year, the old longing came over him once more to preach to the Frisians among whom he had failed in his youth. For two years he toiled among them, until in the year 755 he fell a martyr among the savage tribes, refusing, together with his fifty-two followers, to strike a blow in his own defence. All were murdered by avengers of the ancient gods, and the body of Bonifacius was carried back to the monastery of Fulda, and there laid to rest.

"Truly," says an ancient writer, Germany hath great cause to be thankful unto Bonifacius; for he it was who gave her instructors not only in religion, but in the sciences; persuaded her inhabitants to eat no more horse-flesh, laid the foundation of letters among them, and shunned not to shed his blood for their sakes."

Thus we have seen how Pippin the King and Bonifacius the Archbishop laboured for their own generation before they fell asleep, and were numbered among the dead.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLEMAGNE

I

When King Pippin died, on the 24th of September 768, he left his realm to his two sons, Karloman and Karl, but an accident deprived Karloman of life only three years later, leaving as sole ruler the young Karl, whom the French call Charlemagne and the Germans Karl the Great.

A man of restless activity and wonderful power of organization, he changed during the forty-three years of his reign not only the condition of France but of all Europe. He desired to unite the various German tribes into one nation under his sway, converting those that were still heathen to the Christian faith; so that instead of Franks and Swabian, Burgundians and Saxons, and the many sundered states, there might be one great Christian Empire. This was his life's work, and his mighty deeds, not only as warrior in the field but as wise ruler and furtherer of Christianity, education and civilization, have justified his title to the name of 'the Great'

His first task on ascending the throne was the subjugation of the Saxons, who dwelt between Rhine and Elbe, and, according to ancient German custom, had often banded themselves together, led by their Duke in person, and made raids on the neighbouring Frankish territory.

The Saxons were a bold and fearless race, with a passion for freedom, devoted to the worship of the old heathen gods, and determined to submit to no Frank, neither to bow to his deity.

In the month of May 772, Charlemagne held a council of his warriors at Worms, at which it was unanimously decided to carry war into the realm of the unfortunate Saxons.

Religion was made the pretext for this act, since the Franks had already sent to preach to the Saxons a missionary whose ministrations had been rejected with scorn. Priests had been tortured and slain, and even the monks of Fulda had been driven from their cloisters, bearing the sacred bones of Bonifacius with them.

Kindness and persuasion having failed, Charlemagne felt himself justified, such was the spirit of the age, in converting the heathen at the point of the sword. This motive also served to make the war popular among his people, since they considered their cause that of God and His Holy Church.

Thus Charlemagne crossed the Rhine and embarked upon a war of thirty years' duration, for the Saxons clung with a greater fervour than ever to their independence and their faith in the ancient gods, meeting by night in gloomy forests and swearing on their altars bitter enmity to the Franks and fealty to each other.

Again and again he drove them before him, again and again they rallied and resisted once more. He took their chief fortress of Eresburg, and destroyed Irminsul, a mysterious pillar or tree, which they held in high reverence and awe as the wondrous tree of the gods which upholds the middle earth. Year after year passed, and still the brave tribesmen would not submit. Time after time their leaders would appear, pray for peace, take the oath of fealty to Karl and receive the sacrament of baptism, but just when he felt sure of success, they would rise again and drive him back. Once he felt so sure of them that in the year 777 he held a great parliament at Paderborn, in Saxon territory, at which most of the invited Saxons appeared, and so submissive was their demeanour and so large the number of baptisms into the Christian faith, that he invited them to join his army and help him to suppress a rising of the Wends. Led by their duke, Widukind, they set forth, but at a

given signal turned upon the Franks, almost annihilating Karl's army, and drove from the land the newly appointed ash officials and all priests of the Church.

After this revolt Karl held a fearful assize of vengeance at Verden on the River Aller, where he condemned 4500 Saxons to death, but he failed to capture their leaders. News of this bloody assize spread far and wide through all the Saxon land, bowing each Saxon head in anguish and despair; but, stung to desperation, Widukind once more appeared, rallied the remainder of his forces and flung himself upon the Franks.

Two sanguinary battles bade fair to annihilate his tribesmen altogether, and in the year 808 he appeared with his warriors before Karl at Attigny in France, praying for peace, and submitted to the rite of baptism into the Christian Church.

The story ran that he visited Wolmirstadt in the guise of a beggar, and, led by curiosity, entered the church. There he saw the wondrous figure of a child in white raiment rise from the consecrated wafer of the Holy Sacrament, and in terror he rushed from the sanctuary, confessing the real presence of Christ the Lord.

The submission of the Saxons completed Karl's consolidation of the German tribes into one realm, and their conversion to Christianity assisted greatly in fostering a spirit of unity, although its spread was by no means rapid, and Karl was obliged to visit the frequent lapses into paganism with sentences of death.

In his youth Karl had married a Frankish lady named Himiltrude, but, acting on the advice of his mother, he sought an alliance with the King of Lombardy in the north of Italy, divorced his young wife and married Desiderata, daughter of the Lombard king, Didier. This step was contrary to the advice of the Pope and the dictates of his own conscience, and sorely he was punished for his wickedness and folly. He was so unhappy with Desiderata that after a year he put her away and married a certain lady, Hildegard. This insult to his daughter

made the King of Lombardy his implacable enemy. So Karl raised an army and entered Italy by way of the Pass over Mount Cenis.

Legends say that this pass was pointed out to him by a wandering minstrel, whom Karl rewarded for his services by granting him all the land over which a blast of his horn could be heard.

The strongest fortress in Lombardy was Pavia, where Didier took refuge, and from a high tower surveyed the advancing army.

"Is this Karl?" he asked, as an enormous mass of soldiers appeared. "Noble, not yet," answered his companion, a Frank who had taken refuge with him from the anger of Karl.

Round the hill swept an immense band with engines of war such as Julius Caesar himself might have used. "Here is Karl certainly," said Didier, with conviction. "Not yet," answered the Frank. A still larger band of guards tramped past.

"There is Karl himself." But again the answer came: "Not yet."

And then appeared a long procession of bishops, abbots and priests. "Let us go down," stammered Didier, "and hide ourselves under the earth before the countenance of so fearful a king."

Said the Frank: "When you see steel spring like corn from the earth, then expect that Karl will come."

A dark cloud rose in the west. Nearer and nearer it came, and as it advanced it grew brighter and brighter, for, mounted on a steel-clad horse, and arrayed in glittering steel from head to foot, with his mighty sword 'Joyeuse' in his hand, rode the great king, a band of chosen warriors surrounding him whose spears flashed like a field of steel corn.

"See," said the Frank. "There is the one for whom you have asked," and as he spoke Didier fell almost lifeless at his feet.

But in spite of his fears Didier made a bold resistance, and Karl was detained so long before Pavia that he even sent home for his children and his wife Hildegard.

"Let us begin by doing something memorable," said he, and within a week there arose a basilica with walls, roof and painted ceiling, such as might have required a year to build. And in this chapel Karl, with his family, court and warriors, celebrated the Christmas festival of 778.

The next year Karl sent his generals to continue the siege, and himself set off on a pilgrimage to Rome to see the Holy Father. Three miles outside the city he was welcomed by the magistrates, citizens and students of the schools, who led him, with hymns and songs, to the gates of Rome, where he dismounted and walked on foot to the ancient church of Saint Peter, in which waited the Pope himself. Gifts were exchanged, the Holy Father handing to Karl a copy of the canons of the Church with the inscription •

"Pope Adrian, to his most excellent son, Charlemagne, King."

Karl on his part confirmed his father's gift to the former Pope, adding new grants of his own.

He then returned to Pavia, and having received the submission of the city, took Didier prisoner and sent him as a monk into a cloister, and joined Lombardy to the kingdom of the Franks.

II

Charlemagne founded the city of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was his favourite winter residence. He was a zealous

hunter, and the forests of France and Germany abounded with wolves and wild boar, which it was his delight to pursue. Separated from his companions one day in the chase, Karl was making his way through the thickets when his horse suddenly stumbled, having set its forefoot in a hole. Karl dismounted, since the poor beast seemed frightened and uneasy, and soon perceived the cause of its alarm, for from the hole in the earth arose steam which, upon investigation, was discovered to come from health-giving medicinal springs.

Karl sounded his bugle for his friends, and to them showed his valuable discovery. A chapel was built near the spot, and a palace, where he often dwelt. Then many houses arose round the palace, and people came to bathe in the warm springs, thus founding the historic city of Aachen or Aix.

To this palace Karl would retire each winter after the summer campaign was over, and every Easter he held a council of war which all his chief warriors attended.

He was seldom defeated in war, for he was wary and wise and moved his forces about so quickly that larger armies than his own found it difficult to keep pace with him. He improved the methods of warfare which his father had taught him, and also the weapons of the soldiers. He invented helmets with visors that could be drawn down over the face in fight, introduced large, long shields which protected the whole body, instead of the little round bucklers of the early Gauls.

His men fought with sharp two-handed swords and heavy clubs with steel spikes, and they were mounted on strong, swift horses. Each man *as bound to provide himself with lance and shield or with a bow and twelve arrows. The richer warriors had to clothe themselves in complete armour; poorer men, who could not afford this, contributed each his share to provide one warrior with a full equipment. So accurate was Karl's knowledge of the country that he could dispatch an army by short cuts and byways, thus surprising his enemies before they dreamt of his approach.

Not only was Karl a great warrior, but his government was a marvel when we consider how many wild and diverse nations he controlled. They were ruled by counts, who met once a year at the great open parliament, discussed the welfare of the realm, bore back to their people the Great King's decrees, and brought their vassals with them in time of war.

Karl was also a zealous reformer of agriculture, experimenting on his own farms and keeping a sharp watch over his overseers and the profits made. At that time all the chief men were warriors and the management of the farms was left to slaves, who were bought and sold with the property. To alleviate the condition of these slaves Karl made laws protecting them from cruel masters. Indeed so kind-hearted was he that any man who was oppressed knew that he might claim justice from the King.

At one time Karl hung up a bell at his castle gate, proclaiming that anyone who needed his help might ring and make his claim, and many a man made use of this means.

The story runs that one day when the bell sounded, all that the porter found when he opened the gate was an emaciated old white horse, so starved that it was nibbling at the rope with its teeth. Karl caused inquiries to be made, whereupon one of his warriors arose and spoke:

"Let my lord allow me to speak for this dumb victim of oppression."

And the Great King gave leave.

"This horse," continued the knight, "belongs to one of your warriors. It has served its master well in many a hard fight and its swift feet have borne him to safety when he has been surrounded by cruel foes. But now that it is lame and blind, he will give it food no more, but turns it out to die of starvation on the road. Decide now, O King, the justice of this cause."

And the Great King arose to his feet in wrath.

"The poor beast shall not claim my help in vain," he thundered. "I command that its master provide it a stable and a pasture and care for it well as long as it shall live."

In the year 778 Karl commenced an expedition in Spain to drive back the Moors whom his illustrious grandfather, Charles Martel, had expelled from France. He crossed the Pyrenees and advanced as far as the River Ebro, but the Moors bribed him, with rich presents of gold and jewels, to spare their beautiful cities, so he turned back. On the retreat from Spain Charlemagne's army was attacked in the valley of Roncesvalles by a wild tribe of Basques, and several of the chiefs were killed, among whom was the famous knight Roland.

About the figure of Roland many legends have grown. Untrue or exaggerated as many of them certainly are, they yet illustrate the veneration which his fine courage commanded. So closely was he connected with the Great King that some of these stories call him a relation of Charlemagne, alleging that his mother, the Lady Bertha, was the King's own sister. It was supposed that Roland's father was swept away by a flood when his son was only a tiny child, and he was believed by all to be dead. The Lady Bertha was now reduced to want and misery, and, fearful of the wrath of her noble brother, who had always disapproved of her marriage, she took refuge in a cave near the city of Aix-la-Chapelle. Although only six years of age, the little Roland used to fight the boys of the city, taking from them bread and apples to feed his dearly loved mother.

One day when very much in want of food, he is supposed to have walked into the Great King's banqueting-hall, attracted by the sound of the minstrels, and boldly seized the royal cup and platter as they stood before the King.

So much amazed and interested was Karl at the tiny intruder's boldness that he questioned the boy, and eventually sent a deputation of knights to find his mother, who lived henceforth at the court of Aix,

Later on, legends relate, Roland's father appeared once more, having been rescued from death. He was reconciled with Charlemagne, and served among his knights. Roland eventually became one of the twelve Paladins, the chief of Charlemagne's warriors. With his sword Duranda he could cleave marble, and his horn Olivant had the power of raising to his aid in time of need all those friends of his who had already fallen in war.

Fallen on from the rear and wounded to death during the retreat from Spain, Roland took his horn, and with his last breath blew the blast that warned his beloved King of the danger threatening him in the rear.

III

Charlemagne had a secretary named Eginhard, who wrote, in Latin, a life of his illustrious master, from which we gather what we know of his public and private life. As a boy Eginhard had possessed such bright gaiety of temperament and keenness of perception that the Great King had taken him into his palace as a companion to his own sons in their studies. When he grew up, Eginhard repaid his lord's kindness by faithful and wise service. He is said to have fallen deeply in love with the Princess Emma, one of Karl's daughters, but had despaired of ever gaining her father's consent to so unequal a match. So they used to meet at night and talk together when all in the palace were asleep. One night when they parted and Eginhard was about to turn his steps toward home, they found that fresh snow had fallen while they talked, which would betray only too plainly the fact that a man had stood under the Princess's window. Emma, however, was quick and resourceful, and, taking her lover on her shoulders, she carried him over the castle courtyard, leaving only her woman's footprints behind.

But the Great King, who often waked at night, stood watching the stars at his window, yet when the two beheld him, he made no movement and spoke no word. Eginhard feared the worst, so when days passed and still Karl made no sign, he ventured into his presence and humbly begged for his dismissal.

"Come to the Council on the morrow," commanded the King shortly, and on the morrow Eginhard went trembling and fearful for his life. Karl related the story to his warriors assembled, whereupon some would have condemned the youth to death for his presumption in raising his eyes to a princess of the blood, but Karl shook his head and, turning to him, said: "Eginhard, you have served me well, and now ask for your dismissal. I, however, wish to reward you for your faithful service to me, and I will now do so by giving you my daughter Emma for wife."

So Eginhard was made happy, and devoted himself to the task of writing the life of Charlemagne, wherein he gave an excellent description of his personal appearance, which is quoted as follows:

"Charlemagne was large and robust in person, his stature was lofty, though it did not exceed just proportion, for his height was not more than seven times the length of his foot. The summit of his head was round, his eyes large and bright, his nose a little long, beautiful white hair, and a smiling and pleased expression.

"There reigned in his whole person, whether standing or seated, an air of grandeur and dignity; and though his neck was thick and short, and his body corpulent, yet he was in other respects so well proportioned that these defects were not noticed.

"His walk was firm, and his whole appearance manly, but his high voice did not quite harmonize with his appearance.

"His health was always good, except during the four years which preceded his death. He then had frequent attacks of fever, and was lame of one foot. In this time of suffering he treated himself more according to his own fancies than by the advice of the physicians, whom he had come to dislike because they would have had him abstain from the roast meats he was accustomed to, and would have restricted him to boiled meats.

"His dress was that of his nation, that is to say of the Franks. He wore a shirt and drawers of linen, woven by his daughters, over them a tunic bordered with silken fringe, stockings fastened with narrow bands, and shoes. In winter a coat of otter or martin fur covered his shoulders and breast. Over all he wore a long blue mantle."

It was the fashion among the warriors of Charlemagne's day to wear a short mantle, but this the Great King would never do, preferring the ancient fashion of his fathers, which, indeed, added to the majesty of his presence among the members of his court.

He was always girded with his great sword, Joyeuse, whose hilt was of silver and gold. At great festivals his dress was embroidered with gold and his shoes adorned with jewels. His mantle was fastened with a rich brooch, and on his head rested a glittering diadem.

But usually he avoided such pomp, loving better the simplicity of the ancient Franks, though many of his courtiers dressed with much magnificence.

Once when he thought that their pomp had developed into mere vanity and foolishness, Karl invited these gay gentlemen to ride with him, and galloped through rain, mud and brambles, until all the fine clothes were spoilt.

The Great King was also a very abstemious man, hating nothing so much as drunkenness. At his evening meal, only four courses were served, the hunters themselves carrying round the roast meats on their spears, and while men ate, the

histories of ancient kings were read aloud or good words from the early Fathers of the Church.

IV

We are much indebted to Eginhard the Secretary for his account of Karl. In those days few men could read and write, but so zealous was the Great King for the advancement of the realm that he gathered learned men about him, such as Eginhard and the great Alcuin.

Alcuin or Ealhwine was an English monk, whose acquaintance Karl had first made at Rome. He was a prodigy of learning, and acted as tutor not only to the children of the imperial family, but to the Emperor himself.

Although a mature man, Charlemagne laboured hard at his studies. He learned Latin and Greek, astronomy and music, and took a great interest in theological discussion. He founded schools where he himself and his children and courtiers took lessons.

One thing the great Karl never accomplished, in spite of all his efforts, and that was to write a good hand. He practised the art zealously, even keeping a set of tablets always near him by day and under his pillow at night, so that any stray moment might be utilized for the purpose.

Naturally he met with many disappointments, for his warriors, accustomed as they were to the use of arms, were often found to despise the new learning as the portion of monks and weaklings and unworthy of their notice.

Karl, however, laboured on patiently, paying special honour to the learned bishops and monks, whom he endowed with rich lands, but at the same time kept a sharp watch that they did their duty, and left them no loophole for lapses into idleness. He loved to read with Alcuin the ancient Fathers of the Church, such as Jeronimus and Augustine, but be

persuaded few to join him in his studies, for his Franks found more pleasure in war and the chase than in books.

"Alas!" he cried one day, "if I only had twelve followers as learned as Jeronimus and Augustine, what great things I might do!" Then answered the pious Alcuin: "The Lord of heaven and earth had only two such men, and you desire to have twelve!"

The King would hold rigorous inspections of his schools to assure himself that everyone was working hard. Once he entered a school, and after listening to the answers of the children, and examining their written exercises, he divided those who had learnt well from those who were lazy, bidding the clever children stand on his right hand and the dunces on the left. It was then clearly seen that the industrious were the poor, and the lazy children were the sons of nobles. At this Karl was very wroth, and, turning to his right hand first, addressed them in the following words:

"I am glad, dear children, that you work thus hard. You have chosen the good part and shall not lose your reward. But you"—and here he turned to the young aristocrats on his left—"you sons of noblemen, useless dolls, who think scorn of this good learning, I take Cod to witness that your noble birth and high-bred faces have no value in my eyes, and unless you make good your loss with speed, you need expect no favour from me."

The fame of Karl's government and learning spread abroad and he was much respected by foreign rulers as well as by the chiefs of his own land. Even the Moors of Asia, Africa and Spain sent ambassadors to pay him homage. The famous Caliph Haroun al Raschid sent his congratulations when Karl was crowned Emperor, together with the present of an elephant, which caused some dismay among the astonished Franks, who had never seen such an animal before. He also sent costly Eastern spices and rich works of art, among which was a wonderful clock worked by water, that marked the hours

by little balls which fell ringing on to a metal plate, and knights on horseback who appeared through little doors.

In return Karl gave stately horses, hounds for hunting, and the fine linen and cloth for which the Frankish and Frisian women were famous.

Karl's piety too commended him to the Pope at Rome, for the cathedral at Aix was adorned with gold and jewels, with screens of brass from Rome and marbles from Ravenna. Night and morning the King worshipped there, and on great festivals would even rise at night to join the good monks at their prayers. Organs were brought from Italy, and masters of singing to instruct the choirs. He is said to have written several hymns, one of them being the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, which is sung at the ordination of our clergy. He enforced the payment of tithes in his realm, and he helped poor Christians, not only in his own kingdom, but in Syria, Egypt, Carthage and elsewhere. He sent rich gifts of gold, silver and gems to the great Church of Saint Peter at Rome, and aided Pope Leo III against his enemies who drove him from his capital. The Pope once sheltered for a whole year in the King's palace when conspirators lay in wait to seek his life. And the Holy Father was not ungrateful, for on Christmas Day in the year 800, he received Karl in his own Cathedral of Saint Peter, and there crowned him Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, which meant that he then became lord of France, Germany and Italy.

Eginhard thus described the scene:

"The King came into the basilica of the blessed Saint Peter, apostle, to attend the celebration of mass. At the moment when in his place before the altar he was bowing down to pray, Pope Leo placed upon his head a crown, and all the Roman people shouted: 'Long life and victory to Charles Augustus, crowned by God, the great and pacific emperor of the Romans!'"

Thus was founded the mighty Empire of Charlemagne, but though he did so much, Karl was unable to consolidate it,

and it was doomed to fall apart in the hands of his successors. But the greatness of his work is shown in the fact that he had given so much life and force to his large Empire before he died, that separate parts of it were enabled to maintain their own, and thus Germany, France and Italy each carved out a place and name for herself in the history of nations.

Charlemagne had three sons, Karl, Pippin and Ludwig. In the year 781 he had taken his two younger sons, aged four and three years of age, to Rome, where they were anointed by the Pope as King of Italy and King of Aquitaine respectively. On his return Karl sent the little Ludwig to take formal possession of his kingdom, and he entered Orleans clad in a tiny suit of armour and held upon a horse by his attendants. After his subjects had paid due homage to their baby sovereign he was taken back to his father's palace to be educated.

Toward the end of his life, Charlemagne suffered much loss. Within two years his sister, daughter and two elder sons died, leaving only Ludwig to succeed his illustrious father. In 818 Charlemagne felt that the end was drawing nigh, so he assembled all the chief men of his realm, in the cathedral at Aix, and there before them all Ludwig, or Louis as the French call him, took the great diadem from the altar and crowned himself Emperor of Rome.

"Blessed be the Lord," exclaimed Charlemagne, "who hath granted me to see my son sitting on my throne."

He then began to prepare for death, and, in the presence of priests and laymen, made his last will and testament. The poor were remembered with generosity, even the library which had been collected with so much pains was to be sold for their benefit. Of the three magnificent silver tables which Karl possessed, one with an engraving of the city of Constantinople on it was left to the Cathedral of Saint Peter at Rome, one with an engraving of the city of Rome was bestowed on the great cathedral at Ravenna, and his son Ludwig received the third, a masterpiece of workmanship, on which was engraved a map of the world and of the heavens

with all its stars. Two-thirds of Karl's private property he left to the Church within his realm.



THE CORONATION OF CHARLEMAGNE.

Throughout the autumn Karl continued his usual hunting expeditions, returning to Aix in November. In January he was prostrated with fever, but insisted on treating himself instead of trusting to the advice of physicians. Pleurisy set in, and on the seventh day of his illness, having received the Holy Communion, the Great King Karl passed away, on the 28th day of January 814, in the seventy-first year of his age, after a reign of forty-seven years.

He was buried with great pomp, his body being placed on a large marble throne in the cathedral at Aix. He was clad in the royal robes, the crown was upon his head, the sceptre in his hand, and the good sword, Joyeuse, girded to his side. A copy of the Gospels was laid upon his knees. Thus he was laid in the crypt under the great dome, and on the stone above were carved in Latin the following words:

"In this tomb reposes the body of Charles, great and orthodox emperor, who did gloriously extend the kingdom of

the Franks, and did govern it happily for forty-seven years. He died at the age of seventy years, in the year of the Lord 814, on the fifth of the kalends of February."

Two hundred years afterward the crypt was reopened by the emperor, Otto III, who found the remains of the Great King Karl as we have described.

An enormous black stone now lies over the place with the inscription 'Carlo Magno'; over it hangs a huge candelabrum of gold given by the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa.

Charlemagne's empire ended with his death, but he had checked the advance of Mohammedan invaders, conquered and converted heathen tribes and opened a road for glorious liberty and civilization, for learning and the Christian Faith.

CHAPTER V

THE DIVISION OF THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

The successors of the great Emperor Charlemagne were very inferior to him in all the qualities that make a great ruler. The Holy Roman Empire was at that period so large and the people so barbarous that it took a very strong hand to maintain any show of order, and a man of Charlie's genius to make any real progress. So his son Louis the Pious found the throne no bed of roses, for though he might have ruled a small realm with success, his father's unwieldy empire was far too much for his powers. Chiefs and leaders of the people, who had been sternly repressed and kept in check by the strong hand of Charlemagne, now bestirred themselves; old feuds were revived and more and more audacious raids and marauding expeditions undertaken, which evaded all Louis's weak efforts at pursuit, and reduced him to despair. His impotency was the subject of common gossip in the land.

Wise counsellors had recommended Louis's nephew Bernard as a more suitable candidate for the throne, and this had angered Louis, who, in a mood of irritation, caused Bernard's eyes to be put out with such barbarity that he died three days later.

But, as the surname which he earned shows, Louis was not altogether a bad man, and his cruel deed preyed upon his mind. He very soon realized, too, his deficiencies as a ruler, and after three years' weary struggle with refractory subjects, Louis announced that he meant to abdicate and divide his realm among his three sons. The three sons were called Lothair, Pippin and Louis, and according to the will of their father, Lothair, as the eldest, was to inherit the title of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, together with Italy and the land

along the Rhine as far as the sea; Pippin was to receive the country which we now call France, and Louis the territory which approximately corresponds to modern Germany.

But another power intervened. The Pope and clergy were only too pleased to have a weak emperor, since they themselves gained all the more power thereby, and when Louis told them that he was going to retire into a monastery they were very angry indeed and determined to prevent it. They told him that he was trying to evade responsibilities laid on his shoulders by God Himself, which surely was an impious deed, and so frightened the weak, superstitious Louis that he was soon convinced that he had sinned greatly. So he grasped the reins of government once more with trembling hands, and conciliated the clergy by doing open penance before the Diet of the Empire for his cruel deed in causing the death of his nephew Bernard.

After the death of his wife Irmingard, Louis married again, his choice falling upon Judith, the daughter of Count Welf of Bavaria. She was a beautiful and gifted woman, but imperious and revengeful, and the birth of her son Charles, afterward known as Charles the Bald, changed her into a clever intriguer whose sole aim was the elevation of her child to a throne equal to that of his step-brothers. This desire led her into intricate paths, and years of scheming were necessary before Queen Judith was able to supplant her husband's advisers by supporters of her own and her son's interests.

At last, when Charles was sixteen years old, a redistribution of the realm was proposed, whereupon Louis's three elder sons at once threw off their allegiance and made war upon their father.

The old advisers were recalled and reinstated; and made the most of their opportunities by blackening the character of the Queen, insinuating that she did not love her husband, and surrounding the King with monks and priests of the most bigoted type, who terrified him and reduced the already gloomy man to a state of settled melancholia.

When Lothair arrived from Italy, bringing the Pope with him, the three brothers advanced against their father, and met him, in the year 888, on the plain of Colmar. As the hosts stood facing each other, the Holy Father placed himself between them and solemnly blessed the armies.

But no one came forward to welcome him and the blessing was received but coldly, until he explained that he came in the cause of peace and justice and desired only reconciliation between father and sons.

The immediate result of the Holy Father's eloquence was the desertion of Louis's main body of troops, for they marched over to his sons during the night, and the next day the hapless old man found himself supported by a mere handful of nobles.

"Go ye also over to my sons," exclaimed the kindly old King; "for God forbid that one of you should lose life or limb for me."

The nobles wept with pity for his distress, but they went nevertheless, and Louis fell into the hands of his sons, and with his wife and her child rode into their camp. They received him with respect, separated him from Queen Judith, who was banished to Italy, and also from his youngest son, Charles, whom they immured in a cloister.

Pippin and the younger Louis then returned to their kingdoms, but Lothair was not content. He therefore conveyed his father to Soissons, and, lodging him there in the monastery of Saint Medardus, he summoned a council of bishops and abbots, who compelled the unhappy King to do penance for his sins.

After some hesitation he allowed himself to be led into the church, where he laid his armour and royal mantle on the altar, lay down on a bed of sackcloth, and read a long recital of his 'sins.' He had dishonoured the kingly office, blasphemed God, offended the Church. He was a stirrer up of strife, who had dared to make war on his own sons i Completely

humiliated as he was before the large congregation assembled in the church, the miserable old man was then invested with the penitent's robe, and the Archbishop of Rheims, whom he had himself raised from a very humble station, laid his hand on his head, and, with thirty other bishops, chanted the penitential psalms over this miserable sinner i

And all the while Lothair sat in his chair of state, feasting his eyes upon the spectacle of his own father's shame.

But threats and persuasion alike failed to force the old King to take the monastic vows, and when Pippin and Louis heard of the indignities that had been heaped upon their father, they returned in great wrath, for it was by no means their wish that he should be deprived of the imperial throne. Lothair was compelled to liberate his royal captive, and only received pardon on condition that he retreated at once to Italy and never left that country without asking permission; after which Louis the Pious was reinstated on his throne, with Judith at his aide. His first act was to propose a new division of the realm, excluding Lothair altogether and including the young Charles instead, but this arrangement was destined to failure, since Pippin died shortly after it was made.

Queen Judith then formed an alliance with Lothair, proposing to divide the land between him and her son, to the exclusion of the younger Louis, who of all his sons had perhaps been the most faithful to his father.

Lothair hastened to throw himself at the old King's feet, exclaiming, with tears, and in the words of the Bible: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He declared that he had come, not to claim a throne, but to beg for mercy and pardon for his sins. Louis embraced him tenderly, assured him of his forgiveness, and divided the kingdom between Lothair and Charles.

Louis the younger was naturally indignant, since he who had been the most filial had been treated worst of all, and

a bloody battle would have ensued between father and son, on the banks of the Rhine, had not the old King been taken so seriously ill that it became apparent to all that the end was near. He was borne to the island of Ingelheim, where a tent was hastily erected for his protection. Priests were summoned, among whom was his half-brother Drogo, who conjured him not to leave the world in anger against his son. "Since Louis cannot come to me," murmured the old King wearily, as he lay upon his couch, "I will do my duty toward him. I call you and God to witness that I freely forgive him, but your duty it is to announce to him that his conduct brings my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave."

Louis the Pious ended his life of misery and unrest on the 20th June, 840, in the sixty-third year of his age and the twenty-seventh of his reign. He was laid by the side of his mother in the cathedral at Mayence.

CHAPTER VI

THE RISE OF THE THREE GREAT KINGDOMS

I

After his father's death, Lothair, as lord of the Holy Roman Empire, endeavoured to exert some control over the actions of his two brothers, with the result that Charles and Louis formed an alliance and for three years waged war against him. Eventually a terrible battle was fought near Fontenoy in Burgundy, in which 100,000 men are said to have fallen, and in the year 848 the three brothers came to an agreement and signed the famous Treaty of Verdun. By this treaty the huge Empire of Charlemagne was finally divided into three portions.

Lothair received the title of Emperor, together with Italy, Switzerland and a strip of land along the Rhine which was called after him, 'Lotharii regnum,' and is still known as Lorraine or Lothringan. Charles the Bald became King of France, with all the territory west of Lorraine, and Louis, henceforth known as Louis the German, received the vast kingdom of Germany, and also the cities of Mayence, Spire and Worms, which were valuable for their rich vineyards.

Thus was the mighty Empire of Charlemagne rent asunder and dismembered, and at first thought his life-long work seems to have been wasted. But this was not so, for from its ashes rose three great nations famous in history, strong and vigorous and capable of development, and their vigour and capacity were entirely due to the commerce and manufactures, education and Christian worship, introduced and fostered by the never-tiring energy of the great Karl himself.

When Louis the German at last entered into possession of his East-Frankish or German realm, the kingdom was in a

perilous position, for although many of the tribes, such as the Swabians, Bavarians and Saxons, had lost their own dukes and learnt to obey one king, although they spoke dialects of the same language and had many customs in common, the empire was exposed to constant danger through the lack of strong natural boundaries, such as sea-coast and mountain-chain.

Scarcely had Louis ascended his throne at Ratisbon, on the Danube, which may therefore be called the first capital of Germany, than bands of fierce Norsemen, in swift galleys, swept down on the coasts and sailed up the rivers, plundering and harrying on every hand. They attacked the strongest cities, carried off captive the fairest women and children, robbed the burgher, pillaged the villager, then, springing into their ships, grasped the oars and sped away with a swiftness that eluded all pursuit.

These Norsemen came from the Scandinavian lands. They were bold and hardy; the sea was their element and war their delight. Not only did they make five expeditions into the German realm, but, with Rollo as their leader, they harried the north of France and conquered for themselves the district which we call Normandy. Other tribes conquered the north and east of England, and a couple of centuries later Rollo's illustrious descendant, William the Conqueror, took possession of England once more in the name of the Norsemen and united it to his realm of Normandy across the sea.

So great was the terror of the Germans at the inroads of these wild Vikings that mothers frightened refractory children into silence with the threat that the Norseman would carry them off in his ship; and a special prayer was added to the litany of the German church, *A furore Norimannorum, libera nos, Domine* (From the fury of the Norsemen, good Lord deliver us).

So Louis the German led a troublous life, ever at war with Norsemen or Slavonic tribes in a realm whose borders were uncertain and undefined. To defend these borders he was obliged to appoint powerful lords of the marches, and so

brought into prominence once more the mighty dukes whom Charlemagne had laboured to overthrow. They were a menace to him and his power and yet he could not dispense with their aid.

Louis tried also to improve the condition of Germany by instituting good law and order, but as he had rebelled against his father in his early days, so did his sons rebel against him, and it taxed his powers to their utmost to keep them within bounds.

Lothair, the son of the Emperor Lothair, died in the year 869, and his heirs were his uncles, Louis the German and Charles the Bald, King of the West Franks.

Louis claimed the title of Emperor, and each desired the lion's share of the realm, but before any definite arrangement could be made, the German King died, leaving his land to the care of his three sons.

These three waged a bloody war against their uncle of France respecting the succession of Lothair, and Charles was beaten in a battle fought at Andernach on the Rhine. But Louis's two elder sons died almost immediately, with the result that the youngest, who was named Charles the Fat, found himself in possession of the imperial title, together with the whole of Germany, Lorraine and Italy.

Charles was the weakest and least capable of Louis's sons. This weakness was shown especially in his dealings with the Norsemen, for instead of summoning his forces and fighting bravely against them, he bribed them with rich gifts of gold to leave the land. This proceeding caused great discontent in Germany, for the army was ashamed of bargaining in this manner with a foe which it was quite ready to face in the field. The money too was sorely needed to develop the country, which could not afford to let its riches depart overseas.

Yet in spite of his weakness, Charles was destined to rise to a position of even greater power before his death, for in the year 884, being thoroughly dissatisfied with their own

king, the young Charles the Simple, and desiring a leader who would protect them against the Norsemen, the West Franks offered him the crown of France. Thus for a short time the three realms were united once more under the Emperor Charles the Fat.

The hopes of the French, however, were bitterly disappointed, for Charles neglected to gather an army together against the Norsemen, preferring, as he had done before, to bribe them again and again with treasure, and he even began to buy them off with presents of land, since he made the Danish prince Godfrey a Duke of Friesland. When he actually proceeded so far as to open the city of Paris and the navigation of the Seine to the barbarians, his subjects would bear it no longer. A diet or council was convened at Tribur on the Rhine, near Oppenheim, and according to the manner of the nations of old, each realm elected a ruler of its own from among its most capable men. The Germans chose Arnulph, son of Karloman, one of Louis the German's sons, and thus the three realms began their separate existences once more.

Charles the Fat survived his disgrace but two months, dying in poverty and neglect in the year 888.

A difficult task awaited Arnulph, but he did not flinch, and set to work at once, driving the Norsemen from the land. So well did he succeed that, before three years were over, the strangers were thoroughly beaten, and after a last decisive battle, they judged it prudent to avoid the Rhine altogether and confine themselves to their conquests in the northwest of France.

Yet another terrible danger threatened the realm of Germany, still struggling to maintain its existence. This was the wild hordes of savages calling themselves Magyars, whom the Germans called Hungarians or Huns, and believed to be the descendants of the terrible race of Attila who had devastated the lands of their forefathers.

The Magyars had the same stunted forms which old historians had described, and the same hideous faces. They too ate raw meat rendered tender by the day's ride between the horse and the person of the rider, and they also practised the same horrible cruelties.

This terrible race had been summoned into Europe by Leo, Emperor of the East, to assist him in his wars against the Bulgarians, and Arnulph made the same mistake by calling upon them for aid, little dreaming that they would prove the same scourge to Germany as the Danes were to the English.

Zwentibold, the King of Moravia, had thrown off his allegiance to Arnulph, although he had just been given the land of Bohemia in addition to his own kingdom. Wishing to attack him on two sides at once, Arnulph had called in the dreaded Magyars for the purpose. Zwentibold was certainly reduced to submission, but the heathen hordes had come to stay.

Nevertheless Arnulph was able to undertake two expeditions into Italy, where he acquitted himself well, and, although the gates of Rome were closed against him, he forced his way in, received the imperial crown at the hands of the Pope, and compelled the Italians to renew their oath of fealty. In the month of November or December, in the year 899, Arnulph died (of poison some suspected, administered by the vindictive Italians), leaving behind him, as heir, his son Louis the Child, a boy of six years. But the terrible inroads of the Magyars on the one hand, and the increasing power of the great feudal lords on the other, made the poor lad's task too difficult for him to accomplish.

The condition of the realm was deplorable; the royal dignity had sunk in the estimation of the nation, the nobles fought and harried at will, and families revived blood-feuds that had been long forgotten, whilst the invincible Magyars devastated the land, burnt villages and monasteries, and carried off men, women and children into slavery.

'Woe to the land where the King is a child,' found an echo in every heart, and in none more sadly than that of the young ruler, who by the time he was eighteen sank, broken-hearted and despairing, into his grave.

So passed away the last of the Carlovingian Kings in Germany.

II

The unity of the nation was then threatened with destruction, for Germany consisted mainly of five great peoples, the Franks, Saxons, Lothringians, Swabian and Bavarians; and since there was little cohesion among them, it seemed highly probable that each duke would declare himself independent. Fortunately the Frankish and Saxon lords were united on one object, which was that a capable king must be elected at once to hold together the German realm. The crown was offered to Otto, Duke of Saxony, but on account of advanced age, he refused the honour and proposed Count Conrad of Franconia instead, a man highly esteemed for courage and fine common-sense, who would raise the kingly dignity in the eyes of the world.

For six years Conrad reigned, and a turbulent six years they were for him, since the power of the nobles had grown to such an extent that he found it almost impossible to curb their insolence.

The old Duke Otto had ruled both Saxony and Thuringia, but Conrad desired to deprive his son Henry of some of his lands. The young duke was much beloved of his subjects, and had not the slightest intention of submitting to his king's wishes. "Where are my thirty regiments to lodge?" he demanded haughtily, when Conrad commanded him to yield and lead out his men from the fortress of Grona. And Conrad retreated at the report of so large an army, leaving Henry in undisturbed possession of his lands. He did not learn

until too late that instead of thirty regiments, Henry had only had five men-at-arms with him in the castle! Conrad's life was drawing to a close; despite his utmost endeavour, he had failed to bring peace to Germany. But he was a true patriot, and showed his magnanimity nowhere so nobly as on his death-bed.



THE HUNS.

The heir to the throne was his brother Eberhard, but Conrad loved his land better than the aggrandizement of his own house. He knew that his brother would succeed no better

than himself, and summoned him to his bedside to receive his dying wishes.

Dear brother," he said, "I feel that I am now dying. We are mighty men in worldly possessions, we can lead armies into the field and have all the wealth that glorifies the position of a king. But we lack the noble virtues of our forefathers, and the one who possesses them in full measure is Henry the Duke of Saxony. The Saxons alone can save the land. Take therefore my jewels, the sacred lance, the golden bracelets, the purple mantle of royalty and the sword and crown of ancient kings, and carry them to Henry, Duke of Saxony, choosing him as Emperor of the Germans, since he alone is capable of ruling them as they deserve."

Eberhard did as his brother commanded, swearing homage to Henry and offering friendship and help. So the German crown passed from the Frankish people into the hands of the Saxons.

Henry was hunting birds in the Harz Mountains when he received Eberhard's message, and from this circumstance he gained the name of Henry the Fowler, by which he is known in history.

In the year 919, an assembly was convened of the Franconian and Saxon nobles, who elected him King of Germany, and the Archbishop approached in order to anoint and crown him according to ancient custom. This Henry refused, declaring that it was enough for him to be elected by the people, and chosen by the grace of God, and that he was unworthy to be anointed or crowned like mighty kings.

Henry next proceeded in a business-like manner to deal one by one with the enemies of the land. He approached the Dukes of the five great provinces, and by persuasion, threats or armed force, brought them all into submission as loyal servants to their king and country. They were the more closely bound to his interests by judiciously arranged marriages with the royal family, and to prevent any further treason, Henry

sent a count palatine into each dukedom, who acted as imperial judge, and, incidentally, as a check upon any proceedings contrary to imperial interests. Afterward he turned his attention to the Hungarian invaders, and having had the good fortune to capture their king in war, he released him on condition that a nine years' truce should be observed.

This nine years Henry spent in organizing his army and the defences of the land, as the Hungarians did not understand the conquest of fortified towns, and by the end of the prescribed period he felt himself so secure that tradition says he sent to the barbarian king a miserable mangy dog instead of the yearly tribute, with the message that it was the only offering he would receive from him henceforward.

The Hungarians then assembled their hordes together at Keuschberg, on the Saalbe, but the whole army was either slain or driven away in flight and Henry fell on his knees in thanksgiving, for the danger of foreign invasion was averted for many years.

In 986 Henry died in his sixtieth year. As he felt the end approaching he called his wife Matilda to his bed and addressed her with great affection. "I thank Jesus Christ that I do not survive thee," he said. "No man ever possessed a more faithful and pious wife. Thou didst ever moderate my wrath, lead me on the path of justice and admonish me to show mercy to the oppressed. I commend thee and our children, together with my parting spirit, to our Almighty God."

So passed Henry the Fowler. He had been a good king to Germany, consolidating the Empire and ridding it of foes. Perhaps his most important work within the realm was the foundation of fortified towns, where he induced the people to serve in rotation, and so accustomed them to live the burgher life. The towns increased in wealth and power and became a very important factor in the future history of Germany, as we shall presently see.

III

Henry's eldest son, Otto, was twenty-four years of age when his father died, and he was crowned with more than usual pomp with the golden crown of Charlemagne in the Cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle.

His reign was troubled, for not only did the nobles revolt against him, but his brother Henry turned traitor, and also his son Ludolph. Otto was a brave and wise man, however, and surmounted all these difficulties successfully, for he knew when to reason, when to threaten and when to punish swiftly and sternly. Having settled the internal affairs of his kingdom, Otto subdued both Slays and Danes, and even found leisure to interfere in Italian politics. Since the family of Charlemagne had become extinct, many claimants to the crown of Italy had come forward, and the miserable kingdom was rent with strife.

Berengar, Duke of Ivrea, was desirous of obtaining a throne for his son, so he seized upon the person of Adelaide, widow of the last king, and shut her up in a castle on the Lake of Garda until she should consent to marry him.

The unhappy lady persisted in her refusal, however, and was rescued by a bold monk named Brother Martin, who undermined the castle wall. For days she wandered disguised in male attire, hiding in thickets and corn-fields, until she managed to communicate with friends, who took her to the castle of Canossa for safety. Here the Duke besieged her, and, terrified at her position, she sent to ask help of Otto.

Otto's first wife, Edith, daughter of Edmund, King of England, was dead, so he advanced into Italy, raised the siege and carried off Adelaide to Pavia, where he married her, and proclaimed himself King of the Lombards. On his return home, he hoped for a time of tranquillity after his fifteen years of constant warfare, but this was not to be, for in 955 the Hungarians once more entered Germany in such enormous numbers that they themselves declared that unless the skies fell upon them, or the earth opened, no power could withstand them.

They took up their position on a plain near Augsburg, and Otto summoned together his whole army, received with them the Holy Sacrament, and made a vow to Saint Lawrence, whose day it was, that if he would grant victory, a bishopric should be founded at Merseburg. He then received the blessing of the Bishop of Augsburg and, surrounded by his bodyguard, who bore the sacred spear, supposed to be the one that had pierced our Lord's side, and holding the banner with the representation of the Archangel Michael, Otto waited, while the Hungarians crossed the River Lech and attacked the Bohemians in the rear. The discomfited Bohemians retreated, allowing their baggage to be captured, but Duke Conrad of Franconia, a former traitor who had joined the prince Ludolph against his father, sprang forward, crying: "To-day I atone for ancient treason," and was so successful as to press back the invaders and retake both baggage and prisoners.

The Hungarians were slain by hundreds and thousands, and the plain was heaped thick with dead and dying. For two days the Germans pursued them, and so great were their losses that one historian tells us only seven were left alive from two divisions which had consisted of 60,000 men.

The Germans were elated, and Otto's feats on the field made him the hero of the nation. Many of their leaders were killed, among them the bold Duke Conrad. The victory had cost them dear, but the Hungarians never again troubled Germany. Soon afterward they embraced Christianity, and with the faith of Christ came gentler customs and a system of law and order.

Germany had grown tranquil, and Otto was enabled to further civilization and advance the cause of education and religion, found many bishoprics and colonize the districts of the heathen Wendish tribes with Christians. In this good work he was supported by his youngest brother, Bruno, Bishop of Cologne, a wise and learned prelate, who restored the schools of Charlemagne, himself teaching in them, and so provided a

constant stream of trained teachers, who spread civilization through the country.

In Otto's reign were discovered the famous silver mines in the Harz Mountains by a certain knight whose horse pawed the ground and loosened a stone of silver ore, and this opened up a new source of industry for the Germans. Otto had dispatched his son Ludolph, after his rebellion, to Lombardy, where he had died of fever, owing to the unhealthiness of the climate. Duke Berengar then seized the opportunity of again resisting Otto's authority, and the oppressed Lombards sent to plead for help. So Otto entered Italy once more, and, deposing Berengar, was again crowned at Pavia. From Pavia he marched to Rome, where he took prisoner the Pope John XII, by desire of the Romans, who were shocked at his profligate life. Leo VIII was elected in his stead, and crowned Otto in the great Church of Saint Peter, declaring him and his successors kings of Italy and nominators of the Pope.

Since the south of Italy belonged to Nicephorus, the Eastern Emperor, Otto sent Luitprand, Bishop of Cremona, to negotiate a marriage between Otto's young son and the Princess Theophania. But the good bishop was much displeased with his reception, and described the potentate of the East as a "little roundabout, fat man, so black withal that if you met him by chance in a wood he would serve you."

Nicephorus objected strongly to Otto's encroachments in Italy, found fault with German modes of warfare, with German weapons, with German soldiers, who, he declared, were only brave when they were drunk. Insulted and disgusted with all he saw and heard, Luitprand turned his back on Constantinople, declaring that he would never again set foot in "that perjured, lying, cheating, rapacious, greedy, avaricious town."

Nicephorus, however, was deposed a few years afterward, and not only did his successor grant a daughter in marriage to Otto's son, but ceded the whole of his possessions in Lower Italy to the German Empire.

So in the evening of his days Otto enjoyed the prospect of a realm raised to such a position of honour as it had never enjoyed since the days of Charlemagne. His father, Henry the Fowler, and his predecessor, Conrad, had only been kings of Germany. They had never received their crowns at the hands of the popes, and were consequently never considered emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. Thenceforth the prince elected as their ruler by the German diet became also King of Italy and Rome, though he did not assume the title of Emperor until he had received his crown from the Pope's hands.

Otto's services to Europe were acknowledged by foreign potentates, who sent ambassadors with greetings and rich gifts, and surnamed him 'the Great.' In the full enjoyment of his well-earned honours, he died in the year 978, and was buried in the cathedral at Magdeburg by the side of his first wife, Edith of England.

By this time France was a thriving kingdom in itself and Germany was the pillar of the newly restored Holy Roman Empire. It embraced modern Germany, together with Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands, but Italy remained a troublesome possession, ever dissatisfied and ever ready for revolt from the jurisdiction of a northern lord.

Otto the Second, who was called the Red, was only nineteen years of age when he succeeded his father on the throne. Scarcely had he reigned a year before Duke Henry of Bavaria rebelled, but was conquered in the field and taken prisoner.

The following year Lothair, King of France, sent an army to recover Lorraine, boasting proudly that his horses were so numerous that they would drink dry the rivers of Germany. To this Otto replied that he would pave the whole country of France with straw hats, referring to the hats which the Saxon soldiers wore over their helmets.

The French reached the palace at Aix-la-Chapelle first, and turned the golden eagle on the roof so that its head faced

the kingdom of France, but Otto's forces soon routed them and drove them in full flight to Paris.

He was unable to take the city, however, so made a treaty allowing Charles, brother of King Lothair, to hold Lorraine from him as a fief. Otto could not rest content even though his enemies were subdued, for his mother, the Italian princess, Adelaide, had inspired him with a fervent love for Italy, and circumstances soon arose which summoned him thither. By no means displeased, for the Romans had deposed one pope and elected another, he entered Rome and settled all differences to his own satisfaction by means of inviting the citizens to a banquet and there seizing upon and putting to death all those whom he deemed dangerous.

In the following year, 988, Otto died, and his little son, Otto III, who was only three years old, reigned in his stead, under the care of his mother, grandmother and Gerbert, Abbot of Magdeburg, one of the greatest scholars of his day.

Duke Henry of Bavaria took the opportunity to make an attempt to seize the crown for himself, and was so far successful as to obtain possession of the young king's person. But the Germans had by no means forgotten what Otto the Great had done for their country, and had no intention of deserting his little grandson, so they remained firm in their allegiance.

At their head was Willigis, the Archbishop of Mayence, a man of sense and fidelity, who had risen in life. His father was a poor wheelwright, and that he might never forget the fact, Willigis took for his coat-of-arms a cart-wheel with the motto: Willigis, Willigis, forget not thine origin." Henry's claims to the throne met with such determined resistance that he very wisely restored the little King to his mother and took the oath of fealty, receiving back in exchange his duchy of Bavaria.

Young Otto was a promising child, and made such good progress under his tutor Gerbert that at the age of fifteen

he was reputed to be of unusual intelligence and attainments, and was able to assume the reins of government. He was a dreamy and imaginative youth, and, like his father, imbued with a deep love for Italy. He hoped to restore the glory of the great Roman Empire and make Rome his residence and the capital of his realm.

He was scarcely sixteen years old when he undertook his first journey to the great city, to receive the imperial crown from the Pope and to view his Italian possessions. He was crowned with due solemnity, but the Romans had ever hated the idea of being ruled by German lords, and as usual, incited thereto by their pope, they broke into open rebellion as soon as Otto's back was turned. He immediately retraced his steps, deposed the Pope, and elevated his own tutor, the wise Gerbert, to that position, under the name of Sylvester II.

The year 1000, which was then approaching, was anticipated with awe by many thousands of people, since they thought that the world would come to an end at that date. Quarrels ceased, warriors laid down their arms and betook themselves to prayer and penance. Otto himself made a pilgrimage into Poland, and founded a church in honour of Saint Adalbert. When he returned to Germany he made another pilgrimage to Aix-la-Chapelle, to pray at the tomb of Charlemagne, which he caused to be opened, and he saw sitting in his chair the body of the Great Karl, just as it had been placed there nearly two hundred years before.

The year 1000 passed, and as the world continued on its way, in 1001 Otto made yet another journey to Italy, intending to take up his residence in Rome as the capital of the Empire.

A violent insurrection at once broke out and Otto was for some time in extreme danger. But he fearlessly faced the excited mob, and, coming out among them, addressed them with such fervour and enthusiasm that the excitable Italians threw themselves at his feet, and with tears kissed his robe, imploring pardon for their disloyalty. The next year Otto died

suddenly of fever or, as some suspected, of poison administered by the Italians, and was buried at Aix-la-Chapelle by the side of the great King Karl.

The only representative of the Saxon royal house then left was Henry of Bavaria, son of that Henry who had tried to seize the crown from the last Otto in his babyhood. He succeeded in gaining the German crown, but was never welcomed in Rome, even though he undertook three expeditions thither. He had none of Otto's love for Italy, and spent his short reign in war with the Italians, Poles and Bohemians, and in disputes at home with the various dukes, counts and barons, whose power had grown enormously during the last few reigns.

As Henry relied on the Church for aid against the nobles, and granted large fiefs to the clergy, he was in high favour with them, and they honoured him with the title of Henry the Saint. He died in the year 1024, and with him died out the dynasty of Saxon Kings in Germany.

CHAPTER VII

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

I

The law that governed Germany, and indeed all Western Europe in the Middle Ages, was the law of war. Might was right. The strong man could flourish so long as his strength remained, and the weak were obliged to creep under the protection of the strong to maintain their existence at all.

Under the later Roman Empire a freeman who owned no land would find it convenient to seek shelter with some powerful neighbour, who would feed, clothe and protect him from injury in return for faithful service.

The Germans had a custom which strongly resembled that of the Romans. Tacitus tells us that young German warriors used to seek some popular chieftain and live in his hall, fight his battles and do him personal service in return for his support.

The bond between lord and retainer was very sacred, and was strengthened by an oath.

With the invasion of barbarians the position of a small landowner became extremely dangerous, and many of them fled to the monasteries for protection. They would offer their estates to the monks, together with a small annual payment, on condition that the former owner was allowed to cultivate his fields as before. Thus, although he no longer owned the land, he could enjoy its products, and seek the protection of the abbot in time of danger.

Sometimes a small landowner would offer himself and his property to a more powerful neighbour in the same way. Large landowners often found it convenient to divide their

estates and bestow them on vassals who would follow them to war, help to man their castles in time of siege or assist them in difficulty. Land granted on these terms was called a fief, and this system of exchange of protection and land in return for service was called feudalism.

Feudalism was not introduced in any definite way, but it grew up gradually because it was convenient and often necessary, and by the thirteenth century it had become a rule in Western Europe that there should be no land without its lord.

These fiefs seem to have been hereditary, and the new heir would come and pay homage due to his overlord to renew the contract for another lifetime. The great vassals would hold land directly from the King, who would demand fidelity and certain services, but the bulk of the nation owed little to the King directly, as they lived under the protection and within the jurisdiction of lesser lords.

In order to rank as a noble a man had to be the holder of so much land that he only needed to perform honourable service, such as that of warrior or attendant on his superior lord, and not to labour on the land like the serfs. The sons of noblemen were usually sent into the houses of other nobles that they might learn to serve their lords and be educated in the martial exercises of the time.

II

Whenever a convenient spot is found near the sea-coast, at the mouth of a river, or at the junction of two roads, population tends to gather together for convenience' sake. The presence of a community of people always attracts others, and to the fishermen or tillers of the soil are added artisans and merchants, until a town rises into existence.

From the earliest days, however, the Germans had had a natural antipathy to town life. In ancient times a man would deliberately choose a position for his homestead out of sight and beyond call of his neighbours, and those cities which were built by the Romans on the Rhine and the Danube, they laid in ruins. It was not until the reign of Henry the Fowler that the towns began to take any important place in the national life, but during the terrible Hungarian invasions he encouraged the people to live together for mutual protection against the enemy, knowing well that the Huns did not understand how to wage war against fortified cities.

He instructed the people to build walls and ramparts round their towns and to dig deep moats. Within the town itself he made them construct fortresses or burgs, from which the dwellers gained the name of 'Burghers.' Since the people were unwilling to live within the high walls, Henry used to make them cast lots, and every ninth man had to do service there in his turn, and one-third of the corn was stored there to be ready to withstand a siege in time of war. Moreover Henry decreed that all courts of law, assemblies and councils were to be held within city walls, and a square was to be cleared for the holding of markets. In this manner he accustomed the people to town life, and in his reign there grew up the cities of Quedlinburg, Goslar, Merseburg, Meissen, Magdeburg and many others.

Henry's policy in this respect was followed by his successors, notably the Ottos, who saw in the towns a sure refuge against the increasing powers of nobles of the Empire. For this reason they granted charters to the townspeople, which conferred rights of self-government, such as had only before been enjoyed by dukes and bishops.

So the towns grew in importance, and chose the chief of their men to govern them, and a mayor to be their leader. The citizens were armed in time of war, and displayed banners with the arms of their town, and they acquired the right of coining their own money and levying tolls and taxes. At first

the artisans were looked down upon with scorn by the free burgesses of the town who composed its aristocracy. But as time passed, guilds were formed and the tradesmen themselves rose to a position of much importance in the life of the city.

The description of these early towns sounds scarcely attractive to modern people, for the streets were narrow and crooked, unpaved and uncleaned, and stepping-stones were often used, from one to another of which the people must spring if they wished to keep clear of the mud. The upper stories of the houses projected over the ground floor, thereby robbing the street of light and air. Towers were built as a protection over the town gates, which were shut at night, and those inhabitants who wished to stir abroad at such seasons carried a lantern with them to light their way. The houses were generally built of wood, and were small, with oriel windows and gables, and adorned on the outside with pious texts and proverbs and occasional carving. Such were the German towns, which progressed rapidly in wealth and culture, and became famous throughout Europe. The tradesmen in medieval towns not only manufactured their goods, but acted as merchants too. For mutual protection they formed guilds, some of which exist, in name at least, to this day, and had it not been for these guilds the workmen would have been defenceless in the hands of feudal lords.

Trade was most active in the south of Europe at such centres as Venice, Genoa, Barcelona and the southern French cities, but the Germans soon learnt to value the silks and porcelains of China, the Venetian glassware and Eastern carpets, and exchanged their own commodities for them. They traded usually with Venice, bringing the goods over the Brenner Pass and down the Rhine, or transporting them by sea to Flanders.

Hamburg, Lubeck and Bremen carried on considerable trade with England. Augsburg and Nuremburg in the south of Germany became important because of their situation on the trade route between Italy and the north. Pirates, however, were

numerous in the North Sea, and were often members of the restless warlike aristocracy; variety of coinage caused confusion and loss, feudal lords demanded a share in the profits, and robbers of all kinds infested the roads. The rich merchants soon found that they were often robbed, and so, led by the great cities of Lubeck and Hamburg, they made a league together for mutual protection. Thus was formed the Hanseatic League. Lubeck was the leader, but many other cities joined, among which were Cologne and Brunswick, Dantzic and Bremen, as many as seventy being members of the league at a time.



A BIT OF OLD NUREMBERG.

This league controlled a settlement in London near London Bridge, and others at Bergen, Wisby and even Novgorod in Russia.

They levied an army of citizens and granted sufficient escort to travellers from one city to another, and even maintained a fleet to protect their merchants from pirates. A town was often strong enough to offer protection to a

persecuted king, as Worms once opened her gates to Henry IV, and burghers ventured to risk life and limb in his defence.

III

We have already seen how large a part was played in medieval life by the Church. In an age when such institutions as workhouses, hospitals and schools did not exist, the influence of the Church on social life was extremely important. The monks and nuns were the friends of the poor and oppressed. They nursed the sick, gave alms to those in distress and cared for the serfs on their own estates. Their agricultural work was a great benefit to their country, for they drained the marshes, built roads and bridges, and chose out the most suitable sites for vineyards and gardens. Much of their time was spent in study and in copying old manuscripts, which have by this means been preserved. They also kept valuable records of the events of their own day. In an age of warfare they carried on schools where those who shrank from a life of violence might devote themselves to study.

Constant quarrels, it is true, took place between the nobles and the Church. A dying noble would frequently bequeath a portion of his property for the service of God, hoping by this means to obtain salvation for his guilty soul, and an undignified struggle would then take place between his heirs and the priests for the possession of the property. But nevertheless the Church served as a reminder to the man of the world of the existence of such virtues as forgiveness, mercy and humility.

Very important too was the influence of the parish priests. These men did not live in communities like the monks, nor in seclusion like anchorites, but they had the care of parishes or districts, and laboured among the inhabitants. The priest officiated in the parish church, where he baptized,

married anti buried his parishioners, heard confessions and granted absolution.

The parish church was the centre of social life, and the priest a man of great influence among his people. He was the guardian of his people, and it was his duty to prevent bad characters from settling in his parish and to keep it free from heretics and sorcerers. He was also expected to take the necessary steps to prevent infection in times of plague and sickness, and to superintend the seclusion of lepers.

He was supported by the land belonging to his church, and by the tithes gathered from the parishioners, but sometimes these sources of income were in the hands of a neighbouring monastery or even some influential layman, and the poor parish priests often received a mere pittance, hardly enough to keep soul and body together.

Life must have been very monotonous then, for men had little chance of improving their position, and in the country the population was self-supporting, and so had little inducement to travel. The lords of the manors would give out long strips of land to their serfs, who might not own these fields, but could not be deprived of them so long as they served their lord and paid his dues. They generally worked a certain number of days each week on their lord's land, and spent the rest of their time in cultivating their own.

At certain seasons in the year these serfs would be called upon for tribute, which was generally paid in produce. A peasant would give his lord some sheaves of corn at harvest, eggs and fowls at Easter, and, if he sold his cattle for money, a small proportion of his profit was claimed. These peasants might not move from their land, but passed with it to the new owner when it changed hands. The wives and daughters of the peasants gave their services too, spinning, weaving, baking and brewing, and consequently the whole community was self-supporting, producing its own food and clothing.

Life was certainly monotonous, and often miserable. The houses of the peasants sometimes contained but one room, with no chimney, and ill lighted by a single small window. The larger farms had quarters for the family, cow-stalls and stables, granary and threshing-floor, all under the same roof.

Methods of agriculture were exceedingly crude, and the crops were consequently poor. The land was generally divided into long strips, two-thirds of which was cultivated, while the remaining third lay fallow. Thus all land rested for one in every time years, and recovered its vitality.

Obviously such methods could only exist in a country where land was plentiful. As soon as the population increased, the Germans were forced to cultivate their land more carefully, and study more scientific methods of agriculture, since the badly tilled soil could no longer produce enough food for their needs.

CHAPTER VIII

HENRY THE EMPEROR

I

When Henry the Saint died in the year 1024, the Saxon dynasty was ended, and there was no direct descendant to succeed him. On his death-bed he had recommended as emperor Conrad of Franconia, but a younger cousin of the same name also put forward a claim to the throne.

Since the days of Henry the Fowler, the Germans had elected a suitable king from among their princely families, but the Saxon dynasty being extinct, they met on the banks of the Rhine between Mayence and Oppenheim to choose their ruler. Duke, counts, archbishops, bishops and abbots met together, attended by a vast concourse of laymen, and encamped on both sides of the river; Franks and Lothringians on the left bank, Saxons, Swabian and other Germans on the right.

The moment was critical, since both candidates had claims of some weight to the imperial throne. Both were grandsons of the old Duke Conrad of Franconia, who had married a daughter of Otto I, and the elder had been recommended by the late emperor, but the younger had a strong title, in that he was the son of an elder brother and was a man of unusual skill and ability. But the elder Conrad averted the danger by persuading his cousin that it was surely better for one of them to be merely the relative of the reigning emperor than that the crown should pass into a different family altogether on account of their disputes. So the two princes embraced before the whole assembly and swore friendship, each promising to support the one who should be elected by the people.

Conrad the elder was chosen with only two dissentient votes, and he placed his cousin by his side amid the acclamations of all present. The Archbishop of Mayence anointed him king as Conrad II, and the nobles took the oath of allegiance. The new Emperor made a tour of his dominions, redressing wrongs as he went. He then visited Italy, where he found the people on the point of electing the King of France as their ruler, since they thought that the hereditary right had died out with the Saxon dynasty.

Conrad disputed this claim stoutly and remained in Italy for some time, being detained before Pavia for a whole year. At length he reached Rome, and was crowned with much pomp and ceremony. Two foreign kings were present at the coronation, Rudolph of Burgundy and the great Canute, King of Scandinavia and England. With the latter Conrad formed a great friendship, and Canute gave his daughter as a wife to Conrad's son, while Conrad granted him the province of Schleswig in return. When the Emperor returned home, he set to work to redress the wrongs that he found existing there. He was an able monarch, and during his reign made several laws that were of great benefit to the German people. He it was who made the smaller fiefs hereditary both in Italy and Germany. Hitherto the vassals who had received fiefs from more powerful lords, not directly from the Crown, had been completely at the mercy of their masters, and abuses had been of frequent occurrence. But Conrad provided that every fief should be regularly transmitted from father to son, so that the vassals could not be suddenly deprived of their lands, as had often happened. Also he provided that vassals should be tried by a jury of their equals instead of being at the sole mercy of their lord, and gave them the right of appeal to the Emperor himself, should they be dissatisfied with their treatment.

During Conrad's reign the Empire gained more territory, since the kingdom of Burgundy was annexed to the Crown, a kingdom which included Provence, Dauphin, Savoy and parts of Switzerland. Conrad II died in 1089, and was

succeeded by his son Henry or Heinrich III, a young man of twenty-two. Like his father, he was an able man and contributed his share toward the building up of the German Empire. He exercised absolute authority over Church as well as State.

After quelling rebellions in Bohemia and Burgundy, Henry entered Italy, where the people had elected three popes, and now appealed to him to arbitrate among them. He listened to the claims of the three, and then deposed them all and placed a German, known as Clement II, on the papal throne. Clement's death occurred not long afterward, when Henry elected Bruno, a relation of his own, as Pope Leo IX, and this election took place actually in Germany, at the Diet of Worms, and was afterward confirmed by the Roman clergy and people. During Henry's reign also further territory was added to the German dominions, in that Hungary was annexed to the Crown.

Henry I, King of France, ventured to dispute the possession of Burgundy and Lorraine in the year 1056, and Henry of Germany challenged him to single combat at Ivois, throwing down his gauntlet, as was the custom at that time. But the French king was too deeply impressed by his meeting with his brother sovereign to dare to accept it, and he quitted the place at once, and returned to his own capital without pressing his claim.

In the same year gloom fell upon Germany, for the land was devastated by famine and pestilence, and shocks of earthquake terrified the people, who murmured secretly to each other that these were omens of evil to come. And in the midst of Germany's gloom and misery, her king died, in the thirty-ninth year of his age.

II

Henry IV was only five years old when his father died, and he was left in the care of his mother Agnes, who, as regent, ruled the land in his stead. This lady was of a devout and pious nature, and possessed much intelligence, but her knowledge of the world was too limited to allow her to cope successfully with the enemies of her house, for when the strong hand of Henry III was removed, the nobles, who had previously been kept in check, saw an opportunity of reviving old customs of lawlessness and resistance to authority.

Agnes made a fatal mistake in her dealings with these nobles, in that she tried to conciliate her enemies by granting them land and privileges instead of sternly repressing them. Her gentle, unsuspecting nature caused her to imagine that by this means she would make friends and bind the hostile nobles to her interest, and she never realized that she was dealing with men incapable of gratitude, men whose oaths were made to be broken, and to whom the word of honour was a mockery and derision.

One of these men, named Rudolph of Rheinfelden, had carried off her daughter, a child of only eleven years, but instead of punishing him for his crime, Agnes bestowed on him the dukedom of Swabia and the vice-royalty of Burgundy. But Swabia had already been promised by Henry III to Berthold of Zahringen, and he protested vigorously and not too respectfully against what he considered an infringement of his rights, and was only pacified by the gift of the dukedom of Carinthia and Verona in Italy. Other dukedoms, such as those of Lorraine and Bavaria, also fell into the hands of enemies, and Agnes soon found herself and her son surrounded by a band of ambitious men, whose only care was the aggrandizement of themselves and their own families.

Agnes in her distress sought the advice of her trusty friend and counsellor, Henry, Bishop of Augsburg, but this only made matters worse, for, although an upright and just

man, the good Bishop was stern and inflexible, and his interference caused more strife than had existed before.

The poor Queen was maligned and misunderstood on every hand. Each noble grumbled at his share of the spoil, and they only united to charge their liege lady with favoritism and to form a plot to deprive her of the guardianship of her little son.

At the head of these malcontents was Anno, Archbishop of Cologne, and he it was who finally succeeded in accomplishing their desire. He invited the Queen to celebrate the Easter festival at the island of Kaiserwerth, which lies in the Rhine, not far from Dusseldorf. The Archbishop arrived to pay his respects with much state in a beautiful ship, and the nobles who accompanied him sumptuously feasted at a magnificent banquet, after which he invited the young King to inspect his ship. Unsuspicious of treachery, the Queen-mother allowed the boy to go on board, and Henry, who was then twelve years old, was rowed out in a small boat, and clambered on board, eager to inspect the handsome ship.

Delighted as he was with what he saw, the young King was already too familiar with danger to be easily thrown off his guard, and he soon perceived that the rowers had taken their places and had swung the ship out into the swiftly flowing stream.

He looked up, found himself surrounded by prelates and nobles, realized their intention of separating him from his mother, and with a spring the plucky lad reached the side of the vessel and flung himself headlong into the river.

The current was running too swiftly and strongly for so young a swimmer to battle against it, and he would have been drowned, had not Egbert, Count of Brunswick, sprung into the stream and dragged him back again to the ship. In vain did the agonized mother implore her attendants to interfere, for the

Archbishop was already speeding up the river, and pursuit was hopeless.

His captors sought to soothe the young King with flattering words and promises, and they carried him safely to Cologne, where he was placed under the guardianship of the Archbishop, who proclaimed himself Regent of the Empire.

Anno was a stern and gloomy man, and treated the young captive with severity, obliging him to live a life almost as strict as that of the cloister, and educating him with harshness and rigid formality. Subjected to this treatment, the boy learnt to hate his guardian and to dissemble his feelings, and the natural spontaneity of childhood gave way to reserve and a bitter hatred of his taskmaster. But Anno knew quite well that plenty of others existed who would gladly take possession of the young King's person, so he prevailed on the nobles to pass a law saying that the King should remain in the hands of the bishop in whose diocese he should reside, and that such bishop should be entrusted with the administration of the kingdom.

After this Anno arranged that Henry should reside for a while at the court of Adalbert, Archbishop of Bremen, and the two ecclesiastics should administer the affairs of the kingdom conjointly. This he did, hoping to retain a portion of power in his own hands, lest, striving to maintain the whole, he should lose all.

Adalbert was a man of very different caliber from Anno, having nothing in common with him except love of power and desire for plunder. He loved luxury and display, and pleased himself by dazzling his neighbours with the glittering magnificence of his banquets, his enormous suite of servants and the dependents that crowded his court. He was very extravagant, and would waste great sums of money on his pleasures and his gardens, and his palace was thronged with mountebanks, actors, minstrels and disreputable women. Young Henry possessed an unusually impressionable nature, and his introduction to this court only continued the process of

corruption which had already begun. The most serious affairs of State were discussed over the wine-cups, and Henry was early accustomed to witness scenes of licentiousness that were a disgrace to both Church and State. He was taught that the German people were dull and stupid, fit for nothing but blows and burdens. Particularly he was prejudiced against the Saxons, whom Adalbert hated because they opposed him, and this prejudice was destined to bear bitter fruit later on.

Under the care of such a guardian, Henry grew frivolous, arrogant and selfish. He had been taught to look upon the noblemen of the kingdom as his natural enemies, to be outwitted and repressed, instead of regarding them as his future friends, and he had imbibed the dangerous doctrine that kings are accountable for their actions to God alone

III

At the age of thirteen Henry accompanied Archbishop Adalbert on an expedition against the Hungarians, which was so successful that he came back more pleased than ever with himself and his instructor. At fifteen he was declared of age and invested with the golden spurs of knighthood.

It is said that his first act upon being declared a man was to draw his sword and playfully threaten his old tutor, Anno of Cologne, whom he treated thenceforward with undisguised contempt.

The young King now took up his residence at Goslar in Saxony, and commenced a career of shameless profligacy that shocked and grieved the German people. Like Belshazzar of old, he would drink from the sacred vessels of the altar at his banquets. Archbishop Adalbert carried on a disgraceful trade in ecclesiastical preferments to minister to his own and his young master's extravagance, and he even tore the jewels from the priests' robes to deck the dresses of shameless women, and melted down the altar candlesticks for gold.

It was the custom in those days for the King to be maintained by the people in whose district he resided, and the wicked extravagance of this youthful Franconian king was a sore burden to the Saxons who lived in the neighbourhood of Goslar. Remonstrances were treated with contempt, and so scandalous were the stories current among the people of the life at court, that at last the Archbishops of Cologne and Mayence called a meeting of princes and nobles at Tribur to consider what to do.

Henry and Adalbert hastened thither to defend themselves and frustrate any designs on their liberty of action, but the nobles were firm, and finally announced that Henry must choose between his favourite and the crown.

Henry dissembled for a time, but was captured one night while trying to escape with the Crown jewels, and his palace was surrounded with a guard.

A second council was held, at which Adalbert was offered personal violence by the infuriated princes, and narrowly escaped with his life. They would brook no further delay, and imposed upon the King three conditions—he should dismiss his favourite, renounce his profligate habits, and marry the lady Bertha, daughter of the Italian Margrave of Susa, to whom he had already been betrothed.

So Adalbert was dismissed from his see, and deprived of his wealth; he wandered forth, friendless and lonely, and lived in a state of abject poverty.

Henry returned to his castle at Goslar, and resumed his former profligate life, treating his new wife with neglect and occasional great cruelty. He even persuaded the Archbishop of Mayence to apply to the Pope for a divorce, which the Holy Father promptly refused to grant, and the German princes signified their approval of his refusal in full diet assembled.

So Henry was obliged to keep his wife, and as time passed on he was touched by the gentle patience with which she bore her wrongs, and began to treat her kindly, and he

loved her as far as his corrupt nature was capable of love. In return he always found in her a true friend and wise counsellor.

In the year 1069 the Emperor's evil genius appeared once more at Goslar.

Humiliated and much improved by misfortune, Adalbert was at first harmless enough, but his natural disposition soon asserted itself, and he commenced once more a career of extravagance and vice which encouraged Henry to plunge more deeply into his old dissipations.

Adalbert had always hated the Saxons, and had trained the Emperor in the same opinions. Henry had looked upon them as beasts of burden, who must be kept in their places by repression, and to whom he must make it clear that he was the Emperor and they but churls.

Although he was a Franconian, and his home in Franconia, Henry had always lived in Saxony, at the expense of Saxon people. He had caused huge castles to be built in Thuringia and the Harz, the strongest of which was the Harzburg. Swabian and Franconian soldiers garrisoned these castles and oppressed the unhappy Saxon peasantry with extortion and deeds of violence for which they could gain no redress. All the peasants in the neighbourhood were forced to contribute a certain amount of their services at the fortresses, and the burden soon grew too heavy for them to bear.

Meanwhile Adalbert was meditating revenge for his humiliation at the Diet of Tribur. The chief object of his wrath was Otto, Duke of Bavaria, who had played a prominent part in bringing about his reverse. So a witness was produced who was bribed to swear that Otto had hired him to assassinate the Emperor, and he even showed the sword with which the deed was to be done. When confronted with this accusation, the Duke indignantly denied it, but when, according to the custom of the day, he was summoned to make trial of his innocence by battle, he refused.

So a second council was assembled, which consisted entirely of his enemies, and Henry was called upon by them to invade Bavaria and Saxony. This was exactly what he wanted to do, and war broke out at once, Otto on his part harrying the 'Crown lands in Thuringia.

The Saxons sent a deputation of their nobles to wait on the Emperor and to ask once more for redress of their wrongs before war became general. But the deputation was only received with insult.

Having waited a whole day in the Emperor's ante-room, they were informed that he had gone out riding and would not see them until the morrow, so, determined to bear it no longer, they departed to take matters into their own hands.

Messengers were sent to all the provinces in Germany, begging them not to support the Emperor in his attempts on the lives and liberties of the Saxons.

The Saxon princes themselves met by night in a lonely chapel outside Goslar, Otto of Bavaria at their head, and before the altar they clasped hands and swore to deliver their brethren from the yoke of oppression. With an army of 60,000 men, they surprised the Emperor in Goslar, and he fled in terror to the fortress of Harzburg.

There he was besieged, but succeeded in escaping one night with a few followers through the kindness of a huntsman, who guided him southward through the intricacies of the forest, until he was able to reach Franconia.

So large a force as the Saxon army, however, was not to be ignored, and a day was appointed for a meeting to hear the demands of the rebels. These demands stipulated that Henry should dismantle all the fortresses that he had built in Saxony, and depart, together with his court, to another part of the country. He was to release Duke Magnus of Saxony, whom he had thrown into prison, and dismiss all his evil advisers. Henry thought that if he granted these concessions, all would be well, but he soon discovered that the nobles were

only plotting a larger and much more dangerous rebellion than he had ever imagined.

A diet was held at Ratisbon, before which a certain man named Reginar appeared, who swore that he had been bribed by Henry to assassinate the Dukes of Swabia and Carinthia. The whole assembly pretended to believe this accusation, and discussed the advisability of deposing Henry and electing Rudolph of Swabia as Emperor in his stead.

Henry's position was desperate, but help was at hand from a quarter of which he had never dreamed, for the city of Worms opened its gates and invites him to take refuge within its walls. So powerful were the burghers of Worms, that when their bishop, who was a brother of Rudolph of Swabia, refused to allow them to admit the Emperor, he was promptly expelled, and the citizens marched out in arms and conducted Henry into the town in triumph. The people were enthusiastic; the Emperor was to be protected, they would fight for him, and a certain knight, named Ulrich von Cosheim, offered to do battle on his behalf against the accuser Reginar. Before the meeting could take place, however, Reginar became insane, and died raving mad, which the superstitious people regarded as an omen and considered it a vindication of their Emperor's innocence by the hand of God Himself. Seeing him so well supported, the Saxons made a treaty with Henry, demanding that all the royal fortresses in Saxony should be delivered into their hands to be destroyed. When this was done, they set, to work and razed them to the ground with much barbarity.

It had been stipulated that holy places were to be left untouched, but when the Saxon peasants were destroying the Hamburg, their wrath knew no bounds, and they threw down the altar, burnt the beautiful church, and, disinterring the body of the Emperor's son, exposed it to disgusting insults and scattered the bones over the earth. This desecration aroused all the Emperor's ancient hatred of the Saxons. The nobles, too, were disgusted, and thronged to his banner, and a great battle was fought at Langensalza in the year 1075.

For a whole day they fought, but the Saxons lost 8000 men and were obliged to own themselves beaten.

Beaten they were, but not subdued, for they bided their time until they could find a suitable ally who would support them against the Emperor, and this ally they found in the person of the Pope, Gregory VII.

CHAPTER IX

GREGORY THE POPE

I

Gregory VII was a very remarkable man and he introduced innovations into the Church which were of great importance both to the Church itself and the Empire. His name before his elevation to the papal see was Hildebrand, and he was supposed to have been the son of a poor blacksmith or small proprietor, but his unusual talents soon raised him far above his fellows, and he rapidly rose from office to office in the Church.

His life was rigidly pure; he scorned worldly pleasures with the greatest contempt, and with this purity of morals he united a courage and power of will that no terrors could shake. A wonderful insight into the characters of men and comprehension of their motives often caused people to wonder how so saint-like a character was able to probe the depths of minds which were inured to every form and practice of evil.

His eloquence was great and had much impressed Henry III when he had preached before him.

Hildebrand had been adviser to five successive popes, and his conception of the papal power was extraordinary.

He was eminently qualified by temperament and talents for a reformer, and he thought that the chief cause of the abuses existing in the Church was the supreme head's lack of both spiritual and temporal power.

"As man consists of body and soul," he declared, "so do human affairs consist of spiritual and earthly; and as the body is ruled by the soul, so ought the world to be governed by the Church. As there are two great lights in heaven, the sun

and the moon, so there are two mighty rulers on earth, the Pope and the Emperor. Now, as the moon derives her light from the sun, so is all the power of the Emperor derived from the Pope. The Pope is the successor of the apostle Peter, to whom the Saviour said: 'Feed my sheep.' Now God having placed all things under the feet of His Son, and Peter being the successor of Christ, and the Pope the successor of Saint Peter, it follows that all earthly principalities and powers and dominions should be subjected to him who is the representative of God in the world."

Hitherto the popes had been elected by the Roman clergy and people, although during the reigns of the last few German emperors there had been some interference on their part, since they had confirmed or annulled these elections. But the emperors had exercised the right of choosing their own bishops, receiving the revenues of vacant bishoprics and calling together councils to settle ecclesiastical affairs.

These prerogatives were a thorn in the flesh to Hildebrand, ambitious as he was to raise to supremacy the papal power.

His first decisive step was to take the election of the popes out of the hands of Emperor or people alike, and to vest the power in the hands of a college of cardinals.

At a council held in Rome in 1059 the 'Sacred College' was formed, consisting of seventy cardinals (in imitation of the seventy disciples of Christ), of whom Hildebrand was one. Having secured independence of election for the Pope, he next sought to increase his temporal power, and to this end persuaded the kings of Sicily and Naples to hold their crowns as fiefs of the Pope instead of the Emperor.

In the year 1078 Hildebrand was himself elected Pope, and took the name of Gregory VII. He renewed his connection with the kings of Sicily and Naples and formed a firm alliance with Matilda, Countess of Tuscany, a faithful servant of the Church.

He next entered on a campaign against the abuses in the Church, and forbade the practice of simony, or the sale of ecclesiastical preferment. The buying and selling of benefices is called simony, after Simon Magus, who tried to buy from the Apostles their power of working miracles. His next step excited much opposition, and any man less intrepid than Gregory would not have ventured to propose it. Hitherto the monks had lived lives of celibacy that is, they had taken vows never to marry—but other clergy had taken wives. Gregory thought that the possession of a wife and family distracted priest's thoughts from his religious duties, so he forbade all priests to marry, and commanded that those who were already married should immediately leave their families. This reform roused a storm of opposition, especially in Germany, but Gregory paid no heed and merely excommunicated those priests who refused to obey him, and in time the excitement died away.

He next ordained that all bishops should be elected by the clergy and their election confirmed by the Pope. This meant that the Emperor would lose his right of election, and also the enormous endowments that had much enhanced his power and dignity.

Having finally announced that no man except himself had power to assemble ecclesiastical councils, and having pronounced the decrees of all councils otherwise summoned to be null and void, Gregory sent ambassadors or legates into all the kingdoms to watch over his interests and report proceedings.

These innovations found little favour with the Emperor Henry IV, since he had always appointed his own bishops and invested them with the episcopal ring and staff as an outward and visible sign that they held their fiefs from him. This ceremony was called investiture, and Henry continued to perform it as before, taking no notice of the Pope's commands. But Gregory removed these bishops from their sees and

excommunicated several persons who had assisted at the ceremony of investiture.

At this juncture the Saxon bishops and princes, who had been sullenly meditating revenge for their treatment at the Emperor's hands, lodged a complaint before the Pope accusing Henry of many crimes. Gregory summoned him to appear at Rome within sixty days to exculpate himself, at which demand Henry assembled the German bishops at Worms, and with them solemnly called upon the Pope to abdicate.

"Thou hast removed from their places archbishops, bishops, priests, the anointed of the Lord," he wrote. "Thou had trodden them under foot like servants, and treated them as though they knew naught and thou knewest all. Thou art swollen with pride, and, mistaking our humility for fear, hast lifted up thy hand against the royal power which God has granted to us. Thou hast dared to threaten that thou wilt deprive us of our royal power, as if that royal power had been received from thee, and not from God Almighty. Thou hast despised our bishops and deprived our priests of their office. Me also, a crowned king, of whom God has said, 'Fear God; honour the king,' thou hast dishonoured. Therefore remove thyself from the throne of Saint Peter and make way for another. I, Henry, by the grace of God King, together with all my bishops, say unto thee, Come down and remove thyself."

The Emperor's summons might have implanted fear in the breast of a weak man, but on Gregory it had no such effect. He merely assembled his cardinals and bishops, read the letter, excommunicated Henry and absolved his subjects from their allegiance to him.

A bull was issued, which commenced with an invocation to the apostle Saint Peter. "Holy Peter, Prince of the Apostles," it ran, "bow thine ear to me and hear me who am thy servant Through thy grace power is given me from on high to bind and to loose in heaven and on earth. For the honour and protection of thy Church, and in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, I cast out from the realm

of Germany and Italy, the King Henry, son of Henry the Emperor, and I absolve all Christians from the oaths by which they are or will be bound to him, and I forbid any man to serve him in his office of king.

"He who has despoiled thy Church of honour shall himself be dishonoured. And furthermore because he has not obeyed as a true Christian should, nor has turned again to the God whom he has forsaken, but consorts with the excommunicate, works wickedness and heeds not my warnings, in thy stead, most holy Peter, do I bind him with a curse that all men may see that I am Peter, upon whom the Son of God hath built His Church and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it."

Excommunication was a fearful ordeal for any man to endure, since the victim was thrust out of the Church and might enter it no more, no priest might marry him, baptize his children or administer the Holy Sacrament to his comfort. If he died, he might only be buried in unconsecrated ground and without words of prayer, and if he were a man of authority, all his subordinates were absolved of their duty toward him. Worst of all, if the excommunicant happened to be a king, his realm was laid under an interdict. This meant that all churches were closed and the rites of baptism, marriage and burial refused to the whole population. So this thundering denunciation had important results for Henry, since his subjects fell away from him in terror.

III

After the excommunication the German princes held a diet at Tribur, and declared solemnly that unless Henry were freed from the ban within a year they would follow Rudolph of Swabia. Nothing remained for Henry but to submit to the Pope, so in the winter of 1076, accompanied by a few

attendants and his wife Bertha, with her infant son, he started for Rome.

The roads over the Alps were jealously guarded, but Henry managed to find his way to the pass of Mont Cenis, and this he crossed through horrors indescribable.

Blinded by the falling snow, which grew deeper and deeper under their feet as they advanced, the little band stumbled forward. Avalanches fell round them with a roar as of thunder and threatened to sweep them away in the descent, or maim them by the flying fragments of trees and stones which they scattered.

The rocky pathway wound round the mountain-side, a cliff and a precipice on either hand, and was so slippery with frozen snow and at times so narrow that the travellers were forced to crawl on hands and knees to save themselves from falling into the abyss below. They were often obliged to bind their horses with ropes and let them down over the face of the cliffs, when the poor beasts could find no foothold, and the gentle Queen with her baby and the few women who attended her were wrapped in ox-hides and lowered by ropes down the precipices in the same way. The King rode on horseback whenever it was possible, while the Queen was dragged along on a rough sledge, steadied by men on either hand, to prevent her from being jerked from her seat by the roughness of the road.

If the ascent of the pass had been difficult and beset with perils, the descent was still more so, and the escape of the little party from death was nothing short of miraculous. At length they saw the smiling plains of Lombardy far below, and were kindly received by the Lombards, who were themselves at feud with the Pope. When Gregory heard of the Emperor's approach, and of his reception in Upper Italy, he was uncertain how to act, for he knew not whether Henry came as a penitent or meant to lead an army of Lombards against himself. So he took refuge with his ally, the Countess Matilda of Tuscany, in her castle of Canossa, and there awaited events.

He had no need to wait long, for Henry was thoroughly beaten and dispirited, and desired only reconciliation with the Head of the Church.

Gregory therefore determined to humble him to the dust, and when he appeared before the Castle of Canossa and prayed to see the Pope, he was told that he must come in the guise of a penitent—bareheaded, barefooted, and clothed only in his shirt. For three days and nights the great Lord of Germany stood in the castle courtyard, bareheaded, barefooted, clothed only in his shirt, and deprived of food and shelter; on the fourth day the Holy Father caused him to be brought in, and pronounced him free of the ban. Then he sent him back to Germany, forbidding him to assume the dignity of king until the Germans themselves should decide in council whether they would accept him as their ruler or no. Before Henry started on his homeward way, however, he was summoned to the private chapel of the castle, where the Pope ascended the steps of the high altar, and before a large assembly of people, addressed him in these words:

"Thou hast oft reproached me as if I had obtained the papal crown by bribery and dishonest means, and had disgraced the faith of Christ by many and foul crimes.

"Now do I hold in my hand the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. I will divide the wafer, and myself swallow the one half, praying the Almighty to strike me suddenly dead, if the charges which thou hast brought against me are true. Thou too standest accused of many and great sins, on account of which I have placed thee under sentence of excommunication. If thou be innocent, swallow the rest of this wafer, and purify thyself from all suspicion."

But Henry was terrified at the solemn act, and refused to do his part until he had consulted with advisers at home. So he turned back, and as he journeyed, his terror abated and gave way to sullen resentment against the Pope, who had caused him such bitter suffering.

On the way he heard that Rudolph of Swabia had been elected king in his stead, and knowing that many of the good German burghers would remain faithful to him and that the Lombards too could be relied upon, he determined to resist both Pope and nobles and make an effort to regain his crown.

On his arrival in Germany, crowds of burghers flocked to meet him, and Henry held a solemn diet in the city of Worms, where he condemned to death as traitors, Rudolph of Swabia, Berthold of Carinthia and Guelph of Bavaria. The dukedom of Bavaria, together with the hand of the Princess Agnes, was conferred on Count Frederick of Boreen. He built the great castle of Hohenstaufen, from which his family took their name, that became so famous in subsequent German history.



HENRY IV AT CANOSSA.

Gregory excommunicated Henry afresh and confirmed the election of Rudolph, to whom he sent a crown which he was to hold as a fief of Rome.

Henry on his part deposed Gregory, and appointed in his stead the Archbishop of Ravenna, under the title of Clement III. So there were two popes and two emperors; in many dukedoms there existed two dukes and in the bishoprics two bishops. The whole country was in confusion, and skirmishing and counter-skirmishing in the field were of daily occurrence.

The royalists were beaten on the banks of the Necker, and the poor peasants who had fought for Henry were cruelly mutilated because they had presumed to bear arms. Again they were beaten near Leipzig on the plain where so many battles have been fought. Although defeated, Henry lost his chief enemy, since Rudolph was slain. As he lay dying on the field, Rudolph gazed at his arm, from which the hand had just been severed by a mighty blow from that Godfrey of Bouillon who afterward played so important a part in the Crusades.

"That was the hand which was once raised to swear fealty to Henry," he exclaimed. "May God's vengeance pursue the traitors who tempted me to commit perjury."

He was buried at Merseburg, and a beautiful monument was erected over his remains.

Soon afterward this city fell into Henry's hands and he was advised to destroy the tomb of his rival. This he refused to do. "Would to God," he replied, "that all my enemies were as handsomely entombed!"

After his death, Rudolph's party of followers dwindled more and more, while that of Henry steadily increased.

The Germans elected Hermann of Luxemburg as their next emperor, but he soon saw that resistance was useless, and making his peace with Henry, he retired to his duchy. So successful was the imperial army by this time that Henry left

the charge of it to Frederick of Hohenstaufen and proceeded to Italy to punish his old enemy, Gregory VII.

He beat the forces of Matilda of Tuscany, which advanced to check his way, and, after a three years' siege, succeeded in capturing Rome. Gregory fled to Salerno, and soon afterward fell ill and died, exclaiming with his last breath: "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity—therefore do I die in exile." Gregory was succeeded by Urban II, who continued his policy and contrived to raise up a rival against Henry in the person of the Emperor's son Conrad. This was a terrible grief to the stricken father, and he was with difficulty prevented from laying violent hands upon himself to take his own life. But in his despair he received help from an unexpected quarter.

Duke Guelph of Bavaria had affianced his son Egbert to the aged Countess Matilda of Tuscany, hoping that she would soon die and leave her vast possessions to her youthful husband. But Matilda had ever been a faithful servant of the Church, and when Guelph heard that she had already willed everything to the Pope, he was very angry and joined Henry in revenge against the papal Party.

Young Conrad died soon afterward, but Urban's successor, Pascal II, continued the same policy, and incited Henry's second son to rebel. Henry the younger was a great favourite of the people, and thousands flocked to his standard; only the cities remained faithful to their Emperor, and refused to open their gates to any other.

The son later endeavoured to obtain possession of his father's person by treachery, and, feigning contrition for his rebellion, contrived to bring about a meeting at Cologne, ostensibly for the purpose of a reconciliation. Here the elder Henry was separated from his attendants, seized, and imprisoned in the castle of Bingen on the Rhine. The imperial crown and jewels were taken from him, and a general diet was held, which formally deposed him.

At Ingeiheim Henry was brought before his son and an assembly of nobles for the purpose of signing the deed of abdication. A heart-rending scene took place, as the father threw himself at his son's feet and with tears implored his mercy. But the young prince was obdurate, and his father was compelled to acknowledge him Emperor of Germany under the title of Henry V.

Heart-broken and destitute, the old Emperor fell ill and died in the year 1106. So poor was he that he was obliged to sell his boots to procure food, but on his death-bed he sent his forgiveness to his son, together with his sword and ring.

As the ban of the Church still lay upon him, the body was not allowed Christian burial, and on a lonely island in the River Maas it remained above ground, watched day and night by a pious hermit who had been as a pilgrim to Jerusalem. At last the young King Henry commanded that it should be brought to Spires, where it was received with reverence by the citizens. But no interment in holy ground was possible, and for five years the body remained unburied, until at last the Pope removed the ban and the bones of Henry IV were laid to rest by the side of Queen Bertha in the cathedral at Spires.

Henry's great controversy with the papacy continued unsettled until the year 1122, when an agreement was made, called the Concordat of Worms, which clearly defined the powers of both Emperor and Pope. It was decided that the bishops should be chosen by their clergy in the presence of the Emperor or his representative, and should take the oath to him as a vassal of the Empire, receiving from the Pope the ring and pastoral staff, as symbols of his authority in spiritual affairs.

Henry V did not live long, and with him died out the Franconian line of kings.

Years of strife between rival claimants for the throne devastated the unhappy land of Germany, during which members of the Bavarian family, calling themselves Guelphs, supported faithfully the cause of Henry of Bavaria, while the

Hohenstaufens were protected by adherents calling themselves Ghibellines or Waiblings, from the name of a little town in Swabia. Eventually Conrad of Hohenstaufen was elected Emperor, and he determined to be revenged upon the Guelphs. So he besieged them in the city of Weinsberg in Wurtemberg with such success that they capitulated, only stipulating that their womenfolk should march out free, bearing with them such of their property as they could carry. The terms of surrender were signed and the city gates flung wide, but great was the astonishment of Conrad when the Duchess appeared, bearing her husband on her shoulders, and followed by all the women of the town similarly burdened. His heart was touched by this proof of courage and affection, and a peace was concluded between the rival factions, which continued till his death.

CHAPTER X

IN THE DAYS OF CHIVALRY

I

Germany had developed greatly in the tenth century under the Saxon kings. The Empire was consolidated and its boundaries defined. The prestige of the Emperor had risen in the hands of men who commanded the respect, not only of their own subjects, but of foreign princes and nations, and chivalry developed until it became a system. Since the days of Henry the Fowler the freemen had served in the King's armies on foot or on horse, but the horsemen, who took the name of riders or knights, had risen in position above the ordinary freemen, since their duties about the King's person caused them to be looked upon with respect.

To guard themselves from dangerous neighbours, these knights had built castles in commanding positions on the hills, and having given names to them, they then added the name of the castle to their own names, prefixing it with the word 'of,' or von, as the Germans say.

This fashion of using the name of the home as a surname survives among the German nobles to the present day.

These castles were surrounded by a moat filled with water, and a drawbridge led up to the castle gates. This bridge was drawn up at night or in time of danger, so that the castle was completely cut off by the water from the rest of the world.

Within the outside walls lay the castle courtyard, containing buildings which served for stables and store-chambers and servants' quarters. The chapel adjoined the castle proper. The chief room in the castle itself was always a

large banqueting hall—the hall which has been the scene of many a ballad and story of the knights of yore.

In such a hall sat Charlemagne when young Roland stole the cup, in such a hall Rudolph of Habsburg listened to the minstrel who sang of his pious deeds, and in 'the high hall of his fathers' the King of Thule quaffed for the last time the golden goblet of his love.

Round the walls hung trophies of victory in war and of the chase, weapons and even paintings of honoured forefathers. From the hall opened rooms belonging to the ladies and children of the family, and a castle usually contained one chamber, known as the armory, in which were stored those weapons that were served out in time of war.

Over the building itself rose the great castle tower, on the top of which, day and night, the warders watched to announce with blasts of their horns the arrival of friendly visitors, or to spy the first sign of foes.

Warders watched too at the gates, and at a signal from those above, who would be the first to catch sight of arrivals, they would run out to welcome friends and lead them to their lord, or to draw up the huge chains of the bridge and close the great gates in the face of the foe.

The sons of noblemen were educated with the object of fitting them for the life of a knight.

At seven years of age it was usual for a boy to be removed from the women's apartments and sent to serve as a page in the house of some neighbouring knight. There, from his seventh to his fourteenth year, he would run messages, serve at table, ride horses, and learn to shoot with the bow and arrows and practise sword-exercise. He would run and wrestle, ride and box, until his growing body was toughened and inured to hardships.

In the best days of knighthood and chivalry, while he indulged in athletic exercises, the gentler arts were not

forgotten, for the page was generally instructed in singing and playing on the lute, and would often learn to converse in a foreign language. But above all, he was never suffered to forget the great duties of knighthood-loyalty to God and His servants the priests, fidelity to the lord, service to ladies and protection of the weak.

A beautiful description of the British knight Lancelot was given by one of his sorrowing companions as he gazed upon the dead face of that mighty warrior: "Thou wert the courtliest knight that ever bare shield," he said. "Thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse, and thou wert the truest lover among sinful men that ever loved woman, and thou wert the kindest man that ever struck with sword, and thou wert the wisest person that ever came among the press of knights, and thou wert the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies, and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in breast."

Although these words described a knight who was supposed to have lived in the sixth century, they were actually written at a much later date, and represent the spirit of chivalry at its best.

In the early days of chivalry, as depicted in the *Song of Roland*, prominence is given to the service of the feudal lord and to the duty of fighting the infidel. But later on, when the Crusades were over, and the knights sought adventures nearer home, the ideal conduct of the valorous gentleman toward the lady of his choice finds expression.

As soon as he was fifteen years of age, the page accompanied his lord to war, and performed the offices of squire. He cared for his lord's horse and armour, fought by his side and shared his honour if successful, or, when the worst befell, dragged him wounded from the fight and brought him home, living or dead, to his lady.

The young ladies of noble family had also many duties to perform. They too entered the houses of noble lords, and

took their place among the ladies-in-waiting who surrounded the mistress of the castle. On festive occasions these ladies would grace the board at the banquet and receive honoured guests, or distribute the prizes at tournaments, but usually they lived a quiet life in the retirement of the women's apartments. Here their chief employments were weaving, spinning, and embroidery, beautiful specimens of which still exist, mute expressions of the thoughts and ideals of these ladies of olden time.

When a squire received the order of knighthood, or indeed on any occasion of rejoicing in knightly families, a tournament was usually held to celebrate the occasion.

The lists, so called because barriers were raised, covered with a certain rough kind of cloth named list, were erected on the market-place of the little town which generally grew up round a castle. Or sometimes a plain outside the city walls would be used for the purpose, or the foot of the hill on which the castle stood, or even the courtyard itself inside the castle walls. Scaffolding for seats would be erected round the lists, with a special place of honour for the lord, his family and guests. The arena was spread with sand to prevent the horses from slipping in the mud.

A herald invited the guests, travelling from castle to castle and town to town, and they would arrive with trumpets blowing and banners displayed, each knight bringing the ladies of his family and a company of squires and servants, who encamped within the castle or were quartered in the town, or even, in the summer, dwelt in tents upon the castle hill.

After greetings exchanged and weapons proved for the last time, all would take their places for the tournament. The knights usually attacked each other in companies with large swords, seeking to unhorse their opponent or cut off the crest of his shining helmet. And afterward would take place the single combats, in which the young knights showed their prowess against experienced and proven warriors, while the

squires and pages watched with envious eyes, longing for the day when they too would be admitted to such noble sport.

Last of all, some noble lady would name as victor the knight who had acquitted himself the most bravely, and the gay company would break up to banquet in the castle, and dance in the stately hall.

These were the joys of castle life in the old German realm.

Other interest was provided by the landless knights, who travelled from town to town seeking adventures, and serving any lord in an honourable cause. These knights were very welcome as the winter days drew on, for when winds blew chill and rain beat against the castle walls, no pastime could be indulged in save the chase. Minstrels, too, were received with joy and the household would gather round the blazing wood fire to hear songs and stories of adventure. But when snow blocked the passes and admitted of no access, the days were dark and dreary, and life was very dull to the dwellers in the castle. The stone rooms of the castle were draughty and cold, and it might even happen that actual want was felt when necessities were difficult to procure.

Such was the life of the knights, who were to play a leading part in German history, as the nobility rose in power, and became an important factor to be reckoned with by all succeeding kings.

II

We learn much of the days of chivalry from songs and epics which have been preserved. Some of the legends are so grand and noble that they must have fired the imagination and stirred the higher nature of many a German boy, and thus exercised a widespread influence upon German social life. Fiore old songs relate the deeds of the twelve Paladins or

Peers, which was the name given to the twelve chief knights of Charlemagne's court.

As time passed, these deeds were exaggerated in the records handed on by word of mouth from father to son. The knights were said to have overcome giants, to have tamed wild beasts, slain winged dragons, and done other marvels, which shows how wondrous myths gather round the names of ancient heroes. But apart from exaggeration we can see that these men were nobler, gentler, more chivalrous than the ordinary men of their day, and that although the average German may have been rough and uncivilized, he appreciated and revered their nobility.

The two most famous of Charlemagne's knights were Roland and Oliver. To decide a dispute of their lords they were selected to fight in single combat, but since each wore a helmet that hid his face, neither knew that he was fighting his dearest friend. Two long hours they strove, and neither gained the advantage. At last they paused, panting and trembling, and then, with a wild bound, sprang upon each other. Roland's sword pierced Oliver's shield, and Oliver's sword shivered against Roland's breastplate and broke off at the hilt. Then, with arms outstretched, they sprang upon one another once more, and wrestled fiercely, each succeeding in tearing the other's helmet off.

Great was their surprise when each recognized his friend. "I yield," said Roland quietly. "I yield," said Oliver, each wishing to give the honour of victory to his friend. From this incident arose the expression, which is still used: 'A Roland for an Oliver.'

Chanson de Roland, or Song of Roland, is a famous old poem which relates the story of Roland's death at Roncesvalles on the retreat from Spain.

That death was on him he knew full well;
Down from his head to his heart it fell.
On the grass beneath a pine-tree's shade,

With face to earth, his form he laid,
Beneath him placed he his horn and sword,
And turned his face to the heathen horde.
Thus hath he done the sooth to show,
That Karl and his warriors all may know
That the gentle count a conqueror died.

When King Harold of England advanced against William of Normandy at the battle of Senlac in 1066, the English heard the sound of singing, and saw that in front of the Norman army rode their noted minstrel, Taillefer. He was throwing up his sword in the air and catching it skilfully by the hilt as it descended, all the while singing gaily, and the song that he sang was *La Chanson de Roland*.

In the south of France the troubadours of the twelfth century sang their songs in the lovely Provencal tongue. Many of them belonged to the knightly class, and they had much to relate of the days of chivalry in their songs, which reveal the gay and courtly life led by the knights of old.

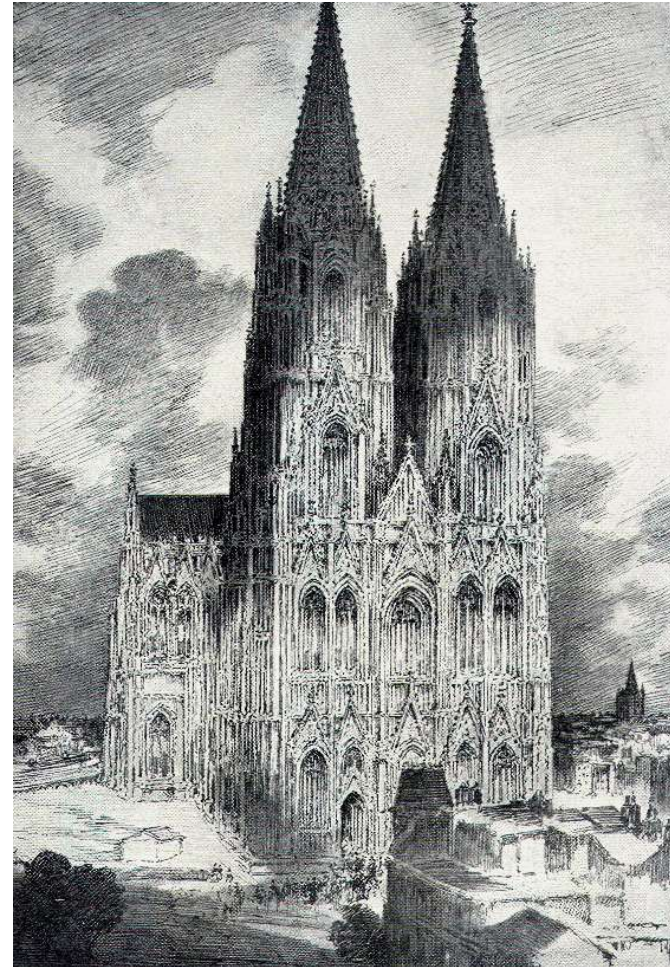
Other minstrels who could not compose the songs, but only sing them, were called *jongleurs*, and both troubadours and *jongleurs* wandered from court to court, northward in France and southward to Italy.

The Germans, too, contributed to the literature of chivalry, and their poets of the thirteenth century, who were known as the Minnesingers, or singers of love—love being the chief subject of their poems—were greatly influenced by the finch lyrists, whom they much admired. Yet the German singers were distinguished from the French by the greater attention which they paid to other subjects than love.

One of the most famous of their Minnesingers was Walther von der Vogelweide, who died about 1228, whose poems are full of devotion to his fatherland.

Wolfram von Eschenbach, who lived at the same time, is famous for his beautiful song of Parsival, the true knight

who sought the Holy Grail, which none but the pure in thought, word and deed could see. Because he failed to speak a word of sympathy to a suffering man, he was obliged to atone for long years, until he learnt that only through pity and humility and faith in God does man see the Holy Grail.



COLOGNE CATHEDRAL.

Up to the tenth century architecture developed very slowly indeed in Europe, except in Italy and those Eastern

countries which fell under Italian influence. Saint Sophia at Constantinople was built by the Emperor Justinian. The ancient name for Constantinople was Byzantium, and the style of architecture in which the cathedral was built was called Byzantine. It had round domes and cupolas and rows of pillars connected by round arches, and all was adorned with lavish brilliancy of colour. Another splendid example of Byzantine architecture is the Cathedral of Saint Mark in Venice.

In Spain the Moors built beautiful palaces in their own style, the best known of which is the Alhambra. It contains courts and pavilions with rows of pillars and arches. Their decoration was very rich, but as their religion forbade them to imitate anything having life, their scheme of decoration was somewhat conventional; a notable exception to this rule, however, is to be seen in the 'Court of Lions' at the Alhambra.

Before the year 1000, Western Europe was far too deeply engaged in war to take much notice of art, but at the beginning of the eleventh century we learn that the monks, who lived more peaceful and secluded lives than the laity, began to study the science of architecture with greater attention. The Byzantine style never became popular in Germany, but we find specimens of the Romanesque semicircular arches and heavy walls and pillars. These churches were generally built in the form of a cross; the walls were very thick, with small windows which let in little light. Near the end of the twelfth century the pointed arch which was one of the characteristic features of the Gothic style appeared all over Western Europe. The name Gothic is very misleading and was merely a term of contempt applied to this architecture by later builders, who despised it. The buildings were erected in a lighter and more graceful style, with pointed arches and slender pillars. A round arch can only be half as high as it is wide, but the adoption of the pointed arch gave much more scope to the builder, as the height and width can be varied. The walls were not so thick and heavy as before, and the pressure from the arches was borne by buttresses and flying

buttresses erected outside the buildings instead of by uniformly solid walls. A strange love of the grotesque appears, and queer bat-like figures squatted on the corners of the roofs and grinned from the tops of pillars.

One of the finest specimens of Gothic architecture in Germany is Cologne Cathedral. It was begun in the year 1248 and not completed until 1880.

The Gothic churches had numerous windows and little wall-space, so we do not find many paintings or mosaics on the walls inside, but the great number of windows gave scope for the development of beautiful work in coloured glass.

The pieces of glass were stained the required colours and afterward cut into the shapes of the figures to be represented and joined together by narrow strips of lead.

Statues, too, in abundance adorned the Gothic churches, and were carved in stone or marble. Images of saints filled the churches and memorial statues decorated the tombs.

CHAPTER XI

THE CRUSADES

I

After our Lord Jesus Christ had ascended into heaven, the Holy Sepulchre where His body rested three days became a spot of especial veneration to Christian believers, and as the gospel spread far and wide through Europe, more and more people made pilgrimages to visit the sacred city of Jerusalem and the scenes of His labours and sufferings.

The great Constantine, Emperor of the Eastern or Byzantine half of the Roman Empire, was a devout Christian, having been carefully brought up by his mother, whom the world knows as Saint Helena, finder of 'the true cross.'

Helena is believed to have been a little maid in a Yorkshire inn in the days when Britain was garrisoned by troops of Roman soldiers.

Having attracted the attention of a Roman officer named Constantius by her sweetness and simple dignity of bearing, she became his wife and was carried far away from Britain to the East, where her husband was raised to the imperial throne of Constantinople, and where she bore the son who is called Constantine the Great, although English people like to think that he was born at York.

In honour of the Christ, Constantine built a magnificent marble temple around the simple cave in the garden where the sacred body had lain, and erected a noble cathedral, which is called the Church of the Resurrection. The pious Helena, too, when growing old in years, undertook a pilgrimage to these holy places, and founded several churches and chapels. She caused excavations on Mount Calvary to be made, and

discovered there remains of the crosses used by the cruel Romans for the crucifixion of their victims. Believing one of these to be the remains of the cross on which Christ died, she brought it back to Europe, and fragments were kept as holy relics by numbers of monasteries and churches.

The desire to pray beside the Holy Sepulchre, to visit the scenes of Christ's sufferings, and the belief that such a pilgrimage would atone for sins committed and open the gates of heaven, led many a man to undertake the terrible journey and brave the perils of the way.

The pilgrim would first kneel before the altar of his church at home, and there receive from the priest a simple robe of coarse black serge, a rosary of beads with which to pray, a slouched hat to shield his face from the sun, a wallet to hold his food, and an iron-shod staff to help him on his way.

Thus equipped, he would wander forth, and if he managed to survive the many dangers on his journey, he would visit the sacred places and pray, lay his rosary on the Holy Sepulchre, and bring it back sanctified by this act, bathe in the River Jordan, where Jesus was baptized, and stitch the cockle-shells from the seashore round his hat. Years afterward, wayworn and old, he would perhaps return to his native place, bearing a faded palm-leaf in his hand to lay upon the altar as a token of his pilgrimage to the sepulchre of Christ.

After the year 1000 the number of these pilgrims increased and they found that it was much safer to travel together in companies for mutual protection on the way. Also when they saw the beautiful silks and carpets, steel and brasswork of the East, they would take money or goods from Germany and exchange them for the foreign treasures, thereby combining the advantages of a pilgrimage with those of a trading expedition.

When the Arabs took possession of the Holy Land in the seventh century they left the Christian pilgrims in peace to visit their holy places. Indeed the great Charlemagne had made

an agreement with the famous Haroun al Raschid, by which, in return for a small tribute, the Caliph undertook that they should not only remain unmolested, but should be granted protection. The Arabs also aided them in the erection of churches, and of a hospital which was dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. But when Palestine fell into the hands of the Turks, the position of the pilgrims became unbearable. The holy places were plundered and desecrated and the pilgrims themselves not only disturbed in their devotions but ill treated and robbed, or captured and sold as slaves. Rumours of these abuses soon reached Europe, where it was felt a shameful thing that Jerusalem should remain in the hands of unbelievers.

Pope Gregory VII was justly indignant, and conceived the idea of fitting out an expedition to go and take the city by force from the hands of the Turks, but he was too much occupied with his quarrels with Henry IV to make any practical arrangements, and it was left to a simple hermit to rouse Christendom.

This man was a Frenchman named Pierre of Amiens, whose name has become familiar to us as Peter the Hermit. In his youth he had been a soldier, but, finding no pleasure in his calling, had exchanged the breastplate for the monk's frock, and had gained a great reputation for holiness by his sanctity of life.

He too had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and had been horrified at what he had seen, and at the fearful stories he had heard of the sufferings of Christians at the hands of the Turks. Kneeling in the Church of the Resurrection at Jerusalem and meditating on these things, he heard a voice from heaven which said: "Rise, Peter! Hasten to accomplish the work begun. Declare the sorrows of My people, that they may gain help and the Holy Place freedom from the hands of the unfaithful."

So Peter arose, and came with all speed to Rome, where he was received by Pope Urban II, to whom he told his

story. And the Holy Father commended him for his simple pious life, gave him a blessing on his mission, and letters to various princes, asking them to receive him and listen to his words.

So he traversed Italy and ice, haggard and way-worn, barefoot and girt with a rope around his waist, mounted on a sorry ass and holding the crucifix in his hand. And the people ran out to see this strange man, who told the story of his vision and of his interview with Pope Urban, and who preached with such fiery eloquence that he melted his hearers to tears, and they would declare themselves ready to go wherever he chose to lead them.

He was honoured as a saint, and happy were those who could press near enough to touch the hem of his garments. Even the hairs of the ass were plucked out and kept as relics of its pious master.

Meanwhile the Eastern Emperor, Alexius, sent a swift messenger to Rome, begging for help, relating the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks upon the Christian pilgrims, and, what proved to be only too true, their determination to fall on Constantinople and take the Eastern Kingdom for their own.

Pope Urban saw that no time was to be lost, so he convoked a meeting at Piacenza in the north of Italy, which was attended by so many people that no building could hold them and he had to speak in the open air.

So moved was the multitude by his words, that a large portion of the assembly made a solemn vow to aid the Eastern Emperor against the enemies of Christendom. Encouraged by their interest, Urban crossed the Alps, and in the year 1095 entered France, summoning the clergy and laity to meet him at a great general council to be held on the eighth day after the feast of Saint Martin at Clermont in Auvergne.

So great was the enthusiasm roused by the preaching of Peter the Hermit that vast crowds flocked to Clermont to hear the Pope's wishes, and the town could not hold them. All the

towns and villages in the neighbourhood were crowded, and in spite of the cold November weather, hundreds slept in tents or in the open, refusing to go away.

Fourteen archbishops, 225 bishops, and 400 abbots were there, besides hundreds of inferior clergy and a countless multitude of laymen.

After the ordinary affairs of the Church had been settled, and King Philip of France, who was at that time at variance with the Pope, had been excommunicated, Peter the Hermit addressed the vast assembly, describing all he had seen in the Holy Land with fiery eloquence that had a wonderful effect upon his hearers.

Then Pope Urban himself took up the word, pleading so piteously for the cause of Christ and exhorting them so powerfully to wrest the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidels, that the multitude burst into one great shout: "It is the will of God! It is the will of God!"

Next Bishop Ademar of Puy approached, and, kneeling before the Pope, entreated permission to accompany the expedition to Palestine. He was followed by almost all the clergy and laity present, and each one sewed on his shoulder a cross of red cloth, from which the expedition received the name of Crusade.

After the assembly was dismissed and had departed home, the clergy preached the Crusade in all directions and the laity told what they had heard and enkindled enthusiasm everywhere.

Forgiveness of sins was promised to all who joined, and hundreds pressed forward in the hope of thus gaining eternal life.

Many serfs took the cross, for in this way they might gain freedom from cruel lords, and debtors saw in the expedition a means of leaving their burdens behind them.



PETER THE HERMIT.

Enthusiasm at length became fanaticism, and signs and wonders abounded throughout the whole of France. Stones fell from heaven, comets and northern lights appeared; one man saw a great city in the sky, another a long road leading eastward, and another a sea of blood. A priest discerned a sword in the heavens, another an army, and a third found warriors fighting with crosses in their hands. It was even rumoured that the great Charlemagne had risen from the dead to lead the band in person, and a fever which was devastating the country at the time was called the Holy Fire and was accepted as a punishment for delay in setting out.

II

In the spring of 1096, Peter the Hermit found himself at the head of a motley multitude, ill armed, ill disciplined, destitute of money, horses, armour or any proper provision for the way, destitute of everything except an unreasoning enthusiasm which would lead them to the death. They crossed the Rhine and entered Germany, where they were received with ridicule by the people, only being joined by the Bishop of Strasburg and the Abbot of Schaffhausen.

Having passed onward into Hungary and Bulgaria, they were fallen upon by the fierce tribes of those countries, plundered and murdered, and of the enormous crowds that set forth, 100,000 men met their deaths without having set eyes on the Holy Land.

Peter the Hermit, with a handful of men, managed to press forward as far as Asia Minor, but being attacked there by the Turks, turned back, and thankfully took refuge in the city of Constantinople.

A second rabble, after having risen and massacred 12,000 Jews because their fathers had crucified the Lord of Life, met in Hungary the same fate as their predecessors.

Meanwhile, the expeditions of the serfs and vassals having so miserably failed, the nobles were preparing a band with much more knowledge and forethought, and by the next August they too started on their way. Many eminent men were with them, of whom the most distinguished were Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, his brother Baldwin, Count of Flanders, Hugh de Vermandois, brother of the King of France, Robert, Duke of Normandy, son of William the Conqueror, and Boemund, Prince of Tarento, who was accompanied by his nephew Tancred, one of the most famous warriors of the age. +

This force was a great contrast to the motley rabble who had wandered eastward a few months before. They passed in good order down the River Danube, and the Duke of Lorraine, with 80,000 men, marched safely through Hungary

to Constantinople, where he was met by Hugh de Vermandois with the finch force.

others soon joined them, and altogether they formed an army of 600,000 men, of which Godfrey of Bouillon was chosen as leader.

His gentle piety, courage and splendid honesty fitted him for this position, and he has ever been renowned as one of the most gallant knights of history. As a youth he had fought for the Emperor Henry IV against his rival Rudolph, and had borne the banner in the fight, with the end of which he had given Rudolph such a mighty blow in the chest that within a few days he had died, and as a reward for this deed the young standard-bearer had been granted lands in Lorraine. The other nobles looked up to him as their chief, for besides his nobility of character he possessed an unusually handsome person and a lever, practical mind.

Alexius, the Eastern Emperor, was somewhat nervous at the approach of so alarming a multitude, and took an oath of allegiance from each leader before he allowed them to take ship for Asia Minor. Here they were joined by Peter the Hermit and his poor remnant, and they stormed the city of Nicaea, famous in Church history for its councils.

As they marched southward they took Edessa, which was given to Boemund of Tarento, and then attacked Antioch, which was only captured after fierce resistance on the part of the inhabitants.

No sooner had the Christians taken possession of the city, than an army of Turks appeared, and they in their turn suffered all the horrors of a siege.

Unprovided with food, they were on the point of surrendering, when a monk declared that in a vision he had seen the spear that pierced the side of Jesus Christ hidden in one of the ancient churches of the city. Search was made, and an old spear-head was discovered in the indicated spot, and when it was elevated on the ramparts the Crusaders' courage

revived. The Archangel Michael, they declared, was distinctly visible fighting in the ranks, and such was the enthusiasm roused by this belief that the Turks were utterly routed, leaving rich booty in the hands of the victors, and the Christian army swept on to a position within sight of Jerusalem.

Here they fell on their knees and kissed the sacred earth, but a terrible struggle awaited them.

Pestilence and war and the inroads of marauding Turks had miserably reduced their numbers, and Jerusalem was guarded by at least 40,000 men. But from the Mount of Olives, the very scene of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, Peter the Hermit addressed the Crusaders, his ancient fire by no means quenched in spite of the hardships he had endured, and with desperate courage, amid cries of "God with us! God willeth it!" they broke through the gates, and Jerusalem was won.

After fearful slaughter of men, women, and children, for all infidels were considered enemies of God, the Crusaders washed the blood-stains from their hands, laid aside their swords, and, bareheaded and barefoot, they formed a procession, and filed into the Church of the Resurrection to give thanks for victory.

After this Boemund was made Governor of Edessa and Baldwin, Governor of Antioch. Godfrey of Bouillon was unanimously elected King of Jerusalem, but he refused to bear the title or to wear a crown of gold in the city where the Saviour had worn a crown of thorns, so he governed Jerusalem under the simple title of Protector of the Holy City.

Two years later, worn out by the hardships of the Crusade, the pious Godfrey died, and his brother Baldwin succeeded to his throne.

Peter the Hermit reached Europe in safety and lived eighteen more years to stir men's hearts by his wondrous eloquence.

The hospital of Saint John was restored some time afterward and an order of knights was founded there called the Knights Hospitallers or Knights of Saint John, who were dedicated to the service of the sick and infirm, at the same time taking the monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

During the same year, on the spot where Solomon's temple had once stood, a second order of knights was founded, who, in addition to the usual monastic vows, swore to defend the Holy Sepulchre against the enemies of the Christian faith.

The kingdom of Jerusalem, however, never gained great power, since the Turks were determined to get rid of the invaders, and constantly worried them by skirmishes and sallies during the reigns of Baldwin I and his son Baldwin II. But when the latter was succeeded by his son Baldwin III, who was a boy of only thirteen years of age, the Saracens saw that their opportunity was come, for the Christian community consisted of a mixed multitude of Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, English, Normans and Greeks, who looked upon each other with jealousy and aversion, and were only kept in check by the discipline of a strong hand over them. Their dissensions were the enemy's opportunity, for wandering missionaries had preached rebellion among the Saracens, and formed them into societies, all with the aim of overthrowing the power of Christ and glorifying the name of Mohammed. Some of these societies consisted of dangerous fanatics, chief among which was that of the Assassins, a name derived from a potent drug named hashish, which they drank before going into battle, and under the influence of which they fought with reckless fury.

In the year 1142 Edessa was retaken by the Sultan of Bagdad, and when the news reached Europe it caused consternation, and Pope Eugenius III sent out a pious monk named Bernard of Clairvaux, who first displayed the doubled-headed eagle as the arms of the empire, symbolizing the union of the German and Greek nations for the defence of

Christianity. It is now borne both by Austria and Russia as the representatives of the German and Grecian emperors.

In the spring of 1147 the German contingent of the Second Crusade set forth under Conrad III, and marched safely through Hungary, though they suffered severely from floods as soon as they reached Greece.

When they reached Asia Minor they were led astray by faithless guides into a wilderness where neither food nor water could be procured, and here hundreds perished of hunger, thirst and disease under the burning Eastern sun.

To add to their distress, they were constantly harried by Turks, who so far reduced their numbers as to leave to Conrad no alternative but to turn back. At Nicaea he met the French, who at first mocked the Germans scornfully for their retreat, but they dearly atoned for their insults a few days afterward, when they themselves had to turn and beat a retreat before the attacks of Turkish marauders. Weary and sad, Conrad returned to Constantinople, where the French and German nobles took counsel, and decided to set sail for Antioch, since they despaired of ever reaching Palestine by land. But this decision only served to discourage the armies still more, and many turned homeward, leaving a miserable handful to march on Damascus.

Here the Germans fought bravely, and Conrad is said to have cut off a Turk's head and arm with one stroke of his sword; but their army was not sufficiently disciplined to be able to carry on the siege with success, and they were obliged to retreat and return home, miserably conscious that the Second Crusade had been a complete failure.

For one man, however, the expedition had provided experience of the greatest value, and this was Conrad's nephew, Frederick Barbarossa. He had won great honour by his valorous deeds on the Crusade, had gained insight into the management of armies and conduct of war, and, last, but not least, had trained a naturally strong body to withstand cold and

heat, hunger and thirst, and the utmost hardships that man can endure.

Frederick was a Guelph on the side of his mother, Judith, who was a daughter of Henry the Black, Duke of Bavaria, and a Ghibelline on the side of his father, Conrad's brother Frederick, Duke of Swabia, and as he was thirty years of age, and so tried a warrior, much satisfaction was felt when Conrad on his death-bed named him as his successor, instead of his own son, who was only a child.

Since he was Conrad's nephew on the male side, Frederick was one of the mighty Hohenstaufen family. Accordingly, in March 1152, he was unanimously elected King of Germany at Frankfort and crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle.

CHAPTER XII

FREDERICK THE RED-BEARD

I

Frederick's manner and appearance were such as to inspire confidence. He was of medium height but very strongly built, and his short fair hair waved over a broad forehead and steady, intelligent blue eyes. The mouth was beautifully curved and gave to his face an expression of cheerfulness and gentle kindness. The reddish tinge of his beard gained for him the surname of Barbarossa, or red-beard.

Frederick was a truly religious man, a strict ruler over his people and a determined opponent of the increasing claims of the papacy. His experience on the Crusade had taught him to act on emergency with quickness and decision, and he was at all times punctiliously just, and only evildoers had need to fear the power of his wrath.

His first task was to curb the power of certain nobles in Germany, who depended upon the strength of their castles and the number of their followers to protect them from punishment. They built great fortresses and from these made sallies into the country, burning and plundering other men's goods. The villages suffered most from these raids, since the towns were generally strong enough to defend themselves.

This evil had increased enormously during the last Crusade, when the King and most of the stronger barons were safely out of the country, until no traveller was safe, especially priests or merchants, who would be captured on their way and not released until they had paid substantial ransom. Frederick levelled many of the strong castles to the ground, so that the robber barons had no refuge left, and he

encouraged the peasants who were oppressed by cruel lords to seek the protection of the cities.

His example inspired other princes, who saw the wisdom of this course of action, and they curbed lawlessness with a strong hand.

Louis II of Thuringia once took refuge in a blacksmith's cottage, having lost his way when hunting. The blacksmith did not know the exalted rank of his guest, but offered him shelter for the night, and went on with his work as usual. Louis watched him hammering on his anvil and noticed the little song he hummed to himself meanwhile: "Harder, Louis, harder, my boy!" "What does that mean?" he asked. "It is our wish for our landgrave," answered the blacksmith, "that he may hit the wicked barons hard." And Louis determined to deliver his poor peasants from their oppressors.

Stimulated by his emperor's example, he overthrew his nobles in a battle, and, harnessing four of the most turbulent to a plough, he ploughed a field in this manner; and the field was named after them 'The Nobles' Acre.' For his sternness in suppressing lawlessness, Louis earned for himself the title of 'The Iron Margrave.'

Germany became more tranquil and more powerful than she had ever been before, for Frederick married the daughter of the Duke of Burgundy, thereby increasing his dominions, the Kings of Poland and of Denmark owned him as their overlord, and Henry II of England sent offers of friendship and homage. But from the very beginning Barbarossa saw that he must curb the pretensions of the Pope, since, encouraged by his example, the German possessions in Italy were ready to throw off their allegiance to their lawful emperor.

During the Crusades the trading cities of Lombardy had grown great and rich, so much so that they ignored the governors sent from Germany, and chose their own magistrates, assessed their own taxes and coined their own

money. Moreover they cruelly oppressed the smaller towns and villages around.

When Barbarossa appeared over the Alps on the way to his coronation at Rome, small towns sent deputations to him begging for help against the larger cities, especially against Milan, the most arrogant of them all.

The Emperor, after hearing of all the evils that existed, was very angry, and promised redress. He sent a warning letter to the Milanese, who only tore it in pieces and trod it underfoot.

Unfortunately the Imperial army was not large enough to proceed against the city of Milan, which had already shut her gates in defiance, so the Emperor reduced to submission the smaller towns, and promised himself an expedition against Milan in the future.

Having been crowned King of Lombardy with the ancient iron crown of Pavia, Barbarossa continued his march toward Rome and encamped outside. He found the city in a state of the greatest excitement, for the populace had just risen under a republican leader named Arnold of Brescia, and had driven away the pope, Hadrian IV.

Hadrian appeared in Barbarossa's camp and was courteously received, but he took offence' and retired because the Emperor had not held the stirrup for him to dismount. More amused than vexed, Barbarossa promised subservience, and once more the Holy Father appeared, and this time his stirrup was duly held, the Emperor remarking that he feared he performed this office but badly, never having acted as groom before. Arnold of Brescia sent ambassadors to Frederick, who might now have humbled the Pope had he so desired, but he was a devout man and would not intrigue with the enemies of the Church. When the republicans offered to crown him in return for 5000 pounds' weight of silver, his wrath burst forth. "It is not among you, effeminate liars that ye are, that ancient Rome and her virtues are to be found t "he thundered; "but

among us, who are full of vigour and truth. The glory of your city is departed to dwell among the Germans. Karl and Otto conquered your land, and would ye demand money from your conquerors?"

He gave Arnold of Brescia into the hands of the Church, and, on his way to Saint Peter's the next morning, saw the republican leader led out to execution. Without molestation Barbarossa proceeded to the church, where he received the Imperial crown with due solemnity from the hands of the Pope.

Meanwhile, enraged at the loss of their leader, the citizens had risen and were thronging the streets, swarming like angry wasps ready to sting. A German servant who had lingered behind in Saint Peter's was murdered in the holy place where he stood, and his death was the signal for a free fight.

The Pope fled to the Vatican, fearing for his life and that of his cardinals, but Barbarossa called up his men and advanced into the streets. As he charged the mob, his horse stumbled and fell, and he would have been killed had he not been dragged out by Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, an ancient enemy of his house, whom he had conciliated by the gift of Bavaria.

"Heinrich, I will remember it!" he gasped, as he was being pulled from under the horses' feet, but to the Romans he cried, waving his sword: "Here is the gold wherewith the German Emperor buys his crown," and they slunk away abashed and subdued.

Having taken Rome, Barbarossa was in no mood for remaining there, since the unhealthy climate was already breeding pestilence among his soldiers, so he turned his face homeward.

Before departing, however, he destroyed a picture which he found there, representing the Emperor Lothair receiving the Imperial crown as a fief from the Pope. This was an intimation to Hadrian that, although he had been defended

by Barbarossa from his enemies, the Emperor had no intention of submitting to papal authority.

II

The return journey to Germany was beset with perils. On one occasion Barbarossa took refuge in the castle of a knight who was secretly in league with his enemies. Having secured the King's person, this knight sent word to the enemy, and a plot was formed by which Barbarossa was to be murdered while he slept

But the nobility of bearing which so much impressed all who surrounded the King soon began to exercise its softening influence on his host, and, stricken with remorse, he threw himself at his feet and confessed his treachery.

The castle was already surrounded by a guard, and Barbarossa's escape seemed wellnigh impossible. But the love of his people never failed, and a knight named Hartmann von Siebeneichen, who was a member of his train, came forward and offered to sacrifice his own life for the safety of his lord.

Very unwillingly Barbarossa changed clothes with him, and while Hartmann showed himself at the window in the kingly purple robes, the real Emperor made his way through the castle gates, telling the guards who barred his passage that he was a servant sent on in advance to prepare for the next night's lodging. At midnight the enemy entered Barbarossa's sleeping apartment, prepared to murder him as he lay. When they found a stranger lying on his bed, and learnt from him the whole story, they could only admire the courage of a knight who was willing to die for his lord; so they allowed Hartmann von Siebeneichen to go free, and smothered their vexation at the loss of their prey as gracefully as they could.

Many other difficulties also Barbarossa had to face, for armed bands met him in the passes of the Alps, but he cut his way through them, and eventually arrived safely home.

Here he once more set the affairs of his kingdom in order, punishing sternly any lawlessness among the nobles, and receiving ambassadors from Italy, France, Spain and England, countries which all held him in high esteem.

Lombardy alone continued to bid the great Barbarossa defiance, so in the year 1158 he went again with a large army, and laid siege to Milan. Worn out with hunger, the city capitulated in September. The chief nobles appeared with swords hanging round their necks, and the citizens with ropes, and all threw themselves at the conqueror's feet, imploring mercy. Frederick treated them very kindly, only stipulating that the Milanese should swear fidelity to him, pay down a sum of 9000 silver marks, build him a palace in their city, and permit him to nominate their magistrates. No sooner, however, had the German army departed than Pope Hadrian IV began once more to sow seeds of dissension. He intrigued with the German bishops, telling them that their Emperor was a rapacious dragon, who would fly through the heavens, and tear a third part of the stars from their spheres, and a ravening wolf, who spoiled the vineyard of the Lord.

The German bishops, however, remained faithful to their lord the Emperor, but Hadrian was more successful among the cities of Lombardy, and he was on the point of inducing them to throw off their allegiance when he died. Milan then expelled Frederick's governor, whereupon an army was raised, and once more the Germans besieged Milan, this time for a period of nearly three years. The siege dragged on and on, and Frederick was in continual danger of his life, for besides the usual perils of war, assassins were busy on every hand. Yet he always seemed to escape unhurt. On one occasion, whilst alone at prayer beside a river, he was thrown into the water by a Milanese of gigantic strength who had stolen up behind him, but the Emperor was young and strong,

and dragged his assailant with him, so that his attendants had time to reach him and put the Milanese to death.

Another time a strange old man was discovered in the camp, selling wares which were steeped in subtle poison and would cause death to all who touched them. Barbarossa was secretly warned, and the merchant was promptly secured and led to execution. But these attempts were very hamming, and Barbarossa swore never to place the crown on his head again until he had humbled in the dust the proud city that had caused him so much trouble.

Accordingly, when on the first of March 1162, Milan surrendered, it found its Emperor no longer in the genial mood of his first conquest of the city. He sat on a throne erected in the open air, robed in royal splendour, his enormous army encamped around, while twenty of the chief magistrates of Milan, with ropes and naked swords hanging round their necks, appeared before him and surrendered their city with all their citizens and property.

A few days afterward 800 chosen knights waited on him, gave into his hands the keys of the town and its thirty-six flags, and, like the magistrates, took the oath of fealty. Then came the citizens, with a band of priests and warriors, in their midst a chariot drawn by four white oxen harnessed in red, and on the chariot a tremendous crucifix, held in great veneration in Milan. Each man walked barefoot, with ashes on his head. In dead silence the long procession wound past the throne, each section laying down its flag at the feet of the mighty monarch whose wrath they had incurred. Then they waited, and wept as they waited.

At last the Emperor spoke.

Their lives were spared, he said, but he would take measures to prevent a repetition of disobedience to his will.

Within eight days the citizens were bidden to quit Milan in four bodies, and build themselves four towns, each two miles distant from the other. The city was then set on fire

and destroyed, with the exception of churches, palaces and works of art. Salt was strewn over the ground, and the plough was driven over all.

Not until then did Barbarossa solemnly place the crown again upon his head at a thanksgiving service of victory in the great church at Pavia.

When the Germans returned home, they took with them the skulls of the Magi, or Three Wise Men of the East, which had been placed in Milan during the First Crusade. They are now in the cathedral at Cologne, and are revered under the names of Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, the Three Kings of Cologne.

While Frederick Barbarossa was away in Italy, the chief man in his kingdom at home had been Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria.

During his Emperor's absence, he had extended his borders over the Elbe and fought against the Wends, a heathen tribe who lived in the districts now called Pomerania and Mecklenburg.

He succeeded at last in carrying his dukedom as far as the mouth of the River Oder, founding many towns, the principal of which is Lubeck, building churches, sending priests to convert the Wends and Saxon peasants to colonize and teach new methods of agriculture.

The friendly relations between Barbarossa and the Lion, however, were destined to become strained.

Barbarossa took possession of land in Swabia, which Henry had hoped to inherit, and the Lion sulked and growled, and when Barbarossa proposed to make yet another raid on the cities of Lombardy, Henry refused to come, pleading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in excuse.

Meanwhile revolt was again brewing, for Milan had formed a league with Verona and other Lombard cities, who had declared themselves fiefs of the new pope, Alexander, and

had built a new city, calling it Alessandria, in his honour. A third expedition undertaken against them by Barbarossa ended in disaster, since the intense heat brought on a fearful pestilence among the Germans, accustomed to the cooler climate of the North, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Frederick managed to bring his sadly thinned army back over the passes of the Alps.



THE SUBMISSION OF THE MILANESE TO FREDERICK BARBAROSSA.

Later he prepared an army once more, and called upon Henry the Lion for aid. Newly arrived back from Jerusalem, he was in no mood for war, and grumbled openly to the

Emperor that service under his banner had made him old and worn before his time. Money and soldiers he offered freely, but resisted all entreaties to go in person.

"Cod above has raised you over all other princes, so it is but fitting that you should fight for the honour of the 'realm,'" pleaded Barbarossa, and it is said that he even kneeled to the Lion, but all in vain.

The next year, 1176, Frederick's army was completely routed at the battle of Legano, where his whole camp and even his shield and banner fell into the hands of the enemy. He himself disappeared in the confusion, and it was three days before he found his way back. All his plans in Lombardy were shattered, he was obliged to submit to the Pope, kneel at his feet and receive the kiss of peace, but in his humiliation he did not forget Henry's refusal of help.

No sooner had Barbarossa arrived back in Germany than Henry the Lion was summoned to answer for himself, an invitation which he saw fit to despise, and did not appear. He was therefore deprived of both his dukedoms and all his offices, and, seeing that nothing but speedy submission would save his life, he hastened to throw himself at the Emperor's feet. Mindful of the occasion on which he had been dragged from under his fallen horse, Frederick generously forgave him, and commuted his sentence into one of banishment from the land; but Henry the Lion lost all his possessions, which were distributed among other German princes, and he took refuge with his wife's father in England.

III

Having settled the affairs of his country, Barbarossa held a great diet or parliament at Mayence during Whitsuntide of the year 1184. Old songs and stories tell of the glories that were seen there, for 40,000 knights and countless princes of the Church were present, together with ambassadors from

foreign courts, lovely ladies, minstrels, poets and artists. The city could not possibly contain the multitude, and a great town of tents and wooden huts was erected outside the walls. Pageants, plays and tournaments took place, and the Emperor himself displayed his prowess in the lists. His two sons there received knighthood at his hands. Even the elements took part on that great occasion, for in the midst of the revels a great black cloud appeared in the sky above the city of Mayence, and it burst upon the assembly there in torrents of rain with a hurricane of wind that tore down the wooden encampment and overthrew the tents. This was regarded as an evil omen by many of those who were there, and they whispered to each other that ill would come of it. Frederick Barbarossa, however, thought lightly of such omens, and only planned to secure his power even more firmly for the future.

In the following year he married his eldest son, Henry, to the Lady Constance, heiress of the kingdoms of Sicily and Naples, counting that thereby he would gain power not only in the North but in mid-Italy and the South. "Italy," he said, "is like an eel, which a man must grasp firmly by the tail, the head and the middle, yet which may nevertheless give him the slip."

Pope Alexander saw the significance of the alliance, and in great rage excommunicated the bishops who had officiated at the wedding. A quarrel would have been inevitable, but news having arrived in Germany that Jerusalem was in the hands of the Saracens once more, private grievances were forgotten in the face of a common ill.

Since the Second Crusade under Conrad III and Louis VII of France, little had been done to consolidate the Christian power in Palestine. The Europeans who had settled there grew weak and indolent in the hot, enervating climate, and as their power declined, the might of the Saracens grew. A period of great glory for the Saracens was the reign of Saladin, Sultan of Egypt and Damascus, a chief of much enlightenment and an ardent Mohammedan, whose courage in war, and whose courteous chivalry has been handed down in many a story and

song. His growing power was a threat to the little Christian state, yet for some time he lived on more or less friendly terms with Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, with whom he made a truce. Meanwhile a knight of Jerusalem named Reginald de Chatillon took prisoner Saladin's mother while she was on a journey from Egypt to Damascus, which violation of the truce Saladin avenged by marching at once on Jerusalem.

He was met by the Christian army before he arrived there, and at Tiberias a great battle was fought in which the Christians were routed, Guy de Lusignan and Reginald de Chatillon taken prisoner, and 11,000 men slain. Saladin put Reginald to death with his own hands, and with very little difficulty made himself master of all the Christian cities.

On the 3rd of October 1187, eighty-eight years after its first conquest, the Sultan Saladin entered Jerusalem, to the music of trumpets and kettle-drums. The cross, which had been erected on the Temple Chump, was torn down and sent as a present to the Caliph of Bagdad, who buried it outside one of the city gates and placed one end level with the surface of the road, so that all who passed over it might tread it with their feet.

When this news reached Rome, Pope Gregory VIII issued a manifesto calling upon all who valued their soul's health to fight for the cross, and thousands obeyed the summons.

King Philip Augustus of France and Richard I of England each raised an army, and, although seventy years of age, Frederick Barbarossa determined to join them.

He travelled through Hungary and Bulgaria, losing many a good warrior in skirmishes with foes and by attacks of robbers, and wintered in Adrianople in the dominions of the King of Greece.

When the spring came, the Crusaders pushed forward through Asia Minor, encountering ever-increasing perils, until

finally they met a large body of Saracens before the city of Iconium. There a battle was fought which would have ended disastrously, had not the aged Barbarossa rallied his men with much spirit, and so encouraged them by rushing on the foe himself, that they performed prodigies of valour.

Meanwhile, Barbarossa's son, Frederick, Duke of Swabia, had taken the city and unfurled the Christian flag, capturing such quantities of rich booty that it was impossible to carry all away. The Germans then advanced as far as the River Calycadnos, where Duke Frederick led the van, followed by the baggage, and the Emperor brought up the rear.

The bridge upon which they crossed was narrow and their progress so slow that Barbarossa, desirous of joining his son, and daring as ever, urged his horse into the river and essayed to swim to the opposite bank. But the current was too strong, and the gallant old King was swept down the stream some distance before his knights were able to draw the lifeless body on shores

The consternation of the army was indescribable. They could not realize that their mighty Emperor was no more.

Many turned at once and went back to Germany, others followed Duke Frederick as far as Tyre, where they buried the great Barber; and then on to Acre, where the young Duke died of fever.

Disheartened and miserable, the Germans struggled onward, following Leopold of Austria as their leader, and joined the English and French forces. But the princes quarrelled, and nothing was done. Richard of England was proud and overbearing, and trod the Austrian banner underfoot, speaking contemptuously of "Austrian swine." Thus insulted, Leopold departed home in disgust.

Philip Augustus also retreated, and although Richard fought bravely, he could not take Jerusalem, and the only concession he could gain from Saladin was a promise that he

would abstain from molesting Christian pilgrims who visited the Holy City.

When the news of Barbarossa's death reached Germany, consternation and dismay spread throughout the country. He had been a father to his people, and in return they loved and revered him. The more ignorant among them refused to believe that he was really dead. It was of no use to tell them that he was buried in Syria. They had never heard of Syria, and they maintained for many a year that he was in the great mountain, K "user, sitting at a marble table. A German poet tells us that he has sat there slumbering for many a hundred years, and his red beard has grown right through the marble table, and curls round his feet upon the floor. He tells how ravens circle round the mountain, and prophecies that one day an eagle will frighten them all away, and then the great Barbarossa will rise again and bring back a golden age to happy Germany.

So ended the disastrous Third Crusade, in which many a bold warrior besides the Red-Beard found a grave.

Perhaps the last to reach his home was Richard I of England, for he was caught by Leopold of Austria, who gave him to Barbarossa's son, the Emperor Henry VI, and the legend runs that he was shut up in Trifels Castle on the Rhine for thirteen months. At the end of that time he was discovered by his own minstrel, Blondel, who wandered from prison to prison and castle to castle, singing his master's favourite song. A voice from Trifels replied by singing the refrain, and, full of joy, Blondel hastened home to arrange for King Richard's ransom.

Nothing more was done for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre until the year 1212, when scenes of the strangest and wildest enthusiasm were witnessed in France, where a shepherd boy named Stephen appeared in the district of Vend8me, bearing a letter which he declared he had received from Jesus Christ himself. Only innocent children could save the Holy City, so Stephen affirmed, and he gathered together

an army of 7000 boys, who were murdered by pirates on the Adriatic coast.

After this, more than 80,000 children, both boys and girls, set out upon the Children's Crusade, tang ship at Marseilles for Palestine. But they were wrecked upon the coast of Africa, and many were drowned and the rest sold into slavery.

So ended one of the maddest, strangest expeditions that the world has ever seen.

The Fourth Crusade was undertaken by Barbarossa's grandson, the Emperor Frederick U, who had made a vow early in life that he would do what one man could to win Jerusalem again. He was prevented for some time from fulfilling his vow, since he had much to do at the beginning of his reign to settle his kingdom in Germany and the south of Italy. At last, in the year 1227, being strongly urged thereto by the Pope, he set forth, together with his friend, the Landgrave Ludwig of Thuringia, the husband of the famous Saint Elizabeth. This gentle lady, whose name is now known throughout the world, was the daughter of Andrew II, King of Hungary, and was born in the year 1207. She was but fourteen years of age at the time of her marriage, and was lonely and miserable at the court of her husband. Her mother-in-law disliked her and the courtiers sneered at the poor little girl-wife, but her husband was kind and good-natured, and she turned to him and to religion for comfort

She would fast and pray till the pale, sweet face looked almost too ethereal for this world, and she would rise from her bed during the night and lie on the cold stone floor, believing that thereby she was expiating sin and earning heaven for herself and her husband.

Ludwig was much disturbed when he discovered the terrible privations she endured, and at last he sternly forbade her to injure her health by self-mortification, or to make her accustomed gifts of food and clothing to the poor.

But Elizabeth was convinced that her services for others were right, and that it would be wrong to obey her husband on this point, so she continued her almsgiving as before

One day, so runs the legend, as she was leaving the palace with loaves of bread in her robe to distribute to the poor in the town, her husband met her suddenly and demanded to know what she was clasping in the folds of her robe. Frightened and confused, Elizabeth murmured: "Roses," amid the agitation the only clear thought left to her mind being that the poor must not lose their daily dole of bread. "Show me," commanded the Landgrave sternly. And to shield the gentle lady, the Lord God changed the loaves of bread into red roses, and when she confessed all to her husband, he forgave her the deceit, and revered her for her saintliness, allowing her to follow her own will. He aided her in her gifts to the poor and loved her as long as he lived.

Unfortunately for Elizabeth, she was only a girl of twenty years of age when Ludwig died and she was left alone. She had fallen under the influence of her confessor, Conrad of Marburg, who was anxious for the honour of producing before the world a saint who had lived under his guidance.

He persuaded her to renounce the world entirely, and to leave her tiny children for a cell. When the poor girl died, at the age of twenty-four, worn out with the privations she had suffered, she was canonized by Pope Gregory IX on account of the frequent miracles reported to be performed at her tomb.

It was on the Fourth Crusade that the Margrave Ludwig, husband of Saint Elizabeth, died, seized by a frightful infectious disease which broke out in the army, and carried off the men in hundreds. Frederick himself was attacked by it and obliged to abandon his project as soon as he was well enough to return home. But the new pope, Gregory IX, was very angry, and, declaring that the accounts of fearful pestilence were only a pretext to evade fulfilment of the vow, he placed Frederick under the ban of the Church.

Frederick was much hurt by this unjust punishment, and, to show that he really meant to keep his faith, set off for Jerusalem the next year.

The ruler of Egypt and Palestine was now the Sultan Malek-Camel, and with him Frederick became friendly, the Sultan allowing him to be crowned King of Jerusalem, and permitting his pilgrims to visit the Holy Sepulchre in peace, on condition that his Mohammedan followers were allowed to do the same.

Pope Gregory immediately excommunicated Frederick a second time, and forbade any priest to crown him; so he crowned himself, and returned home in peace.

Jerusalem was once more in the hands of the Christians, but it was impossible for them to hold it, and in the year 1244 the Mohammedans regained it. In 1517 it came into the hands of the Turks, who have held it ever since.

The effects of the Crusades on Germany were deep and far-reaching. The religious fervour which they enkindled naturally increased the power of the Church, and since princes and nobles followed the Crusades, bishops and abbots remained at home with extended powers. Also many thousands of the men who perished in their struggles with the Saracens left their property in Germany to the Church, and the widows and daughters of the fallen warriors frequently retired into convents, enriching them with their wealth. Thus the results upon the whole were good, since a spirit of true religion and chivalry was developed which contributed to raise the moral tone of society.

The citizens too benefited much, since new channels for commerce were opened, and industries introduced which had never existed before.

Adventurous spirits followed in the wake of the armies and obtained much useful knowledge in the preparation of medicines and the healing of wounds, for such things were better understood in the East in those days than in the West of

Europe. Eastern furniture and stuffs, Eastern fruits, flowers and spices, Eastern carving, weapons and pottery found their way into Europe, bringing wealth and prosperity to the German burgher.

Thus the cities grew great and flourishing and were able to maintain their own against the encroachments of greedy priests and lawless nobles, which contributed greatly to the safety and consolidation of the land.

CHAPTER XIII

RUDOLPH OF HABSBURG

I

With the death of Frederick I, the gallant old 'red-beard,' the German peasants' security and peace passed slowly away. The brilliant Hohenstaufen kings were not good for Germany, for their attention was mainly given to Italy, and there it was that they spent their Germ= gold and fought their battles with German lives.

The closing years of Frederick II's reign were full of anxiety and disappointment, hostility of the Pope, disloyalty of trusted Mends and failure of plans dearest to his heart. He had concentrated all his powers upon the subjugation of Italy, and had very much neglected his native German land. At one time, so defenceless was it that it was overrun by fierce Mongols who had advanced after their conquest of China, through Russia and into Germany. This race came from the same land as the terrible Huns of old, and resembled them, for they were misshapen and ill-proportioned, with thick, protruding lips, flat noses and little, deep-set eyes. They lived on eats and rats, rode small swift horses and practised horrible barbarities in war. One of their customs was to cut off the left ear of each one they slew in battle.

They were driven back by Henry the Pious, Duke of Silesia, in a fierce battle which raged for two whole days, and, although the brave duke and many of his followers lost their lives, the Mongols were so far checked that they retreated, bearing with them nine sacks of ears as trophies from the field.

In his private life Frederick suffered sorrow, for a favourite son, Enzo, was imprisoned by the people of Bologna, and Frederick's chancellor, Peter de Vincis, whom he

had loved and treated like a friend, turned traitor, and attempted to take his master's life by poison, afterward committing suicide in his cell.

So Frederick died very sadly in the year 1250, expiring in the arms of his favourite son, Manfred. He left the Imperial crown to his eldest child, Conrad IV, and the south of Italy to Manfred, who was his son by his last wife, Bianca.

But the prestige of the Imperial crown had fallen very low, and although he had been left substantial legacies of land, Pope Innocent IV refused to acknowledge Frederick's son as Emperor, and sent out wandering friars to preach against him as an infidel and unbeliever. The Pope supported William of Holland, a rival king against whom Conrad had to fight, but the descendant of the great Barbarossa was held in little esteem in Germany, and found but half-hearted support.

In the midst of his struggles Conrad died in the year 1254 leaving a two-year-old baby boy to rule his troubled realm. This little son was named Conrad like his father, but the Italians called him Conradino, which means 'the small Conrad,' because he was only a child.

William of Holland made so little progress among the Germans that upon one occasion he was stoned by the burghers of Utrecht; his wife was robbed on the open highway, and the Archbishop of Cologne tried to burn him to death in his palaces. The Germans paid no heed to his claims, had no esteem for his person, and his death was scarcely noticed.

So degraded had become the condition of Germany that the Imperial crown was actually offered for sale to the highest bidder. Richard, Earl of Cornwall, brother to Henry III of England, entered Germany, followed by thirty-two wagons, each drawn by a team of eight horses and laden with a hoghead of gold with which to bribe the Electors.

A Spanish prince, Alphonso the Wise, of Castille, had also rich gifts to offer, and the consequence was that one was

elected Emperor in the city of Frankfort-on-the-Main, and the other was elected Emperor outside the city walls I

The Pope promised to arbitrate between the rivals, but postponed his decision from year to year, while Germany sank lower and lower, and lawlessness increased to a terrible extent.

Meanwhile the pope, Innocent IV, had refused to recognize Manfred, son of Frederick II, as King of Apulia in Southern Italy, and had offered the crown to various princes, who had all declined to accept so dubious a position. At length a ruler was procured in the person of Count Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX of France, better known as Saint Louis. Charles had no resemblance to his brother in saintliness of life, and although he was undoubtedly clever and courageous, his scowling visage revealed the ambition and stern cruelty of his nature.

In 1266 he utterly routed Manfred's forces in a battle near Benevento, and the defeated king rushed into the ranks of his foes, fighting until he was slain.

Then next year the Apulian sent a deputation to the young Conradino, inviting him to assume the crown. He was living very quietly with his uncle, Duke Ludwig of Bavaria, and his mother begged him to refuse the offer, to remember that he was the last of the great Hohenstaufens, and warned him that the beauty and riches of Italy had always woven a subtle charm for his family, and had lured them again and again to destruction and death.

But Conradino was no unworthy descendant of the great Barbarossa, and preferred to fight for his crown rather than live in ignominious ease, so he sold the last remnants of the Hohenstaufen lands in Swabia, crossed the Alps at the head of a large army, and established himself for time months in the city of Verona.

In Italy his youth and courage and unusual beauty won all hearts, and the Ghibelline knights flocked to his standard. The inhabitants of Pisa prepared a fleet for him, which

defeated Charles of Anjou off Messina. Sicily rose against the hated French, and when Conradino won battle after battle, and at last reached Rome, he was received with acclamation. The Romans were only too glad of an opportunity of showing their spite against the Pope, so Conradino was led round the city in triumph, and conducted to the Capitol, while young maidens strewed his path with flowers. From this moment, however, the boy-king's fortunes fell lower and lower, and when he reached Apulia he was utterly beaten by Charles at the battle of Sarcola on 28rd August 1268. Conradino's knights had victory in their hands, but they dispersed too soon in search of booty, leaving the way open to the French, who sprang from an ambush and put them all to flight.

Conradino, together with his great friend, Prince Frederick of Baden, was betrayed into the hands of Charles of Anjou by a certain Giovanni Frangipani, a man who had received the greatest kindness from the Emperor Frederick II. A commission of judges assembled to try the young prisoner, who was accused of having "taken up arms against Charles, rightful King of Apulia, vexed the Church, and profaned and desolated churches and convents." Only one of the judges pronounced him guilty, and this was Charles of Anjou's own chancellor, yet his sentence was allowed to prevail against the votes of all his colleagues, and Conradino was condemned to death.

He was playing chess in prison with his friend, Prince Frederick, when they communicated the sentence to him, and on the 22nd of October 1268 he was led out on to a scaffold erected new the Bay of Naples, and there the lad of sixteen was to die, facing the blue waters and golden sunshine of perhaps the most beautiful scene in the world.

A low murmur ran through the crowd when he appeared, and looks of compassion met his gaze as he faced the people and spoke.

"I summon," he said, "my judges before the tribunal of the Most High. My innocent blood, shed on this scaffold, will

cry to Heaven for vengeance; nor do I hold my Swabians and Bavarians or my German people so base and degenerate but that they will wash out in French blood this insult to their land."

The gauntlet which he threw down before the crowd was taken up by a German knight and conveyed to Peter of Aragon, the husband of Manfred's daughter, Constance.

Conradino then took leave of his friends and laid his head upon the block. As the axe fell, tradition says that Frederick of Baden uttered a sudden sere= of horror, and that an eagle descended swiftly from the sky, bathed its right wing in the blood, and soared aloft once more.

Frederick himself and several others were then executed, and the crowd turned away, melted to tears and murmuring their discontent

Thus perished the last of the Hohenstaufen kings, but not unavenged. Charles retained Apulia, it is true, but the Sicilians rose as one man, expelled the French, and called the young Conradino's cousin, Constance, and her husband, Peter of Aragon, to their throne.

II

Meanwhile the condition of Germany had been growing worse and worse. Germans no longer cared to become candidates for the Imperial throne, but busied themselves in extending the borders of their own lands.

In olden days each lord had been a vassal of the Emperor, and had kissed hands on succeeding to his lands, and sworn fealty to his master, but gradually the estates were considered as hereditary and men forgot that they had been received from their overlord.

Some of these nobles became so powerful that they chose the emperors, and were for this reason called Electors. The seven Electors consisted of four princes and three priests: the Archbishop of Mentz, who was Chancellor of the Empire; the Archbishop of Treves, who was Chancellor of Burgundy; and the Archbishop of Cologne, Chancellor of Italy.

The four princes were the Count Palatine of the Rhine, who was the grand-sewer and placed the dishes on the Emperor's table at banquets; the King of Bohemia, chief butler, who handed the cup; the Duke of Saxe-Wittenberg, grand-marshal, who bore the sword of state; and the Margrave of Brandenburg, the chamberlain, who presented the water at the conclusion of the feast. To bribe the Electors, the emperors had given them lands and power and many privileges, but the stronger the Electors became, the weaker grew the Imperial power.

Great German nobles were responsible to the Emperor only for their deeds, and when no recognized Emperor existed, they were responsible to no man, and the consequence was a great increase of lawlessness among them. All sacred vows were forgotten, and the nobles degenerated into mere highway robbers and common thieves. They lived on the booty which they gained from a successful raid on a band of merchants travelling through their lands, or the plunder of a rich monastery. Old quarrels were revived and constant feuds maintained between the different noble houses, and they avenged themselves by expeditions into the enemy's territory, where they would burn villages, drive off cattle, mutilate or slay innocent peasants and trample down the growing corn. Justice was not to be had, since might was right, and the strongest hand held the most power. The larger towns and most powerful nobles were able to protect themselves, but those who suffered most of all were knights of lesser degree and the helpless peasantry.

On the Rhine and Elbe robber knights built great castles in which they could take refuge and where no one

could reach them, and from their strongholds they would levy toll upon the ships that passed down the river.

It sometimes happened that several of the lesser knights would join together in a league when they were not able to maintain themselves separately, build a castle, live there together with their families, and sally out in numbers large enough to gain plunder or maintain feud.

The old Imperial court of justice still existed in Westphalia, it is true, but so powerful had the nobles grown that no one dared punish them openly for fear of revenge, and the court was obliged to work in the greatest secrecy.

The Fehm, as the court was called, attempted to curb the more powerful criminals and took no notice of the crimes committed by priests or peasants. The Arch-bishop of Cologne was the only priest who was allowed to be a member, and no other priest, no Jew, woman, or peasant, could sit in the court.

The meetings were held with much solemnity, and often at night, in the episcopal palace at Cologne, and occasionally elsewhere. The members occupied benches rising one above the other, and the president sat on a throne before a table upon which lay a sword and a coil of rope. The hilt of the sword was fashioned like a cross, and an ancient writer tells us that these objects symbolized the cross upon which Jesus Christ did suffer, and also the stern justice of the court; the cord signifying the punishment of the wicked, whereby God's wrath may be appeased."

New members knelt before the president, and, laying their hands on the sword and rope, took the oath of secrecy and fealty to the court. Any breach of faith was followed by fearful penalties, and the candidate was warned that if he disclosed the business of the court his tongue would be torn out and he would be hanged seven times higher ordinary criminals.

A wrong-doer would receive a written summons to appear before the court, and would be led into the room where

each judge was disguised in a long gown and hood with two holes through which the eyes gleamed. The case was tried, and, if the crime were proved, the delinquent would be punished by fine in money or land or be sentenced to death. Any criminal who ignored his notice and failed to appear was condemned in the following words:

"Forasmuch as he hath been summoned before this Holy Fehm to give an account of certain misdeeds with which he standeth charged, and cloth wilfully and obstinately refuse to appear before the same; we, acting under the authority committed to us by the constitution of the Holy Empire, pronounce him *ferfehmed* and condemned; cast out of the number of the righteous into that of the unrighteous, separated from all good men; rejected by the four elements, which God hath given unto man for his comfort; devoid of counsel, rights, peace, honour, safety and love. And we hereby permit and require all men to deal with him as with one accursed. And we do accordingly curse his body and his flesh, giving his carcass to the four winds of heaven, and to the ravens and beasts of the field; and his soul we commend to our Lord God; if peradventure He will receive the same."

The president repeated this condemnation three times, spitting on the ground at the words, "We curse his body and his flesh," and then, turning to the court, would adjure them all to carry out the sentence, "Not failing for love or for hate, for friend or for kinsman, or for anything else that the world contained."

Soon afterward the body of the condemned would be found hanging from a tree, in the trunk of which was stuck a dagger bearing the symbol of the Holy Fehm on its blade.

These courts continued, especially in Westphalia, until happier times brought open justice into the land for rich and poor alike, and the Holy Fehm became unnecessary and ceased to exist.

After the Imperial throne had been vacant for seventeen years the Germans themselves recognized that their land would be at the mercy of any foreign invader if they had no ruler to unite them for purposes of war. Already sixty towns on the Rhine had been obliged to make a bond and maintain their own ships and soldiers, since their very existence was threatened. So when Richard of Cornwall died the Electors set aside the claims of Alphonso of Castille, and asked the Pope's advice in seeking a new candidate for the throne.

But it was a work of great difficulty to select a suitable man, for, though he should be strong enough to repress lawlessness and unite the realm, the more powerful nobles had no wish to choose one of princely rank equal to their own, who would deprive them of their privileges and curb their authority.

An emperor was required who could curb the growing insolence of Ottocar, King of Bohemia. The Pope desired a devout son of the Church, the people longed for a law-giver who would grant justice between man and man.

Considerable delay therefore ensued before a suitable candidate was found in the person of Count Rudolph of Habsburg, the lord of rich lands in Switzerland, Swabia and Alsace.

Rudolph was busily engaged in a feud with the city of Basle and its bishop when the news arrived that he had been elected Emperor. The citizens at once opened their gates and offered congratulations to their new lord, but the bishop was exceedingly angry. "Sit firmly on Thy throne, Lord God," he is said to have exclaimed, "or this Rudolph will take Thy place from Thee!" Rudolph was described by a monk of the period as "a tall thin man seven feet high, with a long eagle-nose and a pale face. He is of mature age, yet not old, and has nine children.

"Since childhood he has lived a temperate life. He is faithful to his friends, has borne arms all his life and suffered the stress and hardship of war. He conquers more by reason than by force, and all that he undertakes prospers in his hands."

At the Coronation, when the moment came for administering the oaths, the Imperial sceptre was found to be missing, and Rudolph took the crucifix from the high altar, remarking that the sign of the world's redemption might well serve instead. This was the man who was made Emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle on the 21st of October 1278, and, almost without a break, his descendants were Roman Emperor and German King down to the year 1806.

It is impossible for us to imagine the breathless eagerness with which the defenceless poor looked forward to the new Emperor's coming. For many years the wretched peasant had lived helpless on his tiny farm at the mercy of greedy men stronger than himself. His crops might be burned, his cattle driven off, his cottage set on fire, his daughters stolen, he himself taken prisoner, there was no one to whom to appeal for help and no redress to be gained.

No wonder that the poor flocked in piteous anxiety to get a sight of the new ruler.

One anecdote which illustrates this anxiety is told very beautifully by the German poet Schiller in a poem, the story of which runs as follows:

The Emperor Rudolph sat at his royal banquet in his castle at Aix. Around him were many gay lords and ladies, and merry laughter filled the hall.

The Prince of Bohemia handed the golden goblet to his Imperial master, the Lord of the Rhine passed the royal dish, and six other noble lords stood behind the throne. Beneath the dais upon which the Emperor sat, and reaching almost the full length of the hall, stood the enormous table round which the courtiers crowded. The dishes were full of steaming game and

fish, and large beakers of wine passed freely from hand to hand.

All was noise and merry laughter, even to the crowd of poor beggars at the end of the hall, who watched the feasting from afar.

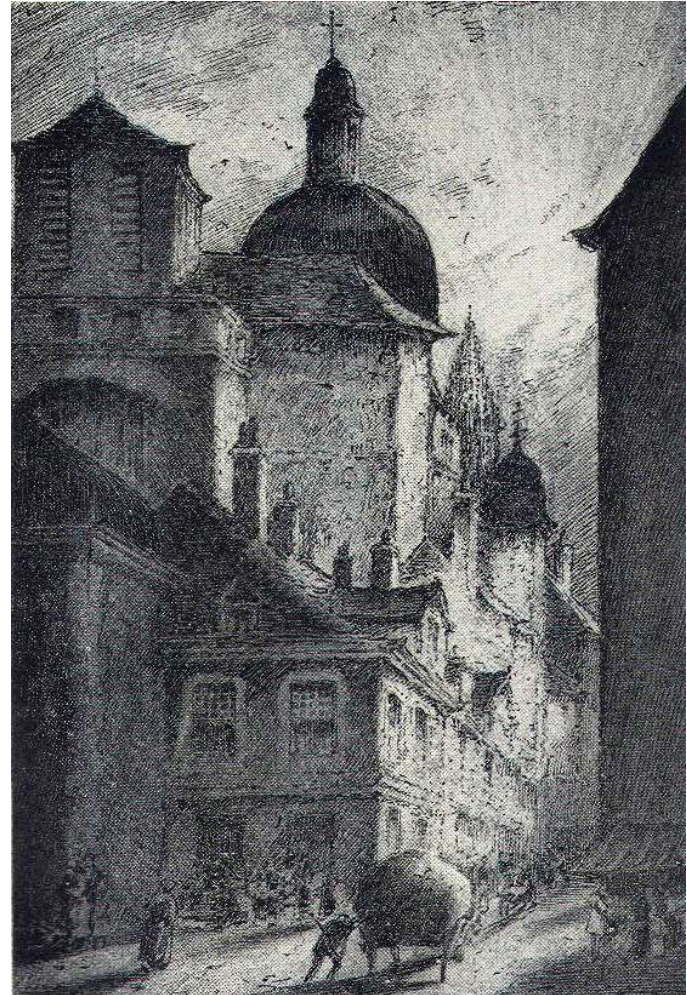
How they longed for a good, wise king, those poor men in the days when robber barons had ravaged their land I

For years there had been no safety for man and beast, maiden or wife, and the land had groaned and cried to Heaven against murder and rapine, oppression and crime.

But now that Rudolph of Habsburg sat upon the Imperial throne, the poor thronged in their hundreds to his hall, and watched with hungry eyes the kind face, which for them would bring safety and help. As yet he had not been proved, but he treated them kindly and would not let his courtiers drive them from his door.

"They are all our brothers and sisters," he would say, and when the banquet was over his pages were sent to distribute the remains among these poor brethren. Surely such a man must be holy and true. The banquet was over, the voices dying into silence, when Rudolph the Emperor turned in his seat and cried: "Is there no minstrel to sing sweet songs before us Y In the young days of my knighthood, many were the golden truths that I learnt from the lips of singers. Surely, as the days grow old, when the hair is silvered and the arm weakened, we have all the more need to learn the might and wisdom of these holy men!" And even as he spoke one stepped forward from among the crowd, a minstrel in a lung dark robe.

His face was old and wrinkled, his hair was snowy-white, only in his dark eyes still burnt the fires of youth, and when he opened his lips and sang the voice was young—at once deep, tender and passionate.



AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

And he sang of a glad young knight who went forth to hunt the boar. Behind him rode his squire, and while they rode they sang for joy and youth and love of life. As they crossed a meadow bordered by a willowy stream, they heard the sound of a tiny silver bell. Before them, over the green grass, strode a holy priest. In his hands, held high with greatest care, he carried the Sacred Elements, and rang the tiny bell to tell any man that might approach that he was on holy ground. The

priest was on his way to a dying man to comfort his poor soul before its flight with the rites of Holy Church. The gay young knight dismounted, and, doffing his bonnet, bent the knee reverently before the Body of the Lord.

His squire did the same.

But when the holy father descended the bank to the stream he found that recent rains had swept away the little wooden bridge.

So, placing his precious burden upon the grass, he unloosed his sandals and girt up his robe to wade the swollen waters.

When the gay young knight perceived this thing, he sprang to his feet and came, cap in hand, to the place where the holy father knelt.

"Far be it from thee, Father," he said gently, "to wade the swollen waters of this flood. My good grey steed is here to bear thee safely with thy wondrous burden whithersoever thou wilt."

So the holy man mounted and rode forward on his way.

On the morrow a priest entered the courtyard of the young knight's castle, leading by the bridle the good grey steed that had carried him so well.

When the lord came forth and heard his thanks, he smiled and said

"Beep thou the good grey steed for Holy Church. He has borne the sacred body of the Lord and must henceforth serve the priests of God."

And the glad young knight turned away and went into his castle.

All the time the priestly minstrel sang the story of the glad young knight, the Emperor's head was turned aside, and his face was shaded by his purple mantle. The courtiers gazed at him in awe and growing reverence. A deep, deep silence

reigned when the priestly minstrel raised his hand to heaven and solemnly blessed the man who in his youth had revered his God. And he blessed him in his household and his lands, in his children and his realm.

And the poor stole out with shining faces, for they knew the Lord had sent to them a champion for their defence.

III

Not only the poor but the bishops and archbishops showed the greatest satisfaction at Rudolph's filial attitude toward the Church and her servants.

Pope Gregory X himself came as far as Lausanne to meet him, since he had been recommended by the Arch-bishop of Cologne as "a sound C , a true friend of the Church, a lover of righteousness, mighty in his own strength and allied with the mighty."

There, kneeling at Gregory's feet, Rudolph swore obedience, but, comparing Rome with a lions' den into which many feet entered but none came back, he did not go there to receive his crown.

He was a sincerely religious man nevertheless, and soon past deeds of piety were spread abroad by his servants, who loved him and delighted to praise him.

When pilgrims had wished to travel to Rome, from the castle of Habsburg at the confluence of the rivers Aar and Reuss, Rudolph had conducted them safely over the Alps. Merchants who had appealed to him for help had been protected from robber knights until they reached securer country, and the Archbishop of Mainz, having desired to visit Rome, had been courteously met and conducted back again.

"Would God, Sir Count, that I might live to reward you for your service to me," said the Archbishop as they parted,

and this wish was granted, for his was one of the most insistent voices that recommended Rudolph as a candidate for the Imperial throne. The priest who had received the good grey steed to bear the Holy Sacrament to the dying had entered the household of the Arch-bishop of Mainz, and had often spoken in high praise of the devout knight who had shown such reverence to his master and himself.

The nobles were equally pleased with their Emperor, since he was not a prince by birth, and yet had borne himself bravely and had ever been successful in war. So all gladly took their oath of fealty to him, except the proud Ottocar, King of Bohemia, who had aspired to the Imperial crown himself. Instead of coming before the council, Ottocar merely sent a bishop, who addressed Rudolph with scant respect in a long Latin speech. But Rudolph interrupted, and bade him be silent, saying: "Sir Bishop, when you speak to your clergy, by all means use the Latin tongue, but here you must speak German, as is our custom." So the bishop was sent away, and ultimately war was declared on Bohemia. During the time that Germany had had no ruler, Ottocar had seized the opportunity of annexing Austria, and so confident was he of his own powers that he laughed scornfully when he heard that the "miserable Count" was preparing for war.

Few of the princes joined Rudolph, and he was very short of money. It is told that as he was passing down the Rhine a nobleman asked him:

"Sire, who shall be your treasurer?"

"I have no treasure," answered Rudolph, "neither have I any money except these five shillings, but the Lord God, who has always helped me hitherto, will help me to the end."

And in spite of lack of money and soldiers, Rudolph pressed forward, and appeared before Vienna, where the citizens themselves rose and joined him. Ottocar was defeated and obliged to take the oath of fealty which he had always

refused, and to give up the lands he had stolen, retaining only Bohemia and Moravia as fiefs for which he must pay homage.

For this purpose Ottocar appeared on the island of Lobau in the Danube, with many knights on horseback all dressed in cloth of gold and jewels. As he approached, the Germans begged Rudolph to assume the royal robes, as befitted the Emperor of his land, but Rudolph refused saying: "The King of Bohemia has often laughed at my grey doublet; now will my grey doublet laugh at him."

He commanded his soldiers to line on either hand the road on which the King approached, and Ottocar rode down the lane of men, dismounted and entered Rudolph's tent, knelt before him, and tendered the homage due.

Tradition says that while he was in this position the Emperor caused the tent to be removed suddenly, so that all the army saw Ottocar on his knees.

Whether this be true or not, the Bohemian King left Lobau in great wrath, and went home to prepare an army and take the field once more. In this he was encouraged by his wife, who had bitterly taunted him for making his submission, calling him a dog that barks fiercely from afar, but fawns on those who approach.

In the year 1278 Rudolph again faced his old enemy not far from Vienna, and prepared his men for war by confession and the mass. His standard was borne by Count Frederick of Nuremberg, who was of the Hohenzollern family and an ancestor of the present German Emperor.

Ottocar addressed his men, and the battle began. Toward midday the Bohemians broke through the German ranks, and although the Emperor Rudolph rushed to the breach, his horse fell, and he would have been killed had not a knight held his shield over his head. But he was soon on horseback again and rallied his men, before whom the Bohemians fled, thousands being slain and thousands perishing in the marshes.

A Bohemian noble who had almost killed Rudolph was taken prisoner, and the German knights were anxious to put him at once to death. But Rudolph always respected courage, even in his enemies.

"God forbid!" he exclaimed to his men. "To slay so brave a knight would be a great injury to our land," and he commanded them to bandage his wounds and see that he was properly nursed back to health.

King Ottocar had fought bravely, but at length sank down under his wounds. Rudolph had instructed his men that he was not to be killed, but he was slain by two Bohemian brothers, whose father had been cruelly put to death some years before by this King. Rudolph was stricken with grief when the body of his enemy was laid at his feet.

"See how vain are the greatness and riches of this world!" he exclaimed, and he bade his followers wash the mangled corpse, embalm it, and carry it in purple robes to the Austrian capital at Vienna, whence it was conveyed to Bohemia and buried at Prague. Bohemia was left in the hands of Ottocar's eleven-year-old son, Wenzel, but Austria and the surrounding lands Rudolph gave to his own two sons, Rudolph and Albert. The descendants of Albert of Habsburg gained Bohemia and Hungary, and the Habsburg family reign in Austria-Hungary to this day.

Rudolph's next task was to punish evil-doers in his land, and restore order and peace. For this purpose he made journeys into every part of Germany, hearing grievances and giving redress.

All who wished were allowed to approach and speak with him, and he was exceedingly angry if he found his servants sending suppliants away.

"Why do you send him away?" he exclaimed on one of these occasions. "Have I become Emperor to shut myself away from my people?"

The robber knights who lived by plunder received their punishment, for Rudolph visited each district in which there had been complaints and made his power felt. On the Rhine alone he destroyed seventy strongholds, and hanged the knights on the trees in their spurs and armour as if they had been so many common freebooters.

"I consider no man noble," he is said to have declared, "who lives on the proceeds of robbery and theft."

In Thuringen he conquered sixty-six castles within a year, and took over one hundred prisoners, who were all put to death. He led twenty-nine robbers to Erfurt, and had them executed there before the city gates, that the merchants might continue their journeys unhindered and the peasants gather their little stores in security.

Thus he brought back peace and safety into the land by means of his great might, and was blessed alike by citizen and peasant and called the father of his land.

In his habits he was simple and dignified, and showed no false pride. He rose from his throne to receive a citizen of Zurich who had saved his life, and in time of war he patched his old grey doublet with his own hands, refused water when it was scarce among his men, and once when no food was available set them an example of cheerfulness by pulling up a turnip from a field and contentedly eating it.

On another occasion, when their supplies had been cut off and they were short of food, he told them to begin their attack at once, since if they conquered they would win supplies, and if they were beaten they would be taken prisoner, and prisoners are always given food. Once when encamped at Mainz he strolled through the streets in his usual simple dress. As it was very cold, he turned into a bake-house and warmed himself by the fire, where he was roundly scolded by the baker's, wife, who was a woman with a sharp tongue, and thought he was only a common soldier.

"Leave my bake-house at once, and go back to your beggarly king who worries honest folks with his ill-behaved soldiers," she screamed.

Rudolph laughed at her description of the king, but did not move, and his laughter so enraged the woman that she picked up a bucket of water that was standing near and emptied it over his head and shoulders. Dripping wet, he hurried back to his camp, and told the story to his followers with much enjoyment. He then sent a basket of wine and good things to the baker's wife, with the message that it was a present from the soldier whom she had refreshed with a bath that day.

When the woman heard who the soldier had been, she was covered with confusion, and, trembling with fear, hurried to the camp, and, throwing herself at Rudolph's feet, begged for mercy. Rudolph bade her rise, and as a punishment made her repeat exactly what had happened, not omitting a single word of her tirade against himself. The recital was hugely enjoyed by both Rudolph and his courtiers, and received with shouts of laughter. Some objected that he carried his good-humoured kindness too far, but Rudolph said: "I have many a time repented of my harshness, but never yet have I repented of too great kindness."

It is related that once he met a beggar who addressed him thus

"Brother Rudolph, give somewhat to a poor man." Astonished at this mode of address, the Emperor asked: "Since when have we been brothers, friend?"

"We are all brothers since the time of Adam," answered the beggar.

Whereupon Rudolph gave him a penny, which did not satisfy the beggar, who stood turning the coin over and over in his hand. "A penny is a very small, gift from an emperor to his brother," he grumbled.

But Rudolph's quick wit seldom deserted him. "If all your brothers since the time of Adam gave you as much," he said, "you would be the richest beggar upon earth."

And the man could say no more.

It added greatly to Rudolph's popularity that he invariably issued his decrees in the German tongue, instead of in the Latin, as had hitherto been the custom, and the citizens and peasants delighted in repeating the many anecdotes that told of his kindness and forethought for their welfare. Also it pleased them to find that he stayed at home instead of wasting his energies on feuds with the Pope and in wars with Italian subjects, as the Hohenstaufen kings had done. But it was one of Rudolph's favourite sayings that to rule well is a greater art than to win territory, and to maintain peace and order in the realm is better than to extend its borders.

Only the nobles were a little jealous of the increasing power of the house of Habsburg, and would not agree to nominate Rudolph's only surviving son, Albert, as heir to the Imperial throne, lest he should become too influential.

Rudolph's honesty became a proverb, and for many a year after his death it used to be said of a liar or thief: "He has not our Rudolph's honesty!"

In the words of an old chronicler of his day: "He was the best warrior of his time; he was the truest judge that ever dealt justice."

So he was the darling of his people, and great was their consternation when in the summer of 1291 he felt death approaching. He hurried toward Spire, where many of his forefathers lay buried, but died before he could reach the city, on the fifteenth day of July.

Of the possible heirs to the throne the Emperor's eldest son, Rudolph of Swabia, was dead, and the claim of the young grandson, John of Swabia, to the throne was immediately set aside, also that of the second son, Albert of Austria.

Through the influence of Gerard, Archbishop of Mainz, who was described as a man of such infamous character that "the devil himself might have envied him," the choice fell on Adolphus of Nassau, his cousin, who, the Archbishop thought, would prove a willing tool in his hands. Adolphus was a man of barbarous habits and ferocious cruelty, and his friends were of the same order. To increase his private property, he bought Thuringen and Meissen from their ruler, Albert the Degenerate, a man like minded to himself. This Albert had married Margaret, a daughter of Frederick II, and treated his wife and children with revolting cruelty.

Knowing well that it would torture Margaret if he took her children from her, her husband gave orders that she must bid farewell to her two sons for ever. As she did so, the wretched lady bit the eldest boy, Frederick, on the cheek, so that the scar might always remind him of his debt of revenge to be paid one day to his cruel father.

Soon after this Margaret died, and the two boys managed to escape, but they were retaken and placed in prison, where they would have died of hunger and ill-usage, had not compassionate servants supplied them with food and tried to protect them. As soon as they were old enough, the two brave youths took up arms against their cruel father and his friend, Adolphus of Nassau, and they were joined by most of the people, since the whole country was groaning under the outrages of Adolphus's unmanageable troops, and fast sinking into the condition in which Rudolph of Habsburg had found it. Seeing that war would soon be general throughout the Empire, Archbishop Gerard once more assembled the Electors and bribed them to declare the throne vacant. He had by no means found his cousin as tractable as he had hoped, and, as Adolphus was now very conveniently killed in battle, the good Emperor Rudolph's son, Albert of Austria, was chosen, just as his father had wished. Albert of Austria was a dark, cold-hearted man of terrifying aspect, since, in addition to pale, gaunt features and harsh expression, he had lost an eye. He

had none of the genial kindliness of his father, and only showed his Habsburg blood by a love of increasing the Habsburg power. He waged war against Prince Frederick of Thuringen with the bitten cheek, but was unsuccessful, and the young prince gained his own again. Also he fought against Arch-bishop Gerard, who had insulted him by threatening that he "had more emperors in his sack" if Albert misbehaved, and he was troubled by risings and rebellions in Switzerland.

Albert had attempted to annex the three Swiss cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden to his dukedom of Austria, but the Swiss resisted sturdily, so he sent a cruel bailiff named Gessler, who oppressed the people and built a great castle in which he used to imprison them.

One day Gessler was riding through the country when he noticed a substantial new house, and inquired of its owner, a certain Werner of Stauffach, to whom it belonged. Werner knew that the question was only asked to entrap him, so he answered: "It belongs to the Emperor and to your Honour, and it is my fief."

Gessler could find no fault with so cautiously worded a reply, but he issued a proclamation that no man was to build a house without his permission. After this the Swiss began to plot his overthrow, for they had ever been a people that loved freedom.

On another occasion Gessler commanded his hat to be set on a pole in the market-place of the town of Altdorf, and a herald announced that all passers-by were to pay it reverence as if it were the Emperor himself. Legend relates that an honest peasant named William Tell was passing through Altdorf that day with his little son. He was a friend of Werner and other conspirators, and when he saw the hat and the kneeling people he passed on without so much as bowing his head.

Tell was immediately seized by the soldiers, and, because he was noted for his skill as an archer, Gessler

commanded that for punishment he should shoot at an apple placed on the head of his own little child.

The peasant at first refused, saying that he would rather die, but, when the cruel bailiff threatened to kill both him and the child, he seized his bow and arrow and took aim. The little boy, who was only six years of age, was a true son of his brave father; he stood firm and held the apple on his head with his own hands, and Tell's arrow split it exactly in two without hurting the child.

The crowd applauded loudly, and Gessler himself examined Tell with interest.

"But why," he asked, "do you hold a second arrow in your hand?"

"The second arrow was for you, if the first had slain my son," answered Tell calmly.

At this Gessler was furious. "I promised you life," he thundered, "and I will keep my word, but that life shall be spent in a dungeon where you shall see neither sun nor moon again!"

He then commanded Tell to be bound, thrown into the boat, and conveyed to prison over the Lake of Lucerne. But as they rowed along a terrible storm arose, so that Gessler became alarmed, and, being told by his men that Tell was a skilful boatman, he unbound him and bade him steer safely to the shore.

This was done, but suddenly, as they neared a flat rock, Tell seized his bow and arrows, and sprang ashore, at the same time pushing the boat off into the lake with a vigorous kick, and Gessler was obliged to land as well as he could lower down. As soon as this was accomplished Gessler and his men proceeded to search for Tell, who had disappeared into the bushes. But the bold archer was expecting this, and, kneeling behind a tree, he waited his opportunity. No sooner did Gessler appear than an arrow struck him to the heart. After this

the brave Swiss peasants rose in the year 1808, pulled down the castle that the Austrians had built, and drove the Imperial forces over the border, forming a solemn confederacy among themselves which has lasted with little change for over six hundred years.



THE MONUMENT TO WILLIAM TELL AT ALTDORF.

The Emperor Albert swore vengeance against the hardy Swiss, who had dared to question his authority, but events happened which put an end to his plans.

All this time his nephew, the young John of Swabia, had long resided at the Court, and had begged repeatedly for the restoration of his father's lands, which Albert held as his own. The gloomy Emperor ever evaded this request, saying that John was still too young, and promising him other lands instead. These promises were never fulfilled, and, goaded to desperation, the youth at last determined to take matters into his own hands; so, with five other malcontents, the chief of whom was a certain Rudolph von Wart, he plotted Albert's assassination.

While crossing the River Reuss one day the conspirators managed to separate Albert from his attendants, and before the latter had time to ferry over to him he was writhing in agony on the ground, bleeding from many wounds. When they arrived, the murderers were fled, and the Emperor was breathing his last, his head supported by a poor woman who happened to be passing.

John, overcome by the horror of his deed, fled to Italy, threw himself at the feet of the Pope, and retired into a monastery, where he ended his days

Walter von Eschenbach, another of the conspirators, lived thirty-five years in hiding as a poor shepherd. Rudolph von Balm died in poverty.

Albert's wife, Elizabeth, and Agnes, her daughter, pursued the murderers with unrelenting cruelty. Their castles, ten in number, were razed to the ground, their lands devastated, and their servants slain or banished. Agnes had sixty-three of Rudolph von Balm's servants beheaded in her presence, and with her own hands was about to strangle his infant child when the soldiers took it from her in horror.

Rudolph von Wart, who was the only conspirator to be caught, was broken on the wheel in the presence of his agonized wife, and thus the Emperor Albert was avenged.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION

I

As the fourteenth century drew to a close, signs were not wanting of an approaching great change. The German Empire was very large, embracing not only its present dimension, but the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland, and reaching even into Russia and Italy.

Numerous princes ruled these territories, and the Emperor was chosen, as stated previously, by a body of seven of them, who bore the title of Electors. This was scarcely a wise method, since the votes of the Electors were often sought by bribes, sometimes by gifts of money, sometimes of land or privileges, with the result that the more the emperors gave way, the weaker they became, and the stronger grew the power of the princes of Germany.

Evil emperors and princes weakened the respect that the lower orders had always felt toward those of high birth, and evil popes shocked the feelings of those who had loved and venerated the Holy Church.

In the reign of the Emperor Wenceslaus, who was chosen German Emperor in 1378, both these tendencies are marked.

His father, Charles IV, had established a law strictly prohibiting all bribery, and afterward, feeling himself growing old, he spent 700,000 florins in corrupting the seven Electors, and thus prevailed upon them to choose his son as Emperor.

Having secured the Imperial crown, Wenceslaus gave himself little concern about the Empire, never once visiting Germany nor once holding a diet. He lived entirely in his own

kingdom of Bohemia, where he was loathed and dreaded as a cruel tyrant. So barbarous was he that historians have since thought that he was probably insane, and it is no wonder that his subjects lost all respect for kingly authority and considered it no sin to disobey his laws.

At table he would sit surrounded by ferocious bloodhounds, whom it was his pleasure to set fighting among themselves, or chasing his guests round the hall. Occasionally he would amuse himself by setting them at his wife, who was several times torn by them as she lay in bed. His nobles were once invited to an entertainment, and they found him seated in a black, tent with a white and a red one on either side, and, when brought before him one by one, they were asked how much land they would give him. Those who gave up their possessions willingly were marshaled into the white tent, where they were sumptuously feasted, after which they ruefully departed; but those who refused were beheaded in the red tent at the hands of the common executioner. Upon another occasion the burgomaster and town councillors of Prague were ushered into his banqueting hall to find a man of grim aspect standing in a corner leaning on an axe. Their surprise and the glances of dismay they stole at each other caused Wenceslaus exquisite pleasure.

"Wait until after dinner," he said to the executioner; "thou shalt have work enough then."

One may well suppose that after the poor citizens had sat some time at that meal, vainly trying to make a show of eating, they readily granted the ferocious king any desire that he expressed in order to save their own lives.

Not even the priests were free from his cruelty, for he oppressed and tormented his wife's confessor because he wished to know all that she had told him. Knowing that the betrayal of confessions was forbidden to priests, and that he would be breaking his ordination vow by doing so, the poor man at last declared that he would die rather than commit such a sin.

"Sayest thou so, Sir Priest?" cried the King. "Then, by the heavens, thou shalt have thy wish. Bind this monk hand and foot and throw him into the River Moldau." And so perished an innocent and faithful servant of God.

So shameful was this tyrant's neglect of the German Empire, over the ruin of which he used to laugh with much enjoyment, and so barbarous was his cruelty that his younger brother, Sigismund, contrived to capture his person and keep him under restraint as a madman. But Wenceslaus was very cunning, and whilst bathing in the river one day he eluded the vigilance of his keepers by diving deep into the water. He gained a boat rowed by a young girl, and was safely conveyed to the opposite bank.

Wenceslaus might have made the German Empire very strong had he cared to do so, for France, his most dangerous enemy, was engaged in war with England, and grave scandals had reduced the power of the papacy considerably.

In olden days the German Emperor had received his crown from the hands of the Pope and subject to his approval, but when two men proclaimed themselves successor of Saint Peter and rightful Bishop of Rome, and each declared the other an impostor, they called upon those princes who had formerly been their vassals and lived under their sway to decide their quarrel. Wenceslaus, however, had no inclination to rouse himself and take advantage of this opportunity, loving better the beer of Prague and his life of brutal sensuality and cruelty there.

At length the Electors determined to set him aside, and in the year 1400 they chose Rupert, the Count Palatine, to rule Germany in his place.

Some few cities offered their services to Wenceslaus, expressing their willingness to reinstate him on the Imperial throne, but he was too lazy to care, and so long as he could live in his own little kingdom of Bohemia, and amuse himself

by venting his cruelty on defenceless subjects, he was quite happy.

So he allowed them to elect what emperor they chose, preferring to turn his attention to his public executioner, whom with cruel irony he caused to be beheaded so that he might understand the suffering he had inflicted on so many others at his master's command. Likewise his cook, who had sent up an ill-roasted capon, he had roasted before his own fire on a spit.

The Emperor Rupert died in 1411, but Wenceslaus made no attempt to regain the crown, so his brother, Sigismund, was elected by one party and Jodocus of Moravia by another.

Both the popes had been set aside and a new one elected, but, as the other two refused to resign, the year 1411 presented the edifying spectacle of time Emperors of Germany and time Popes, each one of the latter protesting that he was infallible and the true successor of Saint Peter. Little wonder then that reverence for religion and loyalty to sovereigns was at a low ebb in Germany.

Within a few months Jodocus died, and Sigismund was left in undisturbed possession of the throne. He was handsome and lively, but had no steadiness of purpose, and, like his brutal brother, was given to sensual pleasure. One good deed he did in that he called together a council at Constance in the year 1414 with the object of reforming the Church.

The teaching of the Englishman Wyclif had penetrated into Germany, and, shocked as people were at the gross corruption of their clergy, it was a favourable opportunity to consider the question of reform.

The pope who had last been elected died within the year and was succeeded by John XXIII, a man of evil life, who had been a pirate and had committed the most revolting crimes, but so degraded were the clergy of the time that one of the cardinals is said to have remarked that John would make a

good pope, since none but a scoundrel could now rule the Church.

The Council of Constance met on the 28th of November, and was believed to have attracted to the city at least 150,000 people. Of these three were patriarchs, thirty-three cardinals, forty-seven archbishops, one hundred and forty-five bishops, one hundred and twenty-four abbots, eighteen hundred priests, seven hundred and fifty doctors, and monks innumerable.

Of the three rival popes, John XXIII was the only one who put in an appearance. He had travelled over the Alps in a carriage, and had been overturned into a snow-drift on the way. The peasants of the neighbourhood had hastened to the spot, eager to help the pontiff and receive his blessing, but when they arrived on the scene and were roundly rated by the Holy Father, who was musing and swearing in a violent temper, they hung back, and their simple minds began to doubt whether such blasphemous language could proceed from the Lord's representative on earth,

Temporal sovereigns were present at the Council in the persons of the Emperor and all the Electors, also numbers of nobles who acted as ambassadors for foreign kings, but Sigismund himself behaved with so little dignity during the sittings that he aroused the contempt of all his guests. The multitude which had collected at Constance included mountebanks, buffoons, troops of English actors, and bad characters without end, and with these Sigismund amused himself and indulged in orgies of drunken debauchery. The first act of the Council of Constance was to declare itself above all popes, and call upon the three representatives of the papacy to resign. Gregory XII did so, and became a simple cardinal, John XXIII resisted by armed force, and was henceforth imprisoned in the castle of Heidelberg, but Benedict XIII was in Spain, and from there bade defiance to all decrees. After this, the representatives proceeded to examine the heresies alleged to have sprung up in the Church.

II

The sister of the Emperor Wenceslaus had married Richard II of England, and by this means the writings of the English reformer, John Wyclif, had found their way into Bohemia and had been studied with especial interest by the professors of the university of Prague. Chief among these professors was the celebrated John Huss and his friend and pupil, Jerome of Prague, who for ten years at least had been preaching and lecturing in Prague and the neighbourhood, maintaining that the Pope was no better than other bishops, that the doctrine of purgatory had no warrant from Holy Scripture, and that confession, images and vestments were vain things.

The priests of the Roman Catholic Church taught that the bread and wine of the Holy Sacrament actually changed into the body and blood of Christ, and they only delivered the bread to the laity, reserving the wine for themselves alone. Huss and his followers believed that the body and blood of Christ were only received in a spiritual fashion when men partook of the bread and wine, and that there was no reason to withhold the cup in the Holy Communion, since our Lord Himself had delivered it to His disciples.

When summoned before the Council of Constance, John Huss was given a safe-conduct by Sigismund, as a pledge that no harm was intended to his person, so he boldly entered the great council hall and saluted the company assembled there. He was first addressed by one of the cardinals in the following words:

"Master Huss, we have manifold complaints against you, that you have taught and spread abroad gross errors against the Church, for which cause we have summoned you here that we may understand from your own mouth of these matters."

To which Huss replied: "Reverend Father, rather would I die than confess myself guilty of one of these acts of heresy; wherefore I come before you this day that if any error be proved against me, I may recant and express my sorrow for the same."

Huss was then removed into a side chamber and examined, and afterward was arrested and thrown into a filthy dungeon, the poisonous air of which gave him fever.

Thus did the Emperor Sigismund break his word, in that he had promised no harm should attend the person of Huss, who, in spite of his petitions, could obtain no hearing until June 1415, when many ridiculous charges were brought against him, such as that he believed in four gods. Whenever he raised his voice in his own defence he was shouted down and forbidden to speak. On the 6th of July he was condemned to death at the stake as a heretic, the Emperor coldly informing his friends who protested that no faith could be kept with unbelievers.

Huss was taken by the Bishop of Riga to the cathedral, but made to wait outside until Mass was ended. On entering, he found the Emperor seated on a throne, surrounded by dignitaries of the Church all in robes of state, and, on a table before them, a full set of priestly garments, which were to be employed in his degradation from the priesthood.

The service was opened by a sermon from one of the bishops on the sin of heresy, after which another bishop read a long list of accusations against John Huss, and every time the condemned man attempted to interrupt he was silenced with angry cries of "Peace, heretic, peace!" At length, hearing them accuse him of contempt of the Pope's commands, he raised his voice and cried loudly: "That is false! I appealed to a higher tribunal and came before this council to defend myself, trusting to the Emperor's promise that no evil should befall me." And as he spoke he fixed his eyes indignantly on the countenance of Sigismund, who is said to have reddened with confusion under his gaze.

The condemnation to death by fire was next read, and Huss knelt and prayed for forgiveness for his murderers, afterward he was invested with the priestly garments, and then, as each one was taken from him, he was solemnly cursed as a heretic. The ceremony was ended by a bishop who placed on his head a paper cap painted with devils, and commended his soul to his master, Satan. Huss raised his eyes to heaven and exclaimed: "But I commend it to my Lord Jesus Christ."

He was then led to the place of execution and bound to a stake already fixed in the ground, and while the faggots were piled round his feet he recited psalms to himself. Before the torch was applied the Duke of Bavaria offered him freedom if he would recant, but Huss cried aloud "I call God to witness that I have never either taught or written those things with which false men have charged me, but in all my teaching I have sought only to turn men from their sins and lead them to God. The truth which I have taught I am now ready to seal with my blood."

The pile was then lighted, and amidst the smoke the martyr's face was distinguishable for a few moments, his lips moving in prayer; then he bowed his head and died. By command of the Duke of Bavaria, his cloak and girdle were also burnt; so that his disciples in Bohemia should have no relics of their master to treasure, while the ashes and even the soil were scraped up and thrown into the Rhine.

Jerome of Prague fled from Constance as soon as he found that there was no hope of saving his beloved master, but soon he too was arrested and after many months in prison was ultimately condemned to the flames. So died John Huss and also his disciple, and their cruel persecutors thought that they had stamped out heresy in their death. But the firmness and gallant bearing of Huss had made a great impression on the spectators of the terrible sight, who asked each other what he had done to merit such a fate, since with their own ears they had heard from him nothing but godly words.



HUSS BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE, 1414.

The doctrines of Wyclif had taken firm hold in Bohemia, and when the new Pope Martin had been proclaimed by the Council of Constance and had issued a bull or declaration condemning these doctrines, crowds of Bohemians met and discussed the new teaching, and needed but a leader to rise in armed revolt against Sigismund to punish him for his breach of faith and cruel bigotry.

It was not long before a leader appeared. There lived at the Court of Bohemia a warrior named John Ziska, who was a favourite of King Wenceslaus because he had fought bravely for him. In appearance he was extraordinary, with a round bald head, deeply furrowed face, and enormously broad shoulders surmounting a thick-set figure with short legs. Like Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, Napoleon, and Julius Caesar, he had the curved eagle nose of the conqueror and a fierce, bristling red moustache. A true Bohemian by birth, Ziska hated the Germans, and he had a special antipathy to the monks, the evil of whose lives he knew too well.

After the death of Huss a great change had come over Ziska. He wandered about the palace gloomy and sullen, his

eyes fixed on the ground, muttering fiercely to himself till even the King noticed his demeanour and asked the reason.

"They have burnt Huss," he answered darkly, "and we have not yet avenged him."

"I cannot help it," said Wenceslaus, "you must try what you can do by yourselves."

Taking him at his word, Ziska called the Hussites to arms, a proceeding which greatly disturbed the King, who commanded them all to come to the palace and deposit their weapons there.

They obeyed, and, headed by Ziska, marched in military order, bearing the chalice as their standard, pausing only at the town hail to throw thirteen German councillors out of the window and to hang an especially evil priest before his own door.

These proceedings reached the ms's ears, who realized, as he sat in his palace listening to the uproar, that a well-disciplined multitude had risen, and moreover a multitude that was deeply enraged. So great was his excitement and terror that, as they approached, he was seized with an apoplectic fit and died. The insurgents broke into churches, tore down the images and rent the priests' vestments in pieces; but Ziska was too sensible to think that anything could be gained by such means, so he calmed his followers and entered into negotiations with Queen Sophia, the widow of King Wenceslaus.

The Emperor Sigismund was furious and would allow her to make no terms, so Ziska raised the peasantry, who plundered churches and monasteries wherever they passed. Many of the priests were slain with the greatest cruelty, and some, it is said, were thrust into barrels, daubed with pitch and set on fire.

An easy victory was won over a force dispatched by Queen Sophia, since Ziska commanded the women in his band

to take off their shawls and aprons and throw them under the feet of the horses, by which means they stumbled and fell, and their riders were soon overcome.

In the month of June 1420 the Emperor Sigismund himself entered Prague, threw twenty-four Hussites into the river, and attacked Ziska's force. But he was unsuccessful and obliged to retire; after which men, women and children, armed with flails and reaping-hooks, flocked in hundreds to Ziska's standard, and were banded by him into companies.

Unfortunately the success of the Hussites turned the heads of many of their number, and in their zeal they indulged in very silly extravagances. One section lived on a hill which they called Mount Horeb, and named themselves Horebites, whilst they maintained constant quarrels with the Taborites, who had taken up their abode on another hill, christened by them Mount Tabor. Most foolish of all was a sect in Moravia, who called themselves Adamites, professed to live in the simplicity of the Garden of Eden, and walked about stark naked.

Such extremes tended to bring the Hussite doctrines into contempt, and Ziska was very angry. He put to death hundreds of these fanatics, for the discipline in his army was exceedingly severe, since he knew too well to what lengths religious enthusiasm would drive people. The penalty of death was inflicted on any man who quitted the ranks, burnt or plundered without leave, and on gamblers, liars or unchaste persons.

Ziska had become totally blind, since he had lost first one eye and then the other in skirmishes, but he continued to lead his army, following the standard in a carriage. He was of iron strength and would march his men by night and day, until they complained that though all was dark night to him, they at least required repose and sleep.

"Cannot you see?" he would ask grimly. "Light up a couple of villages then!"

For nearly four years this army maintained its existence, destroying churches and monasteries and slaying all who opposed its progress. The nobles of Bohemia tried to make peace by offering religious toleration and freedom of worship, but failed, so in January 1422 the Emperor advanced once more upon Prague, where his standards were captured and his army beaten back, though the Hussites suffered enormous loss. Sigismund then endeavoured to gain Ziska over by presents and promises, but the grim leader was inflexible. He died of plague in the month of October 1424, and on his deathbed commanded that his skin should be used to cover a drum, so that his followers might think of him when its voice called them to war.

After his death the Hussites once more defeated the Imperial forces in a pitched battle, and at last, in 1488, Sigismund was compelled to grant them religious liberty, and undertook to gain permission for their worship from the Pope if they on their part would acknowledge him as king.

In the year 1488 the Emperor Sigismund died, being succeeded for two years by his son-in-law, Albert, who also died, and then by Frederick III of the great house of Habsburg.

Frederick was indolent and would have been harmless enough as a nobleman or as a monk, but as an Emperor he was useless and even harmful. His life was spent in gardening and in the study of poetry and astrology, and, to use the language of a German historian, "the Imperial crown had become aright-cap." For fifty-time years he slumbered on the throne, and during this time events of the greatest moment for Europe took place.

The Council of Basle, which had been called by Sigismund in 1481 to settle Church affairs, was still sitting, for the Hussite rising had proved that much discontent prevailed.

The German princes were dissatisfied because the Pope taxed their subjects exorbitantly, thus carrying sorely needed money out of the country. The people were dissatisfied with

the rapacity and evil lives of the clergy and with the services which were read in Latin and not understood. The Holy Scriptures were withheld from the laity, and those who had had the good fortune to study them found no warrant therein for the doctrines of transubstantiation, purgatory, the adoration of saints, the infallibility of the Pope, and many other wars that had crept into the Church.

The Council effected some reforms and took measures to restrain the profligacy of the clergy and prevent the desecration of churches by wakes and fairs, but when they applied to the Pope for ratification of their decisions, he declared all their edicts null and void, and when they deposed him he refused to abdicate. So years passed in useless bickering, for Frederick was not strong nor strenuous enough to enforce these reforms.

In Frederick's reign the city of Constantinople was taken by the Turks, and the eastern half of the Roman Empire fell. When he died in 1498, he left Germany torn with internal strife, and one of the most wicked men the world has ever produced—namely, Alexander VI—on the papal throne of Saint Peter. But during his reign was born a man who was to purge the religion of Germany as with fire—Martin Luther the Reformer.

CHAPTER XV

MARTIN LUTHER THE REFORMER

I

On the 10th of November, 1488, Martin Luther was born at Eisleben, the child of a poor miner who had come to that district in search of work. He himself says: "My parents were poor folks; my father a woodcutter, and my poor mother, his faithful helpmate, used to carry the wood on her shoulders that she might earn something to support us little ones."

While Martin was still a baby, his parents removed to Mansfeld, and there by industry and intelligence the father managed to earn a competence, and gain the respect of his fellow-townsmen for his sagacity, and was afterward appointed one of the town councillors.

Martin was very strictly brought up and sent early to school, and, as he was a fragile child, his father would often carry him there. But he proved so promising a pupil that Hans Luther began to be ambitious for his son, whom he sent when fourteen years of age to schools of higher education at Magdeburg and Eisenach. There the poor boy, like many another poor scholar, had to support himself as best he might by singing in the streets before the houses of richer people, and he would have fared badly had not the Burgomaster of Eisenach, Conrad Cotta, whose wife had been touched by the lad's sweet singing, received him into his household and given him lodging and food. Well housed and fed, the boy applied himself with greater vigour than ever to his studies and was soon far ahead of all his schoolfellows. Especially did he delight in music; he possessed a beautiful voice, played the harp and flute, and throughout his life loved to compose hymns, and tunes to suit the words.

At the age of eighteen he entered the university of Erfurt, since it was his father's wish that he should study law, and here it was that he made the discovery which influenced his whole future life. In the university library he found a copy of the Bible in Latin, the use of which was forbidden to the laity by the priests. The first chapter that he read was the story of Eli and Samuel, which made a lasting impression on his mind, and truly did he pray like Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Although Luther fulfilled punctiliously all the religious duties that the Church imposed upon her servants, he was not at all happy. He meditated much, prayed long, but peace never visited his vexed soul, and in the midst of this anxious uncertainty he fell seriously ill and thought to die. But in his sickness he was visited by a simple-hearted, pious monk, who told him that he felt assured he would recover his health and do mighty works to the glory of God.

So Luther grew strong once more, buoyed by the hope with which the good brother's words inspired him, and when his health was re-established he pursued his studies for another time years.

The sudden death of his friend, Alexis, in the autumn of 1504, however, apparently influenced the future of the young student. He was walking one evening with his friend near Erfurt when dark masses of black cloud rolled up and a storm burst over their heads. The two young men turned back and hastened toward the town, but when they were close to Erfurt a vivid flash of lightning struck them, casting both prone upon the ground. As soon as Luther could recover himself he sprang up, only to find that his friend, Alexis, had been killed beside him.

This sudden death made a profound impression upon Luther, and he vowed to dedicate the rest of his life to God and serve Him in a cloister as a monk. The prior of the Augustine convent at Erfurt was greatly pleased with his decision, and, having written to tell his parents of the step he

was taking, Martin gave a musical entertainment to all his youthful friends and entered the convent as a novice in July 1505.

His parents were much grieved when they received word of their son's choice, and Hans Luther was very angry and remonstrated with vigour. "Never," said Martin, "heard I words uttered by a mortal man which sank deeper into my heart than these remonstrances of my father."

Wounded by his parent's disapprobation, the young novice looked to prayer and study to teach him the right path, but he found at once his mistake. The Augustine brothers had no intention of allowing the novice to remain in the library at study.

"Through the town with your bag," they told him roughly. "It is by begging, not by studying, that the convent is enriched."

And Luther found himself turned into the streets to beg from door to door. Fortunately the University of Erfurt objected to one of its members being set to such degrading work, and made so strong a representation to the prior that Luther was henceforth exempted from begging, though he had to spend much valuable time in the menial work of the convent. Stanpitz, the provincial of the order, perceiving his extraordinary talents and acquirements, delivered him from the menial duties of the cloister, and encouraged him to continue his theological studies.

On the fourth Sunday after Easter in the year 1507, his novitiate ended, Luther assumed the habit of a monk and celebrated his first Mass. He then dedicated himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures and the commentaries of the early Fathers of the Church upon them, and in the next year was invited to fill the chair of the Professor of Philosophy in the University of Wittenberg, where he delivered lectures on the Logic and Physics of Aristotle. Two years were spent in this manner, during which time Luther observed the state of

religion among the German burghers and the life of the German monks, and, as he observed, he was deeply grieved.

A historian named Frederick Mecum describes some of the practices and scenes in the churches of that day which would be watched by the musing young professor of Wittenberg.

"Christ," he says, "was described as a stern judge who would condemn any who did not approach Him through the saints, of which the Popes were always making fresh batches. Men must go to hell or purgatory and burn and broil there until they had done penance for their sins, or until their friends on earth had bought masses enough from the priests to save them. To the convents and priests were brought presents of fowls, geese, ducks, eggs, flax, hemp, butter and cheese. The kitchens, you may be sure, were well supplied and there was no lack of strong drinks. These were paid for in masses, which were to set to rights whatever had gone wrong in the spiritual concerns of the givers." At particular seasons of the year, but chiefly during what were called the Easter Revels, the priests would introduce jokes and anecdotes into their sermons, which were intended to amuse the people, and were often disgustingly vulgar. A preacher would suddenly cry "Cuckoo!" in the middle of a service, or gabble like a goose, or play rough tricks on some member of the congregation.

The invention of printing by John Gutenberg about the year 1440 and the translations of the Scriptures which had already been made, together with the revival of ancient learning, were producing a generation of thoughtful men, who, like John Huss and Martin Luther, could not acquiesce in such a state of things. But the long period that intervened between these two reformers shows the state of apathy and ignorance into which the mass of the people were sunk and the deadening influence of the Church upon them.

Saddened and vexed at the state of religion in his own fatherland, Luther turned his face toward Rome, to gain from

the very fount of faith the strength which his thirsting soul needed.

In 1510, accompanied by a friend, he set off on foot by way of Heidelberg, Swabia and Bavaria, and pressed on with eagerness till he saw the pinnacles and towers of glorious Rome on the plain beneath him. The two monks fell on their knees at the sight and prayed with deep emotion. "Hail, holy Rome!" cried Luther, "thrice hallowed by the blood of the martyrs spilt within thy walls," and in a spirit of great humility and devotion they entered the city.

Anxious to perform all the duties enjoined upon pious pilgrims to the holy city, they visited the churches, honoring the relics of many saints and martyrs. They even caught sight of Pope Julius II, but were somewhat surprised to see him on horseback at the head of a troop of soldiers. Indeed Julius is reported to have said of himself that he ought to have been Emperor, and that the Emperor of Germany, Maximilian I, should have been the Pope Maximilian himself deemed not highly either of his own character or of that of his Holiness, since he once exclaimed to his Court: "Eternal God I How would it fare with the world if Thou hadst not a special care over it whilst under such an emperor as I, who am only a sorry hunter, and under so wicked a pope as Julius II!"

A closer acquaintance with the monks and priests of Rome only served to fill Luther with horror and disgust. "Gross, ignorant asses," he called them, realizing that they were even more brutally stupid and callous than his brethren of Germany, and the wickedness of their lives and sinfulness of their mocking behaviour when celebrating Mass grieved his heart which was by nature simple and loving. After a fortnight Martin Luther turned his back on Rome, shook off the very dust from his sandals and set his face homeward, with a great resolve in his heart.

II

In 1518 a new pope ascended the throne of Saint Peter, Leo X, a man without religious principles but an ardent admirer of art. Leo was anxious to employ the famous painter, Michael Angelo Buonarrotti, to decorate the beautiful church which he meant to erect, but for this he needed much money, which he sought to raise by an unrestricted sale of indulgences.

Ever since the Crusades had ceased the popes had declared that those who came to Rome during the year of jubilee should have as much indulgence as those pilgrims who had been to the sepulchre of Christ itself. At first the jubilee was celebrated every hundred years, but it was gradually shortened to fifty, then to thirty-three, and even twenty-five years, and the pilgrims brought enormous sums of money in offerings to the Church.

As Leo required still more, knowing that comparatively few people could make a pilgrimage to Rome, he issued indulgences, by which, in return for a sum of money, forgiveness could be purchased, not only for sins already committed, but for those which the buyer intended to commit in the future 1) ?> The indulgences were sold by wandering monks, and they were brought to Germany by a certain Tetzl, an eloquent preacher, but a man of infamous character. He entered the towns with great pomp, riding in a splendid chariot, with bells ringing, music sounding, and surrounded by a great procession of priests, monks, nuns and students. He usually proceeded to the chief church in the city, erected *before the altar a cross of scarlet bearing the arms of the Pope, and, after a spirited discourse from the pulpit, offered his indulgences for sale. Tetzl, however, was only one of many. A monk even more shameless than himself carried about a feather which he said had been molted from the wing of the Archangel Michael, and, happening to lose his feather,

borrowed a truss of hay instead, saying that it was taken from the manger in which our Lord was born.

With such tricks they imposed upon the ignorant poor and extorted from them their hard-won money; but the more thoughtful people were indignant, although they dared not act, since the mummery was all performed under the sanction of the Holy Father at Rome.

The monks themselves did not care, for, as wrote Frederick Mecum, the historian quoted before, "in this town of Gotha were fourteen canons, forty parish priests, thirty Augustine 'monks, two begging friars and thirty nuns. They were all held to be pious and holy folks, who were earning heaven for us: nevertheless they led such scandalous lives that nothing in the world could be worse, yet they could not be checked or punished, because they were only subject to the jurisdiction of the Pope."

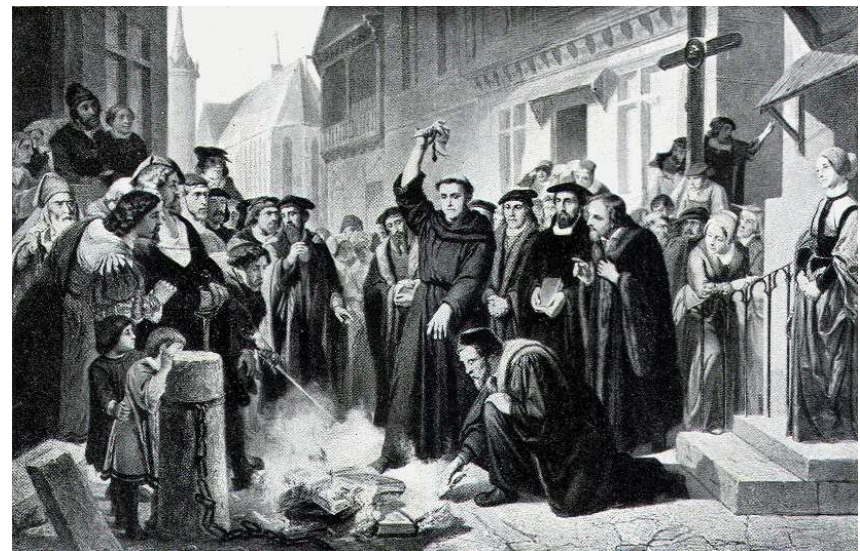
When Tetzel arrived at Wittenberg, Martin Luther lodged a protest against his wicked practices before the Bishop of Bavaria, but, since he refused to interfere, Luther resolved to take matters into his own hands and appeal to the common-sense of his countrymen.

On the 81st October 1517 he affixed to the great door of the castle church in Wittenberg ninety-five reasons by which he proved that pardon for sin could only be obtained by repentance and not by expenditure of money. This challenge is known as the 'Ninety-five theses,' and it spread like wildfire through Germany, since Luther's reasons had been the secret conclusions of many a thinking man for years, although he was the first who had boldness enough to put his convictions into words.

Luther was summoned at once to appear at Rome, but the Emperor Maximilian was only too pleased to insult the Pope, and the Pope had to content himself with sending a cardinal to argue with him.

The cardinal was a narrow-minded man, who refused to give Luther a patient hearing, and broke up the meeting in great wrath, exclaiming: "I will have nothing more to say to that beast, for he hath deep-seeing eyes and strange speculations in his head." He related to the Pope a very one-sided version of the interview. In June 1520 the Pope published a bull or decree condemning Luther as a heretic. Any man who read his works was to be ex-communicated, any man who already possessed them was to burn them, and, unless Luther himself confessed his errors and burnt his books within sixty days, he was to be excommunicated and all princes were called upon to deliver him up to punishment.

In Rome his works were publicly burnt, but at Erfurt the students snatched copies of the bull from the book-sellers' shops and threw them into the river, while Luther himself assembled the professors and students of Wittenberg outside the city gates, and in their presence solemnly consigned the Pope's bull to the flames.



LUTHER BURNING THE POPE'S BULL.

From that time we may consider that Luther had broken from the Roman Catholic Church and appeared before the world as a reformer.

The Emperor Maximilian was succeeded in the year 1519 by his grandson, Charles V, King of Spain.

The German Icings had been wellnigh ruined by their efforts to keep Italy as well as Germany under their sway. The alliance of the Pope with their enemies had contributed to their downfall, and their position had been continuously weakened by their failure to render their office strictly hereditary. Bribes of privileges to the electors had been a constant drain upon the Imperial resources, with the result that Germany had fallen apart into many practically independent states.

About a century and a half after the death of Rudolph of Habsburg, the Electors began to choose their emperors from the Habsburg family. From 1488 to 1806 only two emperors were chosen who were not members of this line, but the Habsburgs were more interested in adding possessions to their own family estates than in maintaining the dignity of the Empire as a whole.

Spain has hitherto played little part in the story, but by a series of royal marriages it happened that a great part of Western Europe was brought under the control of one ruler, Charles V of Spain. He inherited Burgundy, Spain, Austria and part of Italy. No such empire had existed since the days of Charlemagne. To mention a few of his most important titles, he was Duke of Brabant, Margrave of Antwerp, Count of Holland, Archduke of Austria, Count of Tyrol, King of Castille, Aragon and Naples, and of the vast Spanish possessions in America. At sixteen years of age the lad was brought from the Netherlands, where he had been born and reared, to live in his Spanish dominions. This was in the year 1516. Three years later he was chosen Emperor of Germany.

He had never been in that country, never learned its language, and became its ruler at a time when the teachings of

Luther were causing religious and political distraction. His first visit to Germany was made in the year 1520, and he summoned a diet at Worms, the most important business being the consideration of the case of Martin Luther, a university professor accused of writing heretical books.

Charles knew that the German princes would scarcely welcome him as their Emperor, since he was a foreigner yet far too powerful to be ignored. He tried, therefore, to gain their favour and also that of the Pope, by promising to hear Luther when he should next hold his parliament or diet in the city of Worms, and expressed confidence that the heretic would soon be crushed.

III

When Luther was summoned to appear at Worms many of his friends tried to persuade him not to go, lest he should be assassinated on the way by fanatics, or burnt to death like John Huss. But Luther was determined to be present. "If there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses, nevertheless I will go through them and make my confession openly," he cried, and he stood up in his chariot as he approached the city and sang the famous hymn, the words and tune of which he had composed a few days previously, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* (A sure Fortress is our God).

The Emperor's own herald preceded him, many horsemen rode behind, and thousands of the inhabitants accompanied him to his lodging. He himself described the sensation which his entry caused in the following words:

I rid into the city in a little close carriage, my face covered with my hood, and all the folk came together to see the monk Doctor Martin; and so I came unto Duke Frederick's lodging and thereby was Duke Frederick mighty sorry that I had come to Worms at all."

When called to the diet, Luther was not allowed to explain his views clearly to those assembled, but the Emperor called upon him to recant forthwith. This he refused to do, so he was commanded to quit the city within twenty-one days, or at the end of that time any man might seize his person.

Luther was now under the ban of the Church and of the Empire, but his courage had astonished and delighted the German nobles. The old Duke Eric of Brunswick sent him a silver flagon full of his own favourite Eimbeck beer as soon as he reached his lodgings, members of the Diet called on purpose to encourage him, and it was reported that 400 knights were present in Worms, followers of Franz von Sickingen, himself a zealous supporter of the Reformation, who had pledged themselves to defend his person.

Luther's period of safety being so short, to keep him under protection the Elector of Saxony resolved to take him prisoner himself. Martin was told of the plan, and as soon as he approached the town of Eisenach on his homeward journey, three horsemen sprang from a wood and stopped his coach. No one but the captive knew what was meant when they placed him on horseback and told him to consider himself their prisoner.

He was then conducted to the Wartburg, a castle belonging to the Elector of Saxony, situated on a high hill a few miles from Eisenach, where he arrived at eleven o'clock at night and was introduced to the warder as 'Squire George,' not one of the inhabitants of the castle knowing who he really was. In this solitary castle, which he called his 'Patmos,' Luther devoted himself to study and began his famous translation of the Bible into German.

Ten months later he emerged for a week and preached in the university town of Wittenberg against certain followers of his own, who were violently tearing down altars and crucifixes, for Luther, although so firm and bold, was a gentle man, and knew that violence was not the way to win men to Christ. He was highly strung and imaginative, and not above

the superstitions of his age, and strange stories are told of happenings during his residence in the Wartburg. He often thought that he saw visions in his solitude, but the most wonderful of all was the appearance of the devil in person one day as Luther was working at his translation of the Bible. The astonished monk seized the inkstand and hurled it at the intruder, who vanished with a cry of wrath, and to this day the ink-stains are shown on the wall of his cell.

Another time he imagined that he saw a large black dog lying on his bed, which vanished as soon as he knelt and prayed. As far as bodily comforts went, Luther was well provided. He had plenty of food and good clothes, dressed like a country squire, wore a gold chain and had long hair and a beard. He went hunting whenever he wished.

The Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, continued to protect Luther and asked him to provide for the churches of that country a simple prayer-book and collection of hymns, both in the German tongue. This he did, and also drew up a long and a short catechism for the instruction of children.

Luther continued sadly grieved by men whose zeal for reform led them into foolish extravagance. A certain weaver named Klaus Storch founded the sect of the Anabaptists, who taught that people should not be baptized until they were grown up, and being expelled from his native city, he came to Wittenberg, where Luther emerged once more to destroy his influence. One of their number, named Thomas Munzer, preached not only against the Pope but against Luther himself, and he raised a rabble of German peasants, miserable, downtrodden serfs almost as ignorant as animals, who sacked castles and murdered nobles until they were cruelly beaten in war and put down by their lords.

Luther was very tender with such poor, misguided people, and the good Elector Frederick would not put one of his own rebellious serfs to death. "Perhaps," he wrote, "these poor people have had only too much reason for revolt. Alas I

the poor are too much oppressed both by their temporal and spiritual lords!"

After the execution of Munzer, one of the princes behaved with the greatest brutality to his widow, and was sharply rebuked by the bold Luther for his conduct. "A very knightly, noble deed, truly!" he wrote to him, "to treat thus a miserable, forsaken, helpless woman! What shall I write to such swine? The Scripture calleth such men 'beasts,' but we must suffer them, because through them God seeth fit to plague us." On the 5th of May 1525 Luther's kind patron, the gentle Elector Frederick, died, and he died sadly, fearing that violence and greed would take the place of the true spirit of reform. "If it were God's will," he said as he felt himself growing worse, "I would gladly die. I no longer see either truth, or love, or faith, or anything on earth."

Just before his death he sent for his servants. "Children," he said, "if I have offended any one of you, let him pardon me for the love of God, for we princes often give pain to poor folk, and that is ill done." After his death his physician truly said of him: "He was a child of peace, and in peace he departed."

When the princes of Germany, who had hitherto looked upon Luther as a dangerous man, heard how he preached that kings were appointed by God and that servants should obey their masters, they looked upon the Reformation as a means of breaking free from their allegiance to both Pope and Emperor, since they applied his teaching to their own subjects and not to themselves. They made a bond called the Evangelical Alliance, and the doctrines of Luther spread all over Germany and into Scandinavia, and it is significant that the farther away their lands were from the Emperor's seat, the more princes there were who supported the Reformation.

These Lutheran princes drew up a protest against the state of the Church and laid it before the Emperor, and it was because of this protest that Lutherans were first called 'Protestants.'

The doctrines of Luther spread even into the monasteries and nunneries, and in the year 1528 nine nuns of Nimpsch, who were unable to bear the convent life any longer, persuaded two citizens to release them by carrying them away in empty barrels. Their plan succeeded, and when the nine helpless ladies presented themselves before Luther at Wittenberg, he welcomed them kindly and found them homes among his friends. Within two years they were all married, Luther himself marrying the handsome and nobly born Catherine von Bora, and thereby shocking terribly the Roman Catholic world, but delighting old Hans Luther, who had lived to see his son freed from the monastic life of which he had so strongly disapproved.

Luther was very happy with his wife and the four children who were born to them, for he was a man of affectionate disposition and made a very loving husband and father.

One of his little girls died while still a child, which was a great sorrow to him. Bending over her as she lay in her little bed, he asked: "Magdalene, my little daughter, thou wouldst willingly remain with thy father here, but gladly goest to thy Father yonder?"

"Yes, dear father, as God wills it," answered the little maid, and the poor father was glad of her answer, although he turned aside in bitter pain. "She is so very dear to me," he said piteously.

While away on a journey he wrote as follows to his little son Hans:

"Grace and peace in Christ to my heartily dear little son. I see gladly that thou learnest well and prayest earnestly. Do thus, my little son, and go on. When I come home I will bring thee a beautiful fairing.

"I know a pleasant garden, wherein many children walk about. They have little golden coats, and pick up beautiful apples under the trees, and pears,

cherries and plums. They dance and are merry, and have also beautiful little ponies, with golden reins and silver saddles. Then I asked the man whose the garden is, whose children those were. He said: 'These are the children who love to pray, who learn their lessons and are good.' Then I said: 'Dear man, I also have a little son; he is called Hanschen Luther. Might not he also come into the garden; and also his little friends, Lippus and Jost, and when they come, may they eat such apples and pears and ride on such beautiful little ponies, and play with these children? '

"Then the man said: 'If he loves to pray, learns his lessons and is good, he also shall come into the garden; and also his little friends, Lippus and Jost. And when they all come together, they also shall have pipes, drums, lutes, and all kinds of music, and shall dance and shoot with little bows and arrows.'

"And he showed me there a fair meadow in the garden prepared for dancing.

"There were many pipes of pure gold, drums, and silver bows and arrows. But it was still early in the day, so that the children had not had their breakfasts. Therefore I could not wait for the dancing, and said to the man: 'Ah, dear sir! I will go away at once and write all this to my little son Hanschen, that he may be sure to pray and to learn well and be good, that he also may come into this garden. But he has a dear Aunt Lena; he must bring her with him.' Then said the man: 'Let it be so; go and write him thus.'

"Therefore, my dear little son Hanschen, learn thy lessons, and pray with a cheerful heart; and tell all this to Lippus and Jost too, that they also may learn their lessons and pray. So shall you all come together into this garden.

"Herewith I commend you to the Almighty God; and greet Aunt Lena, and give her a kiss from me. Thy dear father,

"MARTIN LUTHER."

To animals also his love flowed warmly forth, and he was sure that God would receive them into His bright heaven. "Fear not, Hanslein," he said one day to his little dog, which stood regarding him with faithful, intelligent eyes, "thou too shalt have a little golden tail."

Once while watching two little birds in his garden, which took wing and flew away on seeing him, he cried: "Ah, dear little birds, do not fly away. I wish you well from my heart if you could only trust me, though I own we do not thus trust our God."

IV

In the year 1580 the Emperor Charles V held another German diet, this time at Augsburg, and once more tried to crush the Protestant religion, which had increased beyond belief since the Diet of Worms, nine years before, when Luther had first done battle for his faith. Luther himself did not go to Augsburg, as he was still under the ban of the Pope and the Empire, but the Protestant princes asked his chief friend, the saintly and gentle Melanchthon, to draw up a confession of their faith to be read aloud at the diet.

This explanation of the faith was approved by Luther and consisted of twenty-eight articles, twenty-one of which agreed with the doctrines of the Roman Catholic faith, and the remaining seven showed the reasons for separation.

The Emperor was anxious to suppress the 'Confession of Augsburg,' as the document was called, therefore he would only consent to its being read in a small chapel of the Bishop's

palace which could barely hold 200 persons; he also commanded that the assembly should be held at three o'clock in the morning!

By this means he hoped that very few people would be able to hear the real views of the Protestants. But his plan was frustrated, for the great heat necessitated the opening of the windows and doors of the chapel, and an enormous crowd thronged outside at every entry. The Chancellor of Saxony then took the Confession and read it aloud in such a ringing voice that it was heard clearly by at least a thousand persons.

At first Charles was very angry and issued a proclamation condemning all the Protestant doctrines and their adherents, but when he found that the princes banded themselves together, and were even ready to fight for their religious liberty, he left them in peace to worship as they liked, so long as they would help him in his wars with the Turks which then engaged all his attention.

Meanwhile the Reformation was spreading in Switzerland, under the leadership of a man named Zwingli. Like Luther, he had studied the Scriptures diligently, more particularly the Epistles of Saint Paul, which he is said to have known by heart.

A Franciscan monk had been sent to Switzerland to sell indulgences, just as Tetzel had visited Germany for the same purpose, and Zwingli had opposed him. War against the Roman Catholic Church having thus been declared, Zwingli swept away the abuses in the churches even to the forms of services themselves, aiming at a simplicity like that of the early Christians. His doctrines were much the same as those of Luther, except that he denied the real presence of Jesus Christ in the bread and wine of the Holy Communion, whereas Luther always maintained that the consecrated elements really changed into His body and blood.

This difference unfortunately kept the two reformers apart, but a meeting was arranged between them, and although

they could not agree upon this point, they conceived a great admiration for one another, and each acknowledged the good work done toward the reformation of religion by his fellow-worker.

The reformation in Switzerland soon led to war between Swiss Protestants and Catholics, in which Zwingli was killed in 1531, but his work was continued in Geneva by a Frenchman named John Calvin, who drew up a plan of church government for the Swiss, from which they were called Calvinists or followers of the Reformed Church. Unfortunately the Lutherans and Calvinists quarrelled bitterly and hated each other almost as much as they had hated the Roman Catholics before.

But the years were passing on, and the brave Martin Luther was growing an old man, and was bowed with painful and incurable disease. He was in urgent need of rest, yet when one prince after another sent to him to ask his advice, he felt that he could not refuse to labour in the cause of Jesus Christ. So in the year 1546 he went to Eisleben on the invitation of the Count field, writing to a friend on his departure: "A man old and cold and rotten and one-eyed writeth unto thee I who had thought that I might now be suffered to rest in peace, am as much overwhelmed with writing and speaking, and doing and settling, as if I had never written, or spoken, or done, or settled anything in my life before."

In Eisleben Luther preached four times, although much worn out with his journey, but he was never to preach again. On the 14th of February he wrote to his wife: "To the hands of my kind, loving housewife, Catherine Luther von Bora, at Wittenberg, these. Grace and peace in the Lord! Dear Kate, we hope this week to be at home again, if God will. God hath shown great mercies here, for my lords have made all smooth, so one may by this understand that God is a hearer of prayer. We eat and drink like lords hem, and are waited upon bravely—and all too bravely: enough to make us forget you at

Wittenberg. My old complaint cloth not trouble me now. We wait God's pleasure. To Him I commend you."

Two days later he was taken so ill with asthma and sharp pain in the chest that he took to his bed, feeling convinced that the end was approaching.

"Oh, my heavenly Father!" he prayed, "God eternal and most merciful, whom I have known, whom I love, whom I honour as my dear Saviour and Redeemer, whom the godless persecute and shamefully entreat and revile, take my poor soul unto Thyself."

Through the night he lay, occasionally murmuring words of prayer, and at two o'clock in the morning of the 17th February 1547 he folded his hands, drew a deep breath and died.

Count Mansfeld wrote to tell Luther's patron, the Elector of Saxony, of his death, to which the Elector replied with some asperity: "I have received with a deeply grieved and troubled spirit the news of Doctor Martin's death. I desire that you will allow his body to be conveyed to Wittenberg, that it may be buried in the castle church there. I cannot help adding, I could have wished that you had not worried the old worn-out man with your troublesome affairs."

When the body of Luther was removed to Wittenberg, bells were tolled in every village and town through which it passed, and men, women and children accompanied it on its way. Count Mansfeld travelled with it as far as the gate of Wittenberg, where it was met by the professors of the University, the town councillors, and citizens. School children preceded the coffin, singing Luther's own hymns, and it was followed by his wife and two sons and many friends.

Amid cries and lamentations the body of the great reformer was buried in the castle church by the side of the good Elector Frederick the Wise, and in a Latin oration Melancthon spoke to those present of the good services rendered to the Christian Church by Martin Luther, who had

given his life to oppose the enemies of God, and fallen worn out in the service of His children.

After Luther's death the Emperor Charles V spent some years in breaking up the alliance of Protestant princes, but this caused him much trouble and many skirmishes in the field. It terminated in the Peace of Augsburg of 1555.

By this peace an extraordinary agreement was made—namely, that all subjects were free to follow the religion of their ruler, and if they did not like his faith they might emigrate to the domains of some prince of whose faith they did approve. If a prince changed his religion, the whole country was enjoined under cruel penalties to do the same.

Charles was much grieved at being obliged to allow the Protestants of Germany freedom of worship, and cruelly extirpated any signs of heresy in his own Spanish dominions. In his reign was founded the famous order of the Jesuits by a certain Spanish monk named Ignatius Loyola. This order took as its motto the words, *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* (To the greater glory of God), and its chief aim was to consolidate the Roman Catholic Church, and stamp out all traces of heresy. It increased enormously in numbers, is in existence at the present day and is chiefly valuable for its splendid missionary work among the heathen.

In the year 1588, tired out and growing old, Charles V abdicated, leaving Spain, the Netherlands, Naples and his South American colonies to his gloomy and bigoted son, Philip II. Austria, Hungary and Bohemia he gave to his brother, Ferdinand I.

This done, Charles retired into a convent with twelve domestics only, and lived in a tiny suite of six rooms, small and bare as the cells of the ordinary monks. He laid aside his grandeur and ambition, living the simple life of an ordinary gentleman, cultivating his little garden, riding through the woods on the only horse he possessed, and, when confined to

the house, amusing himself with the construction of docks and little mechanical inventions.

He attended Mass often, spent long hours in prayer and penance and many acts of piety. A strange and morbid idea was to celebrate his own funeral before he died. He ordered his tomb to be erected in the chapel belonging to the monastery, and himself followed the procession of monks wrapped in his shroud, and was then solemnly laid in his coffin in the choir. The service for the dead was chanted, holy water was sprinkled on the coffin, and afterward everyone retired, leaving the Emperor lying there alone. He then arose and withdrew to his apartments, but the awful sentiments inspired by the occasion; and the fatigue he had endured were too much for him, and the next day he was seized with a fever of which he died.

So perished the great Emperor Charles V, leaving to his son, Philip, the task of extirpating Protestantism root and branch, by the tortures and fire of the Great Inquisition. All the might of Rome, nevertheless, was destined to fall before the onward march of the Reformation, in the cause of which the Germans were soon to shed their blood in their hundreds and their thousands.

CHAPTER XVI

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

I

On the 28rd of May, in the year 1618, a deputation of Protestants waited on the Emperor Matthias of Germany and demanded audience. From an earlier sovereign they had obtained a decree, known as the 'Charter of Majesty,' conceding perfect freedom in religious matters, and the right to build Protestant churches and schools. In spite of this permission, one of their churches in Bohemia had been pulled down and another closed.

The Emperor's attitude toward their mission admitted of no doubt. Two of the deputation, followed by their secretary, were promptly thrown out of the window sixty feet from the ground I

Luckily a stunted tree and a heap of waste paper broke the delegates' fall, so that they crawled away uninjured, but within a few days Germany was in arms, for this deed dated the commencement of the great Thirty Years' War, one of the most cruel and terrible wars that the world has ever known. Many of the princes in South Germany were Protestants, and the doctrines of such men as Luther, Calvin and Huss were spreading rapidly among the common people. Sectarian jealousy, however, led to the formation of leagues to defend the interests of the two religions, and these were known as the Catholic League and the Protestant Union.

The sons of the Emperor Maximilian II had indeed found their task too heavy for them. Their mother was the sister of Philip II of Spain, and in their childhood she had sent her three boys to Madrid to be educated under the eye of their

bigoted Catholic uncle, who was often heard to declare that it was better not to rule at all than to rule over heretics.

Rudolph, the eldest son, was a clever youth, but wholly under the influence of Jesuit priests and a slave to superstition. His chief study was astrology, and when it was predicted that he would one day die by the hand of a kinsman of the second generation, he was so frightened that he shut himself away from society, would not marry nor allow his brother to do so, and spent the rest of his life in spying on imaginary murderers. He loved horses, and although he never rode them he kept many and would visit their stables by means of an underground passage from his palace.

The gloomy Rudolph was much feared by the Protestants, because of the influence which the Jesuits exercised over him; moreover he had oppressed the Protestants in Bohemia and Hungary.

His weakness and melancholy, which almost amounted to insanity, made him incapable of ruling. So in 1606 the Electors met and dethroned him, leaving him no territory to rule except Bohemia. He was still called Emperor of Germany, but his brother, Matthias, was acknowledged head of the family. When Rudolph died in 1612 his brother, Matthias, was not only king of many lands, but was crowned German Emperor as well.

Matthias might have been a more capable emperor than Rudolph, but, like him, he was superstitious and completely under Jesuit influence, so much so that his own brother made him accept his cousin Ferdinand, Duke of Styria, as his coadjutor and guide.

After the "defenestration," as the Bohemians called the hurling of their deputies from the palace windows, the nobles of that country rose and chased all the Jesuits from their land.

In the midst of these troubles Matthias died, and Ferdinand was crowned Emperor of Germany on the 28th of August 1619, although Bohemia refused to acknowledge him

as their king, and chose Frederick, the Elector Palatine of the Rhine, instead.

Ferdinand was in great danger, for he was well known as a persecutor of all heretics, and the Protestants of Austria, with their brothers of Bohemia, were already banding themselves against him. He sent his children to a place of safety, but refused to flee himself, although many of his clergy implored him to do so. One day, while in prayer before the crucifix, he thought he heard a voice which said, "Ferdinand, I will not forsake thee" so he remained, even while sixteen Austrian nobles broke in upon him and demanded privileges for the Protestants, thrusting a paper of agreement before him, and shouting rudely: "Sign it, Ferdy, sign it!" At that moment a regiment of horse entered Vienna, the nobles slunk away, and Ferdinand was saved.

The Elector Frederick was a young man of five and twenty, who had married Elizabeth Stewart, daughter of James I of England. He was very rich, for during his minority the revenues of 100 monasteries had been seized by his father and uncles. Unfortunately for him, since he was totally unfitted for leadership, he was looked upon as the head of the Protestant cause in Germany. When he was offered the crown of Bohemia in addition to his own Electorate on the Rhine, he hesitated long before coming to any decision. Most of his relations urged him to accept it, except his father-in-law of England, who did not approve of any one wearing another man's crown, nor joining in religious quarrels that might upset the peace of Europe. Poor Frederick was miserable in his irresolution. "If I take it, I shall be accused of ambition," he cried, "but if I refuse it, of cowardice."

His wife, the high-spirited and ambitious Elizabeth, was loud in her entreaties to him to accept the crown. So it was accepted, and the new King and Queen of Bohemia left their beautiful castle of Heidelberg, and started for Prague, the capital of Bohemia, taking with them their eldest son, the little five-year-old Frederick Henry.

On the borders of Bohemia they were received by deputies who formally offered them the crown.



THE COURTYARD, HEIDELBERG CASTLE.

There was immense enthusiasm in Prague as they entered. Bells were rung, speeches made and, delighted with her bright liveliness, ladies pressed round to kiss the hem of their new queen's robe.

But Elizabeth found the inhabitants of Prague a much simpler people than her own gay courtiers of Heidelberg. Frederick insisted upon taking into his service twelve young nobles, whose awkwardness was a source of much merriment to their mistress. One upset a cup of wine into the Queen's lap, another let every dish on his tray slip off without even noticing it, and offered the tray to her empty.

On Saint Elizabeth of Hungary's day old women brought the Queen gifts of cakes and bread in commemoration of their dear saint's loaves which had been turned into roses at her prayer. But the Protestant Court understood nothing of this and only laughed at the offerings, while one pert young page stuck a long roll of bread in his hat for a feather.

The citizens gave Queen Elizabeth 150 pieces of gold in a silver bowl, the Jews gave her an alms-dish in the shape of a silver ship, and when in November her fourth child, Prince Rupert, was born, he was presented with an ebony and ivory cradle covered with silver and gems and a chest full of baby garments of the costliest cambric and lace. Time after time the kindness of the honest Bohemians was misunderstood and laughed at, and their feelings hurt by rejection of their well-meant proofs of good will.

Frederick insulted the prejudices of his Bohemian subjects by breaking down an ancient crucifix which they held in great veneration, by preparing to sell the contents of Rudolph's royal museum, even by calling the army to exercise at inconvenient hours, and sending his eldest son away from Bohemia for safety.

Dangers were gathering fast, and by their lack of sympathy and understanding both Frederick and his queen were ill suited to hold the allegiance of the kindly, simple Bohemians. James I, the father of Elizabeth, refused to help them, thinking it wrong that the Protestant princes should rebel against their Emperor, although afterward, in 1624, he was induced to declare war against the Emperor and Spain, and troops were sent over to Holland.

II

By 1620 the army of the Emperor Ferdinand was in the field, led by the famous General Tilly. By birth a Hungarian peasant with a genius for strategy, Tilly had risen from the ranks. He was rough, uncouth and cruel, but bold as a lion, and wherever his green doublet, slouched hat and red feather appeared, there followed victory, but victory after terrible slaughter. He advanced on Prague and beat the Bohemian army before ever Frederick had joined it. The royal family fled for their old home at Heidelberg, but that had already been attacked, and there was no shelter for them there. A home was eventually found for Elizabeth at Custrin while her husband went to render what service he could in the field.

They were the laughing-stock of Germany. Placards were posted up advertising for a lost king, rude songs were sung, and pictures were sold in which they were depicted as a couple of beggars, he bearing a staff and she a candle. Men called the miserable Frederick the 'Winter King' or the 'Snow King,' saying that he had melted away; Elizabeth, it was said, had ruined her family by grasping so greedily at the Bohemian crown, by alienating the affections of her subjects in her selfish thoughtlessness, and lastly by keeping her husband near her when he ought to have been with his army in the field. The wreck of this young pair's happiness was unfortunately only the beginning of sorrows and sufferings beyond description for unhappy Germany.

The Thirty Years' War had fairly begun. Frederick's acceptance of the crown of Bohemia had been the spark that fired the straw, but the real cause of the outbreak was the determination of the Roman Catholics, under their Emperor Ferdinand II, whom they knew to be an ardent supporter of their faith, to gain back the territory of the Church, so much of which had passed into the hands of Protestants since the Reformation.

Numerous states joined in the fray on one side or the other. Everyone who had an old score to wipe out with his enemy, a grievance to vent, or a hope of gain, appeared on the field. The armies were composed of regular soldiers, volunteers of all nations and wild mercenaries, who were the terror of the countries through which they passed. When the army arrived at a village the sergeants would throw their knives into the quartermaster's hat, and he stuck each one into the door-post of the unfortunate villager upon whom their parties were to be quartered. The soldiers followed their sergeants until they found his knife, lodged in the house and plundered and stole anything that pleased their fancy.

The captains had a great deal of power over their men, and were responsible for them to their colonel. The lieutenants were ready to take the captain's place if he should fall in battle. The ensign carried the banner, which he guarded with his life, and received from the colonel of his regiment with the solemn words: "As your bride or your own daughter, from the right hand to the left; and if both your arms should be shot off, you should take it with your mouth; and if you cannot preserve it thus, wrap yourself therein, commit yourself to God, so to be slain, and die as an honourable man."

The armies were enormous, for in those days no one dreamed of leaving wife and children behind, so a huge mass of baggage wagons, containing thousands of camp-followers, straggled in the rear, and food and cattle, horses, bedding, furniture and clothes were plundered from the unhappy peasantry, who were considered fortunate if they escaped with their lives.

Mutiny in such a heterogeneous multitude was frequent, and when camps were pitched a gallows was always erected near the colonel's tent. Gambling, drinking and vice of all kinds was rampant, and the track where the army had passed would be marked by smoking ruins, mutilated corpses of men, women and children alike, and blackened ashes where fair villages had prospered only the day before.

The soldiers cared little about the religions for which they were supposed to be fighting, and although prayers were read every morning by the regimental chaplain, no idea of purity and goodness was connected with the service. The men were often grossly superstitious, and books still exist which reveal the incredible ignorance of the time. The wearing of a shirt, containing a thread woven by a maid under seven years old and laid on the altar while three masses were said, would make the wearer invulnerable. Soldiers would secrete about their persons a goat's beard, a wolf's eye, a bat's head or a piece of the halter that had hanged a man, believing that no weapon could harm them when protected by such a charm. Silver buttons were supposed to be of wondrous efficacy when used as bullets, also powder mixed with pounded dogs' bones, while a sword that was rubbed crosswise with rye bread baked on Easter night was held to be invincible.

In 1628 Frederick of Bohemia and his Queen were at The Hague in Holland, and the people of their beautiful city of Heidelberg in the Palatinate sent to them in vain for help, for Tilly and his army were encamped around it, and on the 16th September the city surrendered. Other cities in the neighbourhood followed suit, and Frederick, Elector Palatine and King of Bohemia, was now homeless and landless, a fugitive in a foreign country.

The Protestant cause in Germany was in a desperate state, and the Emperor Ferdinand was growing more and more powerful, when the war attracted the attention of great Protestant nations in the north—namely, the kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark.

Christian the Fourth of Denmark had interests of his own to guard, since he was also Duke of Holstein and had therefore a seat in the Imperial Diet, as the Emperor's parliament was called; so, with help from Charles the First of England, he landed on German soil. Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, who was later to play so important a part, was then

engaged in war with Russia, and for the time refrained from joining in the fray.

In the summer of 1625 the Emperor found himself in difficulties; he had no control over most of the armies that were ostensibly fighting on his side, and very little over his own General Tilly, who was then fighting in Lower Saxony, and he had not sufficient resources to raise a regiment of his own. At this juncture there came forward an old adherent of the Emperor, a Bohemian nobleman, who offered to provide an army at his own expense, on condition that he should be appointed its generalissimo with absolute command. This man was Albrecht Wenzel Eusebius Wallenstein, one of the greatest generals that Europe has ever known. Of noble Bohemian family, he was born at Prague in the year 1588, and designed for the Church, but so wild and unruly did he prove that at the age of sixteen he was sent by his father as a page into the service of the Margrave of Burgau. His father died soon afterward, and his guardians placed the boy under the tutorship of certain Protestant brethren, since called Moravian, against whose strict discipline he revolted, and became more wild and violent in conduct than ever.

One day, however, while asleep on a balcony of the castle at Innsbruck, he fell from a height of three stories without receiving any injury. This almost miraculous escape had a wonderful effect on his future career, for he believed that he had been preserved by the special intervention of the Virgin Mary, and, renouncing the Protestant faith in which he had been educated, he joined the Roman Catholic Church. He became at once silent, thoughtful, a seer of visions. He travelled much in Holland, England, France, Spain and Italy, taking up his abode for some time at the university of Padua, where he studied astrology, a science which was in future to be the guide of his life, since he retained little faith in any form of religion. Henceforth he was always accompanied by an old astrologer named Seth.

On his return he married an exceedingly rich old widow, and at her death, which occurred soon afterward, he found himself master of a handsome fortune. He then raised a troop of 200 horse at his own expense, and, joining Ferdinand, who was at the time only Archduke of Styria, accompanied him on an expedition against Venice, in which he behaved with great courage and decision; thereby winning the love of the soldiers, the favour of Ferdinand and marrying the young and beautiful Isabella von Harrach, the daughter of Ferdinand's privy councillor and favourite.

When the Bohemians rebelled in 1618, they had offered Wallenstein a command, but he remained faithful to his Emperor, and raised a regiment at his own expense to fight in his cause. The Bohemians thereupon confiscated all his estates, but this only bound him more closely than ever to Ferdinand, and when Bohemia and Hungary made peace, his lands were restored to him, and he was given in addition a handsome estate called Friedland.

The Duke of Friedland, as Wallenstein was thereafter called, was at that time the richest man in Bohemia, and lived in the greatest magnificence. It was after a period of idleness spent at Friedland that he came forward with his offer of 80,000 men to support the cause of Ferdinand the Emperor.

Within a few months, by means of lavish gifts and promises, Wallenstein had gathered together an army of adventurers from all quarters of Europe. Stern and cold in manner—some said that he never smiled—Wallenstein's gravity was such as to impress all whom he met. His discipline was severe, and yet he was the darling of his soldiery. The equipments he gave were good, pay was secure, any man of whatever rank who distinguished himself was rewarded with munificence and advanced to a post of honour. Wallenstein allowed no priests within his camp, and shut his eyes to the irregularities of his men so long as they performed their military duties properly. They regarded him with awe, and when he appeared among them in the morning with a

countenance ghastly and haggard from midnight watching of the stars, they whispered of communings with spirits and devils, and looked upon him as a supernatural being.

Several of his generals were men of mark, notably Pappenheim, the leader of his cavalry, a man of wondrous strength and courage, of pure morals and a devout Roman Catholic. The wild soldiers revered his purity in an age of vice, loved him for his affectionate disposition and would follow him to death or victory. Yet he too, like his master, took all their cruelty and lawlessness as a matter of course.

Wallenstein enlisted Catholics and Protestants alike in his army, and levied contributions from townsmen and villagers of either faith. He cared nothing for the religious questions at issue, his sole aim being to restore the power of the Emperor of Germany to its fullest extent "We want no princes," he is said to have declared again and again, "but a single master as in France and Spain."

III

Tilly was generally mistrustful and jealous of Wallenstein, but the two marched into Holstein together, and forced the King of Denmark to sign an ignominious peace.

After this, Wallenstein appeared with his army before the city of Stralsund and summoned it to surrender, which the magistrate would immediately have done, had not the indignant citizens taken matters into their own hands and prepared for a siege. This angered Wallenstein, who always maintained that nothing was ever withheld from him that he desired to possess, and he swore that he would take Stralsund were it bound to heaven with chains of steel.

The citizens had heard of the unbridled ferocity of Wallenstein's soldiers when let loose on a fallen city. They knew that, should they yield, their town would be sacked and

burned, their property looted and their wives and children cruelly slain, so they determined to defend their religion and liberty to the last drop of blood. Wallenstein swore that he would lay the town as flat as the top of the table, but he swore in vain. He could do nothing, and after carrying on the siege from March to August of the year 1628 he drew off his forces.

After this check the dreaded Wallenstein was no longer deemed invincible, and his enemies took the opportunity of falling on him on every side. The Jesuits opposed him violently, the Catholic League demanded that his army should be reduced, for it had increased to a strength of 100,000 men, who were maintained by forced contributions from the districts through which they passed, and so cruel and pitiless were they that even the provinces loyal to the Emperor's cause complained of their presence.

Wretched villagers were found dead in scores, their mouths filled with earth and grass, showing the tortures of starvation through which they had passed. Horrible stories were told of people who ate their own children, and dug up the bodies of the dead, so wild with hunger were they.

The princes, too, looked upon Wallenstein with disfavour, for had he not declared that the Emperor ought to be master in his own realm, and reduce them to the level of mere nobles? Even the Pope had complained. So when Ferdinand met his Diet at Ratisbon and asked to have his eldest son made King of the Romans, the only reply he met with was a request to dismiss Wallenstein, after which other matters should be attended to. So Wallenstein fell into disgrace, and was deprived of his command. "I pity, and forgive," he said quietly, when he heard of the Emperor's decision, "I grieve for his weakness, and obey."

In the year 1629 the great army was broken up; partly incorporated with Tilly's troops and partly disbanded; and Wallenstein returned home with sixty carriages containing his suite, and 100 wagons of luggage. He retired to the castle of Prague, where he lived in his former princely state. Six gates

led to his palace, guarded night and day by sentinels, fifty soldiers in rich uniforms waited in his anteroom to obey his slightest wish, and twelve watchmen patrolled the corridors, to prevent the least noise while their master was busied in astronomical study. Six barons waited on him, sixty pages of noble birth were brought up in his service, and four gentleman ushers marshaled the 100 guests who were entertained every day at his table. His gardens were magnificent, and contained rare fruits and trees and large aviaries of strange birds, and his horses ate from marble mangers, and drank from troughs supplied with Punning water from his fountains.

In the midst of this magnificence lived the mysterious lord, dark and pale and silent, haughty and greatly dreaded, and yet ardently worshipped by those in his immediate service.

The year 1629 was a time of mourning and desolation for Germany. Impoverished and wasted, the land was the battlefield for all the nations of Europe. The ex-King and Queen of Bohemia had suffered great loss in their exile, for their eldest son, the young Prince Frederick Henry, who had grown into a youth of great promise, was drowned at sea.

In the midst of this melancholy prospect, a ray of hope broke through the clouds that hung dark above Protestant Germany. Denmark had been beaten off the field, but the King of Sweden, having concluded his war with Russia, turned his attention to his oppressed co-religionists across the Baltic.

Gustavus Adolphus, the son of Charles IX of Sweden, was born at Stockholm in the year 1594. From the first he was a child of exceptional promise, and when only ten years of age would sit by his father in the councils of State and listen to the debates. When future difficulties were discussed, the father would lay his hand on the boy's fair hair and say: "Here is he who will provide for this! *Ille faciet*. He will do it."

Gustavus would give the replies to foreign envoys, either in Latin or in their own tongue, and so practised did he become that at the age of fifteen he could speak with ease

German, Dutch, French, Italian and Latin. He was also studying Greek, and read with pleasure the works of Xenophon.

At fifteen his father sent him as governor to Finland, together with his tutor, Johann Skytte, who was to aid him with advice, and continue his studies. At sixteen, according to the old Scandinavian custom, his father presented him before the Thing, as the Swedish parliament was called, and he was formally invested with the shield and sword of a full-grown knight.

The Swedes were full of hope as they watched their future king, for the boy was a typical northern warrior, very tall and very strong, with bright blue eyes, which were, however, near-sighted, and fair golden hair that floated in a sunny cloud around his head. He was gentle and dignified, and grew into a man of deep piety and purity of life, daily studying the Holy Scriptures, since he said that kings, being responsible only to God, must learn His will more carefully than the common people. His religion was reflected in his gentle words and kind sympathy for others, and in the high sense of honour which is the characteristic of the perfect gentleman.

He had, however, a hasty temper, was eager and quick in speech, and in battle absolutely carried away with warlike fury; was beyond all restraint, exposing himself rashly to danger; yet he never received a wound until the battle in which he died. Again and again his horse was killed under him in action, and once he was dragged with the greatest difficulty out of a frown bog from under the horse's feet, but he was never hurt.

In 1611 his father died, leaving the seventeen-year-old youth King of Sweden and engaged in wars with Denmark, Russia and Poland. For several years he fought bravely in battle, establishing a discipline among his men, which made them very different from the ferocious soldiers of Wallenstein or 1511y. They were held firmly in check, pillaging was strictly forbidden, theft and violence were sharply punished,

and no camp-followers were permitted to follow the army except the families of the soldiers themselves.

Gustavus was also careful for their bodily comforts. Instead of subsisting upon what food and clothing they could force from the miserable peasantry of the countries through which they passed, his soldiers were well fed and well shod. Their tents and clothing were good, warm sheepskins were provided for winter wear, and surgeons tended them when they were ill or wounded in battle. Schools were established for the men as well as for their children, and the camp was like a home.

As may be imagined, his service was very popular in spite of its strict discipline. Many English and Scottish gentlemen were among his officers, and all loved him, for he knew every officer by name and many of the men too, and was ever gentle and lenient with them so long as they tried to do their duty. If he saw a man ignorant of his drill, he would himself instruct him gently and kindly and with great patience, and such a man would remember the King's care of him and follow him to the death with all the fidelity of his simple soul.

To offenders of all kinds Gustavus was justly stern. After vain attempts to put a stop to dueling in his army, he once arrived on the spot where two officers were even then facing each other. "Fight till one is slain," he said quietly, "and then off with the head of the survivor t "And the practice of dueling in his army ceased.

In the year 1620 Gustavus made a private tour in • Germany, calling himself Monsieur 'Gars,' from the initials of his name, Gustavus Adolphus Rex Sueviae. In Berlin he met the handsome, stately lady, Maria Eleanore, sister of the Elector of Brandenburg, whom he tenderly loved and soon afterward married.

Gustavus had for some time witnessed with grief the sufferings of his Protestant brethren in Germany, and as soon as he had concluded an honourable peace with Denmark and

Poland, he discussed with his famous chancellor, Oxenstiern, the advisability of joining in the Thirty Years' War.

The Emperor Ferdinand had tried to stir up disaffection in Sweden, Austrians had fought against Gustavus in the Polish army, Wallenstein had insulted his ambassadors, but, apart from these private reasons, the maintenance of Protestantism in Europe made him determined to make his power felt. So on the 20th of May 1680 the King appeared before the Thing at Stockholm, carrying in his arms his only child, the little four-year-old princess, Christine. He presented her to the States as his successor, caused them to swear fidelity to her and kiss her hand, and then read a paper which contained his wishes respecting the government of the country in his absence and during the little Christine's minority should he fall in battle. Strong men melted into tears and blessed him, and, taking leave of wife and child, he embarked for Germany, full of hope and courage, yet with a sure presentiment that he would never return. "For me there remains henceforth no more rest but the eternal," he exclaimed, realizing the fearful difficulties which he must face.

Gustavus landed on the German coast in the midst of a violent thunderstorm, and, falling on his knees, called God to witness that the campaign was not undertaken for his own aggrandizement, but for the cause of His holy Gospel. So little sensation did his landing cause that the Imperial Court at Vienna called him the 'Snow King' in derision, saying that he would melt away if he approached the South, and when the Emperor Ferdinand was told, he merely shrugged his shoulders and remarked:

So we have another kingling on hand!"

The Swedish army consisted of but 15,000 men, but they were in excellent condition, and of his officers Gustavus himself said: "All these are captains and fit to command armies."

The Protestants hailed him as their deliverer, and named him the 'Lion of the North,' greeting with acclamations the Scandinavian giant with the blue eyes and cloud of yellow hair, who presented such a remarkable contrast to the gloomy Wallenstein and the ferocious Tilly.

IV

The army of Wallenstein being dispersed, and Tilly fully occupied with the siege of Magdeburg, the only leader spared to grapple with the Lion of the North was one of Wallenstein's former generals, an Italian named Conti, who occupied Pomerania with 16,000 men. Even Conti had not thought it worth while to oppose the landing of Gustavus, since the only fear which the Swedes inspired was a belief that they might have brought Lapland witches and enchanters with them.

Fortune favoured Gustavus. Although Duke Bogislaus of Pomerania had never quarrelled with the Emperor, he was secretly inclined to the Swedes since Wallenstein had devastated his lands, so he admitted them into the town of Stettin, which Gustavus garrisoned and left under General Horn, while he himself passed on farther into Pomerania. The approach of winter was favourable to Gustavus, since Conti's army was composed of Italians who could not endure cold and exposure. The Imperialist generals asked him to make a truce till spring, but this he had no intention of doing, since his men bore cold, hunger and thirst well, and had warm fur-lined coats and sheepskin cloaks for winter. Reinforcements streamed in from every side, and the despised 'Snow Sing' gathered strength as he passed south, and, like a veritable snowball, grew larger and larger the farther he rolled. During the winter Pomerania and Mecklenburg were practically cleared of Imperialists. The Emperor was astonished and enraged, the courtiers no longer jeered and the Protestant princes began to speak with hope and decision.

This delay decided the fate of the unfortunate city of Magdeburg, for Tilly had to be speedily set at liberty to face the redoubtable Snow King from the North. Gustavus could not march himself to the relief of Magdeburg, since he was not yet sure of the cities in his rear, but he sent Colonel Falkenberg, one of his officers, who managed to enter the city disguised as a boatman, and took charge of the exhausted and dispirited garrison. On the 10th of May 1681 the Imperial party within the town demanded loudly that it should yield. At four o'clock in the morning Falkenberg hurried to the town hall for a consultation with the chief magistrates, but while he was thus engaged Pappenheim scaled the city wall at a place where a weary sentinel had fallen asleep. Falkenberg rushed out but fell dead, riddled with bullets, and though the citizens resisted as long as their ammunition lasted, they were obliged in the end to surrender.

Tilly's soldiers always held that they might work their will on any town taken by assault, and their cruel leader had no desire to restrain their ferocity, so there ensued the most horrible scene of this most horrible war. Some officers, who begged their general to have mercy on unresisting and innocent citizens, were ordered into retreat for an hour.

"I will then," said Tilly, "see what can be done, but the soldier must have something for his labour and danger. Magdeburg must bleed." Before the hour was past, however, crimes too horrible for description had been committed, and the wild soldiers were beyond all restraint. They respected neither old nor young, neither women nor children. Almost all the men were beheaded and most of the women too.

In the midst of the slaughter a fire broke out, and, thinking that the citizens were trying to deprive them of their plunder, the soldiers flew, sword in hand, on every living creature they met, mutilating, torturing and slaying on every hand. The blare of trumpets, roar of flames, and shrieks of victims were deafening, but nothing could bring to reason a soldiery mad with drink and insane with passion. For four days

this terrible carnage lasted. Of 40,000 inhabitants only 600 wretched fugitives remained, and of the stately German city nothing was left standing save the cathedral, one convent and a few houses near them. Tilly entered in triumph and a Te Deum was sung in honour of the victory.

Afterward Tilly rode slowly through the town, gloating over the corpses and heaps of blackened ashes. He described the scene in a long letter to the Emperor, comparing the siege with that of Troy and Jerusalem. "And sincerely," he wrote, "do I pity the ladies of the Imperial family, that they could not be present as spectators of the same!"

The blood of every German Protestant ran cold at the news, and the Electors of Brandenburg and Saxony, who had vacillated hitherto, immediately threw in their lot with the Swedes.

Tilly had already advanced on Leipzig and, threatening it with a worse fate than that of Magdeburg, swiftly reduced it to submission. He was encamped at Breitenwald, five miles from the city, and against him the united forces of Swedes and Saxons marched. There was a marked contrast between the two armies. Religious services were held daily in the Swedish camp, the men treated citizens and peasants with gentleness and consideration, they themselves were respected even by their enemies for their strict morality and quiet, dignified bearing, while Tilly's camp resounded daily with the oaths of licentious soldiers, the shrieks of tortured victims and sounds of fierce and drunken revelry.

The Swedes wore no armour and carried light field artillery, with a view to moving quickly from one place to another, but Tilly's men wore cuirasses, greaves and helmets, and were encumbered with heavy cannon which could not be moved when once placed in position on the field. To give Tilly his due, he had never under-estimated the gravity of the Swedish invasion as others had done. Of Gustavus he wrote: "The King of Sweden is an enemy both prudent and brave, inured to war, and in the flower of his age. His plans are

excellent, his resources considerable, his subjects enthusiastically attached to him. His army, composed of Swedes, Germans, Livonians, Finlanders, Scotch and English, by its devoted obedience to their leaders, is blended into one nation. He is a gamester in playing with whom not to have lost is to have won a great deal."

It was the first time that Gustavus had engaged in battle with the tried Austrian forces. He arranged his men in masses, the Swedes on the right wing, the Saxons on the left. Dressed simply in grey with a white hat and green feather, he rode slowly down the line, speaking words of kindly encouragement to his men. Then he rode to his position at the centre of the line, removed his cap with one hand and lowered his sword with the other. His example was followed by every man in the army, and the King's dear voice rang over the field:

"Good God, Thou who holdest in Thy hand victory and defeat, turn Thy merciful face to us Thy servants. We have come far, we have left our peaceful homes to combat in this country for liberty, for the truth and for Thy gospel. Glorify Thy holy name in granting us the victory."

Tilly advanced to the battle of Leipzig wholly unnerved, and it was said that he signed the capitulation in the gravedigger's house, since no other place had been available, and, on raising his head from writing, had shuddered to find the walls painted with skulls and cross-bones.

The horrors of Magdeburg preyed on his mind as he advanced to meet Gustavus. When he charged the Saxons they broke and fled, and so elated was he then that he sent to the Emperor at Vienna to announce a victory, but at the same time the Swedes routed Pappenheim's army, and, rallying the Saxons, encouraged them to attack Tilly in the rear. His artillery was captured and turned upon himself. Pappenheim, with seven wounds, fell and was left for dead, but was carried away later to a place of safety by a faithful peasant. Tilly, with four regiments of veterans who resolved to be cut in pieces

sooner than yield, sought the shelter of a little wood, where they held out till nightfall.

The rest of the army fled, while the villagers, eager for revenge, pursued the fugitives and cut them down. Tilly stood stupefied, motionless, stunned with despair. He was seventy-two years of age, and had been victor in over thirty battles. Three bullets had already pierced his body before the miserable handful of men could persuade him to retreat. The curses of the peasants rang in his ears, and he was irritated by a rude song that they shouted at him with the chorus, "Fly, Tilly, fly!"

Only 2000 men could be collected from the 20,000 who had set out that day, and all the artillery and baggage were lost. This battle, which was fought on the 18th of May in the year 1681, is sometimes called the Battle of Breitenwald and sometimes the First Battle of Leipzig. It was Tilly's first defeat and the first great Protestant victory.

V

So shattered was the Catholic army that for a time all Germany lay open to Gustavus. His great Chancellor Oxenstiern wanted him to march on Vienna itself, but foreign conquest was not his aim. He only wished to unite in a Protestant alliance with the northern states, as a balance to the Catholic powers in the South, and deliver the Palatinate from its oppressors, knowing that he would arouse national jealousy as a foreign conqueror if he played too large a part himself.

He therefore sent the Elector of Saxony to rouse the Protestants of Bohemia, during which time the great Wallenstein himself sent from his retreat and made overtures of friendship, offering to gather together his old army and join the Swedes against his ancient rival Tilly and the Catholic League, with its weak Emperor, who had yielded to his dismissal.

Gustavus however did not trust him, and turned his attention to other affairs. He invited the fugitive Elector Palatine to join him, and he came, accompanied by seventy horsemen and forty carriages containing his suite, having taken leave of Elizabeth, whose spirits were by no means depressed either by exile or debt. She wrote cheerful letters home to England, full of hope for the future and joyous anecdotes of the merry life she led. Hunting stories occupy a large part of these epistles. On one occasion she wrote that her son, the Prince Rupert, had been lost, and, when the courtiers went to seek him, they found nothing but a pair of boots sticking out of a hole in the earth. Hauling at the boots produced the prince's tutor, who was firmly grasping Rupert's feet, who in his turn clung to a hound with its teeth firmly fixed in a fox! With such amusements and distractions to occupy her mind, the former Queen of Bohemia had no thought for her suffering country.

Frederick met Gustavus at Frankfurt, was presented to the Queen of Sweden, who had joined her husband there, and marched by the side of his deliverer through the rejoicing towns. It was indeed a time of great rejoicing for the Protestant cities. On the 81st March Gustavus had been received into beautiful old Nuremberg amidst scenes of almost frantic enthusiasm. Tears streamed down the faces of the people as they pressed forward to kiss his horse, the sheath of his sword, even his boots. Those who remembered the ferocious Tilly and the gloomy Wallenstein hailed as their saviour the gentle, dignified giant with the steady blue eyes, open face and golden hair. The Italians named him; *Il Re d'oro* (the gold-king), so profound was the impression his sunny brightness of appearance made upon them. Gustavus did not love this homage, which indeed almost made him afraid

"They make a god of me," he said; "and God will punish me for it."

"That old devil Tilly," as Gustavus always called him, was stirring again by then and had encamped by the River

Lech in order to protect Bavaria. Gustavus advanced to the other side of the river, and, keeping up a furious cannonade for three days without intermission, he threw a bridge across the river under cover of the smoke. Tilly rushed to meet him, but was struck by a cannon-shot in the knee. Mortally wounded, he was carried off the field to Ingoldstadt, and there the old general died. He was seventy-three years of age, and out of his thirty-two battles had been victorious in all except the last two, in which he had matched his power against that of the Lion of the North.

The loss of this famous general left the Emperor no alternative but to make advances to the only man capable of taking the head of affairs. Wallenstein received his overtures very coldly indeed, and refused to assume command except upon his own terms. But he was soon at the head of a considerable force again, had driven the Saxons out of Bohemia, and by October 1682 had taken Leipzig.

Hearing that Pappenheim had been dispatched with a considerable force to besiege Halle, Gustavus advanced to meet the Imperial army before that general could have time to return. On the 6th of November the two armies met near the village of Lutzen. Wallenstein deepened the trenches which lay between them, and, to conceal the defects in his army, commanded all the horse-boys to mount and wait on the left wing till Pappenheim should arrive to take their place. The Swedish soldiers stood to arms all night, Gustavus commanding the right, and Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar the left, wing.

Gustavus wished to attack before daybreak, but the fog was so dense that it was impossible to move. Prayers were said at the head of each regiment and hymns were sung, and when the fog lifted at eleven o'clock, the Lion of the North charged, shouting as he led his men: "Now I In God's name, at them I Jesus, we fight for Thy holy name!"

A frightful struggle ensued, in the middle of which the King's arm fell powerless to his side, shattered by a musket-

ball. "It is nothing. Follow me!" he cried to the men who closed round him, but the pain made him feel faint and he asked the Duke of Lauenburg to lead him out of the fight. As they turned, a second shot struck Gustavus, and he fell from his horse to the ground "I have enough, brother," he whispered to the Duke. "Save your own life," and within a few moments the disfigured corpse of Gustavus Adolphus lay buried under a heap of slain.



GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS PRAYING BEFORE THE BATTLE OF LUTZEN.

His horse, galloping riderless over the field, showed his followers what had happened, and now the full strength of the Swedish army manifested itself, for, goaded "to desperation, they fought with a fury that nothing could resist. The Imperialists were in full retreat when Pappenheim appeared on the scene, and the battle began all over again. The Swedish Yellow regiment, the flower of the army, lay dead, each man in his rank without having yielded an inch of ground.

Count Pi000lomini, one of Wallenstein's generals, had seven horses shot under him. Wallenstein rode hither and thither like one bearing a charmed life, his mantle riddled with

bullets, yet without receiving one wound. The gallant Pappenheim received two shots in the breast, and was borne to his carriage, where he died. It was his forty-fourth battle. He had been born on the same day as Gustavus, and both were thirty-eight years old.

The mists of evening fell, and Wallenstein withdrew his troops, leaving the Swedish generals master of the field. But the victory was dearly bought, for more than 9000 men lay dead upon the plain. A large block of granite was dragged to the place where Gustavus Adolphus fell, and is inscribed with the letters G.A., and the date of the battle, 6th November 1682.

A fortnight later the incapable Frederick, Elector Palatine, died.

The Swedish chancellor, Oxenstiern, announced that he intended to carry on his deceased master's policy, and the Protestant army was led by Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar and various Swedish officers, prominent among which were Generals Horn and Wrangel. But Duke Bernard had not that perfect control over his men which had characterized Gustavus Adolphus, and his army began to plunder and harry with as much violence as any Imperial troops. The Duke was a good man, honourable and just, and an earnest student of the Bible, but his strength of character was not sufficient to control an army.

Germany had been devastated from end to end, villages were deserted, and the wretched peasants took to the woods and dwelt like animals in caves and among the rocks. They became violent and wicked, and civilization was set back at least a century.

Wallenstein was by then heartily sick of the war. He would have liked the Palatinate for himself, and from that position felt capable of maintaining peace between the Protestant north and the Catholic south. Much mystery surrounds this period of his career, and he seems to have roused suspicion by his actions, for, determined to force a

peace with the Swedes whether the Emperor wished it or not, he entered into negotiations with them, and at the same time, to test the temper of his men, tendered his resignation to the Emperor. This experiment at once succeeded, for a few of his regiments withdrew, but the majority pledged themselves to serve the Duke of Friedland against any foes he should care to combat

Strange stories spread abroad. The paper containing this pledge was shown to Wallenstein's officers at the beginning of a banquet and was said to have contained the reservation, "against any foes excepting always our Lord the Emperor," but it was signed by them when the evening was several hours old and they were too drunk to notice what they were doing. Probably a second document was substituted during the evening, for when produced afterward no reservation whatever was apparent, though the signatures stood duly at the foot

Wallenstein during this time remained inactive at Prague, while the Protestant army ravaged the country at will. Some whispered that he meant to seize the crown of Bohemia for himself. One of his officers, the Count Piccolomini, betrayed the story of the signed pledge to the Emperor, who was furious and demanded Wallenstein's arrest, alive or dead. Surprised by the desertion of Piccolomini, who had hitherto posed as one of his most devoted adherents, Wallenstein's suspicions were aroused, and he took refuge at Eger, a strong fortress on the western frontier of Bohemia, and once more entered into negotiations with the Swedes. But Bernard of Saxe-Weimar received his advances coldly, being doubtful of his sincerity. "One who does not believe in God," he said, "ought not to be trusted by men."

Wallenstein's days were now numbered. On the 25th of February 1688 a deputation of his officers met together and swore on the crosses of their swords to destroy him and his most faithful adherents. They invited Illow, Terzky, Kinski and other sworn followers of the Duke to a banquet, and, when

arms were laid aside and the wine-cup had freely circulated, a cry was suddenly raised

"Long live the House of Austria!" A scuffle ensued, in which all Wallenstein's friends were assassinated, and to finish their work his enemies rushed from the officers' quarters to the lodging where the general lay sick of a fever.

For some days Wallenstein's astrologer, Semi, had warned him that the stars were hostile and that he stood in great danger.

"It is so," answered Wallenstein, "but it is also plainly written on the heavens that thou, friend Semi, wilt be thrown in prison."

Wallenstein was in bed when Gordon, Devereux and six others entered his room. He sprang from his bed," and, recognizing that his hour was come, spoke no word, but stretched out his arms as if to receive their weapons and fell pierced through and through.

So died the great Duke of Friedland. His estates were divided among his enemies, and his personal property among the soldiers. Almost the whole of his army remained faithful to the Emperor, who appointed his eldest son, later the Emperor Ferdinand III, general-in-chief.

The chief actors in the great drama of the Thirty Years' War had all passed from the scene, though the war itself did not cease, and years of misery were yet to come. In consequence of indecision and quarrelling among the

leaders, the Protestants lost 16,000 men in a great defeat at Nordlingen in 1684. The Netherlands then joined in the war, and the great French statesman, Richelieu, sent 6000 men to serve in Duke Bernard's army on condition of receiving Alsace in return.

The exhaustion of the country was more terrible than ever, for the war had continued so long that many of the soldiers had been born and bred amid the violence and

licentiousness of camp life. The aspect of country and cities was fearful. Starving little children lay on the doorsteps. The dead lay by the roadside where they had dropped and there was none to bury them. One poor little village had been plundered twenty-eight times in two years, and twice in one day, and a deadly plague finished the work which the horrors of war had begun.

In the year 1687 the Emperor Ferdinand died, after a long career of cruelty under the guise of religion, during which he had turned the fair fields and prosperous cities of Germany into one great plain of smoking ruin. The year of his death was marked by the appearance of a ghastly famine, in which not only were the bodies of the dead disinterred for food, but living men were hunted down for the same purpose. Many hundreds committed suicide, being unable to bear the pangs of hunger any longer, and the survivors were swept away in thousands by pestilence, the natural consequence of their loathsome diet.

On the 8th of July 1689 died the good Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, sick with horror at the evils around and unable to control his men, who plundered and harried against his express command.

"I am weary of my life," said he, "for I can no longer continue with a safe conscience amid such lawless proceedings."

The miserable war dragged on nine years longer and the final event worthy of note was the capture of Prague by the Swedish general, Konigsmark.

At last, on the 24th of October 1648, peace was signed in Westphalia, by which the Emperor indemnified the Swedes with a sum of money and gave them the island of Rugen, part of Pomerania, and the bishoprics of Bremen and Verden. France was given practically the whole of Alsace. Romanists and Protestants were now placed on an equal footing, and all

ecclesiastical property that had fallen into the hands of the Protestants was to be retained by them.

Thus ended the Thirty Years' War, during which the best and bravest men in the country had fallen, half the population of Germany had perished, and religion, civilization, manufacture and art were almost totally destroyed.

The power of the German Emperor over the German princes had never been considerable, and after 1648 it almost disappeared. From this time forward the separate states were at liberty to form alliances with foreign powers at will, and they became self-governing and practically independent countries.

CHAPTER XVII

THE AFTERMATH

The misery and depopulation of Germany caused by the Thirty Years' War are wellnigh incredible. Thousands of villages disappeared altogether. In some places one half of the population had perished, in others one-third. The flourishing city of Augsburg was left with but 16,000 souls out of a population of 80,000. The people who survived were reduced to a state of barbarism by suffering and privation, and Germany was too much exhausted to be in a position to contribute anything to the culture of Europe until the end of the eighteenth century.

After the Peace of Westphalia, in 1648, the Elector of Brandenburg was the most powerful German prince next to the Emperor. As King of Prussia he was destined to create a new European power, a German Empire entirely independent of Austria and the Habsburg dynasty. The old line of Brandenburg electors had long died out, and the electorate had been sold by the Emperor Sigismund to the Hohenzollern family as far back as the time of the Council of Constance, at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

Starting with a small strip of territory, which stretched about one hundred miles east and west of the then little town of Berlin, the country grew until Prussia embraced nearly two-thirds of Germany, for practically every Hohenzollern ruler made some addition to his territory. One Elector of Brandenburg inherited Cleves just before the Thirty Years' War, thus gaining a footing in the Rhine country. Next was acquired the duchy of Prussia, which was separated from Brandenburg by Polish territory. It was originally inhabited by heathen Slays, who were conquered by some crusading knights in the thirteenth century when the Crusades were over.

These knights were Gamins belonging to the Teutonic Order, and the country soon filled with German colonists.

In the time of Martin Luther, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, who happened to be a relation of the Elector of Brandenburg, decided to dissolve the Order and took the title of Duke of Prussia, and when his family died out Prussia passed into the hands of the Elector of Brandenburg. In the year 1701 the Elector assumed the title of King of Prussia.

After the Thirty Years' War Prussia gained a strip of territory along the Baltic Sea, but it was reserved for Frederick the Great, who ruled from 1740 to 1786, to raise the country to the position of a European power.

He robbed the defenceless Maria Theresa of Silesia. He promoted the welfare of his subjects materially by draining the swamps, issued a new code of laws, increased the industries and encouraged learning and literature. During the Seven Years' War with Austria and her allies it seemed as if Prussia must disappear from the map altogether, but Frederick was a military genius and was quite capable of facing all the foes who surrounded him, and he emerged triumphant with the addition of the Polish region which had hitherto separated Brandenburg from Prussia.

Poland was a turbulent country, for its kings did not succeed to the throne by hereditary right, but were elected by the nobles, who also had the right of vetoing mss proposed in the diet. The three neighbouring countries of Prussia, Russia and Austria each appropriated a slice of this unsettled kingdom at three different times, 1772, 1798 and 1795. This arrangement is known as the Partition of Poland.

Frederick the Great died just before the wench Revolution, and during that time Germany, and especially Prussia, was in the thick of the fight against France. Prussia, however, was obliged to make peace, ceding her lands on the wench side of the Rhine.

In 1806, after an existence of over a thousand years, the Holy Roman Empire came to an end, and the Emperor Francis resigned his dignity, and assumed the title of Emperor of Austria.

For some years not even a nominal union existed among the German states. Napoleon made himself master of the Austrians at Austerlitz in 1805, and of the Prussians at Jena in 1806, and carved out kingdoms anew, but this tyranny was soon to end.

A strong national feeling was growing up in Prussia, fostered by the writings of such men as Arndt, Kleist and others. Politicians like Stein and Hardenberg reorganized the system of government, and the King's ministers were henceforth responsible officers of State and not mere servants of the Crown. Distinctions between nobles, burghers and peasants, which had hitherto hindered progress, gradually vanished, and towns were granted rights of self-government. An improved system of education was introduced, in connection with which we should mention the name of Wilhelm von Humboldt

Since Prussia was without natural boundaries, compulsory military service was instituted. She then felt herself capable of joining Austria and other German states who fell upon Napoleon after his retreat from Moscow in 1818, won the battle of Leipzig on the 19th of October of that year, invaded France, and co-operated with the British at the battle of Waterloo in 1815.

Thirty-nine states then formed an alliance, of which Prussia and Austria were the chief, and were governed for a short time by a Confederal Diet, to which all the states sent delegates. The battle of Waterloo was followed by a period of disorder and discontent in Germany as in England. The Prussians were patriotic and ambitious, and anxious to develop their national resources. A desire for unity grew with their desire for popular government and trade facilities. So the full flood of modern ideas rose and swelled like a great river,

breaking its way through a mass of ancient restrictions, until unity was achieved and old barriers broken down.

By 1866 the Germans had so far advanced that a united Germany was possible, and five years later the then King of Prussia was crowned German Emperor in the Palace of Versailles.

THE END.