

in the northwest of France. Here, it is said, cannon were first used in battle. Gunpowder had, it is true, long been known to such chemical experimenters as the English monk, Roger Bacon of Oxford, but only as a means of idle amusement. Now its terrible power was to be turned by man against the life of his fellow-man.

The rude artillery made use of by the English consisted, however, of only three or four ridiculously small cannon, which were employed chiefly to frighten Philip's cavalry. According to Villani, an Italian historian of that day, the English artillery made the earth tremble, and the report was so terrible to the ears of those who heard powder speak for the first time, that the enemy thought that "God thundered." He adds that the horses were thrown into great confusion, and that many of their riders were killed.<sup>1</sup>

The battle was gained, not by the cannon, but by the stalwart English archers. The French king had hired a force of fifteen thousand Genoese crossbowmen to aid him in the war, and these were ordered to advance. But they were exhausted by a long march of eighteen miles. Besides this, a thunderstorm had drenched them to the skin, and so wet the strings of their heavy steel crossbows that they were slack and practically useless.<sup>2</sup> The English archers, who had been resting all day, and whose bowstrings had been kept dry, had also the advantage of position. The setting sun was behind them, while its blinding rays shone directly in the eyes of the enemy as they reluctantly moved forward against them.

To support the dispirited Genoese, Philip had a splendid body of horsemen in full armor, who "formed a great hedge

<sup>1</sup> Froissart, the French historian, makes no mention of the use of cannon; but Martin (*Histoire de France*) and several other excellent authorities accept Villani's account. For the opposite view, see Kitchin's *France*.

<sup>2</sup> The bowstrings were made of sinews, and therefore, when wet, would stretch so as to be almost useless. The crossbows were cumbersome affairs and had to be bent by winding a crank, whereby so much time was lost that the English, with their light, long bows, bent by hand, could fire five shots to one of the enemy's.

behind them." Edward, on the contrary, though he did not undervalue his cavalry, depended mainly on his foot soldiers, who were yeomen armed with long, light bows of tough yew-tree wood. Though outnumbered by more than three to one, the English were confident of the result. The Genoese set up a great shout to frighten them. Their reply was a volley of well-aimed shafts. Then the battle began in good earnest, and the white arrows of Edward's men flew so thick and fast that it seemed to those who saw them like a furious snowstorm.

That fatal snowstorm decided the day; for neither man nor horse could withstand those steel-barbed bolts. Edward's young son, the Black Prince,<sup>1</sup> did such deeds of valor that his name became from that time a terror to the enemy; and when the sun went down, though Philip and his knights had fought like brave men, yet France had to mourn the most terrible defeat she had ever experienced. Could she have learned the lesson of that bloody field, and clearly seen that she lost it because she lacked the yeoman class,—the men who owned the little farms they tilled, and who, bow in hand, felt no fear and begged no favor,—she might perhaps have been spared some greater humiliations still in store for her.

**78. Siege of Calais; the Brave Six.**—Edward, however, instead of advancing on Paris, next laid siege to Calais,<sup>2</sup> the chief port on the Channel, which, if taken, would always be an open door to France. He took the place after nearly a year's siege, having fairly starved the people into surrender. Exasperated at the length of the siege, Edward demanded that six of the chief citizens should bring him the keys of the city and then submit to his will.

St. Pierre,<sup>3</sup> the richest man in Calais, offered to be the first of the six. Five others then volunteered. With halters

<sup>1</sup> So called by the French, it is said, on account of the color of his armor.

<sup>2</sup> Calais (kāl'is or käl-jä'): see Map No. XI, page 236.

<sup>3</sup> St. Pierre (sän pe-êr'): see the full account in Froissart's *Chronicles*.

round their necks, to show that their lives were at the king's mercy, they entered the English camp and gave up the keys. Edward ordered them to instant death; but Queen Philippa, who had just come to him, fell on her knees and begged so piteously with tears and prayers that they might be spared, that the king relented, and the brave six were set free.

The English now took possession of the town, garrisoned it, and held it as a constant menace to the power of France for over two hundred years. The breaking out of a frightful pestilence known as the Black Death put a stop to the war, and so terrible was the mortality that all Europe was busy for the next two years in burying its dead.

**79. Battle of Poitiers; "Jacques Bonhomme"; Étienne Marcel.** — Seven years later (1356) the Black Prince was engaged in pillaging the provinces adjoining Guienne. He was attacked by the force of John the Good, Philip's successor, at Poitiers,<sup>1</sup> in the west of France, south of the Loire, and gained a victory which ranks even before that of Crécy. Here again the English bowmen decided the contest.

The Black Prince, seeing that King John had over forty thousand cavalry — the flower and pride of France — to his little army of eight thousand, determined to intrench himself with care. He accordingly stationed his men on a hill surrounded with hedges. The only approach was up a steep lane so narrow that "four horsemen could barely ride abreast." One half of his archers he stationed at the head of this lane, and the other half back of the hedges on each side of it.

Forward came the French with the oriflamme, or sacred banner, fluttering in front of the king surrounded by his knights. Up that hill they charged. But few, if any, reached the top, for the fatal snowstorm of white arrows from the strong arms of English archers soon choked the narrow passage "with men and horses struggling in the agonies of death." Then the English,

<sup>1</sup> Poitiers; see Map No. XI, page 236.

abandoning their protected position, met the enemy on the plain. There the battle raged hand to hand, until in the end King John, finding his bodyguard cut to pieces and his glittering squadrons dispersed or dead, was forced to surrender.

He had vowed before the battle that he would wipe out the shame of Crécy; but as one French historian says, "he had doubled it." Yes, if failure doubled it; but no, if heroism could redeem it, for "those that were there," says Froissart, "behaved themselves so loyally, that their descendants to this day are honored for their sake."

So complete was the victory gained by the Black Prince, that the English found they had twice as many prisoners as they had soldiers. King John and many of the nobility were carried to England, to be held captive there for heavy ransoms.

The defeat at Poitiers filled the French peasants with disgust and discontent. They lost faith in the bravery and the ability of the nobles. An odious tax on salt had been decreed to make them bear the expenses of the war. In addition, they were now expected to pay enormous ransoms to liberate the captive nobles. Jacques Bonhomme,<sup>1</sup> as the French peasant was contemptuously called, was patient and long-suffering, but he could bear no more. He had in fact borne too much.

A rude caricature of that day tells his whole history in seven typical figures. The first is the king, who says, "I levy taxes." Next comes the nobleman, with "I have a free estate." Then the priest, who says, "I take tithes." Then the merchant, with the motto, "I live by my profits." Then the hired soldier, declaring with an oath, "I pay for nothing." Then the beggar, saying, "I have nothing." Last of all, at the bottom of the scale, comes the peasant, saying, "God help me; for I have to support king, nobleman, priest, merchant, soldier, and beggar."

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Bonhomme (zhäk bon-om'): Jacques (James) is the commonest Christian name among the French peasants. "Jacques Bonhomme" — "Jimmy Goodfellow" — was used to insultingly designate the whole laboring class.

So meditating, poor Jacques, with his comrades, now rose in a terrible but futile insurrection, called the Jacquerie,<sup>1</sup> and the provinces of the north and west of France were filled with destruction and carnage.

Étienne<sup>2</sup> Marcel, head of the city government of Paris, took the side of the people. He endeavored to reorganize the States-General<sup>3</sup> so that the taxpayers of France should have their full rightful influence in that body. Nearly a hundred years before, Simon de Montfort had effected the beginning of such a reform in the constitution of the English Parliament; but Marcel failed in his great undertaking, and died by the hand of an assassin.

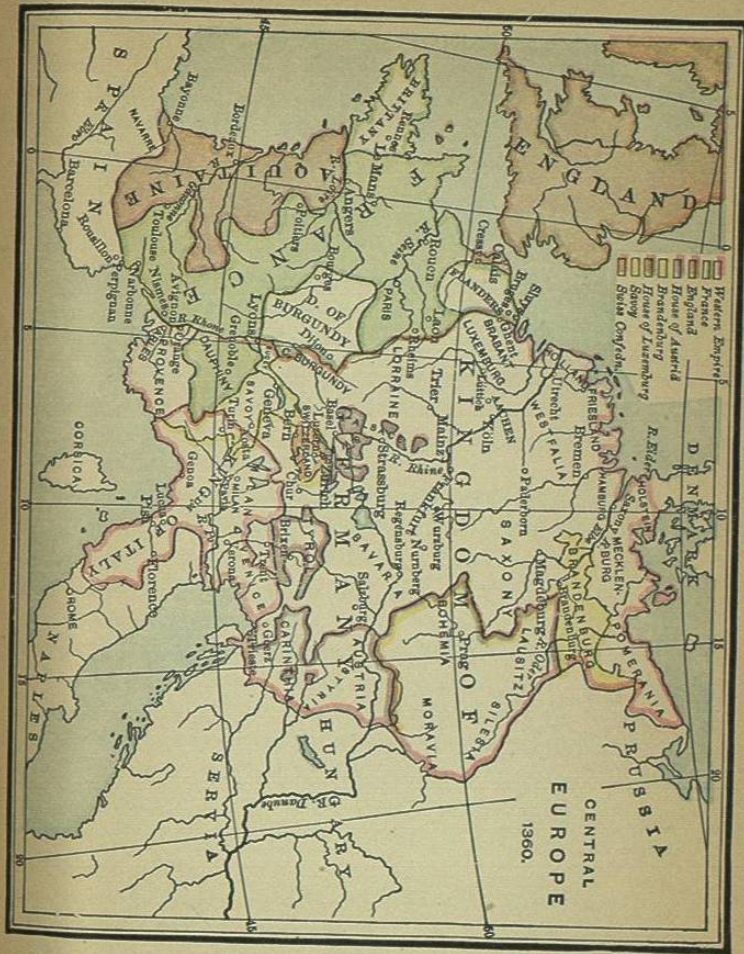
**80. Effect of Gunpowder on War; Treaty of Bretigny.** —

We do not learn that artillery or firearms of any kind were used at Poitiers; but we may be sure that the cannon which had made themselves heard at Crécy<sup>4</sup> would not long remain silent. Gunpowder had a mission in the world, and it was sure to fulfill it. So long as the bow, the sword, and the spear were the chief weapons of war, the feudal aristocracy had an immense advantage. Intrenched in their massive stone castles, they could securely defy attack; mounted on trained horses and covered with heavy armor, they could ride down multitudes of peasants without fear of successful resistance: but now a change had begun.

Gunpowder was to prove itself the great leveler and equalizer. It fought on the side of the people. When the day came that it could be effectively handled on the battlefield, then the haughty steel-clad warrior knew that his occupation was gone. No castle could hope to withstand artillery. No breastplate was proof against the bullet. Gunpowder made the commonest foot soldier the peer in battle of the proudest lord. It was long in coming into use; but when at last, a

<sup>1</sup> Jacquerie (zhäk-rê').  
<sup>2</sup> Étienne (ä-ty-ën').

<sup>3</sup> See Paragraph 71.  
<sup>4</sup> See Paragraph 77.



hundred years or more after Crécy, its power was fully recognized, the coats of mail and emblazoned shields had to be laid aside as useless encumbrances. Hung up as trophies in church and castle, these rust-eaten relics of brave men still remain to testify to that chivalry which, with all its faults, once did the world good service.

In 1360 Edward III accepted propositions for a treaty of peace. At a conference at Brétigny<sup>1</sup> the necessary articles were drawn up. Edward consented to give up his preposterous claim to the French crown<sup>2</sup> on condition that he should be confirmed in his possession of Aquitaine,<sup>3</sup> Calais, and Ponthieu,<sup>4</sup> a province south of it. The important concession was also made that in future Edward was to hold these in his own right as an independent king, and not, as before, as the vassal of the king of France.

It was furthermore stipulated by Edward that the French people should pay three millions of crowns (nearly fifty million dollars, according to the present value of money) as a ransom for the return of King John, then a prisoner in London. The whole of this enormous sum was to be raised by a tax on the peasantry; for, as the nobles said, "the workingman has a broad back; let him bear all the burdens."

**81. Renewal of the War; Miserable State of France.** —

The peace, however, was not of very long duration, and meantime the country was overrun with bands of desperate brigands who plundered and murdered at will, so that the wretched peasants often abandoned their houses and hid themselves in caves and bogs.

King John died in London, and was followed by Charles V. He, with the help of Du Guesclin,<sup>5</sup> "the most famous French

<sup>1</sup> Brétigny (brâ-tên-yé'): near Chartres.

<sup>2</sup> Though the English kings, down to George III, still retained the empty title of King of France.

<sup>3</sup> Aquitaine (or Guienne): see Map No. VIII, page 108.

<sup>4</sup> Ponthieu (pôn-têh-uh').

<sup>5</sup> Du Guesclin (dü gâ-klân').

warrior of that age," succeeded in driving the English out of every part of France except a few towns on the coast. In 1380 he died, and unfortunately for the country, his successor, Charles VI, was a boy of twelve.

The government now fell into the hands of Charles's three uncles, one of whom, Philip, Duke of Burgundy, soon became the most powerful noble in France. He and his successors, who were princes of royal blood, were practically independent kings in their own dominions, and at times they were actually the equals, if not, indeed, the superiors, of the French sovereigns.

Feudalism, once the salvation of France,<sup>1</sup> had now become its scourge. The rapacity and mismanagement of the uncles created insurrection and bloodshed. Charles went mad through a sudden fright. Henceforth the realm was torn by furious factions of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs,<sup>2</sup> both greedy for power. The former represented the party of the king's uncles; the latter, the friends of the queen, whose reputed lover, the Duke of Orléans,<sup>3</sup> had just been murdered by one of the Burgundians. The two parties now involved the country in a general civil war.

**82. Henry V invades France; Battle of Agincourt (1415); Treaty of Troyes (1420).**—As the struggle grew more and more desperate, each side was ready to make almost any sacrifice to crush the other. Both begged the assistance of Henry V of England. The Burgundians, a northern party, were willing to pledge him the crown if he would destroy their enemies, the Armagnacs. On the other hand, the Armagnacs, a southern party, offered him large portions of French territory if he would wipe the Burgundians out of existence.

Henry believed that he could make his own terms. He demanded the hand of the Princess Catharine in marriage and

<sup>1</sup> See Paragraphs 35 and 39.

<sup>2</sup> Armagnacs (är-män-yäks'): a name derived from the Count of Armagnac, father-in-law of the Duke of Orléans.

<sup>3</sup> Orléans (ör-lä-ö'n').

the territory which England had held north of the Loire. He also asserted a claim to the French crown. Such a demand was therefore about equivalent to a request for the entire kingdom of France. The dauphin,<sup>1</sup> with his supporters, the Armagnacs, was not prepared to give up everything, and the result was that Henry declared war and invaded the country. Meantime a hasty peace had been patched up between the king's party and the Burgundians, and the latter stood neutral. Having besieged and taken Harfleur,<sup>2</sup> Henry found his army so reduced by sickness that he resolved to march to Calais, and there go into winter quarters.

At Agincourt,<sup>3</sup> near the coast, between Calais and Crécy, Henry met the French, who immensely outnumbered him. But the English army was protected by a wood, and so fought to the best advantage. Henry furthermore ordered each man to drive a short stake, sharpened at both ends, firmly into the ground in front of him. This substitute for the bayonet, which had not then been invented, proved an admirable defense against the mounted troops of the enemy. As usual, nearly the whole French force was cavalry, and, as the field of battle was a piece of plowed ground soaked with rain, the horses were up to their knees in mud.

The fight began with a blinding shower of English arrows. Then throwing aside their bows, the archers rushed on the enemy with sword and battle-ax. The din of their weapons striking against the armor of the knights sounded, it is said, like blacksmiths hammering anvils. The slaughter of the French was terrible. Henry won a signal victory, and embarked for England with a long train of titled captives.

Two years later he returned and overran Normandy, besieging Rouen, the capital, which fell into his hands. Up to this

<sup>1</sup> Dauphin: the title of the heir to the throne.

<sup>2</sup> Harfleur (är-flur'): a port on the Channel, near the mouth of the Seine.

<sup>3</sup> Agincourt (ä-zhän-köör').

time the old quarrel between the Burgundians and Armagnacs had continued to rage, the queen being on the side of the first, and her son, the young dauphin, in the hands of the other party.

The loss of Rouen had such an effect that John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, now asked for an interview with the dauphin, with the view of uniting their forces against the English. A meeting was arranged; but just as John bent in homage before the dauphin, he was treacherously struck on the head by one of the dauphin's party and then stabbed. The murder was not only a crime, but a blunder. Its effect was to rouse the whole Burgundian party, including Paris, — in other words, the whole north of France, — in favor of Henry, and against the dauphin and his supporters. Thus, as was then said, "the wounds of John the Fearless were the holes that let in the English."

Shortly after, the important Treaty of Troyes (1420) was signed between Henry V on the one side and the young Duke of Burgundy, son of John the Fearless, with Queen Isabelle, on the other.

By the terms of that treaty, Queen Isabelle virtually disinherited her son Charles, the dauphin, whom she hated, and gave her daughter Catharine to Henry for a wife. Furthermore, it was agreed that on the death of the insane king the crown was to pass to Henry of England and his successors. Thus, with one stroke of the pen, France was surrendered to a foreign power, and the English king gained the French monarch's daughter and his kingdom to boot.

**83. Siege of Orléans.** — Not long after this shameful treaty was signed, Henry V died, and his son, Henry VI, was crowned king of England; and then, as the insane Charles VI was now dead, he was taken to Paris and, while yet a child, crowned king of France.

Charles VII, though seemingly a person of but little spirit, plucked up courage to refuse to sanction the act by which his

mother had given away his throne. The war of parties was now renewed with greater fierceness than ever, and the English, with their Burgundian allies, resolved to bring Charles to terms. As he had few or no friends in the north, he retreated south of the Loire, and took refuge in the city of Bourges, where he held his court. Henceforth his enemies sneeringly styled him "the King of Bourges."<sup>1</sup>

The English forces pushed on with great energy to Orléans, which commanded the entire valley of the Loire, and was therefore in a military and political point of view a place of great importance. If they succeeded in taking it, Charles would in all probability be driven to retreat to the extreme south of France, where there was little likelihood that he could long hold out.

The English armies encircled the city with forts and batteries; the cannon, hurling huge stone balls, began hammering away at the walls. The place held out bravely, and did good execution with its own guns in return; but it became evident that unless relief was obtained the city must finally fall, and so once more the golden lilies<sup>2</sup> of France would be trodden under the feet of her enemies.

**84. Joan of Arc;<sup>3</sup> the English driven out; Beginning of the Modern Kingdom of France.** — At that hour, when all seemed darkest, a simple peasant girl — Joan of Arc — came forward, declaring that God had called her to save her despairing country. She was met at first with ridicule; but, nothing daunted, she insisted on her mission. The king gave her an audience; and finally, as all other hope was gone and the people were in her favor, Joan received a horse, a suit of armor, and the privilege of leading several thousand soldiers.

<sup>1</sup> Bourges: near the center of France.

<sup>2</sup> Lilies: the lilies of the arms of France, emblazoned on the royal standard or flag.

<sup>3</sup> Joan of Arc: Jeanne Darc, or Jeanne d'Arc.

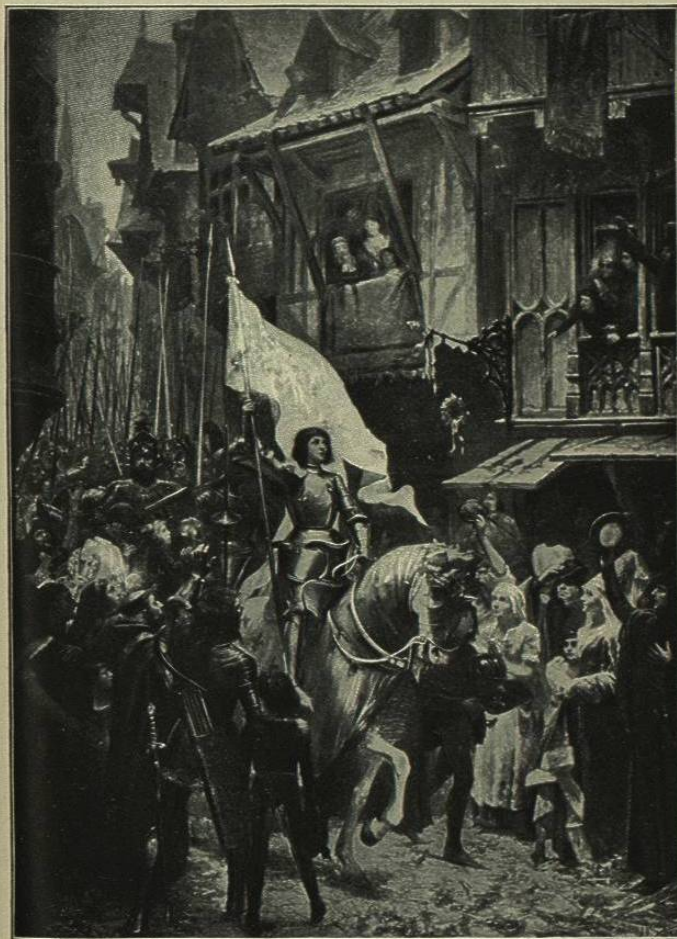
Inspired by her example, the French regained their courage. A body of troops under their new captain entered the city of Orléans. In the battles which followed, the English were forced to abandon the siege, and the royal colors soon waved triumphantly over the encircling forts so lately occupied by the insolent foe.

The coronation of Charles VII had not yet taken place; and Joan of Arc, now known as the "Maid of Orléans," insisted that he should go north to Reims, — then the Westminster Abbey of France, — and there be crowned. In spite of all opposition offered by the English forces she succeeded in her purpose, and then declared that her divine work was accomplished.

But she was in error. In order to complete her mission and thoroughly rouse the patriotism of her countrymen, it was necessary that she should suffer the fate so often reserved for heroic souls. The war was not yet over; but Charles, who, unaided by this brave girl, could never have won the crown for himself, now basely abandoned her, as he later abandoned his faithful friend, Jacques Cœur,<sup>1</sup> the merchant prince of Bourges, who lent him large sums of money to carry on the war.

Joan eventually fell into the hands of the English. They, with their Burgundian allies, charged her with witchcraft. She was imprisoned in a dungeon in a tower of the castle of Rouen. There her trial took place. All defense was useless; and in the market place of the city, on a spot now marked by a marble tablet, the Maid of Orléans suffered death by fire (1431). She was purposely placed on a high mass of plaster so that the executioner should not be able to reach her, and mercifully put an end to her sufferings by strangling her, as was usual in such cases.

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Cœur (zhāk kur): he lent Charles twenty-four million francs, and the king, as a reward for this generous loyalty, allowed his friend to be robbed and imprisoned.



JOAN OF ARC ENTERING ORLÉANS

As the flames rolled up around the martyr, she lifted her eyes to heaven, crying out, so that all might hear, that her celestial voices had not deceived her, and that she had saved her ungrateful country. Even the hardened English soldiers were touched, and one of the leaders exclaimed, "We are lost; we have burned a saint."<sup>1</sup>

It was indeed true that the English were lost; for from the ashes of the martyred girl there seemed to rise a new spirit. France, as if moved by a common impulse, now massed her whole force against the foreign foe, and in the course of the next twenty years drove them out of the land and across the sea. Aquitaine was conquered and annexed, and from this union of southern and northern Gaul the modern kingdom of France began.

Such was one great result of the Hundred Years' War. Of all that the kings of England had held or gained, nothing was left them save the district and walled city of Calais, on the British Channel, and even that slender foothold on French territory they were destined to lose a few generations later.<sup>2</sup>

**85. Results of the Hundred Years' War; Creation of a Standing Army.**— Though terribly weakened and impoverished by this century of strife, France issued from it, in some respects, stronger than before. The common peril and common suffering had tended to unite the people. Men who before the war thought only of the particular city to which they belonged, now felt that as Frenchmen they all had an interest in their native land. Thus the word France came to have a new and sacred meaning to them.

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-four years after she was burned, Pope Calixtus ordered the trial to be reconsidered. The result of an exhaustive examination was that Joan of Arc's conviction was annulled and declared to be both "wicked and unjust." See Murray's *Documentary History of Jeanne D'Arc*. To-day the market women of Rouen keep the spot in the great square where she was executed bright with wreaths of flowers and evergreens in memory of the noble Maid of Orléans who gave her life for France.

<sup>2</sup> Calais was captured by the French, 1558.



Moreover, the king, who seemed to have acquired a manhood that made up in some degree for his lack of it in the past, now established a power which compelled all parties to respect his will. This new power was a standing army, organized in great measure out of bands of mercenaries, brigands, and tramps, who during the civil wars and the struggle with England had pillaged the country.

To support this army Charles levied a permanent tax on the land of the middle classes. As the king now had a regular force of his own, he was no longer obliged to depend so entirely on the feudal lords. The result was that the latter became less and less warlike, for want of practice, and hence less and less able to resist the constantly increasing power of the crown.

**86. Summary.** — This period, embracing nearly two hundred years, was, as we have seen, productive of great events and great changes. The battle of Courtrai, the papal quarrel, and the establishment of the States-General, the suppression of the Knights Templars and the confiscation of their estates, all tended directly or indirectly to strengthen the king against the nobles or the Church.

The civil war and the Hundred Years' War reduced the royal authority for a time to its lowest ebb; but the reaction begun by Joan of Arc made France realize her nationality as never before. Finally, the triumphant close of the war and the organization of a standing army restored the power of the crown and greatly enhanced it.

The general results may be summed up as follows: France is more united; the nobles are less independent of restraint; the real strength of the country is becoming more centralized in the person of the king.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile Switzerland had appeared on the map of Europe. The western portion was formed from what once had been part of Gaul; the eastern portion was contributed by Germany.

## SECTION IX

This was a period of decay and of new birth — a time for reforming itself and setting itself in order. — GUIZOT.

With the Italian wars, the discovery of America, and the Reformation, the modern history of Europe begins. — LAVALLÉE.

LOUIS XI — CONSOLIDATION OF FRANCE — THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING — FRANCIS I — WARS FOR THE BALANCE OF POWER — FRANCE AND THE NEW WORLD — BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION. 1461–1559

LOUIS XI, 1461–1483.

LOUIS XII, 1498–1515.

CHARLES VIII, 1483–1498.

FRANCIS I, 1515–1547.

HENRY II, 1547–1559.

**87. Power of the Duke of Burgundy; League of the Public Good.** — The reign of Louis XI began with a struggle on the part of the nobles to regain the power they had lost, or were beginning to lose, during the latter part of the rule of Charles VII. Philip, Duke of Burgundy, pretended to be the friend of Louis, but in reality he was his most dangerous rival. Philip's domains not only embraced a large territory of the best land in France, but through inheritance or purchase he had come into possession of the greater part of the Netherlands, including the rich and prosperous cities of Ghent,<sup>1</sup> Bruges, Brussels, and Antwerp.

In point of splendor, wealth, and power, no prince in Europe could compare with him. Philip, with a magnificent retinue

<sup>1</sup> Ghent (gēnt).