XIV

FIRST PERIOD OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

(1328-1380)

Causes of the Hundred Years' War. — England and France, the latter strong through the progress of the royal power, the former through that of public liberty, were engaged in a struggle for more than a century. This is the Hundred Years' War, which the rashness and incapacity of the French nobility rendered so glorious for England. As grandson of Philip the Fair, Edward III had claims upon the crown of France, for the Salic Law had not as yet acquired the importance which it assumed later on. But at the accession of Philip of Valois he appeared to renounce them. He even paid him the feudal homage which was due the king of France for the duchy of Guyenne. Nevertheless Edward constantly cherished the hope of supplanting him. He was encouraged therein by the fugitive Robert of Artois, despoiled of the county of Artois, and by the Flemings who, being in need of English wool to feed their manufactures, rebelled under the leadership of the brewer Jacques Arteveld against their count, the friend of France, and recognized Edward as their legitimate king.

Hostilities in Flanders and Brittany (1337). The only fact of importance during the first eight years of war was the great naval victory of the English at the battle of the Sluice (1340). Fighting was carried on chiefly in Brittany where Charles de Blois, head of the French party, disputed the ducal crown with Jean de Montfort supported by the English. The death of Jacques Arteveld, killed in a popular tumult, did not take away the Flemish alliance from England, which maintained its superiority in Flanders and Brittany.

Battle of Crécy (1346). In 1346 the fighting became more serious. Edward invaded France and penetrated to the heart of Normandy, expecting to march upon Paris. The

lack of provisions forced him to turn northward and approach Flanders. Philip of Valois although commanding 60,000 men could not prevent his passage of the Seine and Somme, but gave battle near Crécy at the head of tired and undisciplined troops. The English army, not half so numerous, was well placed upon a height supplied with cannon which then for the first time were seen in battle, and was covered by a dense line of skilful archers. The French chivalry, thrown at random against this strong position, were riddled with arrows and strewed the field of battle with their dead. Edward though victorious continued his retreat upon Calais, which he captured after a year's siege, and which the English held for two centuries. He obtained at the same time important advantages in Scotland and Brittany. David Bruce was made prisoner at Nevil Cross and Charles de Blois at Roche Derien.

John the Good (1350). **Battle of Poitiers** (1356). — At the accession of John the Good, France was already in a sad state. Calais and a great battle had been lost. Charles the Bad, king of Navarre, was intriguing to assert rights to the throne which he claimed to inherit from his mother, Jeanne d'Evreux. The States General convoked in 1355 raised pretensions which recalled and exceeded the Great Charter of England. They pretended to collect the public dues through their agents, to superintend the expenditures and to impose their orders on every one. The nobles refused to submit to the impost and formed a plot in which Charles the Bad was the leader. John arrested many of the conspirators at a banquet at the very table of his own son Charles, and struck off their heads. The English judged the occasion favorable. Edward sent the Duke of Lancaster to Normandy, and the Black Prince to Guyenne. The latter advanced toward the Loire. After devastating the country he retreated, but found his road cut off by King John, who with 50,000 men completely surrounded his little army. But skilful measures taken by the prince upon the hillock of Maupertuis near Poitiers, and the usual rashness of the French nobles gave him a most brilliant victory. The king himself was captured.

French Attempt at Reforms. The Jacquerie. — The great disasters of Crécy and Poitiers, caused by the incapacity of kings, generals and nobles, brought about a popular commotion. As the king and the great majority of the lords were

prisoners, the nation took in hand the guidance of public affairs. The States General, convened by the Dauphin Charles, expressed their will through Étienne Marcel, provost of the merchants for the Third Estate, through the Bishop of Laon for the clergy, and through the Lord of Vermandois for the nobility. Before granting any subsidy, they demanded the removal and trial of the principal officers of finance and justice, and the establishment of a council, chosen from the three orders, and charged with the direction of the government. The States became bolder still. They established a commission of thirty-six members to superintend everything, and caused the Great Ordinance of Reformation to be issued. Thereby they asserted their right to levy and expend the taxes, to reform justice and control the coinage. Even a mild political reform was dangerous in the face of the victorious English. Moreover this ordinance, accomplished by a few intelligent deputies, was neither the work nor even the desire of France. Not a single arm outside Paris was raised in its support. The revolution seemed only a Parisian riot. When the dauphin tried to escape from the obligations imposed upon him, Étienne Marcel assassinated his two ministers, the marshals of Champagne and Normandy, before his very eyes. Such acts of violence discredited the popular movement, which was furthermore disgraced by the excesses of the mob or the Jacquerie. Finally Marcel, forced to seek other support, was on the point of delivering Paris to Charles the Bad, when the plot was discovered. He was killed and his party fell with him.

Treaty of Brétigny (1360). — The dauphin, being rid of Marcel, signed a treaty with Charles the Bad and remained sole master. With the consent of the States he repudiated the disastrous treaty which John, weary of his captivity, had just concluded and agreed to that of Brétigny which was slightly less onerous. Thereby Edward renounced his claim to the crown of France, but received thirteen provinces in direct sovereignty. Dying in 1364, John ended a reign equally fatal in peace or war. The duchy of Burgundy had escheated to the crown, the first ducal house having become extinct. Instead of joining it to the national domain, John alienated it in favor of his fourth son, Philip the Bold. Thus he founded a second ducal house which on two occasions came near destroying the kingdom.

Charles V (1364–1380) **and Duguesclin.**— This Charles the Wise rescued France from the abyss of misery. He allowed the foreign invasion to waste itself in the ravaged provinces, and shut up his troops in the strongholds, whence they harassed the enemy and rendered it impossible for them to obtain fresh supplies. Duguesclin, a petty gentleman of Brittany, whom he had taken into his service and whom he afterwards appointed constable of France, by the victory of Cocherel (1364) rid him of Charles the Bad. He also delivered the country from the "free companies," leading them to the succor of the king of Castile, Henry de Transtamara, against his brother, Pedro the Cruel, whom the English were supporting and whom he subsequently overthrew (1369).

In 1369 the Gascons, irritated by the extortions of the Black Prince, appealed against him to Charles V, the feudal suzerain of the duchy of Aquitaine. The king caused the Court of Peers to declare this great fief confiscated. This was a declaration of war. Charles V was ready, but Edward was not. Nevertheless a powerful English army disembarked at Calais. It marched through France as far as Bordeaux, but found itself reduced on the way to 6000 men. When the Prince of Wales died in 1376 and Edward III in 1377, almost the entire fruit ot their victories was already lost. Bayonne, Bordeaux and Calais alone remained in the hands of the English.

Charles was equally skilful and equally fortunate against Charles the Bad, from whom he took Montpellier and Evreux. He failed however in the attempt to unite Brittany to the royal domain. Influenced by the memories of his youth, he avoided assembling the States General. Still he strengthened Parliament by permitting it to fill vacancies in its own body. He favored letters which had Froissart, the inimitable chronicler, as their principal representative. He also began the Royal Library, which under him numbered 900 volumes. He died in 1380.

XV

SECOND PERIOD OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

(1380–1453)

Charles VI. — Internal troubles almost suspended the struggle between France and England for thirty-five years. During the minority of Charles VI his uncles wrangled over the regency, and the people of Paris beat the tax collectors to death. Rouen, Chalons, Reims, Troyes and Orleans joined in a communal movement which started from Flanders, but which was put down by the French nobility at the bloody battle of Roosebec. The Flemish leader, Philip van Arteveld, was there slain. The princes learned no lessons from these events. Squandering of the public funds and disorders of every sort continued. Suddenly the young king lost his reason and was lucid afterwards only at rare intervals. His uncle, the Duke of Burgundy, and his brother, the Duke of Orleans, disputed the control of affairs. The former, surnamed John the Fearless, decided the matter by assassinating his rival.

The Armagnacs and the Burgundians. — The Count of Armagnac, father-in-law of the new duke of Orleans, headed the faction to which a portion of the nobility adhered and which took his name. The Duke of Burgundy was supported by the cities. A civil war broke out marked by abominable cruelties. John the Fearless flattered Paris and specially the mob whose ferocious passions he allowed full play. The butcher Caboche deluged the city with the blood of the Armagnacs, or of those who were called so. The duke encouraged this hideous demagoguery. However, the shrewd men of the party and the University devised the Cabochian Ordinance for the reform of the kingdom. This sagacious code was of brief continuance. Two years later the Hundred Years' War began again.

Wicliffe. — A general effervescence was then agitating Western Europe. Everywhere the people were chafing against a social order which overwhelmed them with miseries. In the cities the burghers, enriched by their small beginnings in manufactures and commerce, wished to secure their property from the caprice and violence of the great. Some even laid presumptuous hands on the things of the Church.

In 1366 Pope Urban V demanded from England 33,000 marks, arrears of the tribute which John Lackland had promised to the Holy See. Parliament refused payment; and a monk, John Wicliffe, took advantage of the popular indignation to attack in the name of apostolic equality the whole hierarchy of the Church. In the name of the Gospel he also assailed such dogmas, sacraments and rites as were not found expressly stated in the New Testament. His translation of the Bible into English rapidly disseminated those ideas which Lollard, burned at Cologne in 1322, had already taught.

One of Wicliffe's partisans even drew political consequences from his doctrine. John Ball went about through the cities and towns, saying to the poor: —

> "When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Where was then the gentleman?"

Dangerous thoughts were fermenting everywhere. They existed in the minds of those who, about this same time, were exciting the riots of Rouen, Reims, Chalons, Troyes and Paris and the insurrection of the White Caps in Flanders. Thus premonitory signs always herald great storms. The unthinking protests of the fourteenth century against mediæval double feudalism, the secular and the religious, announced the deliberate revolt of Luther and Calvin in the sixteenth in the realm of faith, of Descartes in the seventeenth in philosophy, and of the whole world in the eighteenth in politics.

Richard II (1380). — One year after the accession of Richard II, son of the Black Prince, 60,000 men marched to the gates of London, demanding the abolition of serfdom, the liberty to buy and sell in the markets and fairs and, what was more unreasonable, the reduction of rents to a uniform standard. They were put off with fair promises. After they had dispersed, 1500 of them were hanged and everything went on as before.

The young king had three ambitious and greedy uncles.

They stirred up opposition to him. He rid himself of the most turbulent, the Duke of Gloucester, by assassination. Many nobles were slain or exiled, and England bowed her head in terror. Henry of Lancaster, a descendant of a third son of Edward III, and then in exile, organized a vast conspiracy. Richard was deserted by all and deposed by Parliament "for having violated the laws and privileges of the nation." So, thus early, England through her Parliament had already succeeded in forming a people and in resuming the ancient idea of national rights superior to dynastic rights. The next year Richard was assassinated in prison.

Henry IV. Battle of Agincourt (1415). **Treaty of Troyes** (1420). — Henry IV devoted his reign of fourteen years to settling the crown securely in his house. On his death-bed he advised his son to recommence the war against France, so as to occupy the turbulent barons. In 1415 Henry V renewed at Agincourt the laurels of Crécy and Poitiers. This defeat, again due to the rashness of the nobility, overturned the Armagnac government. The Burgundians reentered Paris, which they again deluged with blood. After the English archers and men-at-arms had safely placed their booty on the other side of the Strait, they returned to the quarry, pillaging Normandy systematically and capturing its cities one after the other. In 1419 Rouen fell into their hands. The assassination of John the Fearless at the bridge of Montereau also served their interests. This murder, authorized by the dauphin, threw the new duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, into the English party. Henry V, once master of Paris and of the person of Charles VI, caused himself by the treaty of Troyes to be acknowledged as heir to the king, the daughter of whom he married. This lady was to avenge France by transmitting to the son whom she bore to Henry V the imbecility of his French grandfather.

Charles VII and Joan of Arc. — Henry and Charles both died in 1422. They were succeeded by two kings in France, the English infant Henry VI at Paris, and the Valois Charles VII south of the Loire.

The little court of the latter, whom the English derisively called king of Bourges, cared only for pleasure and gayety. The constable of Richemont sought in vain to rouse the king from his unworthy occupations. Meanwhile petty defeats chased his armies from Burgundy and Normandy. Bedford, the English regent, managed affairs skilfully and

in 1428 laid siege to Orleans the key of the south. The disgraceful battle of the Herrings completed the discouragement of the French party, and Charles VII was contemplating retreat to the extreme south when Joan of Arc made her appearance.

This peasant girl, born at Domrémy on the frontier of Lorraine, presented herself at court, claiming that it was her mission to deliver Orleans and crown the king. Her virtues, her enthusiasm and her conviction inspired confidence. The most valiant captains threw themselves into Orleans, following in her train. Ten days later the English after several defeats evacuated their camp. Next she won the battle of Patay, where the English commander Talbot was captured, and conducted the king to Reims, where he was crowned. Believing her wonderful mission accomplished, she wished to return home but was dissuaded. In May, 1430, while defending Compiègne, she fell into the hands of the Burgundians, who sold their prisoner to the English for 10,000 francs. Tried and condemned for witchcraft, she was burned alive at Rouen on May 30, 1431.

Success and Reforms of Charles VII. — This crime marked the close of English good fortune. Affected by French reverses, the Duke of Burgundy remembered that he was a Frenchman and abandoned the English. His defection was profitable for himself, as he obtained several cities and counties, as well as exemption from all homage. Thus he became king in fact in his fiefs. In the following year Paris opened her gates to Charles VII. Transformed by his many misfortunes and ably supported by the Chancellor Juvenal, the silversmith Jacques Cœur, the artilleryman Bureau, and the soldiers Dunois, Lahire and Xaintrailles, he triumphed everywhere. In 1444 the English, through the influence of the Cardinal of Winchester who headed the peace party, concluded a truce of two years with France, and sealed it by the marriage of Henry VI with Margaret of Anjou. At the same time Charles VII put down a rebellion of the nobles, who were alarmed at the progress of his authority, and had the Bastard of Bourbon tied up in a sack and thrown into the water. By the creation of a permanent army, he dealt a death-blow at feudal power. This army comprised fifteen companies of 100 lances each and of free archers. The States of Orleans suggested the idea and voted a perpetual tax of 10,200,000 francs for the pur-

pose. In consequence of this strictly national force, Charles was no longer dependent on the mercenaries and highwaymen who devastated, rather than defended, France.

Soon he found himself strong enough to finish with the English. By the battle of Formigny (1450) he drove them from Normandy, and by that of Castillon (1453) from Guyenne. They retained only Calais. So ended the Hundred Years' War, which had heaped so many calamities upon France. It had strengthened public liberty in England and enforced the dependence upon Parliament of victorious kings who needed money and men for their expeditions. While it continued, the two peoples advanced farther in the different paths which we have seen them enter. Amid the ruins of France royalty was finding absolute power. Despite their triumphs of Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt, the English kings learned submission to Parliament and the law.

Engraved by Colton, Oleman & Co., N. Y.