

accepted the Christian faith, rebuilt the burned churches and monasteries, and adopted the French tongue and the feudal system.

In time their province became the most civilized and the most prosperous portion of France. The name of Northmen, once a terror, was softened to Norman, and the district they held called Normandy. The pirate Rollo became the founder of a long line of chiefs, or rulers, who took the title of Dukes of Normandy, and one of whom, as we shall see, six generations later, not content with his French possessions, crossed the Channel and added England to them by conquest.

39. Summary. — Feudalism reconstructed society on the only basis then possible. It was a bridge from barbarism to monarchy. The invasion of the Northmen, though seemingly a calamity, was really a benefit. They brought fresh, vigorous life. Their courage and their energy gave the country a new and needed impulse in progress and in civilization.

SECTION VI

When the last day of the tenth century and the first of the eleventh were past, it was like a general regeneration . . . and the work was begun of rendering the Christian world worthy of the future. — GUIZOT.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF HUGH CAPET TO THE CONQUEST OF ENGLAND (987-1066) — THE BEGINNING OF THE TRUE FRENCH MONARCHY — THE END OF THE WORLD — WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

HUGH CAPET, 987-996.

HENRY I, 1031-1060.

ROBERT THE PIOUS, 996-1031.

PHILIP I, 1060-1108.

40. Hugh Capet begins the Line of French Kings. — Peace had been made with the Northmen, but now another serious question came up. Should the feeble descendants of Charlemagne be allowed to continue to rule by virtue of their descent, or should the feudal lords of France choose one of their own number as sovereign?

This contest for supremacy was well represented by the feeling that then prevailed between the rival cities of Laon¹ and Paris. Laon, in the northeast of France, was the capital of the Carolingian kings, and was much more German than French. Charles the Simple and his successors made this city their principal residence. They refused to speak any language but German, and would not identify themselves with the French further than necessity compelled. In case of any difficulty with

¹ Laon (lä-ôn).

the feudal lords they would cross the boundary, which was not far off, and seek the protection of the German emperor.

After nearly a century of strife between the barons, or lords, and the Carolingian family the former triumphed, and in 987 they chose Hugh Capet,¹ Count of Paris, king. Though Hugh was of Saxon descent, he was thoroughly French in his ideas and sympathies. In him, therefore, it may be truly said that "France has at last a French king." Furthermore, his election by the great nobles of the north made him more nearly a national sovereign than any of his predecessors, who had in most cases inherited the crown.

His accession is an important epoch: on the one hand, it marks the end of the Frankish rulers, — both Merovingian and Carolingian, — whose power was founded on conquest; on the other, the beginning of the proper history of France. From Hugh Capet descended every sovereign — the Napoleons only excepted — that has since ruled the country. It has been truly said that "the Capetians created France."

41. The New King has Little Real Power. — But we must not be misled by a title. To be king in that age meant nothing more than to be the nominal head of a few great lords who considered themselves practically the equals of royalty. A glance at the map² will show that the royal domain was then a small territory having Paris as its capital. The whole of it was less than a twentieth of the France of to-day.

It is true that the important dukedom of Burgundy on the east and of Normandy on the west, with some lesser feudal districts, acknowledged their allegiance to Hugh.³ But that

¹ Capet (*kā'pēt* or *kā-pā'*): properly a nickname, meaning either the Cowled (from the abbot's cowl which Hugh wore as lay abbot of the three chief abbeys of France), or the Big-headed, the Stubborn. Surnames had not then come into use, and nearly every one was designated by what we should now call a nickname.

² See Map No. X, page 122.

³ Hugh's brother was Duke of Burgundy, and his brother-in-law was Duke of Normandy.

acknowledgment seldom meant much. The king had no national army and no national revenue. He, like the other feudal lords, was dependent on his retainers. Outside the dukedom of France where he reigned he could not raise a soldier or a dollar save as the neighboring barons chose to help him. In fact, of the two, the Duke of Normandy might be held to be the more powerful, for by his control of the lower Seine he might, in case of a quarrel with the king, cut off a large part of the supplies of Paris.

South of the Loire, on the other hand, the barons hardly deigned to recognize the existence of the new king, much less to obey him, so that his actual power was small.¹ Yet out of that slender beginning the modern kingdom of France was eventually to arise.

An incident which occurred a few years after the king's coronation illustrates the turbulent spirit of the times. The monarch had occasion to require the assistance of the Count of Périgord,² one of his vassals. The count, however, flatly refused to render it. In his rage Hugh cried out to the refractory noble, "Who made you count?" to which the latter, not at all abashed, retorted, "Who made you king?" In truth, Hugh's short reign was a constant struggle for supremacy.

A Carolingian claimant to the crown had intrenched himself in Laon, and formed alliances with the cities of Soissons and Reims. In most cases the only way in which Hugh could secure the efficient aid of his barons was by granting them some gift of land which he could ill spare. In 996 he died and left the crown, without opposition, to his son, Robert the Pious. Thus the French feudal monarchy was established on that hereditary basis on which it was to rest until the great

¹ By reference to map No. X, on page 122, it will be seen that the whole country then consisted of nine chief dukedoms and counties, of which three (Aquitaine, or Guienne, Toulouse, and Gascony), in all about half of the whole territory, were south of the Loire.

² Périgord (*pā-re-gor'*).

Revolution of the eighteenth century swept away its foundations forever.

42. Unrest of the Mediæval Period; the End of the World.¹
—One of the marked features of mediæval French history was the feeling of insecurity which generally prevailed. It was a time of anarchy, violence, and brute force. It was especially a hard time for the poor. The great curse of European feudalism was the almost constant strife which baron waged with baron. This kept a large part of society in a state of turmoil bordering on civil war; for every feudal lord spent much of his time in one of two things: he was fighting to get possession of some other lord's estate, or he was fighting to hold possession of his own.

Added to this prolific source of unrest and anxiety there was the suffering springing from the frequent recurrence of famine and pestilence,—the result of ravaged fields, interrupted labor, and unsanitary conditions of life.

Such a state of things bred an apprehension of impending calamity and ruin. This feeling naturally gave stronger emphasis to the common belief that the end of the world was at hand,—a belief which was not confined to any particular period, but which had been preached and prophesied for many generations. Such a conviction might indeed be a source of joyful hope to a few, but it inspired the great majority with dread and sometimes with terror. So deeply was this feeling rooted in the thought of that age, that for several centuries charters of gifts of real estate commonly began with the phrase, "In view of the approaching end of the world."

The Church directly or indirectly encouraged this belief. Thus we find that the Council of Trosly, held in the year 999, reminded the bishops that "we shall soon behold the majestic and terrible day when every shepherd, with his flock, shall appear before the Supreme Shepherd."

¹ Rewritten in great part; see references on pages 61, 62.

In accordance with certain interpretations of Scripture,¹ many appear to have supposed that the year 1000 would usher in the second coming of Christ and the final judgment,—a feeling vividly expressed in the hymn of the "Dies Iræ," written at a later date.²

Day of wrath, that day of burning,
All shall melt, to ashes turning.

When the Judge shall come in splendor,
Strict to mark and just to render.

According to the older historians, that dread of the impending destruction of all things deepened the ascetic life. Moved by that impulse, often the rich and the powerful made large gifts to the Church or went on pilgrimages to distant shrines or entered monasteries to make atonement for their sins.

These historians tell us that as the fated time approached men not only ceased to erect buildings, but allowed those which stood to fall into ruin. Not only did buying and selling cease in great measure, but in some sections the farmers hardly tilled the earth.

Finally, we are told that as the year 999 drew to a close, multitudes gathered in the churches and the churchyards in order to spend their last hours on earth in holy places. There, amid prayer and supplication, fasting and scourging, they waited in terror for the breaking of that awful dawn when the archangel's trumpet should summon both the quick and the dead to answer for the deeds done in the body.³

¹ Based on Revelation xx. 7.

² This celebrated hymn, though written two centuries later, may nevertheless be considered as reflecting the feeling which prevailed not only at the close of the tenth century, but throughout the Middle Ages, especially during the first five hundred and fifty years following the fall of Rome.

³ See Duruy's *History of the World* (Grosvenor), page 224; Duruy's *Middle Ages* (E. H. and M. D. Whitney), page 224; Martin's *Histoire de France Populaire*, I, 140; Michelet's *France* (Kelly), I, Bk. 4; Michaud's *Histoire des Croisades*, I, 46.

But the recent researches of a number of historical students have greatly modified this gloomy picture. They deny that evidence can be found of any general panic on the eve of the millennial year, or even that the apprehension of the coming end of the world had at that time any widespread effect.¹ Perhaps the truth in regard to this matter has been stated most satisfactorily by Professor Emerton of Harvard in his recent work on mediæval Europe. He believes that the approach of the year 1000, falling in, as it did, with ideas already deeply rooted, "produced certain effects much more striking than the mere turn of the century would have brought."² But none the less he fails to find that France experienced that agony of fear which so many historians have depicted.

43. The New Life; Architecture; Intellectual Activity; the Troubadours; Progress of the Masses. — Yet the world had indeed come to an end, — not the material world, but the old barbaric order of things. That had finished its course, and a higher age was beginning. There would still be violence, bloodshed, suffering, and death; but there would also be what there had not been before, — faith, hope, and progress. From that period a different spirit seemed gradually to animate society, lifting, lightening, changing it as the housewife's leaven changes the mass of inert dough into wholesome bread.

Especially was this spirit seen in architecture. Before this, men had not dared build for permanence except where security made permanence a necessity. Now began to arise those magnificent cathedrals and noble abbeys which cover France with their imperishable forms of grandeur and beauty. First came the rounded Norman arch with the square massive tower;

¹ See Professor George L. Burr, "The Year 1000," in the *American Historical Review*, April, 1901; Professor George B. Adams, in a note in the *New Englander*, May, 1888, p. 369; and in general, Roy's *L'An Mille*, a work that goes over the whole ground.

² See Emerton's *Mediæval Europe*, page 567, and compare page 150.

then, step by step, the pointed Gothic arch, with tapering spire, the embodiment of aspiration and devotion in sculptured stone. This movement was not confined to France. "It seemed," says an old writer, "as if the whole world had shaken off its ancient rags, in order to clothe the earth with a white robe of churches."

This revival of activity showed itself in many ways. In the course of the next two centuries more than eleven hundred monasteries were built. These institutions fostered a new intellectual life. A certain proportion of the monks devoted themselves to study and to the writing of books. Learning and literature owe no small debt to the work done in the cloisters.¹

At this time appeared the troubadours.² They originated in the south of France. Many of them were of noble birth. They may be said to have created French lyric poetry. These minstrels went from castle to castle singing of love and war. Every feudal court welcomed them, and everywhere they made life put on brighter colors than it wore before. So, too, we find that the new spirit reached even the peasants. They rose from their half-torpid condition and demanded privileges and rights hitherto unasked.

Thus all things bore witness that the world was inspired with renewed hope and renewed energy. This marvelous change was not simply the reaction from the old fear that all things were drifting to speedy destruction. On the contrary, to a large degree it sprang from causes which had long been silently at work. It would often be as difficult to trace those causes as it is to detect the subtle influence of the springtime which, when all is ready, suddenly bursts forth into newness of life.

44. Institution of Chivalry. — This new spirit manifested itself also in the change which now began in the conduct of military affairs. Up to this period wars had been utterly brutal

¹ See Roy's *L'An Mille*, Chaps. IX-XI.

² See Justin H. Smith's "The Troubadours."

and savage. It was not an uncommon thing for a victorious baron when he stormed a castle, to cut off the hands or tear out the eyes of such of the unfortunate prisoners who fell into his hands as had particularly exasperated him by their resistance or whose future resentment he had especial reason to dread.

But now the sentiment of honor and of religion gave birth to that institution of chivalry which reached its highest development about a century later. Chivalry may be defined as the consecration of arms to a noble, though partial, ideal of life. The knight made himself the champion of the Church and of all women of gentle birth. His motto was, "Nobility of rank demands nobility of character." He bound himself to redress wrong, to hold fast to the truth, to meet danger fearlessly, to show mercy to the vanquished, to treat all of his own class with magnanimity and courtesy.

Thus knighthood or chivalry, whatever its imperfections, became, as Guizot says, "the most splendid fact of the Middle Ages." So that we may say that the highest type of the Christian gentleman to-day is simply chivalry in its full and perfect development, no longer restricted to class or rank.

To reach this honor of knighthood a long course of training was required. The youth who aspired to it must be of good family. When a boy, he entered the service of some baron or warrior of renown, following him on his expeditions and bearing his shield or spear. He diligently practiced all athletic and manly exercises, learning to ride, to use the weapons of his calling, and to inure himself to exposure and fatigue. In the society of the ladies of the castle he learned to be polite, deferential, courteous, and helpful.

When he reached manhood he prepared himself for receiving knighthood. Clad in robes whose colors symbolized purity and devotion, he spent an allotted time in fasting and prayer; next, after confession and absolution, and having partaken of the sacrament, his sword was blessed, and he was instructed by the

priest in the duties of a true knight. Then having put on his armor and taken the vow of chivalry,¹ he knelt in the presence of his friends before some prince or warrior of renown, who, striking him lightly on the shoulder with the flat of his sword, said, "In the name of God, St. Michael, and St. George,² I make thee knight; be valiant, bold, and loyal."³

This, like every other ideal, was but partially attained; but it was at least an effort to rise above the ruffianism, cruelty, and violence of the age. As Duruy declares: "It gave the man of that age a new example to follow; if in the religious life he looked up to his patron saint, in civil and political life he now looked up to the knight. Both aided him at a time when he needed aid most."

We may say, therefore, that whatever were the failures and defects of chivalry, however much it ultimately degenerated, yet the world was made better by its existence.

45. The Terrible Famines of the Eleventh Century. — But though this upward movement had begun, terrible calamities were still in store. We must remember that agriculture was then but very imperfectly understood, that roads hardly existed, that all means of transportation were both difficult and dangerous. To-day a great famine, save under very exceptional circumstances, is almost impossible in any civilized quarter of the world, since if the crops fail in one section, food can be readily and rapidly brought by steam from another; but eight centuries ago, if blight and drought destroyed the grain over any large extent of territory, no relief could be had, and famine was inevitable.

¹ This included purity, valor, compassion, the defense of the Church, and loyalty to the king.

² St. Michael: prince of the celestial armies and vanquisher of evil; St. George: a Christian hero of the fourth century.

³ A knight who failed to keep his vows was degraded: his arms were taken from him, and he was publicly expelled from the order as one henceforth "dead to honor." After its decline chivalry fell into many extravagances, and became both silly and corrupt; but for centuries it did good work.

This happened in France between 1027 and 1033. So terrible was the dearth that multitudes perished. Men ate grass, roots, chalk, clay, — anything, in fact, to satisfy the cravings of hunger. Later, when the distress increased, they fell upon each other. To add to the horror of the time, the heaps of unburied dead bred pestilence, and wild beasts, coming out of the forests, attacked the defenseless inhabitants of the towns. War ceased, and men solemnly bound themselves to peace.

46. The Truce of God. — After the famine was over, the private warfare of baron with baron, which was at once the chief occupation and the curse of the period, again broke out. But now the Church interfered, and, though it could not put an entire stop to the practice, yet it checked it in some measure by the establishment of the Truce of God, which forbade fighting from Wednesday evening to Monday morning of every week, and also during such solemn seasons as Lent and Advent.

So earnest were the clergy in this good work, that though by what was called the Right of Sanctuary they protected the oppressed, the weak, and even the criminal who fled from violence or punishment and took refuge within the consecrated walls of the church, yet they refused this privilege to those who intentionally broke the Truce of God. The ordinance, it is true, was not — in fact could not be — uniformly enforced, but it was a step in the right direction; it secured a measure of quiet and safety to the afflicted country, especially to the poor, and thus it fostered agriculture and the arts of peace at a time when they were most sorely needed.

47. William, Duke of Normandy, conquers England. — But though the Truce of God served to check in some degree those private feuds and quarrels of baron with baron, which were of the nature of civil war, yet it in nowise prevented ambitious men from seeking glory and profit by foreign conquest.

In 1066 William, Duke of Normandy, a descendant of Rollo the Northman, finding his province too small to satisfy him, resolved to cross the Channel and attack England. Though he had no legal claim whatever to the crown of that country, he easily found a pretext for one. The English king, Edward the Confessor, was second cousin to William, and before he came to the crown had spent many years at the duke's palace in Normandy.

By education as well as by birth on his mother's side, Edward was Norman, and all his tastes and sympathies were Norman also. He surrounded himself with Norman favorites in both Church and State, and during a visit of William at his court, it was said that he promised the duke that he should succeed him. On his death, however, his brother-in-law, Harold, the son of Earl Godwin, a thorough Englishman in all respects, was chosen king by the national council.

Some years before that event Harold was wrecked on the French coast, and fell into William's power. The wily duke is said to have taken advantage of the situation by getting Harold, by stratagem, to swear on a chest of holy relics, either that he would marry his daughter, and make her queen of England in case he obtained the crown, or else that he would relinquish the throne to the duke. When, at Edward the Confessor's death, Harold was chosen king, he refused to carry out his agreement, — whatever it may have been, — and William resolved to invade his kingdom and take it from him.

The pope, who was desirous of enforcing his authority more completely in England, and also of obtaining a larger revenue from that country, favored the expedition, and sent William a consecrated banner to be borne in it.

On September 27, 1066, the duke, with his archers and cavalry, crossed the Channel and landed under the walls of Pevensey, not far from Hastings.¹ As he stepped ashore, his

¹ See Map No. VII, page 79.

foot slipped, and he fell on his face. "A bad sign! a bad sign!" said the terrified warriors, as they hastened to help him up. But William, who cared little for omens, whether good or bad, grasped both hands full of English earth, crying out, "Thus do I seize the land!"

On the 14th of October a great battle was fought at Senlac,¹ a place between Pevensey and Hastings. Harold was defeated and left dead on the field, and the English army was cut to pieces. William then marched to London, which, unable to make any adequate resistance, opened its gates to him, and on the following Christmas day he was crowned king of England in Westminster Abbey.

48. Results of the Conquest in England. — The effect of this conquest was advantageous rather than disastrous to England. William proved himself an able though stern ruler. He dispossessed thousands of Englishmen of their estates, and gave them to his Norman followers. He likewise put foreigners in all the high offices of the Church; yet he thereby introduced a higher civilization and better government. Feudalism had already become established in considerable degree in England, and it threatened to produce there the same results that it had in France; that is, to divide the country among a number of powerful and rapacious nobles, always at war with one another.

William had not only seen these evils in his own land, but had in fact helped to increase them not a little by his own refractory conduct toward the French king. He was determined that in England the central and royal power should not be at the mercy of the barons; he accordingly took a census of the country,² and then, calling a great meeting of the chief landholders and their vassals (1086), he compelled them all,

¹ After the contest the place was named Battle. Here William built Battle Abbey to commemorate the victory.

² Domesday Book: see The Leading Facts of English History in this series.

from the highest to the lowest, to swear allegiance to him, and to him only, as supreme ruler.¹

Further than this, William made but few changes. He left the great body of English laws, customs, and institutions as he found them. The English language, though modified to some extent by the introduction of French words, still remained the tongue of the chief part of the population, and eventually it became the language of legislation, literature, and society. In France the great barons stood apart from each other; but in England, surrounded as they were by a hostile people, they were obliged to act and consult together. In the end this habit helped powerfully toward establishing a national council or parliament, — an institution that France lacked, chiefly from the want of unity among its great men.

For a number of generations the Norman kings and nobles continued to cling to their possessions on the continent and to regard Normandy as their real home; but constant quarrels and wars with the French sovereign, growing out of their feudal relations to him followed by the loss of their French territory, finally alienated them. Little by little, victors and vanquished united. Originally branches of the same northern race, there was nothing fundamental to separate them, and their situation practically made their interests one.

Normans and English ultimately joined forces to subjugate France on the one hand, and to secure the welfare and constitutional progress of England on the other. Thus, in the end English influence triumphed over the French in Britain, and the conquerors were themselves conquered.

49. Results of the English Conquest in France. — The effect on France was for a long time disastrous. The unwillingness of William and his successors, now sovereigns in their own

¹ It will be remembered that the weak point in French feudalism was that the followers of the great barons swore allegiance to them in all cases; so that if the barons revolted against the crown, their followers fought with them and for them.

right, to continue to do homage to the king of France, who was jealous of their power, kept Normandy in a state of almost chronic insurrection. But in the course of time this very struggle developed the power of the French ruler, and thus enabled him to maintain a greater degree of order and peace throughout his dominions. Finally, the removal of the Norman power from Normandy to England lightened the pressure on the people and led to the attempts of Le Mans and other towns to free themselves from feudal exactions. At first their efforts were unavailing, but at last, as we shall see later on, they succeeded in gaining the liberty they sought.

50. Summary. — The most important characteristics of this period are the beginning of the true French monarchy under Hugh Capet, followed by the conviction that the world would soon come to an end, and then by the commencement of a new period of life. This was illustrated in architecture, in intellectual activity, in the rise of the troubadours, and in the demand of the masses for recognition of their rights. It was seen, too, in the Truce of God, and in the institution of chivalry. William the Norman's conquest of England brought France into close relation with that country, and had a powerful influence on the future career of both kingdoms.

SECTION VII

The Crusades had their origin in France . . . they were the first European event. — GUIZOT.

THE CRUSADES — RISE OF THE FREE CITIES — WAR WITH ENGLAND, CONQUEST OF NORMANDY — THE ALBIGENSES — BATTLE OF BOUVINES — ST. LOUIS AND THE LAST CRUSADE. 1095—1270

PHILIP I, 1060—1108.

LOUIS VI, 1108—1137.

LOUIS VII, 1137—1180.

PHILIP II (AUGUSTUS), 1180—1223.

LOUIS VIII, 1223—1226.

LOUIS IX (ST. LOUIS), 1226—1270.

51. Events leading to the Crusades; Pilgrimages to Jerusalem. — The conquest which William, Duke of Normandy, had effected in the West in 1066, was followed a little less than thirty years later by an undertaking of equal magnitude in the East. This also originated in France. At first it was an attempt to recover the holy places of Palestine from the Mohammedans; afterwards to establish French principalities in Syria. The enterprise grew out of the pilgrimages made to the sepulcher of Christ in Jerusalem.

In a rude age such pious journeys served an important purpose. At a time when few could read, they familiarized multitudes with the places closely connected with sacred history, and thus helped to keep alive that spirit of religion and reverence which barbarism and violence threatened to utterly destroy.

The widespread belief in the coming end of the world naturally stimulated these pilgrimages to the East. Many