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AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND



*From the Earliest Times
to 1204*

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AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE
History of England

*From the Earliest Times
to 1204
by*

DOUGLAS JERROLD

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DOUGLAS JERROLD

London, June, 1948.

INTRODUCTION

THERE are two reasons at any rate for writing an Introduction to English History from the earliest times to 1204. The first is that no one else has done so. The second is that there is an immense wealth of recently discovered facts and well founded deductions from them which bear closely on the remote past of our peoples and country but have not yet found their way into the common stock of knowledge. Only those, however, who are unfamiliar with the problems of historical scholarship and its applications will regard these two reasons as necessarily a justification for this book. Still less can these reasons by themselves justify my particular approach to one of the central problems of historical writing, which is the correct organisation of the material from the point of view of selection, arrangement and emphasis.

Briefly, what I have set out to do is to place within reach of the ordinary educated public, among whom I include those students who have not yet developed into specialists, the best that is known and taught about the origins and development of our peoples, our nation, our beliefs and our institutions, with such judgments and such reference to the contemporary developments in other countries or to our own past or future history as seemed to me necessary to indicate at each stage the significance of events and ideas, and of social, economic or institutional developments. I believe that history, properly undertaken, is the record not of what has happened but of what has mattered. On the other hand one of the gravest obstacles to sound thinking on the contemporary problems of our revolutionary age is the habit, so popular with those who think and write about these affairs, and of those who act in them, of basing their historical judgments on histories written to subserve the purposes of political economic or idealogical propaganda.

To say nothing of the Marxists, mountains of dust and rubble and millions of graves testify to-day to the fatal character of such one-sided historical thinking as that of Hegel and Treitsche, first popularised by Houston Stewart Chamberlain and recently exploited by Goebbels and Hitler. And if that, after all, was yesterday, what of to-day, when a third of

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the world has segregated itself from the whole of what was once called civilisation, in the belief that peoples not converted to communism cannot usefully contribute anything to human well-being. These are the grim and terrifying consequences of a false understanding of the lessons of history and of the nature of the historical process.

The desperate havoc of our times, the loss of opportunities never offered on so great a scale to so many, bears tragic and ineluctable witness to the need for deeper and clear thinking. The majestic achievements of the past afford a shining proof of our own potentialities. The chaos and misery of the present point equally clearly to the existence of conditions operating against progress. Since the study of history is nothing more nor less than the study of the conditions upon which progress among men living in societies depends, the need for a better and, above all, a more widespread knowledge of history is clear. Unfortunately too many of us prefer to study how some men, of a certain race, class or creed, have conducted themselves for a few decades and to try and prove from such selective testimony that this or that political or economic or imperial system, because it coincided with the prosperity of a few people for a short time, is manifestly the best. This is not to attack the writers of specialist monographs which derive from research of inestimable value. No useful study of the historical process could be undertaken without their aid. It is, however, necessary, if the fruits of these researches are to serve the common good, to embody their findings in works which attempt, however imperfectly, to study the historical process as a whole over a sufficient period, and throughout a sufficiently wide area, to exemplify its working. The whole conception of the historical process as guided and determined by "scientific" laws is false. Still less can we say that the course of history is determined by the constant factors in our human nature, because, although these are indeed constant, as witness the recurring need for the carrot or the stick, those who guide the course of events are *ex hypothesi* exceptional men and may well, by reason of an exceptional genius for providing carrots out of nothing or turning words into sticks, produce results entirely contrary to what we had otherwise every reason to expect.

The proper purpose of historical writing is, I believe, first and foremost, to show the extreme complexity of the historical process and its immense extension in time (so that we cannot

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say that the consequences of human folly or criminality are ever finally exhausted), and the immense opportunities which it nevertheless affords for prudent, far-sighted and ingenious men to modify the course of events, but only if they have in fact surveyed the whole field, if they know the whole story and are aware of all the risks and prepared not merely to take them but to provide against them. There is one clear and undisputable lesson of history, that there is no automatic progress. The history of the ages of progress is the history of constant effort and of hardships cheerfully or enforcedly borne in order that the future shall not be sacrificed to the present. What, however, does this mean in practice except that wise government is a paramount historical condition not merely of the greatness of peoples or institutions but of their very survival.

If, however, there is some remedy for human folly in human action on the plane of public life, we must for that reason regard with dismay the tendency of our age to subdivide history not only by reference to its subject matter into political, military, economic or—most fatally misleading of all—religious history, but also, and very narrowly, by reference to time and place. Still less can we lightly accept the view of those who, while sworn to no rival doctor, proclaim with a certain superiority that in any case no one is competent to write “total” history but only to cover a certain class of events over a long period or the totality of events in a very small area over a very short space of time. I believe that the fashionable subdivisions of the field of history, whether dictated by intellectual fashion or by the mere fear of making a mistake, reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the historical process, which is not the aggregate of a number of separate determinisms, but of the continuous interaction over long periods of time of a great number of forces all subject to human direction and control, though necessarily affected, as is everything dependent on human action, by considerations of time and place, by the beliefs, preconceptions and abilities of the principal actors and by the economic circumstances of the age. The tendency of modern historians, including perhaps the majority of our greatest scholars and most acute minds, to a narrow specialisation is indeed more than a misfortune. It is a paradoxical absurdity that in an age whose circumstances necessitate an ever more rapid extension of the area of government and call on its agents for an ever wider range of know-

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ledge, history should be so written and taught that we can only know more and more about less and less. How can those men attempt the tasks of government who know next to nothing of the history of governments and creeds, of states, churches and institutions, who have not studied the relations between mind and power, or the reactions of men living in societies to different types of government and different administrative systems?

Why then has "general" history fallen into such disrepute? In the first place almost all the well-known English historians of the past, and until our own age, were men of affairs: not a few of them, Clarendon, for instance, Gibbon and Macaulay, and in more recent times, Stubbs, Mandell Creighton, Acton, Morley and Bryce, were men of note in public life; all were members of what in their time was still a governing class. Such men came to the task of writing history with immense practical advantages, but that is less to the point than that they were naturally attracted by history in its proudest conception as a pageant of great events in which the provident decisions of politicians discharged the functions of a beneficent destiny, and the errors of kings, popes, foreigners and agitators were combated and on the whole neutralised by the genius and the courage of statesmen, soldiers and administrators! On the broad canvases of the classical historians the affairs of our good friend the common man came to be somewhat overshadowed by the good and great, or even by the merely successful, and art and letters provided the exterior ornamentation rather than an integral part of the composition of the picture as it was presented to us. But, for all their flamboyant defects, the classical historians discharged an essential function, to the extent allowed by the material at their disposal. They saw history as the history of the conduct of the affairs of human society by real men and women, working through political and social and economic institutions which they had created, or inherited and sustained, and whose operation they controlled. They realised that the historical process has an almost indefinite extension in time and that it can only be displayed in action on a very broad canvas. Modern historians, on the other hand, are drawn from every social class, but very few when they "commence historian" have any first-hand or inherited knowledge of public life or of the practice of government. Very often their background predisposes and equips them for the study of social conditions rather than of history as Gibbon

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or Macaulay understood it, and here I am bound to confess my own agreement with the remark of Seeley (although not with the conclusion he drew) that "the history of the Staffordshire potteries is *not* history." Where I differ from Seeley is in thinking, as I do, that it is an essential part of the raw material of history.

The amount of this raw material now available for study is a second important cause of the contemporary fashion for specialisation. The last seventy years have seen an immense addition to the volume of knowledge with which the writer of general history should be, but is not, familiar. Archæology and historical anthropology and, to some extent, biology have had added immensely to our knowledge of primitive and pre-historic man and have incidentally revealed to us that the two terms are in no way interchangeable. The range and extent alike of the archaic urban civilisations of the near and middle East and of the peasant civilisation of Neolithic Europe have given to our own civilisation, with its immediate classical-Judaic ancestry, a new background of immense historical significance. Simultaneously the archæologists have added largely to our knowledge of those periods within historical times, such as our own fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, for which we have no adequate contemporary written record. Again simultaneously, the work of two generations of research workers has brought to light, or at any rate brought from the muniment room to the scholar's desk, innumerable contemporary documents which have necessitated an almost complete revision of our views on the general trend of events in England from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries. When similar researches have been carried out on the same scale in respect of France, and particularly in respect of Normandy, still further revision may well be required. Finally, studies of place names and of family history have enabled the expert in these fields to offer for the consideration of historical students a number of relatively assured conclusions. Indeed, when we remember that J. H. Round was led into his historical studies by his expert interest in genealogy we can safely say that the contributions of these superficially less important studies to historical knowledge has been in one case at any rate as revolutionary as that of archæology itself.

The foregoing sentences are, of course, no more than the merest indication of the nature and range of the new knowledge, but they tell enough to explain why the ingenious, lengthy and

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largely unremunerative work entailed in the acquisition of all this knowledge should have led to a reaction against the "literary" and the "general" historian, to the assertion, first made in its extreme form by the late Professor Bury, that history is a science, not an art, and to a fairly general acceptance of the view that the real task of the historian is the discovery of new material for history rather than the study of the working of the historical process. This view would, however, not have commanded such general acceptance but for the fiscal policy of successive twentieth century administrations and the ever increasing pressure of public business, which have, in less than half a century, destroyed the leisure of the class from which the great historians of the past were almost exclusively drawn. Since there is to-day no educated class in possession of private means, it follows that the writing of history has been almost wholly left for more than a generation to professional teachers and research workers. The result has been, on the whole, what might have been expected. The standard of scholarship has risen immeasurably, there have been numerous additions to knowledge, but less effort to bring the new knowledge into the common stock and less enthusiasm and perhaps less ability to point out its implications—often extremely significant—for students of the historical process or for those engaged in public life. Further, since the patience and meticulous scholarship of the research worker in the library or the field worker in archæology are qualities by no means necessarily allied to political intuition and literary skill, there has been an increasingly rapid divergence between those historical works which are pre-eminently reliable and those which are pre-eminently useful to those called on to play a part in public affairs.

J. B. Bury's contemporary at Oxford, York Powell, went out of his way in his brief and cursory inaugural lecture to say that "style and the needs of the popular audience have no more to do with history than with law or astronomy." We have to ask ourselves seriously how far this is true. If by popular audiences we mean audiences seeking relaxation or amusement, and by style the arts of the public literary entertainer, we must agree wholeheartedly with York Powell's view. But we cannot leave the argument at that point. It is part of the essential function of the historian to bring before his generation the lessons of contemporary scholarship, not in order to entertain them or to gratify their palate by ingenious literary exercises,

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but in order to give them the information and guidance necessary to the wise conduct of contemporary affairs. It is wholly wrong that this essential task should be left to the amateur, the *précis* writer, the mere expert in what the French so aptly call "vulgarisation." It is pre-eminently a task which those who have some part to play in public life have every right to expect the professional historians to fulfil. It is a task which requires all their learning and some literary skill. To define at once accurately, vividly, exactly and briefly the impact of ideas on men and of men on events, is extremely difficult. To demonstrate the full working of the historical process through the influence of events themselves both on other events and on the men who act in them, over a long period of time and in many fields, is not a science but an art. History is the record of what has mattered, and of what, for that reason and for no other, still matters to ourselves. For the immense falsifications of history which confuse the contemporary mind there is no remedy in a "scientific" ascertainment of "facts" because it is not the facts we seek but their meaning for ourselves. That meaning will continue to elude us without the help of a mind capable of relating one event to another in a significant order, a significance not imposed on the facts but arising out of their inter-relation as revealed by a creative imagination. Otherwise history is a mere literary exercise, an arbitrary selection and arrangement of events to form an inconsequential pattern. Any one who imagines that such a book as H. A. L. Fisher's *History of Europe* is anything less than history is very greatly mistaken. Fisher's *Europe* contains no line of original research, but it is the work of a master of the craft of history, who knew the purpose for which history had to be taught and learnt, which is to enable men of good will to dominate events. Far be it from me to suggest that this great book is the only one of its kind, or necessarily the best, which the historians of the Georgian times have produced. G. M. Trevelyan's *England in the Reign of Queen Anne* is at hand to provide an instant contradiction to such an assertion. There are many others, including most certainly one without which this book could hardly have been written. I refer, of course, to F. M. Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England*. But these two great books are hardly for the general reader, or even for the non-specialist student, and we must have books written for such people if democracy is not to end in disaster. We cannot leave the politicians and the publicists at the mercy

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of the charlatans, of the propagandists, or, worst of all, of the public entertainers.

It may be argued, as far as the history of our country is concerned, that the new Oxford History is planned to resolve the dilemma. Professor Stenton's volume, at any rate, is at once an outstanding contribution to scholarship and a notable addition to literature. Nevertheless that great series, when completed, will consist of not less than fourteen volumes, all rigidly confined to the English field. They will be indispensable to the serious student, but fourteen volumes are altogether too much for the general reader, who is the man of affairs of to-day, or for the student of to-day, who is the man of affairs of to-morrow.

The point would always have been important. It is particularly so to-day when history is largely displacing the classics as the ordinary foundation of such liberal education as is still available, and when almost all come alike to their studies and, later, to public life, without that knowledge of the classics and of Christian history and belief which teachers of history, even in late Victorian times, could take for granted.

For these reasons I decided more than ten years ago to begin this book, although it is the fruit of reading which goes back at least another quarter of a century. And for this reason I decided, contrary to some very good advice, to use a broad canvas and to summarise, particularly in the early chapters, such background knowledge of prehistory, of the classical civilisation and of the origins and early history of Christianity as seemed necessary to a serious understanding of the history of any country which belongs to the Christian civilisation of the West. Now that this volume is at last completed I am satisfied that my original plan was the right one, although I am naturally far less than satisfied with its execution. I am not disposed, however, in this matter, to plead, in mitigation of sentence, my lack of qualifications for the task. The writer of a work which begins with prehistoric man and goes down to the loss of Normandy in 1204, cannot base, and should not be asked to pretend that he has based, his judgments on a first-hand knowledge of all the sources. It is his business to ensure, as far as is possible, that nothing is stated as fact for which there is no adequate evidence and to know what that evidence is, but a superficial study of complex documents by a non-specialist would have served no useful purpose, and would moreover show a most improper lack of respect and apprecia-

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tion for the work which has been done on the documents, and on the archæological data, by highly qualified scholars. Only when there is a confessed disagreement among scholars is it proper to summarise the evidence as far as is necessary for the reader to form his own judgment. In normal cases, where there is no conflict of evidence, but only the question of the right interpretation and dating of documents or archæological finds, and where the consensus of scholarly opinion is agreed on the matter, it is the duty of the general historian to accept the findings and to see that his conclusions accord with them. It is a matter more of art than of obligation for him so to organise his material that the bearing of new knowledge, of which we may expect plenty affecting the period covered by the volume, shall be as far as possible easily seen when it comes to light. This I have tried to do.

An impeccable standard of accuracy is, of course, the ideal at which every writer of history must aim, but it is wrong to look to the general historian for all the facts or to expect him to contribute to the arguments of specialists where the facts are in dispute. As has been recently and wisely said of *The History of Europe*, the real question in general history is whether the writer's judgment is sound on the facts as known. And to the matter of soundness there are two sides. He must not only judge wisely but he must address his mind to the right questions, to what is historically significant. For the writer of general history is first and foremost a teacher in the art of discerning the essential question in a controversy, the essential point in a programme of reform, the essentially important consequence of a policy, a creed, or an institution. These are not matters for scientific measurement; history is not the record of experiments which can ever be exactly repeated. What is measurable is, for the main purpose of history, precisely what is inessential, because it belongs only to one moment of time and is something which can never happen again. Of the four leading questions, what happened, how and when did it happen, why did it happen and what consequences ensued, the second is almost always the least important.

If this book is not what I had hoped it could be, the fault lies, I am sure, wholly with me, with a possible saving clause in respect of the very brief section dealing with European pre-history, where hypothesis succeeds hypothesis with a speed which even to a student of politics is frankly bewildering. That, however, is no doubt due to the nature of the evidence

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on which prehistorical theorising is forced to rely. For the rest, the material is available to hand, the evidence is wholly sufficient to enable judgments to be made, and the need to assemble and summarise what is now known of the origins and antecedents of our people and of their history up to the time when they first became predominantly an extra-continental kingdom under one government is in my submission incontestable. I shall be more than satisfied if the shortcomings of this work should lead someone younger and wiser to attempt the same task and to improve on my achievement. Failing that, I hope that the criticisms which I must expect will enable me to make a second edition of this work, should such be called for, more nearly adequate to its aim and purpose.

Chapter One

ORIGINS AND FOUNDATIONS

HISTORIANS can accept no dogmatic judgment as to the origin of our planet or of the living species who inhabit it. The standards of evidence which history requires are exact. History can be written only when we can say with certainty that men with such and such characteristics lived under certain conditions and behaved in a certain way. This knowledge is not in itself history, but it is its indispensable foundation; it is the least that historians must know before they set about their business of determining, as far as human wisdom allows, the causes and effects of human action and of passing judgment on human conduct and intelligence in so far as they have affected the fortunes of societies.

For this reason we used to say that history began only when and where we had direct knowledge of man's achievement, and that this could be provided only by a contemporary written record. We do not get any written record at all until the third millennium before the birth of Christ, and no written records relating to Britain until Greco-Roman times.

There is, nevertheless, a vast stretch of time between the first appearance of man and that comparatively recent date when man began to write his own record. That stretch of time is to-day distinguished from the countless ages which preceded it by the circumstantial evidence which the progress of geology and archæology has provided for the existence of men of different physical types with different habits. These relatively modern sciences have enabled the learned and ingenious men whom we call prehistorians to reconstruct, sometimes in considerable detail, some part of the story of man and his environment in prehistoric times. These additions to our knowledge are important because they tell us something of man's nature and potentialities, even although what they tell us is largely negative.

As students of history we are much less concerned with those earliest geological epochs, of quite uncertain but immense duration, which saw our planet transformed from gaseous

matter into the kind of world which men could inhabit. It is enough to be sure of a few facts.

Firstly, according to the best scientific teaching, our world had a beginning, and for that reason it will have an end. We belong to a finite universe.

Secondly, above the underlying crystalline system which formed the earth's first crust are five strata of rocks, in the earliest of which, the Azoic rocks, geologists find no trace of living matter. The second stratum, the Protozoic rocks, contains traces of inert plant life. The next stratum, the Palæozoic contains fossils of water-borne crawling animals, the fourth, the Mesozoic, yields traces of reptile life, and the fifth, the Cainozoic, yields traces of all contemporary species including man.¹

Thirdly, we know nothing of the cause and little of the nature of the cosmic convulsions which led to the formation of these successive strata of rocks. It is sufficient to note that the geological record gives up to the close of the Mesozoic period a picture of our planet very slowly becoming, over very many millions of years, more tolerant of life, until, after the last great cataclysm which deposited the Cainozoic rocks, the earth could support animal, plant and forest life as we know it to-day.

Geologists are agreed neither as to the age of the earth nor as to the date of the formation of the Cainozoic rocks. What is most generally believed is that half at least and perhaps an even higher proportion of the whole of geological time had passed before even the lowest form of life appeared on the earth, and that considerably more than nine-tenths of geological time had passed before the earth could support all modern forms of life. It is characteristic of the present state of our knowledge that as we approach modern times the inferences as to dates derived from the geological record become increasingly reliable and we touch at any rate the fringe of history when we say that there are traces of man's handiwork in eastern England in geological strata formed perhaps a million years ago, perhaps in pre-Pleistocene times,² and that there are actual

¹ See Appendix I for diagrams illustrating the sequence and relative duration of the geological eras.

² Geologists divide the Cainozoic epoch into six periods:—the Eocene (dawn of recent life): the Oligocene (a few but distinct traces of modern species: the Miocene (more modern species but still a minority): the Pliocene (more fossils of living than of extinct species): the Pleistocene (the period of the great Ice Ages, which ended only *c.* 12,000 years ago): and the Holocene or recent period, in which we live. See Appendix I.

remains, also in eastern England as well as elsewhere, of men who lived perhaps in Pliocene times but certainly half a million years ago.

We know the conditions of life during the early periods of the Cainozoic epoch chiefly from the fossil remains. From the very first, the climate and scenery were not unlike our own. Plant names that figure in the list of fossils include birch, beech and holly; grass was becoming common and palms also. In the forest and following the grass over the Eocene plains appeared for the first time a variety and abundance of mammals.

The land which is now Great Britain had through all pre-historic time a chequered geological history. Great Britain is to-day, and has been throughout all historical times, divided into a highland and a lowland zone. The dividing line runs from the Pennines through the Peak district and across the Midland gap to the Berwines in Merionethshire and the Shropshire and Malvern hills, thence across the Severn valley and the Avon to the Mendips, the Quantocks, Exmoor and Dartmoor. When life first began in Palæozoic times, the western and northern highlands formed an island, the whole of the lowland zone being submerged. The convulsions which ended this period threw up a vast land mass stretching across what is now the Atlantic Ocean very nearly to the eastern coast of north America, with a southern boundary running roughly across the line of the present sea-route from Liverpool to New York. The highland zone of Great Britain formed the south-eastern extremity of this continent. Beneath the waters which at that immeasurably distant time beat against our shores, lay not only all the lowland zone of England but almost all of Europe and the near East.

As a result of the convulsions which ushered in the Cainozoic epoch, the position was substantially reversed, and by the time prehistory begins, England was united not only with France but with Scandinavia, and separated from Ireland by the Irish Channel and from the North American continent by the Atlantic Ocean. England was not again an island until after 6000 B.C. and the English Channel and the North Sea did not attain their present depth or extent until about 1500 B.C.—a date still belonging to British prehistory, but which falls well within historical times as far as world history is concerned.

These relatively new and well-assured conclusions as to the geological history of the British Isles present us to-day with a

picture very different from that which faced the writers even of late Victorian times, but the knowledge which has been simultaneously acquired as to the age of man himself has necessarily had a far more revolutionary effect on historical thought.

At the beginning of the last century the human race was generally, albeit quite unscientifically, regarded as being only a few thousand years old, and it necessarily followed from this belief that man had shown himself from his first beginnings capable of rapid and almost continuous progress. The great preclassical and pre-Judæan civilisations were then still undiscovered. The only "dark ages" known were those which had followed the break-up of the Roman Empire, and, from that catastrophe, society had recovered only to attain new heights of civilisation. As the belief in orthodox Christian doctrine had generally weakened under the attack of the eighteenth century philosophers and their successors, it was hardly surprising in the existing state of historical knowledge that the belief in the natural goodness and wisdom of man, and in the consequential doctrine of progress as a natural feature of human society should have captured many of the best minds of the age.

This optimistic belief, partly based as it was on two errors as to the age of man himself and as to the past history of civilisation, was nevertheless not immediately affected by the great Victorian discoveries firstly of human remains perhaps more than 75,000 years old and certainly to be dated before the last ice age, and secondly of the remains of great civilisations of immense antiquity in Mesopotamia, Crete and the Cyclades, some of which had wholly perished even before the beginning of historical times. This optimism as to human nature was due in part to the character of the age; the nineteenth century was an age of material progress unexampled either in its extent or in its speed. It was perhaps to a greater extent due to the hold which the Darwinian theory of evolution exercised over nearly all the greatest scientific minds of the time. If man, or at any rate a close cousin to man, had emerged before the onset of the last ice age, he was clearly in process of evolution from some ape-like ancestor belonging to the early Pleistocene or perhaps Pliocene times. It was not without relevance to their speculations that until quite recently the oldest human remains were believed to be those of Java sub-man with a cranial capacity of only 940 cc. as compared with

the average modern European capacity of 1450 cc. and the lowest average for any living race¹ of 1266 cc.

To-day we are faced with a picture wholly different from that which confronted even the late Victorian student. There is very strong though not uncontested evidence for the existence of man in late Pliocene times. There is uncontested evidence in the form of human remains dating from the early Pleistocene period for the existence of man at least half a million years ago. Furthermore, these earliest human remains have a brain capacity actually higher than that of some living races, and although not regarded as the direct ancestors of modern man are regarded as belonging to the human family, as sharing, that is, a common ancestry with ourselves.

The bearing of these astonishing discoveries on the classical theory of man's evolution from some ape-like ancestor does not concern the historian as such. It is of fundamental importance, however, to know, as we can claim to do to-day, that man as a maker and user of tools, man possessed of those particular human faculties which distinguish him from the beasts, has been on the earth certainly for more than half a million and most probably for more than a million years.

The evidence for Pliocene man is still disputed. It rests on the discovery by Mr. J. Reid Moir of a variety of flint implements in the detritus bed at the base of the Suffolk crag and in the stone bed at the base of the Norfolk crag. These implements are now accepted as the work of man, and hence the men who made them have been called pre-Crag men. Although the date of these implements is in dispute, they certainly ante-date the first ice age (*c.* 500,000 B.C.) and are more probably to be dated to late Pliocene times. In all later geological strata equally clear evidence has been found of man's handiwork in the form of flint tools shaped by hand. Of man himself, the famous Piltdown skull, so called because it was discovered at Piltdown in Sussex by Charles Dawson, is generally believed to be the earliest direct evidence, although human remains more recently discovered in China and in Central Africa may prove to be older. Both Piltdown man and Pekin man have been dated by some geologists to Pliocene times, although opinion now favours a somewhat later date. What is certain is that both discoveries prove the existence in very early Pleistocene times at the latest of men "already well within the type and range of modern man." Having regard to the fact that no

¹ The Papuans of New Guinea.

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other remains more definitely "modern" in type have been discovered which can be dated earlier than *c.* 75,000 B.C., the relatively high development of Piltdown and Pekin man, even if we date their remains to early Pleistocene times, provides almost conclusive evidence for the existence of the ancestors of *Homo Sapiens* in late Pliocene times, and so, if it does not finally confirm, at least strongly supports the conclusions drawn from the earlier dating of Mr. Reid Moir's discoveries.

Before Pleistocene times, the great age of mountain building had passed. Geologists tell us that it was in Miocene times that the chain of mountain ranges, from the Himalayas to the Alps, which forms, as it were, the backbone of Europe and Asia, was thrown up, presumably as a result of volcanic eruptions. If the geologists are right, the physical world of late Pliocene and early Pleistocene times was, within rather wide limits, the world as we know it to-day. The climate in the northern latitudes was, however, warmer and dryer than we know it and the vegetation was more luxurious: the elephant and the rhinoceros as well as the horse and the ox roamed the English countryside and palm trees flourished. Nevertheless it was an epoch of sharpening climatic contrasts. The great mountain ranges, the deep valleys and the high table lands which had emerged by the beginning of Pliocene times brought with them sharp differences in climate, temperature and vegetation, and probably it was the gradual replacement of forest by open country, as the result of the decrease in temperature north of the trans-continental mountain chain, that first gave the opportunity to man to assert some measure of superiority over the animal world. Certainly we know pre-Crag man as a tool maker and tool user:

The flint tools discovered by Mr. Reid Moir are of two main varieties, the one made by chipping off portions of a stone so as to shape it into a tool, the other made by striking flakes off the stone in such a way that the flakes formed useful tools. There are those who would argue from this fact the presence of two races of men in East Anglia perhaps a million years ago. Some would go even further and say that these two races persisted side by side throughout Europe until the dawn of historical times, since for many hundreds of thousands of years we can trace these two types of flint instrument in course of evolution. This may well be the case. There are strong if not actually coercive reasons for supposing that prehistoric men of the same tribe or group fashioned all their tools in the same

THE GREAT ICE AGES

way. What is equally interesting to the historian is the relative stagnation of prehistoric man, whether he was practising the core or the flake industry, over a period of certainly half a million years and possibly much more.

Mr. Reid Moir's discoveries show us man as a tool maker and user at the threshold of the Pleistocene period, in the relative paradise of a fertile and sunny world. A sudden change in climate brought this world to an end. We enter at the beginning of the Pleistocene period on the great Ice Ages, the last of which is so recent that the retreat of the ice to its present limits only ended on the threshold of historical times. These Ice Ages created new conditions and forced man to adapt himself to them. The changes in climate, vegetation and animal life forced on the emergent races new techniques and new weapons and enforced the habit of migration. If Toynbee¹ be right in saying that progress in human societies is found only when a challenge from outside is offered and requires a response, then the climatic conditions of the Pleistocene period, providing as they did a constant challenge to the earliest races or men, must be regarded as all important. The Ice Ages have a secondary and accidental importance to students of history. The moraines deposited by the glaciers, the alternation of deposit and erosion along river channels due to alternations of glacial and warmer inter-glacial conditions, and changes in the land level relative to the sea "caused by the alternation of depression under ice load and recovery under thaw"² have provided geologists with data for measuring with some exactitude the duration of the different glacial and inter-glacial periods. The peculiarities of the geological record over the last million years thus provide us with a relative chronology for the immense accumulations of primitive tools and weapons and for the occasional finds of human remains. Finally, it is now generally accepted that the Ice Ages were caused by periodical decreases in solar radiation; it is not impossible that, as our knowledge of the laws which govern the variations in solar radiation increases, we may be able to arrive at an absolute chronology for the whole period since the emergence of man. Recent researches indicate that science may be approaching a more accurate knowledge of these variations as they affect the earth, and when this time comes we should be

¹ *A Study of History*, by J. Toynbee, Vol. 1. Oxford University Press, 1934.

² *Prehistoric Foundations of Europe*, by C. F. C. Hawkes, page 8. (Methuen, 1940.)

able to fit the archæological record of man's prehistory into a known framework of natural chronology.

Meanwhile, the story we have to tell can be regarded as accurate at least within far narrower limits than those we have hitherto had to allow.

First Ice
Age,
c. 500,000.

The core and flaked tools which prove the existence of pre-Crag man were found *beneath* the Shelly Crag of Suffolk and the Weybourn Crag of Norfolk. These are sea floors laid down under the conditions of Arctic cold which accompanied the first of the great Ice Ages of Europe. It is now believed that there were at least three lesser glaciations in Europe before this one, but whether this be so or no, pre-Crag man lived on from a sub-tropical climate through conditions of arctic cold into the first inter-glacial period of Pleistocene times. The first great glaciation lasted for some 50,000 years and at its conclusion we find, in geological strata *above* the crag (and notably at Cromer in Norfolk), more core and flake tools, and animal remains which include elephant, rhinoceros and hippopotamus.

First
inter-
glacial
period,
c. 450,000
to
c. 400,000.

Similar finds at Abbeville-sur-Somme and in S.W. Germany tell us of a return to sub-tropical conditions over a wide area and of the survival of both flake and core industries on the continent as well as in East Anglia. Abbeville is regarded now as the type-site for the west European hand-axe core culture of the first inter-glacial period, while the contemporary flake industry at Mauer in south-west Germany is associated with Heidelberg man. Heidelberg man does not, like Piltdown man, belong to the family of *homo sapiens*, but is now regarded as a possible ancestor of the so-called Neanderthal men who inhabited Europe before the last Ice Age.¹ This race did not survive, but it is suggested that their ancestors may have been responsible for the development of the flake cultures through all their stages until these cultures (and the corresponding core cultures) of the early and middle "palæolithic," or old stone, ages, give place to what are called the Upper Palæolithic cultures, introduced by the first modern men not more than 75,000 years ago. Traces of the flake cultures are found as far west as England and as far east as India and China. They are generally regarded as originating in Asia. On the same hypothesis, the core or hand-axe cultures are to be associated with the ancestors, direct or collateral, of modern man (*homo*

¹ The Gibraltar skull, found in 1848, was the first recorded remains of Neanderthal man. See Keith's *Antiquity of Man* (chapters 7 and 8).

CORE AND FLAKE CULTURES

sapiens). These cultures, which were distributed over Africa, Spain, France, the Rhineland, the Low Countries and Great Britain, almost certainly reached Europe from Africa, but are believed to have originated, like the flake cultures, in Asia.¹

The attribution to different races of the core and flake cultures, and still more their attribution to *homo sapiens* on the one hand and to the ancestors of Neanderthal man on the other, is extremely hazardous. It is, in plain English, a guess, although it may be a good guess. What is certain and significant is that Britain is shown from the very dawn of history as the meeting place and recipient of cultures reaching Europe by the two main routes along which all early cultures passed: the continental route from south-east Asia along the Danube valley or up the Vistula, and the western route from Asia through Africa (later, through the Mediterranean) and across the land bridge joining Africa and Spain (later, by sea across the straits of Gibraltar) to Ireland, Brittany and southern England.

The first inter-glacial period ended c. 400,000 B.C. when the onset of the second ice age drove the hand-axe people of Abbeville with the warmer-climate animals south to Africa, where the hand-axe finds are uninterrupted. At the close of this second Ice Age we find the hand-axe culture returning in a more developed form. Axes were still made largely by the stone striking method, but whereas the Abbevillian axes had a jagged edge, the new axes have a straighter edge due to trimming, and, later, to the use of a softer striking material, probably bone or a bar of wood. With the hand-axe people we find again warm-climate animals, elephant, rhinoceros and hippopotamus, as well as the ox, the horse and the deer. But the return to a sub-tropical climate must have been very slow. Steppe conditions gave place only very gradually, over thousands of years, to park conditions. As they did so, the great hordes of gregarious mammals came north again and man, their hunter, followed them.

Second
Ice Age,
c. 400,000
to
c. 250,000.

The flake cultures also reappeared in a slightly more advanced form after the second Ice Age.

The new core culture is called Acheulian after the type site of St. Acheul on the Somme; the new flake culture takes its name from Clacton in Essex. This culture is either a renewal

¹ The belief that the earliest European cultures originated in Asia rests on the fact that where remains of hand-axe cultures can be identified both in Europe and Asia, the Asiatic specimens are always the more primitive.

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or a continuation of the Cromer flake industry. The Acheulian industry is, however, also represented in England, at any rate in its middle stage, and in association with the only skull so far discovered (the Swanscombe skull) which dates from this second inter-glacial period.¹

Second
inter-
glacial
period,
c. 250,000
to
c. 150,000.

“Swanscombe” man is the second inhabitant of our island to achieve a place in history, the owner of the Piltdown skull being the first. Like Piltdown man, Swanscombe man belongs to the family of *homo sapiens*. We must, however, resist any temptation to describe their habits or to paint their portraits. We are in the presence of a mystery. We find men of our family, though not, it is believed, our direct ancestors, possessed of sufficient intelligence to shape rough but effective tools and sufficiently master of their environment to survive many millennia of changing climate, many millennia of intense Arctic conditions, and the long slow processes which, after each ice age, brought back the grasslands, the forest and the great mammals. The archæological record tells us that the same tool-using men were to be found all over Europe, to the south in Africa and to the east in Asia as far as India and China, and that across those vast distances there was either intercommunication or migration. The same curiously shaped hand axes which we find above the Norfolk crag are found in France, in Spain, in Africa and in India. Some of them, wrote Sir John Evans, the father of British archæology, “are so identical in form and character that they might have been manufactured by the same hands.” Further, there is evidence of two broadly differentiated cultures, evidence of two distinct races of men (Piltdown and Swanscombe man on the one hand and Heidelberg man on the other) and a reasonable probability that these two races met in north-west Europe and exchanged or adapted each other’s technique. And yet, when the long history of the Palæolithic industries (for we cannot yet call it the history of man) is continued after the third Ice Age we find only the faintest advance in core and flake industries alike. The so-called Levallois flake culture, named from a site on the outskirts of Paris, which dates from after the third Ice Age, shows a new method of striking off flakes. The hand axes of the (contemporary) late Acheulian core culture discovered at Hoxne in Suffolk are a little finer and more finished than those

Third Ice
Age,
c. 150,000
B.C. to
c. 100,000
B.C.

¹ The Swanscombe skull was found in gravel deposits between Dartford and Gravesend, associated with remains of the *Elephas antiquus*, which preceded the mammoth and enjoyed a mild climate. (Journal Royal Anthropological LXVIII, 17.)

NEANDERTHAL MAN

of pre-Crag man half a million years before. The third and latest of the cultures of the third inter-glacial period, the Mousterian, is named from the caves of Le Moustier in southern France. It is apparently not an independently derived culture but the result of a fusion of the Levallois flake technique and the Acheulian hand-axe technique, as witness hand axes of Acheulian character made by the Levallois flaking technique. This Mousterian "complex" of industries is associated with Neanderthal man, the descendant, so it is now believed, of that sub-man of whom the first trace was the Heidelberg jaw. In the case of the other industries of the period preceding the fourth and last Ice Age, we have no associated remains of man, but Neanderthal man, with his heavy brows, receding forehead and shambling, slouching gait, is represented by very many remains, including those found at Neanderthal itself (near Düsseldorf), at Gibraltar, at Le Moustier in southern France (including one skeleton), in Belgium, in Italy, in Palestine and in Jersey. Neanderthal man is, indeed, the first man of whom we have any widespread traces. His remains are always in association with Mousterian industries. What little had been learnt of tool-making during the preceding half-million years he seems to have known and practised. He did not, however, long survive the onset of the last Ice Ages,¹ but he left Europe inhabited, it is now believed, by the descendants of Swanscombe man, by representatives, that is, of the family of *homo sapiens*. Yet of such men no remains have been found belonging to this third inter-glacial period.

Fourth Ice
Age,
c. 75,000.

To the historian, it is a profoundly unsatisfactory story. It would be simpler if we could revert to the view, held not so many years ago, that Neanderthal man was the only type of man in Europe up to the time that he became extinct, and that modern man came to Europe for the first time in the waning of the last Ice Age, to inhabit a continent then uninhabited, or inhabited only by the scattered representatives of a dying race. Unfortunately the prehistorians have shown us that this simple view is untenable. It is true that sometime after the onset of the last Ice Age, modern man in his various forms—long-headed, round-headed and broad-headed—suddenly ap-

¹ What used to be compendiously described as the fourth (or Würm) Ice Age is now known to fall into three divisions, known to prehistorians as Würm I, II and III. Between the peak of Würm I to the peak of Würm II the latest astronomical calculations (of solar radiation) indicate an interval of 45,000 years. The second Würm glaciation (lasting perhaps to 20,000 B.C.) did not extend to Southern Europe and the last did not extend south of Pomerania. It was during the inter-glacial period between Würm I and II that the "first modern men" from Asia arrived in Europe.

pears. It is not, however, true that he is modern in any cultural sense when he appears. There is evidence of a new technique of so-called blade instruments (designed to serve the purpose of knives and chisels, thus indicating a definite if small advance in the application of means to ends), but these tools were found at Châtelperron in association with Mousterian implements. There is, in fact, clear evidence that, despite the extinction of Neanderthal man, there was no cultural break between Europe before and Europe after the onset of the last ice age. What seems most probable is that the representatives of *homo sapiens*, who, unlike Neanderthal man, must have survived the last ice age, mixed with some of the new immigrants and that the Châtelperron culture was the result of this fusion of races.

Aurignacian
Culture,
c. 50,000
B.C.

The main culture of this period is called Aurignacian, from the discoveries in the caves of Aurignac and Crô-Magnon in southern France. The Crô-Magnon discoveries, made in 1868, have also given his name to Crô-Magnon man, who was at that time believed to be the earliest type of *homo sapiens*. Crô-Magnon man was tall, long-skulled, rugged and broad-faced, and he came to Europe in all probability from the uplands of what is now Persia. His characteristic stone implements, of the knife and chisel pattern, but including also some bone tools, have been found in Asia Minor, in the Crimea, Bulgaria, Roumania, Hungary and Austria as well as in France, and his Asiatic origin is inferred from the fact that the most westerly finds are the most finished. Another race of "modern men" came a little later from Asia across the Russian steppes into Austria and Moravia. Skeletons of men of this race, long-skulled but narrow-faced and much slighter than Crô-Magnon man have been found in Predmost in Moravia and at Combe Capelle in southern France, and their characteristic tool is the Gravette knife blade, named after Gravette in Perigord, and for this reason their culture is known as the Gravettian. We have thus a series of three blade cultures, all named from their type sites in southern France, Châtelperron, Aurignac and Gravette, all associated with races of modern men who came, probably in three successive waves, into Europe from Asia after the onset of the last ice age. But if each of these cultures must be associated with a fresh immigration into Europe, the Châtelperronian is also clearly related to the earlier Mousterian culture, and "Combe-Capelle" man, the most "modern" of all the representatives of *homo sapiens* dating from this time, is

also found associated with tools of the Châtelperronian type.

One other distinct culture of this period has been identified under the name of the Solutrean. It takes its name from Solutrè in central France but it originated about the same time as the Eastern Gravettian, or perhaps a little later, in the mountain caves of northern Hungary, and may possibly be indigenous to Europe and descended from the Acheulian cultures. The typical Solutrean tool is "a roughly made almond-shaped affair trimmed on both faces like a small hand-axe." This culture in its westernised form—it spread from Hungary not only into France whence its name is derived, but into Italy and Spain as well—developed a finer standard of craftsmanship in flint than any earlier or contemporary culture. Its finest implement is the so-called laurel leaf, and there is some reason for thinking that the originators of this very distinctive tool were broad-headed, as opposed to the long-headed Aurignacians and Gravettians.

We do not know the dates of the different immigrations, nor at all accurately the intervals which separate them, but we shall probably not be far wrong if we say that *Circa* 30,000 B.C.—at the beginning of the inter-glacial period between the Würm I and Würm II glaciations—groups of hunters using the tools characteristic of the Châtelperronian, the Aurignacian, the Gravettian and the Solutrean cultures, were scattered throughout Europe, and that, in addition to the descendants of the pre-Ice Age representatives of *homo sapiens*, Crô-Magnon man, Predmost man, Combe Capelle man and Solutrean man were each to be found living in distinctive but almost certainly friendly communities, borrowing from each other their different arts and crafts. From the fusion of stocks and the reaction of cultures upon each other, new cultures are found highly developed in the inter-glacial period following on the second Würm glaciation. Most notable among these are the Hamburg culture derived probably from the East-Gravettian culture of Central Europe and the still more famous Magdalenian culture of Southern France, in which we find the highest and last development of the Palæolithic Age. The final phases of the age are marked everywhere, however, by a growth of regional variations of culture. Descendants of the creators of these regional cultures continued from that time to the present day to occupy Europe and, until the fourth millennium B.C. to form the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants.

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No traces have so far been found of the Châtelperron culture in England, but we have evidence of Crô-Magnon man and his tools from the Paviland cave in south Wales and from the Cresswell Crags in Derbyshire evidence of a flourishing settlement related to the Gravettians, although possibly influenced also by the later Hamburg culture. With the arrival of the "modern men" in England we can therefore say that our distinctive story begins. The blood of these savages still flows in our veins.

They came to our shores at a date many thousands of years later than their arrival in eastern Europe. They came north following the game, the mammoth, bison, wild horses and reindeer, which moved north-west as the ice retreated and the temperature in the south and east rose. These ancestors of ours were acclimatised to cold and their hunting culture flourished most during what has been picturesquely described as the reindeer age, when the barren steppe and tundra was slowly giving place to parkland but before warmth and damp had brought forest conditions. Their spears and harpoons were well shaped and they had spear throwers which enabled them to kill at a distance. When, however, the parkland gave way to the forest, the men of the reindeer age had no tools or crafts to enable them to cope with the new conditions. They could grow nothing and, in England, they built little. All we know of them in England is their dwelling places, mainly natural rock shelters and caves, which these bearers of the Aurignacian and later cultures inhabited through the long winters of post-glacial times. Of these, Kent's Cavern in south Devon and the caves which open on to the Creswell Crags of Derbyshire are the oldest occupied sites, and around Plynlimmon to-day may be found the direct descendants of the men who inhabited them.

In the strange survival of the descendants of Palæolithic man in the fastnesses of north Wales to-day, we can trace, not a freakish accident, but the working out of historical forces. The south-east of England has been an easy prey for all continental conquerors down to the days of Dutch William, and throughout all these invasions the highlands of the north and west have sheltered the race, the faith and the allegiance of the conquered. We can forget as unimportant the remote ancestry of the men of Plynlimmon, but we should not forget causes which still operate to foster separatist movements in Wales and Scotland.

The Upper Palæolithic inhabitants of England lived in their

PREHISTORIC CLIMATIC CHANGES

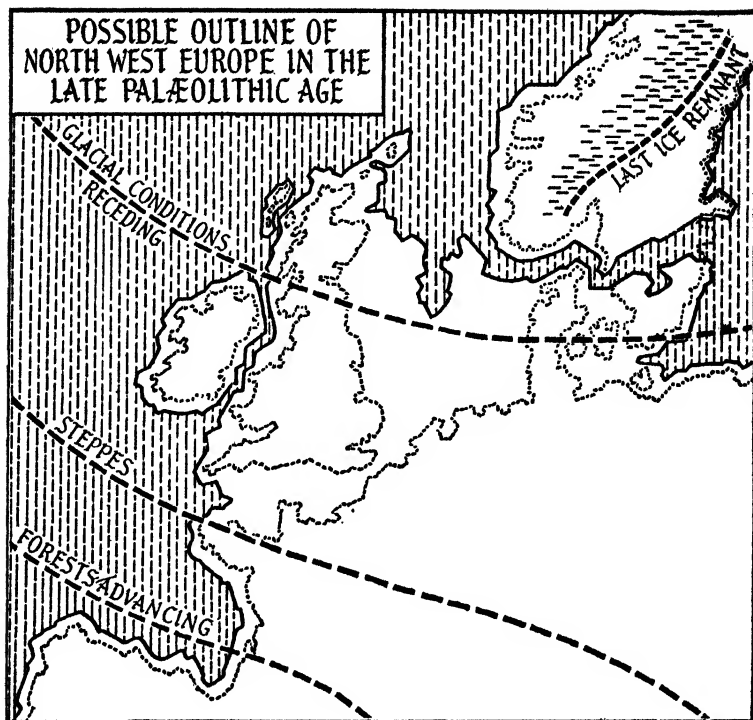
caves in winter, in conditions of indescribable squalor, and built only the rudest of summer shelters, consisting of pits, perhaps roofed over with brushwood. Where there were no caves they scooped hollows out of the ground, but there is no British evidence in the form of postholes to suggest that they understood even the rudiments of building. They practised no agriculture, though there is evidence from the finds of digging-stick weights (quartzite pebbles with hour-glass perforations) that they grubbed for roots. As the forest succeeded the parkland, they were able to eat nuts and berries, but for long they lived mainly on the flesh of the animals they killed. As the climate grew more temperate, the elk, red deer, roe deer, wild pig and aurochs became the chief food quarries; the lance was replaced ultimately by the bow and arrow. It was probably not until the tenth millennium B.C. that the dwarf birch, willow and treeless tundra which alone relieved the bleakness of the landscape in earliest post-glacial times, gave place in England's lowland zone (where alone we can assume inhabitants) to grassland, ash woods, oaks and yews. In these conditions, if ever in these islands, the early hunters tamed the dog.

The climate not only of England but of all Europe and the Mediterranean basin was changing continually from the time when modern man first emerged. During the last ice age, north Africa experienced centuries of heavy rain and what is now the Sahara was then rich pastureland. As the ice retreated across Europe, a period of desiccation began in Arabia and north Africa and probably in southern Europe. This had two all-important consequences. It tended to concentrate the settlements in north Africa and western Asia round the great alluvial valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris, and it sent farther northwards and westwards across Europe the Arctic big-game herds which retreated from the damp and the warmth. The retreat of the ice was probably fairly continuous, until it reached its present limits in about 6,000 B.C. The hunter's paradise, the reindeer age, passed, never to return, and perhaps by 10,000 B.C. the whole of the mainland of western Europe south of Scandinavia was heavily wooded, and Palæolithic man was compelled to look for his sustenance increasingly to smaller game, roots and berries. Since his culture was a hunting culture, the new climates led to a temporary decline of civilisation in Central and Western Europe, where there were nowhere conditions favourable to the discovery of agriculture and no tools with which to master the forest.

Retreat
of Ice,
c. 18,000
to
c. 6,000
B.C.

It is this fact which accounts for the very marked inferiority of the Upper Palæolithic cultures in England as compared with the achievement of the Magdalenians or the contemporary Hamburg people. The Magdalenians, in particular, although the derivation both of their art and of their material equipment can be traced to earlier, and notably to Aurignacian, Solutrian and West-Gravettian traditions, had attained by comparison with anything earlier or later (until Neolithic times), a high level of culture. The later Magdalenian developed all its forms of hunting and domestic equipment to a remarkable degree. They had a rich assortment of gravers and knife blades, finely fashioned needles, bone lance points, fish spears and barbed harpoons. Their skin clothing was probably well finished. Finally, the Magdalenians wrote the first important chapter in the history of European art. The last Gravettians had already produced the earliest known European sculptures, rude but symbolic female figures probably implying some fertility cult, and, in Southern France, animal art in the form of simple line engravings, dates almost from the first arrival of the "modern men." But "in the maturity of the Magdalenian culture carving and painting alike rose to the fullest mastery of design."¹ The cave paintings at the Font-de-Gaume, Altamira and elsewhere are world famous, and although they remain only an isolated gleam in the long history of the essentially uncreative savagery of the pre-Neolithic Ages of Europe, they suggest with the other evidence that given a continuance of favourable conditions these late Palæolithic cultures might have developed into something nearer akin to that primitive civilisation for which Europe in fact had to wait until there was a fresh immigration from the east about 3,500 B.C. As it was, conditions became, as we have seen, increasingly unfavourable to the hunting cultures. What we may call reindeer conditions receded gradually northward and isolated groups of hunters followed the retreating game. But they could not take their settled cave life with them and we must imagine them facing increasingly uncongenial conditions. Even the highly civilised Europeans of the last century shed a lot of their civilisation in the pioneering days in America and Australia and there is clear evidence that until the practice of agriculture began in Neolithic times and the home became an economic necessity, primitive culture was not easily transplanted. Certainly very few of the varied and artistic refine-

¹ C. F. C. Hawkes, *op. cit.*, p. 33.



ments of the Solutrians and Magdalenians reached north-western Europe.

It used to be thought that the passing of the reindeer age and the encroachment of the forest led to the natural extinction of the Palæolithic cultures and that Europe as a consequence was for some thousands of years denuded of population. A long series of recent discoveries have wholly disproved this theory. A clear succession of cultures intermediate in date between the Upper Palæolithic and the peasant civilisation of Neolithic times have now been identified. All these forest or Mesolithic cultures were indigenous to Europe and were in every case directly connected with the late Palæolithic culture created or developed by the first "modern men." The Mesolithic cultures began at the end of Pleistocene times, and their character and distribution reflect from that date until Neolithic times the changing climatic conditions and the consequent movements of population from the south-east to the north-west of Europe and from Spain north into France, Belgium

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and Holland. On the latest chronology the southern limit of the ice field lay *c.* 18,000 B.C. across Pomerania and in the west doubled back across the mouth of the Baltic to south Sweden. The retreat of the ice from Pomerania and south Sweden is dated *c.* 12,000 B.C. and by *c.* 6,000 B.C. the ice field had retreated within its present limits. The first effect of the retreat of the ice from south Sweden was a rise in the land level, the closing of the western entrance to the Baltic and the temporary union of Scandinavia and England, the coast line of the North Sea running from north Jutland by the Dogger bank to Flamborough Head. This was the position *c.* 7,800 B.C. Not long after 6,000 B.C. Britain was again separated from the Continent and by 5,000 B.C. the Baltic was once more a sea. The rise in the land level at the beginning of the eighth millennium, was accompanied by an improvement of climate in north Europe lasting until *c.* 5,000 B.C. This warm dry period is known as the Boreal phase, and it was followed by a no less warm but damp period, known as the Atlantic phase. During this period, which ended *c.* 2,000 B.C. (when our present climate became established) the sea level was steadily rising and by the end of it or soon after the North Sea and the English Channel had attained roughly their present extent and depth.

Inland, the characteristic of the whole of this long period was the advance of the forest leading to really dense growths in the heavier soils almost all over Europe. This advance of the forest following on the gradual northward retreat of the ice field must in any case have produced a northern or north-westerly migration, since the first Mesolithic cultures had no tools with which to face forest conditions. But in time new techniques were developed. Towards the end of the Mesolithic period, say after fourteen thousand years from the last peak phase of the Würm glaciation in 20,000 B.C., we find in Europe three main groups of culture.

* * * * *

OVER the available open spaces from South Russia to the North European plains a hunting culture still survived, generally known as the Tardenoisian culture. Distinguished like all Mesolithic cultures by the use of microliths—very small finely formed flint tools—the Tardenoisian differed in other respects little from the earliest of the Mesolithic cultures, the Azilian, or from the Upper Palæolithic cultures of Southern and South-Eastern Europe from which both the Azilian and

the Tardenoisian were undoubtedly descended. Such differences as there were consisted in a substantial impoverishment and a great decline in artistic achievement, which is limited to the production by the Azilians of painted pebbles bearing geometrical designs in flat red paint, presumably of some magical significance. Even these are not found throughout the very wide area over which the Tardenoisians hunter roamed and it is believed that they derived from Spanish influence.

Of far greater importance are the forest cultures which spread from Hungary to Central and Northern Germany, and the seashore and river-valley maritime and fishing cultures of north-western Europe, the names of which (Maglemose and Ertebolle) are taken from type-sites in Zealand and Jutland. Although, however, these cultures mark distinct material advances over their Upper Palæolithic predecessors in the invention of the axe, for instance, by the men of the forest cultures, in the use of sleighs and the mastery of some sort of navigation by the Maglemose people and, most noteworthy of all, in the use though not the invention of pottery by the men of the Ertebolle culture, there was no closer approach to true civilisation than at any other time in the prehistoric era. Mesolithic man, like his Palæolithic ancestors, was still a hunter, a fisherman and a food gatherer only. All that we can say of these Mesolithic men is that they showed an increasing adaptability to their environment which made them no doubt quicker to learn the rudimentary arts of civilisation when they came in contact with the peasant invaders than their ancestors might have been.

Azilian, Tardenoisian and Maglemose settlements have been found in Great Britain and the men of these cultures no doubt found their way over the land bridges which joined England, prior to 6,000 B.C., both with France and with Scandinavia. In addition we must note the development in Mesolithic times of the only indigenous English prehistoric culture, known as the Creswellian. Having said so much, the ardour of the patriot must yield to the realism of the historian: the Creswellian culture is nothing to boast of.

Three fragments of bone, considered to show traces of animal engravings, and one bone, eight and a half inches long, bearing at one end "an engraved drawing of a naked human figure,"¹ represent all that is known of its artistic achievement.

¹ See Fig. 18, *Archæology in England*, Kendrick and Hawkes, p. 44.

It is, indeed, a poverty-stricken world which is uncovered for us in Mother Grundy's Parlour, the Pin Hole, and the other caves of the Creswell Crags. The men of those times, contemporaneous with the earliest Mesopotamian and Egyptian cultures, had not even found new places to live since Aurignacian times.

If the Creswellian culture cannot be labelled progressive, it is even more certain that the arrival upon our shores of the exponents of the Azilian, Tardenoisian and Maglemose cultures is an episode not in the advance but in the decline of these cultures. All, no doubt, found their way from the coast by river valleys some distance inland, but they were only able to eke out a miserable existence in face of the same inflexible enemy which had driven them here. By the middle of the 7th millennium, the lowland zone of England was completely covered by forest. Only the river valleys, broadened and deepened as the moisture increased, set limits to its encroachments, and the once bold hunters of the reindeer and the mammoth lived scantily on fish and the gleanings of the seashore. It is a noteworthy fact that no trace either of the heavy axe or of pottery (the two major Mesolithic discoveries) has been found in England. Had no fresh invaders reached England, we should to-day have been in the same stage of cultural development as the Tasmanians when we discovered them 150 years ago.

The two historical events which brought civilisation first to eastern Europe and ultimately to England were an immigration of land-hungry peasants in 3,500 B.C., and the invasion of eastern Europe by the warrior peoples c. 2,800 B.C. It is therefore only from 3500 B.C. or thereabouts that the social and religious, as opposed to the biological, history of Europe begins. Our own English history begins a little later when the peasant peoples followed by the warrior peoples reached our shores. It will be simpler first to describe their background and their achievement and to carry the story of Europe forward to the age of metals and the coming of the warrior peoples. Then we shall know from what cultural background and in what circumstances the successive invaders of Mesolithic Britain reached our shores and why they secured without difficulty a permanent foothold.

The first
peasant
civilisations
of
Europe,
3500.

THE essential material foundations of civilisation are cereal and livestock farming and the domestication of animals.

THE PEASANT INVASIONS

Man is not in a position to develop the arts and crafts of civilised living until he has passed from the food gathering to the food producing stage. We know neither when nor precisely where the decisive discoveries were made, but they were made outside Europe, and small farming communities practising cereal, dairy and livestock farming were scattered over the most favoured region of the Near East and in Egypt not much, if at all, later than the sixth millennium. The earliest settled communities which archæology reveals are at Tell Halaf in north Syria, at Arpachiyah, near Nineveh, at Mersin in Cilicia, at Susa in Elam, and at El'abaid and Ur in the land of the Sumerians.¹ By the fifth millennium at any rate these communities were masters not only of subsistence farming but of building, of the manufacture of polished stone axes, of copper axes and ornaments and of plain and painted pottery.

By the beginning of the fourth millennium, this flourishing agricultural civilisation, transitional, with its stone and copper axes, between the stone and the metal age,² was approaching Europe. It was flourishing throughout Anatolia and the fertile hinterland of the Mediterranean, and also at Thermi in Lesbos, in Melos, and in Crete. It was from Anatolia that this civilisation, bringing with it not plain but painted pottery, reached Thessaly *c.* 3500 B.C. At the same time painted pottery appears at Troy, in Egypt, in Syria and in Palestine.

Because of the polished stone axes, this first settled civilisation of Europe used to be called Neolithic. It is now fashionable to classify the different European settlements of these immigrants by their pottery, and to speak, for instance, of the Anatolian plain ware people, the Anatolian painted pottery people, or the beaker people (who came into Europe through Spain late in the third millennium). We can most clearly disentangle the threads of a very tangled story by such differentiations and in dealing in any detail with the dawn of civilisation in any particular country, the accepted terminology of the prehistorians must be applied. We shall thus have to begin the story of civilisation in Britain in our next chapter with the so-called Windmill-Hill and Peterborough people, whom we know by their distinctive pottery. Nevertheless it is profoundly misleading to the student of history as opposed to prehistory to refer to the whole civilisation of Europe from 3500 B.C. to the Bronze Age as Neolithic, or to the people who

¹ C. F. C. Hawkes, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

² This transitional step is sometimes called "Chalcolithic."

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first brought this civilisation to Europe as the Painted Pottery peoples. 3500 B.C. is the first important date in Europe's history, not because the people who then entered Europe had better stone implements than the Mesolithic people (which is not even true in every case) or because their pottery, unlike that found at Ertebolle, was painted, but because the immigrants were peasant farmers, with an attitude to life wholly different from that of any earlier inhabitants of Europe, an attitude derived in part from the practice of agriculture itself, in part from their contact with the high metal-using civilisation of the East.

The discovery of the arts of subsistence farming is generally and no doubt rightly associated in time with the formation of the great deserts of Arabia and Northern Africa and with the consequent concentration of population near the great alluvial valleys of the Tigris, the Euphrates and the Nile. There is no trace, however, on the sites where settled agricultural communities can first be traced of any Mesolithic antecedents and the antecedent stages of evolution which led up to the full-scale practice of agriculture as we find it in the sixth millennium in Asia and Egypt can only be guessed. We can perhaps safely associate them with the regions south-east of Europe, the land between the Mediterranean and the Iranian plateau, and between the Caspian and the Indian Ocean. This was the "Europe" of the prehistoric world, similar in climate to modern Europe with a similar diversity of conditions, great steppes, high plateaux and alluvial valleys, providing a variety of experiences and opportunities. Somewhere to the east of this area, probably before the close of the last ice age in this country, the first developments of cereal and livestock farming probably took place. The first dim beginning of cereal farming almost certainly took the form of hoe agriculture carried out by women as an adjunct to hunting, which at this earliest stage still remained the chief occupation of the male and the chief source of the food supply of the family.

This primitive hoe agriculture was much nearer akin to gardening than to farming. It represented nevertheless an immense advance upon food gathering, and it made possible a significant step in human progress, the emergence of woman as the partner she never becomes in a purely hunting society. All that was stable in the first settled society, when man himself was still the hunter, was built round the woman and the soil. It is believed from the evidence of those communities

which have been found still practising hoe agriculture in historical times, e.g. in West Africa and among the agricultural North American Indian tribes, that in this earliest form of settled social organisation the woman was habitually the chief. The institution of matriarchy and the descent through the female line are, on this reading, transitional institutions bridging the immense gap between man the wanderer-hunter and man the head of a settled family.

It is to this first primitive stage in the evolution of the farming community that we can perhaps date the beginnings of the religious impulse which led to the deification of mother earth, the mother goddess of a matriarchal society.¹ It is a profound biological instinct rather than mere naturalism which lies at the heart of all the earliest developed religions of which we have certain knowledge. Primitive peoples all over the world regard the earth as the female principle, the mother of crops and fruits, in contrast to the city, the mother of arts and eloquence. In the days when man the hunter was almost a parasite on the woman who hoe-ed the soil, the religious instinct fulfilled itself with the simple concept of the earth-mother as the founder and guardian of the home.

Much more than hoe agriculture, however, was necessary to the formation of true farming communities. Without dairy and livestock farming man must still remain essentially a hunter and a food gatherer. The primitive ancestor of the livestock farmer was, like the hoe agriculturist, not in any true sense a farmer at all. He was a wandering pastoralist, driving his flocks from place to place and probably driven in the course of his wanderings to fight with rival pastoralists for the most fertile pastures. In an almost uninhabited world pastoralism could long survive and we know as an historic fact that on the borders of the lands occupied by the first farming communities were numerous warlike peoples leading a pastoral existence. Some of these pastoralists must, however, have found their way at some relatively early date to the alluvial valleys and settled there, for it is the combination of the pastoral and the hoe-agriculture technique which produced the technique of subsistence farming which we find established in the sixth millennium in the Near East and in Egypt. The religion of the pastoralist all the world over is the cult of the

¹ A magical element in the Aurignacian cave art must be accepted and ritual burials are known in Palæolithic days, but both alike were different in kind from the developing ritual associated with the worship of the earth mother.

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sky god, a monotheistic and masculine cult, and it is from the fusion of cults of the sky god and the mother goddess that the characteristic religion of the early peasant communities perhaps derives. Certainly, with settled agriculture, that stupendous discovery of a new way of life which set man's feet firmly upon the earth and turned his eyes to the stars, came a new and more profound revelation: the revelation of the mystery by which death is the inevitable prelude to birth, by which we become only to the extent that we give, by which pain is the price of pleasure and work the price of joy. The masculine principle here enters upon the stage of religious history, and to the earth-mother is added the divine son or lover, who must die each year to be born again.

The drama of the death and return of the divine consort of the mother goddess is common to the whole of western Asia from the dawn of history. This supports the view, incidentally, that plough agriculture was the discovery of a single people made at some definite period. Hoe agriculture is practised by all primitive peoples, though in widely different ways. Plough agriculture among primitive peoples is confined to the belt of continental land from Eastern Europe to China. Outside this area it does not exist. It spread through Europe from the middle East.

The social significance of settled agriculture is as deep as the religious. The practice of farming demands an observant ritual whose ceremonies are imposed by a mysterious and unseen power. It requires the fidelity of the husbandman, strong to tame oxen and to drive them, patient to sow and strong to reap. It is now the farmyard animals, the cattle, sheep and pigs, who provide meat for the pot; man has ceased to be a hunting animal. Finally, this fidelity of the husbandman drives the woman indoors to the spindle and the loom. Here is seen the beginnings of a new organised social life, a division of labour with new forms of work and of leisure and a basis for arts and crafts alike. That is why the first peasant civilisations of Europe mark the invention of pottery, the beginnings of metallurgy and the building of solid rectangular houses with raised hearths and painted plaster decoration, as in the houses of the Homeric Kings, in addition to the finely worked implements of polished stone which misleadingly give their names to an age separated from the Mesolithic by a gulf infinitely greater than that which separates us from even the most primitive peasantry.

It is wrong to think that the reconstruction of this vanished world gratifies no valid instinct except curiosity. In Asia Minor the peasant religion of the Mother Goddess and the divine son or lover was preserved intact down to the beginning of the Christian era, and even to-day the spring and harvest-tide customs of the European peasantry can be traced back to the rites and ideas of this Asiatic nature worship. In south-eastern Europe and, though less obviously, in Germany and France, we have still to reckon with the peasant foundation, with a tradition wholly different from the dominant urban culture. The urban civilisation of the European countries has indeed to a surprising degree failed to impose itself upon this peasant foundation. That is because the urban civilisation of Europe has a different origin and was not brought to Europe by the peasant stocks.

The urban development of the peasant culture was theocratic and its earliest form was the Asiatic "Temple State," which by the third millennium was very widely spread throughout south-west Asia. Like the castle, the monastery or the university in the Middle Ages, the Temple was not merely the most important institution in this first experiment in city life but the *raison-d'être* of the experiment. The life of the community had a sacred character. The Temple had been built to protect man, his crops and his flocks, from the wrath of God by ritual observance and ceremonies of propitiation. As its influence grew, it attracted to itself money and a large community whose interests became its interests. It developed a communal life on a scale larger than anything hitherto attempted, because it had sources of income and authority independent of the mere extent of its land. Inevitably the Temple became the centre of a self-supporting community, growing in wealth with the discovery of the secrets of co-operative enterprise and the division of labour. At Ur¹ large scale weaving was organised, the first recorded factory experiment in man's history. By the beginning of the third millennium in Mesopotamia there was a regular money economy and the Temples had become banks. Just as the school and the library grew up under the shadow or within the walls of the castle and the monastery, so the Temple became the home, and in troubled times the refuge, of thoughtful men. The Sumerian

Early
royal
tombs at
Ur,
c. 3500 B.C.

¹ Knowledge of the earliest civilisations north of the Persian Gulf only dates back to 1922, when Sir Leonard Woolley began his seven years of excavation at Ur, this being a joint expedition of the British Museum and the University Museum of Pennsylvania.

Temple State developed a cuneiform syllabic script and to the Sumerians we also owe the modern division of time and (a more unfortunate legacy for Englishmen) the sexagesimal system of reckoning by multiples of six, which still survives in the British coinage and in many of our weights and measures.

Egypt.
First and
Second
Dynasties,
3400-2980
B.C.
(Breasted).

Almost simultaneously in Egypt, another imposing theocratic civilisation had begun with the founding of the First Dynasty, bringing us across a gap of more than five thousand years face to face with the first Great State. Egyptian civilisation stands clearly revealed from the beginning as the individual creation of a people of genius, who left an imperishable mark upon the world's history when they set up before the eyes of men the first tremendous example of the possibilities of centralised power. But the system of centralisation which made Egypt for centuries the wonder of the world was religious in origin. The kings of Egypt were not, like the rulers of the Temple States, the servants of the Gods: they were themselves gods. The whole life of Egypt centred round the royal palace, the government was a government of courtiers waiting upon a god.

If the Temple States of the near East had their origin in the religion of the first farming communities, the peculiar characteristics of the Egyptian civilisation can be attributed, at least in part, to the Nile. The centralised control of the irrigation system was indispensable if Egypt was to prosper. The principle of compulsory public labour, elsewhere a sign of the breakdown of civilisation, was in Egypt its necessary accompaniment. But no material necessity can account entirely for the peculiar other-worldliness which dominated the Egyptian civilisation in its prime. For thousands of years the whole life of Egypt was lived *sub specie aeternitatis*: it was to the dead, not to the living, that the artistic talents of her people and almost the whole of their immense talent for construction was devoted. This cult of the dead centred round the person of the king. To secure the immortality of the king who was the visible god, and for whose service Egypt existed, every device was employed. The construction of the Great Pyramids under the Fourth Dynasty not only absorbed vast resources and the labour of generations: it put the whole nation under pledge to maintain the temples and the priesthood. It was, however, the Fifth Dynasty which finally determined the religious character of Egyptian civilisation, for it was then that the worship of the Sun God and the identification of the

Fourth
Dynasty,
2900-2750
B.C.
(Breasted).
Fifth
Dynasty,
2750-2625
B.C.
(Breasted).

THE CIVILISATION OF CRETE

successive Pharaohs as sons of the god began. Thus the first highly developed monotheistic religion comes before us, and man saw his first wayward vision of celestial immortality. The son of the god when he died no longer descended into the earth, but was translated into heaven to share with his father, the Sun, the universal lordship over the earth.

A third great archaic civilisation was that of Crete, a civilisation which in length of days outlasted that of classical Greece and in its modernity closely rivalled it. The civilisation of Crete lasted fully 2000 years; it was enriched by brilliant artistic genius and by a high development of trade and industry.

Cretan
Civilisation
(Early
Miocene),
c. 3000 B.C.

The Cretans were the first maritime people to leave an enduring mark on history, and in their last great period, in the middle of the second millennium, they founded a maritime empire. The Cretan script has not yet been deciphered and we thus know little of the details of their organisation and beliefs. Of their customs, their architecture and their manner of life, however, we have, for almost the whole period of their greatness, the fullest possible evidence. Their drainage and sanitary system was in advance of anything subsequently achieved in Europe until the middle of the nineteenth century. In some respects indeed it may be regarded as superior to our own to-day. The Cretans were also the earliest devotees of athletics, of organised spectacles and of dancing as a means of entertainment. The dress of the Cretan women closely resembled that of the women of modern Europe and their women were not secluded: they shared fully in the life of the court, in dances and in spectacles. The great cities of Crete were Palace States, invested with a religious sanction. Their rulers were priests ruling by divine right. The Cretan Palace State, like the Babylonian Temple States, contained workshops and storehouses; there was a highly developed bureaucracy, and the evidence of great accumulations of wealth not only in precious metals but in tributes in kind which served as currency before the invention of coinage.

The theocratic state, in one form or other, might have spread to the mainland of Europe, but it did not. Both the first peasant immigrants from Anatolia with their painted pottery and the plain pottery people who came shortly after them to the Lower Danube from the Crimea, belonged to the gifted round-headed Alpine race which had created the theocratic city states of Mesopotamia, but they were themselves only

land-hungry peasants. By the time of their arrival in Europe a high civilisation had been securely established in Asia, but its line of expansion was through Palestine and Syria to Egypt and eastwards to India and China. The first high city civilisation was based on great river valleys and warm alluvial plains; the men who built it were not tempted to penetrate into the mountainous, cold and forest-encumbered lands of Europe, where none of the conditions favouring the development of an urban civilisation existed. In so far as the archaic civilisation touched Europe at this time, it was through the search for metals, but European civilisation nowhere advanced until the end of the third millennium beyond the stage of the peasant community. It needed a new, more forceful and more restless people than the peasant-immigrants of 3500 B.C. to complete the task of civilising Europe and to bring to its shores the first urban civilisation.

The archaic civilisation maintained itself for nearly two thousand years in Asia Minor and Egypt and for a little longer in Crete. But from the end of the third millennium it had been threatened from without by the warlike pastoral communities on the borders of its own high and peaceful civilisation. This is the first appearance of war as an organised factor in human history. Contrary to long standing belief, war is not a natural pastime of primitive peoples. It appears, on the contrary, in conjunction with a highly specialised type of civilisation. The old peasant cultures, the Temple States of Mesopotamia, the Old Kingdom of Egypt and the Palace States of Crete were not warlike. We find among their remains virtually no weapons and their dwelling places were unfortified. Conflicts undoubtedly took place between the city-states of the Sumerians and between the states of the Nile before the unification of the kingdoms, but society was not organised for war and there was no professional military caste. As for Europe, there was nothing in the peasant culture which tended to war, in the conditions then prevailing. There was no pressure of population and there were no landless labourers. A family could get no richer by seizing its neighbour's land than by clearing some more land and leaving its neighbour's in peace. For the peasant his wealth is his labour and peace is the very condition of his existence.

The peoples who threatened, and ultimately overwhelmed, the states of the archaic civilisation and overran and conquered all Europe were not peasants but pastoralists, not wealth-

producers so much as wealth-collectors. Above all, they were fighting races and their hand was against every man's. These races were the Jews, the first fighting pastoralist wanderers known to written history, the Hittites, and the Indo-Europeans, all of them races with a different outlook altogether from those who built the theocratic states. They brought with them for the first time on to the stage of history the religious outlook which has dominated the western world for four thousand years. The religion of the shepherd and the warrior is profoundly different from that of the peasant. He is concerned not so much with the earth as with the sky, and it is the power of heaven, not of the earth mother-goddess, which takes the first place in his cosmology.

The advance of the pastoral culture, the development of the warrior tribe into a decisive historical force, may well have been due not to any racial or geographical influence but to the impact of the first archaic temple and peasant civilisations on the primitive people around them. Certainly we find abundant evidence from the dawn of history that any area of high civilisation tends to attract to its borders lower but more virile cultures, which may, and throughout history repeatedly do, break in upon the higher but softer culture and sometimes overthrow it entirely.

So it was, in the end, with the archaic civilisations, but long before this happened, Indo-European pastoralist invaders had reached Europe by the Caucasian foothills. We know something of their civilisation and manner of life from the great graves in the Kuban valley which can be dated round about 2500 B.C. In these graves "pastoralism and simple cultivation are revealed together with an intensive southern trade and an adopted metallurgy. The huge kurgan of Maikop covered a shaft grave double chambered in wood, wherein the chieftain's ochre-stained body lay contracted under a canopy decked with gold and silver, with rich jewellery, with vessels not only of pottery but of stone, gold and silver also—some decorated with animal scenes—and steer and lion figures in the same precious metals."¹

Here in these graves lies one of the keys to our understanding of the origins of our civilisation. Here were pastoralist warrior chieftains already acquainted with the use of metals, and in close relationship, through trade connections across the Armenian and Persian highlands, with the metal-using city

¹ C. F. C. Hawkes, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

The coming of the warrior peoples to Europe, c. 2300 B.C.

civilisations of Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean basin; here were the pastoralists who invaded South-Eastern Europe during the third millennium. With this invasion European history begins to conform to a pattern that we can understand, because by that date we have in Europe the two racial stocks which provided, and still provide, the foundations of European culture. In other words, both the peasant and the pastoralist stocks were needed to build the Europe of history, and influencing both the peasant and the pastoralist was the theocratic civilisation of the Temple States of Asia and of Egypt. This near-Eastern and Egyptian civilisation, conquered and reconquered by different warrior peoples, has never lost its hold on the imagination of Europe. In particular, European man has always been conscious of Egypt, where forty centuries of high civilisation look down upon the itinerant warrior. Egypt has cast her spell over all the great conquerors. Her influence is clear in Crete, and, if it was Crete directly, it was Egypt indirectly which brought the first city-civilisation to Europe. More notably, the theocratic centralised monarchy of Egypt, surviving into another age, provided the model and the inspiration for Alexander's empire (which carried European civilisation across Asia to the Indus) for the Hellenistic monarchies which followed it, and for the Roman Empire, which laid the foundations of civilised living in the west, foundations which have endured into our own time.

Yet the true soul of Egypt set itself not to conquer time but to defy it. It embodied a spirit which has been perpetually at war with the other elements which have provided the foundations of European history. Her seamen and her merchants ransacked the world for treasures to bury in the tombs of her kings, while her priests and bureaucrats achieved an immense organisation, informed with a technical skill which remains one of the wonders of the world, merely in order to preserve against the assaults of time the power and influence of the dead.

The august ritual of the great state, the tradition of majesty, the conception of the life of the earth as an incident in an eternal process, these things, so alien to the European temperament and yet so attractive to it, are almost as much part of our inheritance as the peasant civilisation, earthbound and limited by the horizon of the homestead, which came to us directly from Asia. But both these civilisations were static and neither was masculine. The priest symbolises the civilisations

of the Temple and the Palace; the peasant in his heart worships still the Mother-Goddess. In both these civilisations there was a lack of virtue as we understand it. The priest and the peasant have in common a fundamental lack of disinterestedness. Both are serving their gods; neither is serving his fellow-men. The European conception of secular virtue, stern, hard to the point of ruthlessness, seeking always an end outside itself, its capacity for cruelty equalled only by its capacity for sacrifice, is the quality of the pastoral and warrior peoples who overran Europe during the third millennium. From the time of their incursion, Europe displays in essentials those characteristics and those discords which still lie at the root of her conflicts.

To this day, much of this early prehistoric Europe remains. Her foundations, the peasant, the priest and the warrior, endure. It is the presence of these three warring but complementary traditions which makes the history of Europe unique, and we, who are Europeans, must read our history in the light of this knowledge.

This uniqueness of the European heritage is seen by contrast with the other continents. The archaic civilisation lasted in China down to our own times, in a form strangely resembling even in details that of Egypt under the Fifth Dynasty. The warrior peoples reached India more than once but the climate softened their virility. India remained, and remains, the land of the peasant and the priest, of the Mother-Goddess and the Temple State. In South America, the great archaic civilisation, more akin to that of Egypt than to that of the Mesopotamian Temple States, was wholly destroyed by the Conquistadors. There was no fusion at all. North America, Australia and New Zealand received neither the archaic civilisation nor the peasant culture.

It is in Europe alone that we find the elements of all the three great influences which have gone to the building of the civilisation of man; the peasant culture, the civilisation of the eastern temple state and the expansive masculine dynamism of the warrior peoples. And, in the background, we have the men of the Palæolithic and Mesolithic Ages, whose racial peculiarities can still, it is said, be traced in the inhabitants of remote and desolate places in parts of Wales, in the Auvergne, in the Pyrenees and in Lapland, and who may have contributed more than is at present believed to the building of Europe's first civilisation in the Bronze Age.

Chapter Two

FROM NEOLITHIC TIMES TO THE LATE IRON AGE

Peasant
civilisation
reaches
Britain,
2800 B.C.

SEVEN hundred years passed before the peasant civilisation which had come to Eastern Europe in 3500 B.C. reached Britain. Between the coming of the warrior peoples to Eastern Europe in 2300 and their arrival in Britain was an interval of 500 years. From the middle of the second millennium, however, until the prehistoric period in Britain ends with Julius Cæsar and the contemporary written record begins to provide us with some measure of precise information, Britain fell even further behind as civilisation in Europe generally advanced. A high city civilisation arose on the European mainland at Lorchomenos and Mycenæ in the middle of the second millennium, to be followed by the glories of the Homeric Age, which reached its culmination round about 1200 B.C. Only seven hundred years later the military and political genius and the heroic virtue of the heirs of the heroic age challenged the might of Persia for the hegemony of the civilised world and established from that time onward that domination of European arms and civilisation over the neighbouring continents which was only finally ended by the military disaster to the armies of Western Europe in the summer of 1940.

The age of Marathon, Salamis and Plataea was followed by the Periclean Age, immortalised by the glories of its artistic and intellectual achievement, and recorded for us in the pages of the first and not the least of the great European historians. We shall have to trace the outline of this story and its sequel at the point where the high city civilisation of the Greco-Roman world is brought to Britain by the armies of Rome. It is only necessary here to record the bare facts in order to remind ourselves that what we have to tell of the story of Britain in Neolithic times and in the Bronze and Iron Ages is, in its island phases, an isolated story not truly relevant to the development of that civilisation which really came to us ready-made from without. There are, in fact, two distinct and largely unconnected stories to tell of the period from 3500 to the beginning

THE PLOUGH

of the Christian era in Europe. The first story is of the slow but sure diffusion northwards and westwards across Europe of the peasant and pastoralist civilisations introduced by the peasant and the warrior peoples and of the gradual adoption and adaptation by their descendants of the art and practice of metallurgy and plough agriculture. The second story begins outside Europe (for it was in Egypt and in Asia that the warrior peoples first came to dominate and adopt the high city civilisation of the East) and ends with the conquest of the descendants of European Mesolithic peoples (everywhere fused and inter-mixed by the beginning of the first millennium with the peasant and pastoralist immigrants) by the dynamic urban and industrial civilisation which was carried all over the known world by the arms of Greece and Rome in the last half of the first millennium B.C.

The immediate result of the first impact of the warrior peoples on the peasant civilisation of Europe was to accelerate the movement northward and westward of the peasant cultures. As a consequence the food-gathering Mesolithic cultures had developed into primitive agricultural communities almost everywhere in Europe by 2000 B.C. Indeed, there is evidence that the plough was in use in Denmark early in the Bronze Age and plough furrows have been discovered in Holland which date before 1600 B.C.¹

In eastern Europe, the painted pottery cultures were probably completely overrun by the warrior invaders, but elsewhere the process by which the pastoral civilisation became diffused throughout Europe was so infinitely various that any generalised statement must be read as subject to many exceptions. We can however say that after the peasant cultures had pushed westward they were followed by the warrior peoples sometimes as conquerors but more often as immigrants and traders. Their movements followed at first two main routes; northward along the valley of the Vistula (and then westward along the shores of the Baltic) and westward along the Danube valley (and then north-westward to Bohemia and Saxony). We must not imagine a military conquest. Rather, we find the Mesolithic peoples gradually adopting the peasant arts and crafts and then coming under the influence by trade and infiltration of the warrior peoples, who introduced new materials, new tools, new weapons and new ways of living. It was to the superiority of their metal using civilisation, not

¹ See A. E. van Giffen: *Grafhevels Te Zwaagdijk* (1944), p. 233.

to their numbers, that the diffusion of the warrior (Indo-European) speech throughout Europe was chiefly due.

Soon after 2500 B.C. a parallel diffusion of the warrior cultures began by sea along the Mediterranean. With this movement originated the first metal using¹ civilisations of Italy, Spain and Sardinia.

Prehistorians have reconstructed with infinite skill and patience the details of all these different movements and from 2500 B.C. onwards they can tell us with some degree of accuracy the derivation of the culture of any particular settlement which archæology has brought to light anywhere on the European mainland, but the whole picture remains confused. It was an age of continuous migration and also of prospecting for minerals, but for a thousand years the overall result was no more than the gradual diffusion throughout Europe of a primitive agricultural civilisation not unfamiliar with copper but still very largely stone using. Even in north-west Europe, where the battle-axe became, round about 2000 B.C., the characteristic weapon of the dominant people, it was made of stone, though copied from a copper prototype introduced by warrior immigrants.

The first city civilisation of the warrior peoples was that of the second city of Troy, and after the destruction of that city, about 2300 B.C., there was a diffusion of civilised Indo-European settlers throughout the islands and the shores of the eastern Mediterranean. To this process we can perhaps trace the origin of the Greek peoples and the Greek speech and certainly the chief source of the power and energy of the later trading and pioneering civilisations of Crete, Mycenæ and the Cyclades, which reached their highest point in the second millennium. These civilisations provided from the beginning of the second millennium a slender connecting link between the new urbanised imperialism of the East² and the primitive pastoralists and peasants in Europe. The Mediterranean had passed from the Copper to the Bronze Age as early as the time of the second city of Troy. The quest either for copper ore with a tin content, or for tin to mix with copper in the ideal proportion of one in ten, led traders and explorers in the second millennium to the tin-bearing mountains of Bohemia, precisely as they had earlier been led to the copper deposits on both sides of the

¹ More strictly "chalcolithic" civilisations; i.e. they continued to be stone users but were familiar with the use of copper.

² Hammurabi in Babylon and the Twelfth Dynasty in Egypt.

river Danube, in north Hungary and in the mountains of Slovakia. Tin was being extracted from Bohemia early in the second millennium and from that time the Bronze Age in Europe begins. Europe, however, remained the land of the pastoralist and the peasant. The dynamic energies of the warrior peoples were still largely engaged elsewhere. Between 1800 and 1600 B.C. they invaded Asia Minor and Egypt. The first urban civilisation of the warrior peoples at the second city of Troy had been short lived, and the third and fourth cities of Troy never attained great power and prosperity. The Asiatic and African conquests of the warrior peoples were, by contrast, decisive. These conquests superimposed on the wealth, the organised government and the social consciousness of the Temple States of the archaic civilisations a new secular dynamism and a consciously aggressive attitude towards the pretensions of their neighbours. Out of these conquests developed a new technique of politics and government in the near East and in North Africa which was to be the first effective instrument for the diffusion of a high civilisation throughout the world.

Early
European
Bronze
Age,
1900 B.C.

One group of the warrior peoples under the Shepherd Kings (the Hyksos) conquered Egypt; another group, the Hittites, founded an empire including Cappadocia, northern Mesopotamia and the foothills of Kurdistan, the whole being known as the state of Mitanni; and a third, the Kassites, conquered Babylonia. These epoch-making events, all of which took place between 1800 and 1600 B.C., marked the transition stage between the static, other-worldly states of the Archaic Civilisation and the beginnings of dynamic history, a transition which was completed by the Egyptian conquest of Palestine in 1479 and by the capture of Knossos and its destruction by the warrior peoples of Mycenae in 1400 B.C. When the shaft graves of Mycenae were opened by Schliemann in 1876 they revealed the transformation of the semi-oriental, peaceful civilisation of Crete into a thoroughly warlike society. The princes who ruled Mycenae were still lying in their graves "crowned and covered with gold," their long swords by their sides and their gold death masks on their faces, the grim bearded faces of warrior kings, very different from that king of Crete who stands unarmed and almost naked among the flowers in the great painted relief of the Palace of Knossos.

These bearded warriors were the men who two hundred years later marched on Troy, chieftains of the heroic age, scorners of priestcraft and merchandising, tamers of horses and

Siege of
Troy,
1200 B.C.

destroyers of cities, men of splendour and courage who married the luxury and arts of the east to the disciplined virility of the warrior peoples. These were the men who created the crude splendours of the Bronze Age in western Europe. The centuries following on 1200 B.C. saw everywhere a progressively swift transformation of the peasant-pastoralist culture of Europe. We find fortified hill settlements rising above the open villages and the rich graves of warrior princes dominating the landscape. The transformation continues until the climax of the Iron Age, when the Celtic tribes with their chariots and broad swords swept over central and western Europe, planting their great graves on every hilltop from Bohemia to Ireland.

But for all their virility and splendour, these Homeric heroes and their imitators were not the begetters of our civilisation. It was in the near East and in Egypt that the politically decisive events had taken place.

Battle of
Megiddo,
1479 B.C.

Egypt alone of the states of the archaic civilisation ejected her warrior conquerors, but the rulers of the new kingdom were men, not gods. The Egyptians had learnt from the days of their adversity the new methods of warfare with horses and chariots, and they had developed a new military nobility. Conquering her conquerors, Egypt remained enslaved to war, and henceforth for four hundred years the eyes of her rulers were turned on the wealth and glories of Asia. "I made the fortress of Egypt," wrote Tutmose I in the sixteenth century B.C. "as far as the circuit of the sun." Contemporary with the middle Bronze Age of Europe, political history as we understand it begins on May 14, 1479 B.C., when Tutmose III of Egypt conquered Palestine and broke the power of the Syrian armies at the battle of Megiddo. When the victor of Megiddo died in 1447 B.C., Syria was subdued from end to end and tribute was received from the distant lands of Mitanni, Cilicia and Cyprus. Phoenicia and Palestine were firmly held and in Africa the power of the throne was extended southwards to Nubia. Sea-trade was active and profitable, and another great age of building developed under Amenophis III, from whose reign dates the first great glory of Thebes, the splendours of which were proverbial for a thousand years afterwards. This age of Egyptian expansion was of exceptional importance to the world, for it saw not only the rise of the classical types of the Egyptian temple, which influenced the architecture of Greece and Rome and, through the tradition of the Hellenistic and Roman basilica, has left its mark on the landscape of our

THE TECHNIQUE OF CONQUEST

own world, but it fixed, for good or ill, the method by which each powerful civilisation has, in its turn, organised its expansion and enforced its influence.¹

The conception of conquest until the victory of Tutmose III at Megiddo had been purely predatory. In an under-populated world, migration was essentially and naturally a peaceful process. No one seeking land for cultivation or grazing would wish to take land already impoverished by the primitive methods of earlier settlers. The only purpose of these early wars was therefore loot. Herds and flocks would be seized and treasure stolen. Then the raiders would return to their own homes. It was the fusion of the warrior tradition with the settled and organised urban civilisation of the East, where the priestly or deified rulers were accustomed to receive from their subjects tribute in kind or in precious metals and to keep a scrupulous account of their revenues, which introduced for the first time into human history the idea of the forcible assumption of jurisdiction by one state over another for the purpose of enforcing, at the price of continuous tribute, the benefits of peace and order.

Brutal though the many applications of this idea may have been in the past, and wholly disastrous as it has always been when one civilised state seeks to conquer another, it yet remains that political conquest was to be the chief vehicle for the spread of civilisation for more than three thousand years after the first historic experiment by imperial Egypt in 1479 B.C. Not until the Europeans, in the persons of the Greeks and the Romans, had learnt, firstly, the arts of city life, secondly, the technique of conquest, and, finally, the art of government from a distance, was a truly high civilisation to be spread throughout Europe. And not until the power passed to Spain and then to England in the Atlantic age which followed the fall of Constantinople in 1453, was the city civilisation of the west to be spread to the New World and to Asia. The civilisation of Europe in the Bronze Age from 1900 to 700 B.C. was, for all its power and brilliance, in no sense whatever the precursor of the city

¹ It may be useful to remember the subsequent changes of hegemony in the near East. The Egyptian empire, though continuing for a long time in name, ceased to exercise effective authority after c. 1300 and the chief power in Asia Minor passed first to the Hittites and then, at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. to the Assyrians, who actually conquered Egypt in 671 B.C. Nineveh, however, fell to the Babylonians in 612 and for two generations Babylon was again master of the near East. Babylon gave way in turn to Persia and with Darius I we reach the last of the great Oriental empires, which lasted until it was overthrown by Alexander the Great.

civilisation first brought to fruition in Europe by the Greeks and first brought to north-west Europe by the Romans.

This is particularly true of Britain, where each successive "invasion," whether of peasants, traders or warriors, did but bring the increasingly mixed communities a step nearer to the pre-existing continental level of culture, while the invasions became so frequent that no culture ever had time to reach a developed stage before it was superseded by another. The only partial exception, as we shall see, was the British middle Bronze Age culture, but even this was far behind the achievements, cultural, military and artistic, of the Homeric age with which it was contemporary. Moreover, while the British culture of this period represented the highest to which Britain had so far attained, the Homeric Age was not an age of progress but a temporary reversion to barbaric disorder, in a region earlier notable, before the coming of the Warrior-peoples, for a high city civilisation.

If, however, the arts of civilised living came to us, as to the rest of western Europe, from without, superimposed by the sword of the conqueror and not evolved from the pre-existing cultures by the indigenous population, it is profoundly un-historical to infer, as some have done, that the so-called pre-historic period, and even the Roman period, has no lessons and therefore no interest for the student of English history. The history of Britain in these times and, indeed, in large measure until 1066, is only an illustration, in terms exceptionally clear for reasons mainly geographical, of a general historical axiom that all progress comes from an admixture of races and traditions.

Left in isolation, civilisation, as a famous anthropologist has told us, is a watch which runs down. It might well follow that the geographical position of the British lowland zone in relation to both the great routes along which all early cultures passed from Asia across Europe,¹ has contributed largely to the virility and dynamic quality which our characteristic English civilisation came to display in later historical time. It would not, moreover, be fanciful to note that the existence of an adjacent highland zone, where, after each conquest or immigration, the older cultural traditions were long preserved, has tended again and again to ensure that, while Britain has received her full share of stimulus from the new cultures and ideas which have been brought to her shores by conquerors, immigrants

¹ See above, p. 29

or the hospitable influence of sea-borne trade, she has usually maintained in regard to them a sense of balance and proportion and has often succeeded in preserving the best of her old traditions, while profiting from the re-orientation of her way of life.

Fifty years ago a bitter controversy raged between historians, and its echoes can still be heard, on the relative influence exercised on our policy, ideas and institutions by our Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Norman conquerors. Modern historical scholarship is more concerned to remind us that the whole of Great Britain has never been simultaneously conquered, that even as early as the beginning of Neolithic times we have to be careful not to underestimate the contribution of the Mesolithic inhabitants to the growth and development of the new culture, that the physical characteristics of the people even in the lowland zone was relatively fixed by late prehistoric times and was hardly affected by the Roman conquest, and that the character of Anglo-Saxon England was immensely affected by influences not only from the continent but from the Celtic north and west, which had preserved much of the Romano-British culture and of the early Christian traditions across the centuries of anarchy which followed the barbarian invasions.

It is indeed essential that the historical process be studied in its whole extension in historical time if we are to avoid such fundamental errors of interpretation as those which ascribe progress, power and civilisation to some simple predominant factor such as a particular race or religion, some peculiarity of geography or climate, a particular technique of government or some characteristic kind of social or economic organisation. For each one of these views some superficial case can be made out and it may impress greatly those who know only a part of the story. Yet the evil consequences which must and do flow, in these days of widely disseminated views, from a false doctrine of the causes and conditions of power and prosperity are measureless.

The men and women who came to Britain in the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages are our ancestors. The climate in which they lived is still our climate, more or less. The story of the successive invasions and conquests of Britain, from 2500 B.C. to A.D. 1066, and of their consequences, is a story rich in illustration of the working of historical forces which are still in full operation. We can learn, if we wish, as much from these

illustrations as from any more recent of the inter-relations of race and government, of climate and social organisation; of the effective limits within which centralised power and military government can impose and maintain a social order, a religion or an allegiance; of the part which character, education, military power and, last but not least, mere chance, play in determining national destinies, and of the necessary relation between armaments and history, between foreign and domestic policy and between social organisation and political efficiency in a hostile world.

But what we learn we must learn each for ourselves. The business of the historian is to record, not to argue; to exemplify a tendency and to evaluate it (for history is the record not of what has happened but of what has mattered), but not to indulge in moral indignation. Above all, the historian has to attempt to maintain a just perspective. The history of Britain is unintelligible and the evaluation of her achievement impossible, without some knowledge, all through its course, of the progress of events elsewhere.

* * * * *

WE have seen that, before the coming of man, what are now the highlands of Great Britain belonged to a north Atlantic continent, while what is now south-east England lay beneath the sea. The consequent difference in the geology of south-east England, consisting as it does of secondary and tertiary rock formations of soft limestone, sandstone, chalk, gravels, sands and clays, has exercised a determining influence throughout the whole of English history. It has made the south-east England a land of gentle slopes and wide expanses of level plain. The nature of the rock formations has ensured a uniformly fertile soil, much of it easily drained. Further, the rainfall in south-eastern England nowhere exceeds 30 inches a year, while in the highland regions it is nowhere less than 40 inches. In the lowland zone communications have always been easy, agriculture has always prospered, and neither heat nor cold, drought nor excessive rain has ever been an obstacle to human prosperity. For this reason the lowland region has been more accessible and more attractive to invaders. For this reason also, until man was far more completely master of himself and his environment than at any time in these islands before the Norman Conquest, the relatively easy conditions of life in south-eastern England have not bred those qualities of vigorous

AREAS OF NEOLITHIC SETTLEMENT

resistance to change for which the highland region has been famous all through our history. In Mesolithic times the effects of this climatic difference were increased by the existence of a land bridge between Britain and the Continent. This land bridge was broken soon after 6000 B.C. and an exceptionally wet phase in the climate of north-western Europe followed which lasted until after 2000 B.C. Throughout these thirty centuries the land level slowly sank, and not until 1500 B.C. was our coastline, save for the minor results of later erosions, as it is to-day.

A thousand years earlier the first Neolithic peasant invaders of Britain arrived. They found the way across the North Sea and the Channel easier and shorter than it is to-day, but they found also that the "Atlantic" climate had intensified the forest growth, and particularly the growth of damp oakwood on our heavy clay soils. The Neolithic peasants could clear the scrub and light oakwood from the oolite and chalk ridges but made no headway against the thicker growths. Their settlements were thus broadly confined to the sand and gravel of the wide valleys and the oolite and chalk ridges and downs. Not until the Belgae brought the heavy plough in the first century B.C. was the area of settlement extended to the clay soils. As a consequence, for more than a thousand years the regions of the greatest wealth and power, the centres of population and the main lines of communication were different from those in Roman and later times.

The oolite limestone ridge that begins on the Cotswolds and continues through Northamptonshire to Lincoln Edge, and the chalk ridge of the Berkshire Downs, which continues as far as the Chilterns and curves round to form the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire wolds, formed the chief Midland areas of settlement until the Romans came. The contrast in the south of England between the Roman and pre-Roman centres of population is even more striking. The chalk ridges of the North and South Downs meet on Salisbury Plain with the western edge of the chalk ridge of the Chilterns and the northern end of the ridge which runs down from Salisbury to the Dorsetshire coast. In historical times, only the scourge of twentieth-century war induced men to put this wide chalk plateau under the plough. In pre-Christian times, on the contrary, Salisbury Plain was the agricultural centre of Britain and from it ran the great pre-Roman track ways, notably the Ickneild Way from Salisbury Plain across Berkshire and the

Chilterns to the Wash; the Harroway, running along the North Downs from Salisbury Plain to Dover, and the different ridgeways which follow the crests of the Downs and link the hill forts of Wessex.

There were, of course, more reasons than one for this concentration of population in the south-west. It is true that the earliest invaders did not bring the plough with them; they could not have tilled the heavy soils to advantage even if they could have cleared the almost impenetrable undergrowth which covered them. The oolite and chalk ridges were not only easily cleared, but provided a light soil, easily drained. Nevertheless, it is at least doubtful if the economic advantage of the porous soil of the Wessex Downs was much discussed in the Mediterranean, whence came most of our invaders who landed in the west. It is at least equally important to remember that, at the date of the first Neolithic invasion, the Channel passage at its eastern entrance was in all probability still only a swamp and closed for navigation.¹ In 2500 B.C. the normal deep sea route from the Mediterranean to the northern shores of Europe was the westerly route, which brought invaders up the Bristol Channel or to the Hampshire coast. Another early route was from what is now north Germany and Holland to the Wash or the Humber. The existence of natural ridgeways and trackways leading from the Wash and the Humber to Salisbury Plain and the Cotswold country was another factor tending to make Salisbury Plain the chief prehistoric centre of population.

We should not think of these ways as roads in our sense of the term. An excellent example of an ancient cross country route is the belt of light soil, known as the Jurassic zone, which runs from north Oxfordshire, across Northamptonshire to Lincoln, and thence to Yorkshire. We can consider this, even in late neolithic times, as a more or less open corridor, in places as much as twenty miles wide and flanked by dense forests. The Jurassic zone was used even in Neolithic times and it was a recognised channel of communication from the Bronze Age onwards. This is proved by the distribution of bronze and Iron Age remains along its course, and by the actual identity of style of later metal work in the south-western and north-eastern provinces of the later Iron Age culture in Britain. The Ickneild Way was also used in Neolithic times. Its course is marked by otherwise isolated groups of long barrows and the

¹ For a more detailed consideration cf. Fox, *The Personality of Britain* (Nat. Mus. of Wales, 1943), pp. 27-28.

THE WINDMILL HILL PEOPLE

remains of beaker pottery, thus showing its use at any rate from the beginning of the second millennium B.C.

We know of the first Neolithic invasion of Britain from the remains of a foreign camp culture with a distinctive (Windmill Hill) pottery. Windmill Hill pottery is found in all the neolithic hill forts of Wiltshire, Hampshire, Sussex and Devon, but the most important discovery was made at Windmill Hill, near Avebury, and for this accidental reason the pottery and the entire culture of its users has been so named.¹ The users of Windmill Hill pottery spread during the third millennium over Great Britain from the Channel to the Orkneys, and eastwards into Yorkshire. The general character of this invading civilisation is now known from the excavations of the hill forts. The Avebury Camp consists of three oval and roughly concentric ditches, the outer one being over 400 yards in diameter, all the ditches being interrupted at short intervals by causeways. In another Neolithic camp on the Trundle at Goodwood, the second ditch has post holes. In general, it is probably correct to regard these forts primarily as collective settlements; certainly we must not regard them as earthworks thrown up for military reasons. Our first Neolithic invaders were peaceable people, and came directly from north-east Gaul. Their pottery is recognisably akin to that of the Swiss Lake villages, the Rhineland and the Atlantic coast. It belongs to the family of imitation leather vessels, which we associate ultimately with the East, as opposed to imitation basket-work vessels, which we associate with the esparto grass lands of Spain and Africa.

Besides their pottery and their camp settlements, the Windmill Hill people brought with them their polished stone axes, bone implements of all kinds, including antler-combs and antler-picks, leaf-shaped arrow-heads, and flint saws and sickles. The most noteworthy, however, of all ascertained facts regarding our first invaders is that they were stock breeders. Among their remains, the bones of domestic animals, oxen, sheep, goats or pigs, outnumber the bones of wild animals and game. They also grew corn in small plots, and simple grinding stones have been identified. The remains of their oxen indicate a cross between the continental shorthorn and the long horned British wild oxen of Mesolithic times. This has suggested to some that the land bridge connecting with the Continent still existed at the time of the very earliest invasions, but the geological

¹ See Appendix II for a chronological list of main British cultures.

PHYSICAL MAP OF THE BRITISH ISLES.

The overprint shows probable sea routes, the natural boundary between the Highland and the Lowland Zones of Southern Britain, certain prehistoric landways, and the physiography of the Lowland Zone. Dots indicate "damp oak" forest; wavy lines fen or marsh.



they cut from the native rock. Communal self-sufficiency, though seen in its most dramatic form in this remote island, was characteristic of New Stone Age economy; whilst to-day we may be ruined by events on the continent of America, these farmers depended on little outside the bounds of their own pastures. There was, however, one exception to it on a scale large enough to be of some significance. The axe or adze was at this time an indispensable tool, serving to fell trees, for rough carpentry and also, no doubt, for use as a hoe. As it was comparatively large and demanded good material it could not well be made from surface pebbles. To meet this need a specialised industry grew up. In the highland country the most suitable rocks were quarried from the mountain side."¹

In the lowland region the Neolithic period from 2500 B.C. to 1800 B.C. is the great period of the English flint mines. As the Neolithic period proceeded flint mining developed, with the sinking of shafts and the driving of galleries, into a highly organised industry. The famous mines at Grimes Graves, in west Norfolk, extend over an area of more than 20 acres. These mines continued in use into Bronze Age times, and probably until the beginning of the British Iron Age.

Almost and perhaps quite contemporaneous with the Windmill Hill culture another distinct Neolithic culture is found in Eastern Britain. This is distinguished by the so-called Peterborough pottery, of a more advanced and ornamented type than that of the Windmill Hill people and clearly related to the recognised Neolithic pottery in Finland and Russia. At one time it was held that there had been a second immigration of Neolithic folk comparable with that of the Windmill Hill people from Gaul. It is now believed that the Peterborough people were the original Mesolithic inhabitants of East Anglia who had merely adopted, with variations, the Neolithic arts and crafts from immigrant traders from the Baltic. The east of Britain in Mesolithic times "was part of a great cultural unit centred in the West Baltic region,"² and it is noteworthy that the Peterborough remains, like the Mesolithic, are found in the low river lands and the watersides, while the Windmill Hill and all later invaders preferred the chalk uplands. Mesolithic Britain had been influenced by the Baltic "Ertebolle" culture and it is probable that Baltic trading connections maintained as late as 2500 B.C. account for the Peterborough

¹ Jacquetta Hawkes, *Early Britain* (Collins), p. 15.

² C. F. C. Hawkes, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

pottery which is found in a great number of settlement sites in England, Scotland and Wales. Its widespread diffusion has suggested to some investigators that the Peterborough people were primarily hunters and traders and there is even evidence to suggest that they acted as distributors of certain types of Neolithic manufacture. The characteristic Peterborough pottery is found in association with flint mines, with north Welsh stone axes and with fragments of Rhineland stone. This association of "Peterborough" remains with native Neolithic manufactures and with other implements brought from some distance to the places where they have been found, certainly suggests trade, but we can say no more than that.

The next Neolithic "invasion" was also an invasion of traders and seafaring merchants and brought the megalithic culture of the western Mediterranean to our shores. These megalith builders are, to us, people of mystery, which is not surprising, when we consider how little we know of the origins of some of the captains of industry of our own world. They came to our shores from the western Mediterranean where, on the coasts of Spain and Portugal, in Sardinia, Sicily and the Balearics and, most notably, in Malta, the most famous remains of their culture are to be found.¹ The Mediterranean megalith builders have been called "prospectors" because their remains, sited in islands or by the shores along the sea trade routes of ancient times, clearly belong to a trading and maritime people. In Malta they lie across the trade routes of the western Mediterranean; in Portugal they are found at the mouth of the Tagus; in Denmark along the amber coast; in Brittany, land of gold and tin, by the great estuary of Morbihan and Quiberon Bay. In Great Britain they are found along the sea route which linked Ireland, another golden land in those days, with Denmark, and in Devon and Cornwall, then as now rich in tin.

The megalithic culture was primarily religious, centred round a cult of the dead, which had some connection with the fertility cult of the eastern "Mother Goddess." Rude female statuettes of traditional Mediterranean type have been found in Britain associated with the tombs characteristic of the megalithic people and in France female symbols were frequently carved on standing stones and megalithic monuments. This reinforces the general belief that the original megalithic

¹ Megaliths are found not only in the Mediterranean and along all the coasts of north-west Europe, but in Asia, in the Pacific and in South America but there is no evidence linking the megaliths found outside Europe with the Mediterranean megalithic culture.

people, of slight, dark, long headed Mediterranean stock, like the Windmill Hill people, were peasants, not pastoralists. The great stone circles such as those at Avebury and Stonehenge, with their peculiar orientation, presumably connected in some way with sun worship, belong to a much later period and indicate a fusion between the original megalithic religion and the traditional sky-god beliefs of the later pastoralist invaders.

The earliest megalithic tombs as found in southern Spain and Portugal are burial vaults entered by a low narrow passage, usually excavated in the ground and lined with stones, or sometimes cut out of the rock. These are known as passage graves. Variants of this type are the single chamber with an entrance but no passage, the burial chamber being formed usually out of three to six upright stones with a single great roofing slab (dolmenic cists) and the gallery graves, consisting of the stone lined passage without the vault at the end. In north-west France and in Britain all these varieties are found, but in Britain they are not excavated or cut out of rocks or mountain sides but are surmounted instead by barrows, sometimes of immense size, and usually over 250 feet in length. Some of these barrows in the south of England are unchambered, but were used for collective interments. Here again the burial customs of the megalithic people contrast with those of the later pastoralists whose chieftains were buried singly under the equally familiar round barrows, the graves being left afterwards undisturbed.

Some of the megalithic peoples, whatever their provenance, came to Britain by sea from Brittany, but most came from the Mediterranean. The distribution of their tombs is predominantly western. There are a great number in Wessex, but still more in Ireland, on the Welsh coast, in the outer Hebrides and in Caithness and the Orkneys. A few are found by the Wash and in the East Riding of Yorkshire, where settlements were probably made by traders from Ireland.¹

It is sometimes thought that the unchambered long barrows were built by the Windmill Hill people and that only the tombs of strictly megalithic type—passage and gallery graves and dolmenic cists used for successive interments—represent the religion of later immigrants or visiting traders. On this guess, the Wessex long barrows would be older than the megalithic

¹ In early Neolithic times there is evidence of regular trading intercourse between Ireland and Yorkshire. The Ickneild Way from Wessex to the Wash was possibly not in use quite as early as this.

tombs and of the same date of the causewayed camps built by the Windmill Hill people. And on this view, where the long barrows conceal megalithic tombs, these represent "the grafting of the Atlantic tradition of megalithic architecture on to a pre-existing type of sepulchre."¹ O. G. S. Crawford's view, however, is that the long barrow is merely the reproduction in earth of a characteristic type of megalithic burial.²

Although the megalith builders were a seafaring and trading people, the furniture of all their early graves is remarkably poor. The megalithic remains are not found associated with new or even distinctive types of pottery and implements, but with the prevalent types of the country and period to which the remains belong. Thus, the pottery from the earliest English long barrows and gallery graves is of the Windmill Hill type, while in southern France, where the megalithic tombs are later in date, they are associated with the beaker type of pottery of the early Bronze Age. In North Africa the megalithic remains are of Iron Age date. In Malta, where the megalithic remains belong wholly to the Neolithic Age, the pottery has affinities with the painted pottery cultures of eastern Europe.

These are formidable facts. Against them, those who are convinced that the megalithic builders were men of one race and culture can set no more convincing arguments than certain architectural affinities between the dolmens and certain Egyptian tombs, and the suggestion that the evidence of Egyptian influence may at one time have been present in the megalithic graves, but subsequently lost or removed.

The greater probability is that the megalith builders were not men of one race, but men more or less of one faith which they wished to spread, and they perhaps wished to ensure, by due attention to the funeral rites and ritual burials, the safety of their fellows who might die on the voyage. In any case we know that the greatest megalithic monument we possess—Stonehenge—indeed one of the greatest in the world—is not the work of any megalithic people, but belongs to the Bronze Age, by which time southern England was dominated by the Beaker and Battleaxe people from the Rhineland. These, unlike the Windmill Hill folk, were warrior peoples who imposed their culture on the conquered. If the early megalith

¹ V. Gordon Childe, *Prehistoric Communities of the British Isles* (Chambers, 1940), p. 64.

² Crawford, *Wessex from the Air*, quoted by Childe.

THE BEAKER INVASIONS

builders had been an invading tribe or race they would have been among the conquered, and defeated tribes do not erect imperishable memorials in the midst of their conquerors.

The vast mounds which cover the graves of the megalithic people are out of all proportion to the size of the tombs or the number of interments. Many of the mounds covering only four or five interments exceed 300 feet in length, and the true megalithic tombs are carefully constructed with a surrounding wall of stone and turf round the actual burial chambers, and the mountain of earth symmetrically heaped above them. There may be two, or even three concentric walls; the entrance to the tombs is always through a forecourt, often defined by a semicircle of unhewn monoliths, stone walls or timber revetments. The erection of these tombs was preceded by an elaborate consecration of the site by fire, sometimes, apparently, accompanied by sacrifice. The dead were buried in a sitting posture, and the tombs remained in use from generation to generation, the bones of earlier burials being put carelessly on one side to make room for the latest arrivals.

The correct interpretation of these facts is doubtful. There is no harmony between the magnificence of the conception, the size of the exteriors and the mean disorder of the actual graves. At any rate, those interred in the English long barrows had only the rude belongings of a half-savage and wholly primitive society, and the nature of the ritual which governed the burial can only have been half understood.

On the other hand, the later remains of the megalith people in Ireland and in western Scotland show a distinctive and more advanced culture which appears to be unrelated to any earlier remains in those parts. The first Irish remains are similar to the English, with Windmill Hill pottery, but later remains, dating from early in the second millennium, have a distinctive pottery. The culture to which the tombs in the Wicklow Mountains belong, usually known as the Boyne culture, was certainly not derived by any process of evolution from the culture of the English long barrow builders. It belongs to the Bronze Age and came direct to Ireland from Portugal. We must indeed regard the arrival of the Boyne culture in Ireland as a movement similar to but probably earlier in date than the invasion of Britain by the mixed Beaker people.

The first two waves of Beaker folk reached our shores about 1900 B.C. One came from Brittany to Wessex and the other from Holland to the east coast. The wanderings by sea and land

Beaker
invasions,
1900-1800
B.C.

of this remarkable people are typical of the second millennium, the great age of trans-European migrations. We know little of the Beaker folk except their pottery, nor do we know what sent them wandering by many different routes across Europe, so that Beaker pottery is found in Spain, in southern France, in the Rhineland and in north Italy, Austria and Bohemia, as well as in this country. They certainly started on their wanderings from Spain, and we must regard them as the descendants of the Mesolithic inhabitants of Spain who had acquired the chalcolithic civilisation of the Near East from North Africa and perhaps also from the seafaring merchants of Troy, Crete and the Cyclades late in the third millennium. At the same time they had also acquired the arts of agriculture from the Neolithic peasant settlements at Almeria. Without any great assurance we can regard them as the descendants of the Magdalenians whose rock paintings are the chief artistic achievement of prehistoric man. But they had learnt since Mesolithic times the practice of agriculture, the use of metals and the habit of trade. They had also adopted, it seems, the pastoralist religion. They were of broad-headed alpine stock, and we must not suppose that their culture represented any substantial advance on that of the Windmill Hill people. Indeed, the round huts of the Beaker flint miners on Easton Down, Salisbury, are definitely more primitive than the square frame-houses of our first invaders. Their famous pottery is, on the contrary, far in advance of anything earlier in Britain. The beakers are, in the first place, flat bottomed, and the incised decoration occasionally reproduces animal forms derived from the Mesolithic rock painting tradition.

The mixture of races and cultures which went to the making of the Beaker people is no more significant in prehistory than the development of half a score of similarly mixed cultures in all the culture provinces of Europe in the second millennium. The cause of the Beaker migrations is, however, an interesting subject for speculation. Migration is characteristic of the fighting pastoralists rather than the peasants. The Beaker folk were, however, traders as well as peasants. They came out of France by two routes, into Italy and across the Brenner Pass into central Europe, and up the Rhone Valley into Brittany and the Rhineland. From both places they crossed to Britain. We may suppose that they went in search of metals and amber but they went armed with bows and arrows and copper daggers. They may well have come under the leadership of some of the

THE RHINELAND INVASION

warrior traders dispersed over the Mediterranean littoral after the fall of the second City of Troy. Certainly when they met the authentic warrior tribes with their stone battleaxes in Thuringia they were able to settle side by side with them and to produce a new and far more aggressive culture. These Beaker-Battleaxe people from the Rhineland invaded Britain 100 years after the first Beaker invasions from Brittany and Holland.

Rhineland
invaders,
1800 B.C.

These Beaker-Battleaxe invaders brought Britain into the orbit of the metal-using culture of the East. They came to the east coast of England, and penetrated the lowland zone from east to west, where they met the descendants of the Windmill Hill folk and the long barrow builders on Salisbury Plain. From their remains we know them not only as the bearers of a mixed culture but as a mixed race, representing possibly the first fusion of the Alpine and "Nordic" strains, a fusion particularly significant as providing almost certainly an ancestry for the Celtic peoples. These Rhineland invaders created no settlements and brought strictly speaking no civilisation; they were metal users, not pioneers of metallurgy; pastoralists and traders, not farmers; conquerors, not colonisers; yet to this pastoral and warrior people we owe the completion and elaboration of the great Henge memorials, the development of the Atlantic and Irish trade in metals, and, later in the second millennium, the development of a native metallurgy.

We have a steady development from this point, throughout Britain, of the trading, pastoral and metal-using civilisations which culminates in the barbaric force of the Middle Bronze Age which began in 1400 B.C. This development was perhaps intensified in Wessex by a further immigration of warrior peoples from Brittany in 1700. Certainly from that date we must regard the successive Wessex cultures as being slightly more aristocratic, more definitely imposed by the conquering warrior chieftains, than was the case elsewhere in Britain. In the Midlands, the South-east and the North, the Neolithic peasantry, the different Beaker invaders of Britain, Beaker traders from Ireland and the followers of warrior chieftains, spreading south and north as well as west from East Anglia were, according to the finds of pottery, stone and bronze implements and the furniture of the graves, inextricably inter-mixed. Only the gradual spread throughout Britain of the single graves tells us of the growing influence of the warrior-pastoral peoples even in the early Bronze Age, when the so-

called food-vessel culture of the north, east and south must, in other respects, be distinguished from the culture of the Wessex chieftains. The individual burial as has been well said is "a rite obviously in harmony not only with a necessity imposed by nomadism but also with a patriarchal individualist outlook."¹

It was in Wessex that the Beaker and warrior peoples left their most enduring memorials in the great temples of Avebury and Stonehenge. The circular bank at Avebury is fifty feet high and encloses 28½ acres. The circle of stones set just inside the bank is the largest in Europe. William Stukeley, in his *Abury* in 1743, pays a characteristic eighteenth-century tribute to our prehistoric ancestors when he says that Avebury shows "a notorious grandeur of taste, a justness of peace, an apparent symmetry, a sufficient niceness in the execution, in compass very extensive, in effect magnificent and agreeable. The boldness of the imagination we cannot sufficiently admire."

Within the large outer circle were two more concentric circles and from the south-east ran a great avenue lined with megaliths set in pairs 50 feet apart at intervals of 80 feet. This avenue was more than a mile in length. The bank and the two small circles date from the earliest Beaker invasions, but the great stone circle and the avenue date from the time of the Beaker-Battleaxe invasions. Adjacent to the temple itself is Silbury Hill, the largest artificial mound in western Europe, covering more than five acres and rising to a height of 125 feet.

Even more famous than Avebury is Stonehenge because of the more impressive character of the actual remains and the greater elaboration of its architecture; the outer ring of sarsen stones is lintelled with mortice and tenon to form a continuous ring. Within is a concentric circle of blue-stone monoliths, and, inside this, a horseshoe setting of five pairs of lintelled monoliths of sarsen, and an inner horseshoe of blue-stone monoliths; a great altar stone lies across the axis of the inner horseshoes. The stones have all been dressed to a smooth surface and have a curiously finished appearance even to-day. Nevertheless appearances are especially deceptive in the case of Stonehenge, because the surviving circles look small, set as they are on what is now a windswept and barren plain. There were originally three outer circles, the largest of timber posts, and a great circular bank, the diameter of the outer circle being roughly three times that of the largest standing circle to-day.

¹ *Jacquetta Hawkes, op. cit., p. 20.*

There was also a great avenue more than a mile long, ending on the banks of the Avon. Both Avebury and Stonehenge appear to be aligned on the mid-summer sunrise.

A whole literature has been written in the attempt to trace the history and purpose of these vast structures. They are noteworthy in their completed form as memorials of the power of the rulers of Wessex and of their command of technical resources. The whole of the stones of Stonehenge were brought from a distance, the sarsens from north Wiltshire, the blue-stones from the Prescelly mountain in Pembrokeshire and the "altar stone" either from Glamorgan or Milford Haven. A great command of labour and considerable resources of transport were required for both these temples, and there are very many lesser circles of earth, timber and stone hardly less impressive. The whole picture suggests not only a powerful centralised rule, but a unified culture and a considerable population. It is impossible to imagine that these immense constructions were brought into being by unwilling hands. Like the great Christian cathedrals they speak eloquently of a deep and enthusiastic faith in a power unseen but not unknown.

We must remember nevertheless that it is to the first Beaker invaders from Brittany—a peasant, not a warrior people—that we must ascribe the beginning of these great temples. The megalithic religion of southern Britain at the time of the Beaker invasions was, as we have seen, a development of the characteristic peasant worship of the Earth Goddess. The Beaker people were a peasant people who had adopted the pastoralist religion, but we may reasonably guess that they were familiar with the megalithic religion and that their sunward worship was prepared, if not to adopt, at least to adapt to their own beliefs, the megalithic traditions. Indeed, the stone circles can be plausibly regarded as the domed circular tomb adapted under megalithic influence by the mixed warrior and peasant peoples of Holland and North-west and Central Germany but no longer earthed up but opened to the sky. With the arrival in Wessex of Beaker-Battleaxe people the cult of the stone circles reached its highest expression in Stonehenge which, as we know from the middle Bronze Age barrows concentrated there, remained a centre of a lively and potent religious faith for some hundreds of years. The spread of this faith far and wide is testified by the wide distribution throughout Great Britain of the circle monuments and reflects a harmony fully attained by the middle Bronze Age between the

beliefs and customs of the warrior peoples and the earlier Neolithic inhabitants of our islands.

This view is markedly confirmed by other evidence. As we approach the middle Bronze Age, we approach an age of great trading activity in gold, bronze and amber, marked by the beginnings of a native metallurgy. The highways and the coastal waters were alike open and secure.

The Irish gold trade bears similar witness to the growth and settled character of civilisation in the lowland zone of Britain in the middle Bronze Age. In the early Bronze Age almost all the Irish gold was traded to the highland zone. In the middle Bronze period 72 per cent of the gold imports from Ireland went to the lowland zone. At the same time imports of bronze tools and weapons from Ireland, which had been very great before 1700, gradually fell off, until by 1400 B.C. they seem to have ceased altogether. The conclusions to be drawn from the distribution of Irish bronze and gold are clear. When the Beaker-Battleaxe folk and the warrior invaders of Wessex first arrived, they developed the Irish trade in what were to them the principal necessities—bronze tools and weapons. By 1500 B.C. or thereabouts they had created a relatively stable and metal-using civilisation in southern England which spread all over the lowland zone. The demand for imported necessities declined, and a greatly increased trade in luxuries took its place.¹

Outside Wessex we have almost everywhere a truly mixed culture incorporating characteristics from the latest Wessex invaders and their Beaker and Neolithic predecessors, and a wide distribution of such ornaments as crescent jet necklaces and gold lunula, indicating an active cross-country trade. The pottery is of many types, but diffused according to no clear pattern. We must imagine vigorous pastoral and trading communities, with regular interchanges between even the most distant parts. It is indeed safe to say that there was more communication in the middle Bronze Age between highlands and lowlands, between eastern and northern England, and with Scotland, Wales and Ireland, than we shall find again until Roman times. In Wessex itself the chieftains' graves indicate a higher civilisation, with clear traces of a small ruling class

¹ I am indebted for these ingenious inferences to Sir Cyril Fox (*The Personality of Britain*, 1943 edn., p. 45, *et seq.*). They are confirmed by the reverse trend which his investigations reveal in the later Bronze Age (1000-500 B.C.) when Britain was again invaded and gold imports from Ireland again fell off. Of the total finds related to that period 72 per cent are in the highland zone.

expending their accumulated surplus on luxuries, including gold, amber and beads. The trade of Wessex extended from Ireland to the Baltic, and southwards perhaps to Crete.

By 1400 B.C. we have reached the threshold of history. Already present in England by the middle of the second millennium were the descendants of the first peasant culture of the European lowlands, of the Alpine broad-heads, and of the Nordic battleaxe folk who represented the dominant Indo-European warrior strain. From the fusion of these three racial elements everywhere in Europe new peoples were coming to birth and regional cults and customs were everywhere arising. We can trace, in the graves of the Wessex chieftains, the nearest approximation in Britain to the heroic age. Elsewhere in Britain there are isolated graves of great chieftains with gold-mounted daggers, cups of amber, gold and shale, barbed arrow-heads and arrow-straighteners, but in Wessex there are upwards of a hundred of these graves still identifiable. They are a fitting and indeed necessary complement to the great "henge" cathedrals, and reflect like them the wealth and power of the economic, political and religious centre of England.

Middle
Bronze
Age,
c. 1400 B.C.

There is ample evidence for sufficient peaceful comings and goings between Britain and the Continent, both by the short and the long sea route, to account fully for all the parallels between the arts and crafts of Brittany, central Europe, the Mediterranean and Wessex. It was only the rude beginning of a civilisation, for there had been in north-western Europe no archaic civilisation on which the warrior peoples could build any such luxurious and powerful society as was soon to flourish in Greece, and which is pictured for us in Homer. But there were the beginnings of regular trade, with Ireland, Scandinavia, Central Europe, the Rhone Valley and the Aegean, the beginnings also of government, of the accumulation of wealth and the consequent expansion of population. The result, in the centuries following the completion of Stonehenge, was an unprecedented uniformity of culture all over the British Isles.

This culture, in its later developments towards the end of the second millennium is known as the Urn culture and was accompanied by a fresh invasion from the Continent. The culture spread from Wessex, partly by trade and partly by a process of colonisation. The previously settled area was substantially extended. It reached the knolls and ridges of the Cheshire plains, the moorlands of north-east Yorkshire, the

Lake District, and the moors of the Pennines "deserted since Mesolithic times.¹ These movements speak of a notable increase in population and no doubt the greater wealth of Wessex meant that this great increase was most marked there. If so, there may have been some migration from the south to the north, but it was a peaceable expansion, not a conquest. The new settlements still avoided the clay soils. Indeed, they were often on land hardly suitable even for cattle and sheep. This has suggested to some authorities "an intensification of swine breeding at the expense of mixed farming." We need not share that rather gloomy view of northern England in the heyday of the Bronze Age civilisation. Grains of wheat, barley and flax have been detected in the clay of the funeral urns of the period, and small cultivated fields have been traced on the moors of Yorkshire and Devon. These ancestors of ours, if not yet skilled agriculturalists, were nevertheless farmers as well as pig keepers and pastoralists. They lived in small village settlements, remains of which have been found mostly in places where the nature of the soil or the climate was unsuitable for plough agriculture and where, therefore, there were few settlements later than the Bronze Age.

The so-called hut circle was their characteristic dwelling-place—circular buildings of stone with walls not more than three and a half or four feet high, probably with a conical roof from nine and a half to fifteen feet across, supported by a central post. These huts had a simple hearth with a cooking-hole by the side, and a built-up dais for sitting or sleeping. Usually they are found in small groups, sometimes surrounded by strong circular walls of a surprising thickness. The wall at Grimspound, which contains 20 circles, was five and a half feet high and ten feet in thickness.

These village communities must have been the principal customers for the greatly developed metal industries of the later Bronze Age. The metal industry contemporaneous with the great chieftains' graves in Wessex was still a weapon industry, and its characteristic types were exported to northern and central Europe as well as to Spain and Portugal, yet we cannot postulate even in those days an industry manufacturing solely for the great chieftains and for export. The village communities must have been purchasers also, and to their growing demands we can attribute the first industrial revolution of our history, at the beginning of the first millennium.

¹ Childe, *Prehistoric England*, p. 156.

THE FIRST INDUSTRY

This revolution consisted firstly in the adaptation of the new metal industry to domestic and industrial uses, and secondly in something, which it is not wholly absurd to call factory production. The first workers in bronze had probably been attached to the camps of the chieftains. They were individual craftsmen supplying the immediate needs of those who employed them. The characteristic feature of the late Bronze Age is the bronze-founders' hoard, collections of scrap metal which indicate clearly that a system of large scale production was in existence. From Heathery Burn, near Stanhope in Durham, we find in association with one of these hoards the first definite indication in Britain of the domestication of the horse and the use of wheeled vehicles. At the same time, bronze began to be used not only for tools of all kinds but also for cooking utensils and notably for cauldrons. These new products of our earliest factory industry followed continental patterns, but show no trace of any single predominant influence. It was an age when tribes were constantly on the move and new fashions spread rapidly, and we may infer a fairly constant influx from the Continent of new migrants bringing new patterns and designs with them. It was no longer merely the ruling chiefs who desired weapons and ornaments; for the first time we find a metal-using society. Bronze ware of English manufacture has been found all over western Europe, and so numerous are the finds in northern France that a very close association between the two countries must be inferred.

It remains true, despite the increase in the use of metals, that Britain never attained any really high civilisation during the late Bronze Age, which was, indeed, a period when Britain was notably backward as compared even with the north-west of Europe. The land continued, until after 750 B.C., to be sparsely inhabited, no great buildings or even new settlements of noteworthy size or character arose, and the general diffusion of such arts of civilisation as the middle Bronze Age had produced seems to have induced a passive stagnation. Once more, the watch had run down. The progress which marked the last seven hundred years of the prehistoric period in Britain was wholly due to a succession of fresh invasions.

The cultures imposed by the Urnfield (750 B.C.), the Hallstatt (500 B.C.) and the La Tène (350 B.C.) invasions bring us into historical times, the times, that is, for which we have a continuous and reliable written record. These centuries saw the

Early
Iron Age
in Britain,
500 B.C.

birth of the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome but none of these disquieting glories were for us. Yet even in these islands, the last seven hundred years before the birth of Christ was an age of comparatively rapid progress. At the beginning of this period, marked by the introduction of the light plough by the Urnfield people, we were, on the purely material level, many hundreds of years behind the peasant civilisation of Hungary and the Danube basin. The decisive invention of the broadsword in these lands some four hundred years earlier had marked the end of the military domination of central Europe by the eastern Mediterranean basin. It was brought to these islands as the weapon of a determined body of traders and colonists, the advance guard of the Celtic warriors who were soon to sweep across western Europe with their chariots and horses, the first men of western Europe who rivalled, albeit a thousand years too late for fame, the grandeur of the heroes of Homer.

The men of the Urnfield culture reached southern and eastern England round about 750 B.C. The warrior herdsman of the stagnant and passive late Bronze Age civilisations of Britain, whose wife tilled a little barley and wheat, "was not converted into a settled ploughman by the mere example of neighbours overseas or by a few conquering warlords. It took an actual immigration of land-hungry peasants."¹

These invaders, like the third wave of Beaker invaders, were of Alpine peasant stock fused with the fighting Indo-European warriors, identified by their battleaxes and tumulus graves. By this date it is permissible to describe them as Celts. They came from the lower Rhine to East Anglia, Sussex and Wessex and are known to prehistorians of Britain as the Deverel-Rimbury folk, distinguished by their urn-field burials, and their improved methods of farming, which we can reconstruct from the ancient fields associated with Deverel-Rimbury settlements. Even without this evidence, the number of still identifiable interments (there are over 600 in Dorset alone) indicate a great expansion of population which could not have been supported by the old agriculture.

The new agriculture was based on the light plough, drawn by oxen, but scratching the soil, not turning the sod. Hence arose the so-called Celtic field, an irregular square as opposed to the long strip fields of the Belgae of the last century B.C. The light plough scratched but did not turn the soil; this

¹ Childe, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

THE FIRST IRON AGE CULTURE

meant that the soil must be ploughed twice, once along and once across the contour.

We have described the Deverel-Rimbury folk as invaders because of their number and the definite substitution of new for old habits in the districts which they occupied. But the urns found in the new urn-fields testify to all kinds of influences and we cannot assume that the invaders were all of one tribe or stock or that they fought a war of extermination. Nevertheless, the dramatic falling off of the Irish gold trade indicates that these were centuries of disturbance. The invaders brought with them, in addition to the light plough, improved spindle whorls and cylindrical loom weights, and their square fields and cattle runs mark the beginnings of a more truly agricultural civilisation.

They were followed by other Celtic invaders from the Rhone, who brought with them, perhaps not more than two centuries later, the beginnings of the first Iron Age culture, known to European prehistory as the Hallstatt culture, and to English prehistory as the Iron Age A civilisation. These, like the Deverel-Rimbury folk, came first to our south and east coasts, but their settlements have been traced as far north as Scarborough and as far to the south-west as Exeter. They are of three kinds: open villages, isolated farmhouses and hilltop forts. Their only direct contribution to progress was their use of silos for storing grain, and from the number and capacity of these we can estimate that the average size of the isolated Iron Age A farm was probably 15 acres. This implies the absence of labour-saving machinery and substantial labour regularly available, but the immense hill forts built (or, in some cases, rebuilt) in the Iron Age, provide evidence on this point which is far more striking.

Iron
Age A,
c. 500 B.C.

These hill forts vary in size from 6 to 80 acres, the normal size being from 14 to 24 acres. The defences are constructed on a uniform plan, consisting of a deep "V" shaped ditch, separated from the ramparts themselves by a platform from 6 to 10 feet wide. These ramparts to-day present the deceptive appearance of gentle, grassy slopes. Actually they were abrupt, and faced with a strong wooden or stone revetment carried up to form a parapet. The ramparts of Cissbury, the largest of these forts, are estimated to contain 60,000 tons of chalk and the revetment must have required from eight to twelve thousand timbers, each at least 15 feet high and 9 inches thick. Had these stupendous earthworks been preserved, or were they restored,

we should be able to see at a glance what is now revealed only to archæologists, the evidence of the size and power of the Iron Age A civilisation. As public works these forts take rank with the great pyramids. The labour of thousands of men must have been concentrated on these stupendous memorials of a peasant civilisation determined to survive.

Iron
Age B,
c. 300 B.C.

There is evidence that they were successful, for in the third century B.C. a fresh wave of Celtic invaders from Brittany reached Dorset and Somerset, whence it spread along the Cotswolds and into the Midlands. A similar invasion took place in the north-east, where a branch of the Parisii, familiar to us from the pages of Cæsar, and identifiable as a Celtic tribe in Yorkshire as late as the second century A.D., settled in the East Riding. Other late Iron Age invaders reached Scotland about the same time. All these invaders represented the late Iron Age civilisation of Gaul, known as the La Tène culture. This culture had been born of the first direct contact between the mixed warrior and peasant population of Gaul and the urban civilisation of the East, represented by the Greek cities of Marseilles and southern Gaul, and, across the Alpine passes, by the Etruscans in Italy. From southern Gaul and Italy came jars of Mediterranean wine with complete table services of Greek and Etruscan metal vessels and Attic or Italian pottery, exchanged for amber, furs, slaves and forest products. Artisans from Greece taught the native craftsmen to copy classical metal-work and to produce for the first time in western Europe what have remained the everyday necessities of our own living. From the Etruscans came the light two-wheeled chariot in which the heroes went to battle and to death. The La Tène communities provided employment for skilled wheelwrights, armourers and metal-workers and produced the first regular succession of artist craftsmen with whom begins the authentic tradition of Celtic art. This art had its source in the classical models and motifs; its inspiration in the Celtic genius for abstract generalisations informed by an astonishingly fine perception of æsthetic possibilities. The result was a flamboyant reaction from the naturalism of classical motifs. The La Tène invaders of Britain brought with them this art fully developed and England is rich in its remains.

These powerful invaders did not introduce everywhere a uniformly high level of culture. In Scotland, where they built innumerable forts, with stupendous stone ramparts from 10 to 20 feet thick, the majority of the invaders were warrior

farmers rather than great chieftains, pioneers rather than conquerors. Only in the western Highlands do their forts lose the character of fortified hill-top villages and appear as the living places of clan chieftains. The Yorkshire invaders, on the other hand, brought with them a definitely aristocratic civilisation, and their chieftains were nobly buried with their chariots as they had been in the great Iron Age graves in Champagne. This civilisation spread east and south wherever the subordination of the established peasant agriculture enabled the chieftains to lead their traditional life as a ruling class, exchanging the benefits of government for the lion's share of the wealth of the governed. But many of the warrior peasants of the Iron Age A culture who had built the hill forts, survived the invasion, as at Maiden Castle, or made terms with it, as at Cissbury. We can trace in Wessex the influence of a higher culture and an expanding population, but no break in the long established Iron Age A tradition.

This is all the more remarkable because the La Tène invaders in Somerset and Cornwall established a higher and more urbanised civilisation on the very frontiers of Wessex. This civilisation is represented to-day by the remains of great stone forts in Cornwall—Chun Castle is a famous example—and by the marsh village of Glastonbury, where the evidence suggests a settled trading community enjoying a civilisation higher in many respects than that of the great chieftains of Yorkshire. Glastonbury agriculture included the cultivation of wheat, barley and beans, and the breeding of cattle, sheep, pigs and goats. Corn was ground in the rotary quern, and there was a highly developed cottage-weaving industry of the type which survived in the Hebrides into the nineteenth century. Transport was by dug-out canoes and four-wheeled carts.

"The peat of Glastonbury has preserved" we are told "exceptional testimony to the skill of the carpenters and wheelwrights who built the vehicles, houses, platforms, loom-frames and other articles . . . even tubs built up of staves have survived, as well as smaller vessels made of a single piece of timber turned on the lathe." Other curious finds are a set of dice and a dice-box. Here is progress indeed!

The wealth of the village was clearly founded on trade. Not only are the remains rich in the wares of other districts; tin from Cornwall, lead from the Mendips, shale from Dorest, glass beads from Gaul; but the Glastonbury civilisation provides specimens of the first known British currency in the form

of iron currency bars. These *taliae ferreae* were still used in southern England in Cæsar's day. Their distribution, which extends into Sussex and the Thames Valley, to the Cornish borders, and up to the Severn into the Midlands, bears witness to an ordered economic system.

Although Glastonbury seems to have been a flourishing centre of this economic system, we must note in these last centuries of the pre-Christian era a distinct shifting of the political and cultural centre from Wessex towards the Thames valley, Sussex and Kent. By the date of the last Celtic invasion, that of the Belgæ, the recognised centre of Britain's wealth and power was the Thames valley, where Cæsar found a few years later a genuine state organisation under Cassivellaunus, with its headquarters in a great city of 100 acres, above Wheathampstead.

Belgic
invasion,
75 B.C.

The Belgic invasion is the first date, Cassivellaunus the first name, in British history. But there is less in this than appears. We know to-day much more than was thought possible, even fifty years ago, of British prehistory. The bare summary which we have attempted here is not a summary of ingenious guesses or of folk traditions but, in the main, of facts ascertained by highly scientific research. We lack dates and names. We shall never experience, in studying prehistoric England, the thrill which comes from the revelation of the individual motives and passions which fashioned events as surely then as now. But we do know, what was completely hidden from the historians of the nineteenth century, the background of our history, the kind of men who successively peopled our country and contributed to the common stock from which we are descended. We know over at least two thousand years how these ancestors of ours lived and behaved. We can identify and differentiate between the peasants, the pastoralists, the traders and the warriors. We can assess with a considerable degree of accuracy the determination of events by the interplay of natural forces, and the characters of peoples. We thus begin to study the written records in the light of much knowledge denied to earlier students.

The Roman invasion was not the beginning of our history as some have thought. It was one of a series of invasions, each of which had brought nearer to us the city civilisation of the Mediterranean, itself only the reconstruction, in a secular and dynamic form, of that archaic civilisation which the age of the heroes had pillaged and wrecked, but never destroyed. We

start our study therefore with the knowledge that the record of human history before as after the birth of Christ is the record of creation and destruction, of progress and decline, the one rendered possible by the industry, the second rendered inevitable by the passions of men. We start also with the knowledge that the complex business of building a civilisation depends on a mixture of races and the blending of characters and aptitudes. Finally, we start with the knowledge that the civilisation of our island was wholly imported, that we are European first and British only in a secondary sense. We must begin to harbour a suspicion too, that the genius of our island lies in its capacity to receive, to absorb and to use, rather than to create and to give. Yet this very suspicion should forewarn us against the ready acceptance of easy theories. Our history is not determined by the influence of Celt, Roman or Teuton, by this system of government or that, by climate, race or creed. To our far western shores come in time all races, all creeds and all systems, and their effects, if not unpredictable, have usually been unpredicted. It is a history full of hope, but full of warning. We are the people upon whom, by the inherent logic of events, all the ends of the earth must come.

Chapter Three

THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF BRITAIN

THE CULTURE of the Iron Age in Britain was but a barbaric reflection of the far higher civilisation of Gaul. This civilisation, in its turn, was an ambitious, brilliant but disorderly copy of the high city civilisation of the Mediterranean, which from the days of Pericles to those of Julius Cæsar overshadowed, and was soon to dominate, the ancient centres of civilisation in Egypt and Asia.

So rapid had been the advance of Grecian civilisation that the age of Homer, whose poems are the earliest surviving specimens of European speech, had, as early perhaps as 800 B.C., passed into a legend. That heroic world had vanished under the stress of a new invasion of warrior peoples, this time the Dorians, from the north.

With the exception of the Israelites, none of the great peoples of history has an ancestry so confused and mixed as that of those men of genius who lived in Greece in classical times. Cretan, Achaean and Dorian invaders had in turn overrun the mainland of Greece, but the most potent cultural influences still came from the Ionian cities which had not experienced the catastrophic effects of the Achaean and Dorian invasions but had preserved more or less intact the best of the old eastern and Aegean civilisation. Following on the Dorian invasion in 1000 B.C. the Dorian warriors and peasants, who formed the small mainland communities, built up between 900 and 600 the city-states so famous in history. The independence of these states was favoured by the peculiarities of the Greek landscape, which tended to cut off each community from its neighbours and to impose on each a policy directed to self-sufficiency and independence. By a singularly fortunate chance, the difficulty of land communication was offset by the ease and security of communication by sea. The Greek world, inhabited by the most gifted people who have ever appeared in Europe, was thus for some centuries to maintain a society of separate states providing the greatest possible opportunity for the development of the genius of their individual citizens and at the same time for the maintenance of constant relations in

unequivocal circumstances not only with each other but with the older civilisations of Africa and Asia. Political conditions were equally favourable to a political experiment otherwise doomed. In the first place, none of the eastern empires, Assyrian, Babylonian or Persian, which in turn dominated Asia Minor, was in a position, until the sixth century, to attempt the command of the sea. Secondly, to the east of the Ionian cities on the coast of Asia Minor was the powerful buffer state of Lydia. While its genius was coming to fruition, and its trade and wealth were building up a secure foundation of military power, the Greek world was thus protected from a direct attack by land. It was the collapse of Lydia before the attack of the Persian emperor Cyrus in 546 B.C. which first brought the Greek world face to face with a great land empire, less intellectually equipped but commanding much greater wealth and enjoying the political advantages of centralised power.

The Persian challenge to Greek civilisation grew steadily from this time onward and under the inspiration of danger the Greeks assumed for centuries the leadership of the western world. Persian invaders were defeated at Marathon, Salamis and Plataea and by the time of Pericles Athens, whose rulers had taken the lead in these decisive events, was at the head of a Aegean confederacy of city-states, representative of the highest civilisation yet attained by man. The hundred and fifty years which followed the battle of Plataea was the age of the Greek tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, the age which saw the building of the Parthenon and the glories of Greek sculpture, the age which heard the teaching of Socrates and studied it in the works of Plato, the age of Thucydides and Aristotle, the first masters of political history, political science and systematic philosophy, and, above all, the age which saw the first great experiment in democratic government, which enriched the oriental institution of city life with the essentially western conception of citizenship.

Marathon
490 B.C.

Salamis,
480 B.C.

Plataea,
479 B.C.

This glorious epoch ended in tragedy. The city-states of the Greek world, inspired to co-operative enterprise and common sacrifice by the Persian danger, fell to fighting each other and the disaster of the Peloponnesian war broke the power of Athens for ever. The Greek world, deprived of the stimulus of an enemy, needed a master, and, for the full satisfaction of its genius, a wider horizon and a more ambitious creed. The men of Periclean Athens saw no farther than the boundaries of their

city and recognised no rights or responsibilities higher than those of the citizen. Seventy years after the close of the Peloponnesian war, in the person of Alexander, it found a master, and through the genius of the Macedonian soldier was born a more ambitious creed, reflecting the belief in a world of citizens knowing no boundaries of race, religion or language, the belief in a single universal society.

Alexander,
King of
Macedon,
337 B.C.
to
323 B.C.

Alexander the Great was born at Pella, the capital of Macedonia, in 356 B.C. and was tutored by Aristotle. The Greek world of city-states was already in ruins. To buttress the tottering fabric of bankrupt cities and reckless citizens, the Athenian philosopher-statesman Isocrates had just proclaimed the doctrine of *ὁμόνοια*, the common kinship of all Greeks. He preached to deaf ears. The youthful Alexander saw farther than the elder statesman, and proclaimed the brotherhood of all men. In so doing he dreamt for the first time the dream of the great captains, the dream of world dominion.

His method was that of a soldier of genius, but his aims were not those of a conqueror but of a redeemer. The world of the fourth century before Christ was born still lived in the twilight of the old gods. Men passed uneasily between the brilliant morning of human reason and the shadows of the darkest mysteries. The same men who formulated maxims of politics and principles of war which still command the attention of the world, could behave like the barbaric heroes of Homeric days or proclaim themselves the offspring of the gods.

Alexander tore up the roots of this ancient world, tamed the heroes and usurped the gods. He was the first of the *déracinés* and his chosen and created city of Alexandria was the alembic of a new world. How new and how old we can see when we realise that Mark Antony, Napoleon and Adolf Hitler were able to do no more than to attempt unsuccessfully to follow in the footsteps of Alexander.

To fulfil his dream of world dominion, he undertook at the beginning of his career the systematic restoration of order in Thessaly and Thrace, and, in order to secure his base, extended and strengthened his hold on Illyria. This preliminary campaign made him master of the whole hinterland of the civilised Europe of his day. He proceeded to secure the command of the eastern Mediterranean in the only way open to a land empire, by wresting the coastline from Persian control. Seizing Issus, Tyre and Gaza, he turned west to Egypt. Conquering Egypt, he went to Siwah, to the very edge of the

Libyan desert, and was initiated into the priestly mysteries of the last of the great theocratic states. Himself descended from the heroic gods, his mother from Achilles, his father from Heracles, he came, armed with the panoply of scientific war and a brilliant military genius, to assert the doctrine of *ὁμόνοια* on the celestial plane. Then he turned to the east to overthrow Darius at Gaugamela, the third of the decisive battles of the world.

Battle of
Gaugamela,
331 B.C.

Alexander became at one stroke master of the world. But it was not the pupil of Aristotle who overthrew the empire of Darius. Alexander embodied, and perpetuated, a new conception, the Hellenistic monarchy based on the twin foundations of the deified ruler and the universal brotherhood of the ruled.

The consequences of Alexander's conquests were lasting. The gold reserves of the east amounted in the case of Persia alone to more than £90 millions. They were comparable in value to the gold reserve of the entire world to-day. This vast wealth was put into circulation. On the death of Alexander at the age of 32 in 323 B.C., four monarchies were formed to divide the stupendous inheritance of the resulting prosperity. The Ptolemies in Egypt, the Seleucids in Asia, the Antigonids in Macedonia and Chandragupta in India divided between them¹ the wealth and power of the East.

It is hard to realise the full significance of Alexander. For the first and last time in the history of Western man, a dynamic revolutionary idea was allied to a practical genius not merely great but almost superhuman. For twenty-three centuries men have stood dazed in the face of his stupendous achievement, and of those who have tried to imitate it, none has understood his aims.²

This is hardly surprising. The doctrine of the universal society was the greatest secular revolution in human thought which the world had known. Made fact by the practical genius of Alexander, it became the basis of the public life of Europe through the speculative genius of Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school who came to Athens in 311 B.C., and took up the teaching of philosophy in the Painted Portico. "He preached the doctrine of a world state ruled by a Supreme Power, all

Zeno,
311 B.C.

¹ Though the succession was hotly disputed, notably by Cassander in Greece and Lysimachus in Asia Minor.

² One of the great question marks of history stands, it is true, against the name of Julius Cæsar. He, too, men say, was about to re-establish the empire of Alexander when he was murdered by a politician. Who can say what the consequences of Brutus's folly were?

wise and all good, of equality and human brotherhood, of conscience and duty, of harmony, with the divine purpose only to be obtained through wisdom and virtue. . . . Little remains of the original writings of this noble thinker, but the Hymn of Cleanthes (rendered into English prose by Walter Pater in *Plato and the Platonists*), the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, and the singularly beautiful body of moral teaching which survives in the works of Epictetus, attest the wide and prolonged influence of Stoicism over the best minds and characters of the pagan world in its decline."¹

This exalted doctrine is not congenial to the ordinary conqueror, but it reconciled the eclectic Greek genius to the task of civilising the world. The Greek national spirit perished in the process and Hellenism became disembodied and disenchanting, but its influence continued to dominate the Aegean, the shores of Africa, Asia Minor, the Bosphorus and the Black Sea for seven centuries. Its centre was the new city of Alexandria, the first intellectual capital of the world, and its outpost Marseilles, the oldest civilised city of the west.

Alexander, however, had been more than a missionary of Greek civilisation. To the Greeks he had proclaimed himself a god. This conception of the deified ruler has remained the dominant political conception of the pagan world; only Christianity has been strong enough to substitute for the divine authority of a single ruler the division of sovereignty between two supreme authorities, the Church and the State.

It is necessary to understand this conception of the deified ruler if we are to understand European history from the time of Alexander to the conversion of the Emperor Constantine to Christianity in A.D. 311. The deified ruler is not a wholly western conception, yet its place in history, including English history—because for two centuries the worship of the deified Cæsar was the official religion of Britain—derives from the peculiar Greek conception of the Godhead, which in turn became the Roman conception.

Unlike the Jews, who fixed an impassable gulf between God and man, the Greeks "conceived gods in the likeness of men and elevated men to the rank of gods."² It was their common practice to promote founders of cities at death to the rank of hero and to offer them hero-worship. The rites associated with this worship in Greece itself were no more than the public

¹ Fisher, H. A. L., *History of Europe*, Vol. I, p. 45 (Eyre and Spottiswood).

² Ernest Barker, *The Legacy of Rome*, p. 49.

recognition in ritual form of civic obligations and civic gratitude. The oriental tradition was less rational. The traditions of the temple-state long survived alike in Egypt and in Asia and the worship of the oriental ruler was the one unifying factor in the eastern world. There was in the eastern empires no unity of race, language, history or culture. The oriental ruler was the august representative of unseen powers or he was nothing at all. "He that resisteth the power," said St. Paul himself, "withstandeth the ordinance of God,"¹ and this judgment of a Greek-trained Christian philosopher proves the immense historical influence, still powerful in his day, of the beliefs which supported and maintained the Hellenistic monarchies, and after them the pagan Roman emperors, as rulers of the civilised world.

During the century following the death of Alexander, the Hellenistic monarchies divided and ruled. Meanwhile, two very different peoples of genius, the Romans and the Carthaginians, the one Indo-European, the other Semitic, were fighting for the mastery of the west. The Carthaginians, under Hannibal, were finally defeated by Scipio Africanus at Zama in North Africa. That battle, the fourth decisive battle of the world, decided the fate of the east as well as the west. Rome, as mistress of the eastern Mediterranean, was brought at last into direct relationship with Egypt, Greece and Asia Minor. These contacts took Rome across the threshold of empire.

Genius knows no laws. There was no reason why Rome should conquer the world. Yet that is what Rome did. Spain, as a Carthaginian colony, was an early conquest. Southern Gaul was conquered to maintain Italian connections with Spain. Meanwhile, fearing a hostile combination of eastern powers, Rome turned to attack Macedonia and Syria. Antiochus III of Syria was defeated at Magnesia in 190 B.C., and the Romans finally destroyed the Macedonian kingdom at the battle of Pydna in 168 B.C. A last desperate effort by the Achaean League to revive the heroic flame of Greece was defeated on the plains of Corinth.

Zama, Magnesia, Pydna, Corinth—these are decisive names and dates for the student of our own history. Alexander had cleared his flank, secured his base and won the command of the sea before he struck east. Rome, before she could build her western European empire, must also strike east. These battles were the indispensable preliminaries to the conquest of Gaul

Punic Wars,
264-201
B.C.

Battle of
Zama,
202 B.C.

Fall of
Corinth,
146 B.C.

¹ Romans, 13, 2.

and Britain. No Mediterranean power, as Mussolini's Italy was to find, can attempt the career of empire unless she is mistress of her own sea.

Legendary
founda-
tion of
Rome,
753 B.C.

The astonishing triumphs of the Roman republic created new problems which were not easily solved. The Romans, like the Homeric Greeks, were a race of warlike pastoralists who had fought their way westward and reached Italy probably at the end of the second or the beginning of the first millennium B.C. Gradually they had dispossessed the non-Indo-European Etruscans and had consolidated their hold on Rome and the surrounding country. But they remained "small town people." It was to be the source alike of their weakness and their strength in generations to come. Their tenacity and their inflexible sense of possession confirmed their resolution. Their incurable provincialism confined their imagination. It would not be true to say, as Seeley was to say of the English two thousand years later, that they conquered the world in a fit of absence of mind. It is true to say that the Romans conquered it reluctantly. It was the sense of order which set their footsteps on the path of empire; the sense of possession which inspired them to create and defend strategic frontiers. But, with one tragically significant exception, no Roman proclaimed himself an Alexander. The Romans were equally distrustful of the mind of the East. They had no mission except to govern. They needed, for the cultivation of their garden, the peace that only government could give.

The Roman State had begun as a military democracy; it became by stress of circumstances and by dire necessity first an oligarchy and then an empire. As early as the third century B.C., the nominally sovereign people had ceased to govern; the Senate governed although it did not reign. The basic principle of the Roman constitution was the popular election of yearly magistrates. This system was transmuted by the Roman genius for peaceful change into the government of the Senate, originally a council of elders, two of whose members were elected Consuls for the year by the popular assembly, the *Comitia Centuriata*. A more restricted assembly, the *Concilium Plebis*, through their representatives, the Tribunes, could impose a veto on the Consuls, and in theory the constitution could have been wrecked by this distribution of powers. In practice it was not. The social and civil wars which beset the Roman republic, and finally led to the age of dictators, were not class wars within the body of the Roman citizenry, but struggles

THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY

for power between rival factions. In these struggles the claim of the general body of Italians to Roman citizenship was a political counter of great importance. The consequence was that by the time of Julius Cæsar's triumph Roman citizenship had been granted to all Italians south of the Alps, and Italy became, in name at least, the first unified national democratic state.

This unification of Italy, however, came about by force of circumstances rather than design. The Roman political genius was opportunist above all. Such constitutional progress as marked the century which separated the fall of Corinth from the principate of Julius Cæsar was really due to the growing paralysis of the central government in face of faction fights. The Gracchi, the architects of the first popular front in history, Marius, the radical general, Sulla, the conservative revolutionary, who first led a Roman army in a march on Rome, and finally Pompey, the military dictator seeking to preserve the *ancien régime* against the turbulent assaults of extremists on both sides, make up a picture whose outlines were strange, if not wholly incomprehensible, to historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but which presents no element unfamiliar to historians of the present day.¹

Caius
Gracchus
Tribune,
123 B.C.

Pompey
(Gnaeus
Pompeius)
106-48 B.C.

This bitter strife of faction gave an opportunity to the disenfranchised Italians, to the landless proletariat of Rome, and to the slave population, to air their grievances; and the first, or loudest, champion of their different grievances found an easy avenue to political power. But the grievances, formally removed, remained, and led inevitably first to dictatorship and then to the Empire. Rome failed to discover, or refused to adopt, the representative principle. The newly enfranchised Italians could not use their votes effectively, owing to their absence from Rome, and could only make their influence felt as legionaries. Secondly, the military responsibilities of the Roman republic, after the conquest of North Africa, Spain, Greece and Asia Minor, involved in theory the submission of standing armies of professional soldiers to yearly magistrates whose authority, however dear to the great Roman families, was not sacrosanct to the Roman proletariat or to the newly enfranchised Italians.

There were thus two clear alternatives open to Rome as

¹ These parallels are rough and must not be followed too far. They serve however to explain the bitterness of faction and the atrocious conduct of men otherwise disinterested.

she passed the threshold of empire and entered on its full responsibilities. She must either create an executive so broadly based on the popular will that it could control the legions and their victorious commanders or she must accept military rule until such time as the monarchical principle could be harmonised with Roman traditions and prejudices. There was a third possibility; that Rome would become a Hellenistic monarchy, the victor-victim of her own conquests.

Gaius
Marius,
155-86 B.C.

No new champions of the proletariat emerged after Marius had dishonoured the radical cause for ever in Roman eyes by the organised massacre of Rome's most distinguished citizens by slaves and freedmen in 86 B.C. The issue thereafter lay between the Senate and the generals, between the Tories and the Whig soldiers of fortune. It was an aristocratic battle, in which the gods favoured the big battalions and only Cato preferred the Roman constitution.¹ Cicero held a watching brief, seeking a *via media* in which the *noblesse de la robe* could operate to the best advantage.

Social
War,
90-88 B.C.

The constitutional crisis had been brought to a head by the activities of Mithridates, king of Pontus, who in 90 B.C. threatened to make himself master of Asia Minor and Greece. The eastern Mediterranean was the source of the wealth of the west. There was the gateway to the wealth and trade of the east; there was the stored merchandise and the mercantile experience of the civilised world. Like Venice, the Roman republic was mistress of the west because she held the gorgeous east in fee. As Venice became, so must Rome have become, a mere antique in the museum of history, had she abandoned her rule in Asia. The Social War in which the Italian Confederacy challenged the rule of Rome and Latium was raging from 90 to 88 B.C. As time passed, the situation in the east became more menacing and the Senate realised the need for a settlement of the domestic quarrel at all costs. The demands of the rebels were largely granted, and Sulla, the first of the great line of soldier-politicians who built and maintained the Roman Empire, was dispatched by the Senate to the eastern theatre of war. It was a momentous and noble decision. Making it, the Senate signed its political death-warrant.

Sulla and his legions were desperately needed in Rome to restore and maintain the shattered authority of the oligarchy.

¹ Cato the Younger (95-46 B.C.) was the last of the Roman republicans, in opposition to Crassus, Pompey and Cæsar. Lucan's summary of Cato's political career is memorable:—

"Victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni."

In defence of the patrimony of the state, the Senate was forced to abdicate. With the departure of Sulla for the east, the die was cast. Rome had chosen her part. She would accept military rule but she would rule the world. There was one great issue still undecided. Would she found an eastern or a western empire? Would she impose an oriental theocracy on the west, or impose western order and government upon the east? Was Rome or Alexandria to be the political, religious and intellectual capital of the new order?

These questions were answered by the genius of Julius Cæsar and his nephew Octavian, the great Emperor Augustus.

Julius
Cæsar,
b. 102 B.C.

The complex and sordid series of civil wars and faction fights, which make up the history of the last days of the Roman republic from the time of Sulla to the conquest of Gaul by Julius Cæsar, are not material to our British story. Sufficient to say that Sulla, Lucullus and Pompey freed Rome from the menace of the nascent imperialism of Asia so effectively that not even the military incompetence of Crassus, who was utterly defeated by the Parthians on the fringe of Rome's eastern empire in 53 B.C., disturbed its security.

Julius Cæsar first emerges on the stage of history as the victor of a brilliant campaign in west and north-west Spain in 61 B.C. In 60 B.C. Cæsar returned to Rome, intending to stand for the consulship in the following year. The political scene at Rome was dominated in 60 B.C. by four men—Cato, the leader of the extreme conservatives, a man of vigorous integrity and force but surrounded by men of indifferent character and selfish ambitions; Pompey, fresh from his triumphs in Asia; Crassus, who regarded himself as the representative of the *Equites* (the Roman middle class) and Cæsar himself. Cato, whose integrity was superior to his political force, had insisted that Pompey's settlement of the East must be debated in detail, and the land-bill awarding gratuities to his soldiers (whom Pompey had dismissed in landing at Brindisi in the autumn of 62 B.C.) had been blocked. Crassus' financial schemes were also bitterly opposed by Cato and his followers, who were fanatically hostile to any concession to the *Equites*, and also to the recognition of Ptolemy Auletes as king of Egypt, a project backed by Crassus in which much Roman money had been invested. As if determined on political suicide, Cato, in the year 60, added Cæsar to the number of his political enemies by denying him the triumph which he expected as the reward for his success in Spain. This series of political blunders on the

part of Cato led directly to the so-called first triumvirate of Pompey, Crassus and Cæsar, but it was in no sense a division of the supreme power between the three men. It was merely a temporary political arrangement fully within the framework of the Roman constitution. Pompey and Crassus were to back Cæsar's candidature for the consulship. Cæsar as consul was to secure the ratification of Pompey's Asiatic settlement and the passage of the bill giving land to his veterans. Cæsar was also to secure the revision of an Asiatic tax contract in which Crassus's friends were interested and to support the proposal to recognise Ptolemy Auletes.

Cæsar
Consul,
59 B.C.

By the middle of 59 B.C. Cæsar having been duly elected consul for that year, all these undertakings had been fulfilled and in all probability no more would have been heard of the so-called triumvirate (which is indeed very much of a misnomer as far as the years 59 to 56 are concerned) but for two of those incalculable political accidents and coincidences which give to history so much of its fascination. In the first place, as a result of a neglect of the due ritual in regard to the *auspices*¹ the legality of every legislative enactment of 59 B.C.—including the land bill and the arrangement for Cæsar's military command in 58 B.C.—was doubtful. Cæsar, Pompey and Crassus thus continued to have a strong common interest in seeing that the legality of the legislation was not in fact challenged. Of far greater consequence and directly affecting our own history was the serious threat to the northern frontier as a result of the up-rising of the Helvetii. As their province for 58, Cæsar and his colleague Bibulus had been originally voted Italy, which had often been a province in the second century and "had perhaps been the *provincia* of many of the consuls who in the period 120–53 B.C. are not known to have gone after their consulship to any foreign command at all."²

When the news came that the Helvetii were on the move Cæsar was at once given as his province for the next year Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum, to which the Senate added Transalpine Gaul. The chief fear evidently was that the Helvetii might cross the Alps or attempt the invasion of Italy by the indirect route from the north-east. Transalpine Gaul was added in case the Helvetii moved west, as in fact they did.

¹ An *augur* originally was a diviner by birds, the Roman belief being that birds were the messengers of Jupiter and other gods. In time *auspices* meant the observations of the *augur* as to whether the omens were propitious.

² See "Consular Provinces under the late republic," by J. P. V. D. Balsdon—*Journal of Roman Studies*, 1940.

We know that the threat offered by the Helvetii was in fact grave, and there is sufficient evidence that it was so regarded in Rome to justify the statement that the ultimate selection of Gaul as Cæsar's province for the year following his consulship was no choice whatever of Cæsar's but was determined by external events.

The vast and fertile lands of Gaul were inhabited by Celtic tribes with a highly developed agriculture and the rudiments of city life and political organisation. We shall get a wholly false picture of the Roman problem and the Roman achievement if we see Cæsar's campaign as the war of a highly civilised power against savages. The Celtic kingdoms stood to the organised might of Rome much as the Balkan principalities stood to the great powers in the middle of the last century. They had their coinage, their cities, and their political leagues. They farmed intensively, using the heavy plough. The land as far north as Flanders was largely cleared of forest, and in the land of the Belgæ, which is the present province of Picardy, the population has been reliably estimated at the astonishingly high figure of 42 per square mile, a density greater than that of most of Scotland and Ireland to-day. Finally, the Celtic aristocracy were largely Latin-speaking, and Roman in at least the externals of culture. As we have seen, they imported glass and china ware from Italy, and were in regular trading relations with the Roman province of Transalpine Gaul. This province, indeed, had no organised boundary and no natural frontier, and Roman citizens are known to have acquired property far beyond the frontier, in the canton of the Sequani near Lyons, as early as 81 B.C.

The chief civilising influence in Gaul had been for centuries the city of Massilia (Marseilles), founded by the Greeks as long ago as 600 B.C. As a great city within the zone of the Roman influence it attracted not only traders from Italy, but also political exiles. It was the Geneva of the ancient world. To Massilia, moreover, long before the time of the Romans, Celtic traders had brought tin from Cornwall. With the Roman conquest, Massilia became a Græco-Roman city like Naples or Rhegium, but the tin trade with Britain remained largely in Celtic hands.

The Celts on the Atlantic and Channel seaboard, notably the Veneti and the Armorici, had been the first peoples to sail the Atlantic regularly, although the Phœnicians had for generations made occasional Atlantic voyages. The Greeks

and Romans sailed inland seas but the Veneti, more accustomed to ocean voyages, sailed in large ships without oars, provided with leather sails and iron anchor chains. Their skill might have developed still further but for the Roman conquest and the subjugation of a seafaring to a military race.

Celtic commerce and navigation were in advance of Celtic industry. Only in metalwork and mining were the Celts really proficient, but in these they were in advance of their conquerors. It was from the Celts that the Romans learned the arts of tinning and silvering. The iron mines of the Loire were skilfully exploited even in pre-Roman times. There is also evidence of the working of alluvial gold in the neighbourhood of the Alps and the Pyrenees.

The stories of Greek travellers in the second century B.C. reflect a high degree of luxury among the Celtic kings. By Cæsar's time the kings had mostly been overthrown by the nobles and there was no single ruler as powerful as Luerius, king of the Arverni, who ruled at the time of the first Transalpine conquest in 125 B.C., and travelled his kingdom in a silver-mounted chariot attended by mounted clansmen, huntsmen and hounds, and a band of minstrels, scattering gold among the poor. Luerius, exercising a spectacular, if ineffective monarchy from the Pyrenees to the Upper Rhine, could put into the field an army of 180,000 men. The Celts were, indeed, a progressive, virile and inventive people. They had the imagination to write poetry and the energy to live it. They conquered large tracts of Europe between 500 and 100 B.C. They laid the foundations upon which the Romans built their Western Empire. For all that, their habit was defeat. Long before Cæsar's time they had retreated from the lands of their early conquests across the Rhine, and in 71 B.C. German tribes threatened an invasion, and the Helvetii in the Swiss Mountains and the Black Forest were being pressed westwards. The pressure of the alien invader, which united others, divided the Celts. In the face of the threat from the east, the maritime Cantons and the Belgic confederation in the north remained unmoved and detached, while the Sequani in Alsace called on Ariovistus and his 15,000 German condottieri to overthrow the hegemony of the Haedui, who dominated central Gaul. In the course of the next decade, no fewer than 120,000 Germans crossed the Rhine and the Sequani were forced to make the first cession of Alsace to Germany.

This German advance to the west was to the Helvetii an

THE BATTLE OF MULHAUSEN

ever increasing menace which reached its climax in the year of Cæsar's consulship. A mass migration into Gaul had been threatened in 61 B.C. and it was the plans then made which were being put into execution when Cæsar assumed the military command. He had left three of his four legions in Cisalpine Gaul, uncertain at first in which direction the major attack might come. He marched with the rest of his available troops to the Rhone. Here, in the neighbourhood of Geneva, covering the possible crossings, Cæsar laid the foundation of the Roman Western Empire by building nineteen miles of permanent fortifications. It was a significant, yet inadequate beginning. Empires cannot be defended on the principle of limited liability. Foiled by Cæsar on the Rhone, the Helvetii negotiated with the Sequani a safe passage across the Jura. Cæsar's flank was turned, and his fortifications were rendered vain.

The strength of the Helvetii had been reckoned at 360,000 of whom the traditional fourth must be reckoned capable of bearing arms. Subject to this, the numbers may be accepted.¹

Faced with this invasion, Cæsar left the Rhone for his base in Cisalpine Gaul and brought from there three veteran legions and two new legions which, significantly enough, he had already raised. Then, without hesitation or preliminaries, he crossed the frontier of the Province and began his conquest of Gaul. He defeated the Helvetii at Bibracte and found himself master, on terms, of central Gaul. The terms were that he got rid of the Germans under Ariovistus. So much we can read between the lines of Cæsar's narrative and it accords with the logic of the situation. If the proud, warlike, rebellious and ineffective Celts of central Gaul were to surrender, they could at least exact as the price the protection of their frontier. Cæsar accepted the burden with the prerogatives of empire, hurried through the Belfort gap and defeated Ariovistus at Mulhausen on September 2, 58 B.C., in the fifth of the decisive battles of the world. Its consequence determined two thousand years of Christian history.

Battle of
Mulhausen,
58 B.C.

Having secured his flank, Cæsar lost no time in completing the conquest of Gaul. The Rhine frontier could not be secure

¹ *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. 9, p. 550. It is pleasant to be able to record the passing of the old and foolish habit of reducing contemporary estimates of numbers by half or more. When we come to Roman times, these estimates were made or accepted by men of experience in politics, war and government. The Roman historians on whom we have to rely were the contemporaries of Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Seneca or Tacitus, writers as fully sophisticated as any writing in England to-day. We must judge the Roman historians of the Augustan and Silver Age by the intellectual standards of their age, which were in most respects as high as ours.

until the Belgic confederation in the north was conquered. Cæsar fixed the winter quarters of his army at Vesontio, raised two new legions in Cisalpine Gaul, and, in the spring of 57 B.C., marched northward, receiving the submission of the Remi, the most southerly of the Belgic tribes, at Rheims. Cæsar then stood on the Aisne plateau, on a line familiar to Englishmen in the winter of 1914, and awaited events. The Belgic army, reported as 300,000 strong under King Galba, waited for him, a prey to divided councils and the jealousies inherent in coalitions. Half-hearted attempts were made to cross the Aisne, but the tribes whose territory was most immediately threatened, the Suessiones (from Soissons), the Bellovaci (from Beauvais) and the Ambiani (from Amiens) were soon driven to negotiate by the threat that Diviciacus with a force of Celtic auxiliaries from central Gaul would, under Roman orders, pillage their homelands while they, anxious to wound but afraid to strike, impotently faced Cæsar's army on the Aisne.

Defeat of
the Nervii,
57 B.C.

In the end, these important tribes made their submission, and Cæsar marched north to the Sambre, along the line of the Franco-British advance in 1918. Here he fought and defeated the Nervii, the most northerly, Teutonic and warlike of the Belgic confederacy, who had only recently migrated from across the Rhine. Meanwhile another Roman army, striking west, had received the submission of the coastal tribes of Normandy and Brittany. The first stage of the conquest was thus completed by the winter of 57 B.C.

At this stage, the Belgic chieftains who had recently conquered southern Britain began to concern themselves with the war in Gaul. The Belgæ in Britain were still confined to a small area, covering Kent and Hertfordshire, and extending northward to the Fen borders and westward to the Cherwell. The Belgic invaders were thus surrounded by hostile forces. Their security depended entirely on the presence across the Channel of powerful allies. Hence it was politic that the Belgic chiefs in Britain should give assistance, where possible, and in any case a refuge, to their cousins in France. When Cæsar defeated the Bellovaci, it was to Britain that their chieftains fled in 57 B.C. This was the beginning of trouble. Worse was to come.

The trade with Britain was in the hands of the Veneti, the sea-going inhabitants of what is now Brittany, and their fellow Celts in the south of England were active as intermediaries.

THE CONFERENCE AT LACA

Early in 56 B.C. the Veneti, who had only a few months before submitted to Cæsar's lieutenant, Publius Crassus, rebelled. We can safely assume that in the rebellion they received active assistance from Britain, particularly as the occasion of the rebellion was the investigation by Crassus of the route taken by the trade with Britain. The rebellion failed, but the issue was for some time in doubt and, after the defeat of the fleet of the Veneti by Decimus Brutus off Quiberon Bay, in the first naval battle ever fought west of Gibraltar, a powerful section of the Veneti escaped to Wessex and founded a new Celtic kingdom with its centre at Maiden Castle. The Romans were thus faced with a hostile, sea-going people on the Dorset-Hampshire coast.

Naval
battle off
Quiberon
Bay,
56 B.C.

These events were the occasion, but not the sole cause, of Cæsar's two expeditions against Britain in 55 and 54 B.C., expeditions which bring this island for the first time into the written record of authentic history.

In 57, while Cæsar had been fighting in Gaul, a sudden food crisis had arisen in Rome as a result of which Pompey, whose fame with the Roman people as the master resolver of crises was supreme, was voted the special task of supervising the food supplies of the capital (the *cura annonae*) with full powers for five years and troops with which to enforce his authority.

Almost simultaneously there was a move by the right wing party in the senate to bring Cæsar's command in Gaul to an end on the ground, it is believed, that the war in Gaul had been brought to a successful conclusion. The move was unsuccessful, as also was the proposal to make the two Gauls the consular provinces for 55 when choosing the consuls for 56 B.C. It was, however, now clear to Cæsar that there was no chance except through a new political coalition of securing the renewal of his military command when the existing term expired. He might otherwise find himself in 54 B.C. without an army or a command, while Pompey still had great powers and sufficient force at his disposal. It was in these circumstances that Cæsar, while still in command of very large forces and with his fame as the conqueror of the Helvetii still fresh in the public mind, met Pompey and Crassus at Luca in 56 B.C. Here for the first time was a real compact for a division of power. Pompey and Crassus were to be the consuls for 55 B.C., Crassus was to have a military command in the east after his consulship. Cæsar's command in Gaul was extended for five years.

With these arrangements safely concluded Cæsar was not only able but anxious to look for new fields to conquer.

By the beginning of the year 55 B.C. Cæsar was master of Gaul, but it was an uneasy sovereignty. The staple occupation of the Celtic chieftains had been war. They had bands of followers whose allegiance was personal, and who were ever ready to fight in pursuit of wealth and glory. As long as Britain was independent, it was a potential centre for the organisation of rebellion in Gaul, and a fruitful source of supply for men and money. The wealth of Britain was indeed greater than it was reputed in Cæsar's time. The great deposits of argentiferous lead were not exploited until the time of Augustus, but Cæsar's description of the country, and in particular his statement that agriculture was only practised in the coastal regions of the south and that the bulk of the inhabitants were hunting savages clothed in skins, is not only at variance with the facts but difficult to reconcile with Cæsar's strategy. It is more important to remember his reference to the dense population of the south ("*hominum est infinita multitudo creberrimaque aedificia*") and to reflect that his information as to the north and west came from prejudiced Belgic sources, who regarded the early Iron Age civilisation which still survived in certain parts of Great Britain as representative of the entire country, and the light plough as the agricultural implement of the barbarian.

We can guess now how it was that the Belgic invaders got a somewhat false impression of the real state of civilisation in Britain. The high *La Tène* civilisation of Britain had been in the south-west and north-east, although it touched Kent. The Belgic invaders had not, in Cæsar's time reached, much less subdued, any of the strongholds of this civilisation. They had only encountered the old Hallstatt civilisation, which still survived between the Thames and the Wash, in east Sussex and in the forests of the Midlands. It thus happened that the Belgic invaders were surrounded by the only relatively barbarous tribes still left in the Lowland zone of Britain. This fact misled the Belgae, and, through Diviciacus, misled Cæsar also. This is no excuse for the persistence of the error in English text-books to-day. Britain in Cæsar's time was, save for these discontinuous pockets, a trading and agricultural community rapidly advancing towards civilisation, with a highly developed overseas trade, a currency system, and, in the Belgic district, an actual coinage.

The Romanisation of Britain was indeed already in progress before Cæsar conquered Gaul and proceeded by leaps and bounds after Cæsar's expeditions had come and gone. The Greek geographer Strabo, writing not more than twenty-five years after Cæsar's time, describes a large export trade in wheat, cattle, gold, silver, iron, hides, slaves and hunting dogs, and under imports mentions bracelets, necklaces, amber and glass-ware. Archæology supports and extends this list. It is certain that two generations before the conquest there was a large trade in wine and that Italian pottery and metal work, both gold and silver, were in regular use at any rate in southern England. There was nothing in Cæsar's expedition to stimulate this trade directly. Much of it certainly was in existence in his time and explains his own reference to the volume of trans-Channel traffic. In short, however unfavourable and inaccurate the reports which the Belgic chieftains gave him of the earlier inhabitants of Britain, Cæsar must have regarded the country occupied by the Belgæ as an important centre of trade carried on by a wealthy community of growing political and military importance. It is only on this reading that Britain could have had any importance in his eyes either as a possibly dangerous focus for Gaulish rebellions or as a conquest likely to be regarded as important by political circles in Rome.

Certainly there was no lack of preparations for the two invasions of Britain, and Cæsar, no doubt because of the ultimate failure of both, is at pains to detail them.

Cæsar's
invasion
of Britain,
August,
55 B.C.

First of all, he sent a military tribune, Volusenus, on a reconnaissance, in the course of which he seems to have attracted the attention of the enemy without discovering the land-locked harbour of Richborough, which alone could have provided Cæsar with a base at once secure and accessible. And yet, significantly, Volusenus is the only military tribune to whom Cæsar in his Commentaries pays an individual tribute. He assures the world that for this important task the best man was chosen.

Secondly, Cæsar endeavoured, by the mediation of friendly chieftains and traders, to secure an unopposed landing. The principal part in these negotiations was played by Commius, an exiled Celtic king, who appears at first to have arranged for the peaceful submission of the Celtic chieftains in Kent. Later, when he returned with the Kentish envoys to Britain, this bargain was repudiated, but Cæsar was not apparently informed.

Thirdly, Cæsar assembled a very considerable military force. His forces consisted of the 7th and 10th Legions, with archers and slingers and a force of cavalry, to whom 18 transports were allotted. The cavalry embarked at Ambletuse and the infantry in 80 transports at Boulogne.

The infantry fleet sailed shortly before midnight on August 25th. From that moment the story of the expedition is the story of one avoidable misfortune after another.

At the very beginning, the cavalry missed the night tide, and so failed to keep their rendezvous with the infantry. Cæsar waited for them in mid-Channel until the turn of the tide on the afternoon of the 26th. Then the wind veered to the south and Cæsar sailed round the South Foreland and landed near Walmer.

The long delay had given ample notice and, whether because the force was smaller than the British had feared, or because Commius had turned traitor, the landing was opposed. Disposing his archers and slingers on the left flank, Cæsar landed the 10th Legion under their covering fire and after a short but fierce hand-to-hand engagement the Britons broke and fled. Had the cavalry been at hand to pursue them, defeat would have been complete, but Cæsar's army was still tied to the beaches. Without cavalry, it was an army without eyes.

Three days later a double disaster occurred. The cavalry transports from Ambletuse were again beaten back by a contrary wind and dispersed; meanwhile the same gale, combined with an exceptionally high tide, destroyed the infantry transports at anchor. Although based on his fleet, Cæsar had no facilities for repairs, no spare tackle, no reserve fleet and no reserve of supplies. Isolated on a hostile shore, he must advance or starve. At this moment we catch a faint glimpse of that Cæsar who has given his name to the world as a symbol of might rightfully enthroned. We can see in the brief story of the days which follow the man of resolution, quick decision, inflexible will, candour and courage, who was in such a few years, by the mere legacy of his example, to alter the course of history.

Destroying a portion of his fleet, he found the spare tackle and timber to repair the rest. Meanwhile he advanced so far as to give him control of sufficient acreage to enable him to feed his army. There was yet another disaster when the 7th Legion, thrown out as a screen in front of the foraging parties, fell into an ambush. From this misfortune they were rescued

by Cæsar himself. It was one of the great crises of his career. He had himself to lead the tiny force of two cohorts, which was all that he could spare to reinforce the Legion. He could risk his life but not failure. Taking his life in his hand, in saving his legions from the Britons, he saved Rome for the world.

In the hour of success, Cæsar showed a rebirth of that prudence which never again deserted him. He refused to pursue the enemy. He proposed to offer the spectacle of a beaten army to Celtic eyes ever unable to distinguish the fact from the illusion. They attacked, as Cæsar intended, and were heavily defeated. In the fateful hour of his one success, Cæsar withdrew. When his dispatch reached the Senate, they ordered twenty days of thanksgiving. The western world had, it seemed, yielded up its last secrets.

The Roman Senate, not for the first time, was misinformed. Cæsar had learnt many lessons essential to the control of combined operations, but he had not discovered Richborough. For all his added precautions that failure was to prove decisive.

Immediately on his return from Britain, Cæsar ordered the building of a fleet of 600 transports and 28 warships, some to be built at Boulogne, some at the mouth of the Seine, and some inland on the Marne. The necessary tackle was to be imported from Spain. He planned to take on his next expedition eight legions and four thousand cavalry, besides auxiliary infantry. He intended a conquest.

In the November of 55 B.C. Cæsar returned to Italy, where he had administrative duties in Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum. In the spring he was still in Cisalpine Gaul, but rumours of the impending conquest were freely circulating. Cicero, the great orator-politician, was particularly interested, because his brother, Quintus Cicero, was to go on Cæsar's staff as a *legatus*. The general impression in Rome was that the expedition was important but hazardous.

The view taken in Gaul was more frivolous. The extensive preparations were known. Cæsar had summoned a meeting of the notables, intending not to ask their advice but to take a proportion of them as hostages to assure the security of the Roman rule during the absence of himself and his legions. The notables, in a fashion typically Celtic, duly attended but showed their discontent, thus at the same time placing themselves in Cæsar's power and assuring his disfavour. As the

Cæsar's
second
invasion,
54 B.C.

expedition was starting, one of the notables, Dumnorix, brother of Diviciacus, a leading chieftain of the Haedui, broke camp with his followers, was pursued and killed.

In this uneasy atmosphere the expedition sailed, and landed near Sandwich, three miles farther north than in the previous year. Only five legions and two thousand cavalry were finally embarked. The rest were left behind under the command of Labienus.

The landing was unopposed, and Cæsar, determined not to give the enemy time to unite against him, pressed on at once towards Canterbury, where his reports led him to expect a hostile assembly of tribesmen. After a feeble attempt to oppose his crossing of the Stour, the enemy took refuge behind earthworks in the woods two miles west of Canterbury. The site of this ancient fort is now the village of Bigbury. Attacked by the 7th Legion, the Britons put up a feeble resistance, and fled.

In the gathering dusk, Cæsar did not pursue but dug in for the night and sent his cavalry forward at dawn. Immediately, he had news of disaster to his fleet, like that which had destroyed his expedition the year before. It had again been wrecked by a storm and forty of his ships were destroyed.

For reasons which are obscure, Cæsar did not call on Labienus for the necessary labour. He beached the fleet, recalled his army to their base and undertook the work himself. By that time the chance of a speedy victory had gone. The Belgic tribes had agreed to unite under Cassivellaunus, the powerful chief who ruled in Hertfordshire, and to offer a resolute front to the invader. Their decision helps us to estimate the population of the counties of Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire. The size of Cæsar's army must by then have been exactly known to the Celtic chieftains, yet they felt, and rightly, that they were in a position to offer effective resistance. We can hardly suppose, in the circumstances, that the three counties disposed of forces at all numerically inferior to Cæsar's, whose reputation stood high.

The British tactics reflected their confidence. Ten days after the victory at Bigbury, Cæsar, marching on Canterbury, was at once engaged in a running fight with charioteers and cavalry whose harassing tactics delayed and disorganised the march of the legions. The chariots were fought as mounted infantry rather than as an armoured division. Their purpose was to cause confusion in the first place, but afterwards only to add

THE TREATY WITH CASSIVELLAUNUS

mobility to the infantry arm. When attacked, the charioteers dismounted. When hard pressed, they drove away.

Cæsar quickly found the answer to this annoyance. Continuously pursued by cavalry, the charioteers could not turn and fight. This fact determined Cæsar's tactics. He tempted the British to attack him on the second day of his advance and he inflicted a severe defeat on them. Never again, he tells us, did the Britons willingly face the Romans in a pitched battle. No doubt, like all undisciplined troops, the Britons fought best behind earthworks or as guerrillas, but there is no evidence that they ever after this offered resolute opposition of any kind. Cæsar at once turned north from the Stour valley and marched to the Thames at Brentford, forced the crossing and resumed his march on Wheathampstead.

All the way to Brentford and for some distance beyond, the British harassed Cæsar's advance with cavalry raids, but Cæsar pursued a steadfast policy of terrorisation, burning crops and driving in the cattle until, being short of supplies, he turned east into the friendly territory of the Trinovantes, who had themselves but recently been at war with Cassivellaunus. Here Cæsar received the submission of five tribes, obtained supplies of corn and rested his army. Then, getting guides from the Trinovantes, he marched on Cassivellaunus's capital, Wheathampstead, which he captured by surprise, permitting most of the garrison to escape.

Cæsar captures
Wheat-
hampstead
July 54 B.C.

This may have been intentional. Certainly at this point Cæsar had news of an attack on his base, but it was evidently not an attack in force, and it was beaten off. Cæsar himself was back at the base by August 5th, but not because he was needed for its defence. He had heard news from Gaul of an impending insurrection and wished to arrange terms with Cassivellaunus which would enable him to withdraw his army while preserving the appearance of a conqueror. For this purpose he may have prompted Commius, who played so dubious a part on the occasion of the first expedition, to suggest to Cassivellaunus that the moment had come for him to make terms. On the other hand, the offer to negotiate may, by a fortunate coincidence, have come just at the right time from Cassivellaunus. There is no evidence at all for either view, but we know the issue. A peace was patched up with Cassivellaunus under which he was to surrender hostages, pay a nominal tribute and guarantee to respect the independence of the Trinovantes in Essex, whose king, Mandubracius, had

THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF BRITAIN

come with Cæsar from Gaul and was now restored by Roman arms to the throne from which Cassivellaunus had driven his father a year before. These arrangements were completed before August 29th, 54 B.C.

Gaul in
revolt,
54-51 B.C.

We do not know which, if any, of these terms were kept. We do know that Cæsar returned with his legions to Gaul in time to deal effectively with the dangerous revolt of the autumn of 54 B.C., and that Cassivellaunus, restored to his throne, perpetuated and strengthened his dynasty unmolested by Rome. He died in 30 B.C. and was succeeded by his son, whose name we do not know, and in due course by his grandson, Tasciovanus, whose reign was long and prosperous.

Meanwhile, there was a third Belgic invasion, led by the enigmatic Commius, who had turned against Cæsar in the last great Gallic rebellion against Rome, but, after making his submission, was allowed to take refuge in southern Britain. Commius had from the first been associated with Cæsar's British campaigns, and, despite his later desertion, it is impossible not to regard his escape to Britain as an inauguration of a new policy of appeasement in regard to Britain, which Rome maintained for more than a century with results wholly beneficial to both sides.

Julius Cæsar's decision to abandon the forcible conquest of Britain was one of the predetermining causes of the ultimate triumphs of his house. It may well be that no tribute was in fact paid by Cassivellaunus, but the fact remains that from 54 to 51 B.C., when Gaul was in revolt, no British aid was given to the insurgents. When the last rebellion was put down, the departure of Commius for Britain was not the signal for the organisation of fresh opposition in southern Britain but for the rapid extension of Roman influence.

Had there been any doubt as to the mind of Britain at that critical time, the second Belgic "invasion" of Britain would never have been allowed.

The truth is that these confused events were the carefully chosen preliminary to the drama to be played out in Rome, Greece and Egypt in the years from 50 to 29 B.C.

We are coming to critical years. The century from 50 B.C. to A.D. 50 proved to be one of the most important in the history of the human race. "*Magnus ab integro*," wrote Virgil in inspired words in 40 B.C., "*saeclorum nascitur ordo*." It was no false dawn.

Long before Cæsar had finished the pacification of Gaul, the

THE BATTLE OF CARRHAE

arrangement under which the powers and forces of the Roman state were divided between himself, Pompey and Crassus had come to an end. In 53 B.C. Crassus was defeated by the Parthians under Surenas at Carrhae. He and his army were destroyed. Crassus was no soldier but the Parthian victory was nevertheless not without significance for it was a victory for mechanisation. The Parthian forces consisted of horse archers, supported by an immense munition train, amounting, so history records, to 1000 camels with a vast supply of arrows.

Defeat of
Crassus,
53 B.C.

This disaster, the gravest so far sustained by Roman arms against an alien army, had revolutionary consequences. It left Pompey, still in Italy, face to face with Cæsar. At the same time it marked the doom of the old order under which the power and dominion of Rome could be safely defended by political generals in charge of a citizen army. The change in the character of warfare was precisely as significant as that which has taken place in the modern world since the days of Napoleon. Napoleon rediscovered the citizens' army, and the rifle, the citizen's weapon, remained the predominant arm in warfare until 1917. Victory in the war of the rifle and bayonet was on the side of the big battalions and the necessary consequence was the advancement of the cause of democracy throughout the nineteenth century. The numbers which were decisive in battle must also be allowed to be decisive at the polls. So it had been in Rome in the days of the traditional infantry warfare, but the new tactics and weapons were changing the balance of forces. Military power was no longer the result of individuals coming together united by a common will, but of the preparations and prerogatives of strong centralised governments.

The defeat of Crassus pointed the moral. The wealth of Rome, founded not on trade but on conquest, could only be secured and maintained by professional soldiers, and the new warfare necessarily armed their generals with irresistible power. The aim of the Roman people, corrupted by doles and debauched by spectacles, was to back the winner from the start. Cæsar's almost unbroken series of victories established him as the market favourite. Here we see the real reason for his adventure in Britain. But the game was only beginning; all was still to play for.

Throughout the year 50, and perhaps earlier, Cæsar and Pompey were in active negotiation. What was to happen when Cæsar's command ended and he had to give up his armies? It

is evident that Cæsar tried first to force Pompey's hand by putting forward the suggestion that they should both give up their armies. The tribunes, supporting Cæsar, refused to lift their veto on any new provincial appointments (without a relaxation of the veto no successor to Cæsar could be appointed) unless Pompey would either agree to let Cæsar stand for the consulship in absence or enter private life side by side with Cæsar. All these proposals Pompey rejected. The crisis came in December of 50 B.C.: on the 7th January, 49, the tribunes, fearing for their safety, fled from Rome and joined Cæsar in Gaul. The stage was set for the civil war. On January 10th, Cæsar, at the head of his troops, crossed the Rubicon,¹ the small stream which divided his province of Cisalpine Gaul from Italy. In nineteen months Cæsar was master of the world. At Pharsalus, on August 9th, 48 B.C., Pompey's army was finally destroyed. The age of the Cæsars had begun. The world was to have a master; it was not to be left a prey to barbarian inroads as it decayed from within. The will of civilised mankind was to be effectively asserted in public affairs, and there was to be a fusion of authority, mind and power which was to leave its impress for centuries on the whole civilised world. Accustomed as we have been for 2000 years to the concept of a dynamic society, it is difficult for us to realise that it was once not only new but revolutionary. The founder of the Roman Empire was not the first to arm intelligent authority with unlimited power—Alexander had done that—but he was the first to see government as the exercise of creative will determining the destiny of peoples. This conception derives from Julius Cæsar; it was riveted on the western world by his nephew and heir, Octavian, known to history as Augustus, the first of the Roman emperors. Cæsar's victory over Pompey at Pharsalus saved the Roman world from the fate of the Greek city-states by subordinating the claims of faction to the necessities of government. After Cæsar's assassination, Octavian's victory over Mark Antony at Actium decided that the government of Rome should be the first Western Empire and not the last Hellenistic monarchy.

Antony was a magnifico; Octavian a slow and patient statesman. But by the side of Antony had stood Cleopatra, a Macedonian princess, who had inherited the throne of the

Battle of
Pharsalus,
48 B.C.

Assassina-
tion of
Julius,
44 B.C.

¹ This was open rebellion, since the authority of a provincial Governor ended at the boundary of his province and the troops, once in Italy, ceased to be lawfully under Cæsar's command.

Ptolemies in Egypt and much of the force and genius of Alexander. The story of Antony and Cleopatra is a tale with a moral. After the assassination of Cæsar in 44 B.C. Octavian, Antony and Lepidus had formed the Second Triumvirate. Lepidus passed quickly from the political scene and the power and glory of Rome had stood divided between Octavian and Antony, who married Octavian's sister in 40 B.C. The last struggles between Cæsarism and the republic of factions were at Philippi, where Brutus and Cassius, the assassins of Julius Cæsar, were defeated by Octavian and Antony in 42 B.C., and in Sicily, where Sextus Pompeius, the son of Pompey the Great, held out until 36 B.C. The year before, Antony, though still legally married to Octavia, married Cleopatra at Antioch.

Brutus
and
Cassius
defeated at
Philippi,
42 B.C.

From 37 to 31 B.C., the year of Antony's defeat at Actium, the two rivals had been consolidating their forces. Antony assumed super-regal powers jointly with Cleopatra. Octavian laid down his powers as Triumvir in 33 B.C. at the end of the ten years for which they had been granted by the Senate, received a triple triumph, and in 31 B.C. assumed the Consulship. Antony, for his part, assumed the mantle of Alexander, and following his precedent, announced the division of the eastern world between Ptolemy Cæsar, Cleopatra's son by Julius Cæsar, who was declared joint monarch with Cleopatra over Egypt and Cyprus; Alexander, his own eldest son by Cleopatra, who was to rule Armenia and all that lay east of the Euphrates; his youngest son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, who was to rule Syria and Cilicia with the overlordship of all the client kingdoms west of the Euphrates; and Cleopatra Selene, his only daughter, to whom he gave Libya and Cyrenaica. At the splendid ceremony at which these donations were announced, Antony and Cleopatra sat on thrones high above the people. Antony was already more than a king. He had conferred on Cleopatra the proud title, Queen of Kings, and of her sons who are Kings. He dated his reign and his coins from his marriage to Cleopatra. His claim, openly made in Alexandria, only hinted at in Rome by his enemies, was to be the ruler of the world. He was not aiming at secession, at the founding of an Empire of the East, but at universal dominion, and the basis of his claims and the source of his strength was the rank, the prestige, the wealth, the ships and the love of Cleopatra.

There is no need to doubt that Antony for his part loved Cleopatra, or at least that he came to love her. But the drama

Death of
Antony
and
Cleopatra,
— B.C.

of Antony was no tragedy of the world lost for love. Cleopatra was the keystone of the arch of his imagined triumph. Only with the power and wealth of Egypt behind him could he challenge Octavian for the rule of the west. For that dream, or for its dreamer, Cleopatra lost the throne of her ancestors, and sacrificed her life and that of her children. Her divinity she took with her, out of the reach of Octavian's avenging sword; the asp, the divine minister of the Sun-God, deified whom it struck.

Long before the final tragedy, the issue was clear. Whatever popularity Antony still enjoyed could never belong in Rome to an Egyptian queen, claiming the overlordship of Rome itself. For that reason, and in that sense only, Cleopatra's devotion sealed the ruin of Antony. Only a Roman could rule in Rome, and only Roman legions could conquer Italy. Antony's legions would not fight for Cleopatra in such a cause.

The seven years of Antony's vain glory had been years of careful husbanding for Octavian. He, too, had a mission, immortalised not only by the poetry of Virgil, for he fulfilled his mission to an extent and in a manner which places him unexpectedly but surely on a plane altogether higher than any other of the Great Captains. One of the very greatest men in history, the founder of the greatest secular power built by man, Augustus, alike in his innumerable triumphs and in his one failure, has left his impress on every page of European history. He captured the imagination of Virgil and Horace, the greatest poets of his own time, but by later generations his achievement was taken for granted. That is the measure of his greatness. He bequeathed to western Europe the habit and the machinery of government, and in so doing made progress for the first time in human history compatible with peace and order. This he did by beginning the divorce of administration from politics by assuming himself the ultimate authority and so relieving executives of his policy from any political responsibility. These things have been taken for granted for over two thousand years by even the most backward and barbarous societies of the west. They were wholly new at the beginning of the Christian era. Secondly, Augustus extended the scope of the civil administration to cover trade, commerce, communications and public and private morals. Thirdly, in his dealings between man and man, Augustus asserted, over the whole vast territory which Rome had conquered, the rule of law.

THE TEUTOBERGER WALD

The historian of England can measure the reality of Augustus's achievement by the touchstone of his one failure, when in A.D. 9, at the battle of the Teutoberger Wald, the Roman army under Varus was not only defeated but destroyed by the German tribes under Arminius. The Roman frontier, which had been steadily and skilfully pushed forward from the Rhine to the Elbe, was finally withdrawn and the conquerors of Varus were cut off from the Roman rule and discipline. The consequences were long delayed, but four centuries later, under pressure from the east, these same German tribes from the north-west crossed the sea to East Anglia. For Britain it meant a return to barbarism. The lessons of civilisation had to be learnt painfully over again in the sixth and seventh centuries at the feet of a new generation of Romans, the missionaries not of the Roman Empire but of the Roman Church.

Arminius
defeats
Varus,
A.D. 9

Perhaps in the long retrospect of history the consequences of A.D. 9 were for this reason less than they might have been, but for ten generations of our ancestors they spelt war, rapine and that cumulative disorder which, in its effect on the daily lives of simple people, is worse than the lightning stroke of the sword.

The moral is not that Augustus was wrong to have accepted, as he did, the decision of A.D. 9 as irreversible but that the consequences of military defeat are incalculable and inexhaustible. The event is a standing warning to the statesman against complacency and to the historian against summary judgments. Augustus's decision was forced upon him by the shortage of man-power which already threatened Rome and was ultimately to destroy the Roman Empire. The legions lost by Varus could not be replaced. Rome felt herself unable to extend her military commitments, and on this point we must accept the judgment of the slow and patient man who presided over her destinies.

The conviction was one which had been growing on the Emperor for some time. In the early years of the Principate, it was fashionable to speak of the conquest of Britain as an impending event, a thing half begun to which only the finishing touches had to be put. Horace, a Court poet if ever there was one, speaks of the divine glory which will be Augustus's "adjectis Britannis imperio" and, according to Dio, Augustus was twice, in 34 and 27 B.C., on the point of setting out on the conquest of Britain. This may or may not be true, but it is certain that, after the pacification of Gaul, Augustus changed

his mind, and Strabo gives what is almost certainly the official explanation. He tells us that, in the first place, some of the British people were already good friends to Rome, that a great part of the island was already in close trading communication with Rome, and that any tribute which could be gained by conquest would not balance the customs due on imports from Britain payable at Gaulish ports.

This explanation is valuable as a record of what Augustus wished the world to think. It is suspect as a record of what Augustus thought. In particular, the reference to the friendly British kings rings false. In the personal record which he left to posterity—the *Res Gestae*—Augustus makes no mention of any British king among the friendly rulers of whom he gives a list, and the two British suppliants known to have laid their grievances before the Emperor were both exiles—one Tincommius, the son of Commius, the dubious ally of Julius Cæsar, and the other Dubnovellaunus, probably the son of Julius Cæsar's loyal ally Mandubracius and certainly the inheritor of his capital at Colchester. Both these suppliant princes had lost their thrones to Cunobelinus (Cymbeline), the son of Tasciovanus and the great-grandson of Cassivellaunus, Julius Cæsar's declared enemy. The appeals of these suppliants fell on deaf ears, but we may conclude that it was the aggressive vigour of Cunobelinus rather than his friendship for Augustus which prompted the decision to leave him alone.

Cunobel-
inus,
A.D. 9 to
42.

The death of Cunobelinus in A.D. 42, was followed by the invasion and conquest of Britain by the Emperor Claudius in A.D. 43. Yet it was evidently prudence and not fear which had counselled inaction until that date. When Claudius determined on invasion, he sent an army no greater than that of Julius Cæsar on his second expedition. What Rome did was to strike at the most favourable moment when the minimum of force might be expected to produce the maximum result. The calculation was well made, and the event is a clear justification of the policy of Augustus and his adopted nephew and heir Tiberius, who succeeded Augustus in the Principate in A.D. 14.¹

At that time Cunobelinus had been five years on the throne of the Catuvellauni. His capital had been moved from Verulamium to Colchester (Camulodunum) and there he continued to rule throughout the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14-37) and Gaius (37-41) over a gradually extending territory, which

¹ See Appendix III for geneological table illustrating the succession of the Julian emperors.

ultimately reached from the Weald to Cambridge and from the Essex coast to the Cherwell valley. Furthermore, his brother Epaticcus had succeeded to, or conquered, the rest of Commius's kingdom, south and west of the Weald to Salisbury Plain. Three other British tribes were using coinage after the Roman fashion in the first century A.D. These were the Iceni in East Anglia and the Fen Country; the Dobuni, from Oxford along the Cotswold ridge to the Welsh foothills, with extensions into the lowlands of Somerset and Dorset; and the powerful Brigantes, centred on the Humber.

These kingdoms comprise the area of the old La Tène civilisation (whose axis ran from Weymouth to Bristol and thence along the oolite ridge across Northamptonshire to Lincoln Edge) and the area of the Belgic conquests. The other archæological remains from the century between Julius Cæsar and Claudius tell the same story of a relatively high, increasingly "Roman," civilisation south-east of the Weymouth-Bristol-Lincoln line, but north of that line, if we exclude Yorkshire, we can trace only an Iron-Age peasant culture with substantial Bronze-Age survivals.

The highest artistic culture was that of the south-west. There Celtic art untouched by Roman influence was probably at its highest just before or at the very beginning of the Christian era. Outstanding among the art objects of Celtic Britain are a series of bronze objects decorated with enamel in the *champlevé* method. Originally they seem to have been imitations of bronze objects decorated with coral, a number of which have been found on the continent of Europe, in association with chariot burials. With the coral objects were others in which a red enamel imitated the coral. Both go back at least to La Tène times. In the enamels a vitreous substance was applied to the metal ground by fusing the powder. As the Celtic craftsmen became more skilful, they evolved the *champlevé* process, in which the metal ground was scooped out to form a bed for the fused enamel. After the Roman conquest these British enamels remained for centuries highly valued throughout the Roman world. The Greek sophist, Philostratus (born c. A.D. 172), had the Celts in mind when he wrote of "the barbarians who live in Ocean pouring colours on to heated bronze, so that they adhere, become as hard as stone and preserve the designs that are made in them."

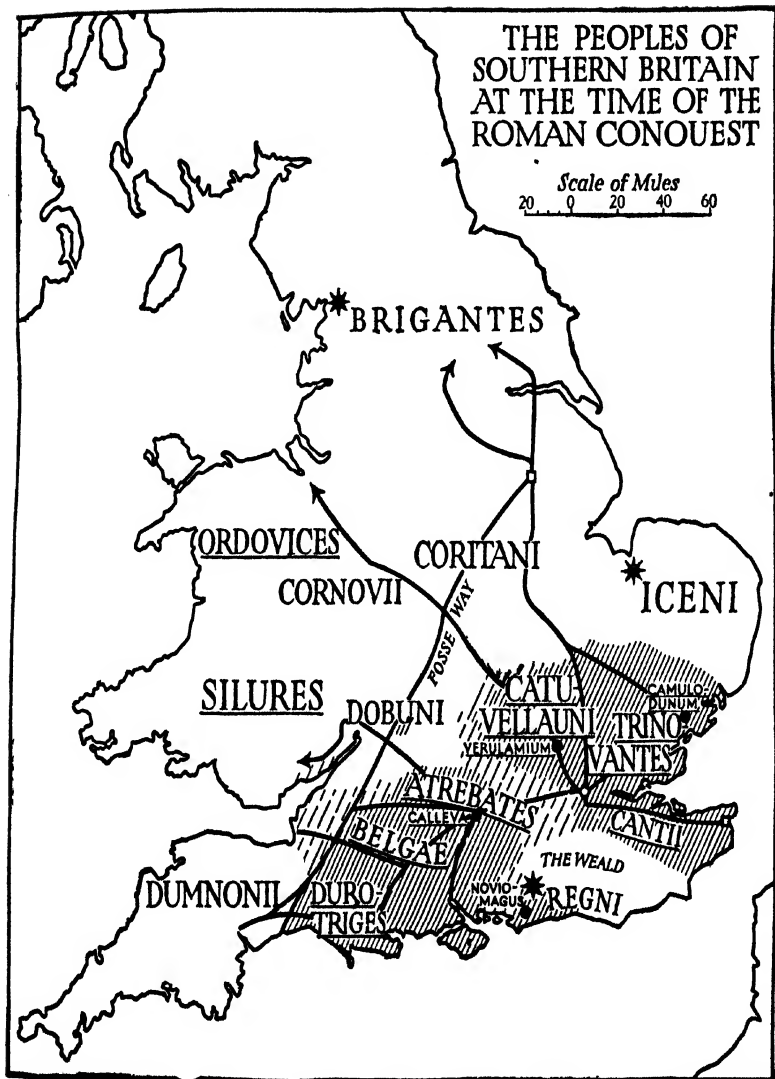
Originally, red enamels were used but, by the first century, the Celtic enamellers worked in blue, orange, green, yellow

Battersea
Shield,
c. 10 B.C.

and brown. Some of the best surviving examples are decorated horse trappings, but the Witham shield, found in Lincolnshire and now in the British Museum, is an example of this *champlevé* work on the largest scale. Other famous pieces are the bronze shield found in the Thames at Battersea, and the lovely mirror found at Desborough in Northants, both of which are in the British Museum.

The Belgæ were not artistic; there is evidence that at first they adopted and coarsened the Celtic designs of their neighbours, but by the time of Cymbeline they had begun to imitate the Roman metal work and the imported Arretine pottery. Their remains show nothing whatever to rival the Glastonbury pottery, the beautiful Celtic mirrors or the La Tène metal work. On the other hand, the age-old rivalry between commerce and art had begun, and while art flourished in the west, the commercial centre of Britain had, by the time of Cymbeline, finally moved from Salisbury Plain to the Thames Valley, and the main trade routes for exports and imports were no longer the Dorset and Devon ports but the Channel ports of Kent and East Sussex. This was partly due to the destruction of the sea power of the Veneti in Gaul by Julius Cæsar, partly to the over-running of the Glastonbury civilisation a little later by Belgæ from Commius's western kingdom. Another factor in the decline of the south-west was the opening of the Spanish tin mines after the final pacification of Spain under Augustus. This reduced immensely the dependence of Gaul and Italy upon Cornish tin. Furthermore, the introduction of the heavy plough had enabled the Belgæ to clear the forests of damp oakwood around Silchester and on the Chiltern ridge. We have already seen, in the organised opposition to Julius Cæsar, evidence of a high population in south-east England. We must assume a further great increase in the hundred years which elapsed before the Claudian invasion.

This increase in population was the logical consequence of the *pax Augusta* which the wise and strong rule of the Emperor initiated in western Europe, and which was maintained by his successor Tiberius. It was the century of town building in France, Spain and on the Adriatic coast; one of the great ages of international trade, during which town life, not only in Italy and the old provinces but in northern France and Spain, attained a level of material luxury and security which Europe was not to know again for generations. Even in Britain vast



Redrawn from C. F. C. Hawkes and G. C. Dunning, "The Belgae of Gaul and Britain," *Arch Journ.* LXXXVII, 317 (1931), and on information kindly communicated by Mr. Hawkes. The Belgic districts, known and presumed, are marked with heavy and light shading respectively. The tribal names of the active opponents of Rome are underlined, whereas an asterisk marks those whose rulers became allies or vassals of the Imperial power. The black lines and arrows mark Roman roads and lines of advance.

imports from Gaul and Italy were handled during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. But Britain could not, of course, participate in the full benefits of that first century of world prosperity, for British exports were necessarily confined to raw materials and her imports to luxuries for the ruling classes. Britain was still in the pioneer stage of civilisation.

The growth in power, prosperity and order in western Europe between 50 B.C. and A.D. 50 was comparable, relatively, to that in Great Britain between 1814 and 1914. In the earlier century, however, Britain was not at the centre but on the extreme circumference of civilisation. As Haverfield put it, in the Atlantic age, Liverpool was at the entrance, in Roman times it was at the edge of the world. What is true nevertheless is that when in A.D. 43 Claudius determined on invasion, he came, not as a more powerful chieftian to fight other chieftains but as the representative of the new forces of wealth, trade and peaceful prosperity, which were already affecting an already Romanised Britain. The rulers of Britain unquestionably spoke and wrote Latin, they habitually drank Italian wine from Italian or Gaulish glass-ware. They used ornaments of Campanian silver or bronze and wore clothes of linen, silk and wool, perhaps imported from lands as distant as India. The population of south-east England was distinctly cosmopolitan. The trading community contained Gauls, Greeks and Italians as well as the Celtic invaders.

The invasion came when it did because, while the wealth of Britain was steadily increasing, the military obstacles to conquest were largely removed by the disunion which followed Cymbeline's death. There was division inside the Belgic territories; outside, in Wessex, Sussex, East Anglia and Yorkshire the population was, if not pro-Roman, at least anti-Belgic in sentiment. The only exceptions to this rule were the Silures in south Wales.

Claudian
invasion,
A.D. 43.

The backbone of Claudius's invading army consisted of four Legions, the II Augusta from Strasbourg, commanded by the future Emperor Vespasian, the XIV Gemina from Mainz, the XX Valeria Victrix from Cologne and the IX Hispana from Pannonia. The commander of this last legion, Aulus Plautius, was appointed to command the expedition. With the usual complement of auxiliary regiments, foot and horse, the total strength of his forces was probably 40,000. Aulus Plautius in A.D. 43 had one legion less than Julius Cæsar in 54 B.C., but a

higher proportion of auxiliaries, which meant more cavalry, slingers and archers.

The Greek historian Dio, writing not less than 150 years after the conquest of Britain, is our chief authority for the details, which are anyhow very meagre. The main landing was at Richborough, where a large camp has now been excavated. Possibly feints were carried out at Dover and Lympne. The landing was unopposed and for some days the invading force was searching vainly for an enemy, because, according to Dio, "the Britons of those parts were not self-governing but were ruled by other kings." In other words, they had no stomach for the fight, and no resistance was offered until the sons of Cymbeline, Caractacus and Togodumnus, crossed the Thames with their forces from Essex and attempted to check the invaders, probably at the crossing of the Stour. The two brothers were defeated separately, and Togodumnus was killed.

These were only affairs of outposts. The main battle of the campaign was fought for the crossing of the Medway near Rochester and here the full force of the Catuvellauni was defeated, and Aulus Plautius, crossing the Medway, marched on to the Thames at Brentford. Here he waited for the arrival of the Emperor Claudius, with a contingent of his Prætorian Guards and an elephant corps. After that, the campaign degenerated into a procession and the Romans carried the Thames crossing and the capital of Colchester with little or no loss. There is good reason to think that they were actually unopposed as the Emperor only stayed in Britain for 16 days, during which time he received the submission of 16 kings.

It is nearer historical truth to regard the activities of the Romans in Britain in A.D. 43 as that of liberators of south-east Britain from the unpopular suzerainty of the Catuvellaunian dynasty than as alien conquerors of a native population. At least two exiled princes, Amminius, another son of Cymbeline, and Bericus, of whom nothing whatever else is known, appealed to Rome for help in the years immediately preceding the invasion. But the military story is, in itself, nearly conclusive. The Emperor Gaius had given the whole world notice of the impending invasion and it is hardly possible to suppose that it came as a surprise three years later. Yet the landing was unopposed and the only opposition inland came from a tribe whose strongholds were north of the Thames and who fell back rapidly on their base. Finally, had the opposition at Brentford

been serious, no Roman general would have waited for it to consolidate, knowing that his Emperor would then be faced with that most formidable of military operations, a river crossing in a hostile country against a prepared defence. We must assume a very different situation if the events of A.D. 43 and the following years are to be intelligible or even plausible.

Of the conquered territory, only one small portion, the kingdom of the Catuvellauni, was made a Roman province. In the rest of the country, only the Regni in Sussex and the Icenii in East Anglia are known to have submitted, and their rulers were at once appointed kings with the strange title "Rex et legatus Augusti in Britannia." The later chapters of the story suggest that the Brigantes also submitted and that their ruler also became a client king.

Aulus
Plautius,
governor,
A.D. 43-47.

On the departure of Claudius, Aulus Plautius divided his small forces into three columns and sent them out fanwise from his base in Colchester in three separate directions, a manœuvre inconceivably foolish if the country had been hostile. There is thus no reason to think that opposition was in fact expected, although, according to Suetonius, the future Emperor, Vespasian, commanding the left-hand columns, fought thirty battles and captured over 20 fortresses. Aulus Plautius must certainly have felt that his communications were secure and that he need fear no revolt among the Catuvellauni. We should conclude that the whole preliminary campaign represented a diplomatic rather than a military victory, that the only people in the south and east who were not prepared to accept Roman overlordship were a small minority of the Catuvellauni, and that once this minority had been soundly beaten on the Medway, the Romanising party was back in the saddle unchallenged and, for so long as the legions remained, unchallengeable. The subsequent history of the conquest confirms this view.

The first task which the Romans set themselves was that of road building and the route taken by Aulus Plautius's three columns is defined by three Roman roads, one running westward to Silchester, one (Watling Street) north-west to Worcester, and the third northward to Lincoln. But these roads radiated not from Colchester but from London, which was not at that time either a military base or the capital of the new province.

P.
Ostorius
Scapula,
governor,
A.D. 47-52.

In the autumn of A.D. 47, Aulus Plautius was succeeded as governor by P. Ostorius Scapula. The IX Legion was already

installed in a fortress at Lincoln; the XIV and XX were probably in Northamptonshire, and the II Legion was on the Devon coast, probably at the mouth of the Axe, having subdued the Belgae of Hampshire and Wiltshire, the descendants of the Veneti round Maiden Castle and the inhabitants of the Isle of Wight.

At this point there is, for the first time, evidence of military anxiety and the new governor made a temporary frontier, marked by the Fosse Way, beginning at Seaton on the Devon coast and then running north-east in an almost straight line to Bath (Aquae Sulis), Cirencester (Corinium), across the Watling Street near Rugby to Leicester (Ratae) and Lincoln (Lindum). Between Leicester and Newark is the site of Margidunum, a substantial fort dating from this time. This frontier ran through the territory of the Durotrices in Devon, the Dobuni in Somerset and Gloucester, and the Cornovii in the Midlands. These tribes must therefore have been regarded, not as conquered foemen, but as allies. The threat came from the Welsh hills and the Pennines, whose inhabitants were at least as alien in culture from the tribes of the south-east as these were from the Claudian legionaries.

There were two dangers. The first was Caratacus, the fugitive son of Cymbeline, who was fomenting disorder in Wales. The second was the ineffective control exercised by the ruling chieftains of the Brigantes, under Queen Cartimandua, over the Yorkshire hill tribes, who had never owed more than a fitful allegiance to the Celtic aristocracy centred round the Humber. Ostorius faced and temporarily overcame both dangers, restoring the authority of Cartimandua over her rebel subjects in A.D. 48 or 49. Caratacus ended his days in honourable captivity in Rome. But the end was not yet. The Silures in Wales remained in a state of constant unrest, and there was a second civil war in Brigantia under Ostorius's successor, Aulus Didius Gallus, governor from 52 to 58. During these years there was no substantial change in the situation. When C. Suetonius Paulinus assumed the governorship in 59, he found the frontiers roughly where they had been 12 years before, although in the north-west the fortress of Wroxeter (Viroconium) had been built, no doubt as a more advanced base for the constant Welsh campaigns. Suetonius determined once and for all to make an end of the Welsh unrest, and his army had actually reached the Menai Straits in 61 when news of an unexpected danger reached him. The Iceni, who, under their

Capture of
Caratacus,
A.D. 51.

Aulus
Didius
Gallus,
governor,
A.D. 52-58.
D.
Veranius
Napos,
governor,
A.D. 58-59.
C.
Suetonius
Paulinus,
governor,
A.D. 59-61.

client king Prasutagus, had been faithful to the Roman allegiance, were in revolt.

It was less a rebellion than a revolution. Certainly it was in no sense a national rising against the invader. The Roman army was not the objective. Only one other tribe, the Trinovantes, round Colchester and London, joined the Iceni. The grievance was not the imperial rule but the misdeeds of the local officials.

King Prasutagus had made the Roman Emperor co-heir to his estate. This was a common device of client kings, hoping to preserve some part at least of their inheritance for their natural heirs. The local Procurator attempted to confiscate the whole estate—so we are told—and also the estates of other noblemen of the Iceni. These exactions led to disorder, in the course of which the royal palace was sacked. The Roman financiers at this stage became nervous and called in their loans. The whole story, told in a few sentences, must be read as covering a period of months, if not years, because among the financiers whose action precipitated the crisis was the philosopher statesman Seneca, and we cannot imagine the leading financier-politicians at Rome taking action, except on detailed reports from their agents. It is customary to express moral indignation at the action of the Roman financiers, but the undertone of revolution must have been audible before they called in their loans, and it is not clear that they were under any moral obligation to finance rebellion. What is proved by the savagery of the insurgents is gross maladministration on the spot, and a complete absence of liaison between the civil authorities and the governor. The nearest legion was 120 miles away at Lincoln, when Prasutagus's widow, Boudicca, raised her standard of revolt.

Revolt of
Boudicca,
A.D. 61.

The trouble at Colchester was simpler. Ostorius, when governor, had founded a colony there for time-expired legionaries, and had, in accordance with the usual practice, made them grants of confiscated land. This form of taxation, always unfair in its incidence, was deeply resented, as also were the taxes required for the maintenance of the Temple of Claudius in the new Roman city of Camulodunum, built on the hilltop to the south-east of Cymbeline's straggling city.

Suetonius acted promptly. He himself rode for London with his cavalry and ordered the commander of the II Legion at Gloucester to join him there. The commander of the IX Legion at Lincoln, Quintus Petillius Cerialis, had already

attempted to go to the relief of Colchester with a small force of 2000 men, but before they reached the city it had fallen and the relieving force was driven back with disastrous losses into their fortress. Nevertheless, London could have been saved, but the II Legion refused to leave its western outpost and Suetonius with his cavalry fell back on his main body, by now marching south. London and Verulamium (St. Albans) were abandoned to their fate, and in these cities and at Colchester 70,000 persons are reported to have been massacred. These figures are probably correct, and, if they are, they disprove the thesis that the rising was in any sense nationalist. The vast majority of those massacred must have been Britons. In fact, this was a semi-social, semi-civil war of the kind with which the history of later centuries, including our own, has made us familiar. In all ages these wars provide a pretext for throwing off the restraints of civilisation of which many in all walks of life are ready to take advantage. The careerist, the gangster-politician, the soldier of fortune, the murderer, the outcast and the idealist no doubt joined hands, if not hearts, under Boudicca as under other revolutionary leaders. Soon, in these movements, every man's hand is against his neighbour's, fear rules, and frightened men are capable of the vilest atrocities. But fear, which steels individuals, disintegrates armies. Suetonius ultimately concentrated his forces, and Boudicca's immense host, disorganised by license, was utterly defeated. In A.D. 61 southern Britain entered, through fire and slaughter, on three centuries of peace.

Chapter Four

BRITAIN AND ROME: A.D. 61 TO A.D. 297

Nero,
54-68.

IN THE YEAR 61, after the collapse of Boudicca's attempted revolution, the final consolidation of the Roman conquest of Britain under the Emperor Nero began. The year 297 saw the restoration of effective Roman rule under Diocletian after the temporary secession of Britain under Carausius. Within this period lie the greatest days of the Roman Empire under the Julian, Flavian and Antonine emperors, the century of disorders and decline which began with the accession of the Emperor Commodus in 180, and the years of recovery which began with Aurelian in 271 and continued under Probus and Diocletian.

It is a vast stretch of time, crowded with great events, a period as long as that from the reign of Queen Anne to our own day. Unfortunately, we have to rely for our exact knowledge of historical events during this period upon Roman historians. Britain, to the Roman, was an outlying province and Britain only appears in the Roman records when there is trouble. The solitary exception, familiar to every schoolboy, is the governorship of Agricola. Of this we have an exact record, because Agricola happened to be the father-in-law of the most brilliant of Roman historians.

Our supplementary sources of information are the inscriptions, the coins and the remains of Roman civil and military buildings. These sources give us a wealth of disconnected detail and the basis for a few generalisations. But if we know little about Roman Britain, as such, we know a great deal about the Roman Empire and, in the light of that knowledge and with that background, the history of Roman Britain can be understood.

The revolt of Boudicca in 61 had left a trail of bitterness behind it. Great wrongs had been done; atrocities had been committed; the widows and children of murdered men cried for vengeance. The Roman general Suetonius Paulinus had saved the authority of Rome, but he was not content with victory in the field. He insisted upon vengeance. With the aid of reinforcements from the Rhine, he established for the first

and last time (if we except the Cromwellian interlude) martial law throughout Great Britain. The country became a police-state, its inhabitants harried by military inquisitors. Meanwhile, as the rebellion had begun in the spring, the fields remained unsown and famine threatened. The danger was averted. The civil administrator, Julius Classicianus, feared the economic consequences of the peace and appealed to Rome. He was more fortunate in his appeal than Mr. J. M. Keynes in 1919.¹ Suetonius was recalled on a flimsy pretext and Petronius Turpilianus, a governor of different mettle, was appointed in his place.

Petronius
Turpilianus,
governor,
A.D. 61-63.

Nero, who had succeeded Claudius as Emperor in 54, had reached a wise decision. For this reason a distinguished historian has judged that neither Boudicca, who headed the revolt against Rome, nor Suetonius who quelled it, should be ranked as the leading actor in this drama. That role he reserves for Classicianus, who sponsored the policy of appeasement. The credit lies rather with the authorities at Rome, who betrayed throughout their dealings with Britain that genius for timing which is so much the greater part of strategy.

We have already seen how Julius Cæsar abandoned the conquest in time to deal with the great Gaulish rebellion, while maintaining Roman prestige and Roman trade with Britain undiminished. Later we saw how the Roman conquest, discussed perhaps as early as 34 B.C., was deferred for two generations until, at the psychological moment, it was achieved almost without bloodshed. Now, in A.D. 61, in a confused situation, with conflicting advice tendered by the two "men on the spot," Rome makes a decision almost sensationally provident. Not even Classicianus can have expected that, as a sequel to his policy, peace would reign unbroken in southern England for 236 years. Indeed, to Tacitus himself not only Suetonius's successor, Petronius Turpilianus, but the next two governors, Trebellius Maximus and Vettius Bolanus, are feeble figures and the state of the country itself is one of smouldering rebellion, *sedition sine sanguine*.

Trebellius
Maximus,
governor,
A.D. 63-68.

The judgment of Tacitus is inconsistent with the event.

We have to remember first the situation in Rome, consequent on the moral collapse of the Emperor Nero, who as

¹ The late Lord Keynes, who, as Mr. J. M. Keynes, published in 1919 the only strong and informed protest against the Allies' German Reparations policy under the title "The Economic Consequences of the Peace." The book was published after his protests, made as one of the British Government's expert advisers at the Peace Conference, had been over-ruled.

early as 59 had murdered his mother Agrippina and by 62 had rid himself of all his trustworthy advisers and begun his descent into the abysses of decadence. The age of Nero lives for us in the satires of Petronius and the moralisings of Seneca. It was an age of immense luxury in which the most refined connoisseurship was allied to the grossest sensuality. Gluttony, drunkenness and homosexuality were common. Common also were wit, culture and the inquiring mind. Nero himself was an ardent phil-Hellene and a not inconsiderable poet,¹ but at the same time a murderer and a debauchee. His crimes so shocked the austere ranks of the older Roman aristocracy and so alienated the people that in 64 Nero was suspected of having organised the burning of Rome to give himself the pleasure of rebuilding the city. This was fantasy, but it is fact that the city which he rebuilt was dominated by the new imperial palace, the *Domus Aurea*, with its miles of colonnades, vast dining-rooms, parks and fountains, and, in the entrance hall, a statue of Nero himself, by Zenodorus, 120 feet in height.

Through the most fantastic years of Nero's reign, ending with his suicide in 68, Trebellius Maximus, who had succeeded Petronius in 63, was governor of Britain. He was a weak man and incompetent. His legions appear to have rebelled against him twice, once early in his governorship and finally during the civil wars which followed Nero's death, when Trebellius fled the country. Yet, despite the unrest among the legionaries, Nero was able to recall the XIV Legion in A.D. 67 to form part of his projected expedition to the east. We have thus for these years the story of a weak and incompetent commander and a depleted and mutinous garrison, and yet of a Britain at peace. These events, recorded by Tacitus himself, contradict his own judgment on Nero's policy. On the other hand a strong policy in Britain, adopted while Rome was so weak at the centre, might have led to disaster.

With Nero's death, the Julian line came to an end, and a year of civil war followed, when no fewer than three soldiers of fortune, Galba, Otho and Vitellius seized the vacant throne, only to be deposed and murdered. Finally, late in 69, Vespasian, commander of the eastern legions, made himself master of the state and founded the Flavian dynasty.

Before Vespasian's accession, the third of the three pretenders, Vitellius, sent back the XIV Legion to Britain under

¹ The historian Suetonius, who had access to the Imperial archives, found MSS. of Nero's poems corrected in his own hand. *Life of Nero*, 52.

a new governor, Vettius Bolanus. Vettius was at once faced with serious disturbances in Yorkshire, where the client kingdom of the Brigantes was still under the rule of Queen Cartimandua. This queen had been already twice sustained on her uneasy throne by the arms of her conquerors. Now, corrupted by the wealth and luxury which were the rewards of friendship with Rome, she sought to displace her husband Venutius, a member of the Celtic aristocracy, and to put in his place her lover Vellocutius. A rebellion followed and all that Vettius Bolanus could do was to rescue Cartimandua from her outraged subjects and leave the Brigantes under the hostile rule of the still more outraged Venutius. The frontier was no longer secure. The hour for the resumption of a forward policy had now perhaps arrived, but the man had not, and the troops were not available.

Vettius
Bolanus,
governor,
A.D. 68-71.

On the contrary, Vitellius, faced with the proclamation of Vespasian as a rival emperor by the legions in Judaea, sent for substantial detachments from the II, IX and XX Legions. A year later, when Vespasian had secured the throne, he in his turn was forced to recall the entire XIV Legion for the second time to quell a revolt on the Rhine. Not till the spring of 71 was Vespasian ready to send a fresh legion, the II Adiutrix, to Britain and to appoint the energetic Q. Petillius Cerialis to begin the second and final phase of the conquest of northern Britain, a chapter in our history closed by the building of Hadrian's Wall fifty-six years later.

Q.
Petillius
Cerialis,
governor,
71-74

Magni duces, egregii exercitus, minuta hostium spes. So Tacitus pronounces the exordium to these decisive events. The hour and the men had met. Between 71 and 86 Britain was ruled by three great governors, Q. Petillius Cerialis, Sex. Julius Frontinus and Gnaeus Julius Agricola.

Already Britain was to Rome what India was to Great Britain in the nineteenth century, a school for soldiers. Frontier warfare is an art in itself. Far from his base, the frontier commander has to look after himself, his province and the prestige of the government at the same time. On the frontier, to lose a battle is to lose a campaign. To lose a campaign is to lose an empire. Yet force is no remedy. No empire can keep all along its frontier forces superior everywhere to its potential enemies. The safety of a land empire depends therefore upon the exploitation of its strategic advantage, that it acts on interior lines. By this is meant, in plain language, that it can reinforce from the centre any point on the circum-

ference of its frontiers with equal ease, whereas its enemies must decide in advance their point of attack and, having done so, cannot change it. A central power surrounded by potential enemies is thus always at a tactical disadvantage because it may be attacked anywhere, but it is always at a strategical advantage because it can concentrate an overwhelming force at the point of danger much more rapidly than the enemy can bring fresh forces to the attack. Imperial power enjoying interior lines of communication can therefore rest strategically on the defensive provided it makes a judicious use of the tactical offensive. It will not wait to be attacked but will use its superior strategical position to take the tactical offensive whenever a threatening situation develops. This was the constant and necessary policy of the Roman Empire laid down by Augustus and resolutely followed to the time of Marcus Aurelius. It was nowhere better exemplified on a small scale than in Britain from A.D. 71 to 86.

The significant dividing line in England in Roman as in prehistoric times was that between the highland and the lowland zones. Half of the kingdom of the Brigantes, the half centred round the Humber basin, was in the lowland zone. It had been an area of high civilisation in the La Tène days and had so remained. But the authority of the Brigantian chieftains extended across the vale of York to the Pennines. The recognition of Brigantia as a client kingdom had been a wise move. It had enabled the very unmilitary governors, whom Tacitus asks us to condemn, to consolidate the lowland zone. Directly, however, the client kingdom became a potential enemy, the vale of York with its two southward roads converging on Lincoln could not be left as a broad highway for the incursion of savage hill-men into the new province.

We cannot reconstruct the three years' campaign by which Petillius Cerialis subdued the Brigantes. Probably he moved first against the eastern uplands where a large camp has been identified at Malton. Certainly by the end of his governorship the IX Legion had been moved from Lincoln to York. York was a true base; it was not a defensive position except in the strategical sense. It was a position from which to launch a tactical offensive either north-east or, through the Ouse gap, north-west to the Lancashire plain.

Sextus
Julius
Frontinus,
governor,
74-77.

Under Petillius's successor, Sextus Julius Frontinus, the forward policy was continued. This time it was the turn of the Silures in Wales. Just as Petillius had advanced the IX

Legion from Lincoln to York as a base for offensive operations against the tribes of the surrounding highlands, so Frontinus moved the Gloucester Legion to Caerleon commanding the vale of the Usk and giving ready access to all the valleys of the southern Welsh hills.

Frontinus lives in history not only as a governor of Britain but as a distinguished civil and military engineer whose writings have been by a strange chance preserved across the gap of nearly 1900 years which separate his period from the present day. When his governorship ended he handed over to a still more famous name, Gnaeus Julius Agricola; but twenty-one years later Frontinus was Curator Aquarum under the Emperor Nerva and about the year 100 he published his *Commentarius de aquaeductu urbis Romae*, which gives to examiners much valuable information denied to students about the water supply of ancient Rome. As became an engineer, Frontinus was a great builder of forts, and his handiwork survives to this day, notably in the Caer near Brecon and in Castell Collen in Radnorshire. He also began the conquest of north Wales from the base of the X Legion at Wroxeter, advancing through the upper Severn valley and planting forts at Forden Gaer near Montgomery and at Caersws.

These were the routine occupations of Roman governors in the first century of the Christian era. They were the road builders for the march of progress. The march in Britain had been rapid.

London between A.D. 43 and the date of its first destruction in 61 had grown with the speed of a mining town in California or an Australian gold-rush camp. There is no evidence for pre-Claudian London. The most that the evidence will tolerate is a small trading settlement established a few years before the Claudian invasion. But by 61 it is certain that the twin hills flanking the Wallbrook, on which to-day stand Leadenhall Market and St. Paul's Cathedral, were largely built over, and there was a substantial outlying settlement across the Thames at Southwark. This town was destroyed in 61. Traces of a devastating fire found from sixteen to twenty feet below the modern level, associated with coins and other remains fairly clearly dated, make it certain that these ashes are the visible legacy of the first "popular front" in British history.

London was almost immediately rebuilt and there is strong evidence that the massive walls, three miles in length and enclosing an area of 330 acres, were built before the end of

the first century A.D. Outside Italy, there were in western Europe only four larger walled cities, Nîmes, Autun, Trèves and Avranches. The growth of London between A.D. 61 and the building of the walls must have been without parallel even in that century of astonishing developments. It is an index of the prosperity of the Romanised lowlands. Roman London was never a city with any official status. It was not, like York, a military centre, nor a Roman colony like Colchester, nor raised to the dignity of a municipality like Verulamium. It depended for its prosperity entirely on seaborne trade which, given internal peace, came inevitably to London as the first convenient estuary and the great road centre of Britain. But peace was vital. Without speedy and secure communications to the west, north-west, north and south, London could not have begun, let alone have flourished, as a trading centre. If the walls are indeed correctly dated to the first century,¹ and the evidence is very strong, complete order must have reigned in Roman Britain from the end of Boudicca's revolt.

This fact would explain the readiness of Vespasian and his successors to acquiesce in a strong forward policy on the frontiers after the immediate danger from the Brigantes had been overcome. Powerful interests had grown up which demanded for their protection a stronger frontier than that provided by the line of the Fosse.

The Augustan conception of empire was never that of a military *imperium*, but of a world of self-governing cities growing rich through the peace and order conferred by the Roman legions on the frontiers. The separation between the military area on the frontier and the Romanised hinterland of the different provinces was, indeed, so marked that our greatest authority on Roman Britain could write that in the great Roman fortresses which for so long almost monopolised the attention of British archæologists, "civic life was wholly wanting."² The spread of Roman civilisation was not the result of emigration from Italy but of the adoption of the Roman way of life by other races whose kinship with those of Italy must never, as far as western Europe is concerned, be forgotten. This way of life was characteristically and essentially urban. Where it took root it brought in its train speculators, money-lenders and traders from Rome, and by reason of direct and indirect taxes, of such invisible exports as the salaries of officials,

Vespasian,
emperor,
69-79.

¹ See Wheeler, *Roman London*, p. 74 *et seq.*

² Haverfield, *Roman Britain*, p. 172.

AGRICOLA'S CAMPAIGNS

and, above all, of the profit resulting from the fair exchange of goods, the Empire enriched the governing class and the bourgeoisie not only in Italy but throughout the western world.

As long as the legions on the frontier were still predominantly Italian or recruited from long civilised provinces such as Iberia and Gaul, their interests, or at least those of their families, were linked up with the progress of town life and trade, and they were thus ready, even anxious, to sustain the burdens of empire. For so long, therefore, the Roman system worked. It was certainly working in the last decades of the first century and nowhere better than in Britain. Not only London but Colchester and Verulamium were rebuilt and Colchester was walled. Great buildings at Silchester, Wroxeter and Bath can also be dated from this century, and a town on the Roman model was already established before 84 as far north as Aldborough. It is with this town building activity and not with any pressure from the barbarians without that we must link the activities not only of Petillius and Frontinus but of their more famous successor, Gnaeus Julius Agricola, whose governorship began in 77 and continued to 84 A.D.¹ The long and arduous campaigns of this energetic administrator mark the optimism which prevailed in Rome as to the future of Britain as a field for urban civilisation.

Gnaeus
Julius
Agricola,
governor,
77-84.

Immortality has descended on Agricola by chance. He was not an attractive character and died a disappointed man. After his seven British campaigns he was recalled and never re-employed. He is described as slavishly obsequious. All that is meant is that he was a professional soldier whose career depended on his ability to gain and keep the favour of his superiors. He sprang from that professional middle class which was beginning to form the backbone of the Roman system. Their thankless task it was to stand with stubborn but calculated prudence between the palace and the senate, to "do the work," as they felt, while the imperial court shared the credit with the senatorial aristocracy. It is, however, an illusion of all officials that they are as apt for government as the aristocracy and as intelligent politically as the politicians. Usually they are neither and there is no evidence that Agricola was an exception. He was a first-class official but he was not a statesman, and he was evidently carrying out a policy already determined. He took up the work of his predecessors

¹ The dates may be 78-85. The evidence is inconclusive.

just where they had laid it down, and built on their foundations.

His first task was to conquer north Wales and to advance the II Adiutrix Legion from Wroxeter to Chester where the XX Legion was stationed in preparation for his advance to the north-west. This, and the building of forts in Yorkshire, occupied the first two years of his governorship. Under cover of these operations we may assume that he began clearing the road to Carlisle through Lancashire and Penrith and building the York-Carlisle road through the Stanmore gap. This was in the year 79. In 80 Agricola made his first advance into new territory and reached the line of the Forth and Clyde in two campaigns, building the forts of Clota and Bodotria in the summer of the year 81.

Titus,
emperor,
79-81.

The year 82 is a mystery, unless we assume, as perhaps we may, that Agricola's northern advance in 80-81 had been based on Corbridge and had been by the eastern route along the Roman road, perhaps built for the purpose, which runs through Rochester, Chew Green, Newstead and Inveresk. All we know of 82 is that Agricola engaged in some seaborne operations on the west coast "facing Ireland" in a territory "previously conquered." It is a plausible guess that he found his communications on the Clyde-Forth isthmus threatened from the south-west and that he brought troops from Chester by sea to mop up south-west Scotland, and cover his rear for the important advance which certainly took place in 83. This advance carried him up to Inchtuthill on the Tay, where the remains of a vast fort suggests the winter quarters of an army. During the naval operations of 82 a naval base was established (perhaps at Ravenglass) on the Cumberland coast. During the advance in 83 to the Tay Agricola supported his left flank from the sea. Despite this, his advance was heavily opposed and in the following year, 84, he was faced with a great Caledonian concentration on the Mons Graupius, probably near Forfar or Brechin, but possibly farther north in Aberdeenshire. This battle and its preliminaries is described at great length by Tacitus. It provides the justification in Tacitus's view for his judgment on Agricola's campaign and his recall; "*perdomita Britannia et statim omissa.*"

Battle of
Mons
Graupius,
84.

Is this another false judgment?

We are handicapped by Tacitus's incurable aversion from geography. At the end of all his eloquence, we are left in ignorance of the site of this battle. We do not know therefore

the limits of Agricola's northward march. Tacitus, on the clear authority of Agricola, believed and asks us to believe that the whole effective force of the Highland tribesmen was assembled and defeated at the Mons Graupius, that therefore the whole of Scotland was ripe not for military occupation but for Romanisation, and that the chance of adding this large territory to the Empire was deliberately thrown away through the failure to consolidate Agricola's gains.

Accusations of this sort are common form among politicians. Hadrian was later to be accused of having failed to consolidate Trajan's conquests and Commodus of failing to consolidate those of Marcus Aurelius. So in 1914 the Kaiser's Germany was to complain of the leniency of Bismarck to France in 1870 and in 1940 Mr. Churchill's England was to complain of our leniency to Germany after 1918. These are the "ifs" of history and the answer to them all is guesswork. Agricola was a highly competent soldier. He was therefore probably right in thinking that if the frontier had been pushed forward permanently to the Tay the whole of Scotland could have been held. Agricola, however, was no statesman, and he was probably wrong in imagining that such a policy would ever have been desirable in the eyes of Rome. The Virgilian ideal,

parcere subjectis et debellare superbos,

had faded long before the closing days of the Flavian dynasty. The business of Rome in 84 was not to spread but to defend civilisation. Further extensions of the Roman rule, notably in Mesopotamia and in Dacia, were imposed by the tactical requirements of defence. Agricola's advance to the Tay far outran any defensive requirements. It was wholly different from the decisive advances previously recorded to Caerleon, to York and to Chester. These legionary fortresses were necessary to protect the Romanised (i.e. urbanised) territory immediately to their rear. So long as they were held, they provided bases from which the uncivilised inhabitants of the highlands could be prevented from debouching to the lowlands by way of the Severn valley, the Crewe gap or the vale of York. Agricola's fortress of Inchtuthill served an identical military purpose, but no political purpose at all. For aught imperial Rome cared, the highlanders could debouch into the Scottish lowlands as often as they pleased.

We would go so far as to say that, once the nature of the

Roman Empire at this date is understood, there is no problem whatever about the Forth-Clyde, let alone the Tay frontier. Neither served a purpose for which Rome at that time, or later, was building frontiers.¹

There is some archæological evidence which suggests that Inchtuthill was planned as a legionary fortress, and such a plan formed by Agricola and specifically rejected by the government most conveniently explains Tacitus's phrase: *Britannia statim omissa*. Some sudden decisive step must have been taken. We know of one. The II Adiutrix Legion was recalled to the Danube c. 86. This left only three legions in Britain, and these three were earmarked, and remained so, for Caerleon, Chester and York. This recall of the fourth Legion must have involved the instant abandonment of Inchtuthill.

Agricola, to the contemporary Roman administration, was a brilliant soldier who had carried through the work of pacifying north-west Britain, which had been begun by Petillius Cerialis and Frontinus. He had not only established the Roman rule securely over the whole of Brigantia and the hitherto unexplored north-west but had pursued and conquered the tribes of lowland and central Scotland. As a security measure, a punitive expedition, his campaigns were evidently approved. Indeed they provided a model for the Emperor Severus, a hundred and twenty years later. To Rome, however, their importance was tactical, not strategic. Agricola, like every successful general, fancied himself as a master of strategy. Rome felt differently about him and his ambitions. Rome was right. Military-political geography is a more or less exact science. To push forward your frontier so far that you need large forces to protect the communications between it and the territory you are defending is a common but fatal error. The appearance of strength involves the reality of weakness.

The real strength of the opposing policy, the withdrawal to a line based on Chester and York, with outposts and forts as far north perhaps as Newstead in the east and Carlisle in the west, is shown by the results. For forty years, the space of an entire generation, there was peace beyond the frontier. It was the reward of fate for the services of a good general subordinated to a wise government.

The Roman Empire was now moving slowly towards its

¹ When, 60 years later, Agricola's line from Clota to Bodotria was temporarily reoccupied, it was for a special purpose, and once that purpose was accomplished the line was again abandoned (see pp. 146-8 following).

zenith. Men dominate events, and the event shows the man. To the Flavian emperors, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, the world owes much; for what they did, for what they were, most of all for the men they chose. The license and debauchery of Nero's time was ended. Vespasian was the first professional soldier to secure the imperial throne and the first member of the Italian middle class. He had known poverty and was used to the management of men and things, but he was educated, apt, and came to the throne with a long record of public service behind him. We must picture this soldierly, elderly, eminently respectable, but inflexibly determined man as not unlike the successful British generals of the Indian Mutiny epoch, and possessing just those qualities of professional integrity, thrift, energy and competence which distinguished the officers of that generation.

Domitian,
emperor,
81-96.

He and his sons, Titus and Domitian, did for Rome just what such men would do. They imposed economies, they reorganised the army and stiffened its discipline; they strengthened the frontiers; they widened, though within sensible limits of practicality, the opportunities for the middle classes and the leading citizens of the provinces to reach high office. They improved education, and they sought, above all, to secure an expansion of the birth-rate by capital grants for land development to farmers and landowners, the interest on which was to be paid in the form of children's allowances to the citizens of the villages on the estates concerned.

For all that, the Flavian emperors lived under the strain of a terrible necessity. The population of Italy was shrinking. With every expansion of the empire, the strain on the government increased. Vespasian calculated that the standing debt of the government amounted to 40,000 million *sesterces*, equivalent, perhaps, to £320,000,000. This was approximately the amount of the British national debt at the end of the Napoleonic wars, but the burden of such indebtedness on the Roman exchequer was certainly very much heavier than it was to England at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the time of Augustus the annual revenue of the State Treasury had been £4,000,000. In Vespasian's day the annual revenue was estimated at not more than six times that figure, say £24,000,000. The volume of debt was thus hopelessly disproportionate to the fiscal resources of the Empire at this date. This in itself was a severe burden, but there were others. Civilisation is the chief disease of civilisation. As the Roman Empire

expanded, so, in almost mathematical proportion, did the civilisation beyond its boundaries. No longer could scattered frontier garrisons be left to deal with the barbarians without. The tribes across the Rhine and the Danube were growing yearly in power and in organisation.

Most interesting to us are the Germans whom Tacitus describes. Undoubtedly he idealises these men who were certainly not, as was once believed, our direct ancestors. The worst that can be said is that we still possess a few of their many unenviable characteristics due to the infiltration of the men and women of this race during the Dark Ages. The Germans as described by Tacitus were a tribe of savages devoted to their own aggrandisement. Work with them was considered only fitting for women and serfs. The only Roman import craved by these super-men was wine. The Germans were, in fact, a cattle-raising people, uncultivated and unamenable to the arts of civilisation. But they were an increasingly formidable foe.

The solution found by Vespasian and his successors was the construction of fortified frontiers from the Rhine to the Danube and from the Danube to the Black Sea. These immense works, of which the remains still stand in the Dobrudja, 50 feet thick and 12 feet high, were not manned by the Legionaries but by the rapidly growing forces of the native auxiliaries, organised not in legions but in wings (*alae*) of cavalry, and in cohorts (*cohortes*) of foot soldiers either 500 or 1000 strong, each under the command of a Roman of the professional officer class.

The building of the new Rhine and Danube frontiers began between A.D. 83 and 89 in the reign of Domitian, and must be understood as part of the policy behind his campaign against the Chatti and his negotiations in 89 with Decebalus, the king of Dacia, as a result of which Dacia became for a time a client kingdom, heavily subsidised. The new policy was accompanied by a great increase in the pay of the forces, which cost the exchequer an additional £600,000 a year, but it had notable consequences, because, as a sequel to the Rhineland wars and fortifications, the Rhine frontier was quiet for more than a century. Three legions were at once withdrawn and two more in the next generation. By Hadrian's time there were only four legions on the Rhine as against ten on the Danube. As we have seen, it was to the Danube that the II Adiutrix was withdrawn from Britain c. A.D. 86.

Domitian at the end of his days fell a victim to fear, and in order to protect himself from real or imaginary conspiracies, began a reign of terror which was only ended by his assassination in A.D. 96. Despite the madness of his last years, he remains a great name. He began the consolidation of the west against the barbarians and freed much of the western armies for the urgent task of holding off the barbarians in the Near East and Asia Minor.

In A.D. 96 Domitian was succeeded by Nerva, who performed the greatest single service to the world of any Roman emperor since Augustus, when he founded the adoptive empire and so inaugurated what has come, in the long retrospect of history, to be called the golden age of the Antonines.

The Principate as founded by Augustus was intended to be hereditary, but fate determined otherwise. The Julian family gave to history in Julius Cæsar and his nephew Augustus two of its very greatest figures, but from the time of Augustus misfortunes dogged the succession. Almost all the Julians went through a period of instability. The immortality of the great Augustus has eclipsed the memory of the youthful Octavian, who was at once a weakling and ruthless to the point of savagery. His nephew, Virgil's Marcellus, died in infancy; his nephew Drusus and Drusus's brilliant son, Germanicus, survived arduous campaigns only to die of sickness. Tiberius was addicted to melancholy; Gaius was mad. Claudius, shrewd, scholarly and pedantic, was also a slobbering, stammering gawk. Nero was a brilliant but vicious and cruel degenerate. All, except possibly Gaius, were men of first-class talent; Tiberius and Claudius were statesmen of a very high order. Our own race owes very much to the Julians, even to Nero, to whom may be given a due share of the credit for the wise treatment of Britain after the rebellion of 61. They were shrewd, wise and often disinterested rulers, but the fact remains that the peculiarities of the Julian temperament submitted the principate to a strain which was altogether too great. Although the succession to the principate, as planned by Augustus, was hereditary, the authority which it enjoyed was not, and was not intended to be. It was conferred by the senate and maintained by the character of the ruler. The theory was that the plenitude of powers vested in the Roman people and senate and, under the later republican constitution, administered by the Roman senate, was conferred on the Princeps as the best citizen of Rome. The theory harmonised ill with a practice

Nerva,
96-98

which conferred these unlimited powers twice in a generation on a madman.

Such incidents have not been uncommon in the history of absolute monarchies, which have survived them sometimes for centuries, but the Roman system was not a monarchy. The emperor was in theory only *primus inter pares*.

There was another reason for the breakdown which concerns the historian of England far more closely.

The absolute monarchies of Europe were modelled on the fourth century Roman Empire, which developed a permanent civil service, an Emperor's *Consilium* and something nearly akin to a Prime Minister. No regular civil service or cabinet had existed when Augustus assumed the principate. Rome was still governed, and her empire administered, by an aristocracy of amateurs who held office for strictly limited terms. This system had broken down by reason not of its failures but of its unimaginable successes, which had thrown up a succession of great generals and a plethora of armies whose appetite for the rewards of valour had been whetted by a sequence of triumphant campaigns. Against the recurrent menace of civil war, Augustus, with an audacity truly sublime, had staked the personal authority of his name and family. He had, it is true, made the beginnings of a civil service, but the dislike of the Roman aristocracy for regular work was as great then as to-day. Even the Roman middle-class, the so-called *equites* or knights, while only too anxious to enter the ranks and discharge the honourable tasks of the senatorial order, considered the increasingly important tasks of the central secretariat at Rome to be beneath them. The secretariat of the Julian empire was provided mainly by freedmen. So long as there was no powerful body of trained professional administrators to perform the functions of the central government at the highest level there could be no security for the principate except the personal character of the holder of the office. In such conditions the hereditary principle was doomed to disappear.

Under the Flavian dynasty, established by the Emperor Vespasian, the *equites* began to take offices in the imperial secretariat, but the senate still remained at once powerful and jealous. Above all, it still demanded a voice in the imperial succession, which, if it was not in some manner regularised by custom, would inevitably in practice be determined by the army. There was thus what appeared an insoluble dilemma. In the absence of a permanent central administration organised

in departments capable of carrying on the business of government to the general satisfaction regardless of the personal quality of the *princeps*, the risks of an hereditary principate were too great for the stress of times when the barbarian was ever at the gate. Without the hereditary principle the death of the emperor must always involve the whole empire in the civil wars between the different armies. Nerva's solution was the adoption by each emperor of a suitable successor. In Nerva's time leadership, and above all military leadership, was the prime requirement, and Nerva as an elderly lawyer was the first to recognise this. In A.D. 97 he adopted Trajan as his heir.

Trajan was a senator and the son of a senator, but he was of the new provincial aristocracy, a Spaniard by origin and a professional soldier of the highest reputation, a straightforward, natural and open-hearted man who was an equal favourite with the Senate and the army.

Trajan set himself two tasks—to conquer Dacia as a bastion to the Danube frontier, and to push the eastern frontier to the Euphrates. These policies could not have been pursued but for the limitation of liabilities in Britain and the fortification of the Rhine frontier, both of which had been decided by Trajan's predecessors. We must therefore read Trajan's policy as the official policy of the Roman government and Trajan himself as the nominee of the government to carry it out. His policy had been wrongly described as a departure from the policy of Augustus. It was its logical complement. It was the policy of the tactical offensive and it preserved the Empire for three hundred years, despite the breakdown of government in the third century.

It was in pursuance of this policy that Britain passed out of history for fifty years after the governorship of Agricola.

Romano-British history comes again into the written record with the accession of Hadrian, the emperor of all the talents, who began his reign, in succession to Trajan, in A.D. 117. Hadrian inherited the Empire at the very summit of its power. Trajan's rule extended from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic, from the North Sea to the Upper Nile. He had relieved the strain on the Imperial finances through the vast booty from Dacia, amounting, according to Crito, Trajan's doctor, to five million pounds' weight of gold and twice that weight of silver. If this astonishing statement were correct, it would amount to twenty-seven thousand million sesterces, or £216 millions.

Trajan,
emperor,
98-117.

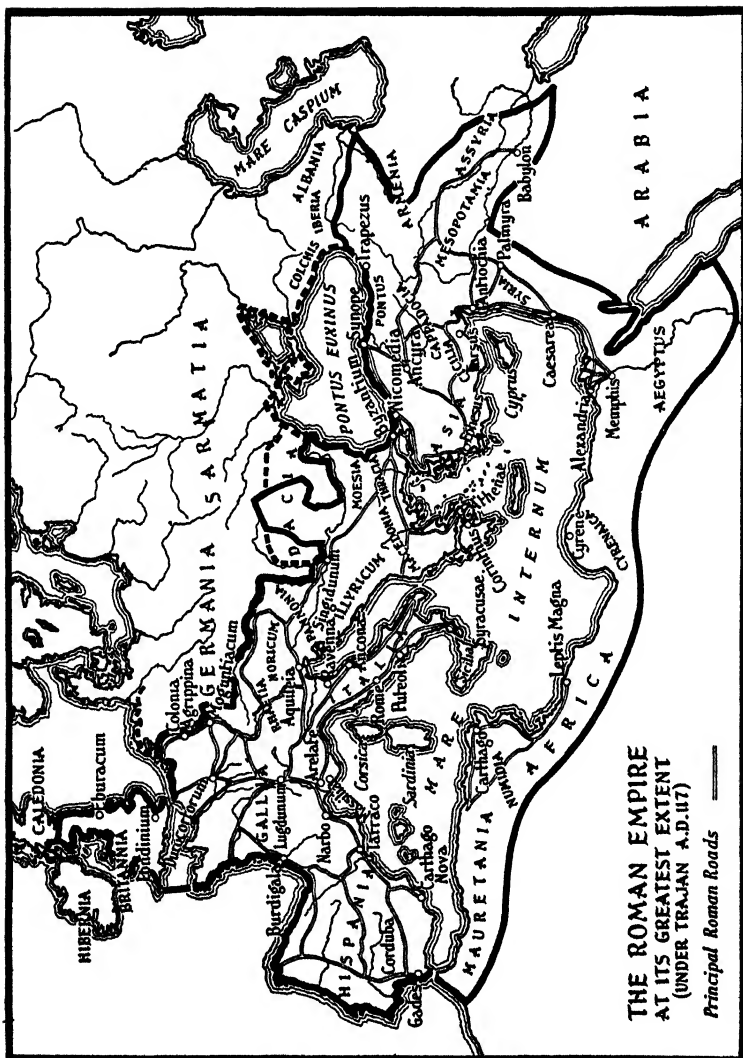
Nepos,
governor,
98.

T. Avidius
Quietus,
governor.

Neratius
Marcellus,
governor,
103.

Hadrian,
emperor,
117-138.

Q.
Pompeius
Falco,
governor,
117-122.



THE ROMAN EMPIRE
AT ITS GREATEST EXTENT
(UNDER TRAJAN A.D. 117)
Principal Roman Roads

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

It is generally, though by no means certainly, assumed that these figures, owing to a palæographical error, have been multiplied by ten, and that the correct total gains to the Imperial Treasury from the Dacian wars was £21 millions. What is certain is a great increase in public expenditure from A.D. 107 onwards. In that year alone public entertainments were held on 123 days and 10,000 gladiators took part, as many as were employed during the whole reign of Augustus. In addition, there were numerous grants of money to the citizens of Rome and a vast programme of public works, including the famous Forum Traiani, the marvel of succeeding ages, dedicated by Trajan in 112.

More important to history were the administrative reforms which accompanied the expansion of the Empire and the great increase in its wealth. By Hadrian's time the bourgeoisie had come definitely to supplant the freedmen in the Imperial secretariat, whose members ceased to be the private servants of the Emperor and became the public servants of the Empire. The transition is exactly paralleled in English history when the power passed in the course of the seventeenth century to the Secretaries, who began in Tudor times as personal servants of the Crown recruited from the clerkly class and ended a century later as Secretaries of State, officers of the highest rank whose humble origin was completely forgotten.

Two further extensions of the power of the civil service date from Trajan's reign; first, the appointment of *Curatores Civitatum*, commissioners responsible to the government at Rome for controlling the expenditure of the different local administrations; secondly, the substitution of the collection of the revenue by civil servants for the indirect collection by tax farmers.

These reforms are as much the history of Britain as of the rest of the Empire. The silence of the records reflects the ordered administration of the British province. Archæology proves it.

The northern frontier was consolidated and organised along the line of the Stanegate, the Roman road running west from Carlisle to the Tyne estuary. The legionary fortresses at Caerleon and York and probably at Chester also were revetted in stone and the internal buildings rebuilt. Many auxiliary forts, notably in Wales, were also rebuilt, and in many cases reduced in size, a process reflecting the advance of scientific fortification and the growing need for economy in man-power.

Rome was approaching her zenith. Her resources were strained to their limits. But the peace imposed by Agricola on the barbarians beyond the frontier endured in Britain until some time after Hadrian's accession, when the IX Hispana Legion was destroyed at or near York.

The written evidence for this disaster to Roman arms in Britain is vague. It bears witness to nothing more definite than a frontier raid and severe fighting. It is reinforced by the abrupt cessation of inscriptions relating to the IX Legion and by the arrival in Britain of a new (VI) Legion at the time of Hadrian's visit in 122. It is reasonably clear that York itself was not destroyed, and it is certain that the frontier zone, if penetrated, was not over-run. There was no incursion of hostile invaders into the lowlands, still less any native rebellion. The proper inference is a series of frontier disturbances, successfully held in check, but at the price of the disaster to one legion. Hadrian's solution was the same as Domitian's in the Dobrudja, the construction of a fortified *limes*, to be garrisoned by auxiliaries. The planning, and, if tradition be correct, the siting of this *limes* was Hadrian's self-imposed task when he visited Britain.

He found a very different Britain from that which had met Agricola, almost exactly half a century earlier. London had in all probability become not only the financial but also the civil and political capital. Colchester, the old capital of the Trinovantes, was in Agricola's time the only colony. Now it had been joined by Lincoln and Gloucester, both former legionary headquarters, and no doubt largely populated by time-expired veterans. To these colonies, and to the one British municipality at Verulam, the surrounding territories, within the limits of the old tribal kingdoms, were "attributed." Thus Colchester was the centre of government for the old kingdom of the Trinovantes, and Verulam for that of the Catuvellauni. The attribution of territory meant that it paid its taxes to the Colonia or Municipium, served in its militia, and, no doubt, enjoyed in return the benefits of order and peaceful communications, the protection of its courts and magistrates, and amenities in the way of baths, games and spectacles.

The government of these towns followed a pattern uniform throughout the empire and was modelled on that of Rome. Each had four annual magistrates (two for legal business and two for public works and finance) elected by its citizens and

responsible to a quasi-senate, called the *Ordo*, whose members were recruited from ex-magistrates and other notables.

More important in Britain than the colonies and municipalities were the *civitates*. Of these, London was the chief in wealth and importance, the chief arsenal and the centre of the civil administration. After London, the backbone of the political and economic structure of Roman Britain was provided by the old tribal capitals, which by Hadrian's time had become like London, fully fledged *civitates*, enjoying full membership of the Roman commonwealth, except for the legal status of Roman citizens. These townships, like the colonies, had their *Ordo*, their elected magistrates and the Roman system of law, and had inherited from tribal times a jurisdiction over the surrounding country which it needed no attribution to enforce. Rome always built, where possible, on local custom. Thus, the old territory of the Atrebatas had its Romanised capital at Silchester (Calleva) and that of the Belgic tribes of East Kent (now united as the Cantiaci) at Canterbury, Chichester (Regnum) was the capital of the Regni of West Sussex and Winchester (Venta Belgarum) of the Belgae in the territory extending obliquely from south-west Hampshire to the Bristol Channel. We may guess that this territory was carved from the relics of Commius's kingdom. Cirencester (Corinium Dobunorum) was the capital of the Cotswold country, inhabited by the Dobuni; Dorchester (Durnovaria) of the Durotriges of Dorsetshire; and Exeter (Isca Dumnoniorum) of the Dumnonii, whose territory covered what is to-day Devon and Cornwall. West of the Severn, Caerwent (Venta Silurum) was the capital of the Silures of south Wales. North Wales appears to have been under military rule, administered possibly from the legionary fortress of Chester (Deva). On the marches of north Wales, however, we find the historic site where to-day

“the Roman and his troubles
are ashes under Uricon.”

Viroconium, or Wroxeter, was one of the great cities of our past. It had been, we must believe, the tribal capital of the Cornovii, but it became a great city by reason of the fierceness of the northern Welsh, and Viroconium was the centre of Roman influence in the north-west for two centuries. The great baths, planned perhaps by Frontinus, perhaps by Agricola, were, they say, never finished. In Hadrian's time the site was used for a splendid Forum and new baths were built adjacent.

The evidence of the remains certainly indicates a great building programme in the last quarter of the first century and a renewal of activity in Hadrian's time. Whatever its birth pangs, the result was a noble city with public buildings in the grand manner. Other midland remains are clear, but less impressive. Leicester (Ratae) was the capital of the Coritani and Caister (Venta Icenorum) the capital of the Iceni. Finally, the Brigantes formed a capital of Aldborough (Isurium), the most northerly of the tribal capitals, which was soon overshadowed by York (Eboracum), a military township later raised to the status of a Colony, probably in the reign of Antoninus Pius.

We owe this information, thus crudely assembled in a few paragraphs, to the devoted labours of three generations of archæologists. We know to-day the principal cities of Roman Britain. We know that they began in Agricola's time or earlier, and that in the time of Hadrian or later they were walled, where necessary re-planned, and their principal buildings often rebuilt or revetted in stone. The reasons lie buried in the texture of Roman history.

A great programme of public works had been the direct and intended consequence of Trajan's restoration of the Imperial finances by means of the Dacian conquest. The building of cities behind a strong frontier system was, to the Roman, the essential civilising process. The very word civilisation means, literally, the transformation of countrymen into inhabitants of cities, or, more properly, members of communities whose lives centred in a city. The building of the British towns and their rebuilding under Hadrian was not an economic venture but a missionary enterprise.

Much rubbish has been written about the small size of the Roman towns, especially in Britain. It has been estimated from the structural remains that despite the evidence of Tacitus as to the numbers massacred at London and Colchester as early as A.D. 61, the population of London even by Hadrian's time was not more than 15,000 while that of Silchester, Chichester, Caerwent and the other smaller tribal capitals has been put at a maximum of 2000. Between these came Verulam, Wroxeter and Cirencester with between 4000 and 8000. This estimate is held by some to prove the feeble and ephemeral character of Romanised Britain. The inference is unsound. At Silchester, a bare 100 acres in extent, the basilica measured 240 feet by 60. The Flavian baths at Wroxeter have both hot and cold rooms,

each measuring 80 feet by 30. The amphitheatres outside all the principal cities were capable of holding many thousands of spectators. These dry statistical facts reveal the structure of a civilisation.

The importance of a market town must be gauged by the size of the market, not by the number of the inhabitants. The Romanised capitals were at once market towns, hence the size of their *Fora*, and cultural and administrative centres for great country districts. It is from the size of their public buildings, fora, baths, basilicas and amphitheatres, that we should judge them. Here came the population of the countryside on holidays, and the farmers and notables all the week through to do their business. This is the chief explanation of the apparent disproportion between the size of the civic buildings and the accommodation for permanent residents. No doubt the Romans made errors of judgment. They sometimes built too fast and too much. In evidence are cited the great baths of Wroxeter and the distance between the walls of Verulam and the outskirts of the town itself. On the other hand, we have evidence of the successive enlargements of the baths at Silchester, and of the great theatre at Verulam, built in the middle of the second century.

The truth is that town life in Britain made astonishing progress in the hundred years which followed Boudicca's rebellion. Even to-day, wrote Professor Collingwood, "no English capital has ever been so lavishly supplied with public buildings, relatively to the size of the population, as was the average tribal capital."

The policy behind this deliberate urbanisation of a backward agricultural country was clear, and it was successful. The native population were to be introduced to the arts and amenities of civilisation and so made in the first place willing taxpayers, and later, willing supporters of the responsibilities of empire. The town, to the Roman statesmen, was not the consequence but the cause of ordered progress. The vulgar pursuit of economic advantage was deliberately rejected by the classical age as a political aim. Town life was something paid for by the countryside, which the countryside thought worth while for reasons mainly uneconomic. They got law, literature, education, health services, amusements, communications and peace from the men who built the towns. These things it was not within their power to create for themselves.

The country as a whole paid willingly for the amenities of

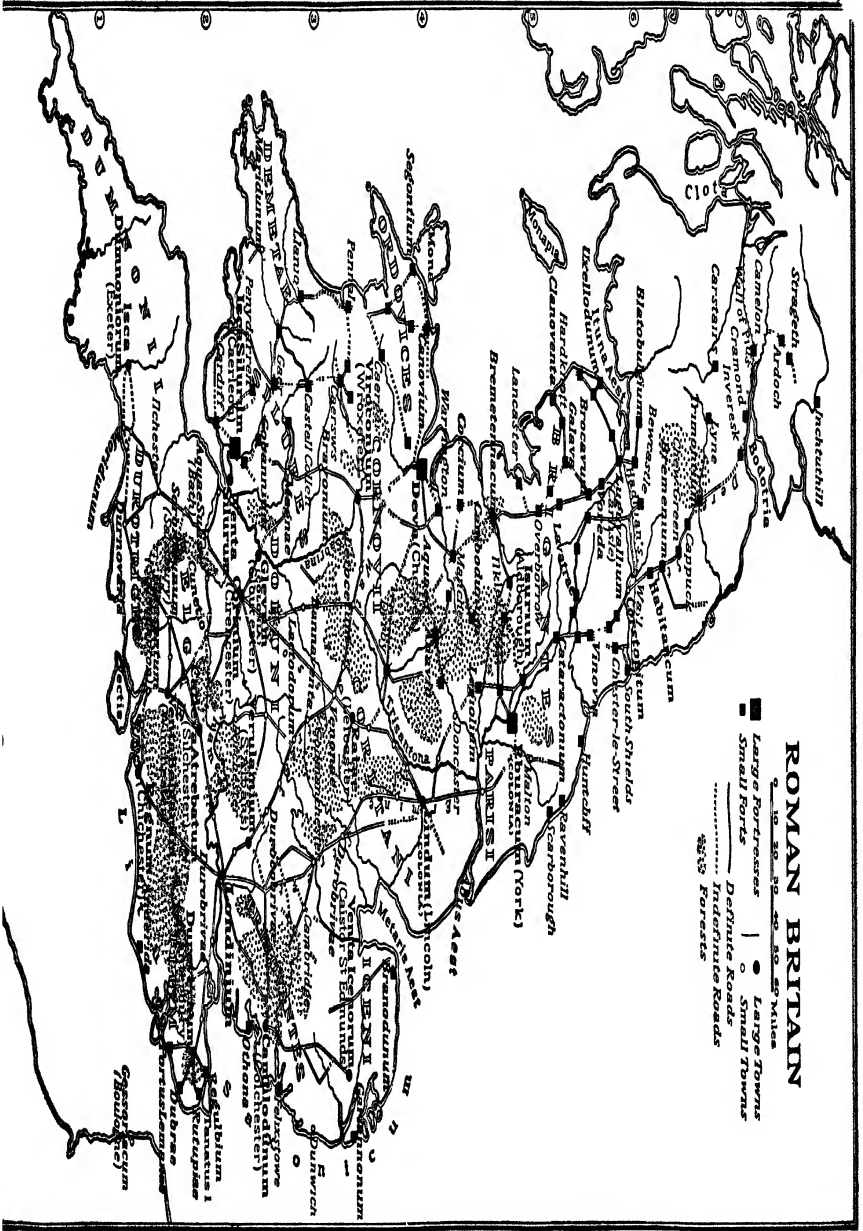
the towns. There was no more divorce between them and the surrounding country than there is to-day in England between the county and the county town. It is an anachronism to imagine in Roman times any specifically urban occupations or professions such as create to-day a specifically urban way of life and thought in our great cities. There was, however, an ultimately fatal antagonism between the towns and the frontier population. We shall understand this sufficiently after considering the frontier system as planned by Hadrian and frozen into immortality in the ruins of Hadrian's Wall.

Vallum
Hadriani,
122-127.

This famous fortification runs from Wallsend on the Tyne almost due west to the Cumberland coast. The original plan was for a wall running from the new bridge at Newcastle to Bowness on the Solway Firth. The eastern extension to Wallsend merely continued the original project of a continuous wall to a more suitable point. The Cumberland extension took the form of turrets and fortlets extending thirty miles north-west along the Cumberland coast. The original design was for a stone wall 10 feet thick, 20 feet high, with a 30 feet ditch in front from Newcastle to the Irthing, and a turf wall double the thickness from the Irthing to Bowness. This plan also was changed, the thickness of the stone wall being reduced to 8 feet, and the turf wall replaced by a stone one. These changes were made in the course of construction. The wall in its completed form was therefore a hotchpotch; from Newcastle westward for 20 miles it stood as originally planned; from there to the Irthing it is 8 feet thick on 10 feet foundations; from Newcastle eastward to Wallsend it is 8 feet thick throughout. To the west, the replacement of the turf by the stone was a gradual process. An intermediate gauge was adopted, but the stone turrets of the old turf wall were incorporated in the new masonry.

Behind the wall runs a ditch which was called a *fossa* by the Romans, but which the Venerable Bede, writing 400 years after Hadrian, called a *vallum*. It was a broad and deep flat-bottomed ditch running from Newcastle to Bowness, the whole length of the wall as originally planned. It is of no importance. It was built contemporaneously with the wall, perhaps as a customs barrier, and almost immediately abandoned. The wall remains as a monument to the Roman genius for construction, a model of military engineering and an invaluable students' guide to the Roman frontier system.

The wall was built mostly by the men of the II Legion



ROMAN BRITAIN

0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

- Large Fortresses
- Small Towns
- Small Forts
- Definite Roads
- Indefinite Roads
- ▨ Roman Forests

HADRIAN'S WALL

from Caerleon (Isca Silurum), but also by detachments of the VI from York, and the XX from Chester.¹ The work was partitioned out in lengths, usually between 35 and 40 yards, to different "centuries" detached from the legions. A "century" built one section at a time, and was then moved on to another. One section, near Birdoswald, was built by men of the fleet. Otherwise it is true to say that the legions built the wall. This is sufficient refutation of the theory of any grave disaster to British arms at that time. It was only in peaceful conditions that the backbone of the Roman garrisons could have been safely employed on such duties.

The wall was not intended as a fortification. At the top it gave a platform only 7 to 8 feet wide, broken up by small forts (mile-castles) every mile, and by turrets at intervals of roughly 500 yards. No Roman soldier, let alone the scholarly Hadrian, would have planned such a fortress, entailing a grotesque dispersal of force with no facilities for effective reinforcement. The wall was no more than the outpost line, though strengthened by 17 forts at irregular intervals, each planned to hold an auxiliary regiment. If we add to this the Cumberland coast forts, the line required for a permanent garrison some 14,000 men. Independently of this, the mile-castles and turrets suggest a regular system of patrols. If the guess is right, these patrols required a further 5000 men. We must in any case assume garrisons for numerous outlying forts, notably on the east coast route to Scotland. The strength of these garrisons has been estimated at from 8000 to 9000 men.

In Hadrian's time 68 Auxiliary regiments, of which 16 were cavalry, have been positively identified in Britain. These regiments, with 8 exceptions, contained a nominal 500 men apiece. The eight millenary regiments had a nominal strength of 1000. We have seen that of 38,000 auxiliaries, some 28,000 were required for garrison and patrol work on Hadrian's Wall and the outlying forts. This left only some 20 Auxiliary regiments for the rest of the country. These were almost wholly, perhaps entirely, required for garrisoning north Wales.

Of the three legions, each containing at this time 5600 men (of whom only 120 were cavalry) two were required for the York and Chester fortresses. The remaining legion at Caerleon was not only drawn on for more working parties than the

¹ Of the inscriptions probably recording the original (Hadrian's) work on the wall, 25 belong to the II Legion, 14 to the VI and 11 to the XX. (Collingwood and Myres, *Roman Britain*, footnote, p. 139). (Oxford, 1937).

others when the wall was being built, but later in the century provided the garrison for the fort at Birdoswald. Possibly it provided other garrisons. The knowledge gained from the inscriptions is confirmed by archæological evidence from Caerleon itself. There are evidences of a decline in occupation in Hadrian's time.

Who were the legionaries, and who the auxiliaries?

The legions were the old citizen army of republican Rome, but by Hadrian's time they were recruited largely from Romanised provincials or from the children of the camps. Their theoretical status as Roman citizens was maintained by the grant of the franchise on enlistment. Hadrian was only confirming the existing practice when he insisted on the local recruitment of the legions, which from his time became permanently attached to their stations, and wholly identified with the province in which they served. The rank and file served nominally for twenty years, though often for far longer, and received on their discharge a grant of money or land. They settled normally in one of the military "colonies." The British legionaries mainly settled at York, Gloucester (Glevum), Colchester or Lincoln, but some no doubt stayed on at Chester or Caerwent in the stations where they had spent their active life.

The auxiliaries in Hadrian's time were an inferior grade "alike in birth and education, in pay and conditions of service, and (under the early Emperors) in morale and fighting power."¹ They were recruited from the fighting frontier tribes, Thracians, Dacians and North British, and, above all, Germans. They did not serve always, or even usually, in the country of their birth. We know of British auxiliaries on the Rhine and of Thracian auxiliaries in Britain.

After the completion of Hadrian's Wall, which was carried through by Aulus Platorius Nepos, the governor whom Hadrian himself appointed and left behind him, Britain again disappears from the written record until the year 140. In that year, in the governorship of Q. Lollius Urbicus, and in the third year of Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, we have a new northward advance and the re-fortification of the Forth-Clyde isthmus. It is possible that this forward move was the sequel to a fresh but unimportant revolt of the Brigantes in A.D. 138. It is more probable that it was connected with the great outburst of native fort building in the central and eastern lowlands of Scotland. These forts cannot have been

A.
Platorius,
Nepos,
governor,
122-126.

Q. Lollius
Urbicus,
140-142.

Antoni-
nus,
emperor,
138-161.

¹ Haverfield and Macdonald, *The Roman Occupation of Britain*, p. 126.

built with the authority of Rome, since if they had been garrisoned by friendly tribes or auxiliaries there would have been no need to build a new fortified frontier to the north of them. There is evidence of the transportation of British tribes to the Würtemberg forests within the Roman frontier system about A.D. 148, and it has been suggested that the object of Lollius's campaign was to facilitate this transportation. This, if true, accounts for the comparatively light fortifications of the Clyde-Forth line, which had no turrets or mile-castles but only 19 lightly-built forts with turf walls and wooden revetments and gateways. Many of them were very small, occupying less than an acre, and the accommodation of the whole system did not allow for a garrison of more than six or seven thousand men. This garrison was provided in part by detachments from the Legions.

The whole line witnesses to the need for economy in men and materials, but even so it seems that in A.D. 153 there was another Brigantian revolt, no doubt due to the weakening of the garrison at York and on the Wall as the result of the Scottish adventure. A new governor, Q. Julius Verus, brought reinforcements for all three British Legions, probably in A.D. 154, as the Roman coinage reports an important victory in Britain in the following year. There is also evidence of the rebuilding of forts and of portions of both Hadrian's and the Antonine Wall about this time.

Q. Julius Verus, governor, 154.

Antoninus Pius died in 161 and on the accession of his adopted heir, the famous Stoic philosopher and author, Marcus Aurelius, we are told of a new threat of trouble in Britain, then governed by Verus's successor, M. Statius Priscus. Evidently the trouble was soon over, for, in 163, we hear of Priscus in an important command in Armenia. He was succeeded in Britain by Sex. Calpurnius Agricola, whose rule was peaceful. There is some unreliable evidence of trouble in 169 and again in 175. Dio tells us that Marcus Aurelius sent 5500 auxiliary cavalry to Britain in that year. But we know nothing definite. 183 is the next year of note in the military history of Britain, when the Emperor Commodus, who succeeded Marcus Aurelius in 180, fought the greatest of his wars on our soil and restored the authority of government after a large scale invasion from Scotland had swept across the Antonine Wall. Ulpius Marcellus, a former governor, was brought back by Commodus to conduct the campaign and an inscription¹ at Carlisle is believed to

Marcus Aurelius, emperor, 161-180.

M. Statius Priscus, governor, 161-163.

Sextus Calpurnius Agricola, governor, 163.

Ulpius Marcellus, governor, 177-184.

¹ C. I. L., vii, 924.

commemorate his victory over "a vast horde of barbarians."

We do not know whether the Antonine Wall, certainly overrun and destroyed in this year, was restored and shortly afterwards abandoned or whether it was never reoccupied. The evidence favours the former view, but this wall, almost certainly never intended for permanent occupation, had proved a source of weakness rather than strength and it passes out of military history from this time on. Marcellus, his work finished, was succeeded as governor by Helvius Pertinax, the future emperor, who found the army mutinous, but the country south of the military zone remained loyal to Rome.

Helvius
Pertinax,
governor,
185-187.

This was characteristic of the uneasy state of the whole Roman world in the last third of the second century. Before Commodus's death the legions in Britain had attempted to set up an emperor of their own—one Priscus, of whom we know nothing. In 193 Commodus himself was assassinated and the Praetorian Guard in Rome chose Pertinax as his successor, only to murder him a few months later, when they put the Empire up for sale. This was too much for the legions, and the grim African soldier, Septimius Severus, commander of the legions in Pannonia, marched on Rome, disbanded the Praetorian Guard and substituted a body of his own troops. From Rome he first marched east against Pescennius Niger and the Syrian legions and then west against Albinus, governor of Britain after Pertinax who, after securing the allegiance of his own legions, had crossed into Gaul, been accepted by the legions on the Rhine and set up an imperial court at Lyons. In February, 196, Severus defeated Albinus outside the city walls and the Empire was for a short time united once more.

Pertinax,
emperor,
193.

Septimius
Severus,
emperor,
193-211.

Albinus,
governor,
193-196.

Nevertheless this civil war spelt disaster for Britain. Albinus had withdrawn some, if not all, of the garrison in pursuit of his ambition to be master of the western world. The Mæatae, the Lowland tribesmen whose fathers had been deported by Lollius, seized their moment. The Antonine Wall had been already evacuated. Hadrian's Wall was not defended and was occupied and destroyed. The fortresses of Chester and York suffered the same fate. It was a systematic, unhurried destruction. In some places the Wall was dismantled to its foundation. The foundations of the stone ramparts at York were undercut and the Wall thrown down length by length. Chester was razed to the ground.

It was a tribal rebellion rather than an invasion. The objective was clearly the destruction of the Roman fortifica-

tions which had denied to the rebels the occupation of their homelands. Even now the peace of southern Britain was undisturbed, and when Severus had established his own authority throughout the rest of the Empire, he had no difficulty in restoring the authority of Roman arms on the northern frontier of Britain. The new governor, Virius Lupus, began rebuilding the wall and the forts in 197 and 198. The work was completed by 208 when the emperor Severus, aged but indomitable, came over to conduct a series of punitive expeditions which carried him as far north as Aberdeen.

Virius
Lupus,
governor,
196.

These campaigns were arduous and, according to the written record, unsuccessful. The Caledonians employed guerilla tactics and inflicted heavy casualties, but when Severus, worn out, it is said, by his labours, died at York in 211, the ascendancy of the frontier garrison had been so well established that peace reigned unbroken on the frontier for nearly 100 years. If the campaign was unsuccessful the necessary comment is that few successful campaigns achieve so much. As the direct consequence, the history of Britain during the third and fourth centuries, despite the decay of town life in the latter part of the third century, was a period of relative prosperity.

For the rest of the western world the strain had reached breaking point.

The causes which led, everywhere save in Britain, to such shocking disorders in the third century A.D. are directly related to the gradual evolution of the Roman military system during the age of the Antonines. This age was not in reality the climax of the development of the old empire of the Julians and Flavians but a period of transition between that empire and the later cosmopolitan and orientalised empire of which Aurelian may claim to have been the founder and which was carried to its highest point at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries by Diocletian and Constantine the Great.

As late as Hadrian's time, the legions, though they had already become locally recruited garrison troops, retained the Roman tradition. Many, perhaps most, of the legionaries were the sons or grandsons of genuine Italian citizens. Their allegiance was still to the central government in fact as well as in name, and they were still the flower of the Roman army. But this position they were soon to forfeit. The later emperors had to rely more and more for their personal protection and

to secure order at the centre on the Praetorian Guard, and for their mobile striking force on the barbarian Auxiliaries who grew steadily in prestige and skill from the middle of the second century until they came to provide all the specialised mobile troops (cavalry, archers and slingers) which the increasing professionalisation of war demanded.

The relative peace of the British, Egyptian and Rhineland frontiers meant that these armies were at once smaller and less efficient than those on the Danube and in Asia Minor. The Levant does not breed soldiers and in the result it was the army of the Danube which became the arbiter of the destinies of the Empire. Had the frontier policies of Domitian, Trajan and Hadrian failed in the west, there would have been a counterpoise to the Illyrian garrisons in the armies of the west. In that event, the Praetorian Guard, the only force under the direct control of the central government of Rome, might have been strong enough to hold the balance and maintain a secure succession to the Empire, based on the choice not of the increasingly barbarised frontier garrisons but of the senate and the Italian people. It turned out otherwise. The triumphant success of the Roman Empire up to the time of the Antonines provided an expansion of wealth in Italy which destroyed the military quality of her citizens. As a consequence the power had passed from Rome to the armies on the frontiers, who were largely recruited from and in the end officered by the barbarians within the Empire. For these reasons in the third and fourth centuries we find Africans, Greeks, Arabs, Syrians, and, above all, Illyrian peasant soldiers, occupying the Imperial throne and employing Goth and Vandal generals to repel, with Goth, Vandal and Scythian mercenaries, the invasion of their compatriots from without the frontiers.

In addition to these mercenaries, a second class of auxiliaries came into existence in the Antonine age. These were the forces of the local chieftains. In Britain they were used to defend the western frontiers against Ireland. We have seen that the requirements of the main frontier defence left only one legion and twenty regiments of auxiliaries for the defence of Wales not only against the still unsubdued Welsh tribesmen but against Irish raiders. Yet, in the middle of the second century, we find in Wales a great building of strongly fortified hilltop camps or townships. These buildings do not conform to the Roman pattern of forts and in any case there were no troops to garrison them. They were probably erected by the Welsh

themselves with the permission of the military governor of Chester.

The legionaries and auxiliaries alike lived a life wholly unlike that of a modern garrison army. We speak of Roman camps, forts or fortresses, but the terms are inapposite. Regiments and legions lived in military townships with their wives and families in outlying settlements. Inevitably they married the daughters of the nearby peasantry and their interests became identified not only with the country in which they were stationed as opposed to the country of their origin, but with the un-urbanised frontiers of the Empire as opposed to the easier, more civilised, town-centred regions. This was a social, and became a political, factor of fatal importance. The army under the later Roman Empire came to represent the hard-bitten, rugged peasantry of the frontier districts, whose interests were not so much divided from as indifferent to those of the great cities whose association within a common system of law, currency and culture is what we call the Roman Empire. Hence the growing tendency of the legions and the auxiliaries to assert their independence. It was the Roman armies, not the native populations of the towns and villas who were the leaders of all secessionist or rebel movements throughout the Empire. The story of civil wars and secessions which makes up the history of the third century of the Roman Empire is not the story of national revolts against alien rule, or of the revolt of peoples against a governing class, but of the repeated assertion by an armed peasantry of its right to rule over an unarmed urban civilisation. That right it could and did assert but could never effectively exercise. Hence the long-drawn-out conflicts ending always in the reassertion in some form or another of some over-riding authority. But this reassertion was always at the price of the increasing barbarisation of the Empire.

This "barbarisation" had reached an ominous point as early as the reign of Marcus Aurelius, which was marked by war, famine and pestilence. His reign had opened with the Chatti invading Upper Germany and a declaration of war by Parthia. In 167 had come a far more formidable challenge. All the tribes from the Illyrian *limes* to the frontier of Gaul conspired together to break the cordon of fortifications which constrained them. The Goths (who were migrating from the estuary of the Vistula, the black earth district of south Russia and the shores of the Black Sea) were pressing from the east and the Vandals from the north. Impelled by these stern forces, the

Marcommanni and the Quadi from the Rhine and the Danube, with Vandal contingents in their wake, reached Italy, besieged Aquileia and threatened Cremona. The soil of Italy was invaded. The whole strength of the Empire had to be staked in defence of the north-west frontier, while even the Belgian frontier was not secure and the Dacian bastion was threatened again and again.

It was a crisis which threatened not the future of Rome but the future of civilisation. Had the Dark Ages descended in A.D. 170, when there was no organised and powerful Roman church to take over the torch from the secular Empire of the west, not only Greece and Rome, but Londinium and the proud cities of Gaul and Iberia would have been one with Nineveh and Tyre; the dream of Alexander and Mark Antony would have been fulfilled and Alexandria would have become the centre of the world. Had this happened, the distinctive European harmony between prophet, priest and king, between the native peasantry, the temple states and the warrior peoples, achieved at the cost of so much suffering and so much glory, would have been destroyed. The unique experiment of western civilisation would have died at birth. That it lived was due, under Providence, not to genius but to character. It was fittingly symbolic because it is character and most certainly not genius which is the peculiarity of the civilisation of the west.

Marcus Aurelius was character incarnate, a man of simplicity, candour and courage, who sustained unimpeded by genius the burden of the wars which between 167 and 180 decided the fate of the western world. Men are destroyed more often by their qualities than by their defects. It was the world's good fortune that Marcus Aurelius was brave and active without being ambitious, introspective but not self-centred, bold in execution but not ruthless in improvisation. His fame and his title to fame alike have been obscured by his *Meditations*, the musings of a Stoic philosopher on the vanity of human desires and the inevitability of destiny, two extremely doubtful propositions inconclusively argued with unflinching felicity. His practical achievement is forgotten because its magnitude leads us to take it for granted. We assume the survival of Rome; we look only at the terrible weakening and barbarisation of the internal fabric of the Empire, which in fact was the necessary price of survival.

As early as the African wars of 145 and 152, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, we read of cavalry from Spain, Germany and Pannonia in action against the rebellious Moors, while in 157

and 158 Moorish levies were employed against Dacian tribes. In the great crisis of the Empire from 167 to 180 we find local auxiliaries raised from the brigands of Dardania and Dalmatia, and, even more significantly, Scythians and Germans hired to oppose and ultimately defeat their invading kinsmen. In command of the field armies we find no longer the high senatorial officers but Praetorian prefects, procurators and members of the Emperor's secretariat. As the victorious defence proceeded, hosts of conquered Germans were transplanted to Dacia, Pannonia and Italy itself to reinforce populations thinned by pestilence and exhausted by years of war. Finally, when Commodus, succeeding to the intolerable burden of Empire at eighteen, broke off the offensive and made peace, the terms included the entry into the Roman service as auxiliaries of 13,000 Quadi and a smaller contingent of Marcommanni.

Commodus,
emperor,
180-193.

The integrating principle of the old Empire, the *auctoritas* of the Emperor resting on the governing tradition of the Roman aristocracy and backed by the strength of the Roman arms, ceased to work after the death of Marcus Aurelius. When Septimius Severus disbanded the Italian Praetorian Guard and decided to recruit it from legionaries loyal to himself, the last link between the traditional power of Rome and the reality that was the Empire had gone. There remained only the provinces, the army and the Emperor. In these circumstances, the role of the provinces degenerated into that of providing funds to enable the imperial administration to keep control of their armies.

This crude necessity explains the edict of Caracalla, who in 211 extended Roman citizenship to all the provincials. It marked not the final act of imperial generosity but the abdication of the city of Rome from the leadership of the Roman Empire. It was accompanied by an even more stringent control of local finances and the imposition of still heavier burdens on the rich notables of the cities, until finally the *curatores*, who had come to save, stayed to destroy that town life which had been the very core of Roman civilisation, the pride alike of the Flavians and the Antonnines.

Caracalla,
emperor,
211-217.

It was the divorce, by then complete, of the provincial armies from the life and habits of the provinces they protected which made this disaster possible. The towns, saved from barbarous incursions by the legions and the mercenaries, found no one to save them from their saviours. We must not imagine a social war. It was a tragedy of indifference. The decay of

town life in Britain between the time of Severus and the time of Diocletian was very gradual, and was far indeed from complete by the end of the third century. The forces at work were none the less inexorable. Not even the genius of Diocletian could arrest them.

The evidence for this decline is, in Britain and elsewhere, circumstantial and conclusive.

Long before the end of Roman rule the best houses at Silchester had become slums. At Caerwent a rough amphitheatre was built on the ruins of residential property some time at the end of the third century. At Wroxeter the great Forum was burnt down about 300 and never rebuilt. At Verulam by A.D. 275 the walls were in ruins, the theatre had long been used as a common quarry and the houses everywhere were falling into decay.

This decay is accompanied by the increasing prosperity of the countryside and the continued security of the frontiers of the Empire throughout the west. The facts presented a puzzle to the optimistic historians of the last century. Our own age finds no difficulty in understanding them. We have, written in dust and ashes, the record of the destruction of a civilisation by politicians. The beginnings of the decline were marked as always by optimism and sentimentality. The great jurists of the Severan age—Papinian, Ulpian and Paul—were insistent on treating Italy's once privileged position in the Empire as an anomaly. The legislation of the age was strongly humanitarian and international. Punic and Celtic became permissible in legal documents. The provincial element in the senate was so increased by the admission of Africans and Orientals that the men of Italian blood were in a minority. The command of the legions, even, was no longer an Italian privilege. It was a "brave new world," not the Rome of Augustus, Vespasian, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, which descended into the abyss in the third century of our era. The spread of responsibility bred a widespread irresponsibility. All obligations became communal. Fiction became law and law fiction. Severus married his second wife, Julia Domna, because her horoscope showed her a queen. He founded a Semitic dynasty on which he hoped to devolve the rule of the western world while his great jurist Ulpian described his authority as conveyed to him by the Roman Senate. He was succeeded by Caracalla and Geta. Caracalla murdered Geta to become sole Emperor and to hand down to the world the cynical doctrine

that the only use for money was to bribe the army and the only task of an Emperor to find sufficient money to bribe on an adequate scale. This was a plain statement of what to the Roman Emperors of the third century was a self-evident fact.

For half a century from the time of Caracalla every Roman Emperor was elected, kept in office and, when he had served his purpose, murdered by the soldiery. There has been no parallel until our own age, when like causes have produced like effects and the same impoverishment of noble and famous cities is the ineluctable consequence. What seemed an inexplicable riddle has become too simple to need an explanation. The citizens of the towns were bled white to provide the sinews of legalised civil wars between legalised bandits. Every Roman Emperor believed conscientiously that he was, in pillaging an empire to defend a usurpation, striking a necessary blow in defence of civilisation. The fatal divorce between the armies and the towns completed the outrage. The frontiers remained secure; the towns were disarmed. Their citizens sought refuge in the countryside, while the frenzied civil servants had to collect the taxes based on assessments of wealth which had been destroyed by political excesses. The wealth of towns is the dividend which peace pays to justice. Wealth is a creation of civilised living and it disappears when civilised living becomes impossible.

The bedrock realities, in Britain as elsewhere, remained. The towns still performed essential administrative functions. They remained, shrunken but impoverished. The life of Wroxeter did not come to an end with the burning of the Forum. On the contrary, the overthrown columns of the portico, buried in the street, bear upon them the marks of long years of wheeled traffic. The imperial estates in Britain, and most notably the mines, flourished well into the fourth century. The gold mines of South Wales seem to have had pithead baths. The lead mines of the Mendips, which were in full working within 6 years of the Claudian invasion, remained at work for the whole four centuries of the Roman occupation. The Derbyshire lead mines—the only lead mines in Britain known to have been leased to private exploiters—were also flourishing in the fourth century. Cornish tin was not exploited by the Romans for two centuries, but about the middle of the third century, when the economic crisis was at its height, tin and pewter began to be exclusively used in Britain and there

is evidence that the Cornish mines continued to flourish into the fourth century.

Coal also continued to be worked. The Anglesey, Tyneside, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, South Wales, Forest of Dean and Somerset coalfields were all developed in Roman times. The sacred fire of the Temple of the Sun at Bath was stoked with coal, which found its way into the most remote villas and villages of the land. Iron ore was won and worked equally generally.

In regard to articles of general household ware, the demand for imports declined as the political oppression spread. The pewter industry took the place of imported silver. Oil was replaced by tallow, and Italian, Spanish or French wine by British wine and by the old Celtic drink, beer. The standard of living, as a consequence, fell slowly but surely, although the British artisans had early learnt how to make glass, good pottery—mainly at Caister and in the New Forest—and excellent ironmongery. To all the industries the passing years brought a high degree of standardisation, with a consequent loss of amenities. Village industries disappeared. Even in the army, the regimental craftsmen gave way to the regimental workshops, which put out in the third and fourth centuries an immense mass of cheap, efficient and tasteless pottery.

On the other hand, as village industries disappeared, villa industry comes into the picture. The villa was the focus of civilised living in the late third and throughout the fourth century; its logical successor, the castle and the great "place," remained so until the final re-establishment of town life in the late Middle Ages. Yet between the villa and the castle was a significant contrast. The villa seems to have been independent of the village and the village life, whereas the castle and the great house were essentially complementary to it. We draw the inference that the Romano-British villages, of which many hundreds can be traced, were inhabited chiefly by the relatively less "Romanised" elements of the native population. The typical Romano-British village is a group of huts "one-roomed, nearly always circular in shape." The majority of them are found in the old areas of pre-Roman settlement on the chalk or oolite ridges. In association with the villages we find the small "Celtic" fields, on which the light Roman plough was almost exclusively used. The heavy plough had been introduced, as we have seen, into Britain long before the Claudian invasion,

but its use had not spread in Roman times to the old areas of settlement which became the chief centre of village life.

The villas, on the other hand, were highly civilised establishments. We have the sites and remains of more than 500. Many of them, no doubt, represent the old pre-Roman family farm, to which the heavy plough had already been introduced and where already, in Claudian times, open field cultivation had begun. These villas now became at once the refuge and the prudent investment of the rich men of the Romano-British towns, not a few being retired officials or military officers. A further and more important group of villas, however, give evidence of use as factories, notably of textiles, and have round them workshops and workmen's dwellings as well as barns and other farm buildings. A villa thus might be anything from the home of a yeoman farmer or retired official to the country residence, farmhouse and factory of a Roman magnate. The villa system spread without a check from the first century to the fourth. The richer landowners began rebuilding their farmhouses on the Roman pattern soon after the conquest. The average villa, if we may use such a loose term, contained from 7 to 9 rooms but there were many smaller and not a few much larger. Some of them have 30 or 40 rooms built round a large courtyard surrounded by a veranda off which the rooms open. Most of the great villas are isolated, but there is at least one group of villas in Oxfordshire which has been held to form a single settlement.

A typical villa in southern England is that in Chedworth Woods near Cirencester, discovered in 1864 and now in the possession of the National Trust. It lies about 500 feet above sea level, on a bed of Fuller's earth, in a valley of great natural beauty. The original building dates from the end of the second century and the villa was occupied until the middle of the fourth century. Thirty-two rooms have been excavated, though the upper storey of wood, roofed with slate, has been destroyed. The mosaic floor of the *triclinium* or dining-room pictures the Four Seasons, while no fewer than five rooms were devoted to bathing. A disrobing room, fitted with lockers, led to the first hot chamber, Room 16 being a cold plunge. The tank in the *nymphaeum* at Chedworth held 1500 gallons of water and there was probably another large reservoir on a terrace encircled by a formal garden. Two late portable altars were found, but the villa revealed no evidence of Christian ownership.

The luxury enjoyed in the larger villas can be judged from the mosaic pavement discovered at Low Ham, Somerset, in 1945, one of the finest yet found. It decorated the cold chamber of a bath. Perhaps equally revealing is the silver treasure-trove turned up by the plough near Mildenhall, Suffolk, in 1946, consisting of thirty-four pieces of silverware and including a massive tray, over two feet in diameter, of exquisite craftsmanship. The Mildenhall silver is Roman work of the third century A.D.

The basis of the villa economy and the reason for the survival, even the prosperity of the villa in a troubled world, was subsistence farming. The larger the villa, the more certainly it was self-supporting, containing in one community all the resources and labour required for civilised living. Town life, on the other hand, is necessarily based on a money economy and it can be destroyed at any moment by political action, either directly by taxation or indirectly by inflation. Both these weapons of the embarrassed but unhappily not transient politician were employed on an unprecedented scale against the townsmen of the third century. Between the beginning of the third century and the time of Diocletian, an interval of a hundred years, the price of wheat in Alexandria was multiplied, in terms of Roman currency, 6000 per cent.

This cynical rapacity of successive emperors was the inevitable outcome of a system which left the balance of power in the hands of the legions on the Danube and which thus brought to the throne of Augustus a succession of soldiers of fortune, without the constraining influence of a race, a religion or an allegiance. The best and the worst of them had one article of faith, and one only. The army protected the Empire from the barbarians. The army must be preserved at all costs under one discipline and one hand.

In terms of politics, only faint echoes of the terrible decay of the central government reached Britain, but the decline of the British towns and the growth of villa economy show that the economic and social consequences of this decay spread to Britain in full measure. The flight of the citizens from the towns was the penultimate remedy against governmental exactions and the evils of inflation and confiscation. The ultimate remedy was already casting its shadow. The birth-rate was everywhere falling.

The frontiers alone remained undisturbed, and while the towns decayed the forts and garrison towns in Britain remained

active and progressive. As late as the reign of Gordian III (238-244) we find large-scale reconstruction still going on in the auxiliary forts, and the milestones up to the end of the century record the systematic extension and repair of the military roadways. The only political change recorded is the division of Britain, perhaps by Severus, into two provinces, probably divided by a line drawn from the Wash to the Ribble. We know that Lincoln as well as York were in "Lower" Britain, while the southern province of "Upper" Britain had the two legionary fortresses of Chester and Caerleon as well as the civil capital at London. The lesson of this division is the increasing military importance of the western frontier on the one hand and the diminishing importance of the legions, as opposed to the auxiliaries, of whom the overwhelming proportion were still in the northern province. There is reason to think that in the time of Caracalla the legions at Chester and York ceased to live within the fortress and were allowed to live in settlements in the neighbourhood.

This small change of history is all that Britain offers during those terrible years when the boldest and most hopeful experiment in government yet known was passing from one agonising crisis to another.

According to some, the year 218 marked the nadir of the Roman Empire, when Elagabalus, the hereditary priest of an obscure oriental cult, was jockeyed on to the imperial throne by the intrigues of women. Nevertheless the spectacle of a circumcised Augustus decked out in feminine finery, performing with ritual zeal in public the obscenities of a Syrian cult, was at that date too much for the Roman public. They were to be less particular later. Others, with more reason, date the nadir of the Empire in 235 when, following the murder of Alexander Severus—the fifth successive emperor to fall under the dagger of an assassin—the throne was seized by Maximinus Thrax, the son of a Thracian peasant. The exactions of this brave and futile man provoked a series of civil wars, in the course of which he himself, and four other emperors, were murdered by the soldiery, who had lost all pretences of loyalty to the imperial idea. From 238 to 244 there was an interval of comparative peace under the boy Emperor Gordian III, until he in due course was murdered by M. Julius Philippus, the son of an Arab sheikh, who was proclaimed Emperor in 244 and lived to celebrate in 247 the first millennium of the Roman State. It was a year of shame and disaster, of wide-

Elagabalus,
218-222.

Alexander Severus,
222-235

Maximinus,
235-238.

Gordian III,
238-244.

Philippus,
244-249.

Decius,
249-251.

spread revolts and invasions from which the Empire was rescued by the victories and usurpation of Decius, who gave the world two years of peace until he fell in honourable battle against the Goths in the Dobrudja in 251.

Aurelian,
270-275.

Here came the third, perhaps the worst, crisis of the Empire which lasted into 270, when Aurelian, the man of destiny, succeeded to an empire split into three; the East under the suzerainty of a virtually independent Palmyrene dynasty, and the West divided by the creation of a Gallic Empire with its capital at Trèves under the Emperor Postumus, who ruled unchallenged over Gaul and Britain.

The significance of Aurelian goes far beyond his dazzling series of military victories, with which, in Asia Minor, in Egypt and on the Danube, he re-established the prestige of Roman arms, and reunited the two Western empires. His role it was to play John the Baptist to Diocletian's Messiah, to re-establish for the last time in the west the moral authority of paganism, and, in the name of *Sol Dominus et Deus*, to offer an effective challenge, the last until our own day, to the moral domination of the Christian faith in Europe.

Gallienus,
260-268.

For some time before Aurelian's usurpation—for, like all his immediate predecessors, save only Gallienus, he took the assassin's path to the throne—it had been fashionable to proclaim, in a world reeling to disaster, the immediate proximity of a golden age. The coinage of the second half of the third century proclaims insistently the impending arrival of Utopia under the ægis of a man of destiny. Aurelian in a climax of optimism proclaimed the lordship of the Sun as the religion of the new age of gold, and himself as *Dominus et Deus*. The world was looking, amid the universal misery, for a universal religion, and the menace of Christianity threatened the total destruction of the moral authority of the imperial system. Aurelian's daring conception, illuminated by the lustre of his victories, saved the day for a short while for paganism, but the deification of the living emperor was nevertheless in the shape of things to come. The deified emperor moving from camp to camp must needs take the power and glory of Rome about with him, and thus at the very time when the last successful challenge was offered to Christianity there was growing up the legend of Rome Eternal, the spiritual and mystical centre of the world, its vital and energising principle.

The pagan restoration was completed under the wise and strong rule first of Probus and then of the great Diocletian.

Following on the restoration of government, the restoration of the currency was the urgent requirement. This was begun by Aurelian and continued by Probus, but there is a doubt how far the reforms were effective in Britain. Britain had come under the rule of the Gallic emperors, and it is possible that, after the defeat of the last Gallic emperor by Aurelian in 274 and the reunion of the Empire, Britain had remained aloof. Coins of Aurelian are rare in British deposits, and in the reign of Probus there is a story of the revolt of a governor of Britain which was put down by Victorinus, a Moor, with the help of German captives settled in the island. Certainly the political disaffection of Britain culminated in the revolt of Carausius in 287, the third year of Diocletian's long reign.

Probus,
276-282.

Diocle-
tian,
284-305.

In 285 Diocletian had made Maximian joint Emperor with the title of Augustus and authority over the Western Empire. In 293 this historic partition of the Imperial authority, though not of the Empire, was supplemented by the appointment of two Cæsars, Galerius in the East and Constantius Chlorus in the West, to assist the two Augusti. It was thus for Maximian as the Augustus and for Constantius Chlorus as the Cæsar of the West to bring Britain back into the imperial fold.

Carausius was a Menapian of low birth, placed in charge of the Classis Britannica by Maximian in order to put down piracy in the English Channel, while Maximian himself was putting down a peasants' revolt in Gaul. Carausius succeeded in putting down the piracy but refused to disgorge the spoils of his victorious campaigns. He was sentenced to death and retaliated by rebelling. Britain, we are told, received Carausius and his fleet with open arms and was therefore secure, unless and until he lost control of the Channel. In due course, Maximian collected a fleet and challenged him, only to be defeated, and Diocletian and Maximian were said, at least by Carausius, to have then recognised him as a fellow Augustus. If so, the recognition was temporary. It is recorded in the coinage of Britain but not in that of the other Imperial mints. It seems more probable that Carausius came to exercise, between 287 and 293, a *de facto* jurisdiction over Britain and the Channel coast of Gaul. Carausius may well have hoped to confront Rome with a *fait accompli*, just as Postumus had done when he founded the Gallic Empire forty years before. But Rome now had a master, and in 293, under orders from Diocletian, Constantius Chlorus proceeded to attack and subdue Boulogne from the land, after first blockading it from the sea by a great

Carausius,
287-293.

Allectus,
293-296.

mole across the harbour mouth. The coast of Gaul was now lost to Carausius. The best evidence against the view that he had ever been formally recognised as an Augustus is provided by his fall and assassination immediately after his first defeat. His chief minister Allectus succeeded him as commander of the rebel British legions.

The mills of Rome ground slowly but surely. Having seized the Channel ports, Constantius proceeded to build a large fleet, but not till 296 did the expeditionary force leave Boulogne for the English coast. One army landed in Hampshire and routed the rebel legions, who fled to London. Just as London was in danger from this broken rabble, Constantius Chlorus himself sailed up the Thames, and delivered the port of London from pillage and fire. The adventure of an independent Britain ended in scenes of enthusiasm for the legitimate Cæsar, *redditor lucis aeternae*. The eternal light of Rome shone again, and for more than another century, on the islands of the west.

Carausius, however great his abilities, was no natural or revolutionary leader. He was merely the last of a long series of provincial military commanders to challenge, with temporary success, the authority of the central government. He considered himself, it was his justification alike to himself and to Britain, a legitimate representative of the Roman *imperium*. His quest was office as a vehicle of government, not power as an instrument of reform. Like Postumus and his successors in Gaul, Carausius was a good enough ruler, and the Romano-British accepted him as they had accepted Postumus and the others, with complacency, but the evils of military rule could not be cured by the virtues of the rulers, not even by the great Diocletian himself. Rome had civilised her conquerors and destroyed her own characteristic civilisation in the process. An empire without a centre, with no dominating dynasty, class, race or religion, could never be effectively governed from the circumference, not even by the *Virtus Illyrici*. The salute accorded by London in A.D. 297 to the eternal light of Rome expressed no higher ideal than the longing for peace and quiet of a bourgeoisie long since driven desperate by the exactions of government and recently threatened with the loss even of its security, which was the sole benefit that the third century emperors even claimed to confer.

Carausius himself had owed his power to the prevalence of piracy, and it is evident that the Saxons and Danes had already begun their systematic inroads on the eastern shores of Britain,

inroads which were later to attain the dimensions of an invasion. On the west coast, too, Irish marauders had been active, and along the Wall there had been numerous and destructive raids, presumably while the legions were fighting for Allectus in the south.

To Constantius Chlorus, Britain was to owe the last of the great series of fortifications and public buildings which have preserved more than the bare bones of Roman civilisation across 17 centuries. A new York, with the great multi-angular tower, the bastions of London Wall, a new Verulam, and the great series of forts on the east coast which still stand 25 feet high from the Wash to Richborough, and along the Channel as far as the Isle of Wight, all these elaborate and noble works belong to the period of the Roman recovery when it at last reached Britain at the beginning of the fourth century. But not even the genius of Diocletian could preserve more than the externals of the structure of the pagan Empire. It was a new spirit, inspired by a new faith, which was to transform the West and open a new and decisive chapter in the history of the world.

Chapter Five

THE ORIGINS AND CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY

WE LOOK BACK on the Roman Empire with a certain superiority, because our own Western civilisation has lasted so much longer. How much wiser we must be! Yet there is a lesson to be learnt. The Roman Empire had more than enough of worldly wisdom, and its Hellenised culture was prolific in art and letters. The pagan Empire of the west lost its authority in the fourth century, and therefore its power, not for lack of practical or speculative genius, but because its gods had lost their magic. It died of a spiritual bankruptcy and of a moral anarchy fatal to public order.

We shall tell in the next chapter of the slow but sure collapse of Roman rule in Britain throughout the fourth century, and of the infiltration from Germany at the beginning of the fifth century which finally submerged the Romano-British province and plunged the country back into barbarism. The cardinal event of these centuries, however, is not the spectacular reversion of western Europe to barbarism, nor even the end of the secular Roman Empire, but the growth of the authority of the Roman Church over the western world.

Constantius Chorus, who claimed to have restored the eternal light of Rome to Britain, was succeeded as Emperor of the West by Constantine, the first Emperor to be baptised, albeit on his deathbed, into the Christian faith. The tolerance extended to Christianity by Constantine and his immediate successors marked the beginning of a great increase in the secular prestige and influence of the Christian Church and in particular of the See of Rome. For the first time Christians gained, under Constantine's Edict of Milan, full legal recognition, and when, in 375, the Emperor Gratian, determined from the first to be an orthodox Christian, refused to wear the robe or assume the title of Pontifex Maximus, Christianity may be said to have become the official religion of the Empire. When the Western Empire collapsed it was therefore natural and perhaps inevitable that the Roman See should acquire in the eyes even of the pagans of the western world something of the

Constantine,
the Great,
305

Constantine
the Great,
sole
emperor,
311-337.

Edict of
Milan,
313.

prestige and dignity of an heir to the imperial authority of Rome. This secular prestige, however, could not have sufficed to preserve the fabric, discipline and doctrine of the Christian Church across the centuries of barbarism which followed the collapse of the Empire. The Christian Church survived because of the circumstances of its foundation, because of its faith, and because of the character and institutions which that faith bred and supported. For this variety of reasons, we cannot fully understand the history of any Western European country after the time of Constantine unless we know something of the origins, teaching and early history of Christianity.

For centuries before the birth of Christ the mystery religions of Greece and the Levant, which had spread to Rome long before the foundation of the Principate, had vainly tried to meet the human need for knowledge of God and for release from the burdens of the world and the flesh. The reason for their failure lies clear. They taught no way of life. The relation of being and behaving had been taught by only one religion within the borders of the classical civilisation. That religion was Judaism. The old Judaism, however, was not a proselytising religion but a revelation to a particular people, who claimed that they stood in a special relation to their God.

The God of the Jews was master of the world and the source of law, and represented in himself an ideal of moral perfection which must be reflected in the lives of all those associated with him and who hoped for his mercy. For nearly two thousand years before the birth of Christ the history of the Jewish people and their forebears had been the history of the development of this revelation, and of the growing conviction that they were a chosen people and that their salvation would in time come to them through the agency of a Messiah, a man sent from God. The chief instruments of development had been three, the prophets, the law and the priests.

The first significant revelation had come before there was a Jewish people, to Abraham, probably a wealthy chieftain of a Semitic tribe in Chaldea, who began thenceforward to separate themselves from their kindred by their manner of life and their consciousness of a special relationship to an all-powerful creator of the world.

Abraham's date is unknown, but he probably lived at the time of Hammurabi of Babylon, about 2000 B.C., and his followers became one of the many nomad tribes who fed their flocks on the outskirts of the fertile crescent formed to the

Abraham,
c. 2000 B.C.

east, north and west of the Arabian desert by the valleys of the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Jordan and the Orontes. Some of these nomad tribes have remained nomads to this day, but others have from time to time passed over the

“narrow strip of herbage blown
that just divides the desert from the sown”

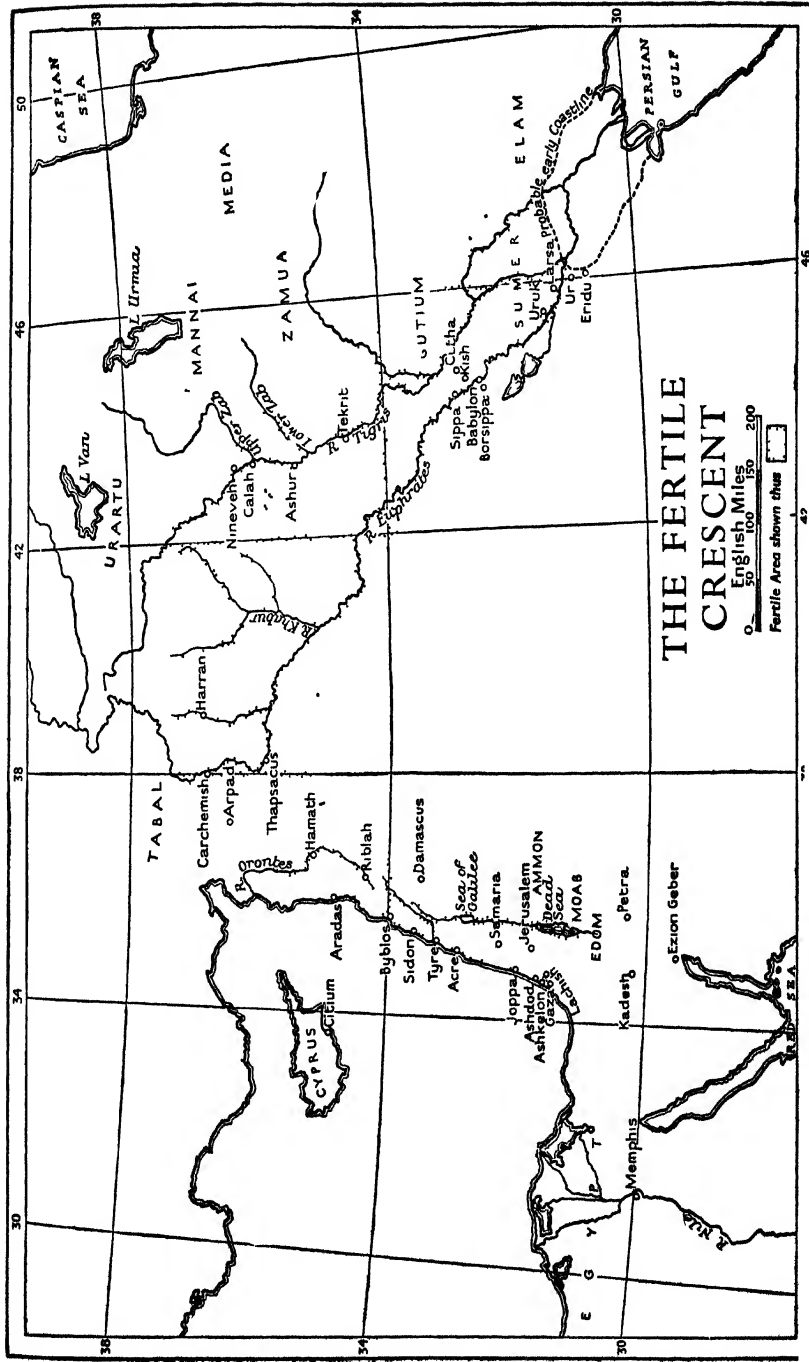
and adopted the practice first of settled agriculture and then of city life. The early wanderings of Abraham's descendants are no doubt reflected in the earliest Bible narratives, though these stories were probably intended to describe the movement of tribes rather than individuals. It is only with the settlement in Egypt, the oppression by the Pharaohs and the return from Egypt into Canaan that we touch the fringes of history, though even here the dating is conjectural and disputed.

Exodus
from
Egypt,
c. 1450 B.C.

The departure into Egypt is plausibly associated with the invasion and conquest of Egypt by the Hyksos. Before that, the descendants of Abraham and his followers had probably settled in what is now Syria and Palestine, and it is to be presumed that those who migrated to Egypt formed only a small section of the whole. The oppression of the Hebrews in Egypt is assumed to coincide with the ejection of the Hyksos and the restoration of an Egyptian dynasty. This places the Exodus round about 1450 B.C.¹ It was Moses who restored to the wanderers Abraham's tradition of the Hebrews as a “peculiar people” and led the migration of Abraham's descendants, still fighting pastoralists, from Egypt into Canaan. In the course of their migrations the greatest of the Hebrew lawgivers set down for the guidance of his people certain rules of life in the light of which all men of good will of our civilisation have, for the last nineteen centuries, lived their lives. These rules, however, remained the peculiar heritage of the Hebrews until they were embodied in the teachings of Christ's apostles to the gentiles in the first century A.D.

The laws of Moses required, first and foremost, the consistent application of moral principles to everyday life. They proclaimed the duty of charity, personal holiness as the end of life, and the supreme importance of the inner law of mind and conscience. The observations enjoined by the Mosaic law on the Hebrews constitute a severe, if prudent, code of be-

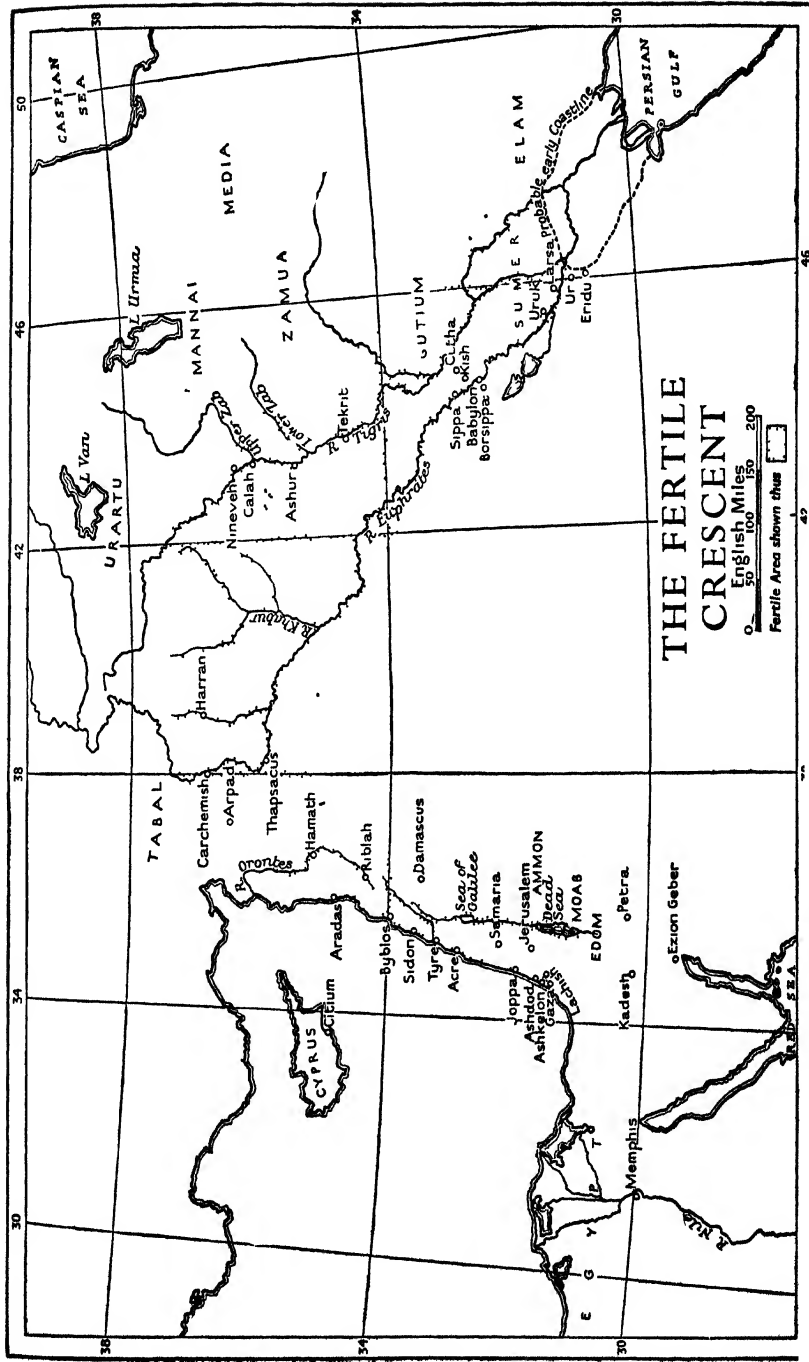
¹ The alternative date of the Exodus is 1250 B.C. but the fall of Jericho is now dated by Garstang c. 1380 B.C. and by Albright c. 1360; the entry of the Israelites into Palestine must have been earlier than this.



THE FERTILE CRESCENT

English Miles
 0 50 100 150 200

Fertile Area shown thus



haviour. It is not to be wondered at that, upon the arrival of the followers of Moses in the promised land and after their conquest of the Canaanites, there were frequent periods of apostasy. For all these human weaknesses the Jewish people, as we can now begin to call them, lived, as no other people of old lived, in the presence of a single, personal and "jealous" God. This is the more remarkable because, of all the great peoples of history, the Jews were the most mixed in descent.

We know nothing of the aboriginal inhabitants of Palestine beyond the fact that they were probably cave dwellers, but before Abraham and his Aramæan followers from Ur had moved round the fertile crescent from south Mesopotamia to Palestine, there had been two earlier waves of Semitic invaders, the first a direct immigration from Mesopotamia probably in the third millennium B.C., and the second an Amorite settlement some hundred of years later. The first immigrants are probably the people referred to usually in the Bible as Canaanites. Both these and the Amorites were settled agriculturists, while Abraham and his Aramæan followers and descendants were, until the conquest of Canaan after their stay in Egypt, still in the Bedouin stage. All these groups, Canaanites, Amorites and Aramæans, were of the pure Semitic type, represented to-day by the Arabs of Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine. Palestine at the time of the Exodus was under the suzerainty of Egypt, but a century or so after the defeat of the Canaanites by Israel and the settlement of the country by the descendants of the tribes of the Exodus, the Egyptian hold on Palestine became weak and the power in the Near East passed to the Hittites. Of the extent of this domination, or at least penetration, we have clear proof, as far as Palestine was concerned, for the physical features which all through later history have been regarded as characteristic of the Jews are in fact those of the Hittites. About 1200 B.C. yet another racial element intruded into Palestine. These were the Philistines, now known to be survivors of the old Aegean civilisation which up to 1400 B.C., when Knossos was destroyed by invaders from the Greek mainland, had survived powerfully in Crete. Hebrew was the language of the original Semitic immigrants into Palestine from Mesopotamia, and the immigrants also brought their ritual law, largely formulated as early as the third millennium. Abraham and his followers spoke a kindred Semitic dialect. The characteristic feature of the Aramæan tribes was, however, not their language but their pastoral,

Philistines in Palestine, c. 1200 B.C.

monotheistic religion, which they preserved, together with their strict nomad conceptions of sexual morality, of the position of property and the rights of personality, long after they had passed from the nomad stage to that of settled agriculture. This gave Israel from the very beginning of their history in Palestine the sense of being a people set apart. It led them to the dominant position in the country of their choice and, finally, to its unification under a Jewish king. Thus out of faith was created a people which, alone of the ancient nations, has preserved its identity to this day.

The secular kingdom of the Jews came to an end with the Babylonian captivity but the idea of the Jewish mission and destiny survived and was actually strengthened. When the exiles returned to Palestine after the Babylonian Empire had fallen to the Persians, they set about the restoration of the old religious observances and the elaboration of the old law which those who had been left behind in Palestine had come to neglect.

Baby-
lonian
captivity
586-539
B.C.

This preservation of the faith through so many vicissitudes, and the effective resistance offered by Israel to the influences to which it was exposed not only in Babylonia but during the later centuries of Persian, Greek and Roman rule in Palestine, was the work of the law and the prophets. With every fresh danger, fresh prophets arose, men whose eloquence, fired by moral enthusiasm and fortified by faith, has still the power to break the guard of the human heart. Through the prophets, rather than the priests or the kings, was given to mankind the truth whose neglect has brought empire after empire to dust. In the fidelity of the individual to the higher law lies the only security for the survival of the society. This concept has determined the ideals and the character of western civilisation. We owe it to the inspired beliefs of the Jewish people, not merely recorded in their literature but professed and kept alive as a living faith from generation to generation until Christ came to fulfil the law and the prophets, and to bring the message of salvation to the whole world. "Go ye, and teach all nations."

But he had come first to the Jews, and the Jews had rejected him.

Like all human societies, that of the Jews, in the course of their evolution, had suffered a certain deterioration. Towards the end of the pre-Christian era the chief spiritual temptation of the Jews was to a sanctimonious pedantry. The Pharisees, in particular, who were the spiritual descendants of the strict

observers who had kept the faith in exile and returned to reimpose strict observance on their people as a whole, came in their enthusiasm to regard the law as an end in itself, and in expounding it they extended its ambit until every act of daily life was subjected to restrictions and taboos of a character repugnant not only to us but to many of their own contemporaries. This aggressive and inquisitorial legalism is a common enough perversion of religious zeal. It is matched in Hinduism, in certain of the Mohammedan sects, and above all, perhaps, in the puritan movements in western Europe during the seventeenth century. What begins as a vivid awareness of the presence of God, and the duty of living the good life under his all-seeing eye, ends in a bondage to ritual observances which narrows without deepening the channel of spiritual life, until men cease through fear and formalism to be free moral agents and suffer spiritual death. The release of the chosen people, and, through them, of the whole world, from this bondage was part of the task of salvation which Christ undertook, but if he came to end the tyranny of the law as the Pharisees and Commentators had over-refined it, he also came to fulfil the law itself. The spiritual message of the Old Testament remained, after Christ's life and death as before it, a revelation not merely more sublime than any in the Greek or Latin literature, or in the more nearly contemporary Chinese or Buddhist scriptures, but unique in kind. The bringing of that message through the Church to the vast aggregate of peoples who comprised the Roman Empire gave to primitive Christianity an historical background and an intellectual pedigree which no other eastern religion then, or has since, enjoyed.

It had been the historical task of Jewry to accept and to keep alive the concepts of an ethical monotheism which challenged every belief and every habit of the ancient pagan world. It was the historical task of the early Christians to spread these concepts over the entire world of their day. But Christ had come, not only to fulfil the old law, but, as he said, to redeem mankind by his suffering and death. It was for some such message, a message of redemption, that the whole civilised world, whose old gods had lost their magic, was waiting in the first centuries of the Christian era. Even so, but for a number of historical accidents, the triumph of Christianity must have been much delayed.

The first of these accidents was the Jewish *diaspora*, or

THE JEWS OF THE DISPERSION

dispersion. The old kingdom of Judah had lasted from 1000 B.C. until the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. The Jews were then carried into captivity. "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Sion." In 539 B.C. the Babylonian conquerors of Jewry fell to the Persians, and between 539 and 400 B.C. many of the exiles returned to Judaea. But the Jewry of post-exilic times was a new thing. Not all the exiles returned. From that date there were two Jewries. The Jews of the dispersion were originally settled round the Euphrates and Nile, but with the coming of Alexander and the unification of the western world in the bond of one culture, the Jews had gone farther afield and settled throughout all the cities of the Hellenic civilisation. With the Roman conquest the Jews spread farther to the west, ever anxious to be at the centre of power and so to renew their memories of greatness. As early as the reign of Tiberius there were 10,000 Jewish men in Rome alone, and one in seven of the whole population of Egypt were Jews.

Persian
supremacy,
539-332
B.C.

Jews
under
Alexander,
332-323
B.C.

Roman
Conquest,
63 B.C.

The Jews of the dispersion remained to some extent a peculiar people. They avoided the principal amusements of the pagan cities, the theatres, the circus and the baths. They were exempt from the charge of public office, as they were debarred by Roman law from military service. But they became Greek speaking, and their sacred writings were translated into the Greek of the Septuagint. Moreover, the literature and philosophy of Greece now lay open to them, and the Jews of the dispersion began their task of reconciling Pagan philosophy with the ethics of monotheism.

The
Septua-
gint,
c. 250-150
B.C.

Philo of Alexandria was the greatest thinker of the Jewish dispersion, and his attempt to reconcile Judaism with all that was best and purest in Platonic and Stoic philosophy was representative at once of the best and the worst of the genius of Hellenistic Jewry. The monotheism remained; the ethics disappeared. The body is essentially evil: man cannot escape sin, but by ascetic practices and assiduous study he can arrive at the direct knowledge of God, which is ecstasy. This was a creed for the few; it offered not even the illusion of salvation to the many. For all that, the concept of the promised Saviour reached a level in Hellenistic Jewry only less exalted than that revealed in the second Isaiah, the greatest prophet of the captivity, "For these philosophically minded persons it is no longer a warrior-judge or king who is to restore the kingdom and wreak vengeance on the enemies of Jahweh, but a trium-

Philo,
25 B.C. to
A.D. 41.

phant, all-conquering true doctrine"¹. It was the prevalence of this belief, common to Platonism, Stoicism and Hellenised Jewry, which made the Christian doctrine of the Incarnate Word, the *logos* of St. John's gospel, more easily intelligible to the classical world.

The fact that Christian missionaries had thus been able "to present their appeal to the gentile world through the medium of conceptions with which it was already familiar"² was later to become an important factor in making conversions, but it was the presence in the most wealthy and powerful cities of the world of bodies of men owing no fundamental allegiance to the classical culture or to the classical religion which provided the apostles with their initial opportunity. To many of the exiled Jews, living in the past, conscious of their spiritual isolation and acutely conscious that they were looked down upon by the governing race, the news of a world redeemer who had been of their own race, and whose apostles were to spread Jewish culture throughout the world, cannot have been ungrateful.

The fact that the Jewish communities and the numerous gentiles throughout the empire who were loosely attached to the Jewish worship, provided a ready made (though not necessarily friendly) audience for the first Christian teachers, and notably for the apostles (who usually made their way first to the synagogues) was one of the predisposing conditions of the Christian triumph. It was through the Jews of the dispersion that those preaching Christianity gained easy and early access to all the chief centres of Mediterranean civilisation. Much, however, though primitive Christianity owed to the Jews of the dispersion, it owed at least as much to the spiritual bankruptcy and moral anarchy of paganism itself.

By the first century of the Christian era, the classical civilisation had brought nearly all the world under one government: it had brought within the reach of millions the blessings of order and justice; it had laid the material foundations of that civilisation which we enjoyed until yesterday. It had, however, failed to teach a way of life which could satisfy the spiritual needs of mankind. The classical civilisation lacked, therefore, the power of renewal from below. For all its splendid achievement, it was always dying a-top, and each effort to restore its moral authority required a greater expenditure of

¹ *A History of the Church*, Philip Hughes, Vol. 1, p. 35.

² C. A. H. XII, p. 649.

energy and yielded a constantly diminishing return. For this reason the classical civilisation was a chief agent in spreading the new gospel. Something was needed to give a meaning to the life of the common man, who had been living for generations in a world spiritually bankrupt and morally anarchic.

Against the absurdities of the old anthropomorphic paganism of the Olympic cult the best minds of Greece and Rome had revolted long before the coming of Christ. "It responded to none of the deeper needs of conscience. It answered to none of the claims of intellect. To thinking men and women, philosophy, which ever since the days of Zeno and Epicurus had become increasingly occupied with the claims of conduct, offered a stronger and more satisfying diet. Before Christianity had become a European religion, educated people in the Roman Empire were familiar with the conception of a monotheistic faith and a dedicated life."¹ The philosopher, indeed, as the distinguished writer of these sentences pointed out, filled a definite place as a spiritual counsellor in the intellectual economy of the classical civilisation. Philosophy, however, is not for the many, and the history of our own time, as surely as that of Rome, tells us that it is more often a disintegrating than a constructive force in the social and moral order. The high pagan virtues of courage, patriotism and family piety which shine through the poetry of Virgil and so exalt it that Virgil became almost a Christian classic in the Middle Ages, could not ultimately survive the loss of all faith in a supernatural order or in a destiny stretching beyond the grave. The Roman world thus turned inevitably, once the old gods had lost their magic, to the cults of the east, which offered to all "however humble in station or mean in intellect"² the chance of escaping from the earthbound life by a difficult process of initiation into a mysterious ecstatic communion with the unseen. Even when acts of penance and purification were enjoined—and only too often the rites of initiation appear to have demanded very much the opposite—they were not enjoined as a way of life but as a way of escape. On balance the results of the mystery cults of Greece, Asia Minor and Egypt were wholly evil. They undermined the pagan virtues of courage, patriotism and piety without fulfilling any of the needs of the spirit. Their disillusioned votaries spread a

¹ Fisher I, p. 89.

² Fisher I, p. 90.

desolating scepticism by way of reaction from the most extravagant superstition.

By contrast, emperor worship, if vulgar, was relatively healthy. The cult served to promote civic virtue and the discipline of conformity to the will of the majority and the traditions of the past. It was, however, essentially the ritual of a governing class. It had no meaning for the intellectuals and no emotional appeal to the poor, the exiled and the oppressed. As far as it survived it was because of its ability to live on terms with such cults as that of the Egyptian Isis and Osiris, the Persian Mithras, the Assyrian sun worship, but also with the old nature gods of the countryside, gods to whose enduring vitality the word "paganism," the religion, that is, of the country people, the *pagani*, perhaps stands witness.¹

Polybius,
c. 204-122

The world into which Christ was born was thus a world already morally disintegrated, and in the first centuries of the Christian era the demoralisation spread. Polybius, writing a century and a half before Christ, had pointed out the disastrous effects of luxury and immorality on the population of Greece. Augustus, during Christ's lifetime, issued warning after warning to the Rome of his own day. From thence onward we have the picture of a feverish but despairing search for new gods, and a growing scepticism among the educated. Stoicism and Platonism still dominated the best pagan minds, but the philosophy of these centuries could no longer build a city nor discipline the citizens. "The singular decay of Latin language and literature which set in during the third century was accompanied by a corresponding decline in the serious effectiveness of western education." Philosophy became, as time passed, more and more linked to piety and "revelations" and less averse from magic. The speculations of the Platonists became increasingly abstract and irrelevant to the problem of life. Hence Christianity came, not only to pose new problems, but, first of all, to resolve an old one, to give a meaning to life.

To our materially minded age, it is hard to realise that Christianity made its first impact on the pagan world as a revelation of the dignity of life in this world. The exaltation which the new religion brought to its followers is attested by history, but this exaltation did not take the form of withdrawal

¹ Although it is now generally thought that the term *pagani* was originally a military one, applied by the Roman legionaries to civilians and then was applied by the soldiers of Christ's army to those who did not belong to it.

THE LAST PERSECUTIONS FAIL

from the world, but of a more vigorous, purposeful life in the world. Christianity created a community spirit.

The world which first heard its message was a world split by acute political, social and religious differences but sharing a common government and the benefits of a highly developed urban civilisation. Both of these things the citizens of the Roman Empire desired to retain. Both of them they were in increasing peril of losing at the hands of the barbarians across the frontiers of the Empire. At first, this desire for security against the enemy without militated against the advance of Christianity, for the early Roman Emperors saw in these early Christian communities, so vigorous, so exalted and so confident, a challenge to their own very necessary authority. This was the genesis of the first persecutions, but the persecutions died down in the second century and were not renewed on an extensive scale until the reign of Decius in the middle of the third century. In the intervening years Christianity slowly spread among all grades of society throughout the Empire. As the Roman Empire declined still further, there was added to the realised need for moral and spiritual regeneration the realised need for greater political cohesion, which could only come from the inspiration of a common faith.¹ How important was this historical fact in assisting the spread of Christianity can be seen from the failure of the last great persecutions at the end of the third century. These persecutions were directed in the first case to strengthening emperor-worship as the unifying bond of the political structure of the empire, and, in the second case, to re-establishing the intellectual prestige of Hellenistic philosophy as the religion of all sensible men. The political and the intellectual challenge to Christianity both failed and the failure was so marked that, as the only political alternative, Christianity secured full legal recognition within fifteen years of the start of the last persecution.

Even in a purely secular sense, therefore, it could be said that Christ was born in due time, and that the conquest of the eastern and western world by his gospel within three centuries of his death was a logical working out of historical forces. This jejune explanation of the triumph of Christianity is, however, only true in so far as it is possible to assert with confidence that some oriental religion, probably Mithraism, would have conquered the western world had there been no

¹ Bury estimated that by the time of Constantine one-fifth of the population of the Empire were Christians. *History of the later Roman Empire*, p. 366.

Christian revelation. The vacuum admittedly was there, and nature's abhorrence of it was writ large in the tragic disorders of the time, but the character and the history of our civilisation was ultimately determined, not by the conditions which favoured the spread of Christianity, but by the nature of Christianity itself, and, above all, by the fact that it was rooted, not in speculation, but in history.

As the background to the Christian faith, the ancient world had the Christian fact.

Birth of
Jesus,
B.C. 4.

Jesus Christ, who proclaimed himself the son of God and saviour of the world, was an historical person, the fact of whose birth, life, death and resurrection appeared to be attested by his contemporaries both in speech and in writing. His witnesses, and notably St. Paul, were men of character and intellect, capable of moving in the highly intellectual society of the age, and holding their own with the subtlest of pagan philosophers and, very soon, with the most powerful of secular authorities.

It was the background of history, attested at every turn by evidence regarded by contemporaries as unimpeachable, which distinguished, and still distinguishes, Christianity from the other world religions. Whatever Christianity might be, it was not, and could never be, described as just one among many other Oriental cults which spread from Asia into Europe in the first century A.D. It was not because it was more popular or more ethical than the other cults that Christianity triumphed. It triumphed because, as a matter of history, in fulfilment of the law and the prophets, and attested by a corpus of literature much of it almost contemporary with the events described, Jesus Christ was born of Mary in a stable at Bethlehem, proclaimed himself the son of God, was crucified and buried and rose again, and sent his apostles, men known and remembered, to teach all nations.

The world of the later Roman Empire, unhappy, superstitious, nervous but still hoping even amid the disorders of the third century for the age of gold, may have been drawn to the church of Christ, by then established, because its doctrine of the redemption of man through suffering was the only message of hope which it could hear. But the early Christians took up their cross because, to men who had known and heard Christ, or had known and heard of him through contemporaries whom they trusted, there was no other possibility. The appeal was always to the fact in support of the teaching—and it was

the historical fact as much as the sublimity of the Christian message which conquered the scepticism and disillusion of the pagan world of the first and second centuries.

For all that, we shall understand little of the meaning of Christianity in history unless we understand its message, at least in its broad outlines. "Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God" is the New Testament's first description of the teacher's activity. But this preacher of the kingdom of God had no attachments to any of the contemporary teachers, who, interpreting the Messianic prophecies in material terms, eagerly disputed the details of the future king's earthly triumph. Such a kingdom had no place in the teaching of Christ. The kingdom as now announced was not the political triumph of God's chosen people over their gentile oppressors. It was not even a restoration of the kingdom of David. It was the reign of God in men's hearts. The citizens of this kingdom were those in whose hearts God reigns, and such citizenship was not a privilege of race, nor the reward of merit. It was offered to all. Repentance, faith, simple childlike humility, were the disposing conditions.¹

Here was indeed a message to the common man, and a revolutionary challenge alike to the religious exclusiveness of the mystery religions and of old-fashioned Jewry and to the social and political hierarchy of the Roman Empire itself. Not even the Greek city states at their freest and boldest had dared to proclaim the freedom of all men. Alexander had proclaimed the brotherhood of all men, but his dream had dissolved into mere cosmopolitanism. He had broken the barriers of race, but not of class. Christianity was a new and revolutionary creed, not because it turned its back on the kingdom of this world, but because it set out to establish a kingdom of God in this world, in the minds and hearts of men free and equal before God and able to find freedom for themselves in the service of their new faith, if only they submitted to its precepts and its psychological discipline.

For the citizens of this new kingdom on earth, the old ideals of holiness and moral goodness revealed to the Jews remained in all their force. The old law was not abolished but transformed. More important than obedience to the letter of the law was the spirit in which the law was to be kept. The new spirit was the spirit of dedication of self to God, the love of all mankind in imitation of God's universal love and for God's

¹ Philip Hughes, *History of the Church* I, p. 40.

sake. Man's love of God and of his fellows must strive to imitate God's love. It must be complete, selfless, universal, not the product of chance association, of similarity of race, or of the hope of gain. Everything for God, for God's sake, from whom all love has come. The 'reign' is necessarily an intimate interior thing in man's heart and will, calling for the continual, conscious union of the disciple's soul with God. On this interior submission all else depends. Obedience to God's demands, then, is no mere legalist obedience, but because of the motive which shapes it, of the spirit which gives rise to it, a means of ever closer union. God's love, which is the foundation of the Kingdom, is, too, its final object and, consummated in eternity, the soul's final reward.

The dangers of this teaching are writ large in the early history of the Church, which is the history of constant warfare against excesses of spiritual pride on the part of its devotees. Two tendencies were particularly marked. As a result of excesses of asceticism men and women became unhinged, and readily imagined themselves in direct communication with God and charged with special revelations to their fellow Christians. Others came to regard ascetic practices as ends in themselves. The kingdom which Christ wished to establish was to be in the world but not of the world. It seemed easier to many, in the social and political conditions of the early Church, to escape altogether from the world.

Christ had, however, provided in his own teaching the remedy against both excesses. He had taught that the mysterious association of his followers in the love of God and their neighbours was to receive visible, corporate expression in the *ecclesia*, an actual society. For the kingdom which was a seed and a leaven was also a field where the weeds grow as surely as the wheat. It was a net of fish, again, both bad and good. It was a flock which wolves would attack, a flock whose shepherd he was, and which he committed to the care of that disciple who was to be key-bearer and foundation rock. Into this actual, visible corporation the disciple entered by a visible, corporal initiation—baptism. In the kingdom there was authority, and those to whom its founder gave authority were to be obeyed as he himself was obeyed. Their authority was to teach, to teach indeed all nations, to bind and loose in his name, to forgive sins even and to retain, to admit by baptism those who believe; and what by his commission they authoritatively decided, that, he had promised them, he would

finally confirm. The nucleus of that society in which the kingdom was to be thus visibly expressed was the twelve disciples whom the record is careful to name.

It was this section of the new creed which led directly to the greatest secular revolution in the history of mankind, a revolution so fundamental that since it was accomplished it has never been seriously challenged until our own day. That revolution was the separation of Church and State. This revolution accomplished the liberation of man from the tyranny of the state by setting up not only, as many creeds and philosophers have done, a standard of judgment outside the state as the basis for assessing what is and is not valuable to man, but also an authority claiming to be competent to insist on the acceptance of that standard, in its appropriate sphere, by the secular power.

Humanly speaking, this astonishing development could not have been foreseen as predestined by the activities of the small band of disciples to whom Jesus gave the commission to go and teach all nations. Yet that is precisely what, as a matter of history, the Christian Church was in process of becoming by the fourth century. As the power of the Emperor declined throughout the second and third centuries, so, insensibly almost to contemporaries, but very surely, the power of the Church was growing throughout the civilised world, and, as it grew, so men grew with it in their conception of human dignity, human rights and human responsibilities.

Such then were the beliefs and the institution which were attested for the first generation of converts by the life of Christ ending not in his death but in his resurrection—attested, that is, by facts regarded as historically ascertained and which appeared to fulfil ancient prophecies. There is much evidence that argument from prophecy, i.e., the assertion that this or that event in the life of Jesus Christ had been indicated by Hebrew prophets long ago, had great weight in the early centuries, but the determining fact was the historical personality of the founder of Christianity. Even to-day, we have from surviving contemporary sources sufficient to give us a clear picture of Jesus Christ. "If we did not have the four Gospels," writes Professor Latourette in his famous *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, "we could gain from the letters of St. Paul, written within a generation after Jesus, a fairly full picture of the main purport of the teaching of Jesus, the nature of his death, and the accepted belief about his resurrec-

St. Paul
died,
c. A.D. 65

tion. Indeed one fairly radical scholar¹ has declared that of few figures of antiquity do we possess as much indubitably historical information as we do for Jesus, and that there are few from whom we have so many authentic discourses. We are probably much nearer to his exact words, for instance, than to those of Socrates. Moreover, while Jesus did not travel widely, neither did Socrates nor Plato. Palestine was not a remote corner of the world, for through it ran some of the chief trade routes of the Roman Empire, and Nazareth, where Jesus was reared, was near one of them."

It was thus from an historical character widely known and described by his contemporaries, that the Christian religion derived its impulse, and what men privileged to hear of Jesus Christ at first hand believed him to have said and done has been ever since the accepted standard of the Christian faith. As Professor Latourette puts it, deliberately in a very minor key: "something happened to the men associated with Jesus. In his contact with them, in his crucifixion and in their assurance of his resurrection and of the continued living presence with his disciples of his spirit, is to be found the major cause of the success of Christianity."

This cause began to operate at once. To us, the New Testament, like the Old, is a document of immense antiquity, older by far to the English-speaking peoples than to the Italians or the Greeks, for whom it is later in date than the chief glories of their own literature. The New Testament belongs, however, to our Dark Ages, long before we had entered the family of civilised nations. It is therefore hard for Englishmen to remember that the writings of Paul, the earliest of the contemporary witnesses to the life and teachings of Christ, were, when they were written, as "modern" as the writings of Mr. Bernard Shaw at the beginning of this century, and that they were published in an age at least as sophisticated as our own—an age familiar with the thought and idiom of Horace and Virgil, of Seneca, of Philo, an age which saw the inauguration under Augustus of the greatest systematic effort in world-government which history records. No modern scholar dates the Pauline epistles² later than the first generation following the crucifixion. In other words, they were addressed

¹ Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*.

² The only dispute among scholars is as to the attribution of the so-called "Pastoral Epistles" and the Epistles to the Hebrews. Even the most sceptical, however, would date them very early in the second century.

THE WITNESS OF IRENAEUS

to an audience of whom the large majority had been alive at the time of Christ, and who lived, for the most part, in districts closely in touch with Palestinian Jewry. The next earliest witness to Christ's life, death and resurrection is Mark, whose gospel is to-day dated at A.D. 65. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke, although later, are not now usually placed later than the closing decades of the first century, and the once loudly challenged Fourth Gospel of John is now generally believed to have been first circulated in its present form at the end of the first century, and is known from recent archæological discoveries to have been circulating in Egypt very early in the second century.

Later Christian literature bears witness to the reality of the apostolic tradition and succession. The early Christian Church, and most especially the Church at Rome, was nothing if not the Church of the apostles, and this historical link with Christ was faithfully cherished. As early as the year A.D. 95 we find Pope Clement, the third successor of Peter, recalling the martyrdom of Peter and Paul at Rome when writing to the Church at Corinth, while Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who was martyred in 107 (or perhaps later)¹ also bears witness to the authority exercised at Rome by these apostles. Most conclusively, perhaps, about A.D. 180 we find Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, resting the case for the authority of the see of Rome on history. He is not concerned with the interpretation of New Testament texts. He rests his case on the historical fact that the Church at Rome was founded by Peter and Paul, and that from that day their successors are known without a break.

The importance of this claim derives from the date of Irenæus himself. He was born between the years 135 and 140 in Asia. His parents and their contemporaries must have known numerous people who had seen and talked with one or other of the apostles, just as surely as there are to-day thousands of men alive who have seen and talked with men born in the early years of the last century. Irenæus himself had known Polycarp, who was a disciple of John the evangelist. Irenæus was therefore in a position to bear witness himself to the historical character of Christ and the authority of his teaching as enshrined in the Gospels and the letters of Paul and as taught by the Church of his day. What is even more relevant, he was, for the same reason of date, speaking and writing in a world

Pope
Clement,
c. 90-99.

Irenæus,
c. 135-200.

¹ Some modern scholars believe the date to be c. 115.

where his claims and assertions must, if false, have been instantly exposed. For there were many, at the end of the second century, who were anxious to find that the Christian claims were false and to expose them.

The so-called apostolic fathers (those early Christian writers who had had direct contact with the apostles) had been content to address themselves to the small scattered Christian communities who made up the early Church. These were communities of enthusiasts, and, quite possibly, like most enthusiasts, uncritical. They were recruited mainly from the poor, though there was a sprinkling everywhere of the well born and well educated, Hellenised Jews for the most part. By the middle of the second century a great change had come about. The mission to the Jews, after its initial success, had failed. The Jews of the Dispersion had finally rejected the new teaching. They had refused to accept the Christian claim to bring freedom from the bondage of the Law. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Emperor Titus and the final abrogation of the Jewish state, had an effect comparable with the original captivity. Deprived of their cities, their temple, and the focus of national patriotism, the Jews were driven back on their one unique possession, the law of Moses. This law they determined to preserve as their own, and, as Christianity spread to the Gentiles and found its leaders among men of all races and cultures, the Jewish attitude became increasingly hostile and conversions from Judaism became very rare.

Destruction of
Jerusalem,
A. D. 70.

The Christians of the age of Irenaeus were therefore forced, almost against their will, to cease thinking of themselves as a peculiar people and to leave that role to the Jews. They concerned themselves more and more with their status within the empire of which they were citizens. Their plea was for the removal of civil disabilities, and ultimately for the legalisation of their organisation. They accepted the secular authority, while denying the divinity of the emperors and the official religion of the empire. This attitude led inevitably to suspicion of their political aims, and Christian apologists had been forced as early as the reign of Hadrian to address themselves directly to the secular authorities at Rome, defending themselves against the charges of immorality and disloyalty and setting out the positive tenets of a faith in every way compatible with the duties of citizenship within the empire. Had their claims been such that they could have easily been rebutted by a mere reference to history, rebutted they certainly would have been.

The apologists of the second century had, however, a wider purpose than the assertion of historical facts. They were for the most part themselves converts from paganism or from the philosophical sects. They wished not only to persuade the emperors to tolerate them but to persuade the friends of their old pre-Christian life of the purity and reasonableness of the new faith. With the second century writers, Christianity thus entered for the first time into the intellectual life of the west, and became within a century a force in the public life of Europe. It ceased to be a network of small communities proclaiming their own Messiah—a sect within a sect, as it must have appeared in the first decades of the missionary effort. It began to be instead a world-wide and increasingly disciplined organisation of preachers and teachers who could speak in Greek and later in Latin to the best philosophical minds of the time.

Here was the force which was, in the long run, to challenge the might of the emperors, as the surest defence of civilisation against barbarism, for here was a deeper unity than any that could be superimposed on the cities and states of the east and west by the succession of soldiers of fortune who seized the throne after the age of the Antonines. Here was a faith, above all, which could unite all classes, bring hope to the oppressed, and assert the dignity of man in a world descending rapidly, as it seemed at the end of the second century, into anarchy.

These facts explain the steady growth of organised Christianity through the first two centuries of persecution and they explain also the renewal of the attack on Christianity first under Decius and later under Diocletian. The early persecutions had not been primarily attacks on Christian doctrine, but mainly inspired by a suspicion of the anti-social character of the Christian communities. Christianity took many decades to overcome this suspicion which attached to all secret and oriental cults. The suspicion remained long after Christianity had ceased to be either secret or oriental, and as late as 180 the Platonic philosopher Celsus writes of Christianity with a repugnance which reflects the view of the die-hard elements in the educated society of the time. But the tide was turning. In answer to Celsus, the best informed, perhaps, of all pagan critics, Origen published one of his most famous treatises, and with Tertullian the literary and intellectual tradition of Latin-speaking Christianity began.

The calumnies against the Christians were indeed fairly

Origen,
c. 185-253.

Tertullian
c. 155-222.

generally discredited by the beginning of the third century and with the growing cosmopolitanism of the Empire "it might have seemed that the reconciliation between the Roman State and Christian Church would be realised through a peaceful evolution."¹ Certainly there was no general suspicion of the Christian character or aims when the Pannonian Emperor, Decius, issued his command that the entire population of the Roman world should attest its devotions to the gods of Rome by the act of sacrifice. The ensuing persecution was a political measure, dictated by the need, as it seemed to Decius, to strengthen the new found faith of the rude Danubian soldiery in the magic of imperial Rome by promoting a world wide acknowledgment of the power and majesty of her gods. This need would not have seemed so clear if the principal sceptics had been members of an already despised and discredited sect.

Decius,
emperor,
249-251.

The persecution under Decius and Valerian produced a great wave of apostasies, but the death of Decius and the capture of Valerian by Persians led to a swift reaction, and the Emperor Gallienus handed back to Christian bishops the property which his father, Valerian, had confiscated and the persecution came to an abrupt end. It was not renewed until the time of Diocletian. The intervening half century had seen what once again looked like the evolution of a satisfactory working compromise between Christianity and the pagan Roman State, and there were many Christians in the Roman civil service and in the army when Diocletian came to the throne. But the pagan hellenistic culture was not prepared to surrender the intellectual leadership of the western world, which it had so long enjoyed unchallenged, without a struggle, and in that struggle they could count, as it turned out, on the support of Diocletian's colleagues and in the last resort, to some extent, on that of the great Diocletian himself.

Gallienus,
emperor,
259-268

Diocle-
tian,
emperor,
284-305.

There is much uncertainty as to the true date when the last of the great persecutions began and as to the reasons which led to it, but it seems certain that the neo-platonist philosophers, who were closely associated with the eastern Cæsar, Galerius, brought considerable influence to bear. The second half of the third century saw indeed the growth of a formidable intellectual and controversial challenge to Christianity, and the writings of Porphyry and Iamblichus had a wide influence, particularly in the east, where they seemed to foreshadow a Hellenistic revival which might, in association with the revitalised empire

¹ C. A. H. XII, p. 656.

at which Diocletian aimed, restore to the Greek mind and the imperial throne the intellectual and moral leadership of the world. There is much evidence that Diocletian himself had little or no share in this pious illusion and little, if any, responsibility for the atrocious persecution to which it led. His abdication may indeed have been caused by the insistence of his colleagues on the new policy. Certainly Galerius was the prime mover, and it was he, on his deathbed in 311, who formally brought the persecution to an end.

Galerius,
emperor,
305-311.

This dramatic event was a turning point alike in the political history of the Christian Church, and in the intellectual controversies of the western world. From that date until the eighteenth century there was to be in the area of western civilisation no further proscription of Christianity as such by the secular power and for very many centuries there was to be no serious intellectual challenge to the Christian philosophy.

Constantine, sole
emperor,
311-337.

In the sphere of theology the turning point had come earlier. The historian must admit at once that there was some justification for the suspicions so widely held in the first two hundred and fifty years of our era that Christian teaching contained within it the seeds of a formidable challenge to the rule of reason and therefore to a rational social order. Christianity itself was forced to join issue during the second and third centuries with numerous Gnostic and Montanist heresies which sprang up within the body of the Church itself. These heresies took the form of over-indulgence in prophecy, of claims by local enthusiasts to direct inspiration by the Holy Ghost, and often of the announcement of the coming end of the world. Their creators were prolific in inventing cosmologies of the most fantastic kind. In the long run, these heresies performed a most useful service to the Christian Church. They forced it to strengthen its discipline and organisation, to insist on the restriction of the right to teach and preach to bishops and priests, and to define Christian doctrine in terms of the best Greek and Latin thought. Above all, the challenge offered by the claim of the so-called prophets to direct inspiration and the fantastic excesses to which these claims gave rise, threw the apologists back on tradition and history as the only sure foundations of Christian doctrine and on reason as the only reliable weapon for its defence. In this respect the writings of Irenaeus marked the turning point in the war between history, reason and the hierarchical principle, on the one hand, and the undisciplined enthusiasms of self-inspired mystics and

fanatics on the other. From the end of the second century the organisation of the Christian Church began to take shape, and we owe it to the gnostic heresies that the Church's authority had to be asserted at a date sufficiently early to enable its champions to draw on first-hand recollections of the apostolic age. The Church was thus free by the third century to turn its mind to the definition of its beliefs in scientific terms which would prevent all possibility of their being whittled away by later generations unable to draw on reliable oral traditions. This task was the work of the fathers of the late second, third and fourth centuries, from Clement of Alexandria and Origen to the great Augustine himself, and of the early Councils, and notably of the epoch-making Council of Nicaea in 325.

Council of
Nicaea,
A.D. 325.

We lack full knowledge of the extent of the Church at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century, but we know of 40 Spanish bishops at the Council of Elvira in 300, and of 16 Gallic and three British bishops at the Council of Arles in 314. In Africa there were seventy bishops as early as the end of the second century, and in Egypt fifty-five by the end of the third century. At the Council of Nicaea there were traditionally present 318 bishops, and the Creed bears the signature of 220. Of these only 14 were from Europe, and 11 of the 14 came from Greece. The eastern bishops who signed the Creed thus numbered 206.

These bishops came from Bithynia, Cappadocia and Phrygia, but above all from the Roman provinces of Asia and Egypt, which were predominantly Christian a century before Constantine. The Church was almost equally strong from very early days in Greece, Ephesus, Thessaly and Thrace. Outside the Roman Empire, Edessa, Armenia and Persia had been Christian for several generations before Constantine. Both in Armenia and Edessa Christianity was the official religion of the state at the end of the third century.

Beyond the Rhine, Christianity had made little headway, but in the Danube province and among the Gothic tribes across the frontier Christianity was well established by the end of the third century, and at least one Gothic bishop attended the Council of Nicaea.

We have thus the picture of a world society gradually assimilating to itself all the active and powerful forces of civilisation. It is a picture constantly in motion because, while Christianity was permeating more and more the civilisation of the Roman Empire, that civilisation itself was slowly

breaking up. This process was not due to Christianity, which did not create, though its expansion was greatly assisted by, the rootless scepticism and cynical materialism which was the disease of imperial Rome. At the same time, Christianity did nothing to arrest the material decline of the Empire, and may arguably have hastened it.

By asserting new standards of conduct for the whole world, based on belief, the Church weakened the prestige of the secular power of Rome in the eyes of the barbarians on the frontiers who now felt themselves, and often quite rightly, the moral and intellectual equals of those whom they had for long regarded as their superiors. At the same time Christianity stimulated national consciousness among the subject peoples of the Empire, notably by the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular. So little is it true that the Christian Church is opposed to the reading of the Bible by its members that the Armenian, Georgian and Syriac literatures owe their beginnings, and, in the case of the first two, their very alphabet, to the Christian missionaries; while in Egypt the Coptic script was specially devised to place a Christian literature within the reach of the Egyptian-speaking population. In the fourth century the Scriptures were translated into Gothic, and here too the Gothic alphabet is ascribed to Ulfilas, the Arian Christian missionary who laboured among the Goths on the Danube. On the other hand, in Spain, in Gaul and in Britain, where Latin was widely spoken before the advent of Christianity, there seemed no need to translate the Scriptures, and the survival of Latin-speaking Christianity as the religion of the people in Spain, France and Italy after the collapse of the Roman rule preserved not only the Romance languages but the underlying unity of those countries as a permanent factor in European civilisation. The loss of the Latin speech in Britain, as a consequence of the Saxon invasion, had an equally permanent effect on the character of British Christianity, which returned as the religion of an ascendancy if only because its services were performed in what had become an alien language familiar only to the ruling classes and whose discipline was enforced by a succession of alien bishops and abbots.

It is none the less important to note that the position in England in this respect as in others was exceptional in the western world. By and large, we must see Christianity, not as an intrusive force supplanting the old order and coinciding with the barbarian irruption, but as a force long at work

within the framework of the Roman Empire, which early in the fourth century became the dominant factor in its civilisation. It was, first and foremost, an historical force, and not the least of its sources of strength was that it linked the spiritual force of oriental monotheism with the secular tradition of Rome, and thus appeared to the world of those times, when the Western Empire declined and fell, not as a revolutionary intrusion, but as the fulfilment of a destiny. For three centuries it had held its own in the intellectual society around it. It had affected the mode of thought, the manner of speech, the very alphabet of culture in the western world, in Africa, and the Near East. Even more certainly it had changed the way man lived, the very texture of the society to which he belonged.

The unassailable witnesses to the extent of this change are, firstly, the martyrs, and, secondly, the monks and nuns. Rooted in Pauline theology is the conception of the created world as a means and not an end, the doctrine of life on earth as a continuing contest between the flesh and the spirit. The renunciation on a great scale of worldly ideals for the sake of that union with Christ which the Christian believed, as he still must, to be only thus possible, was a mark of all the early Christian communities. As the faith spread and persecution followed, a whole literature grew up, exhorting to patience and constancy, and martyrdom came to be regarded not as we regard it to-day, as an intolerable demand on human nature, but as the logical end to the way of renunciation, the direct and sure road to union with Christ. The joy and triumphant exaltation of the persecuted is attested by all the contemporary pagan writers. This heroic virtue had the defects of its qualities. Those who had suffered loss or imprisonment or torture for Christ's sake frequently claimed the right on that account to teach and to preach. Out of these claims slowly arose, by way of reaction, a still more rigid organisation of the diaconate and the priesthood, which generally attained to its final form, except as regards the celibacy of the clergy, by the fourth century.

As persecution died down, and particularly under the Christian emperors, when Christianity might lead to high office rather than the martyr's crown, there was a falling off in the ascetic quality of the ordinary Christian life, but there was no falling off at all in the standards asserted, and there was a great, though not a proportionate, increase in the

THE FIRST MONKS AND NUNS

numbers of those who seriously tried to observe them. The heroic souls were no longer called on to give up their life for their faith, but as *continentes* and virgins, they bound themselves for the love of Christ to a life of perpetual chastity.

Those who so dedicated themselves lived at first in the world, but they soon came to form a kind of spiritual aristocracy and, as such, were "a living exhortation to the whole Church." Here, too, were found the defects of the high quality demanded. There was a tendency to value these abstinences for their own sake. Rigours of this kind led inevitably to heresies involving the belief that matter is necessarily evil. By way of reaction, the Church took steps from early times to bring the life of these ascetics under discipline.

The *virgines* began to lead secluded lives and to meet for communal devotions, and sometimes to take their meals in common. They served the poor and nursed the sick. Such were the origins of convent life. The existence of these communities of dedicated women in almost every city of the Empire by the end of the third century had an incalculable influence, not only on the attitude of society as a whole to social questions and to the moral law, but most particularly on the status of women, the extent of which it is to-day difficult to realise.

Simultaneously there was a great growth, particularly in Egypt, of anchorites. The most famous of these was Antony, who by about 325 had gathered round him in the Nitrian desert more than 5000 solitaries of both sexes. In Egypt also the first authentic monastery was founded by St. Pachomius at Tabennisi about 320. Under his rule, the members lived a communal life, studying under a superior. From Egypt monasticism spread to Palestine, where monastic villages grew up in great profusion, many of them with several thousand inhabitants. The fame of these villages was world wide, and many devout men from the west went east in the fourth century to join one of these communities. Among them was St. Jerome, the translator of the Bible into the Latin version known as the Vulgate, which is still the standard text of the western Church.

St.
Antony of
Egypt,
c. 325.

St.
Jerome,
347-420.

Monasticism first assumed its modern form under St. Basil in Syria. He invented the novitiate, a period of systematic probation in that renouncement of the individual will which is the essence of monastic discipline. St. Basil's monasteries were limited in size to communities of 30 or 40, and great stress

St. Basil,
329-379.

was laid on the need for regular manual work as well as for prayer, fasting and study. Here were the beginnings of the monasteries as we find them all over Europe from the end of the fourth century. But those early monks were usually not priests. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, was the first to turn his episcopal palace into a monastery and to require all his priests to lead a monastic life.

Augustine
of Hippo,
354-430.

The first western monasteries were in Gaul, and they were also of this kind. The pioneer was Martin, Bishop of Tours, who founded the monastery of Lugugé, near Poitiers, in 361. Later he founded a monastery at Marmoutier, near Tours. In 414 and 420 two more famous monasteries were founded at Marseilles and at Lerins. These became the great forcing grounds for the missionary priests and bishops who completed the conversion of Gaul, Ireland and Britain in the fourth and fifth centuries, just as the English and Irish monasteries were to find the missionaries who converted the Germans in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Martin of
Tours,
317-397.

The significance of the birth and growth of monasticism lies, for the historian, not in the dogmas which were taught, but in the attitude to life which the spread of monasticism reveals in society as a whole. These early monasteries were not the creation of a handful of eccentrics. They were the characteristic social institution of a creative epoch of human history, and reflect a revolution in the mind and heart of man, in his conception of his own destiny, in his conception of his duty to his fellows, and in his conception of the historical process.

We must not think of the monasteries as merely keeping alive through the Dark Ages fragments of the old classical learning which would otherwise have perished. That was an accidental by-product of a system which first laid the foundations and then erected the superstructure of the modern world. The monasteries initiated what was nothing short of a social revolution.

In the first place, the monasteries (for in the beginning the same foundations usually contained communities of nuns as well as monks, and the same term is therefore applicable to both) provided for the first time in history a known career for women of education and talent. Work in many fields only recently and grudgingly made free for women, was undertaken by the early nuns. It was not merely that they tended the sick and taught the children, but that, as abbesses, they

became great landowners, builders, farmers, scholars and administrators, often with important legal jurisdiction.

As for the monks, the ladder of opportunity was long indeed. Diplomacy in the Dark Ages, and for much longer, was almost a monopoly of the great ecclesiastics. The rulers of those days were inevitably, first and foremost, soldiers; but they came to depend for advice and executive assistance, not on their military entourage or on enigmatic favourites, but on the clergy, who alone were professionally trained in reading and writing, were well travelled, able to communicate in Latin with men of all races, and familiar with the conception and administration of law.

Within the framework of the early Church there was thus provided a career for all.

Secondly, the Church, through the monasteries, provided not only the whole of what we to-day call the social services, but also almost the whole of what is now called the civil service. In giving land to the Church, whatever the reason for the gift may have been, the donors were in fact endowing not only schools and almshouses, but the equivalent of universities, keeping alive the torch of learning, and ensuring a supply of trained administrators to enable government to be carried on. We shall indeed see that the growth of great estates, both ecclesiastical and lay, during the period from the fifth to the tenth centuries, was in the main a progressive development, directed to the better utilisation of land and to checking the irresponsible use of what was regarded still as in some measure public property, the ownership of which carried the heaviest obligations.

Finally, we must remember that land piling up in the hands of bishops or abbots was land held to the use and further advantage of the one institution in the ancient world which offered a career to men of all classes and races. Great abuses were to develop in some countries centuries later from the assimilation of the higher ranks of the clergy to the governing class—abuses which perhaps reached their zenith in England after the Reformation, though they were certainly present before, but the great figures who will come before us in the next and succeeding chapters were almost without exception men of the people, who fulfilled their trust and used their power and influence to the glory of God and the benefit of their fellow men.

We must beware of reading into the very early Church the

rigid organisation which it soon developed. Some monks, like Bede, the historian, seem to have remained in one monastery all their days. Other famous figures, trained in a monastery, like Patrick in the fifth century, seem to have gone out on their missionary work completely independent. Some doctrine was as yet undefined; there was still more variety in matters of organisation and discipline. We shall find much evidence of this in Anglo-Saxon England. We are in this chapter concerned only with the genesis and general character of the faith and institutions of the Christian Church. Unless we know at least this, the history of England, or of any other part of the western world, from the fifth century onward is unintelligible.

c. 250-350.

The moral collapse of paganism was followed by the collapse of its most powerful characteristic institution, the Roman Empire of the west. We have seen already how, as early as the third century, the citizen had been sacrificed to the city and the city to the army, and how, finally, the army itself made terms with the barbarians and became, not the instrument of order, but a source of disruption. By the fourth century the time had passed when a great or good man, a Diocletian, a Constantine, a Theodosius, could, by resolute administration and a genius for organisation or for war, restore the stability of the structure. The powers of Diocletian's new bureaucracy as developed by his successors in the fourth and fifth centuries could preserve only what was left and could do nothing to restore what had perished. From the end of the fourth century, therefore, it is true to say that the war of civilisation against barbarism passes out of the control of the Western Empire and becomes, so far as western Europe is concerned, the affair of the Church.

The picture of the succeeding centuries is clear, though the details are confused and in the case of our own country almost wholly lacking. The reformed Christian Empire became increasingly weak in the west after the death of Constantine's son, Constantius II, and survived in history only as the Empire of the East, with its seat at Constantinople. The Western Empire struggled on from 365 to 455 under a succession of emperors, Julian and Jovian (ruling in Constantinople), Valentinian I, Gratian, Valentinian II, Theodosius I, Honorius (in whose reign Rome was sacked by the Goths under Alaric) and Valentinian III. During this period of nearly 100 years, the Empire was subjected to repeated invasions notably of Britain in 363, of Gaul and Spain in 405, of Italy itself in 410,

Constantius II, emperor, 337-361.

and of Africa in 430. None of the invasions was wholly repelled. Finally, the great Hunnish invasion saw Christian civilisation forced to rely for its defence mainly on the now Christian Goths, whose defeat of Attila at the battle of Châlons is a decisive date in European history. From 455, when Valentinian III, the last real Roman emperor of the west, died, until 476, no less than nine puppet emperors were set up by Roman or barbarian generals, but the farce was then played out. In 481, Clovis became king of the Franks, and in 493 Theodoric became king in Italy. The division of the secular power in the west enhanced the position of the Papacy as the one remaining international authority.

Battle of
Châlons,
451.

From then on, through the countless vicissitudes which marked the birth-pangs of French, Italian, British and German peoples, new necessities were imposed upon the Papacy. The first necessity was to assert and maintain some measure of political independence; whatever might be the legal relationship between the Papacy and the Empire, the vicar of Christ could clearly not be the subject of one of a number of barbarian kings who might, indeed, like Clovis, be an orthodox Christian, but might equally well like Theodoric be an Arian heretic or, like the early Viking or Anglo-Saxon kings, a pagan. The second necessity was to organise the conversion of the barbarian kingdoms in such a manner as to bring them not only within the circle of those who shared the Christian faith, but within the effective reach of the Roman discipline and administration. With the collapse of the Western Empire, there was no other effective alternative to anarchy.

We shall see during the period from 476 to the beginning of the ninth century how and with what success these necessities were faced. It was perhaps inevitable that in the process a great amount of political power, and very great wealth, should have passed into the hands of the Church, so that by the beginning of the early Middle Ages the Church was the most powerful single institution in western Europe.

Chapter Six

THE END OF ROMAN RULE AND THE COMING OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS

THE HISTORY of Britain during the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries presents a long series of historical problems which cannot be fully discussed within the scope of such a work as this. The period begins with the collapse of the last great persecution and the reorganisation of the military and political system of the Roman Empire which was begun by Diocletian and carried on by Constantine. We know the nature of these reforms but very little about their application to Britain. The purpose of the reforms was, firstly, by a subdivision of the imperial power, to provide for its effective exercise throughout the vast territories of the Empire; secondly, to separate the civil from the military organisation and to build the first into a highly centralised bureaucracy, with a complex fiscal system intended to bring all trade and commerce under effective government control; thirdly, to bring the military system into line with the contemporary facts by legalising the existence and providing for the constitutional control of mobile field armies commanded by professional generals responsible to the central administration. Diocletian had intended the permanent division of the imperial authority between two *Augusti*, one ruling at Rome and the other in the East, and each provided with a lieutenant under the title of *Cæsar*, with authority over a prescribed area. There were thus, in effect, to be four emperors but an Augustus could enter the territory of a *Cæsar*. It was as the *Cæsar* of the north-west that Constantine Chlorus had restored the imperial authority in Britain at the close of the third century. Diocletian's tetrarchy did not survive his life. The supreme power was then seized by Constantine, the illegitimate son of Constantius Chlorus by a British mother known to history as St. Helen, the legendary finder of the true cross. Constantine had been elected *Cæsar* on his father's death by the legions at York. He set out at once on the historic campaigns which made him master of the world. As the first Christian emperor, as the last Roman emperor to assert the imperial authority effectively over the whole territory of the empire, as the

Diocle-
tian,
emperor,
284-305.

Constan-
tine,
emperor.
311-337.

founder of Constantinople and the real architect of the new imperial system, Constantine has left a mark on history only second to that of Augustus himself. He neither created an empire nor was his system or his legend adequate to the preservation for any great length of time of the empire he restored. We are not, moreover, historically justified in regarding his Christian sympathies and his final conversion as necessarily more than a concession to the political requirements of his time, although the evidence is tolerant of a different view. What was historically decisive in his achievement was that it gave the western world another century of comparative order and established in the Eastern Empire an institution which not only protected the west during the dark ages and for some centuries afterwards from the incursions of oriental barbarism, but preserved for all time the inheritance of hellenistic culture which was to be the foundation, eight centuries later, of the intellectual renaissance of the later Middle Ages in Europe.

As far as Britain was concerned, we must attribute to the military and administrative reforms of Diocletian and Constantine the relative prosperity, peace and order of the first half of the fourth century, regarded by many authorities as the golden age of the villa economy of the lowland zone. Far more important, however, in the long reckoning, was the growth and organisation under the reformed empire of Christianity in Britain because it was to the efforts of Romano-British missionaries at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth centuries that Celtic Christianity owed its birth. To Celtic Christianity not only Anglo-Saxon England but the whole of north-western Europe was to owe an incalculable debt.

The administrative system of the reformed empire, as finally completed under Constantine, was certainly applied to the government of Roman Britain and must therefore be briefly described. Diocletian's¹ centralised bureaucracy operated through a *consilium* or inner cabinet, a civil service, a military hierarchy and a secret service. The highest officials were the *Praefecti Praetorio*, of whom there were four, each directly responsible to the Emperor for the civil and legal business of their districts. The *praefecti* were distinguished as *Praefectus Praetorio Galliarum, Italiae, Illyrici* and *Orientis* respectively, and the four territories corresponded, it will be noted, to the

¹ For convenience we refer to this system as Diocletian's. It was only completed under Constantine and his successors.

division of the imperial authority itself as originally planned by Diocletian. The detailed routine of administration was mainly transacted by three great State departments under the charge of the *Magister ab Epistolis Latinis et Graecis* (Home and Foreign Affairs), the *Magister a Libellis* (Ministry of Justice) and the *Magister a Memoria* (Records and Pronouncements). Second only in importance to the *Praefecti Praetorio* was the *Magister Officiorum*, who was the head of the Civil Service and controlled the Secret Service (*Schola Agentium in Rebus*). An official of the Secret Service was attached to every provincial administration. The head of the Treasury was the *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum*, the head of the judiciary the *Quaestor Sacri Palatii*. These three officials, with the *Praefectus Praetorio praesens* (the Praefectus, that is, of the territory where the Emperor was at the time), the two Commanders-in-Chief (the *Magister Equitum* and the *Magister Peditum*),¹ and the Commander of the Emperor's bodyguard, formed the *Comites Consistorii*, or regular members of the Emperor's Council.

Britain was in the territory of the *Praefectus Praetorio Galliarum*, which included the Rhineland, Gaul and Spain as well as Britain. Each praefectorial territory was further divided into dioceses in charge of a new official called the *Vicarius*. Of these dioceses Britain was one, and was divided into four provinces, and later in the fourth century into five. There were at first ten dioceses, and later twelve, for the whole Empire, and 120 provinces. So little do we know of Britain in the fourth century that we do not even know the boundaries of the provinces or their capitals. We know their names only. The original four provinces were Britannia Prima, Britannia Secunda, Britannia Maxima Caesariensis and Britannia Flavia Caesariensis. A fifth province of Britannia Valentia was created later, probably out of territory in the north-west previously abandoned to *foederati* from north of the Cheviots, but it may have been created out of territory similarly abandoned in Wales. It is regarded as certain that London was the headquarters of the *Vicarius* and we may assume London and York to have been provincial capitals. There is some evidence for Cirencester as the capital of Britannia Prima.

There were two military commands in fourth century Britain, one under the *Dux Britanniarum* at York and the other under the *Comes Litoris Saxonici*, responsible for the defence of the east and south-east coast. Both these were commanders

¹ Though these two offices were sometimes combined.

of garrison armies. There was, it seems, no standing field army in Britain during the fourth century, for three Imperial Commanders-in-Chief, Lupicinus, Count Theodosius and Stilicho, had to be sent to Britain during this century, in the first case to quell border raiders, and in the second and third cases to restore order throughout the whole countryside.¹

The fiscal reforms which accompanied the fourth century administrative reorganisation undoubtedly stimulated that development of the villa economy in Britain of which we saw the beginnings in the second half of the third century. The intention of the reforms, nevertheless, was precisely the opposite; it was to restore the commerce of the Empire, ruined as it had been by the disorders of the century of anarchy. The new system was nothing less revolutionary than an attempt—the first known in Europe—at a planned economy. To ensure the collection of the immense contributions in money and in kind which had to be raised to maintain what was nothing less than a centralised world government, trades and industries were compulsorily organised as local or regional monopolies, and the *collegia* or corporations to whom, all over the Empire, these monopolies were now entrusted, were made responsible in return for collecting the revenue and performing the services required by the government. As the century drew on, the task of collecting the revenue became increasingly heavy, and the benefits of the monopolies increasingly inadequate. Municipal office-holding and membership of the different *collegia* responsible for trade, industry and transport became for this reason compulsory for those who continued to inhabit the towns. Although the *collegia* could not discharge the burdens put upon them unless they were given monopolies, these monopolies were the death of that free trade between towns and between town and country on which the prosperity of Roman Britain had been largely built. "Commercial associations," writes H. A. L. Fisher, "were turned into hereditary castes and saddled with definite obligations to the State . . . a vicious fiscal system was not the least among the causes that led to the downfall of the Roman Empire; but what was equally serious was the all-pervading system of compulsion by which the new despotism attempted to secure the upkeep of the State." As ever, the attempt to extend the dead hand of the

¹ Early in the fifth century, however, according to the *Notitia Dignitatum* (as interpreted by J. B. Bury), there was a *Comes Britanniarum* in command of a field army, albeit consisting only of locally recruited forces.

State over all individual enterprise led, not to a strengthening, but to an immense weakening of the central government, and, by way of reaction, to a great increase in the power and prestige of the local magnates outside the towns. The central government was forced not only to recognise but to foster the power of these magnates because, as the towns decayed, and the villas became more and more the centre of economic and social life, the imperial government came to rely more and more on the taxation of land to provide it with money and services. The unit of assessment was the *iugum* of land, and the men, women and cattle maintained on the estate. The revenue was assessed in kind and the landlord became in effect the revenue agent. The system made necessary, if it did not actually create, the semi-feudalism of the late Empire. The breakdown of money economy in any age or conditions necessitates forced labour, and the fiscal system of the reformed empire which sought to make the wealthy citizens responsible for getting in the revenue made it inevitable that, when it came to collecting revenue in kind from the country, the landlord should, except in the case of the imperial estates, have the right to exact services in kind from all who lived on the estate. The freedom of the landlord to do as he liked with his own was not so much the reward for the punctual collection and delivery of the levies in kind as the necessary condition of his ability to collect anything at all. Yet the system was very far short of slavery and had economic advantages which in the short run probably brought benefit to all. Certainly in Britain we can say with fair confidence that the villa estates enjoyed a higher standard of living¹ than the villages, which continued on the whole to use the old plough and enjoy a standard of living, in small one-storey huts, notably lower than that on even the smallest villa estates. The villages, nevertheless, were substantially Roman in their manner of life and we can assume a very fair degree of prosperity throughout the whole countryside for the greater part of the fourth century. In England,

¹ "The staple crop of all British agriculture . . . was wheat. The Romano-Britons continued the prehistoric custom of harvesting before the ears were ripe, but what may have been a new practice was introduced, that of drying the grain in a kiln. . . . Here and there vines were grown and wine made. . . . The ordinary livestock of a villa included horses, cattle, sheep and pigs; geese were often kept and dogs and cats were, of course, indispensable. A villa thus provided could keep itself in bread, meat, milk and cheese; wine or beer; wool for spinning and weaving by its own women; raw leather; timber for burning and for joinery; tallow for candles; in short, almost everything it needed for its own subsistence." Collingwood and Myres, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

however, the end of the new rural economy, when it came, was final. There is no evidence whatever for any survival of the villa economy after the Anglo-Saxon invasions, the immediate effects of which were wholly destructive. On the Continent, on the other hand, fiscal reforms, fatal though they were to the economy of the Empire, had lasting consequences because they contributed to the great social and economic revolution implied in the transition during the dark ages from an urban bourgeois-democratic society to a society predominantly agricultural and aristocratic. The town and the citizen were no longer to be the representative features of the social landscape of the Continent. The lord and the peasant were to take their place. The same thing was to happen in Britain but in a very different way and only after two centuries of chaos.

In marked contrast to the very temporary effects in Britain of the new fiscal economy were the results of the new policy of the reformed empire towards Christianity. Quite early in the fourth century British Christianity ceases to be anonymous. In 314 three British bishops attended the Council of Arles, and three also attended the dubious Council of Rimini in 359. We only know from the records the existence of the Sees of London, York and Lincoln, but it is certain that there were other bishoprics. At the end of the century we reach a famous name, the first of our race to find a place in the world's literary history and the only one to give his name to a heresy. Pelagius was a Romano-British layman of good family, who with his friend Caelestius set out from Britain to Rome, probably in 396, to pursue his religious studies, perhaps with the intention of entering the priesthood. He was no natural rebel. Imbued as he was with the teachings of the Stoics, Pelagius taught that man was naturally good and that his free will, freely exercised, could lead him to salvation. These views were first put into writing in his commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul, a work of interest to us as the oldest extant British literature, but it was not until Pelagius and Caelestius, after a stay of some fifteen years in Rome, left Rome for North Africa in 411 that the implications of Pelagian theology began to attract unfavourable notice, so that Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, and other north African bishops were compelled to take a stand against them.¹ It was in reply to Pelagius and Caelestius that Augustine wrote two of his famous treatises in which he set out the doctrine of original sin and the necessity of interior

Pelagius,
c. 360-420.

¹ Augustine himself referred to Pelagius as "vir sanctus."

grace. Pelagianism was finally condemned at the Synod of Carthage in 418, but in the meantime the heresy had spread to Britain where it enjoyed for a time considerable popularity in the first half of the fifth century.

Contemporary with Pelagius was Fastidius, a British bishop who wrote a book, *On the Christian Way of Life*, which has by a curious chance been preserved. Fastidius was an orthodox Christian, and his quiet, cultured pen reflects the atmosphere of a secure and tolerably peaceful society. We have no reason to regard the society for which Fastidius wrote as anything but representative of the general conditions in southern Britain early in the fifth century. This inference is notably strengthened by what we know of the early careers of two far more dynamic and important men, Patrick the apostle of Ireland, and Ninian, who converted the Picts.

St.
Patrick's
Irish
mission
opens,
432.

Patrick was a Romano-Britain, living in his father's villa at *Bannavem Tabernae*¹ at the beginning of the fifth century. His father was a landowner, and a deacon of the Christian Church. He is not referred to as a convert to Christianity. He appears in his son's life as a typical member of the "governing class in the Romanised society of his day." It is true that Patrick, about the beginning of the century, at the age of fifteen, was carried off captive by Irish raiders. The barbarian infiltration from the west had begun, but its effects were as yet spasmodic and local. Patrick escaped from his captors and proceeded to study first at Lerins and then, under Germanus, at Auxerre. When he returned later Patrick found his family still in their old home. "Travellers came and went; life and prosperity suffered, but life went on, the old homes were inhabited, and the land yielded its fruits."²

St.
Ninian,
died 432.

Patrick's story is paralleled by that of Ninian, who went to Rome for his education towards the end of the fourth century. He went from Rome to the monastery at Tours and then devoted himself to the conversion of the Picts. Ninian's bishopric was probably the fifth province of *Valentia*³ but extending to Galloway and Dumfries, the province being the base from which to organise the conversion of the barbarians beyond the frontier. At Whithorn, Ninian built in 397 the first British monastery.

Another Romano-Briton whom we know to have studied under Germanus at Auxerre is Illtud, the apostle of Wales.

¹ As given in the MSS. The site is not identified and the reading is probably corrupt.

² Collingwood and Myres, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

³ See p. 196 above.

Germanus is indeed curiously linked with British history. He was originally a Roman officer but became Bishop of Auxerre and was twice sent to Britain by Rome, first in 429 and then again in 447, to check the spread of Pelagianism. It was on the occasion of his first visit that he organised the defence of some town, probably Verulamium, against Pict and Saxon raiders and defeated them by a spectacular ambush. What, however, is historically important in his career as in those of Patrick, Ninian and Illtud, is the evidence provided of an active and dynamic Christian society organised for education and missionary work in the north-west of Europe at the close of the fourth and throughout the first half of the fifth centuries. Communications were evidently not too difficult. It was no unusual thing for the Romano-British to go to Rome or to one of the famous French monasteries for their religious education and the careers of Pelagius and Germanus alike tell us that the Church at Rome was keeping close and systematic watch on what was preached and taught. The Romano-Britons who took Christianity to Ireland, to Scotland and to Wales in the early years of the fifth century were not ragged and illiterate enthusiasts or members of a peasant sect, or refugees from an anarchy, but educated and widely travelled men of the Romano-British ruling class practising and preaching a militant and aggressive Christianity as the creed of an organised and active Church. Their fame and worth led relatively soon to their veneration as saints, and therefore to the accretion round their names of a wealth of legends edifying to the pious of a less lettered age. We should be more historical in our judgment if we thought of them less as workers of miracles and more as pioneers of a still dynamic culture. Their place in history is beside such men as those who opened up Africa to European and Christian influence in the nineteenth century.¹ The Roman British society, which gave the world Ninian, Patrick and Illtud, and in which Germanus was a familiar and honoured figure, whose only heretics were regarded as foemen worthy of the steel of the great Augustine himself, cannot have been a society wholly lacking in either faith, culture or dynamism.

Germanus
of
Auxerre,
c. 380-448

Why, then, how, and when, did this society in Britain finally perish?

¹ It is worth while to remind ourselves that the story of the African missions in the nineteenth century is, on the whole, a more important one than the story of the Rand.

The many scholars who have made a close study of the written and the archæological evidence have reached no general agreement either as to the date of the final withdrawal of the Romans from Britain or as to the dates and sequence of the different Anglo-Saxon invasions. Nor is there by any means complete agreement as to the character of these invasions. We are on somewhat firmer ground in considering as our starting point the underlying causes of the collapse of Roman rule throughout western Europe. These causes were mainly military. The emperors of the fourth century did not deliberately neglect the defences of the Empire, but the seat of government, removed by Constantine from Rome to Constantinople, was too far off for effective imperial intervention against the barbarians across the frontiers, and the garrison armies were inadequate alike in training and in morale. This is a fairly clear inference both from the changes in military organisation introduced by the reformed empire and from the need, proved by the history of Britain in the fourth century, for external assistance on the occasion of every serious barbarous incursion. The delays inherent in this system led inevitably to prolonged intervals of disorder. Although Constantine himself never visited Britain after he had been proclaimed Emperor by the legions at York, his son, the Emperor Constans, visited Britain in 342-3, and quelled a revolt in south Wales by settling Picts and Scots as *foederati* within what had once been the borders of the Roman province. When Constans was murdered in 350 and his brother, Constantius II, became sole legal Emperor, Magnus Magnentius, a pretender from Gaul, assumed the rule over Gaul, Britain, Spain and Italy and held it for three years, but Constantius was then able to assemble his forces and defeat him. The restoration of the Empire led to the death of the popular governor of Britain, Martinus, who had accepted Magnentius's rule. In 360 Constantius was again called on to interfere in Britain, when there was a formidable invasion from Scotland and Ireland. This was temporarily repelled by an imperial field army under the commander-in-chief in the west, Lupicinus, but no lasting peace was established. Three years later the frontier was again overrun by Scots, Picts and Saxons, and the imperial authorities were unable to intervene. There was a complete breakdown in government: the imperial garrisons were decisively defeated and their commanders Nectaridus and Fullofardes were killed: the whole countryside was in revolt.

Constans,
337-350.

Constantius II,
337-361.

Martinus,
governor
of Britain,
d. 353.

HONORIUS'S HISTORIC REFUSAL

At last, in 369, the Emperor Valentine I sent a powerful field army under Count Theodosius who restored order, rebuilt Hadrian's wall and re-established direct Roman rule in Wales. This, however, was the last effective imperial intervention. The wall had been rebuilt for the last time. In 383 it was finally destroyed by Picts and Scots when the British garrison was once more in revolt and its commander-in-chief, Magnus Maximus, was fighting the Emperor Grátian in Gaul.

Hadrian's
Wall
destroyed,
383.

Even under the strong rule of Count Theodosius's son, Theodosius the Great, who for a short time reunited the whole Empire, order was not restored in Britain. The last imperial intervention of which we have knowledge was in 399. In that year Stilicho, the Vandal general who became regent of the west when Theodosius died, is recorded by the court poet, Claudian, as victorious over the Picts and Scots, and in 400 the pacification of Britain was reported as complete, but the wall was not reoccupied. Stilicho contented himself with holding positions in Yorkshire, Westmorland and Durham, covering the Vale of York, and with re-establishing the garrisons along the coast from the Wash to the Solent, known as the Saxon shore. Stilicho probably left Britain the same year and in 401 or 402 he certainly withdrew more troops to assist him against Alaric, the Gothic invader who was to sack Rome seven years later.

Theo-
dosius,
emperor,
379-395.

From this point we are without certain knowledge of the sequence of events in Britain.

In 406 the British garrison elected Marcus as Emperor; he was followed by another usurper, Gratian, who was murdered within four months. The army then elected a third usurper, Constantine, who seems to have secured some acknowledgment from the Emperor Honorius, but, on getting it, promptly left Britain with still more of the garrison to assert and maintain his authority over Gaul. The story of the Romans in Britain virtually closes with the historic refusal of Honorius in 410 to send any more troops to the aid of the Romano-Britons in their endless wars against the Caledonian, Irish and Saxon invaders, and 410 is for this reason the most generally accepted date for the end of Roman rule.¹ In any case, the year 410, which saw

Hon-
orius,
emperor
in West,
395-423.

¹ There is some reason for thinking that at some date between 410 and 429 there were Roman troops at Richborough. Not only have many Roman coins of late date been found there, but an edition of the *Notitia Dignitatum* which, according to J. B. Bury, could not have been completed earlier than 428, includes Britain as an imperial province with military commands still functioning normally. Certainly, however, there was no general restoration of Roman rule.

Alaric the Goth sacks Rome, 410. the sack of Rome by the Goths under Alaric marks the end of an epoch for the whole western world. The Dark Ages in western Europe had begun.

The growth of Christianity beyond as well as within the boundaries of the western empire was certainly one of the causes of the collapse. It created a divided allegiance within the Empire and diminished its prestige in the eyes of those who lived beyond its frontiers. This meant that the Empire increasingly depended on mere force. The economic breakdown of the town civilisation of the Empire, although partly due to the strain of the constant warfare in which the Empire was engaged, was also a contributing cause of its collapse. The fact remains that it was the change in the character of war and the complete failure of the reformed empire to produce armies sufficient in skill and numbers to defeat the barbarians, who were masters of the new tactics and weapons, which finally destroyed the political foundations of the historic Roman Empire.

The Romans, for all their prowess, as legionaries, never became adept with the new arms—the sling and the javelin—nor proficient as cavalry, which became by the second half of the fourth century the decisive military arm.¹ When the auxiliaries, like the legions before them, ceased to be militarily effective or reliable, the Roman citizen and the Romanised frontiersman alike lost their political influence and the whole character of the Empire changed. The defence of the Empire came to depend upon barbarian mercenaries from beyond the frontiers. It became necessary to deal with frontier disturbances by absorbing into the Empire more barbarians from without and placating them with grants of land. The settlement of Picts and Scots as *foederati* by the Emperor Constans was only one example of this. In the middle of the fourth century, hundreds of thousands of Goths had been allowed to settle with their families on the Roman side of the Danube frontier and, after the battle of Hadrianople, they overran the whole of Macedonia and Greece.

The political consequences of the new warfare were thus revolutionary. There was, from the middle of the fourth century onwards, a progressive barbarisation of the Empire. The battle of Hadrianople was, probably, the really decisive military disaster, but it was only the culmination of the

Battle of Hadrianople, 378.

¹ The chief problem of war from the fourth century until the seventeenth, when it was partially solved by the socket bayonet, was how to combine fire power with security against cavalry.

pressure of the Goths against the north-eastern frontier of the Empire which had been continuously exercised for nearly half a century. That the Goths themselves were being subjected to pressure set up by great migrations much further east is most probable, but the attraction of the wealth of the lands and cities within the imperial frontier must in any case have led to invasion once the changed conditions of warfare made it possible for the barbarians to meet the imperial forces on at least equal terms. Equally naturally, the first invasion came over the north-eastern frontier. The great Gothic invasions of Gaul and Spain did not take place until 405. The Visigoths were not settled in southern Gaul until 420. The over-running of Britain, the most westerly province of the Empire, in the fifth century by barbarians from the mainland of Europe, was thus hardly more than the logical sequel to a series of events having their origin far back in the military and political history of the fourth century.

Nevertheless, the Anglo-Saxon invasions, when they took place, were infinitely more devastating in their consequences than those of the Goths, Vandals and Visigoths on the continent: for this, three reasons at any rate can safely be given. Firstly, whatever the actual dates of the final departure of the legions—whether in 410 or shortly before 429—and of the *adventus Saxonum*, the latter took place after the former, but so soon after that no organised government and no organised military forces had been built up to take the place of the Roman administration. Britain, in fact, was singularly defenceless. Secondly, the invaders of Britain were pagans, whereas many of the eastern Goths and of the invaders of Gaul and Spain were Christians (albeit Arians). Since by the end of the fourth century the civilisation of the Western Empire was also substantially Christian and its most vital and vigorous institutions were those of the Christian Church, there was on the Continent no complete breach of cultural or social continuity as the result of the barbarian invasions. Indeed, on the mainland of Europe the institutional framework of the Christian Church everywhere survived the barbarian invasions and, when Clovis was converted to Latin Christianity before the end of the fifth century, there was a definite recovery of the Latin Christian culture. In Britain the very opposite was the case. The invasion produced a complete destruction of culture and Christianity was wholly destroyed. Thirdly, the fact that the barbarian invasion of Britain was so much later

in time than that of the rest of the Empire—Rome had been sacked by the Goths long before the invasions of Britain began—meant that the social structure of Britain, and in particular the life of the towns, had decayed further than had been the case elsewhere. Politically the towns remained, until their destruction or capture by the barbarians, the centres of local government. They had their permanent *decurii* and their annual magistrates, but long before the end of the fourth century they had become “shrunk and impoverished.” Archæology tells us that squatters were living at Verulamium in slum conditions in a waste of empty land and ruined houses, and conditions at Silchester and Wroxeter were much the same. There is no reason to suppose that conditions in these towns were exceptional and they reflect a disastrous decline in civic life and trade. The decline must have continued apace in the first half of the fifth century.

When all is said and done, however, the collapse of Romano-British civilisation, like the collapse of the Western Empire itself, was, on the ultimate analysis, due to the fortunes of war. The towns in Britain were abandoned to the barbarian invaders, the bishops and priests were murdered and the churches disappeared, and this happened because nowhere in the lowland zone was any permanently effective military resistance offered to the invaders. In Wales, in western Scotland and in Ireland which the invaders failed to conquer, there was a great flowering of Christian civilisation in the late fifth and in the succeeding centuries. Mainly this was due to the preservation of the Latin-Christian tradition in these countries, but partly, we may believe, to a substantial migration from the lowland to the highland zone during the troublous decades which followed the Roman withdrawal from Britain. Such a migration must have hastened the collapse of the old civilisation in the lowland zone.

* * * * *

Who were the invaders, and from where did they come? Bede, writing in 731, describes the invaders as being of three races, Angles, Saxons and Jutes. In the time of Tacitus, the Jutes, if they can safely be identified with the *Eudoses*, were in Jutland and the Angles (*Anglii*) in eastern Schleswig. The Saxons are not mentioned by name by Tacitus, perhaps because the name is a generic one, meaning sword-man. Yet the Saxons are mentioned in the second century by Ptolemy, who

Tacitus,
A.D.
55-120

tells us that they lived in Lower Holstein. Here Tacitus, some decades earlier, had placed the Reudigni, and the only satisfactory solution of the problem is that which identifies Tacitus's Reudigni and their neighbours with Ptolemy's Saxons.

On this assumption, we can follow the movements of the Anglo-Saxons and Jutes after the time of Tacitus with the help of archæology. The Angles and Saxons were closely akin, so much so that in later times the terms became interchangeable. The Saxons in Britain spoke of themselves sometimes as English, while Wilfrid, an Angle of high birth, spoke of himself as a Saxon. In their native Germany these two tribes or groups had common burial customs and their cemeteries can be identified, and distinguished from those of their neighbours, by the types of urn in which they placed the ashes of their dead after cremation. Archæology reveals their distinctive urn burials spreading in the third and fourth centuries southward to the territory of the Langobardi (Lombards) on the Elbe and westward along the coast of the North Sea to the Weser, and later to the Ems and beyond to the Zuyder Zee. There are also clear traces of smaller and more isolated Saxon settlements near the mouth of the Rhine and even in Gaul.

The history of the Jutes and its bearing on the provenance of our invaders is more obscure. We cannot set aside Bede's clear statement that the mercenaries who settled in Kent were Jutes and the identification of the *Eudoses* of Tacitus (who were in west Jutland) with the Jutes of Bede, is also probable enough. But the cemeteries in west Jutland seem to have gone out of use in the third century and the only written reference to the Jutes between the time of Tacitus and Bede is in a letter of Theudebert, a Frankish chief, to the Emperor Justinian about 540, in which the Eutii (as he calls them) appear to be settled in Frisia and are evidently regarded as having no connection with Jutland. We must conclude that in all probability the invaders of Kent came from Frisia, or even from the Rhineland, and that their leaders, at any rate, were or regarded themselves as Jutes, who remembered and were proud of their origins and whose kinsmen still lived north of Schleswig. This receives support both from the evidence of Procopius of Cæsarea (who inserted a chapter about Britain as a parenthesis into his history of Justinian's wars against the Goths, and gives the Frissones as one of the three races then inhabiting Britain) and from

Procopius,
c. 500-565.

the likeness between the Frisian and Anglo-Saxon languages.

So much for the bare bones. The meat which clothes them is more interesting. These ancestors of ours had one thing in common for certain. They were all seafarers. Tacitus describes them as worshippers of Nerthus, an earth goddess to whom they made human sacrifices. It is believed that the sacred grove of the goddess was on an island and that an incident in her worship was a literal cleansing by immersion in a sacred lake. To Nerthus in all probability were sacrificed boats and booty, as well as, or perhaps in substitution for, human life. Much that we know of the Anglo-Saxons of the fourth century is known from the finds in the great bog at Nydam, which was in the fourth century a lake and therefore very probably the scene of ritual offerings to the Goddess. Here we have the keels of two ships, and one ship practically complete, many weapons and much equipment. Also found in a peat moor was the body of a Saxon of the fourth century, preserved, cloth and all, by the chemical action of the peat. "Spread out over his naked body was found a large woollen cloak almost two yards square and at his feet wrapped up in his trousers, were his shoes, his puttees and his belt. These and similar finds elsewhere not only tell us how our Anglian forefathers were dressed, but they give us a good idea of the daily work and the skill of their womenfolk. One could weave a diamond pattern into the cloth for a tunic. Another, to give her man protection against the storms and rains of a northern winter, sewed a covering of hides to his cloak. Thus did the women of the Anglo-Saxon tribes spend their days; spinsters, weavers, sewers, producing clothes for their families while their menfolk were ploughing in the fields or were out on the warpath with spear and bow."¹

The Nydam ships are especially interesting in their details. Eighty-eight feet long, eleven feet amidships and with a very shallow draft, their clinker-built bodies, propelled by twenty-eight oars, must have been very fast but by no means seaworthy. They could carry neither mast nor sail. Their stability was poor. Forty persons all told may have been packed in, but the journey across the North Sea must have been uncomfortable as well as dangerous.

For weapons the rank and file carried spears with shafts of ash, from eight to ten feet in length, or longbows with arrows in wooden quivers. The leaders carried Roman swords im-

¹ Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, I, 21 (Oxford, 1935).

ported from Gaul or from the Rhineland, and probably wore helmets and coats of mail, also imported. The rank and file relied for protection on round wooden shields, probably covered with hide.

So dressed, so armed, the Saxons were driven by poverty across the sea, half-way through the fifth century. For a hundred years or more, in search of loot or adventure, they had been raiders, privateers and pirates, and all the while their population was rising and they were being forced to extend their settlement westward along the desolate shore between the Ems and the Rhine. To the south the Rhine frontier of the Empire offered, until 405, an impenetrable barrier. After that date there is evidence of some Saxon migration down the Upper Rhine, and some followed the Riparian Franks into Gaul, but the rapid consolidation of the Frankish power soon limited Saxon migration in this direction. Meanwhile, what force had won for the Saxons in their expansion along the coast to the west, nature was taking away. The sea was gaining steadily on the coastal lands of the North Sea all through these early centuries. As early as the first century Pliny the Elder gives a sufficiently sorry picture of the plight of the coast dwellers between the Ems and the Zuyder Zee. "The wretched inhabitants," he says, "lived upon high mounds, as it were platforms constructed by men's hands above the level of the highest tides . . . they dig up peat with their hands and dry it, more in the wind than the sun, and then cook their food with it and warm their bodies benumbed by the north wind." These conditions certainly did not improve as the seas advanced with the centuries.

In 410, however, when our English story begins, there were still Jutes in Jutland, Angles in Schleswig, and Saxons along the coast from the mouth of the Elbe as far as the mouth of the Rhine. In Frisia, beside Saxons, were Jutish settlers and very near them in Picardy and Normandy, traces of small but well-defined Saxon settlements have been identified, although these may date from later in the fifth century. In the course of the next 150 years invaders from all these lands were to reach our shores.

So far there is a broad measure of agreement among historians, but when we come to consider the date and character of the barbarian "invasions" of Britain we enter a field of acute controversy. Our main written authorities are Gildas and Bede. Gildas was a monk who wrote in the year 550, or

Gildas,
c. 516-570.

thereabouts, a book called, with a candour rare among propagandists, *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae liber querulus*. He was born somewhere about A.D. 516 and must therefore have had access to first-hand witnesses of the coming of the Saxons, and was a contemporary witness of the second stage of the conquest and, consequently, to the social and political effects of the original "*adventus Saxonum*." For this reason, whether we like it or not, he is our best authority. Unfortunately he was primarily a prophet, not a historian. Secondly, he came from the west country and wrote his history from Brittany; he may therefore very well be an indifferent authority for Britain as a whole. Nevertheless the witness of Gildas, which cannot in any case be disregarded, would probably have been accepted as it stands but for three considerations. Firstly, he is manifestly at fault in his references to British history prior to the *adventus* and therefore when he tells us that the last British appeal to Rome for assistance against the barbarians was in the consulship of Aetius in 446, he may be as inaccurate as in his accounts of the earlier appeals to Rome, both of which are quite at variance with the known facts. Secondly, his account places the *adventus Saxonum* later than 446 and, by inference, a good few years later, but two related south Gaulish chronicles, which are probably contemporary witnesses and certainly very much earlier than Gildas, give the completion of the Anglo-Saxon Conquest as 438-9 and 441-2 respectively. Thirdly, archæology now suggests to us that there had been a substantial amount of Anglo-Saxon immigration by the middle of the fifth century not only in Kent but in East Anglia and farther north.

Bede,
673-735.

Our other written source is Bede, who, writing in 731, has, of course, no claim to speak as an expert witness on the events of the fifth century. As historian, however, he has every claim on our respect and the two dates he gives certainly reflect alternative traditions which he had reason to respect. His first date for the *adventus* is 446-7, and his other date between 450 and 455.

Gildas goes on to tell us of a fairly long period of prosperity following on the last appeal to Rome in 446 and then of a "proud chieftain" who established authority over southern Britain. The inference is that the southern British, unable to defend themselves, preferred a Celtic tyrant to conquest by the barbarians. Bede, writing nearly 200 years later, to some extent confirms Gildas's story and calls this tyrant Vortigern.

REVOLT OF THE FOEDERATI

Gildas and Bede agree as to the sequel, although not as to its date. The tyrant invited Saxon mercenaries from Frisia into Kent to help him in defeating barbarian raiders. Gildas speaks of the raiders as living across the sea: Bede refers to the Picts and Scots. Possibly the Picts, like the Saxons, were sea-raiders as well as border raiders. Possibly the trouble was caused by Picts from Northumbria and Anglo-Saxon pirates. In either event this calling of Saxon *foederati* is what, both to Gildas and to Bede, marked the beginning of the *adventus Saxonum*. It was, according to them, not in its initial stage an invasion, still less a conquest, but a political arrangement of a kind long practised by Rome herself. The discrepancy between the Gallic Chroniclers and both Gildas and Bede is therefore absolute and the two stories cannot be reconciled because, while the Gallic Chroniclers speak of the total submission of what had been Roman Britain to the Saxons at a date prior to 446, the later dates given by Gildas and Bede record no such submission at all but merely a bargain with alien mercenaries.

It was the revolt of these mercenaries which led to the establishment of the first barbarian kingdom, that of Kent, in 473, and it was the warfare which the revolted mercenaries waged throughout the length and breadth of southern England which marked the real beginning of the Anglo-Saxon conquest. About this there is general agreement among all the authorities. The dating of the arrival of the *foederati* is therefore fundamental to our picture of Britain in the fifth century. Until the revolt of the *foederati* and the widespread devastation and destruction which it caused throughout southern England the old Romano-British civilisation must have remained substantially intact, and the revolt of the *foederati*, according to both Gildas and Bede, did not take place for some years after their original settlement. If, therefore, we accept Gildas's date of 446 as the very beginning of the serious trouble, and therefore assume the establishment of the tyranny, the arrival of the *foederati* and their later revolt to correspondingly later dates conforming to the general tenor of the Gildas narrative, we shall not be able to place the ravaging of southern England much if at all earlier than 475-485. If, on the other hand, we disregard Gildas, take Bede's earlier date (446-7) for the arrival of *foederati* and associate the antecedent troubles in the south-east which led to the introduction of the mercenaries with such intensified pressure from Saxon raiders as might have led the Gallic chroniclers to think that Roman Britain had virtu-

ally fallen into the hands of the barbarians at any rate by 443, we can place the destruction of the old Romano-British civilisation by the revolt of the *foederati* probably as early as 450, and certainly no later than 460.

In favour of the later and until recently more generally accepted dating are several strong but certainly no conclusive arguments. Firstly, it is difficult to bring ourselves to disregard Gildas's very precise dating of the last British appeal to Rome. Aetius was a famous personality whose defeat of the Huns under Attila at the battle of Châlons was known and remembered. Gildas might more easily have made a mistake about any other consul of the late Empire than about Aetius, and his reference to him must in any case be accepted as embodying a clear and strong tradition persisting to the date when Gildas wrote. Secondly, the Gallic chroniclers are evidently guilty of gross exaggeration in speaking of the conquest of what had been Roman Britain by the Saxons at any date in the middle of the fifth century. The conquest was not, even if we assume the loosest possible use of words, completed until after the middle of the sixth century when Gildas wrote and it was not literally completed, since Roman Britain had included not only Cornwall but Wales, until well on in the Middle Ages. It seems easier in the circumstances to disregard these chroniclers than to disregard Gildas. Thirdly, Germanus was asked to visit England to combat Pelagianism not only in 429 but in 447, and his biographer does not suggest for a moment that by the latter date Britain was in Saxon hands or even in a state of active warfare with the barbarians. Fourthly, the British Church accepted the new method of celebrating the date of Easter introduced by Rome in 455, whereas when the method was again changed by Rome in 485, Britain was so completely cut off from the Continent that the change was not adopted. Finally, what we know of Pelagius, Patudi, Fastidius and Germanus and the kind of the society which their careers reflect is not easy to reconcile with a serious Saxon invasion in the first half of the fifth century, and, indeed, Germanus's biographer, Constantius, who died in 490, seems to have considered Britain to be still a wealthy and prosperous country during the third quarter of the fifth century for which period of course he is a contemporary source.

On the other hand there is a real difficulty in rejecting totally the very objective and definite statements of the Gallic

Aetius,
c. 400-454.

Battle of
Chalons,
451.

THE KENTISH KINGDOMS

chroniclers. There is greater difficulty in reconciling the later dating of the *adventus Saxonum* with the fact now demonstrated by archæology that many of the Anglian and Saxon graves in East Anglia and in Yorkshire should be dated not much later than 450. We must also remember that Gildas's narrative does not really accord and cannot easily be reconciled with that of Bede. Although the general sequence of events after the coming of the tyrant is the same in both accounts, Gildas's narrative suggests a longer interval between 446 and the coming of the *foederati* than does Bede's. Further, there is a real difficulty in thinking that relatively ordered town and country life continued in Britain until the fourth quarter of the fifth century. There is no archæological evidence suggesting this.

To meet some of these difficulties a suggestion has been made by Mr. Stevens and tentatively endorsed by Mr. J. N. L. Myres¹ that Gildas, in referring the third British appeal to Rome to 446, was confusing this date with 410, the date of the appeal to Honorius (which Gildas ignores). On this bold but attractive assumption Gildas's narrative falls into line more or less both with the Chroniclers and with Bede and enables us to place the revolt of the *foederati* as early as 450-460. In any case, however, we need not reject the traditional date for the establishment of the first barbarian kingdom, that of Kent, in 473, whether we assume the harrying of southern England to have taken place before or after that date.

Saxons in
Kent,
A.D. 473.

If we cannot be sure of the date of the coming of the mercenaries or of their destructive attack on the British, what we do know for certain is important. The first Saxon settlement was the settlement of mercenaries from Frisia in Kent by invitation of a British chieftain, and the first Saxon kingdom was in Kent, formed when the mercenaries revolted and seized the county and established their independence. The mercenaries were invited not earlier than 410 nor much later than 446. They declared their independence not earlier than 447, (the date of Germanus's second visit), nor later than 473, (the establishment of the Kentish kingdom).

In either case, whether before or after the establishment of the kingdom, the barbarians waged a totally destructive war against the Romano-British when the bishops and priests in southern England were murdered and the towns destroyed or

¹ *New English Review*, Sept., 1946, p. 271.

abandoned. These decisive events took place either in 450-460 or in 475-485.

* * * * *

The formation of the Kentish graves suggests a Rhineland, rather than a north German culture, but we must not infer the migration of a Rhenish tribe. These mercenaries were professional soldiers. They had probably served as Roman auxiliaries on the Rhine or thereabouts. Their legendary leaders, Hengist and Horsa, were, as has been suggested, probably Jutes, but the rank and file were certainly of mixed race. The Jutish race and civilisation, as described by Bede and as we know it from the graves of the late fifth and sixth centuries, was made in Kent. In marked distinction from that of the rest of the country, the social and economic structure of Kent was not wholly destroyed by the German settlement. The settlers came as an organised body to an organised community. The principal centres of population in Roman-British Kent—Dover, Canterbury, Faversham and Rochester—were among the principal settlement areas of the Germans. This alone would distinguish the Kentish conquest (whenever it took place) from all other Anglo-Saxon settlements. It has even been suggested that some of the techniques employed in the beautiful jewellery of the Kentish graves were taught to new arrivals by the Romano-Britons. A further Kentish peculiarity is the field system, as opposed to the system of strip cultivation by the Anglo-Saxons elsewhere in southern England. This again suggests Frankish influence from the Rhineland. Finally, the *ceorls*, or freemen, were in Kent more substantial people than elsewhere, and the different classes of dependants were more elaborately classified. We have here, not a destructive invasion by barbarian warrior bands, but the settlement of a district by an organised body of men already long accustomed to live in an ordered civilisation. This was to be reflected a hundred and fifty years later, when Kent produced the first code of law written in western Europe in a vernacular language.

We are forced to the conclusion that the fervent rebukes of Gildas to the British who invited Hengist and Horsa to Kent were substantially mistaken. No doubt the mercenaries were guilty of treachery in asserting their independence and in seizing the country, but there is clear evidence of the continuance of a fairly high trading and farming civilisation in Kent from Romano-British times onwards, and it is to the

THE BRIEF IMPERIUM OF SUSSEX

Christian queen of a Kentish king that England was to owe the return of Latin Christianity, the earliest written code of law, and the first steps in the rebuilding of civilisation. Had Kent been subjected to the disorders of conquest by Anglo-Saxon barbarian raiders, the dark ages of Britain might have been greatly prolonged.

Apart from the *foederati*, the earliest Saxon settlements were those in Sussex, and the earliest Anglian settlements those round the Wash. The south Saxons began the settlement of Sussex *c.* 477, and defeated the Britons in a decisive battle *c.* 491. About the same time men of the same tribe appear to have come up the Thames and settled in Surrey. The Saxon graves in Surrey are of the same date and type as those in Sussex between Eastbourne and Brighton. Round Hastings and west of Brighton, however, there are no identifiable cemeteries, and the Haestingas and their kindred who landed farther west¹ must have been different in their customs. The main early settlements in Surrey are in the Croydon area, then separated from London by marshes and woodland and from Kent and Sussex by the weald forest.

Saxons in
Sussex,
A. D. 477-
491.

According to Bede, Aelle, conqueror of Sussex, was the first Saxon king to establish an *imperium*, a statement which it is somewhat difficult to interpret. There is fairly clear evidence of inter-communication, perhaps by sea, perhaps also across the weald along the Roman Stane Street, between Kent, Sussex and Surrey. There is also clear evidence, both literary and archaeological, that the Kentish culture spread to Hampshire and the Isle of Wight at a very early date. There is archaeological evidence for a very few contemporary settlements in Middlesex, but there is an almost complete absence of pagan Saxon remains in Essex and Hertfordshire. Either Aelle's *imperium* must have been small or we must assume that the scarcity of pagan remains north of the lower Thames is accidental.

In marked contrast with the lower reaches of the Thames there is clear evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlements in the upper Thames valley somewhere in the middle of the fifth century. The Anglo-Saxons reached the upper Thames from the Wash. The cemeteries at Reading, near Dorchester, and at Fairford contain numerous evidences of cremation and suggest that

¹ Where we have a large group of towns with the suffix "-ing," denoting the settlement of a group or clan (e.g. Worthing, Lancing, Steyning, Angmering, Goring, etc., etc.).

these invaders came direct from north Germany across the North Sea, and had been, before that, immune from Frankish or Christian influence. Some of the brooches found here suggest connections with the Elbe-Weser district.

Contemporary with the Oxfordshire settlements are those in the Cambridge district, in the valleys of the Cam, Nene and Welland. Archæologists describe the earliest remains as predominantly Saxon in type, like those of the Oxford region, but with an Anglian admixture. They can be dated to the second half of the fifth century.

We have the outline, at least of a picture. Gildas, writing about 550, describes the last quarter of the fifth century as one of rapine, the breakdown of government and the destruction of cities. We must connect this with the two invasions of Sussex, the wholesale incursions from the river valleys, and probably along the Ickneild Way, into the Cambridge and upper Thames districts, and possibly also with the revolt of the *foederati* in Kent and the flight of the defeated Britons to London, although, as we have seen, this may have been earlier. If King Aelle of Sussex did indeed achieve an *imperium* in the south, we must assume that he established himself as overlord of the king of Kent and it may well have been under Aelle's leadership that the first real attack on the Romano-Britons outside Kent and Sussex began.

Arthur,
dux
bellorum,
c. 500.

Towards the close of the fifth century there came a halt to the strife between the Anglo-Saxons and the Britons in southern England as a result, Gildas tells us, of organised resistance offered by the west country Britons under the leadership of Ambrosius Aurelianus, a Romano-Briton who is about the only hero of Gildas's narrative, and the still more legendary Arthur, *dux bellorum*, the first national hero of our British story. The first mention of Arthur by name was in the *Historia Brittonum* of Nennius, a ninth century monk, but the reference bears witness to a long-established tradition, and there is some reason to think that Nennius incorporated in his history some much earlier text. The Arthurian legend, at any rate, gives the clue to the nature of the fighting. At the decisive victory of Badon Hill (perhaps to be identified as Badbury Hill, near Faringdon) Arthur and his band accounted for 960 Saxons. The sequel, at any rate, to the resistance offered by the west country was nearly half a century of peace, a peace which still reigned when Gildas wrote and for which therefore we have evidence which for once is incontestable. Ambrosius Aurelianus

and Arthur were almost certainly cavalry leaders engaged in checking raids into the west country and organising counter-raids into the areas of Anglo-Saxon settlement. They were most probably *condottiere*, Romano-British aristocrats of the west country, turned soldiers of fortune whose skill and whose followers were at the disposal of the various British kings of the west and the midlands.

The date of the decisive victory is unknown. Bede places it 44 years after the *adventus Saxonum*, which places it, on his reckoning, somewhere between 490 and 499. The *Annales Cambriae* date it in 516. If we place it *c.* 500 we are on safe ground. We must link with this decisive check to the Saxon incursions the end of the *imperium* established by Aelle and the relapse into obscurity of the Sussex kingdom. Probably the settlements in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight were the only territorial changes produced by the destructive war of aggression waged by Kent and Sussex in the last quarter of the fifth century. For the rest their conquests were temporary: only the destruction which accompanied them was permanent in its consequences.

It remains to record the arrival of the West Saxons, under their British-named chieftain Cedric, in Southampton Water by sea from Gaul at the close of the fifth century, or, more probably in 514. This group, from whose leader the royal family of Wessex, and hence our reigning house to-day, are descended, were for long only a small band of settlers on Salisbury Plain, and for half a century played no part in history. The story of the expansion of Wessex belongs, like the story of Mercia and the northern kingdoms, to the second stage of the conquest which we may regard as belonging to the second half of the sixth century.

Coming of
West
Saxons,
A.D. 514.

Procopius says that in his time, the middle of the sixth century, Britain was divided between three peoples, the British, the Frisians, and the Angles, each ruled by their own king, and he adds that each race was so fertile that it sent every year a large body of emigrants to the land of the Franks. In part, as Professor Stenton observes, this statement is certainly correct. It is to the first part of the sixth century that the colonisation of Brittany from south-west Britain can now be safely dated. But the rest of the story is also circumstantial, and not improbable, and accords well with the history of the preceding century as now generally accepted. It is also confirmed by the German tradition, written down in the ninth century by a

monk of Fulda, that Saxons from Britain were given land north of the River Unstrut by the king of the Franks after the Thuringian wars of 531.

The Anglo-Saxons outside south-east England, the Isle of Wight, Hampshire, and the fenlands round the Wash were still, in 550, a minority, but they had settled in innumerable scattered groups throughout the Midlands, the eastern counties and the upper Thames valley. They settled in the valleys and in the lowlands, and the old Romano-British settlements in the highlands and on the downs show no trace of late occupation; yet there is no evidence of destruction. The older sites merely passed out of use. This is precisely what we should expect as the consequence of the infiltration of raiders from the coastal districts between Hamburg and the Zuyder Zee. These men were at home in the marshes and the valleys. They were used to heavy soil and, above all, to waterways. Naturally they settled in the lowlands and left to such of the Romano-British peasantry as had survived the destructive wars of the fifth century the higher, lighter soil. Equally naturally, as civilisation slowly returned to Britain, the earlier settlements, dating back as they did to the days of the light plough and uneasy communications, merged into the later ones, and the upland villages, as on the Wessex Downs, were gradually abandoned to the more profitable sheep who occupy their sites to this day. The immense fertility of the lower levels of south-eastern England, as compared with the areas of earlier settlement, made this change-over of population inevitable.

The Anglo-Saxons were an aristocratic people. The bands who made their way up the river valleys from the Wash to the Oxford and Cambridge districts, or fought their way on to the Sussex Downs or Salisbury Plain and formed the earliest settlements, were fighting men under their chosen leaders. The rank and file were satisfied with grants of land. The leader and his immediate friends and comrades-in-arms became naturally the king and the nobility of the territory they settled. From the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon age, the earl was over the ceorl, and the king ruled *primus inter pares* over the earls. Only in Kent an established social order remained relatively undisturbed by the conquest, and those Romano-Britons in the old towns of Kent who disliked the new government had fled. We know from Gildas that the towns, even outside the territory conquered by the Anglo-Saxons by the end of the fifth century, were almost deserted and we can only

guess at the state of those in the areas of conquest—of Caistor, Lincoln, Leicester, Dorchester, Silchester, Winchester and half a dozen others. Chichester gives us a clue. The old Roman name was *Noviomagnus*, but it was renamed Chichester the fort of Cissa, the son of Aelle, the conqueror of Sussex. It is clear enough that the city was occupied very early in the Saxon conquest of west Sussex, yet there is no evidence of development, or even of continued prosperity. The Saxon invaders were not town dwellers. They had neither religion, law nor commerce, and of these three things urban civilisation is built. Some cities they occupied; others they neglected. Some few—*Verulam* (though much later), *Caister* and *Wroxeter* (also later)—they actually destroyed. The towns remained names at least to the Anglo-Saxon chroniclers, because the great advance of the Saxons to the Bristol Channel is recorded as including the conquest of Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath. Yet Gildas, writing in 550, tells us that town life in southern Britain had almost ceased more than half a century before. We must accept his word for it, unless by the survival of the towns we mean merely the occupation of ruins by bands of squatters or refugees. Town life definitely perished. Had it been otherwise, the Christian hierarchy would have survived as it did in Gaul. The complete contrast between Britain and Gaul in this respect points irrefutably to an entirely different situation in regard to the towns in Britain.

Saxon
Conquests
in West,
577.

It was in the second half of the sixth century that the issue between the British and the Anglo-Saxons was decided in favour of the invaders. Partly this was due to the consolidation of the West Saxon kingdom and its steady expansion westward, but mainly to the consolidation and subsequent expansion of the Northern Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia.¹

From cemeteries and other remains we can trace the main lines of advance which led to the settlement and conquest of the east, the north-east and the midlands of England. The first was from the Wash, along the valleys of the Little Ouse and the Lark, the second north-east along the valleys of the Witham

¹ Until Penda's reign (which began in 626 or 633) the Anglo-Saxon settlements in the Trent valley, out of which grew the famous Kingdom of Mercia, were politically dependent on the Kingdom of Deira. The later development of this territory was due to the need for clearing the dense natural forest. "The Mercians were the first of the Anglo-Saxons people to demonstrate in a practical way that revolution in political and economic geography which the systematic exploitation of the heavy forested soils was to entail in the development of England."—J. N. L. Myres, *op cit*, p. 418.

and the Slea, the third southward from the Humber into the Trent valley, the fourth northward from the Humber, following the Ouse, and the fifth overland from the Humber across the Yorkshire wolds. We know little or nothing of the dates of the first settlements along these routes, though there are notable fifth century finds on the Little Ouse and Lark and also at Sleaford. We do know, however, that the kingdom of Deira, which developed out of the east Yorkshire settlements, was established c. 550, under Aelle.

Aelle,
king of
Deira,
c. 550.
Ida,
king of
Bernicia,
547.

The Kingdom of Bernicia was to the north on the coast between the Tees and the Forth. The first king of Bernicia was Ida, and his reign began, according to Bede, in 547. But whereas we can find traces of early Anglian settlements in Yorkshire and the midlands, we can find very few farther north. The absence of identifiable cemeteries is not wholly exceptional. There are none round Hastings or west of Brighton and there are none round Southampton Water, yet we know these districts to have been settled very early. The assumption has been, however, in these cases that the invaders came from Gaul where they had Christian or at least Frankish burial customs. Once they ceased either to cremate their dead or bury them in urns, or to bury them with jewellery, swords or other identifiable possessions, a Saxon burial becomes, of course, indistinguishable from any other. If, however, north Britain had been settled by strangers from Gaul, the settlers would certainly have sailed up the Humber before settling in Northumbria. We are left with two explanations. The first is to accept, with modifications, the story of Nennius, who believed that there had been a northern expedition from Kent late in the fifth century. This may reflect a tradition that Bernicia was settled by raiders from the south who had already adopted Romano-British burial customs. The other explanation is that Bernicia was never colonised by any independent migration, but that some chieftain from the Humber built himself a fortress at Bamburg, established a hold on the coastline and thus came to dominate a mainly Celtic population. This we believe to be the true solution, though it is of necessity but a guess. In support of it are two facts. The first is that Bernicia appears to be a British name, being, so philologists tell us, the British form of the Brigantia of Roman times. The second is the striking persistence of Celtic institutions, Celtic language and Celtic place names. It is not irrelevant, either, to remember that Northumbria was the first centre of Celtic missionary

enterprise in conquered Britain. We shall see later how striking the contrast was between the Celtic enthusiasm for converting the men of Bernicia and their apparent indifference to the spiritual welfare of the Saxons of the west and the south coast. For whatever reason, the Celtic Christians worked with the Northumbrians, and it is at least possible that this was because the latter were, in the main, their own kith and kin.

Certainly from the beginning, and for some centuries, the Anglo-Saxon ascendancy in Northumbria was weaker than elsewhere. As late as the eleventh century rebellions in which the Welsh and the Scots played a part were almost the routine north of the Humber. We can thus reasonably guess at a different balance of racial forces than existed elsewhere in England.

In the early decades of the conquest and long after organised Celtic kingdoms had ceased to exist in east and south-east England, both Deira and Bernicia were in contact with still independent native kingdoms. The frontier between England and Scotland ran, in the early sixth century, north and south rather than east and west. The kingdom of Bernicia included the three Lothians, Berwick, Peebles and Roxburgh, the eastern half of Northumberland and the county of Durham. Deira claimed the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire. The western half of the lowlands of Scotland, the whole of Westmorland, the greater part of Cumberland formed the Celtic kingdom of Strathclyde, whose capital was the rock fortress of Dumbarton. Between the kingdom of Strathclyde and the Anglo-Saxons were a number of small British kingdoms and one considerable one, the kingdom of Elmet. The Britons in the north-west were, unlike those of the west country and of Wales, organised and powerful. Strathclyde was in fact never conquered by the Anglo-Saxons.

The decisive events of the second stage of Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain were the advance of Wessex under Ceawlin to the Bristol Channel, after the great victory of Deorham in Gloucestershire, and the advance of the Northumbrians under Ethelfrith to the mouths of the Mersey and the Dee after a decisive battle at Chester. These strategic victories divided the British forces then and for ever into three, the Welsh speaking inhabitants of what became the kingdom of Strathclyde, the Welsh in Wales and the men of Devon and Cornwall. Centuries were to elapse before the Welsh accepted English rule; Cumberland was conquered not by the Anglo-Saxons but by the

Battle of
Deorham,
577.

Battle of
Chester,
615.

The Act of
Union,
1707.

Norsemen; Scotland did not accept English rule until 104 years after a Scottish king accepted the English throne; even the Cornish were not conquered until the ninth century. But after the Anglo-Saxons reached the western seas at Bristol and Chester, all question of effective resistance to their rule over England was at an end.

The prelude to and necessary condition of these advances was the consolidation of the power of Wessex under Ceawlin and the union of the northern kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira under Ethelfrith in 605. We must conclude from subsequent history that these were both great men, but it is too early to look during these years for institutional development, for any development of the rule of the law, even for the effective establishment of dynastic power.

For a variety of reasons, racial, religious and political, even the greatest of the historians have found it difficult to be dispassionate in assessing the true contribution of the Anglo-Saxons to the development of English institutions and culture, and we know in truth so little of the events of the first hundred and fifty years of Saxon occupation that there is much scope for prejudiced generalisation. It is possible to argue from the nearly complete destruction of the Romano-British society that the English genius and its characteristic institutions must alike be regarded as of Anglo-Saxon origin. On the other hand, it can be reasonably asserted that it was only in Kent that any pagan Anglo-Saxon community developed anything akin to civilisation, and that in Kent there is clear evidence for a substantial survival of Romano-British culture and institutions. For the rest, civilisation only returned to Britain with the Roman and Celtic missionaries. Not until continental and Celtic influences could have free play did the latent capacities of the Anglo-Saxons yield any really civilising fruits. This we believe to be on the whole the more historical view, provided we remember well that the capacities were undoubtedly present. During the seventh and eighth centuries under Christian influences (both Roman and Celtic) England developed a notably high civilisation and produced the first code of law written in the vernacular and the earliest extant vernacular literature in western Europe. Even so, we must not forget that England, like the United States in our time, was a great meeting place of races. The Romano-British stock was itself very mixed and however great the destruction wrought outside Kent by the barbarian invasions, many of the Romano-

British must have survived. There is even some reason for thinking, because of the British names of its legendary founders, that the royal house of Wessex, destined to the kingship of England, was itself partly descended from Romano-British stock.

From the seventh century onward foreign influence was pervasive and profound, and by far the most powerful of these influences was that of the Roman Church, a much more cosmopolitan institution at that date than it ever was in later centuries. The trading associations with the Byzantine Empire, however, are not to be forgotten. Unexpected evidence of these was forthcoming in the summer of 1939 when an astonishing archæological find was made at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk. It is now in the British Museum. The site was close to the estuary of the Deben, near Woodbridge, and the first trenches cut revealed the wooden structure of what proved to be a Saxon ship, dating from between 600 and 630 A.D. It seemed probable that the Sutton Hoo find was an example of Saxon or Danish ship-burial, but when the deck was excavated, no traces of a dead man or woman were found. Instead, an astonishing treasure of gold and silver objects was revealed. A purse containing forty gold Frankish coins served to date the treasure, while the silver bowls and salvers and the horn cups made it plain that East Anglia had trade associations with countries as far away as Constantinople. Silver bowls and spoons of Byzantine workmanship were outstanding objects in the treasure. Archæologists regard it as probable that the Sutton Hoo treasure belonged to Raldwald, the East Anglian overlord of the Southern English about A.D. 600. The probability is Raldwald died at sea and, on its return to port, his ship was hauled up from the estuary of the Deben and the royal treasure placed in it, before the memorial mound was erected which preserved it from human sight for more than thirteen hundred years.

The decoration of the well-known Franks casket, another treasure of the British Museum, displays a strange mixture of pagan and Christian themes, which also suggest Mediterranean influences, possibly Alexandrian, though the craftsmanship is plainly Anglo-Saxon. The Franks casket is decorated with carvings in whale bone and dates from about A.D. 700. In addition to Anglo-Saxon runes, there are carved panels illustrating the adoration of the Magi, the suckling of Romulus and Remus by the wolf and the capture of Jerusalem by the

Emperor Titus. Side by side with these classical and Christian themes are carvings picturing such North-European heroes as Weyland the smith and Aegili, his archer brother. Weyland, standing over his forge, is holding in his tongs the skull of a man which he is fashioning into a drinking-cup.

Certainly, the pagan Anglo-Saxons brought much that was necessary to our growth as a nation. They brought the gift of leadership and the habit of obedience to a ruling class, a marked individualism combined with a steady and patient industry devoted to tilling the soil and multiplying its fruits. They brought the common field system of agriculture, which made agricultural progress possible in the primitive conditions of Saxon times. Cruel the Anglo-Saxons may have been in their methods of warfare, but it is hardly for our age to rebuke them. The destruction which they wrought at the end of the fifth century was, moreover, in the nature of an isolated incident, disastrous though it was in its consequences.

The remaining story of the conquest, and in particular of its very slow but inexorable expansion along the natural lines of communication and settlement, suggest that the *adventus Saxonum* was for long periods and in many places less a conquest than an immigration. It is reasonable to call in evidence the (much later) Wessex laws as they affected Britons within their borders. The laws of Ine of Wessex (688-725) not only provided for the systematic settlement of new lands but also clearly recognised the rights of the Britons remaining in newly settled territory. Even a British slave was not without protection from the law. Anglo-Saxon laws, as written down in the seventh century, were not legislative enactments but the definition or modification of pre-existing customs. We must add to this evidence from written law the tradition, established by the time of Bede, of a wholesale migration of Angles and their families into England in the earlier decades of the conquest. Such an immigration need not have been by consent, and the number of urn burials identified among the earliest Anglo-Saxon remains in the eastern counties suggests that even the first invaders, who must certainly have fought their way in, may have been accompanied by women. The making of pottery was a woman's craft. Nevertheless, a wholesale migration such as Bede suggests could hardly have taken place in the face of any substantial opposition.

That the Saxon incursions outside Kent began with pirate raids is certain. They came under aristocratic chieftains,

Ine, king
of Wessex,
688-725.

claiming, many of them, direct descent from Wotan, the war god of their race. They did not come in tribes but in small bands of proved fighting men, probably as mixed in race as the mercenaries whom Hengist brought over to Kent. Some, perhaps most of them, cremated their dead and buried them in urns, which enables us to identify them clearly as the descendants of the men who lie buried in the urn fields of Schleswig and Holstein and the land between the Elbe and the Weser. Others, however, as in parts of Hampshire, in Sussex and in Northumbria, had adopted Christian practices. Others again, notably those in Kent and in the Thames valley, had abandoned cremation but buried their dead with their arms, their equipment and their jewellery. Gradually, and perhaps generally by the middle of the seventh century, they had adopted Christian burial customs. It is possible that some in Kent were actually Christians before the conversion, but Kent was in this, as in other respects, exceptional.

For the rest, they tilled the soil and peopled an underpopulated land, subordinating the inhabitants to their rule but not necessarily nor always depriving them of their freedom or their land. But it is evident from the history of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and their constant changes, that power followed the capacity for leadership of individual chieftains. At the time of Augustine's mission in 596, the king of Kent exercised authority from the Channel to the Humber, but only thirty years before it was Ceawlin, king of Wessex, who ruled supreme. Equally constant are the changes in the relative position of Northumbria and Mercia, the latter a kingdom built up in the midlands by the practical fighting quality of one man, Penda.

The succession to these kingships was, in the main, hereditary, and broken, when it was, only by death in battle or conquest. What is clear is that there was no elective monarchy and no shadow of a constitutional monarchy. The *Witan* or *Consilium* of the later Saxon kings of Mercia and Wessex, of which we know most, was neither a Parliament nor a Cabinet. It descended neither from the woods of Germany nor from the reforms of Diocletian. It was the ancestor neither of the House of Commons nor of the Privy Council. Its membership was confined to the great subordinate chieftains and, after the conversion, the powerful bishops, without whose co-operation war could not be waged nor internal order maintained. The territories of the chieftains in Wessex developed into the shires,

and as jurisdiction became attached to land, the counties came naturally into existence, but that, in the sixth century, was in the far distant future. By the beginning of the seventh century in Anglo-Saxon England, everything that we know as civilisation, outside Kent, had perished. Towns were deserted, there were no schools, no centres of learning, no reading or writing. The Latin speech was lost. Procopius wrote of civilised Britain as of something belonging to an almost legendary past.

Even the Celtic Christians turned their eyes away from the paganism of their neighbours. Only the Papacy, heir to the institutions though not yet to the power of Imperial Rome, remembered. It was by a deliberate act of policy that Britain was slowly brought back, in the first half of the seventh century, into the family of civilised peoples.

For a picture of England as it was before the conversion we should read the great seventh century Anglo-Saxon poem, *Beowulf*. Although composed long after England had become Christian, "it can yet be used as a guide to the ways and thoughts of the earliest English men."

Anglo-Saxon England in pagan times was a world of wooden buildings, the great hall of the kings and chieftains, the small stockaded farm-houses of the smaller farmers, and the mud huts or at best half-timbered, windowless houses of the peasantry. The great chiefs, be they merchant princes in Kent or great warriors, owned magnificent jewellery, fine armour, gold embroidered clothing with gilt buckles, and drinking vessels of silver gilt, imported from as far off as Constantinople. The peasantry dressed in kilts and puttees, or in closely fitted trousers, cross-gartered like those in Kiel. The women wore long tunics reaching nearly to the ankles and long mantles with hoods, their sleeves caught at the wrists with clasps and often finely jewelled. The men, like the women, wore their hair long.

Of their ordinary dress materials we know little. Fragments recovered suggest that they were as good as those of the present day and were in texture not unlike Harris tweed.

Of the men and women themselves we know perhaps more than of the externals of their lives. They belonged to a warrior society. Feasting and fighting were not continuous, but fighting was, for many, the heroic element in life, the fulfilment of its highest potentialities. The king and his chosen comrades in arms, the *comitatus* of Tacitus, were the nucleus of the society. To the nobles might be attached freemen,

owing service to their lord, but generally, as the conquest passed into the settlement stage, the functions of the lords and the freemen became specialised. The former became the rulers and the latter the ruled, ceasing, as a matter of custom if not of law, to bear arms. Here we have a clue to the origin of the more fantastic imaginings of those who have seen in the Anglo-Saxons a nation of armed Parliamentary democrats. The freemen, when they had first followed their leaders on to the beaches, were men at arms picked for adventure. They were an improvised *comitatus* just as the pirate leader was a king in embryo. The division of labour, however, which was the necessary consequence of the process of settlement, soon removed the generality of the invaders from the status of comrades of the chieftain. Only the natural leaders, the natural aristocrats, remained to rule. The leader's friends and close associates became the king's *gesiths* or the *thegns*, but such men were few. Even so, the word *thegn* came more and more to denote service, not comradeship, and a new class of great nobles, endowed by the kings themselves with great estates, came to form the King's council in Mercia and Wessex by the time *Beowulf* was written. As late as Bede's time, however, it is evident that the king's court was the only ruling organisation and that the only local government was that of the reeve, the personal representative of the king or the lord and responsible to no one else.

The clan system, as described by Tacitus, never reached England. The Anglo-Saxon village community, with its curious arrangement of arable holdings in strips, which we shall describe later, was, whatever its origin, an association of free and independent individuals each with his own holding, rights and obligations, as well as a community with communal rights in pasture and woodland. So far from the truth is it that Anglo-Saxon England was a society of tribal communities that, as Professor Trevelyan observes, we owe to our Anglo-Saxon inheritance our sturdy individualism.

In so far as any active comradeship persisted among the invaders in the early decades, it was the natural comradeship of leaders and led, cemented by the memory of past feats of arms and inspired by the hope of fresh conquests. The early chronicles are full of examples of an almost fatalistic fidelity to the king and chieftains. This fidelity, as depicted in *Beowulf*, is matched by the fidelity of the leader himself to his cause and his fighting tradition. Men must die, and the good man can

THE COMING OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS

die best in battle. But the game is loved beyond the prize. There is no trace of patriotism as we know it. Life is rugged and hard, nature is hostile, the pride and joy of living is not for long, and only to the lionhearted man comes any peace at the last. The end is death, which must be accepted. Each of us must expect an end of living in this world; let him who may win glory before death, for that is best at the last for the departed man of war.

In 596 Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine to bring to our ancestors a more hopeful if less simple philosophy.

Chapter Seven

FROM THE CONVERSION TO THE VIKING INVASIONS

THERE ARE few things in English history more dramatic than the sudden quickening of growth which came with the seventh century and continued for a period of more than 200 years. To the historian of England the end of the sixth century may seem a ready-made turning point, because we can date from then the beginning of the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England to Christianity. It would be wrong, however, to think that the astonishing progress of this country in the seventh and eighth centuries, however closely linked, as it certainly was, with the conversion, was anything unique in the world of that day. These two centuries saw the birth or the decisive development of many of the institutions and ideas which have given force and significance to the civilisation of Europe and Asia from that time to the present day. Among them the English Monarchy and the English Church are only two. These centuries also saw the impact of destructive events in Italy and in Spain which have left an equally clear mark upon the world's history.

These decisive consequences can all be said to have derived in some measure from the activities of four great men of the sixth and early seventh centuries. These are Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–c. 550), the Emperor Justinian (483–565), Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) and the prophet Mahomet (c. 570–632).

While Britain was painfully emerging from the anarchy of the fifth and early sixth centuries, Justinian, who succeeded to the imperial throne in 527, was attempting to re-establish the authority of the Empire in the Mediterranean. Justinian, like so many of the earlier emperors, was by birth an Illyrian peasant, but he had been educated for the tasks of government and succeeded to the throne at the height of his power at the age of 45. His brilliant general Belisarius destroyed the power of the Vandals in North Africa and proceeded to attempt the reconquest of the Gothic kingdom of Italy. After a series of wars extending over 28 years, before the end of which Belisarius had been succeeded by Narses, a soldier of almost equal distinction, Justinian accomplished his aim and in so doing destroyed

Justinian,
483-565.

the Italian kingdom and left Italy open to the invasion of the Lombards. That invasion the imperial prowess was unable to resist and the Eastern Empire was forced to abandon most of its conquests a few years after Justinian's death. It was to be the same, only a little later, in Africa. Justinian had reasserted the imperial authority over the African coastline from Tripoli to Algiers, but it had taken an eleven years' war against the Vandals to achieve this and conqueror and conquered alike were exhausted at the end.

Nearer home, Justinian had achieved even less. During his reign the Huns nearly conquered Constantinople, the Slavs captured Adrianople and the Persians sacked Antioch. According to the historian Procopius, the attempt to recapture the Western Empire cost hundreds of thousands of lives while it perilously weakened the imperial hold over Asia Minor and the Balkans. And yet to Justinian the western world owes a great debt. "There are few rulers," says H. A. L. Fisher,¹ "whose work is so widely remembered as the sovereign who commissioned the building of Sancta Sophia and that great series of legal compilations, the Codex, the Digest, the Institutes, and afterwards the Novellae, through which the legacy of Roman law has been transmitted to posterity. The numerous buildings, ecclesiastical, municipal and military, with which Justinian endeavoured to secure or embellish his dominions have been described by the secretary Procopius, to whose brilliant narrative we are also indebted for our principal knowledge of the campaigns of Belisarius his master. Many of these buildings have perished, but there survive a sufficient number both in Europe and in hither Asia to impress the traveller with a sense of grandeur and force. The mosaics at Ravenna are famous. More renowned is St. Sophia, whose vast low dome crowning the lovely city of Constantinople exceeds the masterpieces of the Moslem architects who found in its mysterious proportions a challenge to their highest genius.

"The final systematisation of Roman Law by Justinian exercised an immediate and continuous influence in the East and in those regions of Italy which remained under Byzantine control. It was not, however, until the foundation of the famous school of glossators at Bologna at the end of the eleventh century that the study of Justinian's civil code became an active influence in the intellectual life of western Europe. From that moment it would be difficult to overestimate its

¹ *A History of Europe*, H. A. L. Fisher, p. 133.

power as a factor in the moulding of intellectual, social and political life."

For all that, he would be a bold man who would attempt to strike a balance between the good and the bad consequences of Justinian's reign. He perilously weakened the Eastern Empire, shattered the new Italian kingdom, weakened Spain and failed to recover Africa for Christianity. Like so many great men in history, he sacrificed the reality for the dream. His talents were nearly, perhaps quite, equated to his ambitions, but his ambition was not intelligently directed. Rome at the height of her power never attempted direct rule in the east outside the range of her sea power, or in the west outside the area which could be protected by frontiers which she could man and reinforce. And even this Rome could never have attempted except from the base of a united Italy. The Byzantine Empire had no natural unity. Constantinople was an artificial creation sustained by mercenary armies and permanently threatened on all sides. Constantinople could perhaps have ruled a Mediterranean empire through client kingdoms, but never by direct military rule. To destroy the Gothic kingdom of Italy was merely to open the floodgates to the barbarians; to attempt to hold down the Moors in North Africa by an army of occupation was to attempt the impossible.

The miracle was not that the new empire of the west collapsed almost before it was founded, but that the Byzantine Empire survived, and with it so much of the culture, the law and the arts of the Greek and Roman civilisation. Partly that was due to Justinian's energy in developing new direct trade routes with the Far East, which made Constantinople for centuries the wealthiest city in the world, and partly to a series of vigorous administrative reforms. The combined effort of his insensate ambitions and his immense talents was at once to isolate and preserve the remaining centre of high civilisation in the world.

The immediate beneficiaries in Europe were the Lombards, who seized and held north Italy, and the Papacy, which found itself the heir to, because it became the *de facto* ruler of, the ruins of Rome. Before the end of the seventh century the Papacy was compelled, for the sake of self-preservation, to rule over central Italy, uneasily balanced between the few remaining imperial possessions in the south and the Lombards in the north. This assumption of temporal power, enforced on the Papacy by circumstances, ensured that the unity of Italy,

destroyed by Justinian, should not be recovered until the nineteenth century.

Gregory
the Great,
Pope,
590-604.

When Gregory the Great became Pope twenty-five years after Justinian's death, he found Rome still nominally subject to imperial rule, and he attempted nothing throughout his reign to change this position. For all that, he has been called, by reason of his very great personal qualities and the position in which he found himself, "the true founder of the mediaeval Papacy." At the same time a Benedictine monk and a Roman patrician, Gregory was the first great man who came to the papal throne after there had ceased to be in Italy an emperor, an effective representative of the imperial power, or a king. His actions were inspired primarily by a zeal for the salvation of souls. He was no political pope. Every line of his vast correspondence which has survived testifies to the singleness and purity of his aims. But this very fact led him onward. With western Europe plunged into anarchy, and lacking any secular super-national ruler, a Pope fired with missionary zeal found himself with no rival claimant to overriding moral authority in Italy, in Illyria, in Africa, in southern France or in Spain. He claimed no direct administrative control—that was to come later—but he claimed to be the custodian of the traditions of the Church, the supreme corrector of abuses, and the controller and overlord of the Metropolitans. To his leadership of the Western Church Gregory brought indeed "something of the technique of the old imperial administration, and all the best of the old Roman tradition; fidelity to law, respect for rights, impatience of disorder, whether from insubordination or injustice, and the courtesy of business regularity."¹

It is in this tense, and in this sense only, that this great Pope can be claimed as the forerunner of the temporal power of the mediaeval Papacy. His authority in Italian affairs did not rest on any specific claim to rights over the secular power. It derived from the fact that in the midst of secular anarchy, the Church dioceses, estates and colleges were the chief effective organised institutions, and that over these the Papacy, in the absence of the Empire and the impotence of kingship, came to exercise an increasingly effective supervision and that its right and duty to do so was slowly but increasingly recognised.

In the spiritual sphere, Gregory's claim to be regarded as the founder of the mediaeval Papacy is far more direct. He

¹ Philip Hughes, *op. cit.*, II, p. 9.

pursued a positive and aggressive policy directed to converting the heathen and extending the boundaries of the direct authority of Rome in all matters of faith, morals and discipline. In this sphere his influence was great and lasting. His policy led directly to the conversion of England, the establishment of the English hierarchy and the conversion of the Lombards. It was a further consequence of Gregory's action in regard to England that when Germany was converted by Anglo-Saxon missionaries in the eighth century it was brought into direct relations with the see of Rome.

Gregory's timely initiative was decisive for the destiny alike of Europe and of the Western Church. It coincided, by a dramatic accident, with the birth of Mohammedanism, the only religious movement outside Christianity which has arisen in historical times and the only other Eastern religion which has actively and consciously sought to extend its boundaries. The weakness of the Eastern Empire, particularly in Syria and in Africa as the result of Justinian's wars, gave the new religion an unparalleled opportunity of which full advantage was taken. Syria and North Africa were lost to the Cross for the Crescent, Spain was invaded and conquered and the Moors much later poured into France, where they were broken by Charles Martel at the battle of Tours. They were finally expelled from France in 755, but Spain remained predominantly Moslem and under Moorish rule until 1212. In this the Moors were assisted by geography as well as by the force and enthusiasm engendered by their creed. Nature has imposed on Spain as on Greece a tradition of regionalism, and there are few countries where it has been easier throughout history, as first the Carthaginians and then the Romans had already found, for a conquering power to divide and rule.

Battle of
Tours,
732.

When most of Spain and the countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean were conquered by Islam, the Christian culture of the Mediterranean suffered a loss which might well have proved decisive. "One has only to call to mind names like that of Clement and Origen of Alexandria, of Tertullian and Cyprian of Carthage, and of St. Augustine, to see the part played by those countries in the history of early Christianity and to estimate the significance of their loss."¹ This loss was counterbalanced, for the Papacy, by the success, hardly won, of Gregory's English policy which built a new virile and militant Church on the foundations of pagan England

¹ Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century*, p. 2. (Oxford, 1946).

“from materials brought over from the Mediterranean world.” The markedly “Roman” character of the English Church in the seventh and eighth centuries had important consequences for the whole of Europe but most of all for the papacy itself.

The system of ecclesiastical provinces and dioceses which was generally in force throughout the Christian countries by the time of Gregory the Great was based on the political organisation of the later Roman Empire. The creation of new bishoprics and the appointment of bishops were matters left in those days to the authorities on the spot; the link between the dioceses and the papacy was supplied by the metropolitan, who not only ruled, as bishop, a diocese of his own but was head of a province and required to superintend the other bishops of that province. It was in connection with the foundation of the English Church that the theory was first defined that “the metropolitan bishop must have received the pallium¹ from Rome as a token of his rank to qualify him for the exercise of his functions as the head of a province.”² This in turn meant that a new archbishop, although elected and consecrated, as far as Church law was concerned, in the same way as any other bishop, must apply to Rome for the pallium before he could exercise metropolitan functions. He was required in doing so to send the Pope a written profession of faith, but it was more important at the beginning of the seventh century that the need for the pallium gave Rome the deciding voice not only in the organisation of the new English province but in the appointment of its head. No such clear cut principle existed in the Irish Church, and in Gaul, at any rate by the end of the seventh century, it was fair to say that the provincial organisation had largely broken down and that the link with Rome, if not broken, was extremely weak. We may well believe that Christianity must in any case ultimately have spread to Germany, but the balance of forces in Europe and indeed the whole character of the Middle Ages must have been different had the main missionary effort in central Europe been conducted either by the Irish or by the Franks. As things were, Frisia and Germany directly and the Franks in Gaul indirectly got the best of both worlds. The English missionaries from the time of Wilfrid onward brought back to the Continent at one and the same time the Roman discipline, the Celtic

¹ A band of white wool worn by the Pope and conferred by the Pope (like a secular decoration) on his vicars and other bishops of merit.

² Levison, *op. cit.* p. 17.

fervour and the learning, both classical and Christian, preserved by the Irish monasteries.

Very largely as the result of this, we can see arising during the seventh and eighth centuries that balance of religions and cultures and jurisdictions which was to persist until the end of the Middle Ages, and largely, save for the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, until the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Side by side with the growth in power and discipline of the western Church, and the growing weakness of the Eastern Empire, these centuries saw everywhere in Europe the beginnings of European kingship. Nowhere was this development, except in name, completed by the end of the eighth century, while the coronation of Charles the Great as Emperor of the West by Leo III in Rome on Christmas Day 800 marked the rebirth of a political conception which might have challenged the power, at that date very rudimentary, of the nation states. But in the event it proved otherwise. The Holy Roman Empire became in fact though not in name a German Empire, and it was only in Germany and Italy that it proved fatal so long as it lasted, and it long outlasted the end of the Middle Ages, to the growth of a united national state. Even so, by the beginning of the ninth century, it is no longer a complete anachronism to speak of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Spain, Italy and Germany as countries with a measure of cultural particularisation, determined by language, geography and traditions, but yet, perhaps, possessing an even greater bond of unity in a common religion and in the still prevailing use of Latin as the *lingua franca* of all the ruling classes, lay and clerical, throughout the west. This cultural unity was at least strong enough to ensure that the Viking invaders of the ninth century and the Magyar invaders of south-east Europe in the tenth century, unlike the barbarian invaders of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, were quickly converted to the faith and culture of the territories they conquered. Cruel, desperate and destructive though these later centuries were to prove, there was to be no return to the Dark Ages. Everything that was built in these seventh and eighth centuries was to some extent lasting, and to that extent has significance for us to-day.

It remains to refer to one more development during these centuries which was perhaps above everything else decisive in determining the shape of things to come. That was the beginning of western monasticism in its characteristic form. Benedict of Nursia was born c. 480 and died at Monte Cassino

c. 550. He lived all his life in the Italy of the Ostrogoths and Theodoric, of Justinian and Belisarius. He himself was one of the last of the Romans, educated in the ancient capital of the Empire. His fame rests on his Rule, written at Monte Cassino, but not for that monastery or for any particular group of monasteries. It became, indeed, almost a universal rule for monks. His immense and enduring influence on the mind and temper of the Middle Ages was thus, as is so rarely the case in history, the result of conscious effort directed precisely to the end achieved. He laid down a code "which itself created a way of living and would ultimately create a type of monk."¹ He brought into the monasteries the old Roman conception of the rule of law. The extravagancies of eastern monasticism are finally set aside. The Rule prescribed, and here lay its immense secular significance, a temperate disciplined way of life within the reach of the ordinary man. The two-fold break with corporate austerities and individual self-maceration was revolutionary. The new discipline laid down is purely over the will. For the rest, it was only that necessary for an ordered Christian family whose aim was to realise the gospel ideals.

It is wrong to think of the monks of the sixth and seventh centuries as consciously devoted to the management of estates or to learning and teaching. The central activity of monasticism was corporate public prayer. The monks were, however, required to master the different arts and crafts necessary to the maintenance of their community life on a plane of ordered decency, and among these arts and crafts was copying, the instruction of the younger monks and much reading for wholesome recreation. In short, the discipline aimed at perfecting the ordinary ways of life, and it was by a natural process of evolution that the thousands of communities which grew up all over Europe following this rule became centres of ordered and progressive social life as well as of religion. An important factor in this evolution was the rule which laid down that a monk was to remain in the community which received him.

The all-embracing influence of western monasticism was in some part due to the fact that the new communities grew up during the centuries of transition from the old urban economy of the Roman Empire to the new rural economy of the early Middle Ages. Orderly life in towns was not, outside England, a wholly lost tradition even in the Dark Ages, but the great monasteries first showed the way to an orderly rural economy

¹ Hughes, *op. cit.* II, 88.

and their wealth and influence was derived from this fact. From this in turn came the leisure which enabled them to devote in later centuries so much time to learning and teaching and building. It is as impossible to imagine the economy of the early Middle Ages without the monasteries as to imagine that of the nineteenth century without the merchants and the manufacturers.

Both Gregory the Great and Augustine, his chosen instrument for the conversion of England, were monks following the Benedictine rule. Whereas therefore the influence of Justinian on English history was very indirect, alike in the matter of the increased responsibility which his political failure imposed upon the Papacy and of the preservation for future generations of the corpus of Roman Law, and whereas the influence of Mohammedanism was not to be felt in England until the First Crusade, the influence of Gregory the Great and Benedict of Nursia was direct, immediate and decisive.

Augustine was prior of Pope Gregory's own monastery of St. Andrew on the Coelian Hills of Rome, and his mission, conceived and organised by Pope Gregory himself, was dispatched from Rome early in 596. The mission halted half-way, and the monks who composed it sent Augustine back to Rome to ask for release from their task. Gregory replied by giving Augustine letters, which still survive, to the leading churchmen in Gaul and to the Frankish kings of Burgundy and Austrasia. Henceforward the mission was assured of respect throughout Gaul, and with the consciousness of having good friends behind them, the mission landed in Thanet early in 597 and presented itself to the court of King Aethelbert of Kent. Aethelbert was, according to Bede, the third Bretwalda or over-king of Britain. Gregory's aim was the conversion of the whole country and its organisation under two archdioceses at London and York. The mission was almost immediately successful in its first aim, the conversion of the Kentish king and his court, but its success was at the start very local and was largely influenced by the fact that Aethelbert's queen, Bertha, a daughter of the Frankish king, was already a Christian. The immediate importance of Augustine indeed lay more in the sphere of political than of religious history. He was not one of the great missionaries, but he was the official representative of the Roman see; he had instruc-

Pope
Gregory's
Mission,
596.

Aethel-
bert of
Kent,
c. 552-616.

tions to establish an English hierarchy subject to Rome, and he brought with him not only the true faith but ink and parchment, the Roman habit of orderly written correspondence and systematic administration and the respect for written law. Gregory the Great is known himself to have used the Digest and it is not fanciful to assume that it was Justinian's example which led Augustine to set Aethelbert to write down the laws of Kent "*more Romano*," as Bede puts it, although the laws themselves show no trace of Roman influence. From Augustine's time we return in England to the age of written records and we have at least the outlines of a chronology. Without always knowing the causes, we know something of the character and the sequence of events.

One of the things we know most certainly is that the final conversion of England owed at least as much to the Irish missionaries at Iona as to Augustine and his comrades.

Columba,
522-597.

The Irish saint Columba, who founded the famous monastery of Iona and converted the Picts and Scots, was nearly contemporary with Gregory the Great. After the defeat of the British at Chester by Aethelfrith between 613 and 616, British Christianity had finally receded into the mountains of Wales and into Cornwall. There it was represented, at the best, by an extremely ascetic monasticism, but without missionary fervour or practical genius. Above all, the British showed no desire to convert their hereditary enemies, the Anglo-Saxons, whom they despised as barbarians. It was far otherwise with the Irish monks of Iona. They too were monastic in their organisation. Their bishops ordained but exercised no jurisdiction over the separate communities of monks, each under their own abbot. These communities were out of touch with Rome, but they were animated by an intense missionary zeal, which addressed itself not, as the Roman missionaries did, to the courts of kings, but to the cottages of the people. They were thus destined to prepare the day when the people of the north, among whom the old Romano-British population was proportionately greater, and less disposed to receive the missionaries sent by Saxon kings, would, for spiritual reasons, accept the jurisdiction of Rome. Christian propaganda was thus closing in on England from the north as well as from the Continent at the end of the sixth century. The Roman missionaries got a nineteen years' start because Aethelbert of Kent was already half converted, while King Aethelfrith, the

founder of Northumbria, was a fanatical hater of Christianity as the religion of his British foes. Until Aethelfrith's death the monks of Iona had no chance of preaching their gospel in Northumbria.

Augustine himself must have thought his mission a failure. It is true that at least three churches in Canterbury go back to Augustine's time. The site of one of them is now covered by Canterbury cathedral, and the site of another, restored by Queen Bertha, is covered by the existing St. Martin's church, the walls of which probably date from Aethelbert's time. The third is the Benedictine abbey church of St. Peter and St. Paul, later known as St. Augustine's. Augustine failed, however, to carry out his instructions to secure the co-operation of the British bishops and to organise the Church in Britain into two provinces of twelve dioceses under archbishops at London and York. When he died in 604, England, outside Kent, was unconverted and the British bishops had finally refused to accept his authority.

Death of
Augustine, 604

Augustine, however, had built better than he knew. Canterbury was to be, for ever after his day, the premier cathedral city of England and for more than 800 years the chief link between Rome and Britain. In his own day Augustine established himself at least securely enough for Pope Gregory to think it worth while to send reinforcements, Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus and others. He sent also, and perhaps they were more important, relics, ornaments, vestments and books. If the blood of martyrs is indeed the seed of the Church, the Church in England is the exception needed to prove the rule. There were no martyrdoms. The Church in southern England was founded, not by peripatetic preachers overwhelming an indignant heathen population by their enthusiasm, but by diplomats, lawyers and architects, who worked Christianity into the framework of the State and in so doing strengthened it and gave it the chance of development. Ink and parchment, bricks and mortar were its supports, and, when men failed, the more material foundations proved unassailable.

Pope Gregory himself was essentially diplomatic in his attitude. Never compromising on essentials, he made compromise elsewhere his habit. His letter to Augustine, given at full length by Bede, is a political document of cool and calculated skill. Although it is to Gregory that we owe directly and as a matter of deliberate policy the conversion of England not only to the Roman faith but to the Roman discipline, Gregory

insisted that the process of conversion should be made easy by compromises on all questions not of faith or morals. Heathen temples, which had long been centres of public worship, were to be adapted and consecrated to Christian use. When the English were accustomed to associate worship with feasting, feasts were to be arranged on Christian festivals. As regards Church customs—what we should now call ritual—Augustine was given a free choice between those prevailing at Rome, in Gaul or in any other Church. Whichever seemed most likely to appeal to the English was to be adopted. On the other hand, the clergy were to be disciplined. Gregory had no use for wandering enthusiasts. The enthusiasm for which he asked was that which made a man willing to stay and do the work required in the place to which he was appointed. The organisation of the country into permanent provinces, dioceses and parishes, under resident bishops and priests tied to a particular district, had the added importance of providing a framework within which new conceptions of national unity and local self government could alike take root.

The ultimate consequences of Augustine's mission were thus immense and reach down to our own days. The immediate results were, by contrast, infinitesimal. By 616 Pope Gregory, Aethelbert of Kent and Augustine were all dead. East Anglia was still pagan. In Essex a Christian king was succeeded by pagan sons, and Mellitus, Bishop of London, and Justus, Bishop of Rochester, were driven from their sees and fled to Gaul. Laurentius himself, Augustine's successor at Canterbury, was tempted to withdraw, but his courage was restored by a vision and he converted, or reconverted, Aethelbert's successor, King Eadbald, so that Kent, but Kent alone, remained a Christian kingdom during the critical years 616 to 625. Essex was not reconverted until about 654 and London remained a pagan city for nearly half a century after Augustine's death.

Eadbald,
king of
Kent,
616-640.

The connecting link between Augustine's mission and the Christian England which came into being later in the century was Paulinus, who went to York in 625 to Edwin, son of Aelle, once king of Deira, who had in 617 been restored to the throne not only of Deira but of Bernicia. This was due to Raedwald, king of East Anglia, who had defeated and killed Aethelfrith on the banks of the Idle in 616. Edwin in 625 married, as his second wife, the Christian daughter of Athelbert of Kent, and the story of the instant conversion of Northumbria follows very closely the pattern of the conversion of Kent. The mission

Edwin,
king of
Northum-
bria,
617-632.

of Paulinus was a mission to a king and a court, but it had a greater significance than the mission to Kent because by this time Edwin had attained a position of unexampled power.

Aethelfrith's victory at Chester the year before his death had, as we have seen, marked the culmination of the westward expansion of the Bernicians along the valleys of the Tyne and the Irthing to the coast of Lancashire and Cumberland, and has therefore been accepted as the last decisive battle in the Anglo-Saxon conquest of England. Edwin, as Aethelfrith's conqueror, succeeded to his territories and extended them to Anglesey. His own closely ruled kingdom he extended by the destruction of the kingdom of Elmet in the West Riding of Yorkshire, the last British kingdom remaining outside the "Celtic fringe." The Forth not the Tweed was then the northern frontier of England, and except for Wales, Cornwall and the kingdom of Strathclyde, with its capital at Dumbarton, Edwin exercised authority from the Forth to the English Channel, and from the North Sea to the Irish Channel.¹ Even over Strathclyde and Wales Edwin appears to have asserted some vague overlordship and with Kent he was, after 625, united by marriage.

Edwin's overlordship marked the first direct association between the southern kingdoms and Northumbria and was thus an important step in the movement of the English peoples towards unity. Edwin, however, belonged to the heroic age and cannot be regarded as a true predecessor of Offa or Alfred. His was the personal authority of a great chieftain in what was still in the north the age of migrations. His power died with him and the Church which Paulinus established was virtually brought to an end with the collapse of Edwin's kingdom when Edwin was defeated and killed by Penda of Mercia in 632. The cathedral building at York was not completed, and Paulinus himself had been in exile nearly two years before the letter from Pope Honorius creating him Archbishop of York was written. Communications had completely broken down. Only James, the deacon, remained to carry on the missionary work and it is most probable that at all the centres established by Paulinus's mission, except at Lincoln in Lindsey, Christianity ceased to be taught. The permanent establishment of Christianity in the north was necessarily not only a much

¹ Bede speaks of Edwin as the fifth *Bretwalda* or ruler of the Britons, the successor, in this somewhat romantically conceived line, of Aelle of Sussex, Ceawlin of Wessex, Aethelbert of Kent and Raedwald of East Anglia, but he is not comparing like with like. However great the prestige of the first three, it was not until Edwin's time that the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain could be said to be complete.

slower but a different process from that in the southern kingdoms. Most of the territories of the Northumbrian kings were within, or even beyond, the old Roman military zone. There had thus been virtually no urbanisation. The Christian missionaries from the Continent were used to the ways and temper of an urban civilisation, and they found themselves, accordingly, more at home in Kent at the beginning of the seventh century than in the far north, which was a country both racially and politically better suited to the methods of the Irish missionaries who had no urban traditions.

The failure of Paulinus was to some extent counterbalanced by the introduction of Christianity into East Anglia where the Church was organised from the beginning on continental lines on the initiative of King Sigeberht, who had lived for some time as an exile in Gaul. A Burgundian named Felix was consecrated Bishop of Dunwich by Archbishop Honorius of Canterbury and the future was secured by the establishment of a school. Meanwhile, the scene farther north was dominated by the heathen Penda, who was a recurrent menace to all his Christian neighbours until his death.

The original Mercians seem to have been an Anglian tribe settled in the Trent valley. In 628 or soon after they extended their rule south into Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. Before the middle of the seventh century they had conquered or allied themselves with the Middle Angles in Leicestershire. Later they pushed back the northern frontier of Wessex to the Thames. The Mercians remained till late in the century relatively barbarous and wholly heathen. They were heirs to no Roman towns of note; Wroxeter had decayed long before the conquest. We must see them as the frontiersmen of the seventh century scene, not yet urbanised, looking with equal contempt on the unorganised British and on their own fellow-countrymen to the north, east and south, who had begun to settle in towns and get soft or civilised, according to the point of view. To such a people the coming of Paulinus and the rapid conversion of the northern king, nobles and court, the apostasy of the pagan priests and the sycophancy of the pagan chieftains, may have seemed at once an abominable betrayal and a positive invitation to aggression.

When Edwin was attacked by Cadwallon, king of north Wales, Penda, already the most powerful man in Mercia, was ready to hand as an ally for the Welsh, and the result was the destruction of Edwin's army at Hatfield Chase, the overthrow

Sigeberht
(Sebert),
king of
East
Saxons,
d. 616.

Saint
Felix,
bishop of
Dunwich,
d. 647.

Penda,
king of
Mercia,
632-654.

of his dynasty, and a great setback to the power and prosperity of Northumbria. Cadwallon's success was only temporary. No other British king was again to overthrow an English dynasty. His victory was nevertheless an important event because its direct sequel was an increase in the power of Mercia, which certainly delayed the effective conversion of England and probably delayed the unification of England.

Battle of
Hatfield
Chase,
632.

For a year after Cadwallon's victory all seemed lost for Northumbria. The proud kingdom of the north fell into two. Osric, a cousin of Edwin, ruled in Deira, and Eanfrith, son of Aethelfrith, in Bernicia. Both kings apostasised and were soon killed. Paulinus fled south with Edwin's widow and children. This completed the disintegration of Edwin's kingdom. In 633, however, Oswald, a younger son of Aethelfrith, who had been brought up during his exile by the monks at Iona and was a fervent Christian, returned to claim the throne of Bernicia and he defeated Cadwallon at Rowley Burn, south of Hexham. He fought in the shadow of the Cross which he had put up before the fight. We must remember this battle as the first of that long series of "just wars that we have undertaken for the deliverance of our people." The noble phrase comes straight down to us from Bede, who purports to record the words of Oswald's prayer before battle. If so, the prayer was answered. Cadwallon was killed, and the British pass finally out of England's story as claimants to her territory or government. Oswald himself, after his victory, was accepted as king in Deira as well as Bernicia and a Northumbrian kingdom was thus re-established.

Oswald,
king of
North-
umbria,
633-641.

Considered in military terms, the battle at Chester had been decisive strategically; Cadwallon's incursions, which ended at Rowley Burn, were little more than brilliant raids. Penda's part in the drama, however, presents a real and recurrent problem. What was the purpose of these wars between the rival Anglo-Saxon kingdoms? With the solitary exception of Penda's first campaign against Wessex, the long series of interstate wars which lasted almost until the Danish invasion are marked by no significant boundary or dynastic changes imposed by the conqueror. Penda's wars may have been inspired by hatred of the Christians, but, if so, they were ill-conceived. When Cadwallon ravaged Northumbria and the pagan successors of Edwin were killed in 633 Penda played no part, and he allowed the Christian Oswald to defeat Cadwallon and to restore Christianity. Nine years later Penda attacked and

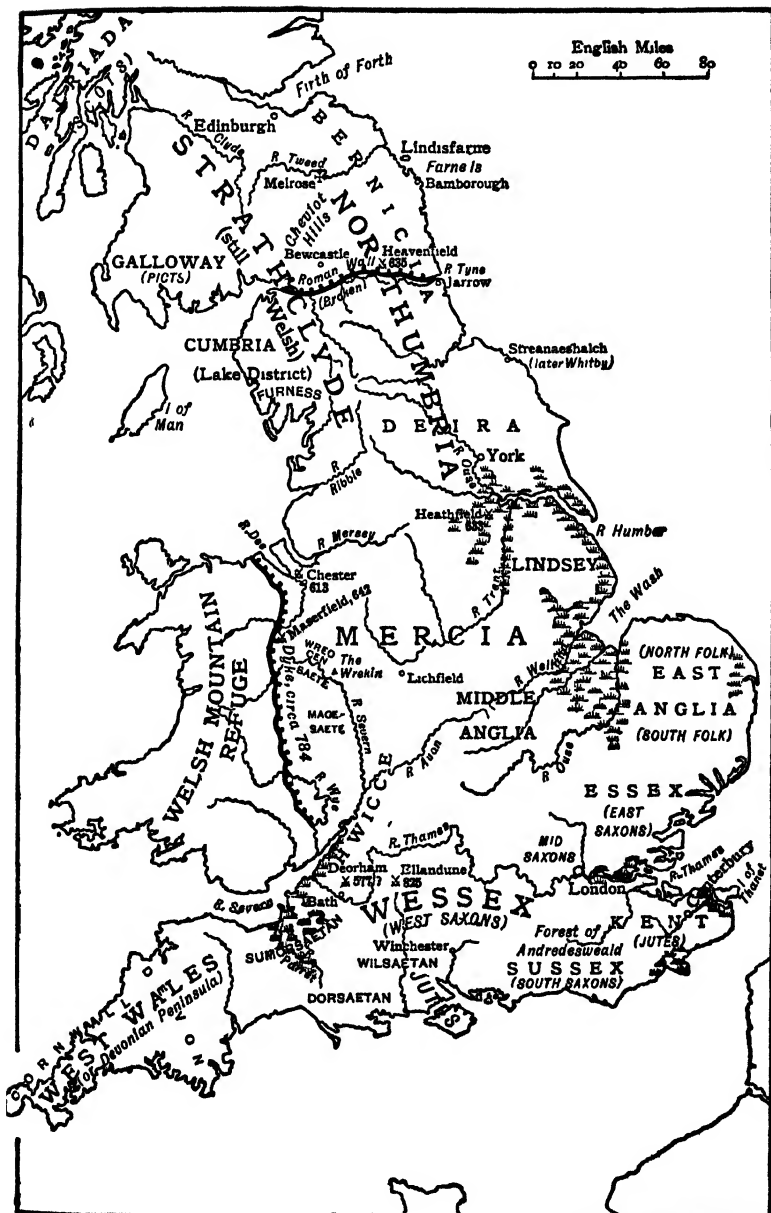
Oswiu,
king of
Bernicia,
641-655;
king of
North-
umbria,
655-671.

killed Oswald, at Oswestry on August 6th, 641, but after a brief internal struggle, in which Penda played no part, Oswald was succeeded by Oswiu, who in his turn attacked and killed Penda in 655. Penda, after a brief interregnum, which may or may not have seen the temporary annexation of Mercia by Northumbria, was succeeded by Wulfhere, who ruled, as far as we can judge, over the whole of Penda's Mercia.

We must certainly not overlook the personal rivalry of these barbaric chieftains, whose prestige in their own lands rested on their triumphs in battle. It does, however, seem clear that there was more than personal prestige at stake and that what was really in dispute, first between the kings of Northumbria and Mercia and later between the kings of Mercia and Wessex, was not sovereignty over each other's territories but suzerainty over the rest of Britain. The rights this suzerainty gave varied from time to time and kingdom to kingdom, but they certainly often included the receipt of tribute and, much more important, a say in the granting of lands both to church and to laity. As civilisation developed, and military-political power and legal jurisdiction were increasingly associated with the overlordship of land, this power of granting land was destined to pass into sovereignty. When by the end of the tenth century, every man must have a lord, and the lord was he who held the land, he who had the right to grant land, or at least to forbid its grant, was on the way to being supreme.

These developments were still far distant in the middle of the seventh century, but coming events were casting their shadows before.

Oswald, when he had regained his throne, regained some suzerainty over Wessex and East Anglia, and took a leading part at the baptism of the King of Wessex by Birinus in 635. Penda's victory over Oswald in 641 was followed by his assertion of suzerainty over both these kingdoms. Oswald's brother, Oswiu, in defeating Penda in 654, regained the suzerainty and maintained it for a time after Wulfhere had re-established himself on the throne of Mercia. Before his death in 675, however, Wulfhere had extended his suzerainty to all the southern peoples except those of Kent. After 685, an uneasy equilibrium was reached, which left England in effect divided into three kingdoms—Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex. It is this fact which gives us an important confirmation of the view that even at this early date suzerainty over the rest of England, although often excluding Kent, was a real issue in these battles



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The Early English Kingdoms

between Northumbria and Mercia. During the preceding period suzerainty over Wessex had always ultimately passed to the stronger of the two rival kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria. When the power of Mercia and Northumbria was evenly balanced as it was after 685, Wessex under Ine quickly resumed her independence and entered on a brief period of prosperity.

These events belong not only to political but to social history because of their direct bearing on the conversion of England and the establishment of an hierarchy in communion with, and subject to, the authority of the see of Rome. From this angle, the decisive events were, first, the readiness of Edwin, the first Northumbrian Bretwalda, to receive Paulinus; secondly, the establishment, in the person of Oswald, of an enthusiastic and militant Christian on the Northumbrian throne at a time when the hostility of Penda to the Church might otherwise have proved decisive; thirdly, that Wessex should have been under the suzerainty of Oswald of Northumbria, when Birinus was sent on his all-important mission by Pope Honorius about 634. With the conversion of Wessex in that and the following years Anglo-Saxon paganism (by then confined to Mercia, Essex and Sussex) was isolated. After Penda's death it ceased to be a political force. Finally it was all important that Oswald had spent the years of his exile with the monks of Iona. Successful as the Roman missions of Augustine, Felix and Birinus were, and as that of Theodore was to be, the missionary enthusiasm of a native priesthood, able to preach the gospel to the people in language which the people could understand, was a necessary instrument in the conversion, and that instrument could not in the nature of things be provided even by the most powerful of Italian popes.

The story of the Celtic missionaries goes back, of course, to Rome, but the link was by Oswald's time a distant one, and, indeed, almost forgotten. After Ireland had been converted by the Romano-British St. Patrick in the fifth century, we lose sight of Irish Christianity, but by the end of the sixth century the early mission stations established by Patrick and his successors had developed into large so-called monasteries, which were in fact community settlements or camps, where hundreds, or even thousands, of believers would settle down together in communities dedicated to the service of God with prayer and fasting. The members of these communities were not priests or monks, as we now understand the term. Within

their community they were subject to the jurisdiction of the abbot (or abness); they had all things in common, and the monasteries became centres not only for distributing hospitality, but for learning, book-making and copying. The monks, however, were free to come and go, and might become itinerant preachers of the Word, or anchorites, or they might leave for another monastery or go back into the world.

These rude communities of disinterested and fervent men were not under the authority of bishops.¹ Their tradition appears to have descended, although it is far from clear in what way, from the first monks and nuns of the Egyptian deserts. They were ascetic, enthusiastic and, for all their community life, intensely individualistic.

It was from one of these communities that Columba had sailed to Iona, and it was in Iona, some fifty years after its foundation, that Oswald had taken refuge during his exile. To this monastery Oswald appealed for missionaries after he had gained his throne (633). His appeal was answered by Aidan who settled in Lindisfarne, an island at high tide, close to the fortress capital of Northumbria at Bamburgh. Bede, writing within a generation of Aidan's death, leaves us a clear picture of Aidan, travelling through town and country on foot "to the end that as he went he might turn aside to any whomsoever he saw, whether rich or poor, and call upon them, if infidels, to receive the mystery of the faith, or if they were believers, strengthen them in the faith." Aidan was the forerunner and leader of many. In these years of Oswald's brief supremacy, there was a floodtide of missionaries from Scotland living the gospel that they preached on the hillsides of Durham, Northumberland and Yorkshire.

Aidan,
d. 651.

Aidan spoke in Irish, and was interpreted to the court by King Oswald, but his monks and their successors of the next generation—Cedd, Ceadda (Chad), and Cuthbert—spoke in English. The most famous of them was Cuthbert, a shepherd born in the Lammermuir hills who, so the legend runs, rode up, in 651, truculently to the Abbey of Melrose and demanded admission at the spearpoint. He stayed there 13 years and was prior until 664, when he became prior of Lindisfarne. But if Cuthbert was English by race, his inspiration was Celtic. He was by inclination a wandering ascetic, and ended his days as

Cuthbert,
d. 687.

¹ The nearest parallel is provided by the community settlements of different puritan sects which flourished in America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

a hermit. It is a tribute to his head rather than his heart that he exercised a great and perhaps a decisive influence in favour of the unification of the English Church discipline after the so-called Synod of Whitby in 663.

The Irish missionaries, and their English successors in the reign of Oswiu, King of Northumbria, revolutionised northern Christianity. They gave it a fervour and a popular character which made it wholly unlike the court Christianity of Kent, or of Northumbria under Edwin, or of the eastern kingdoms. So long as it remained a court religion, Christianity might fall with the dynasty, as it did on Edwin's death, or with the apostasy of the king, as it did in Essex, and nearly did in Kent itself after Aethelbert's death. After the time of Aidan this became impossible, and not only in Northumbria itself but in Mercia, East Anglia and Essex, where Cedd and Chad preached and taught.

It was the beginning of a golden age for Christian England. "Churches were built," Bede tells us, "and the people joyfully flocked together to hear the Word; lands and other property were given of the king's bounty to found monasteries." Even Penda in his old age offered no opposition to the missionaries after the marriage of his son Paeda to Oswiu's daughter. This marriage, however, did nothing to heal the age-long feud between Mercia and Northumbria, and the battle of Winwaed in 654, which saw the defeat and death of Penda at Oswiu's hands, while it meant the final transfer of military and political predominance from pagans to Christians, and was for this reason of decisive importance, was only an interlude in the political struggle for ascendancy between the north and the midlands.

Battle of
Winwaed,
654.

With the battle of Winwaed must be linked the rising controversy between Celtic and Roman influences in the Church, which culminated nine years later in the conference of Streoneshalh, known as the Synod of Whitby, although it was certainly not a synod, nor was the place where it was probably held called Whitby till it fell into Viking hands two hundred years later.

The suzerainty of Oswiu lasted only a few years after the battle of Winwaed, but it lasted long enough to compel Oswiu to take note of the dangerous divisions in the Christian Church. Those differences were such that the religion which should have been a powerful influence for national unity, or at least for understanding between the kingdoms, was an obstacle to

both alike and even threatened to divide families. The dispute between those who followed the northern missionaries and those who followed the envoys of Rome, Augustine, Paulinus or Birinus, concerned the date of Easter and the appropriate style of tonsure. Neither point was of any intrinsic importance, but this was less evident to the churchmen of the seventh century than to ourselves, and the differences in practice between the two parties reflected fundamental differences over matters which are in dispute among men of good will always and everywhere. This was no regional dispute between Northumbria and Kent, still less was it a dispute between England and Rome. The doctrinal authority of the Papacy was not challenged, but its claim to exercise administrative surveillance was. The Celtic party claimed in effect, if not in so many words, that they had the right to determine their own organisation and to follow their own customs. The elaborate administrative hierarchy of Pope, metropolitans, bishops and parish priests had never operated in Ireland and Scotland. The bishop in the Irish Church was a functionary whose chief business was ordination. The leaders of the Church were the abbots, who owed obedience to no one, though they owed their appointments, usually, to the local king. These differences of organisation were paralleled by differences of customs. The priests and monks were essentially wandering preachers and scholars, enthusiasts following the inner light, going where the spirit moved them. But they were not merely fervent missionaries but men of learning, and much of the learning which survived the Dark Ages came back to Britain and then to France by way of manuscripts copied and preserved in Irish monasteries.

It was this fact among others which gave the Celtic Church the feeling that they were the only guardians of civilisation in a pagan world, and that if they allowed themselves to get on terms with the barbarian society which surrounded them, they would be sacrificing for essentially worldly ends the interests of Christ's Kingdom of the Spirit.

So long as racial prejudice was present to add venom to the argument, as in the time of Augustine, no progress was made. Only when the monks of Iona had begun to convert the Northumbrian English, when Englishmen such as Cuthbert, Cedd and Chad became great figures in the Irish and Scottish Church, could the dispute be brought to an issue with any hope of a friendly settlement.

Synod of
Whitby,
663.

The Romanising party of Whitby had seen the rising power of the Church in France and Italy; if Wilfrid of Ripon may be taken, and he surely can be, as representative, Wilfrid himself had already begun to feel the fascination of international politics and it is not fanciful to assume that those who, like him, were familiar with European courts and cities, saw at least dimly how the Church, if firmly united in one discipline, might one day, through its schools, its endowments and its diplomatic resources bind the secular rulers to its high purposes. The ideals of the Celtic party derived from the monks of the Eastern desert. They feared the contamination of the world and they wished to be ruled by their own holy men, not by great ecclesiastics, whether sent from abroad or risen up among their own people by reason rather of their force and their administrative ability than their sanctity or scholarship.

The right solution of these questions is as easy to state as it is hard to achieve.

Church and State alike, in all periods of history, have need of both attitudes in their religious life—an element of the supernatural, else the Church becomes the creature of the State, and an element of nationalism, else religion will appear to the plain man, and Christ came to preach to the plain man, as something alien to his own deepest national loyalties, the family and homeland. Religion must also permeate the public life of a society, if that society is to avoid disillusion and decay. For this purpose it requires a measure of splendour and of wealth, and secure institutions through which the Christian teaching and culture can be handed down, continuously enriched by the advances of scholarship and tuned afresh to the mind of each generation. But all this will avail a Church nothing if the primitive simplicity, the devotion to Christian learning for its own sake, the missionary fervour and the self-denying piety of Iona and Lindisfarne be lost.

Later in our history these issues were to become inextricably confused by political cross-currents and differences over doctrine. It was the great good fortune of Anglo-Saxon England that, when these issues first arose in the reign of Oswald, there was no such thing as English nationalism or fears of "foreign" interference, and no difference of doctrine. We have referred to the Romanising and the Celtic parties in the Church because the terms are correct by reference to the historical origins of the views held, but the division at the conference at Whitby was not along racial lines. Wilfrid of

THE SYNOD OF WHITBY

Ripon, the leading protagonist of the Roman view, was a Northumbrian nobleman by birth. Bishop Colman of Lindisfarne, the chief champion of the anti-Roman faction, was not English but Irish. Cedd, bishop of the East Saxons, who supported Colman, was perhaps Celtic, but more probably English. On the other side, Bishop Agilbert was a Frank, and James, the deacon, last survivor of Paulinus' mission was an Italian. Over this polyglot assembly, Oswiu of Northumbria presided.

The ostensible reason for the conference in 663 was that the difference between the Celtic and the Roman methods of dating Easter meant that, while some Christians were engaged in the solemn ceremonies and fasts commemorating the passion and death of Christ, others would be feasting in joyous celebration of the Resurrection. The purpose of the conference was, therefore, to settle the method by which the date of Easter should be calculated. The debates at the conference are recorded by Bede, the first educated English mind whose opinions we can read and understand, in his *Ecclesiastical History*. The early pages of this great work derive necessarily from oral tradition, for there was no written record. From Augustine's time, Bede's history ranks as an authoritative record, and nowhere more so than in the pages dealing with Whitby. Bede was born some nine years after the conference and for eighteen years of his adult life Wilfrid, the greatest figure at the conference, was still the dominating personality in the religious life of Northumbria, where Bede lived in the Benedictine monastery at Jarrow. Bede records faithfully the arguments of Bishop Colman, abbot of Lindisfarne and spokesman for the Celtic party, and of Wilfrid, spokesman for Rome by request of the Frankish bishop Agilbert, who could speak no English.

The debate did not perhaps reach a high level. Bishop Colman claimed that the Celtic Easter was fixed by reference to tradition handed down from St. John, Wilfrid pleaded the higher authority of St. Peter, keeper of the keys of heaven. Careful calculations of the calendar and many texts and their interpretations were hurled to and fro between the disputants, but these are historical irrelevancies, like the frontier incidents which so often provide the occasion for wars involving great powers and altering the course of history. Behind the battle of words and dates lay two visions each of which kindled generous enthusiasms and fostered a noble rivalry.

Wilfrid saw the majesty of Rome, where he had spent some

years, and the proud churches of Paris, Lyons, Arles, Vienne and Milan, which he had visited in his travels. He had known men and cities. But against the wisdom of the man of the world was set the wisdom, less wise in its generation but burning with a fiercer heat, of the children of light. The monks of Lindisfarne looked back to Columba and Aidan and all the saints of Ireland, men of God, wholly dedicated in body and mind as well as in heart to his service. These men had cared nothing for the power and the glory. They had had no desire to minister to kings and courts. They had made their homes on lonely windswept islands, and their closest companions were the birds and fishes. Their ideal was to find in solitude companionship with God, and to keep alive and hand down to the future the treasures of Christian literature,¹ but their duty had called them to take the road and minister to the ignorant, the poor, and the oppressed. Such men, Colman felt, could not be wrong, even though the whole world held them to be so.

Yet Peter won the day. It is Peter's way. Peter and the keys. No such claim as that of Peter could be put forward, Colman admitted, by those who claimed for their idiosyncrasy the example of St. John. This was the decisive admission, extracted from the Celtic party by Oswiu himself. And so for eight centuries there was to be one fold and one shepherd in England.

Death of
Bede,
735.

From the candid pages of Bede and from his letters to Egbert written just before his death in 735, we know that the consequences of Whitby were not wholly good. The times had by the end of the first third of the eighth century become dangerously corrupt. The bishops had accumulated too much wealth, the monasteries had lost their spiritual fervour, the outlying parishes were neglected. In his history, Bede makes no definite charges, but his panegyric of Colman and his predecessors, his praise of their poverty and asceticism, his reference to the priests of Colman's generation, who "had no care for anything but preaching, baptising, visiting the sick" suggests that he found in the evening of his days that things were different.

¹ Among the masterpieces which we owe to Celtic influences are the memorable Lindisfarne Gospels which were produced in Holy Island, Northumbria, and written and illuminated by Eadfrith, who became bishop of Lindisfarne in 698. In these and similar manuscripts there is a manifest reversion to the earlier Celtic art of formal decoration, characterised by animal ornament, running scrolls and interlacing patterns of amazing complexity.

Every great cause is to some extent betrayed by its standard bearers. Success is a dangerous stimulant. Yet the true judgment on the Whitby conference must not be a regret for a lost primitive simplicity, which was bound in any event to disappear. We must remember the positive achievement and contrast it with the consequences as we can best estimate them of a victory for the Celtic party.

The Mediterranean littoral was still the centre and source of urban civilisation and immediately after the meetings at Whitby gave England, in the persons of Theodore of Tarsus, Hadrian of Africa and Benedict Biscop, a great archbishop and two great scholars who left their mark on her history. England in return was to give in the next century Willibrord, Boniface and Alcuin to the continent of Europe, and thus become directly responsible for the conversion of Frisia and much of Germany, for the baptism and, later, the solemn crowning of Pippin, the father of Charlemagne, for the reform of the Frankish Church, and perhaps in some measure for the direction of the empire of Charlemagne himself. We must place Wilfrid of Ripon with Theodore, Hadrian and Benedict Biscop as the chief creators of the permanent organisation of the English Church, which was to bear such striking fruit in the years to come. The historical function of Rome has been to harness individual genius to the service of enduring institutions. It was due to the Celtic genius that the soil in which the great scholars and reformers of the seventh century were to work was so fruitful. It was due to Rome that the great men of the next generation worked on a wider stage, and in so doing influenced, not England alone, but the whole Christian cause in Europe.

Wilfrid of
Ripon,
634-709.

Politically, the results of Whitby were wholly good. Had the Celtic party prevailed, south England might have become an appanage of the Frankish kingdoms, and the northern Midlands either a pagan oasis, untouched by Roman influence, or a buffer state between a Celtic north and a Frankish south. The victory of the Romanisers, following as it did on the overthrow of Penda in 654 gave a new stability to the relations between the different English kingdoms and notably allowed for the political development of Wessex. Militant heathenism was no longer a disruptive force in England and the existence of a united Church and the consolidation of a strong kingdom in the south-west meant that England could never again be plunged into grave disorder by what Professor Stenton in

referring to Penda has called "the incalculable resentments of a single king."

Arch-
bishop
Theodore,
c. 602-690.

After the conference at Whitby the next important landmarks were the appointment of Theodore as Archbishop of Canterbury and Hadrian as Abbot of St. Peter's, Canterbury (669), the synod of Hertford (673) and the foundation of the famous Benedictine monastery of Wearmouth by Benedict Biscop in 674. In 679 there was another synod at Hatfield. By 685, Wilfrid and his followers had converted the south Saxons, the last pagan kingdom. In 681 or 682 the monastery at Jarrow was founded. After 685, there was a lull in the conflicts between Northumbria and Mercia which lasted until 730. Meanwhile Caedwalla (685-688) and Ine (688-726) restored the independence and revived the prosperity of Wessex.

Theodore found on his arrival only three bishops, one of whom had bought his diocese and was thus guilty of simony, one of whom—the great Wilfrid—appears to have been acting as a bishop in Deira; the third, Chad, who was acting as Bishop of York in circumstances of dubious legality.¹ It is thus probably fair to say that there was only one bishop exercising legal jurisdiction in accordance with the canon law. When Theodore died in 690, there were fifteen regularly constituted dioceses with bishops duly appointed. These dioceses were Canterbury, London, Rochester, York, Dorchester, Leicester, Worcester, Hereford, Lindisfarne, Hexham, Lindsey, North Elmham (Norfolk), Dunwich (Suffolk), Winchester and Lichfield. In 705 and 709 two new dioceses, Sherborne and Selsey, were formed, following the extension westwards of the boundaries of Wessex and the conversion of Sussex.

The age of organisation was followed by a generation of great scholars, saints and prelates. In Northumbria we find Bede, Cuthbert, Willibrord (who converted the Frisians) and Ecgbeorht, Archbishop of York from 732 to 766, in Wessex Aldhelm, the first Bishop of Sherborne, and Boniface, the apostle of Germany (675-754). The period from the synod of Whitby in 663 to the death of Bede in 735 was thus not only the first golden age of the Church in England, but the first time when Englishmen played a decisive part in European affairs. Wilfrid stands out in this astonishing period of Church history as the first Englishman to play a great part in the affairs of the English Church, Theodore as the first great

¹ Owing to a conflict of testimony between Bede and Eddius it is "impossible now to discover the rights and wrongs of the situation" (Hodgkin, *op. cit.*, p. 380).

Archbishop of Canterbury, and the first in that long list of surprise choices made at Rome for the headship of the Catholic Church in England, which have proved so surprisingly successful.

In one important respect Theodore adopted and approved for the reorganised Church in England a Celtic practice, the practice of private, as opposed to public, confession. This practice was to spread to the whole Christian Church, and its authorisation in England marks a turning point in Church history. But it is as a scholar and an organiser that Theodore left his mark on the England of his own day. He had been himself educated at Athens and had lived in Syria, where art and learning "had flamed into a wonderful sunset glow before the region was overwhelmed by the Arabs."¹ He brought to England the finest fruits of Eastern and Latin scholarship, and the school at Canterbury, and the monasteries and schools of Wearmouth and Jarrow, spread this scholarship throughout the English Church.

It was through Englishmen trained in these schools that much of the old learning was brought back to the Continent during the eighth century. It was at Wearmouth that Bede was educated and at Jarrow that he wrote his many works. Aldhelm of Wessex, the first bishop of Sherborne, reckoned the greatest scholar of his age, was a pupil of the Canterbury school.

Yet education alone was not enough. The Irish too had long had a passionate enthusiasm for learning. What was lacking, then, and in England until the coming of Theodore, was a framework, an architectural plan by means of which the fruits of learning and piety could be distributed and handed down to an ever wider constituency. That lack was made good by Theodore's dioceses and by his insistence on bishops and priests remaining in their dioceses and accepting permanent responsibility for the tasks entrusted to them. This was the beginning of the parish system. Centuries were to be needed to perfect it, but the principle of attaching clergy to clearly defined districts and forbidding them to leave without permission was the first and necessary step on the road to a revolutionary conception. Equally important, for quite different reasons, were the monastic foundations of the seventh and eighth centuries. It has been truly said that "in the general history of England the monasteries of this period are of less significance than the obscure parish churches which

¹ Hodgkin, Vol. II, p. 309.

remained as the permanent basis of English ecclesiastical organisation."¹ Yet without the monasteries as centres for the training and education of the clergy and for the endowment of scholarship, Theodore's inchoate parish system could never have survived. Wilfrid claimed, and quite justly, as his cardinal achievement, the support he gave to the foundation of monasteries following the Benedictine rule. He himself established such monasteries all over England from the Tweed to the Channel, while his contemporary, Benedict Biscop, founded monasteries at Wearmouth and Jarrow. Aldhelm of Malmesbury, himself a product of Hadrian's Canterbury school, founded monasteries at Frome and Bradford-on-Avon and when he became Bishop of Sherborne continued to keep control of his foundations. Part of the success of the English missionaries abroad was due to the fact that, although they were themselves monks, they regarded it as normal and right that the monasteries they founded should come under episcopal control. Many English monasteries did not at first do so, but generally as the eighth century drew on, it became the custom to recognise the Bishop's rights over the monasteries in matters canonical.

Aldhelm
of
Malmes-
bury,
640-709.

The great monastic schools taught Greek as well as Latin and, at Canterbury, Roman law was studied. Bede himself had a wide knowledge of patristic and historical literature derived from the great libraries at Jarrow and Wearmouth. Through Bede's influence, the school at York, founded by Archbishop Egbert, became a factor in the general development of European learning. The monasteries and their schools were indeed an essential instrument in the transition from the primitive conception of the Church as a network of communities of "saints" to the mediaeval conception of the Church as an institution whose function it was to preach and minister to the whole mass of the people in every Christian land. The reforms and developments of the age of Theodore marked in England the decisive stage in this transition. From Theodore's time the English Church was evidently and in all essentials the Church as we see it in English history until the Reformation.

The change in the character of the Church must not be taken as inevitable, merely because it happened. However we judge the spiritual consequences of the development of the Church as an independent political and economic force, we must recognise that the separation of Church and State and the

¹ Stenton, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

assertion in this way of two loyalties for all men was a unique political experiment. Outside the mediæval system, and except in so far as that system still survives to-day, either the Church (as in Ancient Egypt or in Peru under the Incas) or the state has claimed and exercised supremacy over the minds and hearts as well as over the material concerns of men. In this respect, if in no other, the claims of the Athenian democracy, the Spartan aristocracy, the Roman republic, the Roman empire, the German national socialist dictatorship and the Russian Soviet system are all alike. The unique civilisation of western Europe and of the Mediterranean basin from the eighth century to our own day has been conditioned and, indirectly at any rate, created by its devotion to the opposite principle, the division of Church and State and the recognition of the supremacy of each within its own sphere. This recognition sets hard and fast limits to the power of the state. Dictators recognise no such limits, and every one seeking absolute power for himself, whether in the name of King, Court or People, has had, and will always have, to dispose of the historic claim of the Christian Churches to freedom of assembly, freedom of worship, freedom to teach and the right to economic independence and the ordering of their own affairs. Other people besides Christian churchmen are to-day interested in these freedoms, but in the early centuries of European history the assertion of such freedoms as against the state was a revolution in the field of political ideas. This revolution we English owe largely to Gregory the Great and Archbishop Theodore.

The ultimate consequences of the seventh century reforms were thus almost immeasurable, but they were not immediate. In the eighth century Church and State alike were feeling their way. Neither had yet developed fully the institutions necessary to put their houses in order. The Church was far ahead of the State in England but it was still relatively weak. Writers of the eighth century, notably Bede, Boniface and Alcuin, speak of the state of the Church in England in terms of growing dissatisfaction. In the end, Boniface and Alcuin adopted almost the despairing tone of Gildas in his *Liber Querulus* of the fifth century. The Penitentials, books describing penances of different kinds, throw an unpleasant light on the habits of clergy and laity alike, particularly in regard to drunkenness, love of dress and sexual immorality, while nobles and bishops were both, according to their critics, equally prone to avarice. The bishops touted for endowments, the nobles got control of

Boniface,
680-755-

Alcuin,
735-804.

the revenues of monasteries by the appointment of lay abbots. On the other hand, the growth of the English Church led to notable political and cultural developments alike at home and on the Continent.

In England the developments were chiefly in law and custom, particularly relating to land. As land was the only important form of property, and since power, as John Adams said, always follows property, these developments shaped the course of our history.

In was the need of the clergy for protection which led them, in their capacity as advisers of the secular power, to urge the writing down of laws, from which came the habit of law-making. The early codes deal almost exclusively with the compensation to be paid for personal injuries and these varied with the injury and with the rank of the injured. The clergy successfully asserted their right to the highest rates of compensation. The earliest laws provided only two punishments, fines or death, but it was probably due directly to Church influence that very soon fines were substituted for death in all but cases of treason and treacherous murder.¹ Later, even more important changes were made. Breaches of the moral code, neglect of fasting, failure to baptise a child and maltreatment of slaves were all made offences against the State. Some of these developments, on the modern view, went too far, and others not nearly far enough. But we have nevertheless the beginnings of a stirring of conscience and the first tentative beginnings of social legislation.

It was, however, as a recipient and administrator of land that the Church was first to assume political importance. Its lands were the source of its wealth, the mainstay of its religious and educational work and the basis of its political power. Further, on the grant of land or of the revenues of land, the parish system, with its profound implication that men were members simultaneously of two societies, came to depend.

We cannot write with exactness and certainty about the Anglo-Saxon land system. It was continually developing. As Maitland reminds us, William the Conqueror stands midway between King Aethelbert of Kent and Queen Elizabeth. It is as wholly misleading to generalise about the first five hundred years since Aethelbert as about the second. We can only trace

¹ Many homicides which the Common Law to-day regards as murders were in these times not so regarded.

the development of tendencies, the growth of customs and, to some extent, of law. We must remember, however, that in Anglo-Saxon times the distinction between the landlords' rights over land and sovereignty, between rents and taxes, between the responsibility for administering justice and the receipt of the profits of jurisdiction was never clearly defined, nor were the customs of the different groups of invaders the same.

The settlers in seventh century Wessex and probably also in the Midlands, in Lindsey and in Deira, brought with them what is known as the open-field system of agriculture, whereby the arable belonging to a particular community normally lay in great unenclosed expanses, over which the holding of the individual peasant was distributed in scattered strips. The arable was usually worked on the three-field system, each field being in turn under winter wheat, spring oats or barley, or fallow. Associated with the arable was the necessary pasture-land, held in common by all the several owners of the arable, and the same might apply to adjacent woodlands.

A large part of England, however, never came under this system. It is not found in the old kingdom of Bernicia nor in what are now the Scottish lowlands which as far north as the Firth of Forth belonged to the seventh century kingdom of Northumbria. It is seldom found in the north-west of England and it was never introduced into Devon, Cornwall or the borderland of Wales, all of which, by the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century, were under Anglo-Saxon rule. In East Anglia the evidence suggests that the peasantry originally held their land in compact holdings which were only "disintegrated by a long continued process of dividing land among co-heirs."¹ Finally, the Kentish land system was probably different in origin from that of the rest of England. There the unit was not, as elsewhere, the village, but the small farm under single ownership, the average size of a farm being perhaps as much as 160 acres.

Nevertheless, the free peasant, the "ceorl," was, at the beginning of the seventh century, the representative Anglo-Saxon citizen everywhere, irrespective of the agricultural system. The Kentish ceorl was a richer man than the average ceorl of Wessex, East Anglia, Mercia or Northumbria, but the difference was of degree, not of kind. Where the ceorl lived in a community settlement under the open-field system, he

¹ Stenton, *op. cit.*

remained a free landowner, and where, as in Kent or East Anglia, his holding was self-contained, he remained, equally with the ceorl on divided land, subject to the obligations imposed by custom and later by law on all landholders.

The definition, growth and changing incidence of these obligations makes up the constitutional history of Anglo-Saxon England.

When we say that the first representative Anglo-Saxon citizen was the free peasant we mean that the peasant originally owed no obligation of personal service to a lord as such. We do not mean that he was free of all obligations. Such a statement would either imply that there was no government of any kind, or that the relatively subtle distinction between rent and taxation had been arrived at by the very unlettered savages who invaded our shores in the sixth century. Both hypotheses are absurd.

The bands of freemen who settled England had each a chieftain: their chieftains became petty kings and maintained themselves at first perhaps by the land which they appropriated as their personal holding. This land which came centuries later to be known as the demesne land of the lord was perhaps in some cases originally worked by slaves. The political history of these early centuries, however, makes it clear that the small kingships were soon incorporated into larger kingdoms, and the greater kings of the Heptarchy, let alone the powerful over-kings of Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex who dominate the history of the eighth and ninth centuries, could not maintain their courts and bodyguards and a state sufficient to enable them to claim, as Offa of Mercia did, diplomatic equality with Charlemagne himself, on the produce of their own personal estate. From the earliest time of which we have documentary evidence it is clear that the kings had acquired by custom certain rights, to tribute, to maintenance, and to the three military duties of service in the militia or fyrd, fortification and bridge building.

The other source of the kings' revenues were the profits from jurisdiction.

These profits originated, it may well be, in the primitive Germanic criminal code of cash compensation for personal injuries or insults or the violation of property rights in women or slaves which were first written down in the code of Aethelbert of Kent. In its turn, this code clearly reflected the first

impact of a little civilisation and a little Christianity on the primitive practice of the blood feud. Aethelbert's code gave to the king and the nobles a high rate of compensation, but by the time the laws of Ine came to be written down the personal compensation due from the kindred of the wrongdoer to the injured party had been extended in two directions. Firstly, injuries to those within the king's peace—those, that is, in his house or belonging to his bodyguard or under his special protection—passed from the category of private grievances to that of public offences, and compensation had to be paid to the king as well as, or sometimes in place of, the kindred. Secondly, under Church influences, fines had become payable in many cases in addition to the compensation due to the injured or his kin,¹ and breaches of obligation to the king in respect, for instance, of military services and breaches of the moral law alike were atonable by fines.²

Aethelbert's Code, c. 600.

Laws of Ine, c. 693.

We must refer briefly at this point to an old controversy. It is evident that these rights of the kings, as established from the earliest times, are incompatible with the theory that the early form of Anglo-Saxon social organisation was a communal society of free and equal citizens. It is equally evident that the existence, from earliest times, of open-field village communities, though, as is now agreed, neither communal nor tribal, is incompatible with the theory that all land was held originally of a lord. It is obvious that in England there were from the first days of the settlement many kinds of holdings. There was the land of the invading chieftain who became a petty king, and later, under the Heptarchy, the lord or underking of the greater kings. There was land given by the kings to their principal followers or those who had done good service in their households (originally this endowment "may often have consisted of a stretch of newly conquered land on which the recipient and his household could be maintained by the food, rent and services of subject Britons and dependent Englishmen"). There was the village community-settlement of free men on the open-field system. There was the compact small holding of the freeman of Kent, East Anglia, the north-west and the west. It was the task of the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries to weld these three systems of land tenure into one, and in this process, one of the principal agencies was the Church, because the habit of "giving" land to the Church

¹ Cf. Laws of Ine, Cap. 34.

² Cf. Laws of Ine, Cap. 51.

necessitated the classification and to some extent the assimilation of pre-existing tenures.¹

For a long time the chief motive of the king who "gave land" to the Church was religious. The donors were probably unconscious and certainly indifferent to the indirect but vast secular consequence which followed. The kings were not in fact "giving land" in our sense of the term. They were giving away their own right to receive certain dues and services from the occupiers of the land in question, who remained undisturbed in their occupancy and in their title. The kings made the gifts because there was nothing else that they could give. The land itself was not theirs to give away. They could have given their personal land no doubt, but the early English kings and sub-kings had no vast personal estates, and out of what they had, they had to provide for their families. So far from the granting of land by the Crown to the Church implying a restriction of the rights of the common man, it reflected and was necessitated by the reality of these rights. The same people remained on the land, with the same rights and duties. The kings could not alienate the land itself but only their own sovereign rights over it. And so we have that long series of Charters endowing churchmen with estates, which begins in the early days of the Kentish kingdom and goes down to the time of William the Conqueror and beyond.

The land which was the subject of the royal grants was what was called "folkland," i.e. land "subject to the rents and services by which the whole people had once maintained its king."² Land exempted from these by charter became "bookland," land the title to which was conveyed by a "book" or, as we call it, a charter. "Bookland" might revert to the giver,

¹ Professor Stenton, discussing this question, writes that "the great ecclesiastical estate is an obvious factor making for the use of territorial lordship, but its direct influence was confined to a minority of English villages and was late in coming into effect. It was in the lands which the kings had given to their companions that the changes began which created the manorial economy of the Middle Ages." No judgment of Professor Stenton's can be prudently disregarded. The lord had his land from the earliest days of the settlement and this fact coloured the social landscape of the seventh and eighth as surely as it did that of the tenth and eleventh centuries. But precisely because the Church as a claimant for land came later into the picture, it is arguable that it called for special machinery for effecting not grants of conquered land awaiting settlement but transfers of land already settled and settled in large part by freemen. The decisive point about the booking of land from the eighth century onward was not that it created a lot of new lords but that, by and large, these new lords (whether ecclesiastical or lay) had to be interpolated between the kings and the freemen. It was as the result of this necessity as well because of the earlier grants by the kings to their companions that by the time of the Conquest every freeman had a lord.

² Stenton, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

when it might become folkland again, or it might be "booked" again to a new beneficiary, but it is uncertain whether it could always, in early times, be given away by the recipient, although it might be leased. These leases created a third kind of land, loan-land.

The value of what was given away varied, partly with the terms of the "book," partly with the prevailing custom in the particular district. Land was sometimes given "free" of all obligations, civic and fiscal, and "free" of all judiciary rights. Sometimes it was "free" only of some of these. The civic obligations attaching to the land were military service, the maintenance of fortified places and the maintenance of bridges, and exemption from these was rarely conceded. The fiscal obligations were various. We read in some places of "*tributum*" or "*vectigal*," or "*pastus*" or "*victus*," the king's *feorm*. The customs are primitive Germanic, the language of the charters mediaeval Latin as used by clerics whose law was borrowed from their Frankish brethren. We should not therefore expect and do not get, exactness of phraseology until the eleventh or twelfth centuries when the lawyer started Latinising the Anglo-Saxon terms.¹

Of the amount of this tribute or *feorm* we know little. Historically, its origin is the duty imposed upon the landowners of maintaining the king and his court on their travels. According to the laws of Ine, the king should have from every owner of ten hides each year, ten vessels of honey, 300 loaves, 12 ambers of Welsh ale and 30 of clear ale, 2 full-grown oxen or 10 wethers, 10 geese, 20 hens, 10 cheeses, an amber of butter, 5 salmon, 20 lb. of fodder and a hundred eels. But we cannot assume that this isolated "doom" is a general law, even for Wessex. We can only use it as evidence of the kind of sum, whether in money or in kind, which free landowners might have by custom to give towards their king's maintenance. In addition to this maintenance tax or rent, the king could give or retain market rights, tolls and forest and fishing rights.

The rights of jurisdiction which went with "bookland" are more obscure. Express grants of *saca* or *soka* are not found before the charters of the mid-tenth century, but land is often booked free of *wite*, of the fine, that is, which went to the king in addition to the compensation due to the injured party.

¹ e.g. *Sacu* and *Socu* became *Saca* and *Soka*, but this linguistic audacity was unheard of in the seventh and eighth centuries. Hence the uncertainty about the rights conveyed by the early charters.

FROM THE CONVERSION TO THE VIKING INVASIONS

There is a charter of Cenwulf of Mercia as early as 816 which implies that the church of Worcester had the right to try minor criminal offences. Then, again, there are early "books" which give land "free" of *furis comprehensio*, when the recipient of the "book" had the right to receive the fines accruing from the arrest and trial of thieves.

In all these cases, and whether we are speaking of military service, bridge building, the king's *feorm* or thief catching, it is evident that the "freedom" given is not to the occupiers themselves. It is a transfer of obligations due to the holder of the Crown which now become due to the holder of the "book." This is particularly obvious in the case of fines for criminal offences or the right to deal with thieves. Obviously the Crown is not saying in these books that the wrongdoers on this land can commit certain crimes without any penalty. The Crown is transferring from itself to a churchman or a lord the right to receive precisely the same penalty as before. It is hard to resist the conclusion arrived at by Maitland that with the right to receive these fines went the responsibility for executing the justice which produced them. The king's representative or reeve was not going to perform, on behalf of someone else, what he knew was, in the eighth century, a tedious and difficult task. In this connection it is most significant that petty offences only are in question. Persistent offenders must be delivered up. The "crimes" of which the land is "freed" are always listed, and it is a short list, often confined to housebreaking and thieving. We are justified in thinking that the practice of making over the right to try certain offences and to receive certain fines was a very old one, certainly dating back to our earliest charters, but that it was not a regular custom. We cannot date back the regular institution of manor courts or of seignorial justice as such to days much earlier than the middle of the tenth century. Nevertheless this all-important development almost certainly originated in the grants made to the Church.¹

These grants of land to the Church were made before witnesses by some simple symbolic ceremony, but a written record—known as a *Landbok* or diploma—might be made by "interested ecclesiastics, with a sufficient smattering of Roman law to understand the nature of private property and of business documents."² They are large and imposing documents

¹ F. W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, p. 294.

² Galbraith, "The Literacy of the Mediaeval English Kings" in *Proc. Brit. Acad.*, 1935, p. 18.

with invaluable topographical and biographical information to be garnered in their elaborate details of grants and lists of witnesses. But they are not legal documents in the modern sense, for they have no sign of authenticity, lacking seals or signatures of the interested parties. Such force as they obtained came in part from the ecclesiastical anathemas on those who infringed the deed but much more from traditional local witnesses to the fact that the transaction recorded had taken place. Almost all the landboks which have survived are grants to religious bodies, and this fact has accentuated for our ears the ecclesiastical flavour of documents in any case abounding in "chrisms, crosses and curses."

Such, in bare outline, was the nature of the charters under which the Church and the great nobles obtained their lands. The decisive changes which had their origin in these charters are three. Firstly, the aggregation of estates created ultimately a great hereditary nobility. Secondly, the charter interposed a lord between the king and the freeman. Thirdly, the king tended to fade out of the picture so far as the freemen were concerned. The owners of "bookland" usually received their land "free" of most obligations and the others, in course of time, they compounded for land or cash. They thus became not intermediaries between the freemen and the Crown but the only people having a call on the services of the freemen. Even military service came to be a responsibility owed to the lord (whether clerical or lay made no matter). The kings in their turn came to look more and more to the lords for the maintenance of order and (when direct taxation came in with the Danish invasions) for the collection of revenue, which was assessed on the estate and not on the individual freemen who farmed it.

The kings saw their lands in terms of estates comprising so many hides. The hide was originally the farm holding sufficient to maintain the normal peasant household and varied in acreage.¹ From the earliest days of the Heptarchy at any rate, each settlement district was calculated as containing so many hides. But these early groupings recorded by Bede and in the "Tribal Hidage,"² soon gave place, under influence of the charters, to groupings of estates, which were usually reckoned by hides in multiples of five. These "hides" ceased

¹ The traditional estimate of a hide as 120 acres represents a fair average.

² See Hodgkin, *History of Anglo-Saxons*, II, 389. It contains a list of tribal units together with the number of hides attributed to each.

to be measurements and became units of assessment. The effect was decisive. An abbey or a great lord might have through a charter rights over 100 hides. When Danegeld or ship money came to be raised in Alfred's time or later, the estate would be assessed at 100 hides for geld and would pay so much per hide. The lord was responsible. He would, in theory, make his own assessment on the occupants. In practice the freemen, while retaining their political liberties, lost more and more of such economic freedom as they had once possessed.

Already, by the time of Ine, there were many varieties of tenure intermediate between what we should call to-day a freeholder and the slave on the lord's land; the community settlement of the freemen in Wessex is clearly conceived of by the lawgivers of that time as already normally in association with a manor or a lord. On the other hand, there is no trace in the laws of Ine of the right of any private lord "to compel observance of the routine of agricultural life."¹ There were also many different kinds of freemen. The Laws of Ine give us the picture for Wessex only and we cannot possibly assume that it holds good for other parts of the country at that date, but we can fairly assume some measure of assimilation to Wessex practice throughout southern England as Wessex became predominant. We must, however, continue to exclude Kent.

Those who owned ten hides or more were usually thegns, a title implying a social rather than a legal or economic status. They owed military service and their wer-geld was fixed at twelve hundred shillings. For this reason they were called twelf-hyndmen, but they had no official position, and as late as the time of Alfred they are described negatively as "ceorls not on gafol land" (land paying rent), as men, that is, with their own estates, not sharers in the open fields. It seems, however, that all ceorls who came to own ten hides or more, a church and belfry, a burgh-gate seat and a place in the king's hall could claim to be ranked as thegns and acquire their rights and responsibilities. So, too, in Alfred's time, could a merchant who had three times crossed the North Sea, From the reference to the special place in the King's Hall, we can identify this class in some measure with the earlier *gesithcund* men or comrades of the king. Not all owners of ten hides would belong to this class, whom we can best describe as the king's bodyguard. On the other hand, some of the

¹ Stenton, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

gesithcund men clearly could own less than the minimum amount of land required for thegn-right. We can infer that in Anglo-Saxon England, as in every society, there were poor gentlemen who while retaining their social status had an economic position inferior to that of rich merchants of lesser family.

The great majority of the ceorls in Wessex and Mercia at any rate were of a very different status from the gesithcund men who might claim thegn-right, or from the owners of five hides, who, although not entitled to thegn-right, had a wer-geld of 600 shillings. The great majority were two hundred shillings (twy hinde) men living in the community settlement and owning, under the community system, anything from a hide down to fifteen acres. The majority, if not all, of these men, came in time to pay rent in money, labour or kind, and sometimes in all three. This, from the laws of Ine, is most clear of the smallholders of a virgate (30 acres) or bovate (15 acres). A smallholder who owed his house as well as the land to a lord owed both rent and labour for two or three days a week, according to the season. The owner of a homestead who owed his lord only for land paid rent only. The smallest holders of all owed little or no labour but owed produce. These were cottars, holders of five acres or less.

How had these complexities of tenure and these infinite gradations of wealth and status developed out of the primitive village community? We do not know, but we can make a number of guesses.

We have already suggested part of the answer. Side by side and in close association with the village communities were from the very earliest times the king's companions with land granted to them personally by the kings. The relationship of these lordlings to the free peasantry cannot be defined if only because in the sixth and seventh century social political and economic rights were not differentiated. We must assume, however, that the lord gave protection and that when the freemen were called to fight in the fyrd the lord would be their leader. In this way the notion that some service was due to the lord may well have begun to develop. The local lord in his turn would wish to free faithful slaves and settle them on the land and to give land to his followers. In both cases he would receive from them rents or duties or both. The land on which they settled might be part of his own land or it might—and more probably did—come from the "waste," the

unreclaimed woodland or scrub which still abounded in the sixth and seventh centuries.

The justification of rents or duties in the case, for instance, of freedmen settled on the lord's land is obvious; in the case of new settlers on the waste it is less so. There is some suggestion, however, that in some cases the lord may have customarily supplied seed or timber for a house. Other services certainly provided by the lord in many cases were the right to use a mill or a sheepfold. Above all, in a rough and brutal age, the protection afforded to a settlement by the presence of a lord and his followers was valuable, and so, also, in an age of great material poverty, was the presence of a lord whose resources enabled him and perhaps him alone to survive bad times without disastrous economic loss. Finally, it is clear that the basic obligations of the freemen to the king, for his "feorm" and for such duties as bridge building and the maintenance of fortifications were obligations which, as populations expanded, and kingdoms grew larger, could only be exacted either through officials, the king's reeves, or by transferring the right to receive these "renders" and services to the local lord, either as a necessary reward for past service or in return for his promise of future service or in return for a lump sum payment or for a gift of land elsewhere. Long before formal bookings of land began, many charters bear direct witness to arrangements of these different kinds, and it is possible that such transfers were commonly arranged long before we have written evidence of them.

In making even such bare statements, however, we have to make a number of hazardous assumptions. We know virtually nothing of the earlier, even more significant transition from the society of kingdoms and semi-tribal "regions," inhabited by folk answering to a common designation and comprising the war-band of a leader, to the society of kings, lords and villages which is disclosed to us in the earliest reliable documents. If we knew more of these regional groupings and what duties the freemen of these groups owed to whom, we should probably understand better how the freemen in the village settlements came to owe so much to the lords of later times. As it is, it is impossible to fix the starting point in the evolution of the Anglo-Saxon land system at which no freeman owed service to a lord, or a date after which all freemen owed service to a lord. We know, however, that in the time of Ine both classes existed.

SOCIAL EFFECTS OF BOOKLAND

The steady process of turning folkland into bookland was the chief agent in defining and perpetuating the obligations of freemen to a lord other than the king himself. But this process, as has been explained, did not in itself impose any new burdens on the freemen. It was essentially a devolution of political and fiscal administration by the central government to the church or the nobility in return for services rendered and expected and as such was an essential instrument not of reaction but of progress, for the services were all-important.

The Church to the Anglo-Saxon kings was the sole provider of education, the sole source from which they recruited clerks and, no less important, she was the holder of the keys. "Whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained." In those lawless days this was a formidable weapon in the hand of ambitious churchmen seeking to establish the kingdom of Christ on earth.

We must see in the creation of bookland the firm and fruitful beginnings of a regime based on the grant of usufruct and of ownership of land to allow of the discharge of services essential to progress. As Maitland has said, "the transition meant civilisation, the separation of functions, the division of employment, the possibility of national defence, the possibility of art, science, literature and learned leisure."

On the other hand, as the population increased and conditions became relatively more settled, the peasantry needed more land, and as more and more estates were "booked" to lords or abbeys or bishops, the peasantry had to strike a bargain with the new lords. Inevitably the bargain was one-sided, just as is the bargain which the citizen strikes with the State to-day. But the freemen remained free, and the mediaeval manorial court, where the suitors formed the court and the lord was merely the recorder of their decisions, testifies to the reality of this freedom in the early centuries of the manor economy. The mediaeval manor court could never have grown out of a servile society.

It was partly to consolidate their own power that the kings "booked" land so lavishly to the church and to the nobles. The Church as landlord could use supernatural sanctions for the enforcement of law and order and the punctual payment of dues. Moreover the appointment of bishops and abbots was, until the Norman Conquest, in the gift of the king and the great Church estates thus buttressed the political strength of the monarchy. The hope of spiritual benefits had also an important influence. The kings equally favoured the aggrega-

tion of estates in the hands of the great nobles. "Booking" land to them was the method of securing their loyalty. We may assume also an element of blackmail. The Anglo-Saxon monarchy was never strictly hereditary and there was no enduring peace. The king's life and power alike depended on the support of the Church and the co-operation of his nobles. Nevertheless, if the sovereignty of the Crown was only slowly developed, the booking of land was the first clear assertion of anything akin to sovereignty as we conceive it to-day.

The responsibility of the central government for preserving law and order, and thus the right to enforce the law, was much more slowly assumed. The chief agent of Anglo-Saxon justice in the eighth century was the Shire Court, which met half-yearly, bishops and nobles sitting together, as they were to do in the smaller Hundred Courts established mainly in the tenth century but in some cases along ancient lines. This localisation of justice was certainly the rule and not the exception in Anglo-Saxon times. "The king has judicial functions, but they are far removed from our modern way of regarding the king as the fountain of justice. His business is not to see justice done in his name in an ordinary course, but to exercise a special and reserved power which a man must not invoke except where he has failed to get his cause heard in the jurisdiction of his local Hundred."¹

Although English kings issued written "Dooms" at intervals during nearly five centuries, none of them did so with the intention of constructing a complete body of law. "All they do is to regulate and amend in detail now this branch of customary law, now another."² Throughout Anglo-Saxon times, from Aethelbert of Kent onwards, all laws made distinction between different classes of men, not only between slaves and free but between different classes of freemen, and all laws assumed that the family bore a share of responsibility for the wrongs done by its members, and was entitled to some compensation for wrongs suffered by a kinsman. The amount of compensation (the *wer-geld*) varied with the rank, in practice with the wealth, of the injured party. The only exception, in the laws of Ine, is that of Welshmen, whose *wer*

¹ Pollock and Maitland, *History of English Law* I., 41. Maitland proceeds to comment that this principle of the king's power to do extraordinary justice survived the assumption under the Conqueror of the king's responsibility for ordinary justice and is the source alike of the Prerogative Courts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and of the modern system of equity.

² Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, I., 27.

was little more than half that of an Anglo-Saxon of the same rank. As we have seen, the ceorl's wer-gild (outside of Kent, where it was larger), was nominally 200 shillings and the thegn's twelve hundred shillings: that of an earl or bishop was nominally 4800 shillings, of an archbishop or Etheling, 9000 shillings and of the king himself, 18,000 shillings. All compensation for injuries less than death was proportionate. We must not, however, draw false inferences from this practice. These fines were punishments for breaches of the peace leading to accidental homicide or injury. They were not machinery for condoning crime. Treason and secret slaying (e.g. by poisoning or by witchcraft) were unatoneable crimes. On the other hand, the killing of an adulterer caught in the act required no atonement; neither did killing by a man serving his lord against his lord's enemies. A man who slew a thief was likewise immune from penalty.

This system of compensation by the wrongdoer to the kindred descended without a doubt from the precursor of all judicial systems, the family or tribal blood feud. And there was still in Anglo-Saxon England a responsibility borne by the kindred of the wrongdoer if he failed to make compensation, although the kinsmen could disclaim him if they were prepared not to harbour him and also to forgo rights of inheritance from him. There is some evidence that, alternatively, either the wrongdoer himself or the kindred of the injured party could elect to bear this feud. This was certainly so in theory, but the course of evolution is clear enough (though we cannot say how far evolution had proceeded at any given date or place). The laws providing and stabilising the rate of compensation were intended to mitigate the nuisance of the blood feud by giving the kindred a remedy which they could enjoy without disturbing the peace of the community. The machinery for enforcement was weak, and default was frequent, but the ultimate remedy came to be, in the normal practice of the ninth and tenth centuries, not private vengeance but outlawry, whereby the wrongdoer who failed to make atonement became a public enemy without rights and his goods forfeit to the Crown. In this way private wrongs might become public wrongs, and the procedure in regard to them would at that stage be assimilated to that proper to offences against the king's peace—treason to his person or injury to his servants. With these exceptions, the kings up to the end of the eighth century were content to let justice take its course, as far as

might be, through the machinery of compensation exacted by the kindred. The first steps towards the modern view of public responsibility appeared when the king accepted part responsibility and claimed part of the compensation for the death of strangers, and when later, breaches of the peace on the highway were breaches of the king's peace. It was by a peculiarly English development that the special responsibility for the king's peace became, instead of the exceptional, the normal safeguard of public order. But this development required three centuries at least.

The system of compounding felonies was much less remote from modern practice than appears at first glance. We, too, punish an ordinary case of assault with a fine. The only two capital offences to-day, wilful murder and high treason, were the only two capital offences in the ninth century. The only recognisable difference concerns manslaughter. Except when committed by a motorist or a doctor, manslaughter is a serious offence to-day. We must regard the rough-and-ready methods of the Anglo-Saxon local quarrel not as the equivalent of Chicago gang law but of the bad social habits which lead to reckless motoring to-day. It was a tough and rough age, but it was certainly neither maliciously cruel nor lawless. Furthermore, the regulation of the amount of compensation by the rank of the victim is to some extent paralleled in English law to-day by what is known as Lord Campbell's Act, which, in certain circumstances, regulates by reference to the earning capacity of a victim, the compensation due in cases of death where there has been contributory negligence.

Secondly, we must remember that the system of oaths was different from ours not in degree but in kind. Teutonic law required evidence to the character not of the deed but of the man. The weightier the evidence to character, the more satisfied the Anglo-Saxons were. It is sometimes assumed by critics that any man accused, say, of robbery with violence, could get any number of people to swear his innocence; that the system was, therefore, a farce. There is no authority for this at all, and the relationship established in Anglo-Saxon law between the rank of the injured party and the standing and number of the oath-givers required by the defence was strictly logical. In plain English, the effect of the Anglo-Saxon procedure was this. A man accused of defaulting on or assaulting a fellow-villager needed to have the good opinion of the village in order to get off. If he had it, he would not be con-

victed. But if he committed his crime against the lord of the manor, then he could only get off if he got a body of testimony from the other local landowners. Anglo-Saxon law was not prepared to take the risk of the villagers conspiring together to connive at an offence against their lord. An accuser, for his part, had, except when he showed the injury and where the wrong was therefore self-evident, to make a fore-oath and the greater the weight of the testimony offered, the greater the number of oath-helpers required by the accused. An accused person who failed in his oath by not having the proper number of oath-helpers prepared to swear, or who by reason of personal misconduct was disqualified from clearing himself by oath, had, if he persisted in his plea of innocence, to submit to ordeal. Trial by legalised combat, found in almost all other early Germanic lands, was unknown in Anglo-Saxon England.¹ The ordinary ordeals were by water or fire—a hot iron, weighing one pound, had to be carried, or the arm plunged up to the wrist in boiling water. For the threefold ordeal the weight of the iron was three pounds, or the arm had to be put in up to the elbow. The hand was then bound and sealed up and kept bound for three days. If after these days the hand showed raw flesh, the man was guilty. If the hand had healed, he was innocent. In the later laws we hear much more of ordeals, and much less of oath-helping. We may well ask ourselves with Thomas Hodgkin, "Does this change betoken the growth of superstition or a decay of honesty and public spirit and a diminished confidence in the veracity of oath-helpers?"

Certainly, the essence of the ordeal was an appeal to God to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused by direct intervention, and the bishops in these early days gave their sanction to the appeal. It is as if the mystery of the Christian revelation had been altogether too much for the untrained minds of men only recently emerged from barbarism, driving them into fantastic follies, as later it was to draw trained minds into horrible excesses of cruelty in persecution.

This inference is fortified by the strange medley of magic and superstition which passed for medicine in the eighth and ninth centuries of Anglo-Saxon England. The Anglo-Saxon medicine men would have reduced Christianity to no more than a form of magic. Side by side with the belief in God, and the possibility of salvation through grace and the sacraments,

¹ It was introduced by the Normans and came to be utilised for various purposes (see Holdsworth, *Hist. of Eng. Law*, pp. 308-9).

was a huge residue of superstition—belief in elves, witches and the merits of magical incantations over fantastic brews of herbs, entrails and other juices. The old heathen fertility rites still persisted under a thin veneer of Christian ceremonial.

The churchmen of those days cannot be absolved from blame. The “tidings of great joy” had been overlaid, in the Gothic twilight of these ages, by the shadow of the gates of hell. The fate in store for graceless men was too terrible for description. And the devil was everywhere, seeking the ruin of souls. The measureless evil of which man without God is capable has been more plainly shown in the twentieth than it was in the eighth century, when men still walked in the shadow of the strangest superstitions and saw God’s direct intervention at every turn of the road. Yet it is impossible not to feel that the Church in Anglo-Saxon England, in its urgent desire not to win men’s hearts but to save their souls from the consuming fires of an eternal hell, went too far along the path of compromise with pagan superstition. We are conscious, in eighth century England, of moving in a world where almost anything might be true, so mysterious are the ways of God. Furthermore, by the end of the eighth century there is evidence of a growing divorce between morals and religion. Drunken priests, simoniacal bishops, loose-living nuns, figure largely in the written records. There had been a great decline in the general standard of decency and behaviour since the days of Theodore and Wilfrid.

This decline in the vigour and purity of Christian life is perhaps in part accounted for by the steady political decline of Northumbria during the eighth century. The long truce with Mercia which had begun in 685 ended in 740 when Aethelbald of Mercia attacked and ravaged Northumbria, but during the preceding two years Mercia had achieved undisputed predominance over the rest of England. Mercia was of course Christian. Aethelbald indeed had been encouraged in his years of exile by the one Mercian saint, Guthlac, an extreme ascetic, who lived at Crowland, in the Fens. But Christianity was not as deeply rooted in Mercia as in Northumbria. The great prelates and the great teachers had come during the golden age from the north or from Rome via Canterbury, and the new, scholarly and disciplined monasticism seems to have struck deeper root in Northumbria than elsewhere. Certainly the Northumbrians were a fervent people, and when they ceased, as they did after the middle of the eighth century, to

Aethel-
bald, king
of Mercia,
716-757.

be a force in English life, some spiritual fervour seems to have been lost.

Nevertheless, the fruits of the great religious revival were many and widespread, nor were they destined to be lost. The links between England and Rome created at the beginning of the seventh century remained particularly close and the dedications of English churches, the many papal privileges given to English monasteries and a good deal of correspondence between kings, archbishops and popes confirm the verdict of a monastic chronicler in France at the beginning of the ninth century that the English Church was the Church of a people, *qui maxime familiariores apostolicae sedi semper existant*. This meant that the routine life of the Church was orderly and uninterrupted, and this reflected, no doubt, in the secular sphere a growing intercourse between England and the Continent which reached its climax in the reign of Offa of Mercia. It was, however, mainly due to the work of Englishmen on the Continent itself that English influence reached such great heights in the eighth century. The English missionaries had been preceded by the Irish exactly a century earlier. It was in 590 that Columbanus set out with twelve companions on his continental mission and in 610 we hear of him preaching to the Alemanni. At Würzburg, the name of an Irish martyr Kelianus is preserved from the seventh century. Amandus, who died *c.* 676, had preached the gospel to the Frisians. But the Irish effort had been unorganised and discontinuous. From 689 when Wilfrid spent a winter preaching to the Frisians and was followed in 690 by his pupil Willibrord, there was a continuous English missionary effort in Frisia and in what is to-day western Germany, which lasted until the whole people were converted and a completely organised Church under metropolitans appointed by Rome had been created. The chief actors in these remarkable events were Willibrord and Wynfrid or Boniface, to give him the name by which he has gone down to history. But their efforts would have been little more successful than those of their Irish predecessors but for the constant stream of missionaries who followed them from England. Willibrord "inaugurated a century of English spiritual" and, we should certainly add, political "influence on the Continent. . . . He formed overseas an English colony which attracted followers in the next generations and came to an end only in the beginning of the ninth century."¹

S. Columbanus, 543-615.

S. Amandus, *c.* 589-676.

S. Willibrord, *c.* 657-738.

¹ Levison, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

When Willibrord arrived with twelve companions in 690 the western part of Frisia had returned to Frankish supremacy under Pippin II (the mayor of the palace then ruling the Franks in the name of a puppet Merovingian king). But Willibrord was not content with Pippin's support. He went to Rome to obtain the blessing and advice of Pope Sergius. It was a decisive moment in the history of the western Church. "The English Church was conscious of its Roman origin and now its first continental offspring entered into the same relation at once, an attitude which also became the distinctive mark of Boniface and of the German Church created by him."¹

In 695 Willibrord, following on negotiations between Pippin and the Pope (the first recorded diplomatic collaboration between the Carolingians and Rome) was consecrated archbishop by the Pope and proceeded to establish his metropolitan cathedral at Utrecht.

When Willibrord died in 739 his province was swallowed up by that of Boniface, who had received his commission to preach to the Germans from Pope Gregory II on May 15th, 719. Boniface was consecrated bishop at Rome on November 30th, 722, and in 732 Gregory III made him archbishop and appointed him head of a new German Church. Boniface was a free landowner from the west country, educated at a monastery in Exeter and a pupil of the great Aldhem, Bishop of Sherborne. He remained through his long career closely in touch with England, and much of what must have been his vast correspondence has survived. When in 738 Charles Martel (Pippin's successor) defeated and temporarily conquered the Saxons, Boniface asked all England to pray for their conversion and recruited as missionaries Wynnebald, Willibald and Lullus. In 729, Boniface, after his visit to Rome, organised four Bavarian sees at Passau, Regensburg, Salzburg and Freising. There were sees surviving from Roman times in southern Germany but in 741 the organisation of the new Church was completed with the creation of further sees in Hesse, Thuringia and Franconia. Many of these sees were held now or later by English missionaries.

The climax of Boniface's career came in 742 when he became in effect archbishop for all the eastern Frankish domain (known as Austrasia) then ruled by Carloman, son of Charles Martel. Carloman's brother, Pippin III, ruled the western Franks, and in 743 a synod of the western Frankish Church was

¹ Levison, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

summoned to meet at Soissons. Boniface had committed all the Franks to the active support of Church reform: the decrees at Soissons were based almost *verbatim* on those of an eastern synod in 742. Even more significant were the meetings of synods of the whole kingdom in 745 and 747. Through these means the hierarchical order and a regular Church administration was partially restored throughout the Frankish dominion and regular relations with Rome were renewed. The work of restoring the hierarchy was completed by Charles the Great, but the decisive initiative was due to Boniface and to England. The consequences reach down to our own times, for as a result of the establishment of friendly relations between the Franks and Rome came the Pope's appeal to Pippin for support against the Lombards, an appeal which led directly to the establishment of the pontifical state and the Holy Roman Empire.

English influence did not end with Boniface. He was succeeded in Germany by Lullus, another Englishman, and in the reign of Charles the Great we meet another English name, that of Alcuin, among the most trusted advisers and collaborators at the Frankish court. Born about 735, Alcuin was a relative of Willibrord's and came, like him, from a noble Northumbrian family. He provides a direct link between Bede and the ninth century, for he was a pupil of Aelbert who had succeeded Archbishop Egbert, Bede's pupil, as head of the famous school at York. Alcuin in his turn succeeded Aelbert when Aelbert became archbishop of York. Alcuin had met Charlemagne in the course of diplomatic missions in 780 and 781. In 782 he went, at Charlemagne's request, to his court to assist his educational reforms. From that time, with some short periods in England, Alcuin made the Continent his home until his death in 804.

It was through Boniface and his successors that the works of Bede and Aldhem and many of the great English manuscript texts of the Fathers and the classics found their way to France and Germany and Italian texts often found their way there by way of England. To this wide dissemination of texts we owe the preservation not only of many biblical manuscripts but of much classical literature. The details do not concern us here but the facts testify to a lively and vigorous intellectual revival in western Europe directed and inspired by Englishmen in the eighth century. We cannot do otherwise than connect with this remarkable growth of English influence the great secular

power attained by two English kings, Ethelbald and Offa of Mercia, during the same period. Like the Carolingians, these two great kings realised that all was not well with the Church in their dominions and they worked hard to increase its vigour and influence first through securing the appointment of Mercians to Canterbury and later—in 787-8—by getting Lichfield made an arch-diocese with control of seven of the more northern of the sees previously responsible to Canterbury. But there was more of politics than religion in this arrangement. Lichfield was an arch-diocese for less than a generation. The real aim of the Mercian dynasty was the rule of southern England, an aim in which Offa was ultimately successful. When Mercia had established political control in Kent the king gladly acquiesced in the abolition of the new archbishopric. The truth is that the supremacy of Mercia, politically as well as culturally, depended on the conquest of the south. The stern fighting people of Northumbria had drawn their great strength from two sources—the religious fervour of the Scots and the Romano-British tradition of ordered civilisation. As long as the south was disunited, and while conditions on the Continent were chaotic, as they were under the decaying Merovingian dynasty, Northumbria was in a powerful position. Ultimately Northumbria was destined to eclipse, if only for geographical and economic reasons. Much of her territory was wild and sparsely inhabited. In the long run the northern towns must always have been outdistanced by those in the south. When trade with the Continent revived, with the revival of France under Pippin and Charlemagne, and when the peace imposed by the Frankish empire reopened communications throughout western Europe, only a power which controlled the south of England could hope to achieve or maintain effective supremacy over the rest of the country.

Offa,
king of
Mercia,
757-796.

Offa of Mercia was not the first king in England to be known and described in Europe as *Rex Anglorum*. Aethelbert of Kent and Edwin of Deira had both been addressed as *Rex Anglorum* by the papacy. Offa was, however, the first king to have anything that could be called a foreign policy. With the Emperor Charlemagne and the Pope he maintained regular communication and from both he received favours of some importance. But he could only maintain his power by controlling London and Canterbury. For this reason Offa made the conquest of Kent, Sussex, the land of the Hastings, and East Anglia and the subordination of Wessex his deliberate aim.

It was only in the evening of his days that he succeeded. In 779, he defeated Wessex decisively at Bensington and cleared his line of communications with London. In 794, he completed the conquest of East Anglia by the execution of the East Anglian king. All through his reign, however, he was harassed by the Welsh at his rear, and his only imposing memorial, Offa's Dyke, represents in all probability the final delineation of the western frontier of England by agreement between the English and Welsh. It is not a military fortification so much as a political boundary line, and along the greater part of its course the boundary between the two countries stands to-day where Offa placed it.

Yet, for all his power and genius, and Offa was, with whatever justification, the first English king to speak to the world in the name of England and to be taken at his own valuation, his work died with him. He was a man of force rather than wisdom, and he probably exhausted his people with his unending wars. A united England had to come by consent born of necessity. It could not be created by the sword. Offa had indeed married his daughters to kings of Wessex and Northumbria and, so long as he personally lived, he was secure. Had his son lived to carry on his work, it might even have endured for some time. But, as so often in English history, chance took a hand. Offa's son Ecgrith died after a reign of only four months, and the succession passed to a distant kinsman, Cenwulf.

Ecgrith,
d. 796.

Cenwulf,
king of
Mercia,
791-821

Perhaps this was a decisive chance. Certainly it was important that when in 802 the throne of Wessex became vacant, there should have been no powerful king in Mercia. Ecgbert, the grandfather of Alfred, related to the royal families of Kent and Wessex and exiled by agreement between Offa of Mercia, overlord of Kent, and Beorhric of Wessex, returned to claim the throne and succeeded unopposed. With him the ninth century of our era begins, and a new chapter of history opens. It is only necessary here to note certain landmarks which, as so often, make the transition between the centuries of more than chronological significance.

On Christmas Day in the year 800, two years before the accession of Ecgbert, Charlemagne, king of the Franks, was crowned Emperor at Rome. In 804, two years after Ecgbert's accession, Charlemagne completed the conquest of the Continental Saxons. This severe task he had begun as early as 772, when his name city of Carlsburg was founded. It took

Ecgbert,
king of
Wessex,
802-839.

the most powerful monarch in the world 32 years to subdue these heathen barbarians completely. The recognition of the new and independent Emperor of the West by Byzantium followed in 812.

The papacy had been forced by the situation in Italy to choose early, and for many centuries, between the two classical theories of European politics—between the concert of Europe and the balance of power. She could either work for the establishment of an over-riding authority comparable in the secular sphere to her own in the spiritual sphere or try to maintain her independence by playing off the new national states one against the other. It was too early for any real freedom of choice between these alternatives. The Franks were too predominant. The papacy was therefore forced to risk creating and consecrating a power which might grow into a dangerous rival. It was thus under papal auspices and with papal blessings that the Empire of the west had been reconstituted and that the Saxons in Germany and in Italy became a part of the new creation. But if the price paid by the papacy was high, that paid by the Empire was not inconsiderable, for the new imperial conception implied alike the temporal power of the papacy and the non-national character of the Empire. The Holy Roman Empire, which was the consequence, has been described by Bryce as neither Holy, Roman nor an Empire. The epigram misses two difficult points in order to make one easy one. The Empire was essentially Holy, and it was essentially Roman. It was for these reasons, and for no others, that it never became an Empire. We enter with the ninth century on an epoch in which force alone is no solvent of the problem of authority: we shall find the arm of the papacy growing in strength until it comes into conflict on occasion with all the secular powers and among them with our English kings.

The second series of decisive events which marked the end of the eighth century was the rise of the Vikings. The immediate consequences were more decisive for this country than for any other, for the Vikings overran much of England, Ireland, Normandy and Sicily. They began their adventures, as far as our history goes, in 793, when they destroyed the monastery at Lindisfarne and made an abortive expedition to Weymouth. In the next year they sacked the monastery at Jarrow. Alcuin, Charlemagne's chief adviser, saw the writing on the wall. It was, he foresaw, "the beginning of misery and

calamity," and he regarded it as a punishment for the misdeeds of his people.

The sequel was for the next generation, but Alcuin was right. The Danish raids marked the beginning of one of those periods of bitterness and strife which are the price civilisation must always pay for being civilised. The civilisation was relative only, but that did not mitigate the price that had to be paid. The once brutal and ferocious Anglo-Saxon had lost alike his fury and his skill. The sea which had been his servant had become in the course of time a stranger to him. He had no better defence, at any rate in Northumbria, against the Danes than the Britons had had against him five centuries before and the scanty population of the north made resistance on land difficult. The men of the south, used to trading with the Continent and better organised, were also far more numerous and were able for a time to stand up to conquest by exploiting their knowledge of the sea and their hereditary aptitude for it. But Northumbria was, as the disasters of 793 and 794 foretold, unable to rise to the occasion. Only Durham, where the relics of St. Cuthbert were taken, was able to put up an effective resistance, protected, it may be, by the prayers of that tough old English saint. It was the great good fortune of England that the Danes, after 794, waited nearly 40 years before they returned in force. By that time the descendants of Egbert of Wessex had consolidated their rule in southern England. During the critical last quarter of the ninth century, Alfred was able to hold the invaders at arm's length and in the process to renew the foundations of that sea power which has always been the chief material source of our strength, and of that Christian scholarship which has more intermittently adorned our society and inspired our aims.

Chapter Eight

FROM THE VIKING INVASIONS TO 978

THE HISTORY of England in the ninth century falls conveniently enough into three clear divisions. Until 823, while Egbert of Wessex was consolidating his hold on Wessex and expanding its boundaries in the west, Mercia under Offa's distant kinsman Cenwulf and his brother and successor Ceolwulf remained the paramount English kingdom and continued to exercise overlordship over Kent and East Anglia and to rule directly over the rest of Offa's extensive dominions. In 823 there was apparently some internal trouble in Mercia: Ceolwulf was deposed and the kingship assumed by Beornwulf, presumably a rebel leader and certainly not of the family of Offa. Beornwulf remained the dominant figure in southern England until 825, but in that year he had to face a revolt of the East Angles and an attack from Wessex. At Ellendun (near Swindon) Egbert defeated Beornwulf "in one of the most decisive battles of Anglo-Saxon history"¹ and the supremacy of Mercia was ended for ever. Almost, we can say, Mercia passes from the pages of history.

Ceolwulf,
king of
Mercia,
821-823.

The years from 825 to 850 were marked by the consolidation of the power of Wessex. Cornwall had already been added to Wessex before the battle of Ellendun. Immediately afterwards Kent, Essex, Surrey and Sussex submitted to Egbert, and the East Anglians, already in revolt against Boernwulf, turned to Wessex for protection. Four years later Mercia itself was conquered by Egbert, and as a consequence Northumbria, presumably under threat of invasion, acknowledged Egbert's overlordship. These military triumphs were of unequal political significance. No effective suzerainty was asserted north of the Humber and Mercia itself regained political independence in 836. On the other hand, the conquests of Cornwall, Essex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex were permanent. Egbert is therefore important in our history not as being, in any sense at all, the creator of the English monarchy, but as the creator of that powerful southern English kingdom which provided the only effective resistance to the Danish

¹ Stenton, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

invaders during the period from 850, when the Danes first wintered in England, to the end of the century.

For this reason more credit is probably due to King Aethelwulf, who succeeded¹ to the throne of Wessex on the death of his father Ecgbert and reigned until 858, than historians have usually been willing to allow him. He did not regain the very nominal overlordship over all England which Ecgbert had won for a very brief period, but not only did he retain effective control over the enlarged kingdom of Wessex but he added to it what is now Berkshire, a territory long disputed between Mercia and Wessex. He also inflicted on the Danes in 851 their first severe defeat at the hands of an English king. In 850-1 a Danish army after wintering in Thanet had stormed Canterbury and London and driven out the king of Mercia. This army Aethelwulf decisively defeated somewhere south of the Thames, and from that time onward Wessex was pre-eminent and for most of the time alone in the long and bitter struggle against the invaders.

Aethelwulf,
king of
Wessex,
839-858.

Since their raids on Northumbria in 793, the Danes had been for forty years occupied on the Continent. They returned to England in 834 to raid Sheppey and in 836 to raid west Dorset. In 838 they joined forces with some rebel Cornishmen and were defeated at Hinxton Down by Ecgbert. This abortive raid had been followed by a last respite of eleven years. The Norsemen however are the dominant factor in our history from the time of their first winter in England in 850 until the date of the Norman Conquest.

They came first to our shores in relatively small numbers, but they dared all, and conquered all save the kings of Wessex. Unlike the Anglo-Saxons themselves, they brought their sheaves with them. The town life of England revived for the first time since Roman days. The Norsemen were, as an historical fact, more English than the English, which is another way of saying that we to-day are more Danish and Norman in our gifts and failings than Celtic or Anglo-Saxon. Animated by no higher motive than that of gain, the Norsemen conferred immense and lasting benefits on the lands in which they settled, and their ultimate triumph was that the most powerful but one of the pre-Conquest kings, far stronger than Alfred and possibly as strong as Athelstan, was a Dane elected king of England by the Witan itself. That was 160 years after

¹ See Appendix IIIb for a geneological table showing the succession of the English kings from Ecgbert to Edward the Confessor.

the time of Aethelwulf, but from the eleventh year of Aethelwulf's reign onwards, men of the Scandinavian race settled in our islands to become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Some of the most powerful and daring of our Norsemen came to us fifty years after the death of Cnut, not from Denmark but from Normandy, but the occupation of Normandy by their ancestors and ours was itself part of our English story. Rollo, the first duke of Normandy and ancestor of our conqueror, took his army to France from England.

To see in true perspective these centuries from the first wintering of the Danes in England in 850 to the coming of William of Normandy in 1066, we must distinguish the dynastic from the national history.

We can see the dynastic history, if we like, as a brilliant defensive campaign fought by Wessex, followed, after a short interval, by the reconquest of supremacy by the house of Cerdic, followed by the reconquest of England by the Danes and the peaceful election of a Danish king, followed by a second restoration of the old ruling house. Then comes, as a sudden catastrophe after so many escapes, the Norman Conquest. Much history has been written so, in which the advent of William of Normandy in 1066 appears as an unexpected and disastrous twist to the story just as the issue of the struggle seemed decided, a sort of "Cobden's over"¹ ending the long drawn-out match between Anglo-Saxons and Norsemen quite against all the odds and all the merits. Certainly it would be foolish to deny that history is nearly always unexpected to the actors and often inconsequent to the most trained observers. But the history of England tends to be the exception, because it is so often the result of the final working out of historical forces which have developed elsewhere. On the whole, this dynastic view of these troubled centuries is unhistorical.

It was not inevitable that the young, virile and warlike people of Norway and Denmark should expand north and west rather than south and east, but by the time of Egbert it had become inevitable, because of the northward expansion and consolidation of Charlemagne's Empire, and later, in the time of Cnut, because of the power of its successors, the German controlled Holy Roman Empire and the kingdom of France. The decisive factors in the middle of the ninth century were the over-population of Scandinavia and the incorporation of

¹ In 1870, Oxford playing Cambridge, wanting 179 runs to win, scored 176 for 7 wickets. Cobden's hat-trick gave Cambridge a sensational victory by two runs.

Frisia and Saxony in the Carolingian Empire by Charlemagne.

The Scandinavians of the eighth and ninth centuries were a patriarchal people, farmers living in stone houses by the shores of the great fjords in a land rich in corn and cattle, men of daring by land and sea, independent and adventurous. But they were essentially colonisers and traders rather than pirates, and for all the desolation of their own lands and the hardships of their lives, they were townsmen by inclination. They would have liked to have settled in what is now Holland and North Germany, predestined centres of seaborne commerce. When these lands were closed to them they looked elsewhere. Those who lived in what is now Sweden looked east across the Baltic to the north of the Vistula and were destined, later in the ninth century, to become the founders of the Russian state. Those on the North Sea coastline looked necessarily west.

Their expansion followed two clearly defined routes. One route, from west Norway, took the first wave of Viking settlers to the Shetlands, the Orkneys, Iona and Ireland. Turgeis of Norway conquered the north of Ireland in 834 and by 853 Olaf of Norway was ruling at Dublin. The second route was followed by the Danes and took them also down the Channel to Ireland in 849, where they were called by the Irish the Black Strangers. In contradistinction to them were the White Strangers, the Norwegians, who ruled in the north of Ireland and eventually won the struggle for supremacy. For the Danes this was an isolated misadventure. The main objective of the Danes and southern Norwegians who followed the southern route were the estuaries of the Rhine, the Seine, the Garonne, the Thames and the Humber. In 810, 200 Danish ships raided the Frisian coast and exacted tribute. In 834 the Danes for the first time reached the city of Dorestad, the great trading centre not far from Utrecht. In 841 they first sailed up the Seine and it was perhaps the same fleet which raided London the next year. In 844 they sailed up the upper reaches of the Garonne and raided the Spanish coast. In 845 they sacked Paris and were bought off by Charles the Bald with 7000 pounds weight of silver. In 850 they wintered in Thanet, ravaging the country the following year.

Danes in
Ireland,
834-853.

Danes in
France,
841-845.

Danes in
Thanet,
850.

The background to these amazing adventures is the disorder within the Empire itself. Louis the Pious, who succeeded Charlemagne in 814, had three sons, Louis, Lothair, and Pepin, and by his second marriage in 819 had a fourth son, known to history as Charles the Bald. Under Frankish custom the

Disintegration
of Carolingian
Empire,
814-887.

Empire would be divided on the death of Louis between all the sons. The first plan of partition, arranged at Aix in 817, was nullified by the birth of Charles the Bald. In 830, fearing that the mother of Charles and her relatives were getting too influential, two of his elder sons revolted against Louis the Pious and he was deposed. Restored in 831, Louis the Pious was again deposed in 832 and remained in captivity until 835. That was the year of the Viking raid on Dorestad. In 840 Louis died and the Empire at once broke up. That was the year of the first raid on the Seine. In 843, after a successful war by Louis the German, so-called because he succeeded to the German portion of the Carolingian Empire, and Charles the Bald against Lothair, the partition of the Empire was finally agreed by the three brothers at Verdun.¹ The effect of the partition of Verdun on the world of that day is suggested in a poem composed in 843 by Florus of Lyons, two lines of which are worthy of remembrance:

Pro rege est regulus, pro regno fragmina regni,
Et nunc tantus apex tanto de culmine lapsus.

It was, as it happened, a prophetic summary. The broad consequences of the Verdun partition have dominated history to our own day.

The Empire of Charlemagne had covered most of what is to-day France, Belgium, Holland, East Germany, Bohemia, Austria and North Italy. The partition, fully in accordance as it was with the custom of the time, came just before something akin to national sentiment was to begin to develop; the consequence of separating much of what is now France from the German lands and leaving in between the two a disputed territory happened for this reason to be decisive. At its widest this middle kingdom included much of what is now eastern France and the mouth of the Rhine: at its least it was only Lorraine (*Lotharii regnum*, the kingdom of Lothair). Here we have the fateful beginnings of an age-long problem, the need for a secure and permanent frontier between France and Germany and the need for a secure and neutral state to control the mouth of the Rhine. Unfortunately, the effect of creating a buffer state between the western and eastern portions of Charlemagne's Empire was that every threat from without to either portion gave the ruler of the other the chance to upset the balance of power. He could either seize the intermediate

¹ The fourth brother, Pepin, had died before the Emperor himself.

territory or, more often than not, ally himself with the ruler of the central territory and levy blackmail. Unrivalled opportunities were thus offered to the Scandinavians in the west, the Bulgars, Hungarians and Slavs in the east, and the Saracens in the south to extend and consolidate their power on the fringes of Charlemagne's Empire. It was hardly a mere coincidence that, in 845, less than two years after the Verdun treaty, Ragnar the Viking entered Paris. It was certainly no coincidence that, in 846, the Saracens, who had landed in Sicily in 827, sacked Rome. Nowhere did the partition of the Empire have more permanent and worse effect than in Italy, already weakened by Lombard intrigues. From the second half of this century, as a consequence of the political chaos in Italy, we must date a decline in the influence and power of the papacy, which lasted, with few and only brief intervals, until nearly the middle of the eleventh century.

The final disruption of the Carolingian Empire took place in 887. From 843 to 884, Charlemagne's Empire, following on the partitions, had been divided and torn by the family quarrels of the Carolingians, but for three brief years from 884 Charles the Fat found himself, by a series of chances, ruler of the whole of the original inheritance. In 887 Count Odo, the ancestor of the Capetian dynasty, became king of France: Arnulf of Bavaria, a Carolingian, became king of Germany, and north Italy fell to Berengar of Trieste. All were Frankish noblemen, and other Franks had established themselves as petty kings in Burgundy and Provence. This final disruption was the direct result of the prevailing anarchy in western Europe due largely to the Viking invasions and of the centrifugal pull of the frontiers urgently needing defence against the Vikings in France and Flanders, the Saracens in Italy and the Slavs on the eastern frontier of Germany. Out of the need for this defence, the separate national consciousness of the French, the German and the Italian peoples very gradually developed.

The period from 887 to 987 was in France one of unbroken anarchy with the power alternately in the hands of the effete legitimate Carolingians and the upstart but powerful house of Capet. It was in the course of this struggle and because of it that Charles the Simple, a Carolingian king, established Duke Rollo and his Norsemen in Normandy in 911. To this event, as much as to any Anglo-Saxon prowess, we probably owe the temporary reconquest of Scandinavian England which began in the same year.

Charles
the Fat,
Emperor,
877-887.

E. Franks,
882-7.

W. Franks,
884-7.

Charles
the
Simple,
893-929

Conrad I,
911-18.

Henry I
919-36.

Otto I,
936-73.

Otto III,
983-1002.

Henry II,
1002-24.

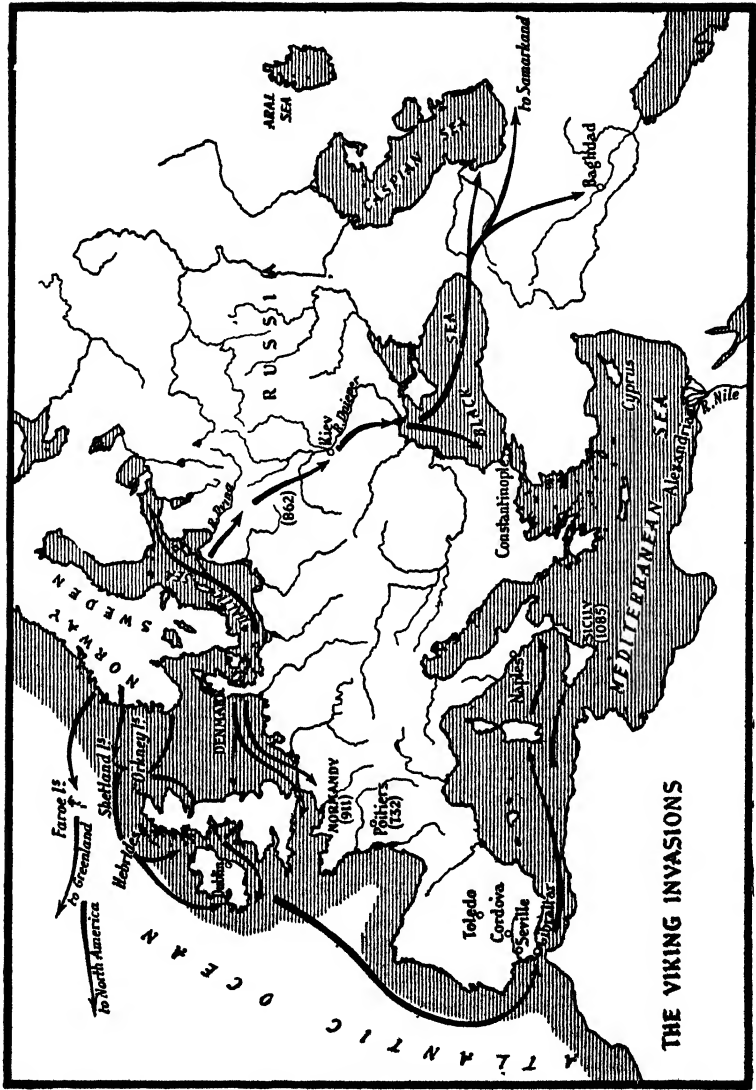
Conrad II,
1024-39.

Pope
Sylvester,
II,
999-1003.

Henry III,
1039-56.

We must read our own tangled story, from the coming of the Danes in 850 to the eleventh century, against the background of a European anarchy to which the only exception was to be provided, and that not until 911, by the Holy Roman Empire. From that date there was a succession of strong German emperors: Conrad of Franconia; Henry of Saxony (Henry the Fowler, whose son Otto took as his first wife the daughter of our King Athelstan); Otto of Saxony (Otto the Great); Otto II (who died at the age of 28 in 983); Otto III; Henry II; Conrad II and Henry III. Not, however, till the time of Otto the Great was there any real renewal of the Imperial authority outside Germany itself, and not until Conrad II and Henry III can we see any real restoration of the rule of law in central and southern Europe. Not until Gerbert of Aurillac became Pope in 999 do we find a worthy successor to the throne of Gregory the Great, and not until the reign of Henry III do we get a succession of strong Popes capable of asserting effectively and continuously the authority of the moral law in secular affairs. Henry III was the immediate creator of the mediaeval papacy.

The truth is that, in the ninth and tenth centuries, the mediaeval system was coming to birth very slowly and painfully. The barbarian invasions which had swept over the frontiers of the old Roman Empire in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries had been followed by a false dawn. The world had seemed, at the time of Charlemagne, to be set on the path to progress. There was, however, no social or economic structure capable of giving secure fulfilment to the dreams of idealists. In an age where there is no secure property there is no stable power. Power had to be created by the creation of secure property rights and then those who enjoyed those rights had to be bound together by a compelling common interest. Such a common interest is to-day often provided by war or the danger of war, but it would be a grotesque anachronism to read the history of the ninth and tenth centuries thus. The Scandinavian invasions of Ireland, the Low Countries, France and England; the Saracen invasions of Italy and the Hungarian invasion of the Empire were not so many spurs to united effort, but so many opportunities offered to ambitious princelings or dukes or mere knights to aggrandise themselves at the expense of their neighbours or their nominal sovereign himself. This was not mere wickedness; indeed, it was not wickedness at all. The sovereigns of the Dark Ages had not



THE VIKING INVASIONS

learnt that sovereignty carries the obligation of service to the community. We see this clearly from the way in which territories whose unity was natural alike in terms of geography and economics were habitually partitioned under family settlements which totally disregarded the interests of the inhabitants. Only slowly did the kings come to learn that the price of sovereignty was the maintenance of an order based not on the rule of the temporarily stronger over the temporarily weaker, but on the effective defence of the rights of the weak against the strong. And only slowly did they realise the immense price which effective sovereignty could exact for its services, always provided that the services were really performed.

Nowhere were defects of leadership and loyalty to be more clearly marked than in England in the years which followed Aethelwulf's victory over the Danes in 851. In 854 the Danes wintered in Sheppey and Aethelwulf seems to have regarded their return as a visitation on the English people for their sins rather than as a call to further action. In 853 he had sent his youngest son Alfred, then aged four, to Rome to receive the Pope's blessing. In 855 he went there himself on a pilgrimage after giving a tenth of his lands to the Church. It seems clear that his absence led at once to disorder and a party of nobles led by Aethelwulf's eldest son, Aethelbald, appear to have seized the kingdom and to have tried to prevent Aethelwulf's return. On his way back from Rome the king had stayed at the court of Charles the Bald and had there married Charles's thirteen-year-old daughter, Judith. This marriage seems to have shocked public opinion and strengthened the position of the rebels. For a moment it looked as if the great kingdom of Wessex was, like the greater Carolingian inheritances, to be torn to pieces by family feuds just in the hour of greatest danger. This disaster was avoided only by the magnanimity of Aethelwulf who, with what Asser, Alfred's biographer, calls "wonderful forbearance," divided the kingdom with his son. Aethelwulf himself died in 858 and Aethelbald in 860, when Wessex was reunited under Aethelbald's brother, Aethelbert. According to Asser, Alfred and Aethelred, the younger brothers, deliberately refrained from raising any claim to share the kingdom, and Alfred continued to accept this position when Aethelbert died and Aethelred succeeded in 865. We can thus see early at work that very exceptional attitude towards kingship which was to make the reign of Alfred the

Aethelwulf
defeats
Danes,
851.

Aethelbald, king,
858-60.

Aethelbert, king,
860-65.

Aethelred,
king,
865-871.

THE GREAT ARMY IN EAST ANGLIA

Great one of the most notable in all our history. Indeed, if we are justified, as we probably are, in attributing to the influence of Alfred himself the reunion of Wessex in 860, we can say that he had exercised a decisive influence on the world's history eleven years before he succeeded to the throne. Without a strong and united Wessex there would never have been a united Anglo-Saxon kingdom and the consequences would have stretched down to our own times. Outside Wessex, divide and be conquered was the only axiom of politics consistently applied by Anglo-Saxon rulers in the ninth century.

The war between Anglo-Saxons and Danes entered on its decisive political phase in 865 when the so-called great army landed in East Anglia. For two generations, England had lived in constant fear of the Danish raiders, but they had been raiders engaged on isolated enterprises anxious for booty to take back to their own lands. Now the great army had come to stay. The whole of north-western Europe was in a state of anarchy at this date. There had been civil wars in Denmark, and about 854 all the members of the royal house had been killed save for one boy who became king as Horic II. At the same time, the sons of Ragnar Lothbrok, the most famous of the contemporary Viking leaders, come upon the scene as the commanders of great armies intent on winning permanent bases in England and France from which they could systematically ravage the surrounding country until the rulers "bought peace" from them. Later they were to settle numerous chieftains and men of their armies on the lands they had conquered and we must assume that this was the intention of the leaders of the great army from the very beginning. Evidently conditions in Denmark had for the time placed the great adventurers in control of the resources of their country and the swords of its petty kings and nobles and they seized the moment to embark on a career of conquest directed to permanent settlement. Few of the great army which landed in England in 865 ever returned to Denmark. Their descendants are living in England and in Normandy to this day and their very names are revealed in the names of countless of our villages and families.

The Great Army landed in East Anglia, under the command, we may believe, of Ivan and Halfdan, two of the sons of Ragnar. The army had set sail from Frisia, where some Danes had received permission from the Emperor to settle. Edmund, king of East Anglia, bought peace, and the army, after staying for twelve months living on the country and collecting horses

to mount their troops, moved to York and entered it on November 1st, 867. There they stayed for four months while the Northumbrians were finishing a civil war. At last, on March 21st, 868, the Northumbrians, under both claimants to the throne, attacked and were defeated. Both kings were killed, and the historic sub-kingdom of Deira came to an inglorious end. The northern kingdom of Bernicia survived as an independent dukedom of Bamborough, to play a dubious part in the intrigues of Scot, Dane, Celt and Saxon which make up the history of northern England from this time until the Norman Conquest.

Death of
Edmund,
martyr,
868.

The winter of 868 was spent by the Danes in Mercia, where the army made its headquarters at Nottingham, and the Mercians, like Edmund of East Anglia, bought peace. The next winter was spent at York and the following winter at Thetford. In 868 they fought and defeated King Edmund. Edmund was killed on November 20. He died a martyr, according to very early tradition, and in later years gave his name to the great abbey at Bury St. Edmund's, where his relics were preserved.

Alfred the
Great,
871-899.

During these years Aethelred was king of Wessex, but the only military action we hear of is an abortive attempt by him and his brother Alfred to organise the defence of Mercia in 867. In 870 the Great Army moved from Thetford to Reading, and the first battle between Alfred and the Danes took place on the Ashdown Ridge in central Berkshire. Aethelred was still king, and commanded one wing of the Saxon army; Alfred the other. They won a definite but quite unimportant victory, and only a fortnight later the brothers were defeated at Basing. In April, 871, Aethelred died, and Alfred was at once recognised by the nobles of Wessex as his successor, although Aethelred had left children.

The beginning of Alfred's reign was neither fortunate nor glorious. The Danes held Reading and after a number of inconclusive skirmishes, Alfred was defeated at Wilton and after various minor engagements proceeded to buy peace. The Danes, under Halfdan, retired to London, and in the following winter the Mercians also bought peace. The Danes remained in London for some years. Pennies and halfpennies bearing Halfdan's name were struck in London from this time. The main Danish army, however, only spent the winter of 871-2 in London. In 872, after a brief and ineffective campaign in Northumbria, which was, as usual, in revolt, the army wintered at Torksey on the Trent, when the Mercians and the men of

THE DANES "DIVIDE THE LAND"

Lindsey bought peace. Late in 873 the army moved to Repton and as a consequence the Mercian king Burgred left the country. A thegn called Ceolwulf was installed by the Danes as a puppet ruler in his place; a "foolish thegn," the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle mildly calls him. To-day we should call him a traitor, but the writers of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, albeit contemporaries, saw no moral wrong in Ceolwulf's action. He was merely foolish to imagine that he could maintain himself successfully against the Danish pressure. So it proved when, three years later, half the Mercian kingdom was divided among the Danish army.

Meanwhile the Great Army, after nine years of campaigning, split in two, and half went north under Halfdan to the mouth of the Tyne. After a year's campaigning against the Picts and the Scots, Halfdan proceeded in 876 to settle his army in what is now Yorkshire, where he divided the land. The remainder of the Danes, under Guthrum, attacked Wessex intermittently and inconclusively, although they forced Alfred to buy peace, and then proceeded in 877 to the division of an important part of Mercia. The region partitioned contained certainly what are now the shires of Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby and Leicester.

After their division of the land, which implied the settlement of large bodies of Danish soldiers on English farms, there was, perhaps, less than a third of the original Great Army in the field. It was this fraction under Guthrum which Alfred defeated at Edington, fifteen miles south of the Danish camp of Chippenham, in the summer of 878. The victory was not decisive in a military sense. Guthrum was baptised, but the Danes not only retained their arms but were allowed unimpeded to move next year to East Anglia and to occupy and "divide" that territory.

Battle of
Edington,
878.

But Alfred had saved his throne.

This is a favourable moment at which to take stock of the Danish invasion and its immediate consequences.

We cannot dismiss the idea that this was a national movement. There is evidence of a unified command and continuous support from Denmark. If Halfdán and his brothers were not recognised national leaders they were merchant adventurers and privateers who enjoyed the fullest support from their fellow countrymen. What distinguishes the Danes from most conquerors, and above all from their own descendants, the Normans of 1066, is that, while they wished and intended to

settle in the lands they conquered, they had no political ambitions. Tenacious, as we shall see, of their right to local government and to preserve their own customs, they never at any time attempted the political control of England. It is extremely doubtful if even the lands they themselves occupied were ever politically united.

Perhaps because they were hampered by no complex political ambitions, the Danes were supremely successful. The reason why they suffered so few defeats was that they knew always where to stop. It has been suggested¹ that the Danes suffered three decisive military defeats, at Edington (878), Paris (885-6) and Dyle near Louvain (891), and that by this last date, when the Danes resumed their attacks on England, the Vikings had definitely failed to secure political control over England, France and the Low Countries. This view needs qualification. No defeat could for the Viking be decisive because his objectives were not military-political. The sequel to the defeat of Edington was the settlement of East Anglia. The sequel to the defeats of Paris and of Dyle was a threat born of a memory. Out of that threat came the cession of Normandy to Duke Rollo less than 20 years later. The great captains, Alexander, Marc Antony, Cæsar, Belisarius, Alba, Condé, Turenne, Berwick, Marlborough, Napoleon and Wellington, had, or imposed on themselves, essentially political missions. They aimed at preserving or acquiring the immediate reality of political power for themselves or for the states or coalitions which they ruled or served. To them a defeat was a dead loss. The fruits of power were denied in such a place or for such a time. The methods of the colonising races, the Romans of the Augustan tradition, the Danes, the Spanish, the Dutch and the English are different. To the colonising race, battles are merely incidents. The Danes, like the modern English, among whose ancestors they must be certainly numbered, could almost always use a defeat as well as a victory in their campaigns of intimidation, appeasement and colonisation. The reason was that they never sought political aggrandisement. They were anxious to secure the right to settle, which in practice meant the right to exercise some local jurisdiction, much nearer to what we call to-day extra-territorial rights, than to political sovereignty as we understand it. They never wished for sovereignty and when, as in England, they won it, they quickly surrendered it. One group of the Great Army installed an

¹ By Alan Mawer. C.M.H., Vol. 3, Ch. XIII, p. 322.

THE DANISH SETTLEMENTS

Anglo-Saxon, Ecgbert, as a vassal-king of Northumbria. A second group divided Mercia between themselves and Ceolwulf. Guthrum's army willingly gave up their claims on Wessex to settle in East Anglia. In other words, these were all trade treaties. Guthrum readily swore to assist no other Danes in their raids on Wessex. There is no evidence that he was even actively allied with his compatriots in Mercia or Northumbria. Each group had made its own bargain with the Anglo-Saxons and they and the Anglo-Saxons were alike content.

What manner of men were these Danes; what was the character and quality of their civilisation; and in what numbers did they settle among us?

We must go outside England for evidence on some of these questions. In England itself we have the evidence of Danish names and Danish customs north of the Welland, but with one possible exception,¹ no evidence of more than slight modifications of the very fluid political organisation of Anglo-Saxon England which we have already described. We cannot say that this or that political institution or legal custom came with the Danes. On the social and economic structure, on the other hand, of the whole of England north of the Welland, the Danes left an enduring mark. This is all the more remarkable because it must be accepted that the original settlements were military in character. The Danish colonies were settlements of military detachments under the rule of an army leader with his headquarters in a burh or fortified town. The evidence of place names tells us that the Scandinavian colonisation "in certain regions such as the east of Lindsey, the centre of Kesteven, the Wreak valley in Leicestershire and the North Riding of Yorkshire, must have overwhelmed the native English population."² The settlements in north-western England are later in date than the time of the great army and are due to Norwegian invasions from Ireland at the beginning of the tenth century; with this exception, the Scandinavian colonisation of the north and the midlands was, by and large, achieved by the division of land among the men of the Great Army.

Many of the native English must have been expropriated, but many remained both as peasants in the country and in the towns. Most of the Danish burhs were established as small trading centres before the Danes arrived. The manorial centres

¹ The Jury of Presentment.

² Stenton, *The Danes in England*. Oxford, 1927.

of the great estates of the mediaeval Danelaw mainly bear, unlike the villages, names of English origin, and we must here assume that the English great men were turned out and that the leaders of the armies of settlement took their place. The distinctive feature of the Danelaw, however, was not the manor but the freeholding peasant accepting a lord's jurisdiction but owing him no service duties. This submission to jurisdiction was, it is believed, the civil equivalent of the disciplinary obligations of the soldier to the army leader. The holdings of this free peasantry, whom we shall find appearing in Domesday as freemen in East Anglia and as sokemen in the Midlands and in Yorkshire, were relatively small and did not on the average exceed twenty or thirty acres, but their owners were free of manorial discipline and paid their own taxes. The existence of this large body of peasant proprietors largely independent of seignorial control had a determining effect on the character of English institutions. As we come nearer the borders of Wessex, so in the later centuries the conditions of the Danish settlers came to be assimilated more nearly to the later English pattern, but in the midlands, the eastern counties and the north this was not so. The free peasantry became reduced in numbers, at any rate relatively, but many of them remained until the enclosures of the eighteenth century, and to that important extent our English economy is different from what it would have been had the Danes not settled in our country.

Yet England owes perhaps most of all to the individual Danish capacity for town life and agricultural development. It was the men themselves who left the greatest mark on our history. We can see them best in their native surroundings and literature.

Their standard of material civilisation was high. The finds at Oseberg (on the Vestfold side of the Oslo fjord) illustrate their skill at shipbuilding, in carving and in the making of furniture and household goods. Yet the background to these finds is grim and barbaric. The Oseberg ship was the burial place of a great lady, possibly a queen. In the boat, with the queen, were placed her beds, her sledges, kitchen utensils and a chariot. "Certainly," writes R. H. Hodgkin, "we leave the Oseberg ship with a vivid sense of the barbaric beauty of the dead queen's belongings, of the ingenuity and vigour of her craftsmen, of the colour and gorgeousness of this Norse society, where the chief men and their womenfolk could appear

in silks and gold-embroidered clothes imported from the south, or in homespun brilliant with blue, red, yellow and dark green dyes; with massive gold and silver rings round their arms and necks, and with heavy tortoise-shaped brooches holding their mantles on the shoulder. We carry away a sense that the gaudiness and variety of their outward display and the vigour of their art illustrate what has been called the 'buoyancy and unrest in the very soul of the nation.'¹

Yet the soul was emphatically barbaric. In the queen's honour or to accompany her on her last journey, were sacrificed thirteen horses, six dogs and one woman. (It is interesting to note in passing that human sacrifice continued in Sweden into the thirteenth century.)

The Oseberg ship is a state barge. Another ship unearthed in a mound at Gokstad and built probably about A.D. 900 gives a direct answer to some other questions. The Gokstad ship found in the same area is clinker built with an external keel and a strong frame with a block into which a mast can be fitted. Eighty feet long, it has sixteen oars a-side and a rudder blade with a tiller. The crew may well have numbered fifty or sixty and fleets of 350 ships, such as we read of in Aethelwulf's time in 851, must have carried at least 15,000 men. The ship contained a chest for arms, and each man had space for a small box for his own possessions, or, more likely, for his share of the spoil. These ships were eminently seaworthy. A reproduction of the Gokstad ship sailed across the Atlantic in 1893 in four weeks, often making 10 or 11 knots. At the same time the ships were built to be beached on any shore and light enough to be hauled overland. They were the decisive military invention of the ninth century and solved in terms of the warfare of those days the eternal military problem of giving mobility to mass.

The Viking civilisation was at once highly-coloured, masculine and calculating. The appearance of these brightly-painted ships, with their striped red and white sails, the great dragon heads at their prows, the coloured pennants streaming from their mast-heads and the brilliant shields of the raiders hanging over the gunwales, must have been an inspiration to the Vikings themselves and a source of awe to their victims. The Viking had an instinct for pageantry combined with a sense of discipline. The Anglo-Saxon had very little of either. This most striking and rather poignant contrast is seen when

¹ *R. H. Hodgkin, op. cit., p. 500.*

we compare the court of Alfred and his patient Christian ideals with that of Harold Fairhair in Norway, who united all Norway for the first time at the close of the ninth century. "Very magnificent," says a contemporary poet, "is the life enjoyed by the glorious champions who play chess at Harold's court. They are enriched with money and with splendid swords, with gold and with girls from the East." Here were also splendidly apparelled poets, jesters and jugglers and much luxury, enviable and brilliant. "Fashions have been copied from the courts of the Franks and of the English. Silks have been imported from the Orient, weapons and armour from the Rhinelands. Everything is gay with the bright colours and the gilt of the Viking age. The fighting men are not allowed to marry, but their generous lord has organised prostitution as he has organised amusements. Hence it was that 'those only became guardsmen to King Harold who were foremost in strength or courage or most skilled: with such only was his ship manned, for he had now good choice of men to pick out for his bodyguard from every folk.'

"Harold's court was assuredly either the model or the copy of the Northman's Valhalla. As in the days of Tacitus, perfect idleness alternated with frenzies of energy, blood-lust, battle. The delights of the court were those of the senses. But the ideal of hardihood—this ideal which we have recognised as one main product of the Viking age—was expressed in a new deliberation. The king's poets encouraged the king's warriors to despise the allurements of peace, the indolence and luxury of life indoors. The man who was indeed a man sought adventure on the sea even in the storms of winter."¹

Alfred too had sought adventure and endured the storms of winter. He was a true Norseman in his love of hunting, in his courage and craft in war. But he was, we must realise, at once a lonely and a divided man. His effort to rally Wessex was a brave but a desperate one, and when the Danes established their camp at Chippenham and Alfred withdrew to the Athelney Marshes he was to all intents but an *émigré* king preserving the bare appearances of power in an unfriendly if not actively hostile world.

Then came Edington and the capitulation of Guthrum, not a military defeat but a traders' bargain. Guthrum probably kept London when he divided East Anglia. Alfred's reign as king of Wessex only became a reality in 879, and his hold over

¹ Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, Vol. II., p. 691.

ALFRED REGAINS LONDON

southern England only became secure when he recovered London and married his daughter Aethelfleda to Aethelred, the under-king of what was left of Mercia after Ceolwulf's "folly." In the same year he made his formal treaty with Guthrum. We must read these three events as inter-related but we know little or nothing of the military events which made them possible.

All that is certain is that in 884 a new force of Danish raiders from overseas besieged Rochester and that some of Guthrum's Danes north of the Thames "broke peace" and joined the new invaders, who were nevertheless defeated, and fled to their ships. The sequel was the formal division of England between Alfred and the Danes, probably in 886. The Danes recognised Alfred as ruler of London and the other unoccupied portions of Mercia. Alfred recognised the Danes as the *de jure* rulers of England north of the new frontier, which followed the Thames up to its junction with the Lea, the Lea to its source, and thence in a straight line to Bedford. From Bedford the Ouse formed the frontier to the point where it is crossed by Watling Street. Beyond this point, apparently, Watling Street formed the western boundary of Guthrum's country. Probably Guthrum's northern boundary was formed by the Avon and the Welland, Leicester being the centre of one independent Danish kingdom and York of another. The form of the treaty indicates, however, that it was a determination not so much of Danish as of Anglo-Saxon territory. The prize which Alfred got for the final cession of East Anglia and half of Mercia was London, and this prize he took to himself by the equally formal abolition of Mercian independence. Aethelred of Mercia, whatever his status up to 886, was not a signatory to the treaty with Guthrum.

Treaty of
Wedmore,
886.

Wessex now stood alone. All that was England was preserved within the boundaries of Alfred's kingdom. But Alfred's Wessex was merely the nucleus of a potentially great kingdom. Winchester was ill-suited to be the capital and was quickly eclipsed by London, the inevitable centre of the lowland zone. In the end, he who rules London rules England. That is a necessity of geography, which the Danes, for all their power and administrative gifts, were not to escape. We must assume that Alfred was aware of this, because the last twenty years of his reign were marked by the systematic reorganisation of the sea and land defences of his kingdom. But he had no appetite himself for the task of offensive warfare. He never recaptured

Death of
Alfred,
899.

the initiative which the Danes had held since 850, and when he died in 899, he left England, which had been for a few years united under his grandfather Ecgbert, for the first time since Roman days, more deeply divided than at any time before or since.

Alfred's heart lay elsewhere. His shrewd courage made him a match, if no more than a match, for the Danes alike in diplomacy and war. But as a reformer, a scholar, an historian and a legislator he stands out from the long line of our English kings, solitary, rather sad, and altogether noble.

The clues to his character and his achievement are to be found in this, that his natural gifts were those of the soldier-politician while his conscience directed him rather to the Church, the library and the desk. "No other king of the Dark Ages ever set himself, like Alfred, to explore whatever in the literature of Christian antiquity might explain the problem of fate and free will, the divine purpose in the ordering of the world, and the ways by which a man may come to knowledge."¹ Alfred's achievement is all the more remarkable because, at the age of twelve, owing to the interruption of his education by the confusion of the first Danish wars, he was still ignorant of reading, and as late as 887, according to Asser, his biographer, he was ignorant of Latin. In 892 his studies were interrupted by another Danish invasion. Yet before his death in 899 he had translated five major Latin works into English.

Bishop
Asser,
d. 909.

Alfred's biographer, Asser, was a monk of St. David's who became bishop of Sherborne. A close personal friend, he spent six months each year at Alfred's palace. A naïve but revealing passager in Asser's "Life" throws light upon the type of Alfred's scholarship and incidentally is an amusing example of the early use of loose-leaf note-taking. Asser writes:

"On a certain day we were both sitting in the King's chamber, talking on all kinds of subjects as usual, and it happened that I read to him a quotation out of a certain book. He heard it attentively with both his ears, showing me at the same moment a book which he carried in his bosom, wherein the daily courses and psalms which he had read in his youth were written. He commanded me to write the same quotation in that book but I could not find any empty space. Upon his urging me to make haste and write it quickly, I said to him, 'Are you willing that I should write that quotation on some

¹ Stenton, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

ALFRED'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

leaf apart, for it is not certain whether we shall not find one or more other such extracts which will please you and if that should happen, we shall be glad that we have kept them apart?' 'Your plan is good,' he said, and I gladly made haste to get ready a sheet and on the same day I wrote therein no less than three other quotations which pleased him."

Alfred worked with a purpose, explained in his preface to his translation of Gregory the Great's *Cura Pastoralis*. In this preface, addressed to Werferth, bishop of Worcester, he contrasts the ignorance of the clergy when he came to the throne with the "wise men there formerly were among the English race both of the sacred order and the secular . . . and the sacred orders how zealous they were in both teaching and learning." The contemporary ignorance was, according to Alfred, abysmal, and there is good evidence to support him in the denunciations of Pope John VIII (in 877) of Fulco, archbishop of Rheims, who writes of the "ignorance and riotous living of the English clergy," and of Pope Formosus,¹ who uses even stronger language, speaking of "abominable pagan rites" and of ineffectual bishops like "dumb dogs who cannot bark." Indeed, monastic life, according to Asser, Alfred's biographer, had "utterly died out."

Werferth,
bishop,
873-915.

Alfred was, however, no monastic reformer. He founded only two monasteries, Athelney and Hyde Abbey, later called the New Minster, at Winchester, where he was buried, and a house of nuns at Shaftesbury. He translated the *Cura Pastoralis* to inspire the bishops to educate all the *élite* of the nation. He hoped by means of his other translations to enable the ealdormen, reeves and thegns of the next generation to acquire the rudiments of education in history and philosophy, the knowledge of which was until then confined, throughout the western world, to the priestly class who could read Latin, and which therefore tended to die out completely whenever wars and ravages interrupted the studies of the priests and destroyed the monastic libraries. This had actually happened in Alfred's lifetime, and it is probable that its ill consequences had come about in the course of one generation. There is evidence that the generation which grew up in the earlier years of the ninth century, at any rate in Mercia, had been by no means illiterate. Werferth, one of Alfred's principal collabo-

¹ This letter survives only in a later transcript and is in part a forgery, but there is no reason to doubt the main part of the text.

rators in his studies, was a Mercian, consecrated bishop in 873. Yet Werferth must have shared Alfred's views of clerical ignorance at the end of the ninth century, for it cannot have been against his wishes that the translation of the *Cura Pastoralis* with the prefatory letter, addressed to himself, was circulated to all the bishops.

Alfred's next great undertaking was his translation¹ of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and he followed it by a translation and amplification of the seven books of Orosius's history from the creation to the year 407. The purpose of Orosius in writing his history and of Alfred in translating it was the same. The history sets out to reveal the ways of God to man, and in particular the greater happiness enjoyed by the human race in Christian lands since the coming of Christ. Orosius and Bede were to give the budding Anglo-Saxon statesmen the historical background necessary to the conduct of public affairs. For the conduct of their private lives they were to read Boethius's *Consolations of Philosophy* and the *Soliloquies of St. Augustine*, the last being in fact an anthology of passages from Augustine's writings and from those of his commentators on the subject of immortality and the growth in the soul of the knowledge of God.

Alfred was not prepared for his labour to be wasted. He founded a school at his own court where the sons of nobles from all over his kingdom attended, together with his own sons, and in his letter to Werferth he put before him the ideal that "all the youth of freemen which now is in England, who are rich enough to be able to devote themselves to it, be set to learn as long as they are not fit for any other occupation."

The sentence is of interest not only because it outlines the first somewhat modest educational programme in English political history, but for the light it throws, as it seems to the present writer, on the much disputed clause in Alfred's last treaty with Guthrum in 886, which fixed the wergeld of Danish and English nobles, of Danish freemen and English ceorls farming their own land, at eight half marks of pure gold but equated the Anglo-Saxon ceorl on gafol land, whose wergeld was 200 shillings with the Danish freedman. Alfred, in his letter to Werferth, was not proposing, in an age of desperate and almost continuous warfare, to inaugurate a

¹ Possibly Alfred only arranged for the translation which may be, in part at least, by another hand.

scheme of universal education, chattel slaves alone exempted. Free though all the ceorls were, Alfred's letter to Werferth does not refer to them all. It manifestly refers only to the gentry, and I take it also as self-evident that the term freedman as applied to the Danes is not used technically to refer to manumitted slaves but to the rank and file of the Danish army newly settled on English land as opposed to the Danish leaders, who ranked with the Anglo-Saxon thegns or ceorls with five hides or more of their own land. Alfred indeed, according to Asser, was admittedly concerned only with the education of the clergy, the ealdormen, the reeves and the thegns, a phrase which if translated into the idiom of to-day would have to read, the clergy, the great nobles, the high officials and the country gentlemen. Education, in other words, was to be confined to those classes which, as Asser himself tells us that, next to the king, "had all power in the kingdom."

This was the reverse of democracy, but, nevertheless, it marked a great constitutional advance in Alfred's reign. A theory of sovereignty came to birth, a hierarchy of authority was not only set up but enforced, and its agents were made and held responsible for the justice of their acts. Alfred took powers in his laws to exact from immoral noblemen the forfeiture of their estates and to put to death all men who failed in their allegiance to their lord. The lord must be worthy, and the lord's men must be faithful.

There is nothing in Alfred's laws which altered the social structure of the State or gave new powers to the monarchy. His positive enactments merely impose new penalties for breaches of loyalty and good faith as between man and man (oaths and contracts), between each man and his lord, and between each lord and the king (Alfred's law of treason), and extend the old penalties to breaches of the moral law. It is clear none the less that the very solemnity of his publication of the laws and his constant vigilance over all those who had to enforce them, were facts of great constitutional importance. While the monarchy in France was dissolving and the Empire in Germany was hardly established, the English monarchy was growing in power. Legislation by the Crown and the delegation of its enforcement to a nobility nominally at least subject to the Crown begins to be from Alfred's time an English custom.

It was the void always felt, after Alfred's time, when the monarchy was weak that made possible first the seizure

of the kingship by the Danes and secondly the coming of William the Conqueror. Alfred was scrupulous always to consult and to refer to his Witan. But by making the monarchy as a local institution work, he made it indispensable, and, in the long run, equally so to all races and classes within the boundaries of what is to-day England. In that indirect and certainly unintended way he is the founder of the English monarchy. But not otherwise. Politically the history of united England only begins with his death in 899.

Alfred's positive reforms were concerned with war on land and, most notably, at sea; they had no political intention. He saw that the Anglo-Saxon militia was useless against the mounted professional soldiers opposed to it. He saw the need for fortifications for local defences, and the simultaneous need for a long service army. His first step was to create a chain of burhs round the frontiers of his kingdom and covering the main communications across it. To each burh was ascribed a number of hides, "denoting the size of the district of which it was the military centre."¹ To create military centres was no doubt Alfred's purpose, but the final result was not a fortress but a country town on the Frankish model which itself was an inheritance from the Roman Empire.

Alfred fortified or re-fortified such old Roman towns as Chichester, Winchester, Bath, Dorchester and Exeter; old Anglo-Saxon settlements such as Hastings, Wilton, Shaftesbury, Watlingford, Malmesbury; and other places such as Oxford, Buckingham and Worcester, which were equally destined to become country towns. There is contemporary evidence that one at least of these burhs, Worcester, was a township deliberately created for the military protection of the surrounding district and to provide a secure refuge in times of trouble for the farmers and their dependants. As usual, a religious sanction was given to the arrangement by including as one of its objects the safe celebration of mass. At Worcester, too, there seems to have been a levy on the hides ascribed to the burh for maintaining the fortifications and the proceeds were divided between Earl Ethelred of Mercia and the bishop. So also were certain rents and market dues and fines, while the toll on goods coming into Worcester in wagons or on pack-horses was reserved to the king.

There is no reason to regard these arrangements as exceptional.

¹ Hodgkin, *op. cit.*, II., p. 588.

We do not know how the burhs were garrisoned. Townships already long established were, presumably, required to provide their own garrison. There is some reason to think that in new burhs such as Oxford the duty of defence fell on the thegns of the surrounding country, who were bound to keep houses and retainers within their fortifications.

It was about the same time, between the Treaty of Wedmore, that is, in 886, and the second Danish war, which began in 892, that the Danes were fortifying five burhs at Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester and Stamford. These famous burhs were the headquarters of the Danish settlement armies, and their rapid growth reflects the great agricultural development of the surrounding territory by the Danish settlers and the consequent need for markets, trading centres and centres of jurisdiction. The development of the fortified burh into the country or market town, which had taken place by the end of the tenth century, was an economic development which we should be wrong to attribute wholly to Danish influence, and still less to King Alfred's reforms. Indeed, there is some evidence that the Anglo-Saxons of Alfred's time took none too kindly to the fortified burhs, and that when war broke out again in 892 many of the fortifications were incomplete. The fact remains that the concentration of population and, to some extent, of wealth also, was a military necessity imposed on Anglo-Saxon England by the Danes and that the great admixture of Danish blood and Danish traditions greatly assisted the development of the fortified church and market into the semi-independent borough of the early Middle Ages.

Alfred's second military reform was the so-called division of the fyrd, an arrangement whereby the national levy was called out half at a time for a limited period. In this way an army could be kept in being without fatal consequences to agriculture. The backbone of Alfred's army was, however, first his own bodyguard, secondly the ealdormen and their retainers, and lastly the shire thegns and their followers, and it is to these last only that the division of the fyrd applied.

It is unlikely that the ordinary ceorls took much part in Alfred's wars except as garrisons of the new burhs, the purpose of which was to enable the life of the countryside, its work and its worship, to go on in the midst of war. A distinction was growing up between the ceorl who was attached to the soil and the ceorl who was more directly attached to his lord, a raiding man or *geneat* as he came to be called in the next

century. The geneats were men who had left the land at the bidding of their lord to become professional men-at-arms, rough and selfish soldiers of fortune as different from the knights of late mediaeval legend as anything could be, but still the backbone of the armies of western Europe until their power came to be broken by the archers. The upper ranks of this class were systematically increased, later in the tenth century, by the creation of loan-land. In Alfred's day it is certain that some of the peasantry still followed the thegns to war and that all of them had recognised military obligations, but the division of the fyrd was the beginning of the end of an unworkable system.

Danish
invasions,
892-896.

Alfred's naval reforms date from the end of his reign. It was his last great war, which began in 892, which taught him the lesson of sea power. In the earlier wars, Alfred had been fighting a field army already securely established in this country, living on the country and only depending on sea power for reinforcements. The war which broke out in 892 was different in character. The war was not against the Danes of the Danelaw, but against Danish invaders from France. Their object was almost certainly to seize London and hold it to ransom. The larger invading army came in 250 ships to Lympne and entrenched itself at Appledore. A smaller army in 80 ships under Haesten sailed up the Thames estuary as far as Milton.

The campaign was not at first serious. Haesten was quickly forced to a treaty which allowed him to retire into Essex, and the larger army, in the spring of 893, was defeated at Farnham by Edward, Alfred's eldest son. Alfred himself, advancing from the west, would no doubt quickly have ended the campaign, but he was recalled by the news that two more armies, this time from East Anglia and Northumbria, were besieging Exeter and invading North Devon. The result was that Edward, probably owing to the dispersal of the fyrd after their six months' service, was not strong enough to prevent the two original invading armies from joining forces at Benfleet. Nevertheless, when the new fyrd came to reinforce Edward, the combined invading armies were heavily defeated at Benfleet, in Haesten's absence, and their ships burnt or taken to London. The remnant of the Danes, joined by Haesten and his men, were driven into a new fort at Shoebury. From there the Danes were driven to raid the west for supplies and were soon defeated by a coalition of Anglo-Saxons and Welsh and forced

THE DEFEAT OF THE DANES

to entrench on an island in the Severn near Welshpool. There they were besieged and had to cut their way out with heavy losses and fall back on Shoebury.

In the summer of 893 the Danes set out from Shoebury to march on Chester. This time they used East Anglia as their base, leaving their women and ships and marching light. They reached Chester while it was still without defenders. The English reply was to devastate the surrounding country and the Danes, still short of supplies, were forced into Wales.

In Wales they were successful in living on the country until the summer of 894, when they were able to make their way across Northumbria and East Anglia and thence by sea to the Thames estuary. Here they towed their ships up the Lea to a point 20 miles above London and remained unopposed till 895, when they were attacked by Alfred and heavily defeated. They broke away to the east, leaving their ships to be captured and taken to London. The remnants of the invaders spent the winter in camp at Bridgnorth on the Severn and in 896 the army dispersed, some to East Anglia and Northumbria, some to France.

The notable feature of this war had been the consistent ability of the Anglo-Saxons to contain and beat an enemy enjoying superior communications and the active support of at least half the country. The Danes had unchallenged superiority at sea and secure bases in the Danelaw. But something had happened which had made raiding either unsafe or unprofitable in Alfred's kingdom. What had happened is easy to guess. The fortress system had rendered Wessex and Kent immune from raiding. Horses, goods and cattle were concentrated and protected, and the raiders were forced to move rapidly from the fortress area to the Welsh marches, where alone their old tactics could be made to pay. But, going so far, they outran their communications. They found themselves usually without horses and supplies, forced to stand siege. Only in Wales itself were the invaders able to winter at their ease and replenish supplies and horses for the next campaign. Everywhere else they were contained, and when they abandoned their fort, as at Welshpool, they were heavily defeated.

It is true that the Danish army was never wholly destroyed. We must not, however, conclude that this was due to any fault in Anglo-Saxon strategy. They were not destroyed because they made their escape into the Danelaw and the Anglo-Saxon were not yet prepared to try and re-assert their sovereignty

over the Danelaw. This was Alfred's decision and it accords with his character. The last years of his reign were years of intense and active work on the building of the great ships, on his studies, translations and reforms. He had no desire to undertake an offensive and hazardous campaign.

In 897 Alfred decided to build more, larger and swifter ships than any yet known to the Danes and employed the Frisians perhaps to build and certainly to man them. But the design, so the Chronicle tells us, was Alfred's. The ships were deep in the water and had sixty oars or more. It was the beginning of competitive shipbuilding. Without the fleet that Alfred planned, the house of Cerdic could never have reconquered the Danelaw and created a united England. It must be noted, however, that Alfred's writings reveal very little trace of nationalism, or even of hostility to the Norsemen. He regarded the wars in which he was involved much, apparently, as he regarded the chase, as a proper and probably inevitable occupation for men, but his interpolations in Orosius's history make it clear that he regarded the northern powers as kinsmen engaged in a common adventure. He is as interested in their explorations as in any English achievement. He was anxious to be the instructor, he was only too eager to lay down the leadership, of his country. On the most worldly view, he realised that a whole complex of conditions must be satisfied before his country could attempt to become a great power. England needed sorely an educated clergy, an educated nobility, an administrative system, an army and a navy. And she had to provide herself with these with the invader not at but within the gate. No one man could give her all these at once, but Alfred laid the foundations, and for that reason he remains one of the greatest of our kings, whatever the shortcomings of his scholarship, his law or his strategy.

The extent to which Alfred himself was aware of these shortcomings is irrelevant to our verdict on his achievement. Of his essential nobility of character no one can doubt. The smallest thing we can say of him is that he was the first of that long line of great Englishmen whom stupid people sneer at as clever and clever people complacently describe as stupid.

But he looms much larger in our history than he did in his own day. Alfred's death in 899 seems to have created small comment. He was the greatest man who had ruled in western Europe since Charlemagne, but western Europe was not to any marked extent aware of it. Alfred had elevated kingship to an

art. He had created, as it turned out, a legend which lived into our own age. He died as he had lived, admired and respected but arousing neither enthusiasm nor love. Perhaps he had served too many masters, a virtue for which saints are seldom forgiven and politicians never. His contemporaries took the short view and saw him only as a moderately successful king who left behind him an energetic son and a province able, once his hesitant hand was removed, to pass to the counter-offensive.

The years immediately following Alfred's death saw his son Edward busily engaged in maintaining his title against a cousin who unsuccessfully called in Danish aid. Eight more years passed before the Anglo-Saxon counter-offensive began with an attack by King Edward and his sister Athelflaed of Mercia against the Northumbrians. At this time of disunion there were numerous virtually independent princelings in what are to-day the counties of Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire. The Danes ruled at York; the Scots were liable at any moment to raid across the border and the Norwegian Vikings from Ireland threatened the west. What led to the campaign of 909 is uncertain.

Edward,
king,
899-925.

From the Mersey south along the Welsh marches to the Severn there was only a strip of the old Mercian kingdom which was not settled by the Danes. As we come farther south, so the Danish border is found farther to the east. All Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire were in English hands as was the centre and south of Buckinghamshire. "Probably Watling Street formed the boundary between the Danes and the English of the southern Midlands."¹

The Danes themselves were, and remained, disunited. It is wrong to speak of the "re-conquest" of England. What was at stake was still suzerainty, not sovereignty. There is no evidence that the Danes were prepared to fight long or hard to save themselves from a rule which left their ownership and their local jurisdiction intact. So far were the Danes from having conquered in order to enslave that the Danelaw contained, on Edward's accession, few if any slaves, in sharp contrast to Wessex; and so far were the Anglo-Saxons from seeking to influence the social or economic organisation of the lands they regained that the great differences of social organisation between Wessex and the old Danelaw remained virtually unchanged until Norman times.

As far as there was a decisive battle in Edward's campaign,

Battle of
Tetten-
hall, 910.

¹ Stenton, p. 317.

which opened in 909, it was fought on August 5th, 910, three miles east of Tettenhall in Staffordshire, against Northumbrian Danes raiding Mercia. This defeat settled the issue, so far as it was a military one, between Wessex and Mercia and the great Danish settlements in the Midlands. Without the support of a strong Danish kingdom in Yorkshire, the Danes in the Midlands could not hope to preserve their independence for long. Nevertheless, the immediate cause of the collapse of Danish resistance in England between 910 and 919 was the treaty of St. Clair-sur-Epte, signed in 911 between Duke Rollo and the king of France, which created a new Frankish Danelaw to which, from that time onward, there was a continuous drift of such English Danes as were not already settled on English land.

In 911, Aethelred of Mercia died and his widow Aethelflaed now ruled in his place. It is clear that there was a real if not yet a constitutional union between Wessex and Mercia, and Athelstan, heir to Wessex and nephew to "The Lady of the Mercians," was her constant counsellor. Aethelflaed, however, was no figurehead but an efficient ruler and leader in war.

Edward and Aethelflaed in this campaign followed Alfred's example. They established burhs which dominated, as much economically as by force of arms, the surrounding country. Aethelflaed is known to have built ten fortresses, mostly in the four years after her husband's death, seven of which have been identified—at Bridgnorth, Tamworth, Stafford, Eddisbury Hill (re-fortified), Warwick, Cherbury and Runcorn. Meanwhile King Edward, advancing from the middle Thames, built two at Hertford and one at Witham (911-12). A pause ensued during which he beat off a Scandinavian attack on Wessex. There followed the occupation of Bedford, the erection of a fortress at Maldon and the departure from England of some of the Danish forces in the Midlands. In 917 was launched the great English offensive which clinched these successes. At first the Danes resisted strongly, but effected little beyond the erection of a fortress at Tempsford on the Ivel and this was soon stormed with complete success by the English. A Danish attempt to relieve the pressure in Essex failed. In the autumn Edward took the field and by the close of the year had completed the destruction of the Danish kingdom in East Anglia. He then turned north, took the key fortress of Stamford, and following the death of Aethelflaed established himself in Mercia, which he perhaps divided into its modern shires.

Recon-
quest of
Danelaw
begun,
911.

After receiving the submission of the Welsh leader the king turned against the great Danish stronghold south of the Humber. This area was in an unenviable position. Irish invasions had plunged Northumbria into turmoil and the king had hemmed them in to the south and west. The great centres of Nottingham and Lincoln fell without a struggle, and the English frontier had now reached the Humber. The Irish raids in Northumbria next engrossed Edward's attention and he reached the climax of his career in 920 when after establishing a fort at Bakewell he received there the submission of the rulers of Bamburgh, Scotland and Strathclyde, as well as of Raegnald, the self-appointed king of York.

It was left to Athelstan, Edward's successor in 925, to annex York to his direct rule in 927; to harry Scotland almost unopposed in 934 and in 937 to inflict a decisive military defeat on King Constantine of Scotland, King Olaf of Dublin and the King of Strathclyde. Constantine had organised this coalition to restore Northumbria as an independent buffer-state between himself and the mighty kingdom of Wessex, now so far famed over Europe that one of Athelstan's sisters married the King of France; one married Hugh Capet of the rival royal dynasty of France; while another sister married the future Emperor, Otto the Great. Athelstan's defeat of Constantine at the battle of Brunanburh, a site not yet conclusively identified, marked the political unification of England.

Athelstan,
king,
925-939.

Battle of
Brunan-
burh,
937.

In a purely political sense Athelstan stands out clear as the greatest of the Anglo-Saxon kings. He is not far from the greatest on any count. Like his father and grandfather he was a man of reforming zeal as well as military skill, and no other three successive English kings have at all nearly approached Alfred, Edward and Athelstan in character or personal achievement. The English court of his day was a gathering place for the great princes of the West. Athelstan's nephew, Louis d'Outremer, afterwards king of France, was brought up at Athelstan's court, and both Alan duke of Brittany and Haakon, a younger son of the great Harold Fairhair himself and later king of Norway, spent several years there. There also came at different times, Hywel the Good, King of Dyfed, and the elusive Constantine of Scotland. Hywel gave an English name to one of his sons and adopted the English view of the king as a legislator. Athelstan's court was indeed a school of statecraft. The great Dunstan himself, chief adviser to no fewer than three of Athelstan's successors, was, after his education at Glastonbury,

committed by his uncle Athelm, Archbishop of Canterbury, to Athelstan's care.

Foreign embassies, seeking Athelstan's favours or alliance brought magnificent gifts: the sword of Constantine the Great, with one of the nails of the Cross set in gold; the Lance of Charlemagne; the Standard of St. Maurice and a relic of the Cross set in crystal. The kings of Wales are said to have agreed to pay him a yearly tribute of twenty pounds of gold, three hundred pounds of silver and 25,000 oxen. The Norwegians presented him with a brilliantly decorated warship with purple sails and gilded stern and prow.

All this splendour was the reflection of an active and, on the whole, brilliant foreign policy. England had done what Germany was not to do for a century, and France was not to do for nearly four centuries. She had assimilated her invaders under an effective administrative system. The English monarchy under Athelstan was thus the strongest power in Europe. The army which Athelstan led against Scotland in 934 included, with numerous English thegns and seven English earls, four Welsh princes and five Danish earls. This was statecraft in action and Athelstan was clearly determined that the principle of statecraft must be supported in neighbouring countries against the forces of anarchy and disorder. He secured the restoration of his nephew Louis to the French throne, but took care to secure at the same time the friendship of the Capetian house who were already the king-makers if not the kings of France. He restored Alan of Brittany to his dukedom, from which he had been ousted by the Vikings. He intervened, albeit ineffectively, in the war between Henry the Fowler's successor Otto and Louis d'Outremer in 939, the first of that long and tragic series of Franco-German conflicts in which this country has been involved.

At home Athelstan maintained a state appropriate to the "*Rex Totius Britanniae*" which appears on his coins, or the "*Angelsaxonum Denorumque Gloriosissimus Rex*" of one of his charters. He held councils throughout his territorial kingdom of Wessex, and at York, Tamworth, Buckingham, Whittlebury, Colchester and London. A remarkable number of his councillors bore Scandinavian names, and for the first time in the history of the King's council magnates, lay and religious, from all over the country, regularly attended. Athelstan's court at Colchester in 936 was attended by 37 thegns, 13 earls (six of them Danish), 3 abbots, 15 bishops and the Archbishop of

Invasion
of
Scotland,
934.

Canterbury. He seems to have assumed an almost imperial style of address after 934. In the dedication to a copy of the gospels presented to Athelstan by the Emperor Otto the Great, and by Athelstan to Christ Church, Canterbury, he is described as "Anglorum Basyleus et Curagulus totius Bryttaniae," and the titles Curagulus or Basileus, or both, appear in seven charters between 935 and 939.

As a patron of learning and, more particularly, of clerical scholarship, Athelstan was a fitting heir to Alfred.¹ To St. Cuthbert's shrine at Chester-le-Street he gave a French gospel book, a missal, two texts of the Gospels adorned with gold and silver, and a life of St. Cuthbert, now preserved, as is believed, in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. To Christ Church, Canterbury, he gave besides the Emperor Otto's gift, a small copy of the Latin Gospels² in a fine Irish hand, previously the property of Maelbrigde, abbot of Armagh from 888 to 927. To St. Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury he presented a fine French gospel book, and to the monastery at Bath a ninth century MS. containing the Acts of the Sixth General Council of the Church held at Constantinople in 680. To Winchester he gave a continental ninth century Psalter with some prayers in Greek written in Latin letters and a metrical calendar directly connected with the English royal house. Some of these gifts have survived the storms of more than ten centuries. They bear witness to a great revival of learning and its wide dissemination all over England. They also bear witness to the establishment at Athelstan's court of professional and tolerably learned clerks, for the inscriptions in some of the gifts are clearly by the same hand. If Alfred was the father of the English navy, Athelstan was the father of the English civil service.

The revival of learning accompanied the revival of power, the security of property and the rule of law. Athelstan was a constructive legislator, and here the descent from Alfred is unbroken, for his father Edward was the author of two important reforms; the first requiring the King's reeve to hold monthly moots to see that every one was worthy of folk right, and the second requiring that all buying and selling should be done before a Port Reeve in a town. We can see here a distinct beginning of that supervision of local affairs in the interests of the common man which was for centuries the

¹ See J. Armitage Robinson's *The Times of St. Dunstan*, pp. 51-71.

² Now in the Archbishop's Library at Lambeth.

distinguishing mark of the English monarchy in its constitutional aspect. The reeve was the representative of the Crown; the suitors, as we know, were the only judges in an Anglo-Saxon court: but the Crown under Edward assumed the responsibility of seeing that the moot was held and laid on its representative the task of seeing that local offenders were dealt with. It was the same with buying and selling. This was to be conducted in an open and orderly fashion before witnesses. The law shows further that the town had become by the tenth century not merely an integral but an essential part of the social organisation. This it had not been so for six centuries.

Either to Edward or to Athelstan we owe the final organisation of England south of the Humber into shires. In between the old shires of Wessex and the new sub-kingdoms of Kent and Sussex and the Danish boroughs was a large tract of what had been the south-eastern portion of Mercia and the kingdom of East Anglia. By the end of Athelstan's reign this territory was organised into ten shires, containing two hundred Hundreds. These shires, Oxford, Buckingham, Bedford, Huntingdon, Northampton, Cambridge, Hertford, Middlesex, Essex and East Anglia, retain their boundaries roughly to the present day, except that East Anglia had been divided into two and London has absorbed most of Middlesex into London County.

It remains to note one constitutional enactment of supreme importance. Clause 2 of Athelstan's Laws lays down that the kinsmen of a thief released on payment of a fine must stand security for him and that a family which contains such a man must find him a lord and a house. Clause 3 holds the lord responsible for all his "men." This means in effect that while the responsibility attaching to the kindred under the primitive Germanic law is being civilised down into the requirement that they stand security for the good behaviour of a convicted criminal of their family, the lord is constitutionally and compulsorily interposed between the king and the family not merely as the landlord but as the person to whom the surety is to be offered and by whom it will be exacted. If the lord fail to exact it he will himself be fined.

We must see here, in the lord's ultimate responsibility for the behaviour of his vassals, the beginnings of a process which was to lead directly but slowly to a general system of seigniorial justice, to the system, that is, whereby in the normal petty

LOCAL JURISDICTION

affairs of every day the poor man, be he free or half free, must first seek justice in his lord's court.

We have given reasons for thinking¹ that certain profits of jurisdiction were in fact given to the recipients of bookland from the earliest times. No charter, however, created or implied the existence of anything like a manorial court, and such a court was necessary before any real system of seignorial justice could develop. As late as the time of Alfred the normal channel of justice was still the shire moot. At the end of Athelstan's reign we find a change. England is beginning to be divided into hundreds,² and in the new shires the hundred consisted of roughly, and was certainly usually assessed at, 100 hides. In the older shires there were some much smaller hundreds as well as some larger ones, but the pattern throughout the Midlands is fairly uniform. In the old Danelaw we have wapentakes for hundreds and ploughlands for hides, but however different the philological and historical origins of these terms, the result was similar. In the hundreds and wapentakes we have, for the first time,³ practical units of local jurisdiction. Many of these units, however, must already have been wholly booked to one lord, bishop or abbot, and very many more were to be booked in the course of the next two hundred years. Indeed, granted the establishment of the hundred, and that, at least, is historical fact, the booking of jurisdiction must have followed if it had not, as we believe, in exceptional cases, preceded it. No king in western Europe at the end of the tenth century had a Civil Service on a scale sufficient to send hundreds of reeves to attend monthly courts, and we know in fact that Athelstan, the most powerful of all our kings, was not able to do so, for we have a document which tells us how the citizens of London organised their own system for the maintenance and enforcement of order through a body called a peaceguild, an elaborate organisation for common action in the pursuit of thieves and for the compensation of injured persons out of the common property of the guild.

We must certainly not assume for Athelstan's time, or for very many decades later, any uniform system of administration

¹ See pp. 262-264, *supra*.

² Direct evidence for the existence of the hundred as part of local administration is first found in the reign of Athelstan's son Edmund and by the end of the tenth century there is evidence that in England, outside the centres of Danish influence, the shires were all divided into hundreds.

³ We must always exclude the extreme north and the Welsh marches from any generalisation.

for the whole country. We can, however, probably attribute to this great reign a distinct advance, the division of most of the country into workable administrative units, the recognition of the local lord as the person properly responsible for the orderly conduct of those living within these units, and the assumption by the Crown of at least nominal responsibility for seeing, either through a system of devolution or directly through its reeves, that the local system worked. Thus Alfred's skeleton conception of the legislating sovereign directly concerned with enforcing a satisfactory standard of conduct on his subjects was at least clothed during the reigns of his son and grandson in flesh and blood, even if it was by no means fully articulated.

* * * * *

Edmund,
king,
939-946.

Eadred,
king,
946-955.

With few exceptions, the formative events of the reigns of Athelstan's successors: Edmund (939-946), Eadred (946-955), Eadwig (955-959), Edgar (959-975) and Edward the Martyr (975-978) lie outside political or constitutional history. It is the age of Dunstan, of Oswald of Worcester, of Aethelwold of Winchester, the three leaders of monastic reform in this the first reformation of the English Church.

The political story is quickly told. From the death of Athelstan to the renewal of the Danish invasions under Aethelred, there was recurring disorder in Yorkshire, in the earldom of Bamborough and in the kingdom of Strathclyde. Norse raiders from Ireland, aided sometimes by the Strathclyde Scots, sometimes by the kings of Scotland and sometimes by both, were the cause of the trouble. Early in Edmund's reign Olaf Guthfrithson, King of Dublin, captured York and established his rule over part of Northumbria and the north Midlands for a short time. Two other Irish vikings after Olaf Guthfrithson ruled over York, apparently at the same time, but they were finally defeated by Edmund, who ravaged Strathclyde. We must assume that Strathclyde had supported the Irish invaders. It is interesting and important to note that Edmund was regarded as a deliverer by the descendants of the settlers from the Great Army. By this date the old antagonisms between Danes and English had disappeared. In 946 Edmund, just as he was on the point of leading an expedition to France to help his nephew Louis d'Outremer, was murdered, and once again, while the Danelaw remained quiet, the Norsemen seized their opportunity to attack and conquer York. This time it

THE CESSION OF THE LOTHIANS

was Eric Blood-axe, ex-king of Norway, and he ruled at York for a few years. In 954 Eric was killed in battle and the effort to establish an independent Scandinavian kingdom in Northumbria was, and this time finally, defeated. We know no details, but Earl Oswulf of Bamborough was probably concerned in the victory, since, as a sequel, he was made Earl of Northumbria.

In 955 Eadred died and was succeeded by Eadwig, the eldest of the two sons of Edmund. Eadwig was then 15. Two years later, Mercia and Northumbria renounced their allegiance to Eadwig in favour of his younger brother Edgar. In 959 Eadwig died and the kingdom was reunited under Edgar. The quarter century which began with Eadwig in 955 was, for all these domestic quarrels, the most peaceful in Anglo-Saxon history. Edgar in 973 is reputed to have received the homage of eight kings, including the king of the Cumbrians and the king of Scotland, and it is to 973 that the most decisive political event since 939 can be best dated. That event is the cession of the Lothians to Scotland. Few political acts can have had more formidable consequences. Had the Forth remained the northern frontier of England, a wholly Celtic and unfriendly Scotland would have posed for Norman, Plantagenet and English statesmen problems so different from those known to history that the consequences are incalculable. Edgar at the same time gave a wide measure of political autonomy to the Danelaw.

Eadwig,
king,
955-959.

Edgar,
king,
959-975.

The wisdom of these policies we may probably ascribe like so much else in the reign of Edgar, to Dunstan, born about 909, Abbot of Glastonbury from c. 943 to 955, in exile from 955 to 957, Bishop of Worcester and London from 957 to 959 and appointed Archbishop of Canterbury when the kingdom was reunited by Edgar. It was Dunstan's good fortune to be born in the great days of the Cluniac Revival, the chief light in the mundane darkness of the tenth century. It was England's even greater fortune that she should have had a man who was a great administrator and a great statesman as well as a saint to organise and stimulate the new spirit which was rebuilding monasticism in Europe. The monasteries in these centuries were not only the sole institutions performing the functions of universities but they were the training ground of bishops and abbots. On them depended the whole spiritual life of the time as well as much of its secular force and dignity. In 910 when Cluny was founded by Duke William of Aquitania, with

Dunstan,
c. 909-988.

Berno as its first abbot, monasticism in France and Italy was at its lowest ebb. Great endowments and much feudal power was in the hands of lay abbots with wives and children, while such monks as there were were idle and often dissolute, ready partners with their lay rulers in all manner of evil. In England the monasteries had rather ceased to exist than become actively corrupt, although we must remember Oswald of Worcester's complaint that at his monastery at Winchester he "lived like Lot at Sodom." This may or may not have been a rhetorical exaggeration. It is certain, however, that the old monasteries had become communities of clerks, mostly not in orders, many of them married, living idle, luxurious and unprofitable lives and not even regular in their attendance at the church services.

The monks of Cluny revived the strict Benedictine rule of St. Benedict of Aniane (750-821), and were from the first directly under the protection of the Papal See. The influence of Cluny began with the second abbot, Odo, who, with Papal sanction, began the reform of other monasteries, some of which became priories of Cluny. Odo was one of the great men of the century, perhaps the greatest. His influence spread all over France and most of Italy and before the end of the century it had spread to Spain. By that time the number of monasteries dependent on Cluny was sixty-seven.

Odo,
Abbot of
Cluny,
927-942.

Almost simultaneously with the beginning of Cluny there were important reforming movements in Lotharingia initiated by Gerard de Brogne and by John of Gorze. Gerard was soon invited by Count Arnulf of Flanders, son of King Alfred's daughter, Aelfthryth, to reform all the monasteries in Flanders.

It is not irrelevant to note that these great spiritual movements were initiated with the help of great feudal nobles and that the two most powerful personalities, Odo and Gerard de Brogne, were both brought up at the court of Frankish kings. It needed the coincidence of great piety with great position to change the current of life and thought in feudal society. Once the change was made, however, the reaction of that society was swifter and more immediately effective than it could be in modern times. Mediaeval society knew only one God and only one principle of secular authority. Pope and king, bishop and lord, might be foolish or evil but if all were able and willing to rule, there was no one who wished to challenge the credentials of any of them. There were no competing ideologies.

On the contrary, the evidence is conclusive that beneath

the deep disorder of Church and State there was a deeper anxiety for stable, ordered and disinterested living on the part of thousands of eager spirits in all countries. The knights and the troubadours of the later Middle Ages represent not the essential spirit of feudalism, but the beginning of its decline, the revolt against order when order had been too long established. In the tenth century the finest minds stood for order. It was only through order that the new world of the nation states, the towns, the cathedrals, the great abbeys, the parish churches, the schools and the universities, could come into being. It was only through the monastic ideal, the dedication of men of force and discipline to the service of their fellows within a closed moral and political system, that order could be achieved. We must not regard the monastic revival as essentially an other-worldly movement, appealing only to ascetics. It was the condition of survival for society itself, and the great Frankish nobles and the kings who formed the apex of Frankish society were acutely conscious of the fact. The parallel to the tenth century monastic revival is the creation by the middle classes when they came to power in the nineteenth century of a great educational system and a great police system, both essential, even if essentially inadequate, to the survival of society, once the authority of the throne and the altar had vanished before the doctrine of the self-sufficiency of man.

And we may carry the parallel further. Just as the revolutionary doctrines were sincerely held by all the heirs of the enlightenment, so the traditional Christian faith was sincerely held by the leaders of the monastic revival of the tenth century. It was no lip-service that these great churchmen paid to their faith and the same is true of the great secular rulers. Neither Alfred nor Athelstan, neither Dunstan nor his great contemporaries, Oswald and Aethelwold, had any doubts as to the truth of Christianity, or as to the supernatural authority of the Roman Church to proclaim and defend that truth. The breakdown of the ninth and early tenth centuries had been due not to moral doubt but to the dishonest abuse of power by lawless men. The problem of lawless men is one which our modern age has so far failed to solve. It was solved by the early Middle Ages, after a century and a half of anarchy, by the alliance then cemented between the monarchy and a Church whose spiritual authority was unchallenged. In this way the masses were led to support with active enthusiasm the forces making for order, and the tenth century reformation, for that

reason, strengthened instead of disrupting the social system out of whose defects it was born.

Dunstan did not begin his career as a disciple of the continental reformers. On the contrary, his career is a witness to the new spirit at work in the English Church as the result of the influence of Alfred and Athelstan. Dunstan was the nephew of Athelm, Athelstan's Archbishop of Canterbury, and was by him commended to the king's court, where he learned to know men and cities and came under the influence of Aelfheah, a priest and monk of Glastonbury who was to become Bishop of Winchester in 934. Aelfheah, like Dunstan himself, was connected with the royal family and it was due to his instance that about 937, at the canonical age of 30, Dunstan was ordained. In 939 he was appointed by King Edmund to the Abbey of Glastonbury. Here he was joined by his friend Aethelwold, also from Athelstan's court. Under the direction of these two influential and saintly men, Glastonbury became a centre of attraction for many "men of high birth and eager spirit." It was, in fact, an English Cluny but with a characteristic national difference. The missionary spirit was lacking. Glastonbury was a great institution but by itself it would not have initiated a movement. The inspiration for that had to come from abroad.

Dunstan
in exile,
955.

Dunstan apparently became involved in the disputes which followed Eadred's death and incurred the displeasure of the new king and his wife. He went into exile and placed himself under the protection of Count Arnulf of Flanders. At the monastery of Blandinium at Ghent he first came into direct contact with the continental reforms. At the same time Oswald, despairing of his lot at Winchester, went to the reformed Cluniac monastery at Fleury. In 957 Dunstan was recalled from Ghent and in 960 Edgar made him Archbishop of Canterbury. Dunstan in turn made Oswald Bishop of Worcester and in 963 made Aethelwold (who in the meantime had reformed the abbey of Abingdon) Bishop of Winchester. From this time the movement gathered pace. Oswald, in addition to reforming Worcester itself, founded monasteries at Westbury-on-Trion and Ramsey; Aethelwold turned out the clerks at Winchester with some brusqueness and brought monks from Abingdon to take their place, restored the once-famous abbey at Ely and founded new abbeys at Peterborough and Thorney. Dunstan himself reformed Bath, Malmesbury and possibly Westminster.

THE "REGULARIS CONCORDIA"

We are able to do more than record the names of these new and reformed foundations because we have in the "Regularis Concordia Anglicae Nationis Monachorum Sanctimonialiumque" an agreed code of customs for the reformed monasteries. The formulation of the code was undertaken at a Synod held at Winchester and attended by monks from Ghent and Fleury, where Dunstan and Oswald had spent their brief years of exile.

The rule of St. Benedict had prescribed much manual labour in addition to the regular religious observances. As education advanced and civilisation developed, the rule, so suitable to the conditions of an unlettered age, became unenforceable. The reforming movement was liturgical in character and required far longer attendance in church and much more elaborate music and ceremonial. The movement was one easily carried to excess and we may read into the "Regularis Concordia" an attempt to regulate the excesses of the enthusiasts.

"The reformers," writes Armitage Robinson, "were, as the *Regularis Concordia* sufficiently attests, true to the spirit of the founder of their order. Individuals like St. Aethelwold might be severe with themselves in the matter of abstinence, but they did not attempt to make their own practice the rule for others. Diet was simple, but sufficient; the time allowed for sleep was ample; the life was disciplined, but not austere. And in spite of the long hours in church, manuscripts¹ were written and splendidly illuminated, the sciences of the day were cultivated, and the voluminous writings of Aelfric mark an era in our Old English literature."²

The "Regularis Concordia" is an important historical document. It reflects a relationship existing in England between a national Church and a national State which did not and could not exist anywhere else in Europe until at least the thirteenth century. It reflects our natural aptitude for the judicious and unenthusiastic assimilation of foreign ideas. Incidentally, it prescribes many prayers for the royal house, a new departure in a monastic rule.

There were two important consequences of the reforms of the tenth century. In the first place the reformed monasteries and sees were to attract fresh and very large gifts of land, thus

¹ The last phase of Anglo-Saxon supremacy in England saw the production of manuscripts of outstanding beauty. The best are associated with Winchester. English metal work of the tenth and eleventh centuries also enjoyed a reputation throughout western Europe.

² J. Armitage Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

creating a balance of power between the nobility and the Church which was to assure to the monarchy a definite if uneasy predominance over both alike until the Reformation. In the second place the growth of the great ecclesiastical estates, of which those of the bishopric of Worcester are the classic tenth century example, required the creation of a new class of tenure. When Oswald of Worcester deliberately created, with the explicit approval of the Crown, leasehold tenures for a class of mounted retainers bound "to fulfil the law of riding men as riding men should," he was taking a fateful step. Would they always ride on peaceful errands? We know from the records of Edward the Confessor that they would not. And would they forfeit their leaseholds if they failed to fulfil the law of riding? We do not know but we can guess. The fateful consequences, however, attended not the "riding men" but the cultivators of the soil which they leased. These had been freemen once, holding by custom, subject only to dues and to the Crown. Then their land had been booked in part, or it may be in whole, to the Church instead of to the Crown. Now a cultivator found himself three degrees away from the Crown of which he had once been tenant-in-chief and his immediate obligations due not to a great nobleman or ecclesiastic but to a "small" man, a mounted retainer on the estate of his erstwhile landlords. The social consequences were inevitable and swift. The status of the mere freeman declined swiftly from the tenth century onward.

On the other hand, as Professor Stenton reminds us, many of the "riding men" were probably descended from ceorls, though others no doubt were younger sons of thegns. In other words, these riding men were the new middle class of the countryside and the rise of this class was part of that process of differentiation and specialisation which we call the growth of civilisation. High civilisation entails and implies greater equality of opportunity and therefore an ever-widening gulf between the more and the less energetic.

The peaceful and brilliant reign of Edgar ended with his death in 975 and was followed by an immediate reaction, under his son Edward the Martyr, against the monastic revival. The nobles had seen their influence curtailed by the power of the great monastic estates and seized the opportunity provided by a new and unstable king, to rebel. We know no details, but the Crown and the monasteries won the first round, and we must assume the assassination of the king in 978 to be the second

Edward
the
Martyr,
king,
975-978.

AETHELRED SUCCEEDS EDWARD

round in the struggle. He was murdered by the household of his younger brother Aethelred when on a visit to his mother. The sequel was a weak rule by a perjured man over a divided country. The legends which gathered quickly round Edward's tomb at Shaftesbury reflected the rapidly growing disgust of the people at his successor. The tenth century reformation was not to be overthrown but the unrest which it had excited was to be fatal to the Anglo-Saxon suzerainty over England. A divided country and an unpopular king asked for and received a conqueror.

Chapter Nine

FROM 978 TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST

Aethelred the Redeless, 978-1016.

AETHELRED the Unready is a nickname which has passed into history. His contemporaries called him Aethelred the Redeless—the misguided. It was a pun on his name, Aethel-rede, which means good or wise counsel. The jibe was deserved. There is little or no evidence of any breakdown in the machinery of government during his reign. Aethelred's misfortunes were the consequence of a misguided policy, entered into with deliberation as soon as he grew up and pursued with obstinacy. Yet the picture is not altogether black. The religious revival of Edgar's reign continued; the series of charters continues, and there is evidence that the king's secretariat, possibly first organised by Aethelstan, functioned continuously not only during Aethelred's reign but on into the reign of his Danish conqueror Cnut. Again, we must note a long series of laws by Aethelred, to one of which, (Code III), promulgated at Wantage in, perhaps, 997, we owe most of our information concerning the customs of the Danelaw, and to another of which, (Code IV), promulgated sometime between 991 and 1002 we owe important information regarding the topography of London and the trade with north-west Europe.

Finally, we must note that the two great scholars of the tenth century reformation, Aelfric, the father of English vernacular literature, and Byrhtferth of Ramsey, the most eminent man of science produced by the English Church since the death of Bede, wrote undisturbed by the military disasters of Aethelred's reign. The activities of the reformed monasteries were not seriously interrupted.

Aethelred II, 978-1016.

Aethelred was only thirteen when he came to the throne in 978 and it is probable that the first misfortunes of his reign were much increased by this fact. Within two years of his accession the Scandinavian raids began. The Norsemen visited Hampshire, Thanet and Cheshire in 980, Devon and Cornwall in 981, Dorset in 982 and Devon in 988. The raiders apparently used the ports of Normandy, and in 990 Pope John XV intervened, sending an envoy to arrange a treaty between Normandy and England to stop what would now be regarded as a flagrant

THE FIRST ARBITRATION TREATY

breach of neutrality. This is the first recorded papal intervention in English secular affairs. It was probably made at the suggestion of English churchmen but it may well have had a wider purpose, to prevent a renewal of the vast disorders of the first period of Viking aggression. The treaty, signed at Rouen on March 1st, 991, provides for the peaceful reparation of injuries inflicted by either party on the other; it is, in effect, the first formal arbitration treaty in our history, and by providing that neither party should entertain the other's enemies it lays down what is still the essence of neutrality in international law.

Anglo-Norman
treaty of
Rouen,
991.

The practical consequences were important but paradoxical. The raids were renewed only four months afterwards in greater strength, presumably because the raiders, deprived of their Norman bases, had to land in sufficient force to maintain themselves in England indefinitely, as the great army had done a hundred years before. The campaign of 991 is nevertheless more famous in literary than political history, for it produced a great poem describing the heroism and death of the Alderman of Essex, Byrhtnoth, in battle against the invaders at Maldon. Historically, this was a chivalrous but futile episode in a disastrous campaign which ended in a treaty between the Viking leader, Olaf of Norway, and the English, whereby 22,000 pounds of gold and silver were given to the raiders as the price of peace. The treaty also provided elaborate regulations to protect England's sea-borne trade from interruption by Viking raiders harrying other nations.

Here is another essay in the construction of international law. Foreign shipping in English harbours was to be immune from capture and English ships and their cargo in foreign harbours were to be safe, provided that the cargo had not passed into the custody of the foreigners, in which case it was a lawful prize. The treaty also bound Olaf to assist King Aethelred against any future Viking raiders. Apparently this treaty never came into effect, for in 994 Olaf again appeared as an enemy, accompanied by Swein, son of Harold, King of Denmark and conqueror of Norway, with a combined fleet of 94 ships. Peace was bought this time for 16,000 pounds. Swein returned to Denmark, but Olaf came to King Aethelred at Andover and received the sacrament of Confirmation, the king standing sponsor. Again Olaf entered into a treaty, which this time was fulfilled. Olaf disappears from English history and within a few months entered on the expedition which ended in his establishment as king of Norway.

The power of the Danes alone, however, was sufficient to bring down the English monarchy. With the exception of the year 1000 in which Aethelred ravaged Strathclyde, there were Danish raids every year, and in 1002, 1006 and 1012 peace had to be bought by the payment of huge indemnities, amounting in the last year to £48,000. All was in vain. In 1013 Swein, by then king of Denmark, returned to conquer England and succeeded. Northumberland, Lindsey, and the five boroughs of the old Danelaw submitted at once. London alone made a show of resistance but not for long, and at the close of the year Aethelred, who had already sent his wife to Normandy, followed her, and left Swein in possession of the country.

Aethelred had by this date been on the throne for thirty-five years and was now nearly fifty. The bare recital of the events of his reign suggests that we lack some essential clue. The chief contemporary authority, the anonymous monk who compiled the Abingdon Chronicle, presents a picture of war and misery due to treachery and misgovernment. Archbishop Wulfstan of York, preaching in 1014 (when Aethelred had been restored), represented the misery of the time as "God's judgment upon a treacherous, wicked people." There was certainly treachery. Olaf of Norway broke his first treaty. In 1002, Aethelred himself was responsible for a general massacre of Danes in southern England (in anticipation, we are told, of a similar attempt by the Danes against him). In 1008 a new, heavily armed British fleet was immobilised by the treachery of a Sussex traitor, Wulfnoth. Eadric, Aethelred's own creation as Ealdoman of Mercia, betrayed his country twice. Thorkell the Tall of Denmark, who deserted his leader Swein in 1012, deserted Aethelred soon after. We are puzzled not by these isolated crimes in an age still barbaric, and which can all be paralleled in the Europe of the twentieth century, but by the disintegration of a kingdom united for sixty years and apparently powerful and contented.

Administrative machinery had evidently not kept pace with the increased responsibilities of the centralised monarchy, whose strength and popularity therefore depended too much on the character and personal ability of the king. If the king was weak or incompetent the local nobility, the great ecclesiastics and the boroughs, which in the Danelaw were for all practical purposes self-governing, had no guidance, no leadership and no great incentive to fight for a suzerain whose weakness deprived suzerainty of all its usefulness. But this is

not the whole story. Aethelred and his advisers pursued from 890 onwards a foolishly optimistic foreign policy. We should regard this optimism as characteristic of the age and connected with the religious revival and the growing influence of churchmen in public affairs. Treaties were made which bear the superficial character of statesmanship, but they were not kept. To this fact rather than to any general decline in private morals we should probably ascribe the fierce clerical denunciations of the habits of the age. The treaties of 992 and 994 were intended not to buy off raiders but to establish permanent and friendly relations between England and Scandinavia, on the lines of the Anglo-Norman treaty of 991. Such policy is praised as constructive statesmanship or condemned as appeasement (in the modern idiom) according as it succeeds or fails. In the eleventh century as in the twentieth, it failed. The reasons are fairly clear. The new policy coincided with the rise of a powerful Danish state, ambitious, because short of land for settlement, and looking westward for expansion. The attempt to play off Norway against Denmark was premature, and the Norman alliance was destined not to save but to destroy the house of Cerdic. Above all, Aethelred and his advisers, like countless politicians since his time, failed to realise that treaties which profess to set up an international order which is not in accord either with the real balance of forces or with the prevailing international morality will never be kept.

In defence of Aethelred's foreign policy it can only be said that the breakdown of internal unity in England as a result of decentralisation, might have been equally fatal even with a wiser foreign policy. This, however, is doubtful.

The repeated tributes paid to the Danes amounted to the huge sum of £426,000 sterling. This was the equivalent of at least £25,000,000 in present values. Under the prevailing system, the burden of this imposition was largely passed on by the nobles and the Church to the ceorls, and must have accelerated the process under which many of the freemen became the half-free villeins or *bordarii* of the Domesday Survey. What happened to the ceorl was, however, nobody's business. In earlier days the ceorl had been directly dependent on the king of his province, and the king had been to a large extent dependent for his revenue on the ceorl. Now, the king's rights over the ceorl had been largely booked away and the great landlords like Oswald of Worcester had in turn devolved their own rights and responsibilities. The result was a great

weakening of national feeling, even in Wessex and Mercia. In the rest of England national feeling hardly existed.

The Danelaw, in which we include four distinct regions, Northumbria, the Five Boroughs of Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester and Stamford, East Anglia and the south-east Midlands, unquestionably acknowledged the suzerainty of the king of united England. The Wantage code, for instance, which relates to the territory of the Five Boroughs, was promulgated by Aethelred as king of England. It is not, however, a body of State law, but merely a document giving the covering authority of the Crown to a large body of pre-existing local customs. The supreme judicial authority in this region was the Court of the Five Boroughs, a general assembly of notables from the whole region. There also were separate borough courts equivalent to the shire courts of the south, and the courts of the Wapentakes, under the control of the twelve leading thegns of the district. These men were responsible to the king's reeve for arresting all men of bad repute who had broken the peace and had also to swear not to accuse any innocent person. These thegns were more like judges than were the Earls, Bishops, Lords of the Manors or Reeves who might preside over the shire or hundred courts in Wessex. In theory, in the Danelaw as elsewhere, the suitors constituted the court, and the fate of the wrongdoer was decided by the ordeal, not by fact-finding judges or juries. But these distinctions belong to legal and constitutional rather than to political history. The chief thegns were in fact responsible for law and order in the Wapentakes, and the notables of the whole territory of the Five Boroughs, which were in fact five shires, formed the supreme political authority of the region. Aethelred's solemn promulgation of the Wantage code is really little else than the solemn recognition of the autonomy of the Five Boroughs. Once, in 962, an English king had "ventured upon a piece of State legislation directly affecting the Danelaw."¹ The enactment itself—about cattle thieves—was of no great importance, but the "extraordinary deference" with which King Edgar addresses his Danish subjects, and the virtual undertaking he gives, that the making of this law, applicable to Danes as well as to Englishmen and Britons, is something wholly exceptional and not to be regarded as a precedent, shows us that even under a strong king the Danelaw was virtually independent. As Professor Stenton goes on to say, the king "claims far less than

¹ F. M. Stenton, *The Danes in England*. Oxford.

has been accorded to him by many modern writers. Even the bare allegiance of his Danish subjects is not taken for granted. Their fealty is balanced by his recognition of their autonomy. Still more significant is his virtual denial of responsibility for the maintenance of public order within the Danelaw. Among the English it is for him and his wise men to improve and enlarge the body of accepted custom. The Danes have their autonomy, and the king can do no more than propose regulations for their acceptance. Above all, he does not even venture to appoint a punishment for those of his own servants among the Danes who misbehave themselves. With all the force that a very expressive language can give him, he leaves his Danish subjects to themselves."

The existence in the heart of the country of this great body of virtually independent and wholly autonomous peasantry was, with the great growth of the towns in the Danelaw, a decisive factor in the military history of the whole of the eleventh century in England. The peasants could not, and the men of the towns did not wish, to leave their normal pursuits to fight against any one who was prepared to leave them in enjoyment of their land, their trade, and their virtually independent courts. The battles of great nobles for earldoms and kingdoms left the peasants and the towns of the Danelaw not merely unmoved but actively disinterested. As for the lords and bishops, it is abundantly clear that their allegiance was dictated in Aethelred's time by personal and political, not by racial or national considerations. A Danish or Norman king might be as good as a Saxon and better if he kept better order. When the king was Aethelred, whose presence on the throne put a premium on disorders, the issue was almost beyond doubt from the start. What might be equally to the point, a timely change of allegiance might and did mean the transference of estates to the time-server.

Admittedly the events of Aethelred's reign are puzzling. We do not certainly know the immediate cause of the final collapse. We do know, however, that Swein, after his triumph, died in 1014, leaving as his successor in England his younger son Cnut, then a mere youth. The same nobles who had transferred their easy allegiance to Swein in the autumn of 1013 now recalled Aethelred.

We learn from the sequel how personal were the motives of the various parties.

Swein's main army, with his ships, was on the Trent at

the time of his death. This army gave its allegiance to Cnut, who also inherited the benefits of the treaty made by his father with the men of Lindsey. When Aethelred entered Lindsey at the head of an army, Cnut and his fleet left the Trent, and Aethelred took vengeance on those in Lindsey who had been prepared to abet the enemy. Whereupon the Abingdon chronicler, instead of hailing this triumph of Anglo-Saxon over Dane, remarks that the "poor people" of Lindsey were "betrayed" by Cnut.¹

The next thing of which we read is the murder of two leading thegns in the Danelaw by Eadric of Mercia, the arrest of the widow of one of them by the king and the revolt of the king's son Edmund, who married the widow and raised an independent army in the Danelaw. Edmund was at once accepted as lord by the whole Five Boroughs.

When Cnut landed again in 1015 he was joined by Eadric of Mercia and his men (Anglo-Saxon, of course, by race as well as allegiance) and opposed by the Saxon Edmund and the whole (mainly Danish) population of Lindsey and the Danelaw, who, for further assistance against the invader, called on Aethelred and the men of London. The war continued its paradoxical course. Aethelred fell back on London; Edmund joined forces with the earl of Northumbria and ravaged the estates of Mercian nobles. The Danish king ravaged the Danelaw.

Edmund,
Ironsides,
king,
April-
November
1016.

The decisive incident in this first phase of the war was the submission of Northumbria to Cnut. Edmund, known as Ironside, who, unlike his father, had his full share of the family talent for war, at once marched south and joined forces with his father at London. Here, on April 23rd, 1016, Aethelred died, and Edmund was at once chosen king by the southern magnates and the men of London.

Cnut,
King of
England.
1016-35.

The brief reign of Edmund lasted until only the 30th of November, when he died. During these six months he had heavily defeated Cnut at the battle of Orford, but had himself, owing to Mercian cowardice, been decisively defeated at Ashington in Essex six months later. At the time of his death, Edmund was king only over Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Wessex. London and the rest of the kingdom had been ceded to Cnut. On Edmund's death the final note of farce was struck by the unanimous election of Cnut as king of all England by the Witan.

The profound disturbances of Aethelred's reign, due as they

¹ Quoted by Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 281.

were, in their beginnings, to a foolish foreign policy and prolonged by the opportunity offered to brave and determined aspirants to power by the widespread popular indifference to the fate of the English ruling house, were certainly aggravated by baronial unrest. At the time of Dunstan's retirement, there had been what was in effect a barons' revolt against the alienation of land to the Church and the growing secular power of the great ecclesiastics. The Church, as far as we can judge from the charters, substantially held her own. We know, for instance, that the great grants to Oswald of Worcester remained intact. The result must have been and was, a discontented baronage and a zealous body of ecclesiastical landlords. If Aethelred could in fact have relied upon his caldormen, earls and thegns to take the field on his behalf with vigour and enthusiasm, then he was nothing but a fool to go on buying off his enemies. But the evidence is overwhelming that whenever he or his successor Edmund equipped a fleet or raised an army, baronial treachery led to its defeat, and as the population as a whole was indifferent, the result was fatal. The nobles, Saxon and Danish alike, continued to fight for their own hands. The Church wanted peace and was evidently prepared to pay for it for a long time. So were the people. Aethelred's policy of appeasement was a logical if ignoble conclusion.

Cnut's solution was simple and apparently effective. He saw that the church's support could be won by a stalwart profession of Christianity, and he holds his secure place in history as "the first Viking leader to be admitted into the civilised fraternity of Christian kings."¹ But he also saw that decentralisation had been carried too far, and he placed the country under a limited number of great earls, not territorial magnates but ministers of state on the Diocletian model, the boundaries of whose jurisdiction were laid down by himself. Finally, Cnut raised Danegeld for the original purposes for the last time to pay off his own army. The place of the Danegeld for the rest of his reign and until 1051 was taken by the *heregeld*, a levy devoted to paying a standing corps of housecarles, and a fleet of 16 warships. This standing army was necessitated partly by the lack of personal loyalty on the part of the territorial nobility, and partly by economic progress, which made it impossible to raise an effective citizen army. Cnut thus found an answer at one and the same time to baronial disloyalty and popular indifference.

¹ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 391.

Of the sixteen earls whose names we know from Cnut's charters, only six were English. One of these was the famous Godwine, certainly a man of no loyalty to the house of Cerdic, and possibly a son of the traitor Wulfnoth and as such recompensed and ennobled. Whatever his origins, Godwine was a great power in the later days of Cnut's reign, and his name, with that of Earl Siward of Northumbria (a Dane) and Earl Leofric of Mercia, appears until his death on most charters not only of Cnut but of his successors Harold, Harthacnut and Edward the Confessor.

Cnut was not only a conqueror and an administrator. He was a great legislator for England and the first king of England to rule an empire overseas. His rule was not unchallenged. In 1026 he had to face a coalition of Olaf of Norway, Amund of Sweden, and Ulf regent of Denmark. The sequel is as curious and illogical as the sequence of events in England in Aethelred's reign. Cnut was heavily defeated at sea by Ulf and the Swedes, after he had apparently defeated the Norwegian fleet under Olaf. The next we hear is that the defeated Olaf is still master of Norway but that Ulf is murdered and Cnut is undisputed master of Denmark. The very next year (1027) Cnut felt sufficiently secure in his two kingdoms to attend the coronation of the Emperor Conrad I by Pope John XIX in Rome on Easter Sunday and to negotiate with the Pope, the Emperor and the king of Burgundy for greater freedom of travel and trade for English merchants and pilgrims, and for fewer exactions from English archbishops when called to Rome to receive the Pallium. These negotiations were successful and Cnut reported on them in writing to his council while on his way to Denmark for his last and brilliant Scandinavian campaign. At Nidaros, Cnut held a great court in the summer of 1028, installed Hakon, son of the great Earl Eric, as under-king of Norway and saw himself for a brief moment undisputed master of the Scandinavian world.

Yet the recurrent theme of these battles, *vae victoribus*, persists. Hakon was drowned at sea in 1029. Cnut appointed as his deputy in Norway Swein, his son by his mistress Aelgifu of Northampton. Denmark he had already given to his legitimate son Harthacnut, his son by Emma, daughter of Richard of Normandy and widow of Aethelred. Cnut, like Aethelwulf of England and many another northern warrior prince, including the great Charlemagne himself, could not subordinate personal and dynastic considerations to political

necessities. The Norwegians might accept Cnut and the Norwegian nobleman whom he appointed as Regent. They would not accept Aelgifu's son, and her son would never accept the overlordship of his younger half-brother.

Cnut, in his letter to the English Council, refers to the manner in which he had rescued England from "those nations and peoples who, had it been in their power, would have deprived us of both our kingdom and our life." Certainly, Cnut himself was a bulwark against the disruptive influence of these insipient nationalisms, but when he died in 1035 his empire, largely disintegrated by his own actions, fell to pieces. Olaf's son Magnus regained Norway. Harthacnut ruled in Denmark. Harold, Cnut's younger illegitimate son, was elected regent of England in 1036 and recognised as king the next year. Harold's reign was short, and on his death in 1040 he was succeeded by Harthacnut, who thus accidentally united the English and Danish crowns. But Harthacnut died in 1042 and the English Witan, learning nothing and forgetting nothing, accepted as king the only surviving son of the ever-defeated Aethelred the Rede-less. The son is known to history as Edward the Confessor, the last Anglo-Saxon to rule over the Anglo-Saxons. The Anglo-Danish monarchy thus came to an end as unexpected as its beginnings. In 1035 Cnut had been to all appearances the most powerful sovereign in Europe, the Emperor alone excepted. Seven years later his descendants yielded England to the heir of the house of Cerdic without even a battle.

Harold,
king,
1037-1040.

Hartha-
cnut,
king,
1040-1042.

Edward
the Con-
fessor,
king,
1042-1066.

Behind the dynastic changes lies buried a tangled and probably tragic story of intrigue, bloodshed and treachery in which Emma, widow of Aethelred and Cnut, mother of Harthacnut by her second husband, and of Edward the Confessor by her first, is clearly involved. So also was Godwine, earl of Wessex, the father of that Harold whom William the Conqueror defeated at Hastings. We need not attempt to guess the story in detail. Cnut's widow resented the election of Harold, her husband's younger son by Aelgifu of Morthampton, as king of England, and she maintained until 1037, with the help of Godwine, an independent court at Winchester. In 1036 Godwine was at least accessory to the treacherous murder of Alfred, Emma's younger son by Aethelred.

Godwine saved himself after 1036 by deserting Queen Emma. Later he made a handsome present to King Harthacnut. We need not doubt either that he was one of the first to acclaim Edward, Alfred's brother, as king on Harthacnut's

death. England remained uneasy, however. Magnus, King of Norway, claimed both the Danish and the English thrones on the strength of a treaty he had made with Harthacnut, and while Godwine protested loyalty to Edward, Queen Emma supported Magnus's claim against that of her own son. Godwine's loyalty to Edward was based on personal reasons. His son-in-law Swein was the Danish claimant to the Danish throne and Godwine attempted to induce Edward of England to support Swein in his struggle for Danish independence. Edward and his advisers maintained instead an armed and watchful neutrality and in 1047 the danger passed with the death of Magnus. Swein secured his Danish kingdom and the crown of Norway was seized by Harold Hardrada, half-brother of Cnut's enemy Olaf. Thus a second Scandinavian empire fell to pieces and England was left free to indulge in civil wars.

In 1051 Godwine, refusing to obey a possibly ill-advised order of the Court, raised an army and set up his standard on the Cotswolds near Tetbury. The other great earls rallied with their followers to the king and the two armies faced each other, both clearly unwilling to fight. Godwine was forced to agree to attend a meeting of the Witan to be held in London on September 24th. The king at once called out the Fyrd and thus mobilised the ordinary thegns and freemen of Godwine's earldom against him. Godwine and his son Harold refused to appear before the Witan without guarantees, which the king refused to give. Godwine was thereupon exiled. He waited his time. It came quickly.

In 1052 Godwine, assisted by some mercenaries, landed at Dungeness and obtained promises of support from Kent, Surrey and Sussex. He returned to Flanders and a little later aided by Edward's naval inefficiency he harried Portland and the Isle of Wight and succeeded in joining Harold farther west. Soon he had made himself master of the whole southern coast and the king was forced to re-establish him and his family. In effect the king had to surrender the substance in order to retain the appearance of power. After 1052 Godwine and his family were all-powerful.

The meaning of this story is fairly clear from the terms of the peace. Godwine got his earldom back, but the king had also to undertake to outlaw a number of foreigners, including Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury. The sudden change, within a twelvemonth, of the balance of forces must be ascribed in part to a visit paid at the end of 1051 by William of Normandy to the English Court, when William was apparently recognised

by Edward as his heir. The great Anglo-Saxon and Danish nobles clearly took fright. They wished for no such master. Yet they were digging their own grave. Godwine lacked the one justification for rebellion. He was ready to strike a fatal blow at the authority of government but he did not assume that authority. England was not conquered but merely weakened. Godwine was the real architect of the Norman Conquest. The England which his son Harold came to rule as king was an England hopelessly disrupted by the illegal actions of his own father. Revenge, the Normans must have felt, is a dish best eaten cold.

In one case Godwine's intolerance was especially ill-judged. The lawful Archbishop of Canterbury was among the victims whom he drove into exile and William of Normandy, when his hour struck, was able to use the uncanonical occupation of England's chief see by Bishop Stigand as an argument to influence the Pope in favour of the Norman expedition against England.

Godwine himself died in 1053 and was succeeded by Harold. In 1056 the active disintegration of the English kingdom began with a renewal of Welsh nationalism under King Gruffydd ap Llywelyn in alliance with Aelfgar, the outlawed heir of Leofric of Mercia. Harold, now Earl of Wessex, was placed in charge of the king's army and at once invaded Wales, but the rival armies came to terms and Aelfgar was restored to his earldom of East Anglia and Gruffydd evidently retained some conquests. A second campaign against Gruffydd seems to have ended in the formal cession of some territory to him, although he became an under-king to Edward.

Death of
Godwine,
1053.

The real meaning of this policy of appeasement towards Wales is clear from the sequel. On the deaths of Leofric of Mercia and Ralf of Hereford, Harold and his relations secured all the earldoms except Mercia itself. Harold's policy clearly was to isolate Mercia. He evidently failed, because Aelfgar the new earl married his daughter to Gruffydd and his alliance with Wales lasted till his death in 1062. His successor, Edwin, was barely of age and Harold, assisted by his brother Tostig, Earl of Northumbria, at once attacked Gruffydd. The campaign was brilliant and the nascent power of Wales was broken; the border lands ceded to Gruffydd were regained and Gruffydd himself was killed by his own men. Harold seemed at the height of his power and was so confident of his position that, in 1063, he left the country, on some foreign mission. The sequel is an historical puzzle.

HAROLD ASSUMES THE KINGSHIP

In the Bayeux Tapestry Harold is seen acknowledging William as his overlord. That he came into William's power by mischance is certain, but it is improbable that the story which is told in the nearly contemporary tapestry is false. Far too many witnesses were still alive when the tapestry was made and exhibited. It is more probable that Harold was forced to acknowledge William's claim to the English throne as a condition of his own release. In any case his release came too late. In 1064 Mercia and Northumbria were planning a revolt which broke out in 1065. The nominal cause was the injustice of Tostig's rule as Earl of Northumbria. Actually the revolt was a renewal of the old civil war between Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex. On this occasion as so often before, the Welsh joined Mercia in support of the Northumbrians who had already accepted Edwin's brother Morcar as Tostig's successor. The king accepted the Northumbrians' choice and Tostig went into exile. In reality England was divided once more. On January 5th, 1066, the king died.

Revolt in
Mercia
and
North-
umbria,
1064-5.

Harold at once assumed the kingship and was accepted as king by the Witan, but it was not by popular choice that he entered on his brief reign but as the nominee of the southern nobles, who saw in his military energy the best chance of preserving their property, and of the northern earls who needed an ally against the threat of Norwegian invasion. The great mass of the people was as usual indifferent.

Harold,
king,
January to
October,
1066.

The routine of government went on. "Coins are known to have been struck for Harold at forty-four different minting places, ranging from York to Exeter and from Chester to Romney."¹ The administrative system was in fact handed down intact to the Norman conquerors, just as it had been handed to the Danish conquerors fifty years before. But this only shows, in the second case as in the first, the profound indifference of the Church and the common people to the quarrels of the great territorial magnates who had long since come to form an international class without loyalty to race, region or state. Harold himself was half Dane. William of Normandy had Anglo-Saxon and French as well as Viking blood. Tostig, the first rebel gangster to attempt invasion in Harold's reign, was Harold's own brother, driven by the revolt of the Anglo-Saxon earls in the north to seek the restoration of his fortunes by alliance with Harold Hardrada of Norway.

If the civil administration had continued on the lines laid

¹ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 573.

down by Athelstan, it was far otherwise with the naval and military organisation. Edward the Confessor had by 1050 dispersed the small standing force of 16 warships which he had inherited from Cnut. Instead he relied on the arrangement whereby the ports of Sandwich, Dover, Fordwich and Romney, in return for charters giving them the profits of jurisdiction, agreed to provide men and ships. Probably Hastings and Hythe accepted similar obligations. In an emergency, further ships could be provided out of further contributions in men and money from the shires but no levy for this purpose seems to have been made after 1051. In that year Edward the Confessor also abolished the Heregeld, out of which the king's own bodyguard had been maintained. The militia remained. The English kings seem never to have abandoned the theoretical right to call up the ceorls as well as the thegns for military service. In practice, however, the thegn owed his service to his lord and was expected when summoned to bring his own men" with him to his lord's standard. Some of the militia thus owed a divided loyalty and, in any case, the day of the ordinary ceorl as a valuable soldier had long since passed. The ceorls had neither arms nor horses and their enthusiasm was limited to the defence of their own land and neighbourhood. From the days of Valmy onwards, conscripts have needed ideologies to stimulate their ardour. Until the dawn of nationalism, history tells us that only religion could weld the rank and file of any nation into an army.

The consequences of these conditions are easy to understand. The great nobles could be mobilised for a brief military expedition with an objective which harmonised with their own interests, but an army could not be assembled against a hypothetical threat or kept in being. Worse still, the fleet had to be written off as a military asset.

In these circumstances it was less surprising that Harold should have been accepted as king than that he should have wished to attempt the usurpation. He seized the throne with full knowledge that William of Normandy claimed it, and that Harold Hardrada of Norway would probably do so. He knew also at first hand the military power of Normandy. He, least of all men, could have had any illusions about the loyalty of his fellow earls to his own upstart house. It is notoriously easy for the historian to be wise after the event. The converse is less often considered; that it is peculiarly difficult for the historian to be as foolish after the event as the politician was

before it. To ask how Harold hoped, in the circumstances of 1066, to keep the throne is to ask a really difficult question. It is so obvious to us that as the supporter of either of the rival claimants he could have secured his position as the power behind the throne and one of the leading figures in western Europe. He must, however, have felt, before giving up this attractive certainty, that he had much more than an even chance of holding the great prize.

Harold made no attempt to assemble an army. He called out the militia of the southern counties to defend the coastline and called on the ports to provide and man ships, but before William of Normandy sailed, he had been forced by the needs of the harvest to disperse both militia and fleet. The temper of the fleet is illustrated by the fate of the first attempt against Harold by his brother Tostig. Tostig, with some Flemish mercenaries, raided Sandwich in May, 1066, took possession of the ships in the harbour and attached the crews to his service. With this fleet he sailed north, but after ravaging the Northumbrian coast and being defeated on land by Earl Edwin of Mercia and Earl Morcar of Northumbria, his fleet deserted him and sailed back to Sandwich. The southern militia remained on the coastline for some weeks after this, and the fleet, mutinous as it was, kept the sea in the Channel. But in September the militia went home and such fleet as could be kept at sea was concentrated in London, evidently to minimise the risk of desertion.

Tostig's
revolt,
May, 1066.

At this moment Harold Hardrada of Norway with a fleet of 300 ships sailed down the Yorkshire coast, threw off landing parties which harried Cleveland, Scarborough and Holderness and sailed up the Humber, aided by Tostig.

From this time events moved at a speed which would be sensational even in the twentieth century. On the 20th of September, Harold Hardrada defeated the northern earls, Edwin and Morcar, at Fulford, two miles south of York. By September 24th, King Harold of England who had made a forced march north with his own retainers and such militia as he could raise, came up with Harold Hardrada's army and the next day he defeated him at Stamfordbridge. Harold Hardrada and Tostig were killed. At 9 a.m. on September 28th William of Normandy sailed into Pevensey Bay. On October 14th the Battle of Hastings was fought.

Harold was at York when he heard of William's landing. He cannot have heard before October 1st. He was at that time

Campaign
of
Hastings
Sept. 28-
Oct. 14,
1066.

undisputed master of the north. He had just conferred a signal service on Edwin and Morcar by defeating their northern conquerors. His forced march to Stamfordbridge showed strategic insight. It had been necessary to risk all to avoid a war on two fronts. But by October 1st that danger was over. Even if the loyalty of the northern earls was doubtful, which it was, they had just sustained a heavy defeat at Fulford and were in no condition to take the field for some time. Why then the forced march, first to London and then to Hastings? The decision had obvious disadvantages which the latest historian of the period has brilliantly summarised:

“Even if he despatched the summonses to the host from York as quickly as they could be written after he was told of the invasion, it was physically impossible for the thegns of distant shires to receive them in time to set out with him for Sussex. No mediaeval government ever attempted to mobilise a large army with this speed. It is clear, in fact, that the effective part of the host with which Harold fought the Battle of Hastings consisted of his own housecarles and those of his brothers Gyrth and Loefwine; thegns and mounted freemen who had joined him on his northward and southward march; and an element representing the men of those classes who lived within a two days’ ride of London and were accessible to his messengers. There is every reason to accept the statement of an annalist of the next generation that Harold moved from London before half his army had come together.”¹

Harold, however, must have appreciated the situation differently or he would have acted differently. Had he been able to rely on the loyalty of the north and midlands he would have had, after his victory at Stamfordbridge, all the cards in his hand. He would have had only to raise the northern and midland thegns, march south on London and there await the invaders. William’s relatively small force did not, as we know, feel strong enough to move directly against London even after the Battle of Hastings. With the knowledge that Harold was marching south with a large and growing army, William could not have moved from his base without far larger forces.

For these reasons it is, we believe, certain that Harold knew that the country was at best indifferent to the issue of the struggle between William and himself. Furthermore, there

¹ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 584.

are good reasons why the country should have been even more indifferent than it had been in the days of Aethelred. Such dynastic sentiment as existed in England attached itself to Edward's nephew Edgar the Aetheling; such national sentiment as existed centred round the Earls of Mercia and Northumbria, the pre-eminent representatives of the old Anglo-Saxon nobility. The north remained, as ever, regional in sentiment, and was no more willing to accept Harold than it was to accept Duke William. The peasant proprietors of the Danelaw could not leave their holdings to fight and wished only for peace. The Anglo-Saxon ceorls had already gone back to work and were indifferent in what to them was not a struggle for national independence but a competition for lordship. The Church was equally indifferent. Many of the bishops were hostile to the house of Godwine because of the expulsion of the lawful Archbishop of Canterbury. The general run of the clergy favoured neither candidate for the throne. They would have preferred peace to war and would support the winning cause. But there was a further factor, new since the earlier invasions. England in 1066 was becoming urbanised and the constitutional developments which were to give the town a share and an interest in the central government were two centuries ahead.

The first experiments in borough organisation in England as on the Continent had gone much too far in the direction of autonomy. The towns were centres of trade and their interests cosmopolitan. They were in process of acquiring (some, like London and the Cinque ports, had already acquired) their own courts. The towns in the Danelaw had their own code of law and were the centres of an essentially local government. As recently as in the days of Edmund Ironside, London had actively resisted the invader. The fact that London in 1066, beyond first accepting Harold and then accepting William, played no part in the contest for the throne, must possess some significance, particularly when we realise that the town population of England was substantial by 1066. The Domesday records show that the population of York, even in 1087 after the devastation of Yorkshire, exceeded 8000 and that of Norwich and Lincoln 6000. Thetford contained perhaps 4750 and Oxford 3500. Of London, Domesday gives us no particulars, but it was certainly the most densely populated city in England and it would be rash to estimate its population in 1066 at less than 30,000. It is to be noted that William did not try to

subdue London by force. It was the great prize and he never attempted it. We must assume a population so great that its able-bodied militia, one in four or five of the population, would have provided a formidable opposition even to William's professional and highly-equipped force. A further hint as to the urban population in 1066 comes from the Pipe Roll of Henry I. Among the aid-paying boroughs London came first with an aid of £120. York, although it had not, even by that date, fully recovered from its condition at the time of the Domesday Survey, paid £40. We may, therefore, perhaps, fairly assume that London in 1066 was three times and possibly four times as populous as York. Winchester, on the Pipe Roll evidence, was probably two-thirds of the size of London; while Exeter, Canterbury, Colchester, Gloucester, Wallingford, Worcester, Cambridge, Hereford, Northampton, Nottingham and Derby may be assumed on the same evidence to have had in 1066 a population roughly equivalent to that of Oxford. The Pipe Roll list, like that of Domesday, is not complete. It omits prosperous seaport towns such as Dover, Hastings, Bristol, Yarmouth and Southampton, and numerous small burghs, relics of Alfred's military reforms, which had developed into towns. A further check on the size and relative importance of the boroughs in 1066 is provided by the coinage. From Athelstan's time onwards, all dies for coins were cut in London. On the other hand, all boroughs had their own moneyers, the number being originally at any rate prescribed by law. We do not know the full number of moneyers working in 1066, but from actual coins we know the minimum figures for the most important boroughs. London had at least 20, York 10, Lincoln and Winchester 9, Chester 8, Canterbury and Oxford 7, Thetford, Gloucester and Worcester at least 6. Ipswich and Norwich are represented in the coinage by only five moneyers apiece, but from what we know of the population of East Anglia,¹ there must have been many more.

These are impressive facts and although the details are speculative there is no doubt that the general conclusion is correct. In every shire, if we except the extreme north and the Welsh marches, there was at least one county town of sufficient size at least to be called a town even to-day, while London at any rate was a fairly large city. The population of all these

¹ It has been calculated from Domesday that the population of Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincoln was roughly 73,000, as contrasted with a population of some 33,000 for the shires of Gloucester, Worcester, Hereford, Salop, Stafford and Warwick.

towns may indeed have been substantially larger than we have suggested. The Domesday figures quoted are definite minima. They assume one household only per tenement and that the list of tenements is exhaustive, but as regards tenements not held by the Crown this may very well not be so.

This network of substantial towns had grown up in no satisfactory constitutional relationship to the central government. They knew the king's government as a collector of taxes but they received from it no services in return. They administered their own law. They had their own police and there was no standing army either to protect or to coerce them. Feudalism never solved the problem of the towns, which tended either to become independent or to secure control through representative institutions of the central machinery of government.¹

These developments were in the distant future in 1066. Nevertheless, the townspeople in the south, had they felt their liberties and trade threatened by William of Normandy, could have opposed him with forces so numerous that he would have required a very large army indeed and a very long campaign to conquer the country. It is not irrelevant to remember that the success of the first Viking invasion was due to the superior concentration of the invaders and the almost wholly agricultural character of the English economy in Alfred's time. When Alfred concentrated the men of the shires in fortifications the Vikings had at once lost their strategic advantage.

We must conclude therefore that in addition to the dynastic, regional, social and religious influences which still divided England, Harold had to face the complete indifference of the towns which contained if not the bulk of the population, at least that portion of it from which it should have been easiest to mobilise support. We believe therefore that Harold's strategy was based on the necessity of surprising the second invader as he had surprised the first and defeating him before he could get reinforcements. When Harold took his stand on the ridge where Battle Abbey stands to-day he was not, as has sometimes been suggested, barring the road to London. He was concentrating his force for an attack on William's position.

¹ The earliest development of the independent township was in France and of representative institutions in Spain. The finest development of the idea of the free city was, however, in Italy and of representative government in England. In France the towns gradually lost their independence and in Spain the Cortes gradually lost its power.

We must therefore assume that his force was if anything superior to William's in numbers.

Battle of
Hastings,
October
14, 1066.

There is much doubt as to the size of both armies and the most modern view gives the Normans an army not much exceeding 5000 and Harold an army of not more than 7000. Against this view we know that William of Poitiers, the most nearly contemporary writer, gives the size of William's army as 1000 large vessels and 2000 smaller craft. The large vessels, as shown on the Bayeux Tapestry, were however only flat barges with one sail, holding not more than twelve mounted men. Against the testimony of William of Poitiers we have that of Wace, the Bayeux poet, writing in 1172 but professing to have first-hand information from his father. He gives the total of William's fleet as not quite 700. The two figures cannot be reconciled, and neither has any real authority behind it. It is certain, anyhow, that calculations based on the numbers which could have been transported in a Viking fleet are hopelessly wide of the mark. William of Normandy brought a small and highly-armed force; in other words, he transported knights in armour and their horses, the eleventh century equivalent of a mechanised division. The Vikings had arrived unmounted in large clinker-built galleys which did not carry horses (although they often carried livestock) but could carry fifty or sixty men.

A more certain starting point for calculation is the size of the battlefield. Harold took up a position on the summit of the hill at Battle, on a ridge some 1600 yards in length. In the centre is a plateau roughly 600 yards in length; the ridge falls away fairly sharply on both flanks. The whole position was easily defensible. While, however, we should expect Harold to have occupied it all, it is just possible that he held only the central plateau. The fall in the ground to the east and west of the plateau might have protected his flanks adequately from an army of not more than 5000 men.

We can be fairly certain that the number of knights in William's army did not exceed 2000. Normandy could not put more than 1200 knights in the field for a foreign campaign, and the number of knights from other parts must have been for political reasons, substantially less than the Norman contingent. If, however, we accept 2000 mounted knights as the probable upward limit for this portion of William's army, the lowest estimate of the size of the fleet will give us a far greater number of foot soldiers than that required to bring the army up to 5000. We shall probably be wise in assuming

that William's army, which after heavy losses was able to conduct a series of impressive demonstrations without reinforcements, was not less than 10,000 and may very well have been, as General Fuller estimates (in his *Decisive Battles*), as much as 13,000. In that case Harold's army cannot have been less and was probably more, unless we are to guess that Harold's intelligence was at fault and that he had underestimated William's strength. This is extremely unlikely. Moreover, the generally accepted tradition gives Harold a battle-line nearly a mile long, and nothing like this frontage could have been held for a long day against cavalry by as few as 7000 lightly-armed infantry without assistance from earthworks or a palisade. The lower estimate of both armies remains credible, but not, as it seems, probable.

Harold almost certainly intended to attack William on the day after that on which the battle was actually fought. His surprise was strategic, not tactical. He cannot have intended to fight with tired troops after a forced march of 250 miles. He did intend to fight before William had secured any adherents within the country or before he could get any reinforcements from Normandy. But Harold had met his master. William surprised the surpriser and the sequel was inevitable. The more modern army with its higher fire-power and penetration won hands down. Hastings was the last battle fought by the old-fashioned infantry against cavalry. The axe was Harold's dominant weapon. The lance, sword and arrow opposed the axe and won the day. The decisive factor was the trained cavalry provided by the knights—a "mechanised" and armoured force of professional men-at-arms to which nothing in Harold's army could offer effective resistance.

Harold's men were drawn up, as was necessary, in a phalanx, behind a shield-wall. His equipment gave him no other possible defence against cavalry. In front were Harold's personal troops—his housecarles, and those of his brothers and other nobles. Behind were the levies, many of them countrymen in their ordinary clothes, armed only with staves or axes. The housecarles, in addition to their shields, had helmets and hauberks and were armed with swords and spears. The standard of Wessex and Harold's personal ensign were set up in the centre of the line of battle.

Against him William marched in three divisions. The left consisted of Bretons and men from Anjou and Maine under Alain of Brittany (whose ancestor had been restored to his

throne by Athelstan); the right was formed by French and Flemings under Eustace of Boulogne; and the centre by Normans under William himself. Each division had archers and slingers in the front, then the main body of men-at-arms and lastly the knights on horseback.

William won because he had an army trained in the co-ordinated use of weapons. The fire-power of the archers, capable of being used directly or indirectly, prepared the way for the shock tactics of the cavalry. The role of the men-at-arms was to contain the enemy on his front and thus enable the cavalry to manoeuvre to a flank if necessary. The infantryman, tied to his shield-wall, must in such a battle be defeated by the fire-power of the archers and slingers who outranged him. The arrow and sling had long been the decisive weapons in the east. They were to be later in the west. But Hastings was a cavalry victory and the knights were for the time, and indeed for nearly two hundred years to come, the necessary foundations of that military power on which the authority of governments and the power of kings, in the eleventh century as later, mainly depended.

At Hastings many of the territorial nobility of Wessex were killed. Except at Exeter, there was no further serious resistance from the south to the Norman invader. But this was not due to the losses in battle. It was due to the indifference of the whole country south of the Humber. We have argued that this indifference was greatly due to local causes peculiar to England, and in so far as Harold himself was concerned that is certainly the case. The success of the Norman Conquest, however, ending in the secure establishment of a centralised monarchy was materially assisted by the deep-seated reaction which had set in throughout western Europe against the abuse of power by the great nobles. Against these abuses the reformed Papacy was taking the lead.

William of Normandy unquestionably obtained Papal support for his claim to the throne of England and the Papal blessing on his arms because of Archbishop Stigand, who had been excommunicated in turn by Leo IX, Victor II, Stephen IX, Nicholas II and Alexander II. But these successive excommunications show that the hostility of the Papacy to the House of Godwine was no personal whim of Alexander II or of his chief adviser Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII. It was rooted in policy and history. It was, in fact, only one link in a series of events issuing on the international plane from the tenth century reformation.

The first of these was the Truce of God, which aimed to give full protection to non-combatants and led to the first organised efforts to limit feudal wars. These efforts developed from leagues organised locally by bishops in the closing years of the tenth century. The Truce of God was proclaimed in 990 in France. The Peace of God, which provided for the complete prohibition of war at specified times, was first proclaimed at the Synod of Elne (1027) and its ideals were preached by the monastic reformers and others throughout France, Italy and Germany.

Truce of
God, 990.

Peace of
God, 1027.

Throughout the Middle Ages church officials constantly arbitrated in the perpetual struggles of king and baronage and their efforts were normally strongly supported by the towns which, for somewhat different reasons, had an equal appreciation of the value of an ordered society. The wish for peace which pervaded the Church and the lower orders of feudal society was one of the strongest cards in the hand of a rising monarchy. For the same reason a strong monarch could be assured of Papal support. Europe, not excluding England, was being ruined by the wars of the great nobles at the beginning of the eleventh century. The English crisis of 1051 and the destructive wars which followed between the Welsh, the Mercian earl and Harold, were typical of what had been going on in continental Europe for nearly two centuries. The Truce of God, and its abortive successor, the Peace of God, were only put forward by the clergy as means to an end essential to the survival of Christian civilisation. That end was the subjugation of the feudal lords to an authority pledged to act in accordance with the moral law. The first step was to exalt the authority of the crowned heads, and, in particular, the Emperor, the king of France and the king of England, over the rebellious nobles. (Here lies the significance of the increasingly elaborate coronation service.) The next step was to safeguard the independence of the Church against the secular governments which were being so greatly strengthened. For this, the essential was to secure the right of the clergy to appoint its own bishops and to elect its own Pope. After that the Church would claim the right to call on the armed force of Christendom to eject a ruler who sought to deny the independence of the Church. The first decisive move was made in 1059 when the election of the Pope was taken out of the control of the Emperor and the Roman nobility (who for too long had effectually controlled Papal elections) and given to the College

of Cardinals, where it has remained ever since. The next step was to end finally the practice of lay investiture. It was not only because of William's personal character but because Harold was a partisan of Stigand, the uncanonical Archbishop of Canterbury, that the Papacy was prepared to support William of Normandy actively. This support was given all the more readily because William was clearly the most likely of the rival claimants to found a strong centralised monarchy in England and thus to pursue the secular task of restoring order which was begun by the German emperors and was shortly to be continued by the Capetian dynasty in France.

These far-reaching policies could not have been made effective by a mere act of volition. They were adopted at a time when, in the sphere of opinion, the ground had been prepared by the various ecclesiastical reforms, and, in the sphere of self-interest, by the growth of trade and commerce which made peace and order necessary to the rapidly increasing urban population of western Europe. Nowhere, as we have seen, was this more so than in England.

"For at least 70 years before the Conquest, England had been in continuous relationship through trade with the Continental world."¹ The two great European trade routes were from Italy through the Rhineland to the ports of the Low Countries and from the Near East up the Vistula and then through the Baltic to Schleswig, where Harthaby was the chief North Sea port. Both routes converged on England, and as early as the time of Alfred it is clear that English trade was being developed in both directions.

Alfred interpolates in his translation of Orosius some first-hand stories of Baltic and Arctic exploration and is at pains to give his subjects a long if somewhat inaccurate lesson in the political geography of the Baltic. Evidence abounds that the lesson was learnt. British coins have been found in quantities in all Scandinavian ports and while some of them, of Aethelred's reign, may represent Danegeld, a few are earlier and many belong to the reigns of Cnut and Edward the Confessor when Danegeld had long ceased. Oswald's biographer, writing in about 1000, describes York in particular as a great trading centre for Scandinavian merchants. Included in the laws of Aethelred is a document in Latin giving much detailed information of London trade in that reign, and recording the duties and tolls levied on traders from Rouen, Flanders,

¹ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 535.

Ponthieu, Normandy, France and the Empire, as well as the tolls levied on English merchants, dairy-farmers, and poultry keepers. We have already seen, moreover, how Aethelred, in his treaty with Olaf of Normandy, was concerned to safeguard traders from the consequences of wars to which they were not a party. In the half century following that treaty, trade certainly increased. We are approaching the great period of cathedrals, castles, elaborately equipped knights in armour, the heraldry and pageantry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was in the eleventh century that the economic sub-structure of this remarkable epoch was being built up. The self-imposed mission of the Normans was to supply a political framework within which progress could continue. The world of the eleventh century was a world hungry for government and prepared to pay a great price for it. In that fact lies, on the ultimate analysis, the secret of William's astonishing triumph.

The Norman Conquest still rouses the passions of historians and an effort has even been made to represent it as an almost wholly destructive *coup de force* directed against a free Teutonic people by a new, cruel and tyrannous governing camarilla adhering to an alien tradition and bent on the destruction of the Anglo-Saxon culture and institutions. This picture does complete injustice, save in one respect, to the high achievement of Anglo-Saxon England, and wholly misrepresents the character of our culture and civilisation during the Anglo-Saxon period. The over-riding weakness of the Anglo-Saxon civilisation lay in this, that for administration, for government as an art, and for war as a science the Anglo-Saxons lacked any great taste or aptitude. Indeed, the Anglo-Saxons never created a true system of centralised government or any effective method of controlling local administration or of restraining the power of the territorial nobles. The Anglo-Saxon kingdom of united England was thus never truly articulated. The name and the concept were there; there was a more or less hereditary kingship; but there was never more than a personal loyalty offered by individuals, sometimes by a great many individuals, to a strong king. If England was on the way to being a nation by the time of the Conquest, she had hardly even attempted the task of becoming a nation-state. Historians have explained this, and almost certainly rightly, by reference to the circumstances and nature of the Anglo-Saxon invasions. England was invaded neither by men of one race or country

nor by a number of separate tribes, but by a number of war bands owing a purely personal allegiance to their chieftain. These bands of invaders had widely differing customs and faced, in the country they conquered, widely differing conditions. In Bernicia, as we have seen, it is possible that the first invaders formed at first merely a military aristocracy ruling over a population almost entirely alien. In Kent, on the other hand, there was certainly a settlement by consent of great numbers in a county already urbanised. In Sussex and Essex there was a large scale military invasion of territory much less densely populated. In East Anglia there was a long period of infiltration, to which perhaps little resistance was offered, and followed, if we accept the tradition reflected in Bede's history, by a large scale immigration, including women and children. Mercia on the other hand was largely the creation of frontiersmen clearing and developing land which had never as a whole been an area of dense settlement in earlier times. It happened thus that there was a relatively high settled civilisation in Kent while Northumbria was still in the age of migrations and Mercia still not fully opened up. The Romano-British contribution to the civilisation of Kent was probably very great: to the civilisation of Mercia it was negligible. Wessex, again, when she was forced to expand to the south-west by the Mercian advance to the Thames, had to face a quite special problem, the absorption, relatively late in her political development, of large numbers of Romano-British into a Saxon kingdom already possessing well-defined customs and laws. Even Christianity, although it came to be a great influence for unity, laid at first a fresh emphasis on the differences between the northern and the southern kingdoms, while the longer survival of paganism in Mercia introduced a further element of discord.

Nevertheless the history we have related suggests to us that none of these obstacles to unity was insuperable. Time and again men of force and personality succeeded in achieving something very like the union of the kingdoms under one allegiance. It was due to a failure of technique that not one of our kings succeeded in creating a structure which would outlive a weak successor. When political unity was finally achieved under Edward and Athelstan it was by force of arms and at the price of recognising the virtual autonomy of the Danelaw and the virtual independence of Northumbria. Except in the south of England under Alfred and his immediate

successors there was never a union of minds and hearts, and the reason is clear enough. No king of England, not even Athelstan, ever conferred enough in the way of positive benefits on his subjects or disposed of sufficient force to reconcile the territorial nobility to the loss of their independence or to create in the minds of the Church or the common people a really strong conviction that their security and comfort demanded their acceptance of the rule of the House of Cerdic over a united England.

If, however, the country was politically ripe for conquest in 1066, it was a highly civilised and socially integrated country which passed under Norman rule and neither the social structure nor the Church organisation nor the Anglo-Saxon intellectual and cultural traditions were seriously affected by the Conquest. The map of England is a legacy from the Anglo-Saxon period. South of the Humber no new counties have been formed, except Monmouthshire and, possibly, Rutland. Most of our modern parishes date from Anglo-Saxon times. Only two new dioceses were formed between the Conquest and the Reformation. The system of agriculture practised by the Anglo-Saxons continued in use for centuries after 1066. Our towns (excepting those brought into being by the industrial revolution) and our villages were almost all in existence before the Conquest.

Still less have we reason to be anything but proud of the intellectual achievement of the Anglo-Saxon period, which gave to Europe the first vernacular codes of law and in the eighth century can truly be said to have assumed the intellectual leadership of the western world. The Anglo-Saxon centuries were in truth "the formative period of our national culture"¹ and even in the sphere of literature the late Professor Chambers has reminded us that there was an unbroken chain in English prose from Alfred to Thomas More. This continuity was much overlooked in the last century because the vernacular religious literature of the late Middle Ages was ignored, and attention concentrated first on the secular chronicles and biographies of the Middle Ages, which were written in Latin, and, secondly, on the secular prose and poetry of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the English language began to take its modern shape as the result of the gradual fusion of the French and English into one people.

If, nevertheless, outside the military and political spheres

¹ Chadwick, *The Study of Anglo-Saxon*, p. 25. (Heffer, 1941.)

the effects of the Conquest were much less than has been at one time believed, this is only true because the culture and social institutions of the Anglo-Saxon period were to a very great extent the product of continental influences. We were already, in the pre-Conquest period, a people of very mixed descent who had been exceptionally open, since the very dawn of history, to influence from Europe. What is to-day England had been four times conquered, by the Celts, the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes, since the beginning of written history, and had twice been formally converted to Christianity. All the important prose written in England between 600 and 800 was in Latin, and even after Alfred's reforms Anglo-Saxon prose literature, apart from the laws, and Anglo-Saxon religious poetry, continued to be wholly based on the Latin tradition. Apart from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the prose consists almost wholly of translations. Nor is it irrelevant to note that towards the end of the tenth century, nearly a hundred years before the Conquest, important biography begins again to be written in Latin. If it is true to say that after 1066 Latin for a long time displaced Anglo-Saxon as the normal language of serious literature, there was certainly nothing revolutionary in this. The revival of Latin studies and scholarship had long preceded the Conquest.

It is true that the Anglo-Saxon vernacular literature is the oldest in Europe apart from that of the Greeks and Romans, but the exception is altogether too formidable. It was not with the pre-Christian vernacular poetry but with the use of the vernacular language under Alfred to bring the Latin culture and tradition back into the common knowledge of Englishmen that the history of our characteristic English literature begins. Whether we like it or not, we are the heirs of the European tradition, and the chief glory of the Anglo-Saxon culture is that for some substantial time in the eighth century the Anglo-Saxons were the chief exponents of the Latin-Christian culture and in a very real sense its guardians and preservers. In the dark ages the light shone more clearly in England than anywhere else in Europe. It was a people rich in intellectual achievement, firm in faith and very closely assimilated to the Latin Christian culture of western Europe, which came under Norman rule at the battle of Hastings.

Chapter Ten

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ANGLO-NORMAN STATE

THE BATTLE of Hastings was one of the decisive battles of the world. Had Harold held his throne, England would have become an outpost of the barbarous north. Only in alliance with Scandinavia would he have been secure. His defeat marked not the conquest of England but the fulfilment of her destiny, whereby she was to be a dominant force in the development of western European civilisation.

The issue was far from being significant only to England. Politically, the Norman Conquest involved and at once affected the whole of the countries bordering on the North Sea. As concerned the Church it was to affect the whole of Latin Christendom. The house of Godwine, which was all that Harold represented, stood for a sterile provincialism, which sought to weaken the Throne and the Church in the interests of a family policy. "To the submission of the great factions to the law, to the establishment of a strong monarchy capable of preserving order and to the re-penetration of England by European civilisation they were invariably opposed."¹ Nor had these anarchs proved themselves any more tolerant of law and discipline in the Church than in the State. When Harold's father, in 1051, re-established his position in England, the lawfully appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert of Jumièges, had been driven from his see, and a subservient English prelate, Stigand, had been uncanonically intruded into his office. It must inevitably have followed, had William been defeated by Harold, that the Church in England under a schismatic archbishop would have remained, as she was in 1066, cut off from the influence of the great reforming movement which reached its height in the eleventh century.

These things, unlike some historical hypotheses, were clearer to the rulers of Europe in 1066 than they are to some contemporary historians. Harold, who was at any rate generally believed to have sworn fealty to William, was regarded, when the crisis came, as a lawless and perjured man, supported

¹ David Douglas, *The Norman Conquest*. G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1928.

by a schismatic archbishop: neither the Emperor, nor the Pope, nor the Regent of France, would support his claim.

William's own claim to the English throne¹ was shadowy in the extreme by modern views of the hereditary principle, but by contemporary views it was good enough. His father, Duke Robert of Normandy, was a first cousin of Edward the Confessor. The only other hereditary claimant was Edgar Atheling, the great-grandson of Aethelred the Unready and a son of William's second cousin, Edward, who had died in 1057. It was in full accordance with eleventh century practice to set aside the young and inexperienced heir in favour of an older and more powerful claimant with a weaker hereditary title. Of the eight kings of England who had ruled between 899 and 1016, only three, Edmind, Eadred and Eadwig, had come by direct inheritance to an uncontested throne. William also claimed, and history cannot certainly rebut him, that Edward the Confessor in 1051, when he was still in good health, had acknowledged him as his heir and that Harold himself had sworn fealty to him in that capacity. Against this Harold could claim his "election" by the Witan, which meant little or nothing. The English monarchy had never been elective in the modern sense, and the Witan was never less a representative body than at this time. All that happened was the great earls chose the ablest among their members to lead the defence of their anarchic oligarchy against all comers. The indecent haste of Harold's election and coronation (which took place the day after the Confessor's death) was evidence that they felt the lack of popular support.

It was, technically, on the point of Harold's oath that the Pope, to whom William had appealed before attempting the invasion, decided in favour of William, but the course of English history was determined not only by the Pope's verdict but by William's own belief in his claim to be lawful ruler of England by hereditary right. He claimed not to have conquered the English but to have defeated a usurper. He succeeded to the machinery of the English state, acknowledged the validity of English laws and customs and claimed no prerogatives not exercised previously by English kings. Neither would he concede to the Papacy anything not previously conceded.

It was the direct consequence of this view of his own

¹ See Appendix III C for a genealogical table showing the respective claims of William the Conqueror, Harold and Edgar the Atheling.

position that William's conquest created a new state, neither Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian nor Norman, but different from all three and more powerful than any of them.

The key to an understanding of this fact lies here. The legal and constitutional powers of the old Anglo-Saxon monarchy were unique. It could legislate; it could and did tax all its subjects; it could summon the population to arms; it had always claimed the ultimate authority over land transfers in an age when land was the sole source of power and wealth. The Anglo-Saxon kings had failed from lack not of the means but of the aptitude for government. The prerogatives of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy in the hands of a king of force and ability, advised by prelates and nobles of exceptional character, whose wealth and position moreover depended upon the strength and not, as in the case of the house of Godwine, on the weakness of the Crown, were formidable indeed. The monarchical powers enabled the Conqueror to create an imposing military-political structure which was cataclysmic in its political effect but which avoided the need for a social revolution. This military political structure is what to-day we call feudalism, and it was the super-imposition of feudalism on the established Anglo-Saxon social order by means of the established prerogatives of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy which created in England after 1066 a centralised power without parallel in the Europe of that day. The paradox of the Norman century is that the whole force of Norman absolutism ended in, and was in some measure even directed, to securing the rule of law and establishing for all free men the right of redress of their grievances in the royal courts. A culminating point in this slow but steady process was reached a hundred years after the conquest when the Assize of Novel Disseizin provided that every free man unjustly dispossessed of his holding could seek a remedy before the king's justices.

The Norman kings wisely saw in the king's justice the means to win the support of the Anglo-Saxon freemen against the often rebellious feudal nobility and to win the constitutional support of the growing body of townsmen against the great landed interest. In so planning the Norman kings no doubt gave hostages to fortune. The towns secured privileges which in due course became the corner-stone of political liberty in England and the common lawyers obtained a power which six centuries later was to bring an English king to the scaffold. But from the men of the eleventh and twelfth centuries these

things were surely hidden. Only the power and the glory shone clear. For the good peace he imposed after more than a century of anarchy, William I was respected and obeyed.

William and his sons after him had the Church and the people behind them (although William Rufus alienated both before the end of his reign) and they needed this support to establish their rule in England and to maintain it in Normandy. They were English levies who broke the northern rebellion in the autumn of 1069 and the early spring of 1070 and it was an English army with which Henry I defeated Duke Robert of Normandy at Tinchebrai in 1106 and won back Normandy. Midway between 1066 and the Assize of Novel Disseizin, 1106 is another decisive date. It marks the first effective appearance of England as a military power on the Continent. Tinchebrai has often been described as the English revenge for Hastings. Rather it was the first fruit of that marriage of conduct to valour which resulted from the policies of William the Conqueror and laid the foundations of England's strength in centuries to come.

The wars of earlier centuries, once the age of the great migrations had passed, were the result not of acts of government but of the breakdown of government, usually of a dynastic quarrel or a baronial revolt. The Normans, however, combined political and military genius and used war as an instrument of government policy. Because of this, they extended the Norman Duchy until its power was greater than that of the French monarchy, founded the Anglo-Norman state and founded the kingdom of Sicily, giving it a continental frontier which lasted until 1860. They did not do and could not have done any of these things by the force of arms alone. They were good soldiers but they were also administrators, builders and reformers, who systematically enlisted under their banners Frenchmen from all districts, drew to their councils the best brains of Europe and insured a continuing supply of statesmen by their vigorous reforms of the Church first in Normandy and then in England, by the provision of schools, by the careful organisation of dioceses and chapters, the foundation of monasteries, and the building of great cathedrals and castles, imperishable monuments of the twin foundations of their power.

The ancestry of this remarkable people was the same as that of some of our own Scandinavian invaders. In fact many of those who came over with Duke William in 1066 must have

been descended from our own invaders of Alfred's time. Even in those days, as we have seen, they were pirates with a difference. They pursued a clearly defined aim, not military glory, but money and land. Nevertheless, there are differences between the Scandinavian settlement of Normandy and that of the Danelaw which were of decisive importance. In Normandy, as in the Midlands and East Anglia, some land was "divided" but there was no great mass settlement of a peasantry as in the Five Boroughs, but rather the settlement of small bands under aristocratic leadership. By 1066 the peasant smallholders were the characteristic representatives of the Scandinavian settlement in England: in Normandy this part was played by a vigorous and dominant aristocracy. Further, the Danes came to England as seafaring adventurers: Rollo and his comrades came to Normandy from Gaul; their first settlements were round Rouen and it was at least a generation later before they controlled the whole seaboard. Their eyes were thus, from the very beginning of their settlement, turned north and east, towards France and the Empire, and not, like those of the invaders of England, towards Scandinavia. From the very first they showed great political wisdom in their relations with the French.

The political history of Normandy begins with the treaty with France signed at St. Clair-sur-Epte by Duke Rollo¹ in 911. It was the beginning of a period of understanding with the Carolingians which was to last through the reign of Rollo's successor, Duke William I. The third duke, Richard I, who succeeded his father in 942, allied himself in 965 with Hugh Capet and from that time the duchy was linked with the rising Capetian fortunes. Richard I and his son, Richard II, who succeeded to the dukedom in 996, were probably the real architects of the Norman political system as it passed first to Duke Robert and then to his natural son, Duke William II, whom we know as William I of England. An examination of the Norman charters from the end of the tenth century to the time of the Conquest suggests, as Professor Douglas has recently told us,² that the great abbeys of Normandy, and many of the estates of those Norman nobles whose names were destined to pass into English history as followers or associates of the Conqueror, were only established or granted towards

Duke
Rollo in
Nor-
mandy,
911.

¹ See Appendix III d for a genealogical table showing the succession of the Dukes of Normandy.

² David Douglas, *The Rise of Normandy* (Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. XXXIII, 1947).

the very end of the tenth or at the beginning of the eleventh century. Duke Richard II, moreover, was a vigorous supporter of the Cluniac reforms. The Norman political system as it fell to the Conqueror's inheritance was thus the creation of a strong dynasty of constructive rulers, resting on the support of a reformed Church and a new aristocracy, both largely created by and dependent on the ruling house.

The Conqueror's father, Duke Robert, was half a Briton on his mother's side and may have been at one time married to the sister of King Cnut of England. If so, he later repudiated his wife, and perhaps as a consequence of this breach of relations, he is believed to have prepared an invasion of England to restore Alfred the Aetheling, the elder brother of Edward the Confessor, to the English throne. The invasion was never attempted and the plan became superfluous when (after his brother's death) Edward came to the throne. The story is somewhat doubtful but points to a belief that it was already a principle of Norman policy that England must not become an outpost of Scandinavian power threatening the Continent. Certainly the remarkable thing about the Normans in France was their complete submission to what was best in the continental culture and their unhesitating rejection of what was worst. The background of the Norman system was provided by the great abbeys, Fécamp, St. Wandrille, Jumièges, which had been founded or reformed by the dukes themselves, and the great episcopal sees restored by Duke Richard I. Monks from Cluny were imported by Duke Richard II, and on the reformed monasteries was placed the obligation to train the village clergy of the future in monastic schools. The later dukes maintained the same policy. The Truce of God, with its rigorous limitation of private war and the special prohibition of fighting on Sundays and festivals, had the effect of further extending the competence of episcopal jurisdiction, by accepting as an overriding restriction on feudal rights the obligation to observe canon law.

Nor were the leaders of the Norman Church necessarily or even usually men of the Norman race. The Dukes reserved the right of appointment to bishoprics and abbeys, yet in the Conqueror's time nearly all the greater abbeys were ruled by men of foreign birth, among whom are some famous names; William of Poitiers the historian, William of Jumièges and Lanfranc, Abbot of Caen. They were men of continental reputation and it was they, or their pupils, who were to reform

the English Church. Normandy was in fact, by the deliberate policy of its rulers, one of the intellectual centres of western Europe in the years immediately preceding the Conquest and the example of the dukes themselves had been followed by their vassals. The famous Abbey of Bec had been founded by a Norman knight.

The same policy was followed by the Normans in Italy and Sicily. Sicily was to become before the end of the Norman century not only politically stable but one of the most highly civilised states in Europe. What differentiated the Normans from the other Frenchmen, from the Anglo-Saxons, and from the different Frankish, Lombardic, Greek and German princelings who divided Italy between them, was not rudeness nor even military efficiency but the capacity to employ force systematically for political and cultural ends. To the twentieth century this phrase has a sinister ring, and indeed Hollywood teaches us that the Normans were the spiritual ancestors of the gangsters, who have laid Europe in ruins. We must remember that it is one thing to condemn the overthrow of order by force; quite another to grasp the truth that without force order cannot be imposed on anarchy. The world of 1066 was a world everywhere threatened with ruin as a result of baronial anarchy. The Norman genius lay in their ability to crush the anarchy without destroying the vigour or the individuality or damping down the energy from which it sprang. Where, as in Greenland and Iceland, the Normans had no vigorous subjects on whom to exercise their genius for government, they achieved little or nothing.

The territory to which William succeeded at the age of seven on the death of his father Duke Robert in 1035 comprised not only Normandy but the suzerainty of Brittany and claims to the French Vexin and Maine. His security depended on playing off the rulers of the powerful neighbouring provinces of Brittany, Maine and Anjou and the kings of France, whose overlordship at this time was very nominal in character, one against the others. William inherited the friendship of the king of France and it was with the aid of the French king that he quelled the revolt of the western Normans under Guy of Burgundy, lord of Brionne and Vernon, in 1047. The Battle of Val-ès-dunes, near Caen, fought when William was about 21, was his first victory. In 1048 he found himself again fighting with the French king, this time against Geoffrey of Anjou. The Angevins were defeated and Normandy became

William,
Duke
of Nor-
mandy,
1035.

William
marries
Matilda of
Flanders,
1053.

the most powerful principality in northern France. William at once saw his opportunity and laid plans for his marriage with Matilda, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, whom he married in 1053.

With Normandy allied to Flanders, the French king became dependent on Anjou to maintain an even balance of forces and to preserve even the appearances of sovereignty. The sequel was inevitable. In 1054 and again in 1058 the French king on some unknown pretext invaded Normandy. In 1054 his brother was defeated at Mortemer and the king withdrew: in 1055 William began his threat to Maine by fortifying Ambières on the Normandy-Maine frontier. In 1058 the French king's forces were again defeated by William at Varaville. These were years of defensive consolidation. In 1060 William's years of opportunity began when King Henry of France and Geoffrey II of Anjou both died, leaving a seven-year-old king, Philip, on the French throne, and a disputed succession in Anjou. Baldwin of Flanders, William's father-in-law, became regent of France. In 1063 the male line of the Counts of Maine became extinct. William at once invaded Maine and later adopted the title of Count of Maine. In 1064 he invaded Brittany and defeated Conan of Brittany at Dinan.

Invasion
of Maine,
1063.

These were not even in form wars of conquest. They were the necessary reaction to the centrifugal tendencies of French feudalism, which had created no central government and recognised private war as the last court of appeal for the baronage. In Normandy itself constitutional development had proceeded farther. The documentary evidence¹ strongly suggests that the ecclesiastical baronies at any rate were held of the Dukes of Normandy on military tenures before 1066 and that the customs in regard to knight service and feudal aids and relief which the Normans then introduced into England were already by that date well known in the Duchy. Certainly, in regard to these ecclesiastical tenures the supremacy of the Dukes was clearly established and the wide jurisdiction which the bishops exercised seems to have derived from Ducal privileges. Over the lay nobility the Dukes of Normandy exercised a less defined measure of control through the greater nobles—the counts, who were members of the ruling house, and the *vicomtes*, who were not. All these were personal representatives of the duke, and their offices though normally

¹ For details of the evidence see Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, chap. I. Harvard, 1925.

hereditary were not always so. They looked after the ducal demesne lands in their districts and maintained the ducal castles. Within this framework, religion, learning, trade and organisation flourished, but always subject, because of the weakness of the French monarchy, to the threat of frontier war, in which the disputants would rely either on the help of the Norman duke or of the ruler of one of the adjoining duchies.

As long as there was no effective central monarchy, any ruler of a duchy with ambitions for good order and progress must himself see to it that his neighbours provoked no disorders among his own vassals. William of Normandy was far ahead of his contemporaries not in aggression but in his pursuit of law and order. The only machinery available was that of war, the purpose not being to conquer territory or expropriate wealth but to acquire the juridical status which alone, in the absence of a central monarchy, enabled a ruler to exercise a legal check on anarchy at his gates.

The success with which this aim had been achieved in the interior of Normandy for at least two generations was in itself a contributing cause of the Norman triumphs: it sent the young and vigorous sons of the Norman baronage abroad in search of adventure. In the post-feudal age, and almost down to our own day, the heir to great estates would be trained to the succession while his younger brothers would enter some branch of the public service or go into Parliament or the Church. It was, however, inherent in the feudal system that all military, governmental or legal authority was derived from the ownership, or more correctly, the over-lordship of land. As a consequence, in feudal times, the only avenue of employment open to younger sons was the Church or military service abroad. For this reason, the existence of a strong central government in Normandy made the Normans the greatest adventurers of the age. The final fruits were seen in the council which Duke William called at Lillebonne in the January of 1066, where he secured the support of the whole baronage of his duchy and its dependencies for the English expedition. Norman, Breton, Flemish and Burgundian soldiers of fortune had already won lands, opportunities and wealth in Apulia, in Calabria, in Sicily and in Castile, where a French dynasty was soon to unite Castile to Leon and conquer the Moorish stronghold of Toledo. The fame and profit of these exploits was known and presaged the success of this new adventure.

Council of
Lille-
bonne,
January,
1066.

Invasion
of
England,
September,
1066.

It was a French army, with Norman leadership, which as a consequence of the decision of Lillebonne, set sail for England on Wednesday, September 27th, and landed at Pevensey on St. Michael's Eve. Of the 2000 knights who formed the spearhead of William's army not more than 1200 came from Normandy; the rest were Bretons, Flemings or Frenchmen from other parts of France or volunteers from Italy and Sicily.¹

But this was no band of adventurers. It was an organised force intended as a political instrument vindicating, in the interests of political continuity and the rule of law, a just claim to an historic throne.

"So stark a man." That was how William I impressed himself chiefly on his Anglo-Saxon subjects. A man of method, severely applied. We should be wrong in assuming that his great lieutenants were men remarkably different. William I was exceptional, indeed, in one respect, in the purity of his private life, but amid all the disorders of this Norman century we find no trace anywhere of a national uprising against Norman rule.

The Norman barons were certainly men of violent passions, great ruthlessness and ostentation and great extravagance of life and habit. This was in contrast to the men of the House of Cerdic who had, not even excepting Alfred, a weakness, in part the result of physical disability, in part of a gentle piety, rising sometimes to sanctity, but degenerating sometimes into introspection and indecision. The Normans by contrast were not saintly, gentle or introspective. But they were men of character and faithful after their fashion to the religion of their fathers. William the stark soldier and Lanfranc, the astute Pavian lawyer, turned monk relatively late in life, restored and reformed the Church in England which under the saintly Confessor had relapsed into relative idleness. Under Norman rule great English abbeys were founded, not one by one but by the score, new Orders were established and the great reforming movements associated with Cluny, with Cîteaux and with the Augustinian canons took deep root in England.

We need not palliate the rough brutality of the Norman baronial feuds, the mutilation of prisoners, the "wasting" of villages; still less should we forget the harshness of the forest

¹ Professor Stenton quotes as evidence of the international character of the invading force, the presence among 43 lay tenants in Northamptonshire at the time of the Domesday Survey, of 6 Flemings, 3 Bretons and 2 Picards, more than 25 per cent being thus non-Norman invaders.

laws which preserved for the sport of kings some thousands of acres which had once supported a small population of freemen. But, by and large, the Normans were brutal to each other, not to the Anglo-Saxons, and it is at least fair to recall that armed rebellion against the sovereign which was punished under William with imprisonment and sometimes with mutilation, is to-day punished with death. As for the expropriation of land, we must remember that in 1066 the authority of the state was not distinguishable from the rights attaching to the overlordship of land, rents were indistinguishable from taxes, public from private law, personal service from public administration, the duty of punishing crime from the right to the profits of jurisdiction, personal privilege from public responsibility.

We read early in William's reign of vast transfers of land from English to Norman ownership, but these were not transfers of private property to the conqueror. They were, by and large, transfers of jurisdiction and military authority. In England in 1066 the lordship over land already gave the lord much jurisdiction and the great Anglo-Saxon earls were the conveners and leaders of such of the fyrd as came from their earldoms, and the same applied to many of the lesser nobles. The great landowners were thus the only instruments of local government ready to the Conqueror's hand, and in so far as there was a central administration, they were its agents. It was they who had to bring the fyrd to the king's standard and who, when they were sheriffs, represented the Crown at the shire courts, as well as presiding over their own courts when their charters gave them "sake and soke." In any case they were responsible for seeing that justice was done: they had to produce their man and answer for his fulfilling the court's sentence. It followed that William had only two alternatives when these great landholders, inevitably alien in thought and habit, proved to be also hostile. He had to transfer their legal and political power to his supporters by transferring the lands to which this power attached, or he had to divorce tenure alike from political service and jurisdiction, and set up a national system of justice, a national civil service and a national army under professional officers. Such a revolution even if it had been within the intellectual range of the eleventh century, was wholly outside its administrative capacity. The Norman Conquest thus inevitably meant that by the end of William's reign the lay tenants-in-chief of the Crown were

almost exclusively Norman or French. Any alternative method of installing and paying a Norman administration must have meant a social revolution which no one, least of all the Conqueror, desired, and the imposition of a crushing burden of regular taxation which the country would never have accepted. This vast transfer of legal and political power was brought about by the creation of a complex of dependent military tenures which were superimposed on the Anglo-Saxon social organisation. Thus was created a type of society wholly new to England and substantially different from anything that existed elsewhere. The feudal system and some of its social and political consequences will be discussed in the next chapter. It is only necessary to note again that, cataclysmic though the process was which created Anglo-Norman feudalism, it was intended not to destroy but to preserve constitutional and social continuity. There is clear evidence in William's political actions that this was, from the very beginning, his consistent aim.

After Hastings the Witan at London accepted Edgar the Aetheling as king, but the northern earls, Edwin and Morcar, left for Northumbria. They no more intended to fight for Edgar against William than for Harold. Who ruled in London was immaterial to the Northumbrians, who remained true to the old fatal separatism which had frustrated the Anglo-Saxon monarchy for three centuries.

Battle of
Hastings,
October
14, 1066.

William left Hastings on October 20th, 1066, subdued Romney, and accepted the surrender of the fort of Dover and then of Canterbury, where the Kentish thegns crowded into his camp to do homage like flies settling on a wound. At Canterbury, William was taken ill and there was sickness in his army which delayed him a month. This delay showed, in the event, that no considerable opposition was to be expected. England after Hastings had become a mere geographical expression; political unity, even political consciousness, had ceased to exist. In November Winchester submitted, and early in December William proceeded to reconnoitre London. He burnt Southwark and then struck west through Surrey and Berkshire, crossing the Thames at Wallingford. As he passed he wasted the villages. At Wallingford, Stigand, the schismatic Archbishop of Canterbury, submitted. From thence William moved through Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire to Berkhamstead, where Edgar the Aetheling, Archbishop Eadred of York and the notables of London came to do homage. We must

note William's tactics. He deliberately avoided a second battle by refusing to attempt the capture of London by assault, and by occupying and wasting the surrounding country he deprived the notables of London of their revenues and their food supplies. It was an economic blockade, of a necessarily destructive kind, since the size of a feudal army was insufficient for the complete investment of a large city. Nevertheless, the success of these tactics, first applied by William and his Normans in Maine, and later in 1071 against the Yorkshire rebels and the Danes, emphasises the fact that these wars were essentially the concern of the notables. If there had been any national or political feeling among the thousands of Londoners, or the tens of thousands of Northumbrians, these tactics could not have succeeded. No group of nobles could have surrendered London to Charles I or Yorkshire and Lancashire to the Parliament during the seventeenth century rebellion, nor could the wasting of a few estates have paralysed the executive power of the government.

On Christmas Day the Conqueror was crowned by the Archbishop of York in Westminster Abbey, and at once, while the Tower of London was being built, left for Barking, where he held his court and received the submission of more notables, including the earls Edwin and Morcar. Some of the notables were retained at court as virtual hostages. We read in the history of William of Poitiers that William also made a tour of the south-eastern counties to receive submissions. Certainly the lands of those who fought and fell at Hastings were made over at once to the more eminent of the Norman nobles, but the generality of landowners who submitted paid a fine and retained their rights, and from the writing office inherited from the House of Cerdic writs in the traditional English form went, *inter alia*, to the borders of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, to Peterborough, to "all the thegns of Staffordshire" and to "all the thegns of Gloucestershire and Worcestershire." This was the reality, not merely the appearance, of constitutional government as it was understood in England at that time. William was by nature constitutionally minded, but had he been otherwise he must have acted as he did because, unless he was the constitutional successor to Edward the Confessor, the men who opposed him at Hastings would not have forfeited their title to their lands. But if he was indeed the true and lawful king, their lands were forfeit, and in taking them, or restoring them on payment of a fine, William could claim

William
crowned,
December
25, 1066.

plausibly enough that he was only following the laws he had sworn at his coronation to observe.

Sharp practice, no doubt, by our lights, but throughout the Middle Ages we shall be struck again and again by the respect shown for the form, the word and the symbol. There was in the eleventh century little if any conception of public morality outside the forms of law¹ or of private morality outside of obligations specifically accepted. England under the Normans was indeed ahead and not behind the rest of western Europe in so far as there was some national law to control and if necessary to override feudal loyalties. The Anglo-Saxon law of treason was part of this law and William I at once respected and took advantage of the fact. In this historical necessity imposed upon our conqueror our English constitution has its roots.

William
in
Nor-
mandy,
March,
1067.

In March, 1067, William returned to Normandy, leaving Odo, bishop of Bayeux, his half-brother, and William fitz Osbern, the newly created Earl of Hereford, as regents. He took with him Edgar the Aetheling, the earls Edwin and Morcar, and Waltheof, Earl of Northampton and Huntingdon. Odo ruled south-east England as far west as Winchester; fitz Osbern's rule perhaps extended across the Midlands from the marches of Wales to Norwich; Northumbria was entrusted to a Northumbrian thegn by the name of Copsi, a relative, it seems, of Tostig, and thus of the defeated King Harold. South-west England had never formally submitted and appears to have remained a stronghold not of national sentiment but of loyalty to Harold and his family. His widow and his daughter were still at Exeter.

William's departure for Normandy at this early stage of the Conquest is a minor historical puzzle. We may guess that

¹ This legalism extended to the Church and is nowhere better instanced than in the attitude of the Papal Legates dispatched to William in 1070, who on their way back from England stopped in Normandy to draw up a table of penances for all Normans who had fought for William in England and had killed Englishmen. The penalties were not markedly severe but a moral theologian of the later Middle Ages would certainly have seen that, if William's claim to the throne was good, as the Pope had agreed, it could not be wrong to enforce it, and that whether or not it was a good claim, if it was wrong to kill in battle, every soldier was equally culpable, whether he had himself personally killed a man or no. The reason for the Legates action was that the Canon Law in Normandy recognised, in addition to war in defence of the country, private war in discharge of feudal obligations and by so recognising what it was later to condemn had by implication condemned what it was later to accept, namely, national war in vindication of national or dynastic claims. In other words, the Church like the State was only groping its way towards recognising the differences between what was right and wrong in the sphere of public action.

he wished to emphasise the normal character of his succession, but we do not know. The results were a series of baronial risings which began in the autumn of 1067 and continued intermittently until 1070 in the north and 1071 in the east.

The earliest incident in point of time was the murder of Copsi of Northumbria by Oswulf, son of the former Earl of Bernicia, a feud between the old Northumbrian ruling house and the house of Godwine. This was followed by a rising on the Welsh border by a thegn called Eadric, who ravaged Herefordshire and retired undefeated to Wales, while the Picard, Eustace of Boulogne, seized Dover Castle with the assistance of some Kentish rebels and held it against the Norman Odo of Bayeux. Finally Exeter raised the standard of revolt (in the interests, possibly, of Harold's widow).

William sailed from Dieppe and landed at Winchelsea on December 6th, 1067, to find the country quiet again except in the west. Eadric was still in arms but had been driven back to Wales; Eustace of Boulogne had been ignominiously driven from Dover by the forces of the Regent. The murderer of Copsi had been murdered. William marched to the west with a force of English troops. After an 18-day siege, Exeter capitulated, and William marched through Devon, Somerset and Cornwall to receive further submissions. His half-brother, Robert of Mortain, was made Earl of Cornwall, but Exeter recovered its privileges and remained loyal to the new dynasty.

William
in
England,
December,
1067.

On Whit-Sunday, May 11th, William's wife Matilda, ancestress of our Plantagenet, Tudor and Stuart kings, was crowned Queen at Westminster.

In the early summer of 1068, three illegitimate sons of Harold, with a band of adventurers, raided the Bristol Channel and the West Country, while the earls Edwin and Morcar, in alliance with the Welsh, started a revolt in Mercia. Cospatric, newly appointed by William to Northumbria, declared for the Aetheling. All these revolts were stillborn. The sons of Harold failed to consolidate a landing; the Mercian levies and the Welsh faded away before William's advancing army, and Cospatric had no army at all, since, except for the citizens of York, no one in the north could be distracted from their local feuds. Indeed, at the time of Cospatric's pronouncement, King Malcolm of Scotland was actually raiding Northumberland. Cospatric chose the lesser of two evils and surrendered himself to Malcolm, who allowed him, with the Aetheling, to go into

Scotland but himself made terms with William and perhaps did homage.

William
captures
York,
1068.

On his way north William had planted castles at Leicester, Warwick and Nottingham and Robert of Meulan was perhaps made Earl of Leicestershire and overlord of a great portion of Earl Edwin's Mercian estates. York later surrendered without a fight. This was William's greatest prize since London fell. On his way south, William fortified Lincoln, Huntingdon and Cambridge, and Cospatric was succeeded in charge of Northumbria by the Fleming, Robert de Commines.

By the beginning of 1069 England south of the Humber was pacified. What was unconquered was the inveterate separatism of Northumbria, born partly of race, partly of history, but kept alive by the irresistible political temptations of geography. Immediately to the north was the kingdom of Scotland, always a ready ally of any English rebel. To the east lay Scandinavia, some of whose kings had once ruled in England, others of whom professed to have a claim to rule there, and all of whose subjects were anxious to perpetuate the disunion of England and the Northumbrian anarchy in order to keep the field open for piratical adventure. In the language of twentieth century diplomacy, a strong and independent Northumbria was a cardinal point in the foreign policy of Norway, Denmark and Scotland.

The presence of Robert de Commines with a powerful force of Norman knights at Durham acted as a danger signal in all three countries. The new order must be overthrown before it could establish itself. No sooner had William returned south than a fresh revolt broke out, and on January 28th, 1069, the Normans in Durham were trapped and massacred. At once Cospatric and the Aetheling left Scotland with a small force, and, gathering strength as they moved south, they besieged York.

William returned in March to raise the siege and disperse the besiegers, who returned to Scotland, while he himself, leaving William fitz Osbern in charge of the north, moved south to hold his Easter court at Winchester. It was only a truce. The next few months were spent in negotiations between the rebels in Scotland and their supporters in Scandinavia. At the end of August a great Danish fleet of 240 ships led by King Sweyn's sons, Harold and Cnut, and his brother, the Jarl Osbion, sailed for England. This fleet carried an army of perhaps 10,000 fighting men.

Danish
invasion,
August,
1069.

After ineffective raids on Kent and the east coast, the Danes sailed up the Humber. Here, according to the Chroniclers, they were greeted with enthusiasm by the men of Lincoln and Yorkshire, "riding and marching gladly"¹ under such leaders as Earl Waltheof and other Anglo-Saxon notables hitherto loyal. York with its garrison, under the Norman William Malet, was besieged and captured and three castles destroyed, but there was no heart in the rebellion and not even the rudiments of a plan. The Danes beached their ships and retired into winter quarters between the mouths of the Ouse and the Trent. Some of the Anglo-Saxons, joined by Cospatric and the Aetheling, garrisoned York. There they waited for the wrath to come. William's task was made easy for him.

The Danes deserted their allies on an undertaking from William that they could remain for the winter on the Humber. At Holderness William left a small force under Robert Mortain and the Count Eu to contain the Danish raiders and himself moved west to Stafford where he broke a Mercian revolt. Then he turned back to York and recaptured it. The Danish army took no action and retired on its ships in the estuary. This was in December, 1069. The next two months were spent breaking the power of the Northumbrian rebels, by ravaging the farm-lands between the Tyne and the Ouse. It was more probably a military manœuvre to save life than an act of political vengeance, as the lands of innocent and guilty, of churchman and layman alike, seem to have suffered. Yet there was, if we can trust the Chronicles, an element of revenge, and those who resisted were slaughtered mercilessly. The desolation in Yorkshire was enormous, and Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire also suffered heavily.

Early in 1070 the chief English rebels, Waltheof and Cospatric, submitted and were pardoned. The Aetheling and the earls Edwin and Morcar had fled on William's approach to Scotland; only the Danes, isolated and without supplies, remained. William had already made his terms with them, and felt sufficiently secure to turn his back on them and take his main body of Norman knights and English mercenaries through Staffordshire and Derbyshire to Cheshire, receiving submissions and wasting many villages in the centres of disaffection. After the submission of Chester, the thegn Eadric, the only English rebel then in arms, made his sub-

¹ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. D. text.* Quoted by H. W. C. Davis, *England under the Normans and Angevins*, p. 20.

mission and William moved south to Salisbury, where he disbanded his army.

William kept his Easter Court at Westminster.

Hereward
the Wake,
1071.

There is much that is obscure about the events of 1070 and notably the movements of the Danish fleet and the relations between William and its leaders. It is inferred that in the spring of 1070 king Sweyn appeared in person in the Humber, ordered his fleet to break their agreement with William and attempted to set up another centre of revolt based on the Isle of Ely. Certainly it was with Danish aid that Hereward the Wake, the last of the English rebels to take the field, seized the abbey of Peterborough in the late spring of 1071. Equally certainly, the Danish fleet returned to Denmark in the summer of that year, leaving the English to maintain a heroic but futile resistance until late in the autumn.

In the course of that year Hereward was joined by Earl Morcar, and the guerrilla warfare in the Fens continued even after Ely itself was captured by William. Hereward himself passed into legend and his exploits were magnified by time. A century later he became the eponymous hero of a national resistance movement which in fact never existed. Had Hereward, or for that matter the northern rebels, succeeded, the only result would have been a Danish instead of a Norman sovereign. The rebels were not nationalist patriots but "quislings,"¹ wholly uninterested in the idea of national unity and willing, for personal reasons, to bring back the Viking raiders and to see England again divided under alien rule. They were ready to surrender English soil in the west to Welsh princelings, in the north to the king of Scotland, and in the east to the king of Denmark.

Invasion
of
Scotland,
1072.

William, Malcolm of Scotland and Sweyn of Denmark had a clearer appreciation of the realities. Sweyn was disposed of by negotiation in 1072 and a bare show of force was sufficient to induce Malcolm of Scotland to render homage to William at Abernethy. As a consequence Edgar the Aetheling left Scotland.

A strong indication that this rebellion had no national character is provided by William's settlement of the north at

¹I excuse the anachronism because there is a moral difference between a "quisling" and a traitor which can best be thus expressed. A quisling is a political anti-nationalist who considers that the best future for his country lies in ceasing to be an independent nation state. A traitor is a man who, for private gain, while continuing to enjoy the privileges of citizenship of his own independent nation state works in the interest of another independent state.

THE REVOLT OF THE EARLS

this time. In 1070 he had installed Cospatric as earl of Bernicia, and it was due to his weakness that Scottish raids had penetrated as far south as Cleveland and Holderness. In 1072 he was replaced, not by a Norman but by another ex-rebel, Waltheof, who was made Earl of Northumbria and married the king's niece.

The centrifugal pull of these piratical kingdoms in the west, the north and across the eastern sea, and not any desire on the part of the people for an Anglo-Saxon monarchy, was the determining factor in the destruction of the English baronage. This centrifugal pull demanded and received a counterpoise in the shape of a strong centralised monarchy in England and the need for this was recognised by all classes except a minority of the great nobles. Most notably the Church and the towns proved solidly opposed to the rebels.

These rebels were not all Anglo-Saxons. As we have noted, Eustace of Boulogne was among the earliest. In 1075 occurred the revolt of the earls, Waltheof, Roger fitz Osbern of Hereford and Ralf of Norwich. Only Waltheof was of Saxon descent. The last of the rebels was no less a Norman than Odo of Bayeux, half-brother of William himself, who was arrested and deprived of his offices for some unknown treason in 1082. But except for the northern rebellions, not one of these dissident nobles received any popular support even in their own locality and their activities loom much larger in the history books than they did at the time. William did not trouble to return to England when the rebellions of 1067 broke out. The chief event of 1070 was not the guerrilla warfare in the Fenlands but the reception of the Papal Legates by William at Easter, the deposition of Stigand, the reorganisation of the English Church and the meeting of the first Church Council, presided over by Lanfranc, in that year. During the revolt of the earls William was campaigning in Normandy, and did not return until the autumn of 1075 when the rebellion was over.

The revolt
of the earls
1075

Between March, 1070, when William disbanded his army after the Chester campaign and 1082, when he led a punitive expedition into Wales, William was never in the field in England, unless we count his bloodless march to Scotland in 1072 to receive Malcolm's homage.

Welsh
invasion,
1082.

Most of this time, on the contrary, William was engaged in French wars assisted by British soldiers of fortune¹ and also

¹ At the siege of Gerberon in 1079 William's life was saved by an English thegn, Tokig of Wallingford.

by British mercenaries, asserting his title to Maine in 1073, against the challenge of the French king, and his suzerainty of Brittany in 1076, while from 1074 to 1079 he was engaged in a dispute, flaring up into actual war in 1078, with his eldest son Robert, who found refuge in Flanders. In 1084 he was again fighting in Maine. Not until 1085 was William seriously threatened in his hold on England and that threat arose from his continental entanglements. The coalition of Flanders, Denmark and Norway which was then ranged against him, and threatening to invade Britain, was formidable and William returned to England with a large body of Norman and English mercenaries. As far as we know, however, no English nobles were in communication with the enemy on this occasion, and if the invasion had come, a united England would have faced the invaders. For all that, the menace was very real, as William's swift reaction showed. It was the last occasion on which a Scandinavian power was in a position to take the offensive against this country. The development alike of military power, of the machinery of centralised government and of national sentiment in England combined to discourage any further Danish invasions. In 1086, however, the Anglo-Norman state must have seemed to the outside world extremely insecure, and the powerful Danish fleet would certainly have sailed had not the Danish King Cnut—the same who had been one of the leaders of the invasion of 1069—been murdered at Odensee on July 13th, 1086. As it was, Cnut's ambitious scheme had merely incidental consequences. William's arrival in England in the autumn of 1085 marked the height of the crisis, and at the council held at Christmas at Gloucester, after "very deep speech," the famous "Domesday" inquest was ordered. This inquest was not solely, perhaps not even mainly, a fiscal inquiry. Its "underlying purpose . . . was to supply the king with detailed knowledge of the kingdom he had come to rule."¹ Clearly the Conqueror, faced with a formidable threat of invasion, wished to know the amount of geld due by custom from his tenants-in-chief. But he also wanted to know their real resources in land and live-stock, the extent and situation of their holdings and perhaps also, as we may infer from the evidence of the separate inquests which we know were conducted by many of the great ecclesiastical tenants-in-chief, the number of knights who were available for service.

Domesday
inquest
ordered,
December,
1085.

¹ David Douglas, *Domesday Monachorum* (Royal Hist. Soc., 1944). Chapter V., p. 27. The whole chapter should be consulted.

THE OATH OF SALISBURY

The preparation of the Domesday survey was a major administrative achievement—the greatest in the whole history of the Middle Ages. There had been a number of similar “inquests” earlier and some record of them has been preserved. The lands of the monastery of Ely had been the subject of inquiries begun in 1071 and reopened in 1080. There had been the more famous inquiry at Pinnenden Heath, near Maidstone, into alleged encroachments by Bishop Odo, the Conqueror’s half-brother, on the lands of the see of Canterbury. There had been an inquiry at Worcester into a boundary dispute between the Bishop of Worcester and the abbey of Evesham. These inquiries were high affairs of State and the highest officers of State had taken part in them; the efficiency of the State depended on the utmost precision in delimiting estates and defining the obligations owed by each mesne tenant to his lord. Failing this, the lord could not discharge his own obligations, fiscal or feudal, to the crown. We must see the Domesday survey, therefore, as the climax and consequence of a great number of lengthy inquiries. An end was now to be put to this unending litigation by the systematic application throughout the whole country of the jury system under royal supervision, and the resources of the kingdom, and thus of the Crown, were to be at last accurately ascertained.

The deep speech at Gloucester was followed in the next year by a great council at Salisbury when, according to the Chronicle, all the landowners of any account in England did homage to William and swore him fealty. Those summoned, in addition to the tenants-in-chief, were probably only those mesne tenants who were of baronial status and who were already commonly known as barons. This was a momentous occasion because it asserted the English monarchical over and against the continental feudal principle. The fealty which the tenant owed to his lord must not be allowed to conflict with the fealty which, like all subjects, he owed to his sovereign.

This dramatic strengthening of the administrative machinery and the constitutional framework of the State which marked the year 1086 is demonstrably connected with the threat of invasion, although, as it happened, that threat had passed before the Oath of Salisbury was actually sworn. It marked the climax of a great reign and consolidated for eight hundred years the power and prestige of the monarchy in England.

In September, 1086, William left England for the last time. For a year he was campaigning in Normandy, where he died

Oath of
Salisbury,
August,
1086.

on September 9, 1087, from wounds received at the siege of Mantes.

Death of
William,
Sep-
tember,
1087.

William's later continental wars were far more serious than his English campaigns, but they were forced on him by circumstance. Since 1066 William's good fortune in continental politics had deserted him. His father-in-law, Baldwin V of Flanders, died in 1067 and his cousin Baldwin VI three years later. This left a disputed succession—Baldwin's brother Robert contesting the claims of Arnulf, the direct inheritor. William took young Arnulf's side, but Arnulf and his regent were defeated and killed at the battle of Cassel in 1071, leaving Arnulf's brother Baldwin as a dissatisfied pretender who was able to count William among his supporters. This threw Robert into the arms first of the king of France and later, of Cnut, king of Denmark, but Arnulf's defeat had wider consequences. Normandy allied to Flanders was in a position to exert constant and effective pressure on the king of France, and the traditional alignment of the king and the duke of Anjou against Normandy, Maine and Flanders had produced at worst a 'balance of forces. Once the Flemish alliance was lost, Normandy must in the long run either conquer or be conquered by Anjou if she was to preserve the power (for it was not a right) of independent initiative against the French monarchy. The ultimate, fateful and not very distant consequence was the union of the two ruling houses through the marriage of William's granddaughter Matilda to Geoffrey of Anjou, the succession of the Angevin dynasty to the English throne, and the vain struggles of the Plantagenet kings to hold their continental possessions which diverted England for two centuries from her destiny as an Atlantic power. The immediate consequence, however, was no more than a weakening of Normandy's strategic position which forced William to maintain his prestige by constant minor wars in Maine and in Brittany.

He was never severely pressed, and only once, in Brittany, in 1076 was he ever forced to retreat without securing his objective, but he was weakened all this time by the quarrel with his son Robert, who resented not being allowed to exercise the authority to which he felt himself entitled as titular duke of Normandy and count of Maine (the titles were conferred on him in 1066 and 1069 and he had been promised the dukedom as early as 1063). The grievances of heirs apparent and the parental incompetence of even the greatest of sovereigns are among the

commonplaces of history, but Robert's career does not suggest that William was seriously at fault. All his life Robert was an ineffective rebel, relying on feudal claims without giving any evidence of ability to discharge his feudal responsibilities. He was perhaps a competent soldier (his Scottish campaign in 1080, fought after a temporary reconciliation with his father, was easy but successful), and after the Conqueror's death he showed gifts of leadership in the First Crusade, but he seems never to have had any sense of political responsibility. He saw himself as a knight errant, to whom greater possessions would have meant greater opportunities for military adventure. To William he appeared as the undutiful son, whose conduct moved his father to despair and brought his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. To the historian of England he is a less dramatic figure because these harassing Norman campaigns were not, any more than the English rebellions, decisive events in our history. Their scale was small. No king of France or duke of Normandy or count of Flanders or duke of Anjou staked his all during the years in which England was being moulded into shape by her masterful ruler. Forces were growing up which would have to be destroyed or concentrated or absorbed, but coming events cast only a light shadow over William's reign. The present he had always under control, in France as in England, except for that one crisis in 1085, and then the Conqueror's good fortune, which seemed to have ebbed, returned to him at Odensee to remove his only formidable opponent.

Except for 1085, all these wars and rebellions belong to social rather than to political history. It was a turbulent age. Constitutional remedies for grievances did not exist, and French feudalism made private grievances remediable only by acts of public violence. What is politically significant in the reign of William the Conqueror is not the violence or disorder which was endemic in the Europe of the eleventh century, but the decisive measures taken by the king in England to control it in England, to assert the authority of law, to improve and centralise administration, to reform and revivify the Church and so to lay the foundations of a system of public order in Church and State which could at once withstand, and in the end subdue, the turbulences of baronial insolence and foreign aggression.

These decisive measures must now be described.

Chapter Eleven

THE ANGLO-NORMAN FEUDAL SYSTEM

MUCH confusion in our thoughts about the Anglo-Norman state is due to the current colloquial use of the word feudal, as applying pre-eminently to a class-society and in particular to the master-servant relation. If this were the correct use of the term, we should have to deny any connection between feudalism and the Norman Conquest. Anglo-Saxon society before the Conquest was largely dominated by an aristocracy of birth. Every man, moreover, had a lord, although many of the Anglo-Saxon thegns and some freemen of lesser rank, particularly in the Danelaw, could choose their own lord. As regards the peasantry outside the Danelaw, they held their land in a variety of conditions, varying between the modern landlord-tenant relation and something much nearer akin to what we should call the master-servant relation. After the Norman settlement England was neither more nor less of a class society than it had been. If the status of many of the villeins deteriorated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it had certainly not been the intention of the Conqueror to change it, while as regards the free peasants his successors legislated to preserve their rights and, in the long run, to extend them by giving them easier access, and, as of right, to the royal justice.

It is in this sense that it is true and necessary to say that the Anglo-Norman system did not aim at, nor lead to, a social revolution. In the higher ranks of the social structure, however, the changes affected were revolutionary, and the manner in which they were made had the effect of a cataclysm.

The backbone of the Anglo-Saxon social structure were the thegns, many of whom held their land specifically of the king or held lands of their own inheritance in subordination to lords of their own choice. Others were tenants of greater landholders, most often on one of the great ecclesiastical estates. There were a number of great lay estates before the Conquest, and the accumulation of estates by a small number of great families was a salient feature of the century before the Conquest, but at the time of the Conquest there were still many thousand separate estates either held directly of the

Crown or held by virtue of inheritance, the holder being subordinate to a lord but not by reason of his holding. All holders of estates owed duties of some kind or another under the Anglo-Saxon system, but the distinguishing characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon thegn was that his obligations were personal, not attaching to the land as such, that no military obligations attached to him as lord of a manor or group of manors, that his national obligations were roughly related to the size of his estates and that it was the exception for the thegn to be unable to alienate his land. It is nearly as hard to generalise about the social status of the thegn as about the conditions of his tenure, but what is certain is that "the distinction between the thegn and the peasant was the fundamental line of cleavage in Old English society"¹ and that this distinction lasted until the Conquest. It was on the thegns that the Norman Conquest fell with cataclysmic effect, partly as the result of the need of the Conqueror to reward his followers and his servants with land, partly in order to strengthen the monarchical power by the creation of strictly dependent tenures, but mainly as the result of the crown's immediate need for a force of professional, mounted men-at-arms.

These three needs were simultaneously fulfilled by one clear-cut measure whereby the land of England, other than the land remaining in possession of the Crown or that held by the Church in frankalmoyn, was to be held only by dependent military tenure, under a contract direct, explicit and legalised, whereby he who held the land of the Crown held it on the condition that he swore fealty to the Crown, that he provided the service of so many knights and that he rendered to the king certain aids and reliefs. This system of dependent military tenures, and nothing else, is the feudal system. It was modelled on practices already prevailing in the case of certain abbeys and bishoprics in Normandy, but as introduced and applied in England it was in fact a new and revolutionary political experiment, because it became the normal and almost universal form of tenure, which it had never been in Normandy, and because the whole land of England was granted afresh and as regards lay tenants to a newly created baronage, each of whom owed his position and his lands directly and wholly to royal favour.

The contract in regard to knight service was a simple one. The tenant would hold certain lands of the Crown in return for the service of so many knights. The number of knights

¹ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 481.

required was known as the tenant's *servitium debitum*. The number of knights required was arbitrarily fixed; that is to say, it bore no relation to the value or area of the lands held. The contract between the crown and the tenant was unwritten, and it was prior in time to, and irrespective of, the creation of knights' fees. We deduce these facts from the returns called for by Henry II exactly a hundred years after the Conquest, when each tenant-in-chief was required to state how many knights' fees had been created on his barony prior to the death of Henry I, and who held them, how many had been granted since and to whom, and how many knights did he have to support on his demesne in order to complete his *servitium debitum*. The extant returns are nearly complete for the ecclesiastical fiefs, but not for the lay fiefs. They are, however, sufficient to enable us to say that the total of the *servitia debita* from the ecclesiastical fiefs in the Conqueror's time was just short of 800 knights and from the lay fiefs roughly 4200.

The earliest surviving document which clearly illustrates the nature of those military tenures is a writ of summons to the feudal host by William I to the Abbot of Evesham, which must have been issued before 16th February, 1077, and should most probably be assigned to the year 1072. It instructs the Abbot of Evesham in his capacity of royal official to supervise the feudal levy in the districts over which he is set. It also bids him as a tenant by knight-service to appear himself with the five knights which he owed from his tenancy. The document¹ is as follows:

William King of the English to Aethelwig, Abbot of Evesham greeting. I order you to summon all those who are subject to your administration that they may bring before me at Clarendon on the Octave of Pentecost all the knights that they owe to me duly equipped. You also on that day will come to me, and you will bring with you fully equipped those five knights which you owe to me in respect of your abbacy. Witness Eudo the Steward, At Winchester.

The knights were probably required to perform, if called upon, forty days' service at the expense of the tenant-in-chief, and in early days the service was in fact called for in very many cases for the purpose of garrisoning the royal castles even when no knights were required for service in the field. The methods

¹ The importance of this document is discussed in Round, *Feudal England* (1895) p. 304, where the Latin text is printed. It is also printed in the later editions of Stubbs, *Select Charters*.

by which they were found by the different tenants-in-chief varied very greatly. Some barons created many more knights' fiefs than were required to meet the *servitium debitum*, and some created considerably fewer. The process of enfeoffment was necessarily somewhat gradual, and at the beginning of the Conqueror's reign all tenants-in-chief must have had to provide and maintain a fairly high proportion of their *servitium debitum* in their own households from the proceeds of their demesne lands. Clearly this system had an immediate advantage for the tenant-in-chief as it enabled him to retain in his own hands a larger proportion of the gross revenue of his estates. On the other hand, the estates of a great baron were, as we shall see, often widely scattered and if they were all retained in his own hand their effective supervision would be a very difficult administrative problem. Most important of all, however, was the difficulty of getting knights without granting them land. "Feudal tradition urged a young knight to serve in a baron's household, but it was in the hope that he would eventually receive a fief. Social prestige and economic security demanded that a knight have a fief. No doubt some knights never attained this end and spent their lives serving as household knights, but it is hard to believe that many would enter a service where there seemed no hope of acquiring a fief. In all probability it was not difficult for a baron to keep four or five knights in his household. For a minor baron these knights might be an important part of the quota owed the Crown. But the great lords could hardly hope to maintain indefinitely household forces large enough to furnish any great proportion of their obligations."¹

Another advantage of enfeoffment was the right acquired to claim from the enfeoffed knight the feudal reliefs and aids on succession, and, in the case of the lay tenants-in-chief, on the marriage of the lord's eldest daughter or the knighting of his eldest son. In this way the tenants-in-chief recouped themselves indirectly for the feudal reliefs and aids which they themselves had to pay.

For these reasons the granting of fiefs to mesne tenants who would administer the estates and out of the revenues provide so many knights became the normal method of providing knights. We can, in fact, from records of enfeoffments which have survived, see how knights fees were created for

¹ Sidney Painter, *Studies in the History of the Eng. Feudal Barony*. John Hopkins Press, 1943.

many dependent relatives and minor officials of the great honours, stewards, butlers, cooks, marshals and the like. A small manor would be given them for the service of half a knight, or less, with a promise of further land to make up a full knight's fee, or a full half of such a fee, later. We know that by the thirteenth century property bringing in £20 a year was considered a normal knight's holding, but in the eleventh century there is a good deal of evidence of knight's fees half that size, worth £10 a year only. And even these small fees had to be built up gradually by grants of what were in effect reversions to manors likely to become vacant, presumably through the death of childless tenants. The system was extremely elastic. Some of the very great barons had mesne tenants who themselves ranked as barons and might have to provide a considerable number of knights, but a number of men held only one knight's fee and in return for the revenue of the estate were personally liable for service. Those who held only half a knight's fee would perhaps have to contribute half the cost of providing a knight or the cost of providing a sergeant, or, more likely, do service for half the usual period.¹ By 1166, however, some mesne fiefs had been created which owed the service only of very small fraction of a knight. Clearly these men paid in effect in rent and not in service.

The return of 1166 gives us for certain the *servitium debitum* and the details of sub-infeudation for 65 lay and 22 ecclesiastical barons. Of these, by the death of Henry I, 17 lay and 18 ecclesiastical baronies had enfeoffed more knights than they owed to the crown; eight lay and one of the ecclesiastical barons had provided exactly for their obligations by enfeoffments. The remaining forty-three barons had enfeoffed fewer than they were required to provide. By 1166 this number had fallen to 35.² We are not able to say for certain why the practice in regard to enfeoffment varied so greatly. There is evidence, however, to show that the burden of knights' service was very unevenly distributed. The Domesday valuation, for instance, of the Aincurt barony was some three times as great

¹ There are not many actual records of enfeoffment preserved from very early times. In Appendix IV we print four typical documents, the first dated 1083, and the second 1085; the third belongs to the period 1066-1087 and the fourth to the period 1136-1145. The elasticity of the system is particularly well illustrated by the third document.

² Counting as a barony any tenure in chief of more than 5 knights' fees, Mr. Painter calculates that there were 133 lay baronies in 1166. It will thus be seen that we have precise figures for less than half. Nevertheless, there is no reason whatever to suppose that the sample is unrepresentative.

as that of the Arcy fief, yet it owed only twice as many knights. This meant that the proportion of the whole barony which would have had to be given away in fiefs to provide the whole of the *servitium debitum*, without calling on any household knights, varied greatly. Mr. Painer's calculations in respect of eight baronies, about which fairly precise information can be deduced, show that this proportion might be as low as 29 per cent and as high as 90 per cent.

Royal favour may always have had something to do with this, and in the time of Henry I it certainly had, but as far as the Conqueror is concerned it is more likely that there was insufficient information as to the value of the different estates.

Equally varied, as the result of the different methods of providing the *servitium debitum*, was the social standing of the knights themselves. Some were members of the Norman nobility, or relatives of bishops or abbots. Some were small tenant farmers, barely distinguishable in economic status from the richer villeins. Many, especially in the Conqueror's time, were household retainers and soldiers of fortune, who had attached themselves in search of wealth and fortune to one of the great Norman houses. Some idea of the character of these professional men at arms is conveyed by the comment of the Abbot of Ely who tells us that he found the procedure of enfeoffment—the creation, that is, of knights' fees—preferable to the standing entertainment of a roystering troupe of knights *quod intollerabiliter et supra modum potuit vexare locum*.

We do not, unfortunately, know the process by which the land of England was granted anew by the Conqueror to his supporters. The outcome of the process on the other hand is very completely set before us, as the resulting fiefs, or "baronies" or "honours"¹ to use the terms which now began to come into use, are all described in minute detail in the land survey which we now know as Domesday Book. This survey covers the whole kingdom except for the four northern counties and a few towns, London and Winchester among them. It tells us that in 1086 the annual revenue, in the money-value of the period, from the rural properties dealt with in the survey, but exclusive of the revenue arising from the towns, may be thought of in round figures as about £73,000 a year. "To this total the ten shires of Wessex south of the Thames contributed

Domesday
survey,
1086.

¹ "Barony" is a somewhat less technical term than "honour" but neither ever had a clearly defined meaning in Norman times. Both are used to describe the estates of great mesne-tenants as well as the estates of the great tenants-in-chief.

about £32,000, the three East Anglian shires about £12,950, the eight West Mercian shires about £11,000, the seven shires of the Southern Danelaw lying between the Thames and the Welland about £9400, the northern Danelaw between the Welland and the Humber about £6450, and finally the devastated lands of Yorkshire and Lancashire about £1200. If it were possible to ascertain the corresponding values at the date when the estates first came into the hands of their new owners, the figures would in each case be much smaller; but though there are some returns in Domesday which give the values when the lands were received, these are far too fragmentary to furnish the data necessary for calculating such general totals. To make up totals from averages is all that could be done for the earlier date, which would be unsatisfactory; and, after all, the values for 1086 are perhaps more to our purpose, as they indicate better the potentialities of income to which the new landowners could look forward in 1070, however much for the moment the countryside had been impoverished by the fighting in the previous four years.

“Reckoning then that the income from land which the Conqueror had at his disposal, exclusive of the rents and other profits of the boroughs, was potentially about £73,000 a year, Domesday Book, when further analysed, shows that the distribution of this sum resulting from the king’s grants for the five main purposes for which he had to provide was roughly as follows: (a) £17,650 a year for the support of the Crown and royal house, including in that category himself, his queen, his two half-brothers, and King Edward’s widow; (b) £1800 a year for the remuneration of his minor officials and personal servants, later known as the king’s Sergeants; (c) £19,200 a year for the support of the Church and monastic bodies; (d) £4000 a year for the maintenance of some dozen pre-Conquest landowners and their men, such as Ralf the Staller, Robert son of Womarc, Alured of Marlborough, Colswegen of Lincoln, and Thurkil of Arden, who for one reason or another had retained his favour; and (e) £30,350 a year for the provision of some 170 baronies, some great and some small, for the leading captains, Norman, French, Breton and Flemish, and their retainers, who had risked their lives and fortunes in the great adventure of conquering England.”¹

¹ W. J. Corbett, *The Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. V, p. 507. The whole chapter from which this passage has been quoted, by permission, is of incalculable value to the non-specialist student and to the general reader.

This summary of the final effect of William's regranting of the English lands brings us up against one question which must be faced. What was the value of the £ in 1086? No final answer can be given. In the first place, there was not at that date a fully developed money economy. A landless man, whatever his possessions in treasure, could not obtain by the expenditure in one year of say £100 (otherwise by buying an estate, which he might well be unable to do and could not in any case do directly or without favour of the crown or of one of the great barons), any equivalent in goods, services or amenities, to that enjoyed by a man holding a manor or a group of manors valued in Domesday Book at £100 p.a. All, therefore, that we can usefully ask is what money income in 1938¹ would have placed a man in the same relative position as the holder of estates valued at £100 p.a. in Domesday by giving him the same command over goods and services and placing him in the same position relative to a great state official on the one hand and a small yeoman farmer on the other. Even this question cannot be easily or accurately answered, but it is easier to make a comparison with 1938 than with earlier periods because modern taxation imposes a burden on the wealthy much more nearly equivalent to the burden of providing knights, aids and reliefs than anything imposed on the wealthy in any other post-feudal age. The purchasing power of the £ at the end of the eleventh century was, if we compare prices of sheep and cattle, for instance, probably 40 times what it was in 1914, but we should fall into an elementary error if we equated the holder of manors valued in Domesday Book at £100 p.a. with a property owner enjoying a gross income of £4000 p.a. in 1914; we should have omitted to take account of the manors he had to dispose of by sub-infeudation to provide his quota of knights and there was in 1914 no corresponding liability on estate owners. Moreover, when we remember that the *servitium debitum* was essentially an arbitrary quantity determined by royal favour and not closely related (although it is not certain how far this lack of close relationship was intentional) either to the extent or the value of the fief, we realise that accurate generalisation is impossible. It is none the less important to attempt an answer because the difference in the value of money is so great that without some guidance we can form no picture at all of the social hierarchy or the standard of living.

¹ Comparisons with the present day are, for the moment, impossible because the inflation consequent on the second World War has not yet (1948) run its course.

Although it would be possible from the price of sheep and corn to argue for a higher multiplier, a roughly accurate picture will, we believe, be given if we say that the Domesday gross incomes must be multiplied fifty times to give the 1938 equivalent in gross income. The net income retained after providing the *servitium debitum* was probably on an average less, and often much less, than half the gross income of a barony, which is much the same as the position of a property owner in 1938 in the matter of direct taxation. The possession of a Domesday income of £100 p.a. might therefore be very roughly equated, but for two very important considerations, with the possession of property bringing in, in 1938, £5000 p.a. in rents and the holding of a single knight's fee in the Conqueror's time with the possession of a private income from dividends of a few hundreds a year or the tenancy of a farm bringing in a net income to the tenant of £500-700 p.a. Nevertheless, we must remember that the number of substantial lay tenants-in-chief was very small—only about 170—and the small number of knights—only about 5000—is relatively even more surprising. Secondly, we must remember that in 1086 England was at the very beginning of an age of rapidly rising prices. The villeins were to continue to work for their lord and the value of their work was to increase very rapidly, whereas knight service (and "aids" and "reliefs") were to be commuted for fixed sums when prices were still comparatively low; the process began in the reign of the Conqueror's son, Henry I, if not earlier. We must therefore make our survey of the Norman feudal system as set up by the Conqueror with our eyes wide open to the facts that, firstly, the social and political influence of the baronage was incomparably greater than any calculation of the present day equivalent of their money incomes would suggest, and, secondly, that their collective wealth was to increase very rapidly. It remains true that the immediate effect of the Conqueror's settlement was a vast increase in the power of the Crown in England, and it is this which lends chief significance to the feudal system, for it provided England for the first time with a monarchy so established and for three generations so financially secure as to be able to fulfil all the essential tasks of government (the breakdown in Stephen's reign was due, of course, to purely political causes). William retained nearly a quarter of the land of England in his own hand. The Church held even more. The income of the baronial fiefs was less

than half the total income of the estates of the kingdom, and the tenure on which the baronage held their lands was strictly dependent. The tie of allegiance, moreover, was, in the beginning, far stronger under the feudal system than under the pre-Conquest system where the Crown had slowly asserted a varying degree of authority over men whose title to their lands was in many cases older than the Crown's claim to any authority over them. Nor was the Conqueror's baronage at all homogeneous. It is at least doubtful whether the great Breton nobles, such as Alain of Richmond in Yorkshire, felt more closely akin to their Norman *confreres* than to the old Anglo-Saxon nobility to whom they had succeeded. At best, the baronage was, for the first two generations at least, a junior partner of the Crown. It was not, and could not attempt to be, a rival. Unless and until the Church and a majority of the baronage made common cause against the Crown, as they did for a decisive moment at the end of Stephen's reign, the Crown was master.

The transfer and consolidation, without social disorder or even disorganisation, of the estates of some thousands of nearly independent landowners into less than two hundred baronies, was itself an administrative achievement of a very high order. The victims of this political revolution were the Anglo-Saxon thegns. The Church, although it had to accept the new burden of providing knights, on the whole gained considerably by the Conquest, and, as Domesday makes clear, the position of the peasantry of all ranks was left during the Conqueror's reign substantially unchanged. They owed the same duties or rents to different lords. The position of the free peasantry was not gravely affected by feudalism as such and was in some ways strengthened. As regards the villeins, the position of those on the "ancient demesne" of the Crown became increasingly more favourable, and they came to be known by the thirteenth century (according to Bracton) as villein sokemen. "They were relieved of the public burdens incumbent on the regular tenants in villeinage; they could leave their tenements when they wished; and they were protected by special writs provided to meet their case, both against ejection from their holdings and against any increase in their services."¹ The status of the rest of the villeins unquestionably declined during the twelfth century, but this was due not to any evil intentions of the Norman overlords, but, paradoxically enough, to the pro-

¹ Austin Lane Poole, *Obligations of Society in 12th and 13th Centuries*, p. 18.

gressive liberation of slaves on the one hand and the consistent efforts of the common lawyers, on the other hand, to protect the status and rights of the free peasantry. To the common lawyer, the villein was not free, and he did not therefore, except on the ancient demesne where special procedures were set up, benefit by the legal reforms of Henry II and his successors. These causes of a decline in the villeins' status did not however begin to operate in the eleventh century.

Very different was the fate of the Anglo-Saxon thegns. With some dozen exceptions the great Anglo-Saxon pre-Conquest landholders lost all, and the smaller thegns lost immeasurably in social status. How exactly this happened is not clear. It is indisputable, however, that, as a general rule, the Anglo-Saxon thegn lost his land. Very many, no doubt, were killed at Hastings. Many more forfeited their lands by joining one or other of the rebellions during the Conqueror's reign. Of the small minority who retained their lands many degenerated into sokemen in effect if not in name. Only a few received knights' fees. The plain fact is that, as a class, the thegns had to disappear as independent landowners in order to create the great estates necessary to sustain the baronage and in order that fiefs might be available for the knights and the officials alike of the Crown and of the great "honours." A number of the smaller fiefs came into Norman hands through the marriage of Anglo-Saxon heiresses, and the high mortality of the times must have made the transition easier in any case than it would have been to-day. Nevertheless, a whole and once dominant social class was in one way or another expropriated, and however necessary in the interests of social order or good government the process was, it must have involved a great measure of harshness to hundreds of individuals. These individuals, moreover, belonged to the very small literate class, and it is probably their hardship which inspired many of the laments of the monkish chroniclers as well as fomenting some at least of the earlier rebellions. Having said so much, it must be added that no wholesale transfer of property and power in this country at any rate has ever been carried out with so little bloodshed or so little adverse effect on the general body of the people.

Consideration of the fate of the Anglo-Saxon thegn leads directly to the description of the great feudal institution, the "honour," which really took the place alike of the *congerie* of

free landowners, great and small, who dominated the earlier Anglo-Saxon scene and of the great earls and their families who had come in the last century before the Conquest to control the political destinies of England.

We have seen that in 1086 two-fifths of the land of England was parcelled out to some 170 barons. These Barons were Norman, French, Breton and Flemish.¹ The chief estates were assigned to those who had most directly contributed to the success of the initial Conquest, notably the king's two half-brothers, Odo of Bayeux and Robert of Mortain, William fitz Osbern, Roger de Montgomery, William of Warenne, Hugh of Avranches, Eustace of Boulogne, Richard of Clare, Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutances, and Geoffrey de Mandeville. All these received during the Conqueror's reign baronies worth more than £750 a year. Of the great barons Odo of Bayeux was made Earl of Kent and William fitz Osbern Earl of Hereford in 1067; Roger de Montgomery became Earl of Shrewsbury c. 1075, and Hugh of Avranches Earl of Chester in 1071. Of the old Anglo-Saxon earldoms only those of Bernicia and Durham were retained, but all the earldoms were political appointments to the chosen custodians of the border territories, and conferred no feudal privileges but only precedence, though some of them retained by special grant the fiscal privilege granted to the old Anglo-Saxon earls, of a third of the profits of jurisdiction in the hundred and shire courts of the earldom.

Not all the families who held the great fiefs in 1086 survived the century as great English landholders. On the other hand, among the holders of quite modest estates at that time are the bearers of such famous names as Ferrers, Bigod, Gifford Percival, Lacy, Montfort, Mortimer, Vere, Beaumont and Beauchamp, who are found in possession of great estates in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The fact is important. The fiefs created by William I for his followers were not irrecoverable. They were, in fact as well as in law, conditional tenures.

The baronies or honours were created by handing over so many manors as going concerns with the peasantry living upon them, and each baron selected for himself which manors he would keep as demesnes for himself and which he would sub-enfeof. Rarely did a Norman baron succeed to the estate of only one English antecessor. The great fiefs were made up of scores or even hundreds of manors, some of which had

¹ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 621.

formed the estates of several great Anglo-Saxon nobles, others of which had been severally held by Anglo-Saxon thegns. "The fief of Roger de Busli in Nottinghamshire and in South Yorkshire had been divided in 1066 among more than 80 English owners."¹ The size and value of manors varied indefinitely. We find in Domesday such manors as Berkeley, worth £170 per annum to the lord of the manor, with 54½ teams working on the demesne land and 192 teams on the tenants' land. Working on the demesne or as tenants, or both, there were 29 radknights, 162 villeins, 147 bordarii, 22 coliberts and 161 serfs. Leominster in Herefordshire was even larger. The extent was 80 hides, with 30 teams on the demesne, and as tenants 8 reeves, 16 beadles, 8 radknights, 238 villeins, 75 bordarii and 82 serfs, with 230 teams between them. At the other end of the scale there were numerous manors of a hide or half a hide in extent recorded in Domesday as worth a few shillings or even a few pence only. The owner of such a manor would be in fact a peasant with perhaps two men working for him. In some cases, however, we find manors with no tenants and must presume them to be small holdings worked by the owner's families but each directly assessed and personally responsible for paying its geld. On the other hand we find manors with no demesne land, the whole estate, in modern parlance, being let to tenants, with no home farm.

The largest manors such as Berkeley and Leominster represent, we must imagine, pre-Conquest aggregations of small manors in one fiscal unit for purposes of administrative convenience. But such aggregations were the exception, after as before 1066. There were tens of thousands of manors, and every manor had a lord, who might himself hold of another lord or hold of the king. The Conquest did nothing to disturb this except that the aggregation of scores and often hundreds of manors into a few great "honours" led inevitably, as a matter of mere administrative necessity to the creation by sub- infeudation of a new class of "honorial barons" intermediate between the tenants-in-chief of the great fiefs and the individual holders of the manors. But the process of evolution was haphazard. There was no more symmetry about the distribution of land in 1086 than in 1066.

The aggregation of wealth and power in the hands of a few great nobles was, of course, immensely significant, but

¹ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 618.

we must be careful always to remember that it was much more than counter-balanced by the wealth and power in the hands of the Crown and the Church. The political power of the Crown was concentrated in the person of the king and that of the Church was, in effect, concentrated, at any rate during the reign of William I, in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The 170 members of the baronage, on the other hand, had no very direct community of interest during the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, while there were very great divergences of interest to separate them on most political questions. Chief among these was the extent of their English as compared with their Norman or other continental fiefs. This became very important when in the reign of William Rufus the dukedom of Normandy became separated from the English Crown and Robert of Normandy was at war with his brother. Again, the fact that there was no fully developed money economy in the eleventh century meant that the political influence of great fiefs during the first generation of English feudalism was related to their military strength and the danger that they could be to the Crown in case of rebellion. The smaller tenants-in-chief had no corresponding influence, and depended for their position solely on the favour of the Crown, which they therefore tended to support. It was not until towards the end of the twelfth century, when a real money economy had come into existence, that the barons saw reason, in the Crown's ever increasing demands for money and in the extension of royal justice which tended to diminish baronial revenues and power, to act in concert. For this reason there is probably less truth than used to be thought in the theory that the wide geographical distribution of the estates of the great honours was intentional and in the nature of a precaution against rebellion. The disposal of a baron's fees might indeed, as Professor Stenton points out, actually enlarge the range of his influence. In any case, the risk of rebellion was always there, and the very powerful tenants-in-chief were, as we know, tempted to rebellion on several occasions, but as far as political or fiscal advantage was concerned, the interest of the baronage as a whole in 1066, and for two generations after the Conquest, coincided with that of the Crown. The source of all their wealth and power was the feudal system and if they destroyed the power of the Crown they destroyed the keystone of the feudal arch. Only a disputed succession could give them a real interest in rebellion, and that applied only to

William
Rufus,
1087-1100.

the great fiefs whose support of the rival claimant might be decisive and who might thus hope greatly to aggrandise their position if the rebellion were successful.

The obligations imposed on the baronage were no doubt heavy, but for the first hundred years of English feudalism, at any rate, they were generally much more than counter-balanced by baronial privileges and revenues. The basic obligation was knight service, but although the Conqueror made it clear that the knights individually owed their fealty to the Crown and not to the lord of the honour to which they were enfeoffed, or in whose household they served, many honours enfeoffed more knights than they owed. It is clear that this military power carried with it advantages, political in the first case and, later, fiscal, when knight service came to be commuted for a payment known as scutage, or shield-money, in respect of every knight required by the *servitium debitum*. When the Crown raised a scutage, those honours which had enfeoffed more than their *servitium debitum* raised scutage from all their knights' fees and the resulting profit was often substantial. But the calling out of the feudal levy, or the raising of a scutage, was an exceptional event. Normally the military duties of the enfeoffed knights were performed guarding the king's castles, or, in the case of the marcher earls, castles placed under their control for the purpose of frontier defence. A number of baronial castles, however, also received garrisons, and here the peace-time service of the knights accrued to the direct if not the sole benefit of the lord of the honour. Baronial castles which we know to have had permanent garrisons in the twelfth century, and which were probably garrisoned earlier, are those at Hastings, Lancaster, Richmond (Yorkshire), Tickhill, Alnwick, Pevensey, Proudhoe, Skipton-in-Craven and Skipsea.¹ Most barons, no doubt, were only able to provide adequate garrisons for their castles in time of war or civil disturbances, but in any case the military establishment which they were forced to maintain was a great insurance. As Mr. Painter points out, the position of the barons from the Norman Conquest until the end of the fifteenth century "rested on a combination of economic, political and military power, but the development of the first two depended to a great extent on the effectiveness of the last." When, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the barons succeeded in getting very drastic reductions in their *servitium debitum*

¹ Painter, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

from the Crown without greatly relaxing their authority over their own tenants, the balance of power as between crown and barons changed in the barons' favour, but in Norman times the balance was in the Crown's favour. The Crown secured the services in time of emergency of virtually the whole of the fully-equipped mounted men at arms in the country. In peace time, the royal castles were garrisoned by calling on the tenants-in-chief to supply knights for castle guard, or to commute their service by money payments which enabled the Crown to hire a permanent garrison. At Windsor, for instance, the garrison was found from four baronies, one owing a service of thirty knights, two of fifteen knights and one of ten, and from three single knight's fees. This provided a garrison of 73 knights and originally no doubt it was intended that these knights should serve in rotation, but by the date of the written record, the service was commuted for twenty shillings in respect of each knight, giving the Crown an annual revenue of exactly 4s. a day, for which six knights could be hired in the reign of Henry II. At Dover, nine baronies provided 170 knights, and at Rochester five baronies provided 60. There is direct evidence that this system of castle guard was in operation at Windsor in the reign of William I and at Rockingham Castle, at Norwich Castle in the Isle of Ely and at Lincoln Castle in the reign of Henry I. There is every reason to suppose it was generally in force from a very early date.

The other feudal rights of the Crown were reliefs, aids and wardship. The king could claim payment of a "relief" when the heir entered into his inheritance; he could claim an aid on the marriage of his eldest daughter, the knighting of his eldest son or to ransom himself from captivity. He could claim wardship when the estate fell into the hands of a minor, and the right to find a husband when the estate fell into the hands of an unmarried woman or a widow. All these obligations could be claimed in the same circumstances by the lord of the honour from his own mesne tenants. The amount of the relief was long a point of contention between Crown and baronage, and although William Rufus exacted very oppressive payments and the baronage no doubt did the same with their own tenants, it was not until a century and a half after the Conquest that Magna Carta limited to £100 the relief payable on succession to a barony, or that the relief on succession to a knight's fee became generally limited to 100s., or £5. Even

after 1215, however, there were many exceptions to these limits.

Only second in financial importance to the barons' manorial and feudal revenues were their revenues from rights of jurisdiction. The barons owed suit to the popular shire and hundred courts, but most of them had franchises allowing them to try certain minor criminal cases in their own courts, and some had obtained or inherited from Anglo-Saxon antecessors control over the local hundred court, which meant, in effect, the right to receive the fines. The great frontier honours of the Bishopric of Durham, Chester, Shrewsbury and Richmond (guarding the Vale of York) which later became known as the Palatine Earldoms, retained the fees from all courts within their jurisdiction, but with these exceptions, baronial jurisdiction outside of suits proper to the feudal courts—such as suits concerning tenures and the obligations of tenants—was limited to the petty criminal cases which might come to them by a special franchise attaching to a manor or group of manors, or as owners of a hundred court. Some few barons, however, had even more extensive rights, either to act as hereditary sheriffs or to exclude the sheriff and act in his place: in some cases the right to exclude the sheriff, and thus to receive all those profits of jurisdiction which formed a substantial portion of the sheriff's income, dated from very early times. These franchises and immunities, as they were called, were all paralleled in Norman practice in pre-Conquest times, but in the case of the petty jurisdiction, which went almost as a matter of course to any tenant of standing, the usual formula, that the tenant was to hold "with sake and soke, toll and team, and infangenetheof"¹ showed that Anglo-Saxon custom was also being followed.

The profits of jurisdiction formed a very substantial addition to the baronial incomes. In 1241 the manorial income of the Palatine Earldom of Cheshire was £528. The revenue

¹ "By the early part of the eleventh century sake and soke had come to mean nothing more definite than the right to hold a court and take its profits. A grant of toll empowered a lord to take such payments as custom sanctioned on sales of cattle or other goods within his land. A grant of team authorised him to entertain in his court pleas in which a person suspected of wrongful possession of cattle or other goods could vouch his warranty, and as only those who could produce good witnesses of their purchases were admitted to this process, there was a connexion in sense as well as in alliteration between toll and team, for the payment of toll implied the due publicity of a sale. The word of greatest moment in this series is infangenetheof, the power of doing justice upon a thief taken in possession of stolen property within the land of a lord thus privileged."—Stenton, *English Feudalism*, pp. 99-100.

from pleas was £208. In 1214 the manors of the Bishop of Durham brought in £1255, while his pleas brought in about £600. In the case of the less privileged, the revenue from pleas was, of course, less, but the twelfth and thirteenth century pipe rolls give figures which make it clear that the income from pleas formed an important part, seldom less than 20 per cent, of the revenues of most baronies.¹ Those revenues, moreover, unlike the manorial and feudal revenues, were not, in Norman times counter-balanced by any corresponding obligations. They were in fact derived from privileges arbitrarily conferred in the first instance as a mark of royal favour but which became by custom inalienable. By the thirteenth century the possession of sake and soke, toll and team and infangenetheof entitled a tenant-in-chief to the privileges and subjected him to the burdens of tenure *per baroniam*, but the definition of baronial tenure as something essentially *sui generis* was the work of the thirteenth century lawyers. At the time of the Conquest and for two generations afterwards we cannot define the position more closely than by saying that the grant of this petty criminal jurisdiction to the tenants-in-chief (by which was usually meant the grant of the relevant profits or fines from the local hundred court) was almost invariable.

As regards the higher justice, as the common law gained strength in the thirteenth century, the Crown began to check the baronial privileges and to question their validity in cases where there had, in fact, been no grant and rights had merely been usurped. It is, however, fundamental to any understanding of Anglo-Norman feudalism to remember the immense respect universally paid in England to old-established custom. The Crown found it impossible in practice either to increase substantially the established obligations due from the baronage or greatly to reduce their privileges. Many of their rights of jurisdiction, indeed, probably came to the barons in the first instance solely because these rights had been given to their antecessors in Anglo-Saxon times.² If the lord of a particular manor had always had sake and soke, then the Norman holder of that manor must have it too. Indeed, this

¹ For the whole question, see Painter, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-123.

² As late as Henry I's time, we find the king giving three manors to his dapifer "with the same customs with which Edgar the Staller best held them in King Edward's time, that is, with soke and sake, and toll and team and infangenetheof, and as Geoffrey de Mandeville most quietly held them in my father's time." (*Colchester Cartulary*, p. i, 22—quoted by Stenton—*English Feudalism*, p. 102).

petty criminal jurisdiction seems normally to have been re-granted by the tenants-in-chief to their mesne tenants with little or no regard to their rank or the size of their estates. The grant seems to have been regarded as indispensable to the prestige of any mesne tenant of standing or held in favour by his lord. We even find one great tenant-in-chief conferring sake and soke on his cook.

So far we have been considering only criminal jurisdiction and its profits from the point of view of the revenue which it brought to the tenants-in-chief, and these men themselves we have been considering as individuals—how many of them were there, what land did they hold, on what terms, and what did they get out of it in net revenue? That is one aspect of the feudal system as set up by the Conqueror, but it is not the whole story. The old system of administration based on the sheriffs and the king's reeves in the towns, and on the hundred and shire courts was maintained by the Conqueror and it was round the sheriffs and the shire courts that the administrative system of the later Norman, the Angevin, kings was to be built up and that the royal justice was to be spread throughout the land until it ultimately gained the strength to interfere with the tenants-in-chief of the great honours and their own mesne tenants and other dependents. Throughout feudal times, however, there was a dual system, because, side by side with the system inherited from Anglo-Saxons we have the really characteristic feudal institution of the Honour, with its own administrative centre, the *caput honoris*, usually a castle but always the chief seat of the tenant-in-chief, its own writing office, its own court or *curia*, and even its own baronage consisting of the great mesne tenants of the honour who came to claim baronial rank and many of whom received summonses to parliament as barons in the fourteenth century.

The existence and nature of this dual system is nowhere better or more clearly illustrated than by contrasting the manner in which the Domesday survey was compiled, and the form in which the regional returns were summarised and are now known to us.

It used to be thought that the Domesday survey was put in hand almost entirely for fiscal reasons, and that in the form in which we now have it it was really a geld or tax book—a record, that is, compiled to enable the Crown to know at what number of hides each estate was assessed to geld and who was responsible for paying it. The purpose was almost certainly

HOW DOMESDAY WAS COMPILED

much wider and can be broadly described as the delimitation of the extent and boundaries of the great honours. It was fundamentally as important to the Crown to know to whom the Crown must look as the administrator of feudal law and custom in respect of this or that estate, and to know the precise boundaries of each honour and the limits of its jurisdiction, as to know accurately the wealth of the different estates and their assessment to tax.

This immense volume of information contained in Domesday the Crown obtained not from the tenants-in-chief but through the old hundred and shire courts, when commissioners visited each county and held what may be described untechnically as an enlarged shire court, "comprising the sheriff, the king's barons enfeoffed within the shire, with their foreign tenants, the court of every hundred and the priest, reeve and six villeins from every village."¹ This assembly heard the sworn testimony of jurors from each hundred. The original returns were therefore obtained county by county, arranged under hundred and vills, i.e. on a geographical basis, adjacent properties being grouped together irrespective of their ownership. The information obtained was then rearranged by the royal officers, who compiled the final record so as to give within each county the particulars first of the county town, then of the other boroughs, then of the Crown estates held in demesne (this was the land that came to be known as the "ancient demesne" of the Crown), then of the estates of those holding in chief of the Crown. The different manors held by each tenant-in-chief within the county were thus grouped together without regard to geography.

Domesday Book thus confronts us at the very outset of the Anglo-Norman regime with a dualism which was very deep-seated. In the summaries of the returns the vill or township, which was and has remained the basic social institution of the English countryside, disappears. The hundred, which was still in Norman times and which had been for very many decades an important administrative unit, also disappears. We have instead groups of manors forming the baronial honours or the estates of the lesser baronage. This new feudal organisation cuts clean across, without superseding, the old social and economic structure of the countryside. The freemen and sokemen of East Anglia and the Danelaw remained. The larger farms characteristic of Kent remained, elsewhere the village

¹ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 644.

with its complicated strip system of cultivation and its complex of tenancies dependent and otherwise remained as we have already described it. The old hundred and shire courts went on and the sheriff continued to be the representative of the Crown in the shires, to preside over the shire court and to collect revenues due to the Crown including the rents in kind or in money due from Crown lands and the royal share of the proceeds of jurisdiction, fines and amercements, tolls and fishing and forest dues.¹ After 1066, however, the military obligations and fiscal liabilities of the tenants-in-chief necessitated a system of baronial administration and jurisdiction running concurrently with that of the Crown, the sheriffs and the old local courts.

Feudalism by its nature required that the tenants-in-chief upon whom these heavy obligations lay should be able to pass on their obligations to their own tenants, and these in turn to their sub-tenants. Hence arose the feudal courts. Side by side with the hundred or shire court, and the *Commune Concilium*, and the king's personal and extraordinary justice as shown in the ancient rights to grant pardon and to make laws, and the right, brought over from Normandy, to direct juries *ad hoc* to find facts, there were required the manor court, the court of the honour and the Curia Regis. The one set of courts administered the old laws of England, the laws of the Confessor which William had sworn to preserve and keep; the other courts provided the sanctions necessary to the smooth working of feudalism.

That the Domesday returns should have been so reorganised indicates as clearly as anything could the supreme importance of the honour in the Conqueror's administrative scheme. So long as the Crown's power depended on the feudal levy of armed and equipped knights and so long as the king's peace depended on the regular garrisoning of the king's castles and of the frontier defences, for so long the honour was the pre-eminent and most characteristic institution of feudal society and the holders of these honours had to be vested with almost the same powers over their tenants as the Crown itself exercised through the Curia Regis over the tenants-in-chief. It was only

¹ The sheriffs in fact paid a fixed annual sum (the sheriff's "*firma*" or farm) for the right to collect their dues, and they retained any profit. The amount of the *firma* was, in essence, a matter of bargaining between king and sheriff. Henry I largely increased the amount of the farms and in certain cases farmed the counties himself through "custodes" or special commissioners. Stephen tended, in order to gain support, to reduce them. The tendency was again reversed under Henry II. See pp. 413, 468 and 507, following.

when the kings of Cnut's house had finally abandoned hope of reconquering England and when the eldest line of William's own family had died out with the death of William Clito in 1128, that the military strength of the baronage began to be less vital to the Crown, but it was not until the character of warfare changed with the development of fortifications at the end of the twelfth century that the position began to alter at all radically from the baron's point of view.

If the royal castles were important as the chief guarantors of the king's peace, the lord's castles were of hardly less importance as the normal administrative centres of the great honours. The remains of Anglo-Norman castles are scattered all over the country. "The scores of earth works" writes Professor Stenton "which we now know to represent castles built between the Battle of Hastings and the death of King Stephen are the most authentic memorials remaining of the age of militant feudalism." The Norman castle was, indeed, much less a centre of defence than a centre of government and a base from which armed parties of knights and sergeants could operate, as a police force. We are inclined to identify the tower with the castle because the mound on which it stood, sometimes surrounded by a moat and approached by a drawbridge, is usually what has survived. But an equally essential feature of the Norman castle was the levelled courtyard or "bailey," surrounded by an outer moat fenced on the inner bank and containing wooden or stone houses to house the garrison. The tower, in the case of the great private castles, housed the lord of the honour, or, in the king's castles, the king's lieutenant, and dominated alike the bailey and the surrounding countryside. The first castle built by William I was a wooden castle at Hastings and many of the mounds now identified as the sites of Norman wooden castles were no doubt put up with equal haste for purely military purposes, to provide shelter for men and horses and to terrorise the neighbourhood. But the permanent castle was a social and political institution, and many were built on sites quite unsuitable for defence. In such cases their military functions was that of a barracks rather than a fortress. The chief exceptions were the border castles and those on the southern seaboard. Even the border castles, however, had a double part to play, for these too were not only outposts against the Welsh and the Scots, but also the headquarters of great "honours."

In these castles the great nobles, lay and ecclesiastical, lived

in great state and they travelled from one to another with vast retinues. The Archbishop of Canterbury¹ in the reign of Henry I attends a chapter of the Priory of Stoke by Clare accompanied by a butler, a dispenser a chamberlain, a seneschal, a master cook, an usher, a porter and a marshal. Robert de Belleme's vast castle at Bridgnorth could hold more than a thousand men; it was a settlement, almost a township of its own. The famous Hugh of Avranches, Earl of Chester, under William I and William II, kept open house for all and wine flowed like water. He is described as a lover of riotous sport, minstrelsy, romance and jest.

This high, reckless, violent, highly-coloured civilisation rested on the foundation of feudalism, which established and made effective the principle that the strength of the baronage was the strength of the Crown, and the sanction behind feudalism was provided by the feudal courts.

There are few written records of the proceedings of the honorial courts, and we know few details of their administrative practice. What is certain is that the organisation was at its most elaborate in the early Norman times, when some of the great honours had a baronial sheriff and a baronial justiciar as well as the ordinary officers of a feudal court, such as the dapifer, the constable, the marshal, the dispenser, the butler, the cook and the usher. The lords of great honours clearly modelled their procedure on that of the Crown, and issued writs to their justices and barons and made grants of sake and soke to their tenants in language identical with that employed by the Crown. The *dapifer* or seneschal was usually the chief executive officer of the honour, and no doubt had to see that the decisions of the honorial court were carried out. We have very few records of such decisions. We are, however, still dealing with a relatively simple society in the reign of the Conqueror and his sons, when action was usually direct. The lords of the great honours (including the bishops and abbots) were not so much subject to the central government as partners in its responsibility for the orderly management of all the estates of the realm, for the punctual collection of the taxes as and when levied and for the military defence and policing of the realm in peace and war. As regards justice, the baronage was responsible for almost the whole of what

¹ See Appendix IV for a description of the Barony of the Archbishop of Canterbury, drawn up between December, 1093 and October, 1096, a very early description of a complete feudal honour.

there was outside of criminal jurisdiction, and for much of the petty criminal jurisdiction as well. The chief administrative problem, after the provision by enfeoffment of the necessary knights, was to regulate the succession to estates within each honour and to see that this was so arranged that the land should continue to provide the goods and services required of it. Services were, at the outset, largely rendered in person, and officials were paid by grants of land or manors rather than by salaries. If a money payment was made it was charged on the revenues of a particular manor. To a great extent, therefore, providing tenure was secure and estate management efficient, the system in the earliest times worked itself. Even the lords of the great honours remunerated themselves largely in kind by living at different manors and taking their retinue with them. The kings of England certainly did likewise on occasion, for there were many complaints in William II's time of the exactions and depredations of his followers.

Since abbeys and cathedral colleges were not able to move about, rents in kind had to be collected from the monastic estates. The canons of St. Paul's, for instance, provided for their collective wants by exacting a farm from each manor, in some cases a day's farm, in others a week's or a fortnight's. Ramsay Abbey worked, at any rate in the twelfth century, on a scheme of fortnightly farms, payable in turn by each of twenty-six manors. The average value of the fortnightly farms was £16 15s. 1d., of which £4 was payable in cash and the rest in stipulated quantities of flour, bread, malt, honey, lard, cheese, butter, eggs, pigs, lambs, hens and horse-meat.

The same problem existed in the case of the Crown estates and we know from the action taken in Henry I's reign that some proportion of the revenues collected for the Crown by the sheriffs were payable in kind as late as the beginning of that reign; there is no reason to doubt that the system was once widespread.

Mr. Austin Lane Poole¹ quotes from the Records of the Templars in the twelfth century an interesting and eminently characteristic account of the complex administrative scheme under which the Templars' estate of Guiting in Gloucestershire was farmed in 1185:

“Each virgate of land which owes services must work with one man for two days in each week from the feast of St.

¹ *Obligations of Society in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.*

Martin (11 November) till the time of haymaking, and then they will mow for four days a week as long as there are meadows to be mown and hay to be carried. If they shall have been mown and the hay carried before the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula (1 August), they shall return to working two days a week until St. Peter ad Vincula, and after the feast of St. Peter for four days a week, unless the corn crops are so forward that they can reap them, and if they can reap them, then on Monday they must work with two men and on Tuesday with one man and on Wednesday with two men and on Thursday with one man until the corn is carried, and when the corn has been carried, four days a week until the feast of St. Martin. Further, each virgate which renders work must plough as a boon work (*de bene*) an acre and three-quarters, and thrash the seed corn, and sow the land and harrow it for the winter sowing; and, if the master wishes it, carry loads to Gloucester or wherever he wills. Each team must also plough two acres of pasture. All the labourers must also make a load of malt against Christmas, and similarly against, Easter, and for drying the malt, they must get one load of wood; the said labourers must also move the sheep-fold twice in the year, and they must spend two days in washing and shearing the sheep."

Such arrangements were certainly customary and of very long standing. We can regard them as fairly representative of early twelfth century practice. We thus start the feudal period with a system under which services, broadly speaking, are all remunerated by enfeoffments in the case of knights and sergeants, and manorial revenues, provided by complicated schedules of work such as that done by the villeins at Guiting, were largely received by the lord in kind. The regulation of enfeoffments, the check on the punctual rendering of services and the collection and distribution of the manorial yields, was in the great honours the task of their officials and the personal responsibility of the different sub-tenants.

But the twelfth century was a century of transition; we find the beginnings of a money economy, and with it the specialisation of labour. The holder of a knight's fee, or a sergeanty, who paid scutage or fined to be absolved from his service, was in the way to becoming a professional farmer or small-holder or, in the case of the more important knights, a country gentleman devoting himself to local affairs and the management of his estates. This transition went on slowly but surely

within the framework of the honorial system, guided and checked by the officers of the honour and subject in respect of every modification of an existing tenure or custom to the final, formal and public approval of the lord of the honour, often notified in a writ, but many times only declared in the lord's court. Despite, however, the progress of this transition to a money economy, the military power of the barons continued to be the dominant political factor alike in their relations with the Crown and with their mesne tenants, and the obligations of dependent military tenure enforced by the feudal courts provided the sanction which kept the administrative system effective. So long as this was so, the partnership between Crown and barons was an effective reality and there was no necessary tension between the two partners. It is wholly wrong to ante-date the struggle between the Crown and the baronage to Norman times. The complex administrative system needed sanctions which feudalism alone could provide before a money economy became fully established, and that was not until the thirteenth century.

There was, however, a fierce struggle always going on beneath the surface between different groups of the great barons themselves. Their alliances, marriages and quarrels make up the domestic political history of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The prizes were great indeed, for political influence, wide jurisdiction and social and economic power went together and could in practice not yet be separated. But this fact, which made for interbaronial quarrels, made also for the stability of the system as a whole. On the whole, Norman feudalism made progress compatible with order. As the baronage increased in strength so did the reserved powers of the Crown itself, notably in regard to the jurisdiction of the royal courts, which was to make the Crown the champion of the people against their immediate lords, and in regard to taxation, which made the Crown less directly dependent on the personal service of the knights. In particular, the commutation of knights' service for money payments was in time to enable the Crown to organise and maintain its own force of mercenaries.¹ Meanwhile, as the centuries wore on, the castle,

¹ Scutage was undoubtedly taken as early as the reign of Henry I and apparently at the high rate of 30s. per knight's fee. In the time of Henry II the more usual rate was two marks (26s. 8d.). The Pipe Rolls of Henry II show many cases of payments in substitution not only for the provision of knights but, at lower rates, for the provision of private soldiers, porters and watchmen. We do not know, unfortunately, how or when these other obligations arose. The pay of the private soldier was 1d. a day, of the porters 2d. or 1d. and of the watchmen 1d.

whether a royal castle or the headquarters of a greater or lesser baron, became gradually less important. The break in this process of evolution which we shall find during the troubled reign of Stephen was more the effect than the cause of the breakdown of centralised government and England learnt the lesson.

The peculiar feature of the Norman system was that the process of evolution was to so great an extent foreseen, intended and guided by the Crown. It is true, for instance, that the earliest castles were hastily erected wooden fortifications, but the Tower of London, designed by Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester, and the great keep at Colchester, built in the Conqueror's reign, served as a model for the castles which followed them. The elaborate structure of political feudalism was a deliberate creation of William I, and the oath of Salisbury in 1086 recognised that a new and important social rank, the lesser baronage, composed of the chief mesne tenants, had grown up and must be brought into direct political relationship with the Crown. Meanwhile the machinery of the Curia Regis was systematically developed. The Curia Regis was in theory no different from the Commune Concilium, the assembly of the tenants-in-chief, the highest court of the land. But the Commune Concilium, summoned at the great Church festivals of Easter, Whitsun and Christmas, which William I when in England celebrated usually at Winchester, London or Gloucester, was a formal gathering. All the great notables, lay and ecclesiastical, were summoned. Little business, as a consequence, was done. The Curia, on the contrary, was in almost constant session, because it was, in essence as well as in fact, peripatetic. It was the king's body of permanent advisers, reinforced by such dignitaries as happened to be in the neighbourhood. The councils of which we have records were held not only in the great cities but at such places as Rockingham, Clarendon and Woodstock, all of them hunting boxes.

The Curia Regis had no legislative powers; it was in this respect neither the descendant of the Witan nor the ancestor of Parliament. It was, on the other hand, the direct ancestor of the Cabinet, of the Royal Courts of Justice, and of the permanent civil service, but with these embryonic functions it combined the role of the supreme feudal court. It was normally in the Curia, not in the great councils, that the feudal business arising from the relations of the Crown with the

baronage as tenants-in-chief was conducted.¹ Its importance as a feudal court derived from the peculiarly public character of political feudalism.

All feudal relationships were deliberately publicised. Even the smallest mesne-tenant making a grant of half a knight's fee to a servant would address the document to his fellow mesne-tenants and the neighbourhood generally and would cause it to be witnessed. We have one such document enfeoffing one man for garrison duty in the castle of Weston Turville which is witnessed by the lord's hallimot, two priests, a local smith, a blood-letter and all the men of the village. It would be wrong to infer that the consent of any of these witnesses was required. Subject to his obligations to his lord, in this case the king, the lord of Weston Turville could do what he liked, but a public character attached to his actions in this sphere. The enforcement of feudal obligations depended evidently to a definite extent on the public opinion of the neighbourhood, and it was much the same with the Crown in relation to its great tenants-in-chief. The grant and the reciprocal obligation accepted would alike be made public and the arrangement would in fact if not in law have to commend itself to the Curia Regis. The Curia was thus not only the place from which writs were issued and the ultimate judgments delivered, but it was the place where the great barons discussed their affairs with the king not as head of the State but as their feudal lord, and in these matters we may think with Professor Stenton that "the weight of their decision was irresistible." There is evidence that the crown moved with great care in matters interesting the greater barons. The Anglo-Norman monarchy was no autocracy.

Nor was feudal England in the eleventh century without qualification an aristocracy. It was not a land of lords and labourers, even if the towns are left out of the reckoning. The English countryside at the end of the reign of William I contained an infinite variety of men, holding every kind of estate and enjoying every variety of status from slave to earl and there was a profound respect everywhere for existing customs. The social ranks of rural England in the eleventh century can be no more easily defined and classified than those of our contemporary urban society, and they were infinitely

¹ Only in the case of the very great tenants-in-chief, such as the King of Scotland and Anselm in William II's reign or Geoffrey of Mandeville in Stephen's reign, was the whole Council summoned to adjudicate.

more various than those of rural England to-day, where landowners, tenant farmers, small holders and landless labourers provide a reasonably inclusive classification. It was not so in the eleventh century.

Domesday records four categories of men whom socially, though not necessarily economically, we must rank below the small holder or the peasant proprietor because they owed labour to their lord, and perhaps most of all because in their case the lord, and not each man individually, was responsible for their taxes and dues. The lowest of these classes were the slaves, but even these were not all landless. We find slaves who held as much as ten acres, also oxen and a cottage. Their legal status was no doubt deplorable but they earned some money, at least in cases where they had no land to cultivate. Usually the slave worked on the demesne land of the manor and was no doubt provided (Domesday only records 25,000 of them in all)¹ with a cottage and a share of the produce of the demesne. The slaves, however, were the only landless labourers, and they were a diminishing class. Many slaves were emancipated by their Norman masters and, as a result of the abolition of the slave trade by Lanfranc and Anselm and of the gradual supersession of the Anglo-Saxon laws of monetary compensation for wrongs by new laws which made all serious crimes and felonies punishable by death, the slave class gradually ceased to exist.

The other classes of unfree labourers recorded in Domesday are the villeins, the *coliberti*, the *bordarii* and the *cottarii*. The total of these is nearly 200,000 households, of whom over 170,000 are classed as villeins or *bordarii*. These men were the working classes of the Conqueror's time. In what sense were they unfree and how did the Conquest affect them?

In the economic sense a freeman, alike in pre-Conquest and in early Norman times, was a man who held his land, whether he be in modern parlance a freeholder or a leaseholder, without requirement of personal service, excepting only his political (i.e. military or quasi-military) obligations (if he held by military tenure) and who answered for his geld. It is in that sense that Domesday distinguishes between the villeins, *coliberti*, *bordarii* and *cottarii* on the one hand, and the freemen and (generally) the sokemen on the other.

The villein, *colibertus*, *bordarius* and *cottarius* of Domesday

¹ There is reason to think that in the case of slaves the Domesday enumeration is by individuals, not, as elsewhere, by heads of households.

when he is not a freed-man, is generally the lineal descendant and the social equivalent of the twy-hind man of Wessex or Mercia, unless he be the descendant of a twelve-hind man who has lost his status. The element of unfreedom attaching to the status of the villeins and the smaller *bordarii*, *cottarii* and *coliberti* was the obligation, which went with their land, to do manual work on the land for the lord of the manor.¹ There was, however, no land held under the Normans, except Church land held in frankalmoign, to which some obligation of personal service did not attach, and seen from this angle the villein and his fellows were distinguished from the serjeant, the knight and the baron only by the nature of the service they had to fulfil, not by the fact of owing personal service. In law, moreover, there were only two classes of men, *servi* and *liberi homines*. The villein and the great honorial baron alike belonged in law to the second category of free men.

We must remember that none of the terms used in Domesday had any strict legal significance. The word *villanus* in its eleventh century use, means only a countryman, a man of the vill, and there is some reason for thinking that the distinction between the various classes of peasants and cottagers owning their land varied in different parts of the country. The *coliberti*, for instance, were almost certainly freedmen, planted on the soil by the lord who had freed them and holding everything they possessed at the lord's pleasure. But only 900 such men are recorded, in northern Wessex and Mercia. There must have been many more, but they were not described as such by the juries in other parts of the country. The truth is that the Domesday classification attempts to translate into Latin terminology an infinitely complex series of relationships which had developed between master and man in the English countryside between the eighth and the middle of the eleventh century and which was left, broadly speaking, undisturbed by the Conquest. The village system remained; the strip system of agriculture remained. The man who in 1065 owed two days' work a week to his lord still owed the same in 1067, and probably in 1087. The man who held his land freely in 1065 almost certainly still held it freely in 1067 but less certainly in 1087. A number of small peasant proprietors, radknights and sokemen, began to sink into the villein class in the Conqueror's reign, but much, we may think, in the same way

¹ But there is evidence that some sokemen also worked on their lord's land.

that, in times of depression, the very small holder in Europe to-day may sink back into the landless labourer class.

The status of the villein became vital in the time of Henry II when the possessory assizes gave free men access to the royal justice against a lord who sought to evict them from their holding. Villeins were deprived of this right and thus with the march of progress found themselves degraded, at any rate in law, into serfs. In practice things were not quite so bad for the villein class. Those on the ancient demesne of the Crown had, as we have seen, most of the rights of small freemen. They could leave their tenement if they wished but were protected from ejection and against any increase in their services. Secondly, there were many freemen who held land in villeinage—presumably younger sons of peasants who went to work on the lord's land and accepted the same terms as the general body of their fellow workers. These freemen who voluntarily entered into villeinage could not be evicted as long as they did the work they had contracted to do and they could leave their holding if they pleased. There was often a great doubt whether a man was in fact a villein or no, which suggests that no great social stigma attached to villeinage even when it had degenerated legally into serfdom. There are many late twelfth century records of different pleas of villeinage—a villein claiming that he cannot be held tied to the land because he is in fact free, or a freeman seeking possession or recovery of his land under one of Henry II's assizes and being opposed by his lord, who claims that he is in fact a villein. A local jury heard such suits and often found the facts hard to determine.

Another complicating factor was the frequent commutation, in the late twelfth and in the thirteenth century, of villein service for a money rent. This did not affect the villein's status in law but it must clearly have affected his social position which must have been indistinguishable from that of a freeman. So long as he was content to remain where he was the villein was, in fact, normally protected by the custom of the manor, provided that he paid his rent or did his appointed work. But he could not move away at his pleasure and could be actually sold by his lord to another lord. He might get his freedom by escaping to a town or by going into the Church, but in neither case was his fate certain. Normally he could be freed only by the solemn act of his lord or by purchase, but a man could not buy his own freedom since in theory all that

he owned was the lord's. The freedom would be bought by a third party, at any rate nominally.

There is clear evidence that many small freemen sank into the villein class after the Conquest, and, so we must conclude, as a consequence of it. In Cambridgeshire the number of sokemen fell from 900 in the times of the Confessor to 200 in 1086, and throughout the Domesday record we find recurring evidence of small groups of freeholders who have been replaced by one manor holder with a number of villeins. In Anglo-Saxon times there was always a manor when geld was payable, but there was not in every case a lord. That defect the Normans were quick to remedy. There is also evidence that rents were raised against small sokemen and some of them may have been thus forced by direct economic pressure into the villeinage. This economic pressure must have had a corresponding effect upon the villeins themselves. When rents were raised, the villein must also do more work for the lord that the lord may be able to pay his rent. They will have to till the lord's demesne "*graviter et miserabiliter*" as Domesday records in one famous passage. Nevertheless, the picture of a countryside enslaved to a brutal conquering race is wide of the mark. The great army of free peasants in the old Danelaw largely survived the Conquest. The villein preserved his land, and his status, although it hardened in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was not in any way affected by the Conquest as such. On the crown lands he certainly preserved a far greater measure alike of economic independence and of security than his successor, the landless labourer of our own day. The average holding of the villein in 1086—and the villani were the most numerous of the labouring classes recorded—was 30 acres, and although many held less, many held much more. The *bordarii* probably held as a rule half a virgate or 15 acres and even the cottarii might hold as much as 5 acres, though many only held a share in the common grazing rights and worked for the villeins as well as for the lord. The *cottarii*, like the *coliberti* and the slaves, were a numerically small class.

The tragic picture of the effects of the Conquest drawn by the Chronicles cannot have been wholly false but it was the expropriation of the Anglo-Saxon thegns that most probably coloured the picture as it appeared to the chroniclers of the day. The transfer of more than a third of the countryside to strong and boisterous landlords of an alien race, who were allowed to consolidate the great, but often undefined, rights of their

antecessors, into a hard and fast system of subordination, must have appeared sufficiently shocking even in an age when nationalism and racialism were alike unknown. Add to this the economic strain of constant wars and high taxation, and the very varying quality of justice as administered at the manor courts, and we have what looks like the materials of grave social unrest. That this unrest did not develop is by far the most significant feature of the Conquest in its early stages. We can take a cynical view and say that it did not pay the lord of the manor to oppress the villeins because he needed good work from them. This is true enough, but we must not imagine a tyranny mitigated only by greed. The villein could not in fact be removed from his land unless he refused to work. He had a good deal of security and in the manorial court he was a member, not a suppliant. For three or four days a week he was in practice quite free to work on his own land for his own profit. There is no evidence that the Normans wished to restrict this freedom.

Vast though some manors were, the average manor was a very small and rather homely affair, comprising 10 to 12 households, perhaps 4 villeins, 5 *bordarii* and 3 *servi* with two ploughs between them and one plough on the lord's demesne land—360 acres in all with 24 oxen. These were small neighbourly communities, and, except in the eastern counties, they would almost all be subject to the same lord—the vill was in fact the manor. In the eastern counties Domesday describes an economy still markedly free. There were many more freemen, more sokemen and fewer or no slaves; moreover, far more lords would have "men" in each vill in Lincolnshire, Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Some of these freemen held their lands of the lord by virtue only of being commended to him, but this bond, as far as we can see, came in Norman times to be a one-sided affair. In Anglo-Saxon times to be the lord's "man" was a benefit to both parties. It conferred security, because the man who killed you had to pay a fine proportionate to the dignity of your lord. It conferred legal protection, because the lord's oath was of value. Finally, it guaranteed the man's title to his land. On the other side, the lord had acquired a retainer who would follow him to battle against his neighbour or in the king's or some great earl's "host." In Norman times, when all serious breaches of the peace came soon to be pleas of the Crown, where private war was forbidden and where murder could no longer be avenged

by paying blood money, no economic advantage came to either party from the relationship, but the freeman and sokeman, if the relationship was maintained, got security of tenure without having to make any return, so it is not surprising that in some cases the arrangement ceased and the freemen came to pay rent as security for their title.

The work of harmonising the elaborate social organisation of the old Anglo-Saxon society with the system of dependent military tenures created by the Conqueror was not accomplished by legislation, nor enforced by a central legal system. The *Curia Regis* dealt with feudal matters as they arose and in a direct and personal way. So did the barons. Royal justice remained, during the reigns of the two Williams, occasional and extraordinary. The infinite gradation of ranks, economic, social and feudal, and the complex of relationships which we have summarised, were things lived, not things prescribed.

The unique complexity of the Anglo-Norman system was due to the needs of the Crown. The Conqueror needed to secure his own title, and the stability of the social and economic order upon which his revenues depended, and for this reason must preserve and enforce the old English law and thus ensure a contented peasantry. He needed at the same time to bind his strong and inherently rebellious followers to him by the firm nexus of feudal obligation. The matter was further complicated in that law had not yet emerged fully from the tribal or personal stage. The Frenchman had his own law; the Englishman had another law, and the two had to be harmonised. The necessity gave rise to one of the very few authentic laws promulgated by the Conqueror, in which he lays down the procedure for exculpation when the dispute is between a Frenchman and an Englishman. The French trial by battle cannot, the king rules, be forced on an Englishman, but if the Englishman selects it in preference to trial by ordeal, the Frenchman must accept it or provide a substitute. If the Englishman is the aggrieved party and does not wish for trial by combat, then the Frenchman must clear himself by oath supported by compurgators. William I also established special law for the protection of the lives of those Frenchmen who came over with him. For the rest, with one exception, the terms of his legislation have not come down to us and the substance is on the whole unimportant. He demanded an oath of fealty from all free men. He decreed that the county and hundred courts should meet as of old. He decreed that all free

men should have pledges bound to produce them in court. He forbade that cattle should be sold except in towns and before witnesses. He substituted mutilation for capital punishment and he forbade men to be sold overseas. There is nothing at all here which is not in the tradition of Anglo-Saxon law. The only innovation, the abolition of capital punishment, was reversed by his son.

The exception to the routine character of the Conqueror's laws is the law removing ecclesiastical pleas from the hundred and shire courts and pledging "the power and authority of the king and the sheriff" to enforce the authority of the episcopal judges and forbidding "any sheriff or reeve or baron or any other lay man" to interfere with the jurisdiction of the bishop. This important reservation left a place open for the entry of the canon law into England and was to lead in the centuries to come to acute conflict between the canon and the civil law. Its immediate consequences were equally important. It created the machinery for the systematic reform of the Church in England, which began in 1070 and continued uninterrupted under Lanfranc and Anselm into the reign of Henry I.

If, however, outside the matter of Church law, the Conqueror's legislation was essentially conservative, it was quite otherwise with his administration. High and low were brought and held under strict control by the central government, which through its chancery, its writs, its commissions of inquiry and its use of fact-finding juries, was at once informed and dynamic. The legislation of even the greatest of the Anglo-Saxon kings had been little more than the periodical expression of pious hopes. William used the reserved powers of the Crown to create by administrative action a powerful and highly organised state. The chancellor first became in William's reign a high official in charge of the writing office, but he was not yet a minister of state and though justiciars were appointed with wide powers, the chief justiciar has not yet come on the scene. The sheriffs, their authority no longer challenged by the earls, were the chief agents of the Crown in the shires, and the insistence on the periodical view of frankpledge, when the sheriffs had to see in every hundred that all except freeholders or the lord's personal retainers were enrolled in a tithing,¹ added to their powers. The sheriffs and heads of the great lay and ecclesiastical

¹ A group of ten men collectively acting as surety for the good behaviour of the individual member of the group.

honours comprised together the feudal governing class. From the Conqueror's reign to the beginning of the thirteenth century was, in fact, the golden age of the sheriff. He was responsible for collecting the revenues from the demesne lands of the Crown; he was intimately concerned with the occasional royal local justice; local inquiries appointed by royal writ usually nominated the sheriff as the justiciar, or as one of several. The fines collected or the penalties imposed in the shire and hundred courts, where the fines had not been granted away, came to the sheriff as something additional to the profits which came to him from the Crown lands after paying his "farm" into the exchequer. The profits from the half-yearly view of frankpledge were another fruitful source of income to the sheriff. The profits in this case came from the fines constantly imposed upon the tithing for failing to arrest a criminal or upon the hundred for having failed to enrol the criminal in a tithing.

The sheriffs of the Conqueror's day were great nobles but great rather by virtue of their office, which was at the king's pleasure, than of their rank. We are still in the age of personal government, but we have entered the age of dynamic government which was bound in time to create its own professional instruments. In William's time we find the Bishop of Coutances and Lanfranc constantly advising the Crown and occupying a quasi-ministerial position; we have the Curia Regis strengthened by the presence of stewards, seneschals and the like, and we have a succession of chancellors who proceeded from that office regularly to high preferment in the Church. Their personalities make up the constitutional history of an unlettered age. Most of the intellectual clergy, most of the capable lay nobility, were, or hoped to be, in the direct employ of the Crown, which therefore enjoyed the support of the orders to which these servants of the Crown belonged. The energising mind was the king's and the licence which the king gave to the barons to extend their feudal jurisdiction and to the Church to regulate its own affairs both in matters of law and in matters of discipline, produced a constitutional balance such that, in the matters reserved to the Crown, the king's authority went unchallenged. The whole country except for the lake district was under government within 20 years of 1066 and the rights and obligations of every householder in the country were clearly defined. In many ways the Crown was above the law. The king could not be sued; he could protect

rights which the common law would not. He could set aside a judicial sentence by granting a pardon. On the other hand there was much law which he could not set aside. The baronage were in control *with* the Crown and not merely *under* the Crown, and this principle inherent in the Norman system as the Conqueror established it was destined to be the foundation of the limited monarchy.

It is a matter for argument how far the system which the Conqueror set up possessed an inherent stability, and how far its success was due to his personal qualities. The strength of the system was its regard for ancient law and custom as far as was compatible with the establishment of feudalism. We have tried to show how far that was. The weakness of the system was that it contained within it no machinery for change and the respect for ancient custom was to work like a boomerang. The centuries that followed the Conquest were centuries of rapidly rising prices. The incomes and standard of living of the whole country rose rapidly and steadily. It has been calculated that by comparison with Domesday valuations, baronial incomes had increased by the last quarter of the twelfth century by 67 per cent. By 1250 the increase on Domesday revenue was 175 per cent. The comparable figure half a century or so later was 242 per cent.¹ These figures are independent of the baronial revenue from franchises, profits of jurisdiction and fines, as well as other political privileges conferred in later reigns. We can therefore say that they represent a rapid and regular increase over a very long period in the value of agricultural produce in which, since the feudal system left the peasantry much of the produce of their own land, all classes must have shared.

The reason for the rise in prices was no doubt the development of a wide and free market for agricultural produce as the result of the growth of the towns under the Normans, the clearing of land, the great and progressive development of sheep-farming, and the general improvement in cultivation, but it was also due to a great expansion in the amount of money in circulation consequent on the systematic transition to a money economy. As we have just noted, even villein service began to be commuted for money in the twelfth century. Knight service began to be commuted in the time of Henry I at anyrate, and the same reign saw the court officials given regular salaries instead of being required to live on the

¹ Painter, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-169.

country. Once the transition began it gathered pace with what must have been an inflationary effect. The later kings required money, not renders in kind, and long service mercenaries in place of the feudal levy, nor could they go on indefinitely finding lands to reward the rapidly growing number of ministers and high officials. The effect of these tendencies was already felt in Henry I's time and his formal organisation of the exchequer reflects the ever-growing need for the punctual collection of revenue in money. For this, the feudal system as set up by the Conqueror made no adequate provision save in one vital respect, that it placed a strong king in the position to do very much what he liked. No Anglo-Saxon king, not even Alfred or Athelstan, could have done what Henry I was able to do in the way of collecting money from the baronage.

Henry I, nevertheless, was driven to the most oppressive expedients in the way of fines and amercements and to the supersession of the baronage by members of the new official class in the sheriffdoms, the custody of the king's castles and many offices at court. To a marked extent the government of the shires was in fact, for a short time, taken out of the hands of the baronage, with their strong local interests, and given to men who were nothing less than agents of the king. That the primary purpose of all this was the more efficient collection of more revenue can hardly be doubted, but on the whole the Crown retained its popularity and there may have been baronial exactions which were held in check by the new machinery. Nevertheless it is clear that the degree of centralisation attempted was too great. The great barons could not be permanently divorced from the tasks of administration, and the baronial reaction under Stephen (although this was largely facilitated by the disputed succession) suggests that the Conqueror was a wiser man than his son. The balance between baronage and Crown and the dependence of each on the other could not be upset so long as the feudal relation of lord and tenant and the feudal conception of the allegiance due by a man to his lord was still operative. Feudalism meant that the great barons must, in the nature of things, enjoy a great measure of local independence, which was balanced by their own complete dependence on the Crown. Nevertheless, it was inevitable that the feudal conception should slowly yield to the need for a stronger central government than the feudal military and financial system could provide in the twelfth and

thirteenth centuries. The Crown revenues, other than feudal relief and aids and sums collected from wardships and escheated baronies, were bound to become insufficient for three reasons. Firstly, the manorial and borough revenues of the Crown were farmed to the sheriffs for sums which were fixed early and became customary. The baronage were financially interested in keeping the farms low, since the sheriffs were drawn from their ranks. As costs rose, the farms could not in practice be sufficiently increased. Secondly, the rate of commutation of knight service for scutage was fixed where the pay of a knight was 8d. a day. By 1200 it had risen to 2s. and the skilled fortress engineers and artillery experts who were indispensable in the wars of the late twelfth century were even more highly paid. Thirdly, the assessment of the estates of the baronage and Church to geld, which we know from the Domesday survey, was arbitrary, unscientific and fixed. The Domesday commissioners were not instructed to make an assessment but to find out what the assessment was. The Anglo-Saxon custom had been not to take Danegeld at varying rates according to the wealth or acreage of a shire or the degree of political favour it enjoyed, but to allow for all these, and no doubt many other factors, by attributing to each hundred (or wapentake, in the Danelaw) an arbitrary number of hides (or ploughlands, in the Danelaw), probably always a round figure, being some multiple of 5 in the case of the "hidated" counties, and some multiple of 6 in the case of the "carucated" counties. The hide usually contained 4 virgates of 30 acres and the caruca contained eight bovates of 15 acres, but a manor assessed at 5 hides or 6 carucates did not necessarily contain the exact number of acres. Indeed, the researches of Mr. Round, which have clearly proved that the assessments to geld were in round figures, dispose at once of any such possibility.

The usual rate of geld had been 2s. on the gelded hide or carucate, but the number of gelded hides in relation to real hides varied greatly as between shires; the heaviest gelded counties were Buckinghamshire, Oxford, Berkshire and Wiltshire, where geld at 2s. on the hide produced nearly two-seventh of £1 per square mile. Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Sussex, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Somerset paid approximately half as much per square mile. Nottingham, Derby, Stafford, Kent, Devon and Cornwall paid less than half as much per square mile as the second group of counties.

WHY FEUDALISM WORKED

The nature of this system once and for all precluded the Crown from gaining, by the direct taxation of land, any revenue proportionate to what the land was to yield the tenant as its value and its produce increased. Actually, the traditional assessment came within a century to bear so little relation to realities that the tax for which it was made had to be abandoned. The political consequences will be seen in the reigns of the Angevin kings who were forced by the logic of events and the circumstances of their time to make deep inroads into the essential feudal relationship between the lord and his men. The baronage retaliated, as we shall see, by insisting on the reduction of their own feudal obligations, but they preserved much of their own military power and territorial influence. The rise of a middle class fostered by the charters given by the later Angevin kings to the towns created a new balance through which the monarchy was to remain secure but at the price of constitutional concessions of great significance.

It is always tempting and almost always wrong to assign to any one fact during a century or more of political and social evolution an over-riding importance. Had Stephen been a man of the calibre of Henry I, let alone of Henry II, England would probably not have experienced the baronial reaction and the resulting period of anarchy. In such circumstances the Crown might have been able to meet its financial difficulties to a far greater extent within the framework of the Conqueror's system. It is nevertheless certain that we must look at Anglo-Norman feudalism as a system undergoing constant and progressive modification under the stress of influences mainly economic but partly military. The Crown revenues failed to expand with the rise in values, and knight service, the cardinal institution of the Conqueror's system, became an anachronism by the time of Richard I and John and the revenues from scutage were quite insufficient to provide the long service professional armies required for the Continental wars in which those kings were engaged. Feudalism, nevertheless, provided England at the most critical period, during the first century of Norman rule, with a strong monarchy and a local administration which worked at least well enough for all classes to welcome the end of the brief period of anarchy during Stephen's reign and to join in supporting Henry II in his rapid and far-sighted extension of the authority and scope of the king's government. And it is at least easy to say why feudalism worked as well as this. It was because it created an effective working partnership

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between the Crown and the baronage while it strengthened the order, discipline and authority of the Church. The whole system rested moreover on the strong foundation of a peasantry whose rights were on the whole maintained and in some important directions strengthened by the deliberate policy of the Crown. For these reasons the centuries of feudalism saw an immense growth in the wealth and prosperity of town and country and a great advance in the arts of peace. It can be no criticism of the Conqueror's policy that the advances to which it led necessitated in due course wide and sweeping measures of reform.

Chapter Twelve

THE CHURCH UNDER WILLIAM I

THE REIGN of the Conqueror in Normandy and England fell within a memorable age of reform throughout the Church. First, the papacy itself had been reformed by the Empire. Then, under Leo IX, the papacy placed itself at the head of the movement for reform. With Leo IX, with Stephen IX, the first pope for a long time to be freely elected by the Church itself, with Nicholas II, who first established the routine for independent papal elections by the Sacred College, with Alexander II and with Gregory VII (the famous Hildebrand), the mediaeval papacy begins.

Limitless in its claim to rule over the mind and hearts of men and employing all the resources of spiritual discipline and secular diplomacy to enforce its authority, the reformed papacy sought to arm the chair of Peter not only with new spiritual weapons derived from a more austere character and temper, but with the prerogatives of a secular sovereignty almost unlimited in its objects.

Such claims had been made by Nicholas I as early as the ninth century, before the forgeries of the pseudo-Isidore, which put into documentary shape one traditional view of the papal power, had reached Rome. Since that time, however, the papacy had been in eclipse, having for many decades been almost appropriated by the quarrelsome, corrupt and incompetent Roman nobility. The nadir was reached in 1046 when there were three rival popes. At this point the German king, Henry III, the strongest and most conscientious of a succession of strong kings and emperors, felt it his duty to intervene. Benedict IX and the anti-pope, Sylvester III, were deposed, and Gregory VI was compelled to abdicate at the Synod of Sutri. On the king's mandate a German bishop was elected Pope as Clement II. Clement II promptly crowned Henry III Emperor. Henry III "to secure a legal leading voice in the papal election, as well as the right of confirming it as Emperor, obtained the dignity of Patrician from the Romans."¹

Henry III,
king of
Germany,
1039-1056;
emperor,
1046-1056.

Clement
II,
pope,
1046-1047.

In this roundabout way the Empire came at a critical time

¹ Previte Orton, *Outlines of Mediaeval History*, Cambridge, 1933, p. 172.

Leo IX,
pope,
1049-1054.

Victor II,
pope,
1054-1056.

to the rescue of the papacy and, Clement II dying a year after his election, three equally zealous reformers, Damasus II, Leo IX and Victor II, were appointed in succession before Henry III himself died in 1056.

Reform was long overdue. Since the latter half of the tenth century a renaissance of religious life and learning had been gathering way. Partly this was the product of the Cluniac and Lorraine reforms, partly of a great monastic revival in Italy itself. In all this, the papacy had played little part. It was Leo IX who initiated the active, reforming papacy which we associate with Gregory VII. By his important progresses, Leo restored to the papacy its international position which it had lost for two generations. We cannot however understand the prolonged quarrel between papacy and Empire which broke out under Gregory VII, nor the lukewarm attitude, not merely of the German bishops but of such men as Lanfranc, to the papal cause in that quarrel, unless we realise that the reforming movement in the Church had preceded the reforming papacy by two generations at least, and that it was only by the initiative of the Emperor that a succession of pious and able men had at last come to occupy the chair of Peter. The rulers and bishops of the Conqueror's generation were well aware of this. There was nowhere in the west any challenge to the spiritual authority of the Pope in matters of faith or morals. There was a widespread doubt as to the political competence or wisdom of the papacy.

The issue between the Emperor and the papacy concerned the investiture of bishops. Who should invest the bishop with his rod and staff? The papacy, having first succeeded in making the papal elections free of secular interference, was anxious to secure, as part of its machinery of government, the supervision of the appointment of the bishops in accordance with the now fast developing canon law. Only if the bishops were dependent on Rome for the tenure of their office could the now reformed and energetic papacy have any hope of being able to impose its will on the national churches.

On its merits, the papal case was clear enough. Lay interference with the election of bishops, the buying and selling of the rights of nomination and simony itself—all these abuses were rife at the time of Leo IX and no merely monastic revival nor zeal for learning could have uprooted them. Leo's apostolic journeyings had taken him to not a few of the chief provinces of western Christendom. They provided the foundation upon

which all the later effort of the Church as a united whole was built. Lay control, in the judgment of Leo and his successors, was the root cause of all the disorder. So judging, Leo had set in motion a force which, "since the lay hold was universal, must ultimately shake all Christendom."¹ It must, and it did.

Hildebrand had been an official in the entourage of Leo IX. He had played some part, though not a leading one, behind the scenes in the three succeeding pontificates.² He was at the right hand of that pope, Alexander II, who had approved William the Conqueror's claim to the English throne, and whom, in 1073, he succeeded as Gregory VII. Hildebrand shared the views of his predecessors, but he saw deeper below the surface. He believed, as Innocent III was to say, that there was room for only one supreme authority in all human affairs. He believed, in other words, that, since a large element of lay control over the major ecclesiastical appointments was a practical necessity, the secular rulers must in their turn accept a measure of papal control. Ultimately he was driven by the logic of his case to claim the right to depose the highest of all secular authorities, the Emperor himself. It was at this point that the Hildebrandian solution broke down. To depose a king in a feudal age was not merely to change a ruler. It was to suspend the whole operation of law, to create, not metaphorically but literally, an anarchy. It made it far too difficult, in other words, to combine justice with order.

Alexander II, pope, 1061-1073.

Gregory VII (Hildebrand), pope, 1073-1083.

Opposed to Hildebrand were two schools of thought. There were the secularists, men who believed, whether from good motives or selfish, that the papal cause was bad in itself, that the battle should be to the strong, that the claim raised by the papacy in the name of spiritual authority to the seats of the mighty was an impertinence. Most of the men who believed this were interested. They had exercised vast patronage, their secular power was buttressed by a dependent Church and their revenues sustained by a simoniacal clergy. Nor was the question of celibacy without influence, particularly in Germany, on the attitude of the clergy themselves. We misunderstand our history, however, if we forget that there was another party who strongly favoured the Cluniac reforms, who wished to see a strong and independent Church, but who gravely and honestly doubted the capacity of the papacy, in the political

¹ Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

² Victor II, Stephen IX and Nicholas II.

conditions then prevailing in Italy, to achieve the desired results, unless it made the secular power its agent. Such, beyond question, was the view of William the Conqueror, and such, probably, was the view of Lanfranc.

The investiture controversy reads less strangely to-day than it did to our ancestors. The world of the twentieth century, while no more ready than the Emperor himself to accept even the most theoretical jurisdiction of any Church in secular affairs, has learnt in blood and tears that it is unwise to the point of criminality to allow the state to determine the Church's policy, practice and beliefs. Indeed, the bitter lessons of the twentieth century enable us to see somewhat further than our ancestors, who were so anxious to secure and fortify the strength of the secular power that most of them were blind to the danger of acquiescing in the subordination of the papacy to the Empire. William the Conqueror, certainly, was not prepared to go beyond what he considered necessary to strike a fair balance between secular convenience, by which he meant a strong national monarchy, and his desire to see the Church free to assert its will, under the guidance of leaders chosen by himself, in matters legitimately concerning it.

When William became king of England, the investiture controversy had not reached an acute stage, but it was on the horizon, and the reigning pope, Alexander II, had issued stringent decrees against lay investiture as well as against simony and the marriage of the clergy. William was hostile to all papal claims to interfere with the secular power but he was at the same time a militant Church reformer. He was able to carry through all his reforms and to avoid a clash either with Alexander or Hildebrand because his reign coincided with the years of war between Empire and papacy, a war which saw as its first climax the Emperor doing penance before the Pope at Canossa in 1077, but, as its second, the death of Gregory VII in exile at Salerno in 1085.

The chroniclers give us a depressing picture of the English Church in 1066. As before Dunstan's reforms, monastic life was at a low ebb. At Christ Church, Canterbury, the monks were found hawking, hunting, riding and throwing dice: at Gloucester there were in the monastery only two old monks and eight boys, at Rochester four or five inmates clothed like laymen, barely able to secure food. As for the bishops, Stigand held the archbishopric of Canterbury and the see of Winchester in plurality, being entitled to neither. Ealdred of York almost

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alone attempted any reforms. The bishops of East Anglia, Durham and Thetford were uncanonically elected. The sees of Dorchester, Lichfield and Worcester were in dispute between Canterbury and York. The primacy was in abeyance. No Church councils had been held for years. A further grave weakness was that the headquarters of many sees were in small or remote villages. Some of the stories reflect, no doubt, the excessive zeal of monkish chroniclers pious after the event. Yet the entry under the year 1044 in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle provides evidence which challenges very forcibly the view now rather widely held that the English Church in 1066 was in no great need of reform. In 1044, the chronicler tells us,

“Archbishop of Eadsige gave up the bishopric by reason of his infirmity, and he blessed thereto Siward, Abbot of Abingdon, as bishop by leave and counsel of the king and of Earl Godwine; it was known to few men else before it was done because the archbishop thought that some other man, in whom he might have less trust and confidence, would pray or pay for it, if more men should know of it.”

There was something gravely wrong with a Church of which that could be written by a contemporary historian. At the same time, many of the bishops of the early eleventh century had belonged to the immediate circle of Dunstan, Ethelwold and Oswald, and their influence had been active not only on parochial life but in promoting Christian studies. The first quarter of the eleventh century saw the publication of a great number of vernacular homiletics, and a sustained missionary effort in Norway. Finally, Wulfstan, the Confessor's last appointment to the bench of bishops, lived on into the reign of William II to prove to indifferent Norman ears that great men had lived and worked in the English Church before Lanfranc and Anselm.¹ The truth seems to be that it was the last quarter of a century before the Conquest which saw a decline in the vitality and spiritual force of the Church in England, although as recently as the time of Dunstan it had had a notable revival, the force of which was not wholly spent. By 1066 another and more forceful reforming movement was, however, almost certainly overdue.

¹ See Darlington—*The English Church before the Conquest*. English Historical Review. Vol. 51.

Immediately after the conclusion of his northern campaign in 1070, William, as we have seen, marched south to Winchester and received the Papal Legates, Ermenfrid, Bishop of Sion, and John and Peter, two cardinal priests. The business of reform was begun at the Easter and Whitsun meetings of the Great Council. At Winchester Stigand of Canterbury and Ethelmar of Elmham were deposed. At Windsor six weeks later, Ethelric of Selsey, a married man with children, was deposed and the first of the new appointments were made; Thomas of Bayeux to York (Eadred had died in 1069); Wakelin, a royal chaplain, to Winchester; Herfast to Elmham; and Stigand (no relation to the deposed archbishop) to Selsey. Finally, Lanfranc, Abbot of Caen, was nominated to Canterbury. The Legates left at once for Normandy to acquaint Lanfranc with his nomination, by special desire of the king of England and the Holy Roman Empire as well as of the two Legates.

Lanfranc,
Arch. of
Canter-
bury,
1070-1089.

Lanfranc had begun life as a lawyer at Pavia, but had made his name as a teacher first at Avranches and then at Bec, where he became prior under Abbot Herluin, and later at the new foundation of Caen, of which he became abbot in 1063. Among those who had studied under Lanfranc at Bec were the reigning pope, Alexander II; Anselm and Theobald, both later Archbishops of Canterbury; Guitmond, Archbishop of Aversa; William, Archbishop of Rouen; Ivo, Bishop of Chartres, the great canonist; three Bishops of Rochester; Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster, and Lanfranc's own nephews, Paul, later Abbot of St. Albans, and Lanfranc, later Abbot of St. Wandrille. At the time of his appointment to Canterbury, Lanfranc was probably already sixty, and if he is to be identified with a famous Pavian lawyer of the same name,¹ he was nearly seventy. At any rate he had been a great figure in Europe for a quarter of a century. His appointment, evidently arranged between Pope Alexander II and William, was a decisive event in English history, at least as decisive as the appointment of the great Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus three centuries earlier.

Lanfranc was reluctant to accept the appointment. In 1067 he had refused the archbishopric of Rouen, but this time his *nolo episcopari* was fruitless and he was consecrated on August 29, 1070, in a temporary shelter amid the ruins of Christ Church, Canterbury (which had been destroyed by fire in 1067)

¹ This seems very improbable since Lanfranc was active until his death in 1089; on the other hand, his biographer Milo reports him as saying that he was worn out in mind and body when he first entered Bec.

in the presence of the bishops of London, Winchester, Dorchester, Rochester, Elmham, Selsey, Sherborne and Wells.

It was a dingy ceremony, and Lanfranc saw nothing in the state of England to redeem the distress of the occasion. "Bad as is the present state of things," he writes to the Pope, "when I look round me I feel that the future will be still worse." Elsewhere in the letter he speaks of "the harrowing incidents, the losses, the harshness, the avarice, the meanness, the evil conduct I see around me." We must take this with a grain of salt. Lanfranc was a monk, from whom some strong expression of distaste for the hurly-burly of secular life was natural and, we may be inclined to add, expected. Like all men charged with unpopular and difficult missions he was careful to make it clear that it was none of his choosing.

The first official task falling to Lanfranc was the consecration and enthronement of the new Archbishop of York. Lanfranc at once showed his mettle. He refused to consecrate Thomas of York until he had received from him a written profession of obedience. This Thomas refused.

The point was, for Lanfranc, not academic. The reform of the Church demanded an effective administrative machine and, perhaps above all, a single code of law, uniformly interpreted. If, even in a small country like England, there was no primacy, no one channel through which the militant papacy could enforce its decrees, the challenge to the disruptive forces of impenitent provincialism could not be met. It was a feudal age in which all men, even the greatest, had a lord. Was the Archbishop of York Lanfranc's man, or was he the king's, or the Pope's? The papacy, in its struggle for the independence of the spiritual power, stood or fell by the discipline it could exert over the great feudal nobles who presided over the great abbeys and sees. If England was to be won for the reformed Church, there must be one united Church to which the new decrees could be applied, and one man through whom they could be enforced. Perhaps, for different reasons, the king also was convinced of this. It has been said that William feared that an independent Archbishop of York might consecrate a rival claimant to the throne. All that is certain is that both king and Pope wanted unity and discipline in the kingdom.

The standpoint of Thomas of Bayeux is more difficult to understand, unless we understand already what later will become a commonplace, that the machine is often greater than the man. The fierce northern separatism no doubt inspired

the chapter of York to suggest a protest, but there must have been very strong pressure from the diocesan officials before an Italian born Norman abbot, who owed his new dignity entirely to William could have been persuaded to oppose Lanfranc, and to appeal first to the king and then to Rome.

Lanfranc's case in regard to the primacy was very strong *de facto*, although it was clear that Gregory I had not intended to create a primacy, but in asking for a written profession of obedience as well as an oath in accordance with "the practice of his predecessors" Lanfranc went far beyond what the documents could justify. There were, and are, numerous examples of written professions of obedience to Canterbury by the suffragan sees, but Lanfranc was in fact the first Archbishop of Canterbury to make such a demand on York. The matter came up before the king, who decided the dispute provisionally with a compromise which has a twentieth century parliamentary flavour. Thomas was to make the written profession, but it was not to be taken as a precedent by his successors. This question was remitted to a council of bishops to be held later. It is not clear whether or no the demand for an oath was maintained. It is certain that Thomas of Bayeux was consecrated by Lanfranc in 1070. In 1071 both archbishops went to Rome, and according to Eadmer, Lanfranc's biographer, Thomas of York tried to get a papal reversal of the decision. If so, he failed. Pope Alexander, according to Malmesbury, remitted the case to the bishops and abbots of England. The case was reopened at the Council held at Easter 1072 at Winchester, when Lanfranc produced his documentary evidence. It was clearly shown that from the time of Augustine to the time of Bede, Canterbury had possessed a *de facto* primacy over the whole island. Moreover, antecessors of the bishops of Lincoln, Lichfield and Worcester had during that 140 years been consecrated by Canterbury, not by York, and there were documents to prove that the bishops of all those sees had on different occasions made written professions of obedience to Canterbury. Lanfranc also produced papal documents conferring the primacy on Canterbury. These documents, as reproduced by Malmesbury, in his accounts of the 1072 proceedings, finished in 1125, are mainly forgeries, but there is no certain evidence in the *Gesta Pontificum* that these documents are identical with those produced by Lanfranc, and there is no evidence of any kind favouring the view that Lanfranc forged them.

Council of
Win-
chester,
1072.

THE COUNCIL OF WINCHESTER

For the Council of 1072 the documents were hardly even important. The question which the Council had to decide was that of the written submission, not of the *de facto* primacy. It was later, in 1120, that York challenged the whole doctrine of the primacy of Canterbury by claiming that the see of York was directly subject to Rome.¹ In 1072 Rome was concerned only to strengthen Lanfranc's hand. For this reason the matter had been left by the Pope to the English bishops and abbots who found unanimously for Lanfranc. The documents embodying the finding was sealed with the royal seal and distributed to the leading churches and abbeys. The details of the settlement awarded the three disputed bishoprics to Canterbury, leaving Durham as the only see in the province of York. The Archbishop of York and his suffragans were to attend any Council summoned by Canterbury and to be bound by any decisions there canonically made. Thomas made a full submission in writing, but his oath was remitted.

A report of the proceedings of the Council was sent by Lanfranc to Alexander II, who at the same time asked for a formal confirmation of his right to the primacy. This he failed to secure and the matter was not finally settled till 1123 when it was decided in favour of York, largely because Gregory the Great had clearly intended to create two co-equal provinces in England, although he did not in fact do so. The clumsiness of the Canterbury forgeries, then produced at Rome, undoubtedly helped the Yorkists.

The importance of the Canterbury primacy was far greater in 1072, both for the papacy and for England, than it was fifty years later, which may account for the different action taken in regard to the dispute. The great papal reforms depended upon tightening the bonds that held the bishops to the metropolitans

¹ It then became important to say what definite papal pronouncements had been made. There were pronouncements, beyond a doubt, and even the most hostile of the critics of the Malmesbury documents admit that one at least was genuine—the letter of Sergius addressed to the kings of Mercia, Northumbria and East Anglia urging them to receive Bertwald as Archbishop of Canterbury and “chief bishop of England.” Further, the very important Malmesbury letter of Leo III to Ethelhard of Canterbury conceding that all the churches in England should be perpetually subject to Ethelhard and his successors is believed by many to be genuine, and by all to be based upon an original genuine document. There is in any case an admittedly genuine letter from Leo III to Cenwulf king of Mercia in 798, agreeing that Canterbury should be the primatial see (but it should be remembered that at that time there was no see of York). This letter certainly creates a presumption in favour of the letter to Ethelhard. These genuine letters with the evidence from Bede were quite sufficient for Lanfranc's purpose, which is one of many reasons for rejecting the view that he forged the remainder of the Malmesbury series.

and the metropolitans to the Pope at Rome. Alexander II wished to see in England a strong reformed Church and he had, therefore, to create with the least friction the machinery necessary to that end. For this reason he had made Lanfranc Apostolic Vicar in 1071; for this reason he left to William and Lanfranc the temporary settlement of the practical question of the primacy, and for this reason he deferred the final decision of the matter until quieter times.

For William I the decision was even more important because he was able to restore to proper Church councils powers which for generations had been exercised by the Great Council itself. This was a necessary preliminary to real reform. Spiritual and moral discipline could not be imposed upon the clergy by a lay assembly. On the other hand, the powers of the Crown over the Church could never have been delegated in 1072 to an independent northern province. A separatist movement would inevitably have followed.

Lanfranc and William had, beyond all question, an understanding on other fundamental points which was less pleasant to Rome. No pope was to be recognised in England, nor papal letters received, without the king's consent, and no tenant-in-chief of the Crown was to be excommunicated without the king's consent. These wide reservations implied claims which could never have been admitted by the Hildebrandine papacy nor prudently abandoned by an eleventh century king of England. No trouble in fact arose because William was a sincere reformer, albeit of the old school, and Lanfranc was a Norman statesman, while the papacy, in the throes of a struggle with the Empire, was in no mood to turn a friend into an enemy by seeking out a quarrel.

Separation
of Church
Courts,
1072-6.

It was probably shortly after the Council of Winchester that William issued the law, removing ecclesiastical pleas and questions involving spiritual law from the jurisdiction of the hundred and shire courts, which was officially accepted by the English Church in 1076. Any ecclesiastical cause must be tried before the bishop at such place as he should arrange and according to Church law. The way was thus open for the reception of the canon law into England. The Pope thus acquired legal sovereignty *de jure* over the English Church, which became in practice what it had perhaps always been in theory, a society within a society, with its own legislation, its own judiciary and its own law. That law was from Lanfranc's time onward the law of the Roman Church.

THE FAKE DECRETALS

By 1066 ecclesiastical synods and ecclesiastical law had both to some extent fallen into disuse in England.¹ There had been legislation for the English Church in times past—the Penitentials had actually originated either in England or in Ireland—but much of this material was irrelevant to the aims of the new reforming movement, and in any case much of it was in Anglo-Saxon, which was unintelligible to the Anglo-Norman clergy. For Lanfranc's reforms to be effective, a complete *corpus* of law was required.

What is now called the Canon Law was a code compiled from the papal decrees, the pronouncements of Church councils (where these had received papal approval), digests of the letters of certain popes, notably Popes Pelagius I and Gregory the Great, and extracts from the Bible and the Fathers.² The most important early collection of papal pronouncements is the Canons of Dionysius Exiguus, containing the decretals of the popes of the fourth and fifth centuries and the earlier Church councils and digests of some later papal letters. This material, with additions from Spanish and African sources, was sent to Charlemagne by Hadrian I when he was asked to supply an authoritative text of papal laws.

This collection was authentic, but as the years went on a new problem arose, notably concerning the extent and nature of the Roman primacy. The earlier decretals were all clear as to the institution of the papacy and its headship over the Church, but there is little in them which implies the direct government of the Church by the Pope. Rather, they stress the importance of the bishop as "the normal organ of spiritual government." As the needs of reform became more urgent, it seemed desirable to supplement the existing body of decretals by others. Hence the False Decretals, forged by a monk about A.D. 850, probably in and for the benefit of the diocese of Le Mans. Nicholas I, the great reforming pope of those days, was claiming a universal primacy of jurisdiction and re-asserting the idea, already preached by Gregory the Great, of the papal monarchy. The False Decretals supported this claim and were at one time supposed to have provided its only justification. The truth is hardly thus, since the papal claim, be it good or bad, did not rest on the forged decretals and was in fact made before the

¹ Z. N. Brooke, *The English Church and the Papacy* (Cambridge, 1931), p. 28.

² Some of these last found their way into the Canon Law from an Irish eighth century canonical collection.

forgeries came into existence.¹ The collection into which the False Decretals were inserted contained most of the genuine documents as well, but it did not enjoy any very great circulation for more than a century and the wholly authoritative collection of Hadrian I seems to have been in most general circulation in the tenth century. Neither of these collections, however, was scientifically organised as a source of reference to the Church's law.

Burchard
of Worms,
1006-1022.

Early in the eleventh century Bishop Burchard of Worms arranged the whole body of decretals and other relevant materials in twenty books systematically according to their subject matter. This work became, for the first half of the eleventh century, the normal text book of Church law in many parts of western Europe. It was a very conservative rescension, and although a number of the False Decretals were included, the general effect of the work was to stress the position of the Pope as the final arbiter rather than the direct ruler of the Church. About 1050 an anonymous *Collection in 74 Titles* appeared, which, drawing almost wholly on the False Decretals and the letters of Gregory the Great, stresses the papal authority. Three other "collections" were issued during the pontificate of Gregory VII, the most important of which was the collection in thirteen books of Bishop Anselm of Lucca. This work, also stressing the papal authority, reached countries outside Italy.

Simultaneously, the scientific study of canon law was beginning at Bologna. Efforts were made to restore the texts quoted by the different collections to the authentic originals (many had been altered carelessly and some deliberately, especially by Burchard), and the aim now was to bring together and harmonise the deductions from all the relevant texts, not to select those most appropriate to a particular thesis. From the abstracts edited in the law schools the material was at last available for a really comprehensive digest of Church law. This was compiled late in the eleventh century, by Ivo of Chartres,

¹ The monks of the early Middle Ages habitually produced documents to resist unfair claims against their title. It was their unfortunate fashion of dramatising and defining what they claimed as the prescriptive rights or privileges of their order or house or chapter, or the traditional doctrine as handed down to them. It would be unhistorical to assume, as a jury rightly would to-day, that the existence of the forgery was tantamount to proof that the claims embodied in it could not be supported by other evidence. It is nearer the truth to say exactly the opposite: during these troubled and lawless centuries the tradition handed down orally to the monks was the nearest thing to historical evidence that could be found and the habit that grew up of embodying these traditions in fictitious documents was regarded by their authors as not only legitimate but actually praiseworthy. Certainly in the case of the False Decretals their general acceptance is proof that they did not run at all counter to the mind of the times, or the accepted tradition.

Lanfranc's pupil, but his great work was put out of court by Gratian's even more famous code or digest issued in 1142.

Gratian's
Digest,
1142.

It will be seen from this that Lanfranc's tenure of office as Archbishop of Canterbury came at the end of the period when Burchard's conservative collection enjoyed most popularity and shortly after the publication of the *Collection in 74 Titles*. Neither of these works, however, became the accepted authority for England. Lanfranc introduced into England a composite MS., which he sent for from Bec, consisting of two main parts; the first a condensation of papal decretals from the pseudo-Isidore; the second, the decisions of the Church councils, which are given in full. Following these main parts are three additional documents, the decrees of the Lateran Council of 1059, the decrees against simony and the oath of Berengar of Tours. It is the addition of these three documents to the composite manuscript which has satisfied scholars that it was originally prepared under Lanfranc's direction at Bec. Whether this be so or no, it is as certain as may be that Lanfranc's own copy of the MS. still survives in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, and that the note on the last folio, to the effect that Lanfranc brought it from Bec and presented it to Christ Church, Canterbury, was composed by Lanfranc himself. It is also certain that copies of this MS. were made for use of the English cathedral schools and chapters. Ten of these copies still survive in England, most of them written in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. One, now at Peterhouse, came from Durham; copies at Lincoln, Hereford and Salisbury cathedrals have always been there; one at the British Museum came from the cathedral church at Worcester, and one at the Bodleian came from Exeter. Another at the British Museum came from the abbey of Gloucester. Well did Professor Brooke say that "the official character of this collection stands revealed."

The discovery of this *Corpus* of Church law, accepted by Lanfranc as authoritative and promulgated as such to the bishops of England, is doubly important. In the first place, the collection itself is one which accepts the direct papal government of the Church as the normal and historical system. We can thus see how it is that although Lanfranc himself was no ardent papalist and stood closer to the school of Burchard,¹ the next generation of English clergy were far more tolerant

¹ To avoid misunderstanding it must again be emphasised that there was no difference of doctrine but a difference of view as to the normal administrative practice in day-to-day Church government. The Burchard Collection represented

of papal interference in the domestic affairs of the English Church. The cathedrals were not only administrative centres but the chief educators of the clergy, and from Lanfranc's time the clergy were brought up to accept without question the claims of the Hildebrandine reformers. Secondly, the systematic distribution of the MSS. indicates more than any other single piece of evidence the energy and method with which William and Lanfranc undertook the reform of the English Church. In promulgating a defined *Corpus* of Church law for acceptance in every diocese, Lanfranc was in fact ahead of the papacy itself. Not until after the appearance of Gratian's decretals, more than half a century later, was any one collection to be generally accepted in any province outside England. Lanfranc clearly realised, however, that the re-establishment of the Church Courts would make for anarchy rather than reform unless all the diocesan courts administered the same law. Lanfranc's action in this matter throws a new light also on his earlier dispute with the Archbishop of York.

If the legal reforms emphasised the independence of the Church as against the State, it remained true that the Church was also a national institution. The bishops and abbots, as barons, were indispensable to the strength and good order of the State. The double position of the bishop, as an essential working officer of the national feudal government and as an essential working officer of the international ecclesiastical monarchy, made conflict inevitable or compromise essential between Church and State.

It was while the active reform of the English Church was proceeding that the great conflict over investitures began at Rome. Since the bishops were, and indeed in some countries still are, great officers of State as well as the successors of the apostles and officers of the universal Church, the obvious answer was that the Pope and the Emperor, or the Pope and the king, must agree on the appointments. But agreement was difficult when the Pope seemed to desire the support of the bishops to weaken the power of the Emperor in secular affairs, and when the Emperor seemed to wish to make the bishops his subjects in order to regain control over the election of the Pope and over his actions after the election.

the older papal practice. The False Decretals and the collections based on them in whole or in part represent the views of Gregory the Great which had been reasserted by Nicholas I and which were now the declared policy of the reformed papacy.

HILDEBRAND DIES IN EXILE

The conflict of Papacy and Empire was precipitated by the intransigent attitude of the bishops of the great German sees of Cologne, Mainz, Augsburg and Hamburg. Perhaps they were acting under the Emperor's orders, but these great potentates had no desire on their own account to see a strong papacy, to have their independence fettered by the authority of Church councils and their discipline and personal conduct subject to papal investigation and censure. In particular, the Pope's decree of 1075 regarding clerical celibacy raised the fiercest opposition in Germany.

At first glance this state of affairs might seem to favour the Emperor, but Henry IV was no more anxious to see his *imperium* dissolve into a titular primacy over a number of really independent feudal princes than was the Pope himself. The Emperor was thus led into the false position of claiming the right himself to nominate bishops to the sees of Bamberg, Strasburg, Spire, Pavia and Turin (which the Pope had declared vacant) and to back up his claim by raising against the Pope all the discontented churchmen in Germany and Lombardy and the anti-papal Roman aristocracy.

The challenge was accepted and after a brief hour of triumph at Canossa, the strongest and most ascetic of the popes went on to meet disaster after disaster, to die in exile at Salerno, with the Church divided and the reformers scattered. "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity," he said on his deathbed, "and therefore I die in exile." But the ultimate issue was a drawn battle ending in a moral victory for the papacy. The attempt to arm the papacy with secular jurisdiction matched with its spiritual claims failed completely. But for the next four centuries no secure authority could be exercised by any secular prince who denied the spiritual autonomy of the Church or challenged its verdict in matters of faith and morals.

Henry IV
at
Canossa,
Jan., 1077.

Thanks to the political acumen of William and Lanfranc, the quarrel of Church and State did not develop in England during the crucial years of reform. There was no need that it should, because nothing vital to the Church was withheld by William and nothing vital to the State was ever asked by Lanfranc. We may well imagine that William was watching events in Italy and Germany with a certain magnanimity. It suited him much better than his bishops should be subjected to the discipline of his chosen adviser and required to put their sees in order, to build schools and cathedrals and to stiffen the discipline of the clergy than that they should seek to challenge

the reformed papacy in order to make themselves virtually independent of the king, the Pope and the primate alike.

Council of
London,
1075.

It was with the Conqueror's strong approval, therefore, that the Council of London, after hearing of the separation of ecclesiastical from civil jurisdiction, proceeded at once to deal with the precedence of bishops, the discipline of monks within the monasteries and the transfer of episcopal sees from villages to towns. Remigius had transferred his see from Dorchester to Lincoln. Later Sherborne was transferred to Salisbury, Selsey to Chichester and Lichfield to Chester. The principle once accepted, other changes followed. Elmham moved to Thetford *c.* 1079, Chester made a second move to Coventry in 1086, Wells moved to Bath *c.* 1088, and Thetford moved to Norwich *c.* 1095.

The bishops were thus brought into closer touch with the central life of the Church and of the nation and the English Church was forced to fit itself into the pattern of urban civilisation at a time when the village life of old England was beginning to lose its importance and the political centre of gravity was shifting to the growing English towns.

Simultaneously, the parochial clergy were placed under stricter supervision. No clerk was to be allowed to settle in a diocese or to seek ordination in any diocese but his own without episcopal authority. The purchase of offices and benefices was solemnly forbidden, but this decree was really only an echo of the continental war between Empire and Papacy. William's administration was in fact wholly free from simony, both in Normandy and in England.

Finally, the Council of London decreed that no one might speak without permission in Council except bishops and abbots. We may guess that the purpose of this decree was to reduce the influence of the Saxon clergy and to expedite the business of the Council.

Council of
Win-
chester,
1076.

While the Council of London was sitting, Gregory VII was issuing his famous decrees about clerical marriage and lay investiture. In 1076 another English Church council was held at Winchester. Gregory had instructed all the metropolitans to take action in clerical celibacy. The Council of Winchester forbade the cathedral clergy to have wives and allowed no one to be ordained as priest or deacon who did not swear to observe the rule of celibacy. But the parochial clergy were allowed to retain their wives, in direct contradiction of the papal decree.

We can trace in two other decrees of this Council echoes of

the larger controversy in Europe. The clergy were protected from rendering greater service to their lay lords in return for their tenure of benefices than was rendered in the days of the Confessor, and existing endowments were declared not subject to forfeiture merely because there was no extant charter. Finally, an important decree of 1076 defined a marriage as unlawful without a priest's blessing.

The most significant feature of the Council of Winchester is nevertheless a negative one. There was no reference to the Roman decree on lay investiture. There is no evidence that Lanfranc published this decree or that it was discussed. In 1079 Gregory VII summoned Lanfranc to Rome, refused to confirm William's selection to the see of Rouen and made the archbishop of Lyons primate of Rouen, Sens and Tours. William replied with an assurance of personal devotion, but Lanfranc remained in England. In 1080 Gregory sent a Legate asking for an oath of fealty to himself from William, and also asking for money. William sent the money but refused the oath of fealty. The Pope evidently wrote to Lanfranc protesting, for we have Lanfranc's reply, assuring the Pope of his fidelity to the Holy See and promising obedience "according to the canons" but disclaiming all responsibility in regard to the oath. "I advised him to comply with your wishes but I did not succeed." The Pope in 1082 wrote peremptorily to Lanfranc summoning him to Rome within four weeks under pain of suspension. Lanfranc's reply is not extant and there is no evidence that he went. There is some evidence, although it is not conclusive, that he did not. William of St. Calais, Bishop of Durham, was sent to Rome in that year to obtain the Pope's approval for his project to remove the secular clergy from Durham cathedral and to replace them by a community of monks. There was no reason whatever why he should have gone in person, and the bishop was in all probability sent as an envoy to heal the breach between Lanfranc and Rome. Apparently he was successful, for a formal letter conveying the Pope's approval of the Durham proposal was, we are told, addressed by the Pope to William and Lanfranc. If this was so, the threat of suspension must have been first withdrawn.

It was Lanfranc's good fortune, perhaps, that Gregory VII after 1082 was too hard pressed to pursue the correspondence. On the other hand, it is probable that there was a good deal of unreality in the apparent relations of these two great and determined men. The Pope was fighting for the autonomy of

the Church. It was not an issue which allowed of compromise. To impress his principle upon the mind of the times he had excommunicated the Emperor. He could hardly do less than maintain an appearance of hostility to Lanfranc, who had certainly modified his decrees regarding married clergy, and perhaps altogether ignored the even more important decree against lay investiture. The Vatican could not possibly have created a precedent fatal to papal authority by allowing such conduct to go unrebuked. The summons to Rome was the most colourless rebuke in the repertoire of the diplomacy of the age. It was therefore employed.

Had Lanfranc received a direct instruction to promulgate the decrees of 1075 he would presumably have done so. He was as justified as we are in thinking that the absence of such an instruction was no accident. Gregory VII knew, as the rest of the world knew, that under William and Lanfranc a great reformation and strengthening of the Church in England was taking place. Without William's support that reformation could not, in the feudal world, have taken place. The Emperor used his feudal power over the bishops to fight the reformation. William used his to further it. Nevertheless the relations between Lanfranc and Gregory were enigmatic, and when the Emperor set up an anti-Pope, Lanfranc refused to pronounce against him. Lanfranc's personal contribution to the cause of reform was not in the constitutional sphere but in his revival of diocesan life and monasticism, both matters which lay nearer to the heart of Lanfranc, the devoted Prior of Bec and Abbot of Caen, than did the proper relation of Church to State.

Lanfranc found a number of notable abuses. Bishops, parochial clergy and even monks bore arms and had taken part in the fighting. Clerks were unchaste. Apostate clergy roamed about the country. Mass was celebrated by clerks not regularly ordained. The straggling sees lacked cohesion; there was no systematic delegation of disciplinary authority by the bishops. Now every diocese was ordered to hold one or even two councils a year. The bishops were ordered to visit parishes and ordination was to take place at fixed times and only in cathedral churches. Baptism was to be administered only at Easter and Whitsun, unless there was danger of death. Archdeaconries were created on an extensive scale. By the beginning of the twelfth century there were five in the York diocese, seven in Lincoln and four in Salisbury. There were possibly three in Wells by 1120 and three in Norwich by 1127.

THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

The drive behind the reforms came, we must believe, from king and primate, but the necessary learning came from the abbeys and abbey-schools of Normandy. From Bec and Caen came Lanfranc himself and Anselm after him; Gundulf of Rochester, the great architect; Paul, Abbot of St. Albans; and Crispin, Abbot of Westminster and founder of the abbey school; Ernulf, Abbot of Peterborough, builder, founder of hospitals and compiler of the famous *Textus Roffensis*; and Thurstan of Glastonbury, a man of ferocious temper but a great musician. From the Rouen schools came a crowd of royal chaplains: Wakelin, Bishop of Winchester; Simon, Abbot of Ely; Giffard, later Bishop of Winchester; and Gerard, later Archbishop of York. Mont St. Michel sent Remigius, Bishop of Lincoln, and Scotland, Abbot of St. Augustus; Fécamp sent Vital, Abbot of Westminster before Crispin; and the brilliant, almost Renaissance, figure of Herbert Losinga, Bishop of Norwich. Bayeux sent Thomas, Archbishop of York, Samson, Bishop of Worcester and William of St. Calais, the rebellious builder of Durham Cathedral. From Tours came four men famed for their skill in medicine: John, Bishop of Wells; Grimaldi, the court doctor; Fabricius, Abbot of Abingdon, who founded a medical school at Malmesbury; and Baldwin, Abbot of Bury, who had attended the Confessor and who attended Lanfranc during an illness. From Norman abbeys or from Norman schools came the contemporary historians: William of Malmesbury, Florence of Worcester, Simeon of Durham and Archdeacon Henry of Huntingdon and his household.

We need not necessarily think that these men were more spiritual than any of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors, but they were men of learning and experience of affairs; they knew men and cities and shared a common tradition of order, discipline and statecraft. Church councils composed of men of this calibre were an effective instrument for initiating reform. Men of this calibre presiding over dioceses and abbeys and administering a defined code of law could be relied upon in most cases to implement the reforms. Lanfranc's correspondence shows, however, that he was quick to note and to reprimand any backsliding. Lanfranc's famous letter to one of the few backsliders, Herfast, Bishop of Elmham, is a clear exposition at once of the archbishop's character and of his claims as Metropolitan of England. "I now charge you," he writes, "not to grasp at anything belonging to St. Edmund, unless you can show, by authentic documents, that it has been sought by your

predecessors. Dismiss the said Berard in peace and uninjured until the matter shall come to our hearing, and shall receive a decision agreeable to canonical authority and our judgment.

“Give over dice playing, not to speak of graver misconduct in which you are said to waste the whole day. Study theology and the decrees of the Roman pontiffs and give special attention to the sacred canons . . . you will discover how vain is your expectation of escaping ecclesiastical discipline. In the decrees it runs thus: ‘In every province let him attend to the regulations of his bishop in all things.’ At the Council of Nicaea: ‘The confirmation of everything done in each province is to be left by the bishop to the metropolitan.’ At that of Antioch: ‘In every province, it is fitting that the bishops acknowledge the metropolitan bishop as having charge of the whole province, for since all who have any business resort from all parts to the metropolis, it is right that he has the precedence.’ At the Council of Toledo: ‘It is proper that each should receive rules of discipline from the place where he received the honour of consecration, that in accordance with the decrees of the fathers, the see which is the mother of each one’s priestly dignity should be the mistress of his ecclesiastical rule.’ And a little after: ‘If anyone violate these decrees, let him for six months be debarred from the communion, and undergo penitential correction as the metropolitan may direct.’ There are other passages on the precedence and power of primates and archbishops, both in the aforesaid writings, and in other authentic books of orthodox fathers, which, if you had read more studiously, and when read had remembered, you would not think disrespectfully of your mother Church, nor have said what you are reported to have said. Nor would anyone in his senses have considered this to be a rash presumption in another’s diocese, when through God’s mercy, this one island, which they call Britain, is evidently the diocese of our single church.”¹

In the matter of monastic reform Lanfranc himself took the lead and we have a complete picture of the reforms which he instituted at Christ Church, Canterbury, in the book of rules sent to Henry the prior. These rules were based broadly on those of Cluny, although much discretion was left to the prior. There is, in particular, no reference to manual labour in these rules, although learning held a high place, if still subsidiary to liturgical observance. But from Christ Church,

¹ Quoted by A. J. Macdonald in *Lanfranc* (Oxford, 1926), p. 121.

in the age immediately following Lanfranc, came the historians, Eadmer and Osbern, and from St. Alban's, the first abbey to adopt the Christ Church rules, came Matthew Paris, Walsingham, and their successors. A change was coming over Benedictine monasteries and we must assume Lanfranc to have been at least ready to co-operate with the new spirit. Yet the chief need was religious revival and nothing was done by Lanfranc to weaken the ruling Benedictine principle. The ritual of religious observance was the principal occupation of the monks. Religious experience was the supreme reality and worship the prime duty. Lanfranc, keen theologian, active statesman and strict disciplinarian as he was, was first and foremost a monk, and for this reason his influence was most effective in the reform of abbeys and cathedral chapters, in the promotion of corporate activities dedicated to spiritual ends, and least effective in raising the level of the seculars. In the parishes, a century after the Conquest, married clergy were still common and it was still by no means uncommon for a benefice to pass from father to son.

Very different was the effect of his rule on the bishoprics and abbeys. The first Cluniac house founded in England was at Lewes in 1077 and from Lewes other priories were founded at Thetford, Much Wenlock, St. Andrews outside Northampton, Daventry and Pontefract. In 1088 Bermondsey Abbey was founded by monks from La-Charité-sur-Loire. But there were never more than 38 Cluniac houses in England. English Benedictines increased in number more rapidly. New abbeys were founded at Battle (by William the Conqueror to commemorate his victory), Malvern, Shrewsbury, Chester and Colchester. Priories under St. Alban's were formed at Wallingford, Tynemouth, Belvoir, Birnham and Hertford. Jarrow and Wearmouth were re-formed by prior Aldwyn from Winchcombe.

This great expansion of monastic activity went on side by side with the reform and revivification of cathedral life. Both are reflected in the great architectural monuments which have come down to us from Norman times.

Of Lanfranc's cathedral at Canterbury (1070) some columns only remain, at Lincoln (1072-82) only the lower part of the west front; but Rochester (1077) and St. Alban's stand, as do the transepts of Ely (1083) and the nave at Winchester, which was building in 1083 under abbot Simeon. We have nothing of the eleventh century St. Paul's, built, for some

reason, of wood, nor of Salisbury, Hereford or Bath, but we have the crypt at Worcester (begun in 1084) and much of Gloucester (begun in 1089), although the eleventh century stone-work was later cased in as at Winchester. At Durham building began in 1093 and the church was completed in 1133. The cathedrals of Norwich (begun 1096) and Exeter and the abbeys of Tewkesbury (begun in 1087), Romsey (begun in 1120) and Malmesbury (begun in 1145) are all early Norman, though a little later than Lanfranc's time.

What is left is only a fraction of what was built. The wooden roofs with leaden casing were the most frequent cause of the loss by fire of so many Norman buildings, and the cloisters also were in Norman times generally built of wood and thus have disappeared. What remains is a mere indication of the majesty of the Norman achievement, but more than enough to prove the reality of the religious revival.

The building of the great cathedrals and abbeys would have been a remarkable achievement whatever their purpose. Buildings which are in every way comparable with such modern cathedrals as Liverpool were built in a far shorter time than they would take to-day, despite the immense material and mechanical resources of our time. The men of those times were willing to make sacrifices for the glory of God. The great revival of building came at the same time as the reform of the cathedral churches and the expansion of some of the cathedral foundations into great monasteries. Christ Church, Canterbury, had 150 monks and Rochester 50 or 60 by the end of William's reign. Regulars were restored at Worcester, Winchester and Durham and a strict rule imposed on the congregations of secular canons at York, London, Lincoln, Norwich, Salisbury, Chichester, Hereford and Chester.

The revenues of the sees and abbeys were large but there were no resources for borrowing the great capital sums which must have been needed for the buildings. In some important cases much of the stone was brought from Caen, and some of the craftsmen. Thousands must have been employed. Great and continuous calls must have been made on the generosity of the layman. The achievement was a triumph of energetic organisation and magnificent technical competence. The technique of stone vaulting for the great roofs was not fully developed until half a century later; otherwise, all these buildings would have been standing to-day.

And yet the chief historical importance of these cathedrals

THE CISTERCIAN RULE

and abbeys lies elsewhere. They gave permanence alike to the religious, the economic and the political structure of England and fixed the main centres of population where they remained until the industrial revolution. Further, they set the Church visibly side by side and on an equality with the secular power and authority of the Crown and the baronage. The Church was fixed for centuries at the heart of the political and intellectual life of the nation, both of which it came increasingly to influence if not to dominate.

The reaction to all this splendour and influence came not, as the modern age would expect, from the laity, but from the Church itself. Nothing shows more clearly the deeply religious character of the age. The reaction existed even in Lanfranc's time; it grew up with the reforms. In 1084 Bruno, a canon of Rheims, founded the Carthusians, an order devoted to extreme asceticism, enclosed and devoted exclusively to a life of prayer. The head and fount of the reaction from Cluny, however, was the Cistercian order, founded by Abbot Robert in 1098 at Cîteaux. Robert was succeeded by an Englishman, Stephen Harding, in 1108, but the real development of the order dates from the arrival at Cîteaux of St. Bernard of Clairvaux with 29 companions in 1112. In 1119 the *Carta Caritatis*, the Cistercian rule, was confirmed by Pope Calixtus II. By 1152 there were 330 houses in many countries.

Founding
of the
Cistercian
Order,
1098-1112.

The inspiration of the order was the reaction from the splendour of the great abbeys of the Cluniac foundation, from the length of the services, from the magnificence of the ritual, the vestments and the church decoration, and no doubt also from the increasing wealth and ease of the monastic life.

The Cistercians shortened the services, vetoed elaborate vestments and decorations, reintroduced manual labour and accepted only gifts in kind, but not the least significant of their departure from Cluniac practice was that they preferred to found their abbeys in desert places far from towns and on poor land. The first Cistercian house in England, Waverley, was founded in 1128 and the great abbeys of Rievaulx (near Helmsley) and Fountains (near Ripon) were founded in 1131 and 1132. One of the strange accidents of history is that this deliberate choice of poor land and remote sites for these abbeys led the Cistercians inevitably to sheep-farming. In the result, when the wool trade became the staple industry in thirteenth century England, the Cistercians became the wealthiest and most unpopular of the religious orders, being often accused of

Cistercian
in
England,
1128.

THE CHURCH UNDER WILLIAM I

turning the peasants off their land to provide grazing for their vast flocks.

Seen in the retrospect of history, the Cistercians' destiny was to enrich and adorn the countryside and so to ensure that the Church played as large a part in the economic revolution of the thirteenth century as in the first establishment of the feudal order two centuries before. To the student of the twelfth century, the importance of the Cistercians is that their rise and development shows that the immense religious enthusiasm of the age was not satisfied with the power and the glory of life in the great abbeys and cathedrals but must overflow into new channels where it could return to a simpler and more ascetic life. There were still in the twelfth century thousands and thousands of men not merely ready to accept suffering for Christ's sake but to seek it.

That bare historical fact we must remember, side by side with the harshness, the brutality, the license and the luxury of a passionate but creative age.

Chapter Thirteen

ENGLAND UNDER WILLIAM II

WILLIAM the Conqueror had established a strong monarchy in England and had greatly strengthened the dukedom in Normandy. Two principles, however, remained to be established before any strong English monarchy could take root. The first was that the eldest son of the king should be his legal successor and should become king *de jure* at once and automatically on the death of his antecessor; the second was that the monarchy should be the appanage of the country and not the country of the monarchy. At first sight these two principles conflict. If the monarchy is an office, the nation can choose the holder, but the doctrine of an automatic succession, enshrined in the phrase "The king is dead, long live the king," when it came to be accepted, continued to deprive the nation of any effective voice in the succession. But the events of the period from the death of the Conqueror to the accession of Henry II in 1154 had convinced those who lived through those troubled years that this was less disagreeable than a disrupted succession and a divided kingdom.¹ The discords, wars and misfortunes which fell on England during the reigns of William Rufus, Henry I and Stephen determined that the future constitutional struggle should be directed to reserving to the nation not the right to choose the king, but the right to determine the conditions on which a strictly hereditary monarchy should exercise its powers.

William the Conqueror's strength was intensely personal in its character. It was his own force and integrity rather than any great originality of thought which gave an edge to his statesmanship. When his strength failed him at the last, he saw no further than his contemporaries and, in arranging for the future government of his possessions, followed the long established Teutonic custom (whereby the lands of inheritance went to the eldest and the lands newly acquired to the second son). He nominated his eldest son Robert as Duke of Nor-

Robert,
Duke of
Nor-
mandy,
1087-1134.

¹ See Appendix IIIe for a geneological table showing the succession of the Norman and Plantagenet kings.

mandy and commended his second son William, nicknamed Rufus from his fiery complexion, to Lanfranc as his successor on the English throne. To his third and ablest son Henry he left a considerable sum of money, five thousand pounds of silver, worth perhaps, in terms of our present currency, nearly £250,000.

This arrangement had three defects. It ignored the incapacity of Robert for government. It imposed a divided allegiance on all the great barons who held fiefs in both Normandy and England while adding largely to their feudal obligations, since they would owe aids and reliefs to their two overlords. By separating England from Normandy it gravely weakened both and rendered far more difficult the essential tasks of both governments, the reduction of Wales and Maine and the maintenance of strong frontiers against Scotland and Anjou. With these tasks unfulfilled, both parts of the great inheritance consolidated by the Conqueror might easily fall into anarchy and become themselves the victims of another conquest.

The Conqueror's decision was fully in accord with the mind of the eleventh century, but times were changing, and the measure of the change was the great struggle between Empire and Papacy which coincided with the closing years of William's reign. William knew that his successor in England would have to face the new papal claims. Only his own personal strength and prestige had enabled England to evade that issue hitherto. The stresses of that inevitable conflict would in any case weaken the monarchy. It is probable that the story told by the Chroniclers is true, that he had intended to leave his whole domain to William and that he was prevailed upon to leave Normandy to Robert by scruples of conscience. The same scruples no doubt led him to release the most important of his political prisoners, including his half-brother Odo of Bayeux. This failure to distinguish between his duty as a politician to his rivals, as a father to his son and as a king to his people was highly characteristic of the feudal age. It is true that this age was passing away and that the next two hundred years were to see the consolidation on the one hand of the papal power and on the other hand of the national monarchies. But neither the Conqueror, for all his genius, nor his son William Rufus were men of the transition.

William
II, king,
1087-1100.

William II was essentially a gangster, without fear, without morals and without pity, redeemed only by his loyalty to the

feudal code of chivalry and by his personal courage and energy in defence of his inheritance. Drunken, profligate and perverted,¹ his spasmodic activity was nevertheless consistently directed first to securing his authority at home, then to rejoining Normandy to England, finally to the conquest of Wales and the settlement of his relations with Scotland. The security of his power and the concentration of his effort were consistently weakened by his quarrels with the Church and by the extravagance of his habits. It was no coincidence that the rule of the most profligate of English kings saw for the first time the appearance in England of a papal party.

William II began his reign in England with the good will of Lanfranc. Indeed, he had added to his coronation oath, when Lanfranc crowned him at Westminster on September 26th, 1087, a promise that he would be guided in all things by the archbishop's advice. This promise was probably a condition imposed by Lanfranc to induce the baronage to tender their allegiance. It is also important to note that the coronation took place only seven days after the Conqueror's death and that no council met in the interval. "The archbishop was tacitly accepted as spokesman to the nation."²

At Easter in the following year the almost inevitable feudal rebellion broke out. It was led by Odo of Bayeux, nominally in the interests of Robert of Normandy. It was supported with varying degrees of zeal by some of the most powerful of the feudal nobility, Robert of Mortain, William of Eu, Roger de Montgomery, Earl Palatine of Shropshire, Bernard of Neufmarché, the lord of Brecon, Robert Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland, the guardian of the Northern Marches, Roger Bigod of Norfolk, Gilbert of Clare, Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutances, and William of St. Calais, Bishop of Durham. It was a concentric attack of the Marcher earldoms and Norman exiles on the centre of power at the time when it might be expected to be at its weakest for a generation.

Revolt
of Odo
of Bayeux

There was nothing either nationalist or revolutionary in this rebellion; great numbers of the baronage supported Rufus and much the greater part of the population was on his side. In any case, rebellion under the early feudal system was almost the constitutional method of expressing a wish for a new administration. The regime was not challenged. The rebels,

¹ "Nefandissimum Sodomae scelus noviter in hac terra divulgatum jam plurimum pullulavit."—*Anselm*.

² *Davis, op. cit.*, p. 11.

had they won, would have co-operated with Duke Robert in carrying out exactly the same system of government as that of the administration they had overthrown. The Anglo-Saxon fyrd and the Church tended, for that reason, to support the government of the day in any rebellion. In this case they supported it with unusual zeal and effort, not because they felt strongly in favour of William but because a change of administration would make no difference to them and their interest was the maintenance of the authority of government itself. What every one feared in the Feudal Age was the excesses of individual barons, and especially when these took the form of annexing Church lands and using the feudal courts to depress the status of the small freeholders and the villeinage. The remedy for this was a strong and stable central government. Such a government, whoever composed it, could be trusted to keep the baronage in control, since it depended for its revenues on the punctual rendering of feudal obligations and on the steady expansion of royal as opposed to baronial justice. A period of civil war on the other hand meant that the baronage became the only source of law and order and that the source, as far as the common man was concerned, was tainted.

What the rebels wanted was office and power. The Marcher earls no doubt felt that if they made Robert of Normandy king he would, as an absentee king, be willing to extend their privileges and liberties. The other Norman rebels were probably guided by purely personal motives. The leader, Odo of Bayeux, clearly aimed at regaining his estates and very probably the succession to Canterbury. Odo's feud with Lanfranc was of long standing. Over and above all this the chief rebels were men who held lands in both England and Normandy and they preferred therefore that the Duchy and the Kingdom should be under one head. There was the question of feudal aids and reliefs. There was also the fact that any war between the king and the duke involved automatically the temporary loss of their revenues either in England or in Normandy. This applied to not a few of the lay barons but not at all to the bishops and abbots.

It was therefore not surprising either that the rebellion broke out or that it failed. Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, with the west country fyrd, denied the passage of the Severn to the rebels based on Bristol and Hereford. William himself, accompanied by Lanfranc, led the fyrd for the Home Counties against the rebels in Kent and Sussex, where Robert of Mortain

THE DEATH OF LANFRANC

at Pevensey, Roger Montgomery at Arundel, Gilbert of Clare at Tonbridge and Odo at Rochester, held the approaches from Normandy to London clear for a formidable invasion.

The decisive stroke of the campaign was taken by William when as counter to Pevensey, held by the rebels, he seized the ships at Hastings and the Cinque Ports. The Norman invading force came late and was not formidable. It failed to effect a landing at Hastings and Robert of Normandy renounced the cause of the rebels. The rest was a matter of time. With the surrender of Rochester in June, 1088, the rebellion was over. Some of the rebels were pardoned, among them William of Eu and Robert Mowbray, but most of them, though their lives were spared, forfeited their English lands and had to leave the country. William of St. Calais, the Bishop of Durham, who was not pardoned, pleaded his orders and appealed to Rome. Lanfranc took the traditional Norman line that in respect of his temporalities he was a lay baron and subject to lay jurisdiction. As to his spiritual office of bishop, Lanfranc wisely expressed no opinion. The bishop was sentenced to forfeiture of his estate and allowed to leave the country and appeal to Rome if he wished. He left the country but did not appeal to Rome.

This was Lanfranc's last and not uncharacteristic appearance on the stage of the world. He died full of years and honours on May 24th, 1089, happy, perhaps, in the opportunity of his death. The investiture controversy in England then loomed ahead. As a reformer and disciplinarian, Lanfranc's reputation stands secure. His introduction and promulgation of the canon law had far-reaching results. His monastic reforms and his insistence on clerical discipline, even to the point of bringing the monasteries, wherever possible, under episcopal control, was an important factor in building the ordered centralised state, the creation of which was the outstanding Norman achievement. But on the question of the papacy, Lanfranc's attitude was neither clear nor absolutely straightforward. No doubt, like many men of his generation, he deplored the controversy, but it is hardly possible to hold, as some English historians do, that Lanfranc's view of the papal powers was merely the normal pre-Gregorian view that the Pope should not interfere with the normal course of episcopal government. Z. N. Brooke, one of Lanfranc's greatest apologists, admits that his attitude to the papacy changed with his appointment to Canterbury. "Hitherto," he says, "as

Death of
Lanfranc,
1089.

theologian, papal authority had magnified his importance: now, as archbishop, the great ecclesiastical administrator of a kingdom, it might be irksome." It is certainly difficult to believe that, after the event, Lanfranc misunderstood what was involved in the great quarrel between Gregory VII (and his successor, Urban II) and the Empire. The issue was not one between the Metropolitans and the Pope, or between the conception of a national Church or a Church governed from abroad. That issue was to be argued out five centuries later. What lay at the root of the Hildebrandine controversy, as it actually developed, was the need as Gregory VII saw it to assert, under unmistakable constitutional forms, the absolute independence of the spiritual power. It cannot detract from the wisdom and indeed the necessity of this uncompromising assertion of independence that a Church which succeeded in establishing its claim to be independent of, and in its own sphere superior to, the secular power, might go too far; any more than the totalitarian view can be honestly defended on the ground that in practice the State would not use against the Church all the power that it claims. Yet, when, after the death of Hildebrand in 1085, the papacy was in dispute between his lawful successors and the nominee of the Empire, the anti-Pope, Clement III, there is some evidence that both William I and Lanfranc "would have preferred the victory of a pope who was subservient to a lay ruler,"¹ and Lanfranc publicly stated that the English Church had not decided which pope to support.

Lanfranc's attitude cannot be satisfactorily explained by reference to his legitimate opposition to Hildebrand's request that William I should do fealty to him for his kingdom. He was no Celtic visionary; although not an original thinker, he was a lawyer, a theologian and a canonist, and it is impossible to imagine his failing either to distinguish between the claim of the papacy to appoint bishops and the claim of the papacy to exact fealty from secular rulers, or to realise that it was not necessary, when conceding one claim, to concede the other. Lanfranc, moreover, was an Italian, turned Norman abbot, and he knew Rome and was in close correspondence with Alexander II and Gregory VII. He knew, therefore, as well as any one else in Europe, what was going on behind the scenes and all that it implied. Either he was honestly in intellectual doubt or he was temporising with a view to seeing the result of the quarrel between Empire and Papacy. He was a very

Alexander
II, pope,
1061-1073.

Gregory
VII, pope,
1073-1085.

Clement
III, pope,
1084-1100.

¹ Brooke, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

WILLIAM II INVADES NORMANDY

great servant of the Church and of England, but his fame might well not rest so high but for the fact that he was succeeded by a man of different character who, although equally desirous to keep the peace, was quite unprepared to compromise on the fundamental issue which underlay the investiture controversy. The Church in England thus preserved its independence despite Lanfranc's wavering.

The three years after Lanfranc's death are filled with the Norman and Scottish wars. William invaded Normandy. His intention had been foreshadowed two years before when his brother Henry came over to claim his share of his mother's English lands. William agreed that he should have this and Henry did homage to his brother, but William later broke his word; Henry meanwhile, after a short war with Duke Robert, to whom he had played false in becoming William's "man," retired to the Cotentin peninsula, which he had acquired from his brother soon after the Conqueror's death. Had William aimed merely at avenging Robert's attempted invasion of England, Henry would have been naturally his ally. It is clear that William's policy went far beyond this. He made no attempt to conciliate Henry. He ordered a full-scale invasion of Normandy and in 1090 his forces almost captured Rouen. At this point Henry, angered at William's treachery, came to Robert's rescue, and William was checked. But in 1091 William landed in person in Normandy with more men and more money. Robert was forced to sue for peace.

William
II invades
Nor-
mandy,
1090.

The terms of this peace, signed in February, 1091, left with William the tactical initiative. He retained east Normandy, which he had occupied and used as his base of operations, and he received in addition Fécamp. The two elder brothers then turned on Henry and William received Cherbourg and Mont St. Michel in return for the services of his troops against Henry. William thus held, in addition to Caen, the two most important ports on which to base a new invasion of Normandy. All that he promised in return was to reinvest Duke Robert's supporters with their English lands where these had been forfeited. The duke for his part was compelled to exile Edgar Atheling, who fled to Scotland.

This was the occasion, if not the cause, of the first of William's Scottish wars. Behind the tangled stories of treachery and counter-treachery lies the hard fact that feudalism on the international plane was becoming, as the twelfth century approached, incompatible with the growing concentration of

power round the new territorial monarchies. The lordship over land carried with it under feudalism political rights and to some substantial extent a claim to military allegiance. The system was only workable in practice where all lands were subject to the same overlord. Just as Normandy and England must be under one sovereign if Norman lords were to hold English fiefs and *vice versa*, so in the case of Scotland the king of Scotland must either do homage to the king of England as his overlord or abandon his English fiefs, which included Carlisle with most of what is now Westmorland and Cumberland as well as various English manors.

Scottish
war, 1091.

The war of 1091 was begun by Malcolm, the Scottish king, and was connected with the arrival of Edgar Atheling, whose sister Margaret was Malcolm's wife. Malcolm perhaps intended no more than a demonstration in force. He crossed the border in May but advanced only to the Wear and then retired. William came back from Normandy and took an army into the Lothians. He, too, seems to have had no serious military aim and a peace was made in September, under which some disputed manors were restored to Malcolm and the Atheling was returned to Normandy; Malcolm received a small pension and promised William the same obedience he had rendered to the Conqueror. William was only manœuvring for position. In 1092 he marched on Carlisle, turned out Malcolm's tenant and planted a colony of English mercenaries. The Lakeland counties remained part of England from that time onward except for a few years in the next century. Malcolm came to Gloucester to protest and was at once summoned to appear before the council. Malcolm claimed that his submission and the pension had not placed him in the position of a vassal. He returned to Scotland and later in the same year invaded England in some force, only to be defeated by Robert Mowbray on the banks of the Alne. Malcolm was killed by Mowbray's steward, Morel of Bamborough, and his eldest son by Margaret was mortally wounded. A few days later Queen Margaret died.

The consequences were not to William's liking. The "English party" fell from power in Scotland. Malcolm's brother, Donaldbane, seized the crown and made an alliance with Magnus, King of Norway. William retaliated by allowing Duncan, Malcolm's eldest son, to lead a mixed force of Anglo-Scots and mercenaries against Donaldbane, who was defeated. The Lowlands had no sympathy, we can well believe, with Donaldbane and his Norse allies, but in 1094 Duncan was

defeated by a coalition between Donaldbane and his Highland supporters and Edmund, the second son of Malcolm and Margaret. Thus ended the first important English intervention in Scottish affairs. The Scots evidently preferred to settle what was primarily a domestic quarrel in their own way. The Lothians for centuries had been part of the English kingdom of Northumbria and there was a clearer cultural division between the Scottish Lowlands and the Highlands than between the Lowlands and the English borderlands. At the same time there was everywhere a growing sense of the need for a more centralised and more national government. Just at this time neither the Lowlands nor the Highlands were strong enough to impose such a government on the whole of Scotland without English or Norse assistance. The second reign of Donaldbane represented the necessary compromise. Edmund and the Lowland party were given, perhaps, some measure of local autonomy under the overlordship of Donaldbane. We do not know the exact arrangement but the balance of forces is evident.

It is very different with the quarrels between the English Church and the monarchy which came to a head in the year 1093 with the belated appointment of Anselm to Canterbury. On Lanfranc's death, Flambard, a minor court official under William the Conqueror, became treasurer. Flambard was a priest but his career had been in secular offices. He was certainly a man of very great abilities and he was given the Canterbury lands and benefices to farm for the benefit of the royal treasury when the see was vacant. Other sees and abbeys as they fell vacant came into his capable but unscrupulous hands. In addition, according to the English Chronicle, he was responsible for unlawful gelds and levies in 1090. Further, he had ignored the customary limits on feudal aids and reliefs and even bishops and abbots had been made to pay reliefs before they took up their appointments. Herbert Losinga paid a relief of £1000 on his appointment to Thetford; Robert Bellême, later in the reign, paid the huge sum of £3000 when he succeeded his brother Hugh in the earldom of Shrewsbury.

Anselm,
arch-
bishop of
Canter-
bury,
1093-1109.

It is probable that Flambard's personal character has been unfairly attacked in these matters. There is little evidence of "unlawful" exactions and where, as in the case of the Worcester relief of 1095, he overstepped the law, there was some reason behind it. The feudal revenues at this date could not be relied on to yield any regular annual sum. Reliefs and wardships were the most valuable, and it was a matter of chance, having

regard to the small number of the tenants-in-chief, what was obtainable in any particular year from these sources. Even as late as 1015 two or three big estates paying death duties in one year might make the difference between a surplus and a deficit in the national accounts; in the time of William II, this would certainly have been the case every year had there been budgeting as we understand it. Further, reliefs could not legitimately be claimed from sees or abbeys, since any payment by a new bishop or abbot would render him liable to a charge of simony (Herbert Losinga went to Rome to get absolution from the Pope after paying his £1000). There was thus every temptation to prolong the vacancies in the sees and abbeys, since in these circumstances the revenues accrued to the Crown under feudal law. In 1095 Flambard appears to have attempted to get round the difficulty of claiming reliefs on the death of the Bishop of Worcester by exacting a so-called relief from the tenants of the see. Legally the tenants were only required to pay relief on succeeding to their own fees, and then they would pay them to their own overlord, the bishop, not to the Crown. It evidently appeared illogical to Flambard that bishoprics should enjoy the benefits of reliefs from their own tenants but should be themselves exempt. The payments in this case were demanded by means of a royal writ and were presumably obtained, but there is no record of any similar exaction at any other time. Given the failure of this expedient, there was no alternative, if anything substantial was to be derived feudally from the Church estates, to the disagreeable and unpopular practice of prolonging vacancies.

Henry I,
king,
1100-1135

As regards the laity, Henry I's charter on his accession clearly indicates that the claims in respect of reliefs had been exorbitant in William II's reign and he promised to ask no more than had been customary in old times. This, however, meant little more than the usual promise of economy and a reduction in taxation which every new administration is tempted to make and compelled (in its own judgment) to break.

There is no evidence of any popular indignation at these practices even as they affected the Church. There was no Archbishop of Canterbury and therefore no leader of the English Church. The bishops as a whole, as Anselm was to find, preferred at this date royal to papal authority in matters not directly concerning faith and morals. Herbert Losinga, for instance, might have had more than a qualm of conscience at paying for his see, but as late as 1100 when the dispute arose

between Anselm and Henry I over investitures, we find him acting for the king against the archbishop.

The general body of the people, the villeins and burgesses, were probably indifferent to the taxation imposed on the rich, and it may be significant that the Worcester experiment in direct taxation of the mesne tenants was not repeated.

We must never forget that a high proportion of the chronicles and biographies on which we rely for contemporary witness were written by monks, who felt bitterly the refusal of William II to fill the vacant abbacies (no less than 11 abbeys were, by William's death, vacant and let out to farm for the benefit of the Treasury). We must therefore discount to some extent the laments of the monks at William's misgovernment. They were ahead of the bishops in asserting their right to independence for the very good reason that they wished to be independent not only of the Crown but of the bishops also. Yet by 1093 even the regular clergy had done no more than organise a demand for the appointment of Anselm as Archbishop of Canterbury, a demand in which they were faintly supported by the bishops. There the matter would have rested, so little popular indignation was there, but for William II's serious illness in Lent, 1093. In the hour of danger the king "believed and trembled."¹

Anselm was already in the country. He had been brought over with the consent of the monks of Bec and was at the king's court during his illness. At the instance of the bishops, the king appointed him to the vacant see of Canterbury and from his sick bed invested the unwilling saint with the ring and staff. At the same time the king gave wide promises of secular reforms. The "laws of the Conqueror" were to be confirmed and followed. His ministers were to be called to strict account for their illegal exactions. This tardy and temporary repentance opened two chapters in English history. Constitutionally it was the first of the long series of bargains between the successors of the Conqueror and the people which were only to end with the Act of Settlement of 1688. It was also the beginning of the formation of a papal party in England and thereafter of the long conflict between Crown and Papacy which culminated in the sixteenth century.

The constitutional issue was raised only to be dropped until William's death. No secular reforms were in fact initiated and apart from the gift of the other vacant see of Lincoln to Robert

¹ Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

Bloett, the king's chaplain (1094), nothing was done to remedy the disorganisation of the Church. But this only served to bring the wider issue of the relations of Church and State immediately to the front.

Anselm was at the time of his investiture one of the most famous men in Europe. It was an age which admired sanctity and theological learning much as commercial acumen and scientific learning are admired in the twentieth century. Even those who were neither saintly nor learned, nor understood how to become so, regarded these qualities as of pre-eminent importance. For the last thirty-three years of his life, and he was sixty when appointed to Canterbury, Anselm had been at Bec, for three years as a monk, for fifteen as prior, for the last fifteen as abbot. There he had written the treatises which had made him world famous and which are still studied with respect. They cover the whole field of Christian doctrine and hold an important place in the history of philosophy, where he stands as the precursor of scholastic theology, as the first to attempt a systematic reconciliation of faith and reason (he was the author of the famous phrase "credo ut intelligam") and as a defender of Realism against the first onslaughts of the Nominalists. Anselm also has a place in history as an original thinker. His ontological argument for the existence of God, perhaps his chief philosophical achievement, has a curious history. It was rejected by Thomas Aquinas, revived in another form by Descartes, attacked by Kant and defended by Hegel. Apart from his originality as a philosopher, Anselm's fame outside the circle of professional theologians is less than it would be but for the fabric built on his foundations, but his work guided and determined much scholastic speculation.

A man of such learning, coming to high political office after 33 years in one monastery, might be expected to find himself at a loss. Indeed some historians have stressed the contrast between Lanfranc, the man of action, with his keen political mind, and Anselm the saintly scholar. This contrast is perhaps exaggerated. Lanfranc, too, was a monk and was older than Anselm when he was called to Canterbury, even if more versed in affairs. Nor was Lanfranc by temperament a politician. Anselm showed himself, in far more difficult circumstances, at least as successful in public affairs as Lanfranc. If he could do little with William II, that was due to the defects of William's character, not of his own.

Anselm was no fanatic. Lay investiture had been repeatedly

denounced since 1075, yet Anselm calmly accepted investiture at William II's hands. The decrees had not been officially brought to Anselm's notice, and there seemed no need in the circumstances to let this question stand between the Church and the Crown. Was William, however, going to redress the wrongs of the Church, restore the lands he had appropriated, fill the vacant sees, submit his actions in relation to the Church to the authority of the canonically-elected Pope Urban II and concede the right of his archbishops and bishops to visit Rome? These were the points really at issue between William II and Anselm. Before Anselm's death in 1109 not only all these points but, as far as England was concerned, the investiture controversy itself, had been settled on terms acceptable to the papacy. Even from William II, reckless and profane as he was, Anselm won substantial concessions.

Urban II,
pope,
1088-1099.

Anselm stood fast on the question of the Canterbury lands. All must be restored to the Church that had been taken away since the Conqueror's death. He insisted at the same time on his rights to acknowledge the claim of Urban II and to act as chief adviser of the king of England. These claims he compromised, the first in the letter only, the second in the spirit. In accepting consecration he made his formal profession of obedience to the Holy See, omitting the name of the Pope. This was in 1093. In 1094 the king determined to renew his attack on Normandy and called on Anselm for feudal aid. Anselm, offering a token sum, in effect refused and retaliated by asking the king's permission to call a Church council and fill the vacant abbeys. The king refused both requests and sailed for Normandy after ingeniously summoning twenty thousand men of the fyrd to come to Hastings with ten shillings apiece for the Treasury expenses, appropriating the money and then dismissing them. We are asked to assume great indignation on the part of the fyrd who were thus deprived of the glory of a campaign in Normandy, but the men had lost their ten shillings in any event and must have been delighted to return to their farms safe and sound after no more than a few days' absence. The money collected enabled William to buy off the king of France from his temporary alliance with Duke Robert. Probably William had this necessity in view before he sailed. Anyway, he returned to England at the end of the year, with his beachheads in eastern Normandy still secure, to resume his duel with Anselm.

Anselm asked permission early in 1095 to visit Pope Urban II

(whom he had already recognised when Abbot of Bec) in order to receive his pallium. Unless he made this journey, the custom of the age made him liable to forfeit his see. William can have had no objection to his troublesome counsellor leaving the country, but he was not prepared to recognise either of the rival popes and he fell back upon his father's principle that no pope should be recognised in England without his consent. William referred Anselm's claim to the council which met at Rockingham on 25th February, 1095. William asked the council to condemn Anselm for seeking to recognise Urban II as Pope without permission to do so. The council refused to condemn the archbishop. We know nothing of the grounds which led the lay barons to their decision but the Chronicles tell us of much popular sympathy for Anselm and even hint at popular demonstrations in his favour. The bishops contented themselves with disclaiming their right to sit in judgment upon their ecclesiastical superior but were as a body hostile to Anselm. They resented his action in raising an issue which was bound to aggravate still further their already uneasy relations with the Crown, on whom they depended for their temporalities, as Lanfranc himself had conceded in the case of William of St. Calais.¹

Council of
Rockingham,
1095.

Despite this, the council's refusal to condemn Anselm was a total defeat for William II. The power and prestige of the papacy had grown much faster than the new power of the national monarchy, and the lay baronage had been quick to realise that a quarrel with the Pope might put William's throne, and thus, if they supported him, their own feudal possessions and dignities in jeopardy. They were illogically but naturally quicker to realise this because of the high personal qualities both of Anselm and of the Pope. In a believing age, sanctity is a formidable political force.

William had only one chance left of ridding himself of his archbishop and that was to enlist the support of the Pope himself against Anselm. He seems to have attempted a bargain. He sent messengers secretly to Urban II with the suggestion that he should recognise the Pope if the Pope for his part would depose Anselm. William was easily outmanœuvred. The Pope sent a legate, the Cardinal William, Bishop of Albano, who first made William recognise his jurisdiction and then pronounced in Anselm's favour. The Pope made only a diplomatic concession, that papal legates should not be named

¹ See page 445 above.

for England without the consent of the king. This was a question of diplomatic courtesy only, since in the absence of a legate the Pope exercised from Rome all the powers which the legate could exercise on the spot.

The diplomatic triumph of the papacy was complete but the political triumph of the papal party was short lived. Baronial and popular opinion alike required respect for papal authority on all matters which concerned the Church, but the king's practical power was not weakened by the dispute with the Pope and in the course of the next two years it was greatly strengthened. The summer of 1095 saw an English rebellion crushed and a moderately successful campaign by the king in person against Wales. The climax of William's reign came in the spring of 1096 when Robert of Normandy pledged his duchy to William II for 10,000 marks so that he could raise an army and go on the First Crusade, which had been proclaimed by Urban II at the Council of Clermont in November, 1095.

First
Crusade
1095.

The occasion of the English re-entry into Normandy was more important than its consequences.

The immediate cause of the First Crusade was the arrival at Placentia in March, 1095, of an envoy from the eastern Emperor Alexius to Urban II asking for western help in resisting the encroachments of the Seljuk Turks on the weak and disorganised Eastern Empire. These Turks were descended from Aryan tribes who, in the days of the Roman Empire, were mostly settled in what is now Turkestan but who had appeared from time to time as raiders between the Danube and the Caucasus. In the eighth century, the advance of the Arabs along the Oxus brought the Turks into contact with Mohammedanism and in the middle of the ninth century, the great Abbasid Caliph, Mir't Tasim, ruling at Baghdad, formed for the defence of his authority a Turkish bodyguard. From that time the Abbasid Caliphate declined, weakened by the depredations of Turkish governors and military adventurers seizing and despoiling provinces. Persia had, for a brief moment, proved to be the *tertius gaudens* and conquered Baghdad in 945, reducing the Caliphate to a spiritual supremacy, diminished at that by the loss of Egypt and Syria to the rival (Fatimite) Caliphs at Cairo. The Turks themselves, however, set up their first kingdom under Ghazril in Afghanistan at the same time. It was from there that Mahmud (998-1030), the first of the great Turkish conquerors, annexed the Punjab and ruled on his

golden throne from Ispahan to Lahore. In 1055 another great Turkish conqueror, Tughril Beg, of the house of Seljuk, conquered Persia and Baghdad itself. Tughril Beg was invested by the Abbasid Caliph with the secular rule of all Islam and the title of Sultan. In 1070 Tughril Beg conquered Syria and Jerusalem from the Fatimite Caliphs at Cairo and in 1071 the Byzantine Emperor Romanus was defeated and captured at Manzikert. In 1084 Tughril Beg's successor conquered Antioch. The rule of the Turkish sultans over some of these near-eastern territories was only finally ended by Allenby's campaign in 1918.

Basil
defeats
the
Bulgars,
1014.

While Mahmud was advancing eastwards to Lahore, the Eastern Empire itself had had a brief revival of power under Basil II. Basil recaptured the Illyrian peninsula, restoring the Danube as his northern frontier. To the south he regained Syria and in the north conquered half Georgia and all Bulgaria. At the height of his power he was master of an empire which stretched from the Danube to the Euphrates, from Armenia to the south of Italy. Alas, it was "a government without a nation."¹ The wars of the Empire were fought with mercenaries. Its trade was in the hands of foreigners; its lands were tilled by serfs. Further, Basil II in extending his rule to Armenia had deprived himself of a valuable buffer state and had brought his frontier to the boundaries of the Turkish lands. The Turks of this age were not, as they later became, the effeminate, corrupt if sometimes highly-intelligent commanders of mercenary armies; they were themselves fighting men. Probably their inferior strategy and their incapacity to settle and rule a territory alone saved the Empire from annihilation after Manzikert in 1071 or after the capture of Antioch in 1084. It seemed to western observers, however, only a matter of time before the Eastern Empire finally collapsed, in which event the Holy Places might well be lost for ever. Now was the time, so it seemed to Urban II, to call Europe to arms.

The enthusiasm with which his appeal was heard was very largely religious. Pilgrimages to the Holy Land had for years been part of the religious life of western Europe, a life inspired by beliefs which were at once ardent, unequivocal and universally held, however far the morals of the age might fall short of Christian precepts. Moreover these beliefs included a belief in the value of outward observances and the efficacy for

¹ Finlay, *Greece under the Romans*.

salvation of a devotion to places and relics which was greater than that of any preceding or later age. It was an age of much personal extravagance of life and habit, but ordered in every relation by an elaborate ritual. Men would start a rebellion on a point of punctilio, allow their adversary when at their mercy to go free on a point of etiquette, fight each other one day and feast together the next. After the three-sided Normandy campaign of 1093, Robert of Normandy, William Rufus and their brother Henry Beauclerk spent Easter together in England in 1094. The spirit of the Tournament had not yet altogether dominated feudal wars but the tendency ran strongly that way. Men were ruled less by their passions than by fashion, by the desire for the extravagant gesture, for the appearances of valour and the symbols of honour. Each man saw himself the champion of outraged virtue, of family honour, of God himself. Personal obligation was not yet merged into a conventional organised loyalty to institutions, still less replaced by a mere observance of law. A man still lived his own life, and saved, if he could, his own soul. To such men the seizure of the Holy Places by the infidel was at once a reflection on their personal honour and a danger to their chances of salvation. The sense of personal obligation was to degenerate very soon from this high level of sensibility; knight service was to degenerate into the payment of scutage or shield money, and the spiritual privileges promised to the faithful crusader were to become obtainable for a monetary contribution to the war chest. But these things were in the future. When the Pope summoned the First Crusade it was still a hard age, with the virtues of its brittle quality. Men had not yet begun to look for the easy way out.

Yet history must note that if faith and feudal chivalry were the driving force, those economic and political motives which were to reduce the later Crusades to a much more sordid level were already present.

The Pope saw in the Crusade an act of reparation to Almighty God for the blasphemy of Turkish misrule in the Holy Places. But he saw an opportunity also for the unity of all Christian peoples under the leadership of the Church which must strengthen the papacy for the great struggle with the secular governments over investitures; in which it was even then engaged. Finally, assistance brought by the military force of western Europe to the hard-pressed Eastern Empire might well lead to the ending of the Great Schism between

the Church in the west and the Church at Constantinople which had begun in 1054 and which must be ended soon if the separation of the eastern Churches from the discipline of Rome was not to become permanent.

The feudal nobility of the west had also more reasons than one for taking the sword against the infidel. Antioch had fallen in 1084. In 1087 there had been a new invasion of Spain by the Mohammedans and the Christian armies had suffered a severe defeat at Solaca. It was sound strategy as well as good religion to attack the infidels at the source of their power.

From first to last the Crusades had the strong and strongly interested support of the Italian merchant ligarchies of Genoa, Pisa and Venice. The Crusaders, aiming at Latin control of the Holy Places, would, in the process of securing their aim, secure the Syrian coastline against infidel attack. Looking farther ahead, any movement designed to check the advance of Islam must bolster up the Eastern Empire and serve as a bulwark to Constantinople itself. There the Italian merchants had already some special privileges and were soon, as a result of the Crusades, to secure many more.

Finally, there was famine in western Europe, and a great incentive for all classes (and most of all for the minor nobility) to seek their fortune in foreign adventure.

It would be unhistorical to suppose that these considerations were uppermost in the minds of most of those who preached the First Crusade. The immediate material interests of the Mediterranean seamen and merchants were clear enough, and the crusading enthusiasm was in fact to be later diverted, one might say prostituted, to serving these interests. It remains true that to the mind of the eleventh century the religious and ecclesiastical wholly outweighed the material motives, if only for the reason that the distinction made by modern scepticism between religious obligation and practical advantage would have been meaningless in 1095. Vicious, passionate, extravagant as they might be, the saving of their souls was to each and all of them, even in the last resort to so depraved a man as William Rufus, a supremely practical necessity. To the papacy, moreover, the call to the First Crusade was the climax of the great reforming movement which had commanded the best minds of Europe for three generations. That movement had aimed not at the reform of one institution among many but at that of the whole Christian society through the assertion of the authority of one institution supreme over

RESULTS OF THE FIRST CRUSADE

all. That was the splendid vision first seen perhaps by Leo IX, carried nearer to fulfilment by Gregory VII, and which now, it seemed, was to be translated into material shape. The whole fabric of Christian society was to be welded into one dynamic force, controlled and led by the Vicar of Christ under the banner of the Cross. Thus was to be formed, out of the rude amalgam of classes and races which made up the Crusading armies, the *societas perfecta* of which so many had dreamed for so long.

As with so many later movements, some of them in our own time, which have tried to establish a universal society aiming at the highest good, the results of the Crusades, even from the first, were vastly different from those intended. The diversion of feudal energies strengthened the national monarchies of England and France, and the attempt at international co-operation surprisingly strengthened national prejudices and animosities. The formation of a Latin kingdom of Jerusalem within the boundaries of the Eastern Empire heightened the hostility between that Empire and the heirs to the Empire of the west and made the Great Schism permanent.¹

The immediate consequences were less unsatisfactory. Jerusalem was taken in 1099 and the Latin states of Edessa, Antioch, Tripoli and Jerusalem, which were to preserve western influence in the Near East for nearly two centuries, were established. The Eastern Empire was saved for the time being, and indeed experienced a brief but brilliant revival under the Comnenian dynasty (1081-1185). Jerusalem itself, and the other Holy Places, were left in Christian hands until the decisive battle of Hittin (1187) and Jerusalem was not finally lost until 1244.

Capture of
Jerusalem,
1099.

The early Crusades had no direct effect on England, and English historians have tended for that reason to ignore them, treating as merely incidental the fact that Robert of Normandy took the Cross and pledged his duchy to William II to raise the very high cost of his forces. Historically, however, the First Crusade was at least as significant a date for England as the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

But for the action taken in 1095, Constantinople might, and most probably would have fallen to the Turks in the twelfth

¹ 1094 is generally taken as the significant date in the dispute between the Churches of the east and the west, although neither side seems to have regarded the proceedings in this year as having culminated in a final rupture.

century. The closing of the eastern trade routes, which would certainly have followed its fall, might well have prompted the merchant adventurers of northern Italy, otherwise deprived of their livelihood, to the necessary pitch of invention which would have enabled them to navigate the Atlantic. In that case the Atlantic Age would have begun two centuries earlier, but the great prizes of the New World would certainly not in that case have fallen to Spain, Portugal or England, but to the merchant oligarchies of northern Italy. England was far too preoccupied with her continental entanglements and her need to defend her own frontiers to be able to turn her eyes to the west in the thirteenth century. The Crusades were not, however, without a positive and immediate influence on our history. Made possible by the vigour of the reformed papacy, they consolidated its influence, and in so doing cemented the unwritten alliance between militant feudalism and Rome which made the Europe of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries more nearly one society than ever before or since. It was this special relation of the papacy to feudal society that enabled the Pope to play so important a part in our political history in the reigns of Stephen, Henry II and John, and in so doing to create a counterpoise to the growing power of the monarchy and thus to stimulate constitutional development.

Ironically enough, however, the immediate consequence of the pledging of Normandy to William was that he felt strong enough, not only to make war in Scotland, in Wales and in France, but to renew his quarrel with Anselm. Anselm pressed the king for permission to hold a Church council; William retaliated by making extravagant claims on Anselm for an alleged default of feudal service. Anselm left the country and did not return in William's lifetime.

William's
quarrel
with
Anselm,
1097.

William now felt free to exploit his hold on the Norman duchy. His remaining years were spent in fighting the French king and the Count of Touraine. It is possible to see the outline of a grand strategy behind the wars of 1097-1100 and even to link up this strategy with the quarrel with Anselm, which enabled the king not only to seize the revenues of Canterbury but to leave unfilled the sees of Winchester and Salisbury. This great appropriation of Church revenues must have helped him to meet the heavy cost of these years of war but to what end these wars were planned, if planned they were, is unknown. Orderic speaks of the conquest of all France as the objective. William may have supported Edgar, another son of Malcolm

THE DEATH OF WILLIAM II

and Margaret, against Donaldbane of Scotland as part of this policy. In 1097 Edgar was allowed to recruit an army of English and Scottish mercenaries and succeeded in deposing Donaldbane once more.

In Wales William had been forced to direct action three times between 1093 and 1097 but his later policies were more fortunate; in south Wales Norman rule was extended and in the north, although Anglesey, Powys and Cardigan were lost, the new Earl of Shrewsbury, Robert of Bellême, was strong enough to hold the marches securely.

In November, 1097, William picked a quarrel with the ageing King Philip of France and was at once faced by a revolt in Maine. The war with King Philip went on in an inconclusive way until September, 1098, and the war with Helias de la Fleche, Count of Maine, lasted till William's death. Neither war brought victory to either side, but in 1100, William of Poitou, William's ally in the war of 1098, followed Duke Robert's example and mortgaged the duchy of Aquitaine and Poitou to William of England in order to raise money for the Crusades.

Out of this chance, if it was but chance and not the culmination of three years' diplomacy, contemporary historians such as William of Malmesbury created the picture of a grand plan for the conquest of all France. Certainly William II was on the point of leaving for Aquitaine when he was accidentally killed hunting in the New Forest on August 2nd, 1100. Such reputation as history has conferred upon him for provident diplomacy and military skill is due to this hypothetical campaign, which he never fought and, for aught we know, never planned. There is nothing to show that he had either the generalship, the character or the resources to have carried it through to a successful conclusion. His one important achievement was the annexation of Cumberland and Westmorland to the English Crown in 1092.

Death of
William
II,
August,
1100.

Chapter Fourteen

ENGLAND UNDER HENRY I AND STEPHEN

ON August 2nd, 1100, William II died unregretted. His brother Henry, who was hunting with William at the time of his death, rode immediately to Winchester and seized the royal treasure. On the 4th August, the handful of notables who were with him chose him as king and the following day he was crowned in Westminster Abbey by the Bishop of London. Anselm was in Rome and the Archbishop of York too old to perform the ceremony. Henry's claim to succeed was good enough law. He was the only surviving son of the Conqueror who had been born in the purple. Duke Robert, by the custom of the times, was not of royal birth, since his father had been merely Duke of Normandy when he was born. The more than feudal haste of Henry's coronation, however, suggests above all the fear with which all classes regarded a disputed succession. Every precedent was violated in order to prevent this possibility, and it was prevented. When Robert of Normandy, back from the Crusade, invaded England next year he made a treaty with his brother and renounced his claim in return for a pension of 3000 marks a year and the promise of help in his war with Maine.

Henry I himself had confirmed the people in their allegiance by three positive acts of statesmanship. Immediately on his coronation he issued a charter confirming his adherence to the laws of the Conqueror, undertaking *inter alia* not to sell or farm vacant benefices, to levy no exceptional aids or reliefs, and to make the fines imposed in the king's feudal court proportionate to the offence. At the same time, he threw Flambard into prison and recalled Anselm. Finally he married Edith, daughter of Malcolm of Scotland and Queen Margaret, and so descended from the old House of Cerdic. He thus gave to his reign from the outset the stamp of legality and the support of tradition. These measures were markedly popular, and Anselm, for all the grave matters still in dispute between the Church and the monarchy, actively supported Henry I against Duke Robert. Even more significant was the complete failure of the revolt of the three Montgomery brothers, Arnulf, Earl

Anselm recalled to England, 1100.

Montgomery revolt, 1102.

of Pembroke, the great Robert of Bellême, Earl of Shrewsbury, and Roger of Poitou, lord of Lancaster, in the following year, 1102. These forceful and powerful rebels found themselves completely without support from baronage, clergy or people, were compelled to surrender after a campaign of only some three months and forfeited the whole of their English lands.

The controversy with Anselm remained. He had refused to do homage to Henry I or to recognise the bishops who should be invested by Henry. He had changed his ground since his first appointment to Canterbury. He had since that date been present at the Lateran Council of 1099 and had returned to England with direct instructions from Rome to make no settlement on investitures without Roman consent. But he regarded the matter as *sub judice*, not as decided. As Primate he was the papal representative and he, but he alone at this stage, was committed to a definite attitude. He had made this clear to Henry, and Henry, as early as 1101, had written to the Pope asking him to give way. "Even if I should submit myself to this humiliation" (a concession of the papal claims), "which God forbid, my barons and the people of England would not permit it."

Paschal II, who had succeeded Urban II in 1099, was in no mood to compromise. The anti-pope Clement III set up by the Emperor Henry IV had died in 1100. The Emperor was ageing and the Empire was tired of the struggle. Much had happened since the death of Gregory VII. The First Crusade had carried the prestige of the papacy to a new height. The German princes and bishops were weary of the long schism which had begun with the excommunication of the Emperor Henry IV in 1081 and was not to end finally till 1122. The deep disquiet of the clergy and laity concerned nothing less important than the validity of the orders of those ordained by schismatic bishops and consequently the validity of the sacraments administered by the priests. In an age of faith doubts on this point must in the long run prove fatal to the secular power whose activities were responsible for them. Even had Paschal II been convinced that it was possible on theological grounds to compromise the doctrine inherited from his predecessors, the time had passed for compromise. Opinion in Germany and north Italy, the two centres of schism, was moving rapidly his way. In 1105, the heir of the Emperor, the future Emperor Henry V, was to make his submission to the Pope and coming events were casting a clear shadow. In 1101

Paschal
II, pope,
1099-1118.

Paschal had no intention of providing his almost defeated enemy with a new and powerful ally.

Henry I was as clearly aware of the trend of events as Paschal himself. Both were unwilling to force the issue. Both saw the need of temporising. In 1102 (no clear reply coming from Rome) Anselm was allowed by the king to hold a Council in England with a view to enforcing disciplinary reforms, particularly in regard to celibacy, which was now for the first time fully enforced, and the purchase of benefices. Several abbots, including three appointed by Henry I, were deprived of their office. In 1103, at Henry's suggestion, Anselm went to Rome to negotiate directly with the Pope. But still the time had not come for a settlement; the German schism was not yet quite at an end and Anselm retired to Lyons and wrote to the English clergy to continue to recognise all the existing bishops and abbots until they received direct instructions to the contrary from Rome.

Anselm
visits
Rome,
1103.

Meanwhile affairs in Normandy were reaching the inevitable crisis. Robert of Bellême was revenging himself for the loss of his vast English fiefs, for which he had paid William II so highly, by plundering the Norman fiefs of the loyal English baronage. Duke Robert was either unable or unwilling to control him. Following expeditions in the previous year, Henry I embarked in 1105 on a campaign for the conquest of Normandy; he landed at Barfleur and captured Bayeux. Caen surrendered without a struggle. Another army following in his footsteps 839 years later was to take the same road and open its victorious campaign with the same captures. After a short visit to England Henry returned and on September 28th, 1106, the decisive battle of Tinchebrai was fought and won. Duke Robert was captured and deposed and Normandy reunited to England forty years to the day after the Conqueror's landing at Pevensey.

Henry
invades
Nor-
mandy,
1105.

1106 saw also the death of the Emperor Henry IV. Meanwhile Lanfranc's pupil, Bishop Ivo of Chartres, was working on the reconciliation of the claims of the Pope and Henry I of England. The time was ripe for a settlement and in August, 1107, a Concordat was ratified.

Concordat
on In-
vestitures,
1107.

Agreement was reached with great difficulty and only after very protracted negotiations. Henry I had been forced into negotiation by the Pope's threat to excommunicate him and others implicated, but the agreement when reached was fair and therefore lasting. The Crown abandoned its right to invest

with ring and staff or to control elections, but election by the chapters had to be held in the presence of the king and the elected bishop or abbot had to do homage for his temporalities.

Broadly speaking, this was the settlement finally reached, although not until 1122, between Pope Calixtus II and the Emperor Henry V at Worms regarding appointment to German sees. It was a settlement which most definitely left the chief say in the appointment of bishops and abbots to the ruling sovereign in both cases, but that is not to say that it was a defeat for the papacy. The implicit claim of the Norman kings, the explicit claim of the Holy Roman Empire, had been that bishops should be appointed by the lay sovereign. This claim neither king nor Emperor established. Instead they were forced to negotiate with the papacy and to recognise objectively the supremacy of the papal jurisdiction in spiritual affairs. The real power of the papacy was much enhanced, but not to the extent that the king or the Emperor ceased to be the master in his own house on the matters affecting his secular authority. Had the papacy won a complete victory, had the bishops from the twelfth century onward been appointed solely by the chapters acting under papal direction, the nature of the feudal system would have made the alienation of Church lands inevitable or the monarchy impotent. In either event an apparent triumph would have led to real disaster. It would be very rash to suppose that the papacy was unaware of facts so obvious. As it was, the papacy emerged from the struggle as the recognised supreme and sovereign authority in all spiritual affairs throughout western Europe. In all fields where, as in the appointment of bishops, the spiritual and temporal interests overlapped, the kings and the Emperor were to treat with the Pope as co-equal sovereigns. That position, the importance of which was shown almost immediately, was to remain in England until the Reformation. Two years after the Concordat of 1107 Anselm died.

Calixtus
II, pope,
1119-1124.

Henry I was now at the height of his power. The rest of his reign was at home a period of consolidation and administrative progress. One law, providing that certain disputes to which men of different lords were parties must be held in the Shire or Hundred Court is especially characteristic. Henry's policy was not anti-feudal. The contemporary document entitled the *Leges Henrici* is not a record of Henry's legislation but a rough and inaccurate summary of what the law was in Henry I's day, set down by a clerk in his *Curia*. According to

Death of
Anselm,
1109.

the *Leges Henrici* every great noble possessed high justice and every freeholder sake and soke over his land. This was an exaggeration, but the exceptions were few and high justice in the possession of a bishop or a great noble meant that the local courts of the shire or the hundred were in danger of being superseded; from the manorial and higher feudal courts there was no appeal to the king's court. This state of affairs had been developing slowly since pre-Conquest days, and as far as the lord's men were concerned, Henry I recognised it and even, it seems, looked kindly at it. Certainly his charters show that he was prepared to concede the fullest jurisdiction to those whom he favoured. But his new law must have brought back a great deal at any rate to the shire courts and the importance of these courts was heightened by Henry I's frequent use of the practice of sending travelling justices to hear the pleas of the Crown in the local courts and of superseding the sheriff by a royal official who would hear not only the pleas of the Crown but the less important cases normally coming before the sheriff.

Roger of
Salisbury,
justician,
1107-1139.

The moving spirit behind this effort to spread the jurisdiction of the king's court throughout the land and to make it progressively less "exceptional" was Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, formerly chaplain to Henry I, made chancellor on Henry's accession, and then, when promoted to Salisbury in 1107, appointed *Justiciarius totius Angliae*. He also acted as the king's regent during his frequent absences abroad. Under Roger of Salisbury, who occupied this high position till his death in 1139, we can trace some important developments. He appears to have created, and certainly was credited with creating, the somewhat elaborate machinery of the exchequer as described for us in the famous *Dialogus de Scaccario* by Richard Fitz-Nigel, treasurer in succession to Henry II, Richard and John, from 1160 to 1198. The exchequer as we know it from the *Dialogus* had two branches, an upper and a lower exchequer. The lower was concerned with the payment and receipt of money. It was presided over by the treasurer and chamberlain (or their deputies) assisted by a staff of clerks. This branch of the exchequer certainly dates from the Conquest and some organisation of the kind must have existed before that time. The upper exchequer was a more formidable body and was to have a long history. It was a court of account and contained, as a matter of practice, many high officers of state besides the treasurer and chamberlain. Probably in Henry I's time it was more of

THE MACHINERY OF THE EXCHEQUER

an official body and less clearly the king's Court, the *Curia Regis* for matters of finance, but by the end of Henry II's reign that is what it had become. As such it was the apex of the administrative system. Before it, all who had to pay anything to the crown could be summoned to attend, as the sheriffs in fact were, twice a year, at Easter and Michaelmas, and by the exchequer, acting as the *Curia Regis*, writs were issued and pleas heard in regard to a great number of matters concerned directly or indirectly with the revenues or dues of the Crown.¹

The scrutiny conducted by the upper exchequer was minute. "Nearly every item was checked by written records. The sheriff was allowed credit for expenses which he had incurred by written order and for the income of those royal manors once making part of his farm which the king had given away. He was charged with the amount of this farm, with the ameracements in king's pleas which were not included in his farm but noted in the records of the justices, with the income of escheats and of lands falling to the king not included in the farm, and with debts which he had been directed to collect, including sums paid to the king by individuals for favours or exemptions. He also accounted for reliefs which had fallen due within the year, and for lands in wardship. From the accounts thus rendered the general record for the year was put into permanent form, making the series which we call the Pipe Rolls. The earliest of these which has come down to us is for the year 1130, but the system had been in operation for some years at that date. We have no Pipe Rolls for Stephen's reign and the continuous series begins with the second year of King Henry II."²

The revenue system itself was also changed in some important particulars. The sheriffs' responsibility was to collect within the shire all that was due to the Crown, but some part of the sheriffs' payments to the exchequer were still paid, at the beginning of the reign, in kind, in agricultural produce, cattle, horses or hounds. These customary dues of the Crown's tenants were now, by order of Roger of Salisbury, farmed to the sheriff in return for an addition to his own annual fixed farm. Taken by itself this small reform may seem unimportant. But we have also in this reign the first regular

¹ This capacity to combine administrative and legal business was retained by the exchequer for a hundred years and more, but led ultimately to a further process of differentiation when the financial exchequer became separated from the exchequer of pleas, which became one of the common law courts.

² G. B. Adams, *Constitutional History of England* (Cape, 1941).

payments of scutage. As a complement to this partial transition to a money economy, we find repeated efforts to preserve the value of the currency. Money paid in by the sheriffs was assayed and credit was only given for the real silver content of the coins. The moneyers were repeatedly inspected and on one occasion ninety of them were convicted and cruelly punished for debasing the currency.

We have here the first indication of an economic problem which was never wholly resolved until the seventeenth century. Service in kind, and still more payments in kind, were inappropriate to the needs of an organised state where sub-division of labour had already begun and men generally expected to work at the same task all the year round, for fixed wages. Knights rendering forty days' service were often less useful than the whole-time professional soldiers who could be hired for money, and the king's court and the great officers of state could no longer, by the twelfth century, be expected to live on requisitions from the neighbourhood. They expected, and during Henry I's reign were granted, fixed money rates of daily pay. The great court officials got 5s. a day (about £4500 a year in present day currency), a figure more than half-way between the salary to-day of a permanent head of a State department and that of a Cabinet Minister. The lowest paid of the bakers, grooms and waiters got 1½d. a day, the equivalent, perhaps, of £2 5s. a week, but most of the court servants got more and they all got some maintenance. The king's archers or personal escort got 5d. a day, about £7 a week in present day values. These payments, designed to remedy the grievances aroused by an army of courtiers billeting themselves on the countryside wherever the court might be, imposed a burden on the Crown which the customary revenues could not support.

There is evidence that Henry I increased the sheriffs' farms substantially, either directly or by exacting from the sheriff an annual payment for the privilege of exercising his lucrative office. There is clear evidence that the sheriffs were making more than they should have made out of the old farms. The Pipe Roll of Henry I shows the citizens of Lincoln and of London bidding for the right to pay direct to the Crown, the sum offered in the former case being 200 marks of silver and four of gold,¹ but there is reason to think that what the Crown received from the citizens of Lincoln after they had bought

¹ Cf. J. Tait—*The Mediaeval English Borough*—pages 156-157.

this privilege was substantially more than the old sheriffs' farm. Both parties to the transaction were thus satisfied. It must be observed, however, that the main evil of the system from the Crown's point of view, the "farming" system, was retained. All that happened at Lincoln was that the burgesses farmed the revenue themselves. Even less constructive was the expedient adopted by Henry I later in his reign in regard to London and Middlesex. Here the sheriff's feorm had been increased from £300 under the Conqueror to something over £500, but in his charter to London issued at some date after 1130 the citizens were given the right to appoint their own sheriff, i.e. to farm the revenues themselves, and the feorm was reduced to £300. It is evident that they must have paid a large lump sum for this privilege. In other words, the Crown was taking its revenues in advance.

It is possible that Henry I or his treasurer were fully alive to the unsatisfactory working of the system, for in 1129 Henry superseded the sheriffs in 12 shires by special commissioners who collected and paid over the whole of the Crown revenues. This proved, however, to be only an emergency measure. We must assume therefore that the reason for the appointment of the commissioners was chiefly to ascertain for how much these shires could reasonably be farmed. The practice of separating the borough farm from that of the county, as in Lincolnshire, was to be extended later but there was no permanent change in the farming system. We must look to politics, not to finance, for the explanation. The trouble was that custom in the Middle Ages had an almost mystical value in the eyes of all. In an age such as our own, which prides itself above all on its readiness to change, and holds that nothing which was good enough for yesterday is good enough for to-day, it is hard to appreciate this. Yet it is necessary to make the attempt. Every early Norman king felt it obligatory to say that he would observe the old customs and laws, either of the Conqueror or of the Confessor. Naturally no king was able to do this completely but the popular feeling in the matter made it necessary for him to preserve the appearance of doing only that which was customary. This lent a certain stability to the political situation in the Anglo-Norman state but it had disastrous repercussions on its finances. Not only did the farms tend to become fixed, or, where they were increased, to revert to the old figure, but new commutations of service such as scutage tended to become fixed. The result was that

every Anglo-Norman king was continuously forced into expedients which have the appearance to us of sharp practice, and were certainly so regarded by their contemporaries. Henry I was forced to levy a yearly "geld" and in addition an aid of 35 pennies a hide on the marriage of his daughter Matilda to Geoffrey of Anjou. The aid was normal feudal custom but the amount was considered harsh. Henry II, we shall find, was continually being forced to supplement his scutages by what were euphemistically called gifts. In 1159, for instance, the scutage of two marks on the Church's knights' fees produced 1101 marks and the "gifts" from the same fees produced 4442½ marks.

Every attempt by the government either to raise the basis of assessment or to increase the customary payments was regarded, in an age when custom was almost sacrosanct, as immoral and unconstitutional. Yet the Crown, in an age of rising prices, needed and was entitled to an increasing revenue.

Henry I vastly improved the administrative system and enriched the exchequer in the process, but he did nothing and probably could have done nothing, to remove the fundamental trouble. He relied greatly, and was attacked for doing so, on new men, who had to be rewarded with grants of land. Roger of Salisbury and his relations and Ralph Bassett were prominent in his *Curia* and excited, as we know from the events of the next reign, a great deal of baronial jealousy. Yet their work endured, and on the whole was welcomed. We are probably right in regarding Roger of Salisbury as the first great administrator in the modern sense in our political history.

Henry I himself was occupied during most of his reign in purely political problems, his chief antagonist being the king of France abroad and the Pope at home. Later, his main objective was to secure the succession to his family.

In foreign politics his cardinal aim was always to unite Anjou with Normandy, and thus neutralise the rising power of the French monarchy. Robert of Normandy had left a son, William le Clito, whom Henry should have taken into custody when he imprisoned Robert. Instead, he had given him into the care of the Count of Arques, who had married Duke Robert's illegitimate daughter. In 1111 the Count of Arques brought le Clito to the court of Louis VI of France. The threat brought Henry into action and there were two years of desultory fighting, but in 1113 Henry made an alliance with Anjou, whose interests were as directly threatened as Henry's

Alliance
with
Anjou,
1113.

by a possible reunion of the kingdom of France and the Duchy of Normandy. Henry betrothed his son William to the daughter of Fulk V of Anjou and recognised Fulk's claim to inherit Maine. Faced with this formidable alliance, Louis VI signed the treaty of Gisors, which left Henry in unchallenged possession of Normandy and recognised him as overlord of Maine, Brittany and Bellême. This treaty was the diplomatic sequel to Tinchebrai and the two events renewed and fortified the foundations of England's continental empire.

Louis VI was slow to admit defeat, but it is not as the saviour of France from partition but as the author of a famous phrase that he has gone down to history: "*Si jeunesse savait; si vieillesse pouvait.*" Louis VI lacked the wisdom to maintain a fixed policy but his energy kept him constantly on the move. In 1116 he fancied his chances of a *revanche*. Henry I was supporting an attempt by Theobald IV of Blois to increase his territory at the expense of the French king. This was displeasing to Anjou, so Louis and the Count of Anjou invaded Normandy, with the help of the Count of Flanders, and another desultory war began. In 1119 Henry succeeded once more in dividing Anjou from France. His son William was married to Fulk's daughter and a few weeks later the French king was decisively beaten at Brémule. Louis, after some futile negotiations and an attempt to get the Pope's support for le Clito's claim to Normandy, recognised William as the heir to the duchy. Henry's triumph seemed complete when in 1120 William was drowned in the Channel.

Contemporary chroniclers made much of the tragedy and for once the popular identification of royal with national misfortunes was fully justified. Henry's sorrow was to be the common sorrow of all in the next reign, when the disputed succession plunged the country into turmoil. Shrewd Norman as he was, Henry realised the situation and did his best to remedy it. He was by this time a widower and at once he married Adelaide of Maine, hoping for an heir. His surviving legitimate child was his daughter Matilda, who was married to the Emperor Henry V and was thus, so long as the Emperor lived, debarred from the succession. The elaborately planned design of an Anglo-Norman kingdom was wrecked unless a successor acceptable to England, Normandy and Anjou could be found.

In his hour of misfortune, and perhaps it was no coincidence, Henry found himself once more at issue with the Pope.

In 1115 Paschal II had complained fruitlessly that legates and papal letters were not allowed free entrance into England and that appeals to Rome were not allowed. In 1120 English bishops were conditionally allowed to attend the Council of Rheims, presided over by Pope Calixtus II, but in 1120 Archbishop Thurstan of York was banished by Henry for appealing to Rome against the subordination of his see to that of Canterbury and in the following year the Pope threatened an interdict. Thurstan was recalled and the battle over appeals to Rome was for the time lost by the English Crown. A papal judgment in favour of the Bishop of Llandaff against the Bishop of St. David's was actually enforced by Henry under pressure from Rome. In the matter of legates also Henry had to give way. In 1125 Cardinal John of Crema was not only allowed to enter the country but to preside over a Church council, and in 1126 the Archbishop of Canterbury (William of Corbeil) was given a legatine commission. This was done partly to compensate Canterbury for the adverse decision, reached in 1123, on the claim to the primacy. What William of Canterbury lost in 1123 as archbishop he regained in 1126 as legate. Nevertheless, this was a politically dangerous solution of an old problem. The Archbishop of Canterbury presiding over a Church council with wide legislative and judicial powers was no anomaly in a country where all without question accepted the Roman discipline and faith, but when he was presiding not as the head of the Church in England, who had done homage to the Crown for his temporalities, but as the representative of another sovereign power, the situation was difficult and might become dangerous. The difficulty was to be intensified in the next reign when a bishop of Winchester was appointed legate and the country had to put up not only with two rival sovereigns but with rival authorities within the church itself. The difficulties arising out of the papal jurisdiction were bound in any case to become more formidable as the canon law came to be more clearly defined. Ecclesiastical jurisdiction was already ceasing, as royal justice was ceasing under Henry I, to be "extraordinary" justice and was coming to be applied under a more or less rigid code of written law, which was bound sooner or later to conflict with the civil law.

Granted the acceptance of the papacy as the supreme spiritual authority in the Christian world, the Norman kings were bound in the end to allow its representatives entry and jurisdiction, but it would need as strong a king as William I

or as astute a king as Henry I to prevent a quarrel so long as the spheres of the civil and the canon law remained undefined. In 1127 a Church council demanded royal sanction for a canon reducing to slavery the wives of priests who refused to desert their husbands. Henry gave his sanction and his justices allowed it to become a dead letter. But the quarrel was only deferred.

Henry I was particularly unwilling to quarrel with the Papacy in 1126. In 1125 his son-in-law, the Emperor Henry V, had died. He himself had no children by his second wife and the succession was settled on his daughter, the Empress Matilda, at a Council held on Christmas Day, 1126. The oath of allegiance was taken on New Year's Day, 1127, by all the barons including King David of Scotland (who swore as an English earl) and Stephen, Count of Mortain and Boulogne, the Conqueror's grandson. This was only the first step in Henry's new policy. In 1127 Matilda was betrothed to Geoffrey of Anjou, son and heir of Fulk, then only fourteen years of age.

Honorius
II, pope,
1124-1130.

This was high politics, but the risks were proportionate to the stakes. The alliance was unpopular in Normandy. It meant that the Duchy would pass to the Angevin house. It was not particularly popular in England, for it meant the rule of a queen and the risks of anarchy. No woman had yet ruled England or Normandy. Moreover, most of the great barons held Norman fiefs and shared the traditional Norman distrust of Anjou. William le Clito was still alive and in January, 1127, he had married the French queen's half-sister. Anything like a quarrel with Rome might easily have led to papal support for le Clito's claim to Normandy, possibly even to the English Crown. We must read Henry's appeasement of the papal party in England against the background of his continental policy. Here was his real interest. He intended to found a continental empire powerful enough to master, in fact if not in name, the French monarchy. And now luck came once more to the help of Norman statecraft. Just as the assassination of Cnut at Odensee had solved the last crisis of the Conqueror's life, so the death of le Clito from a wound received at the siege of Alost in July, 1128, set the seal on Henry I's diplomacy. The next year, 1129, the marriage of Matilda to Geoffrey, now Count of Anjou, was celebrated, Matilda being 27 and Geoffrey 17. In 1133 an heir was born; he was the future Henry II. But the game was no more than set and all was yet to play for

Marriage
of
Matilda
to
Geoffrey
of Anjou,
1129.

when, on December 1st, 1135, the Lion of Justice died at Lyons-la-Forêt, having reigned a little over 35 years.

Death of
Henry I,
1135.

By the end of Henry's reign, and thanks in great part to his own concentration and his judicious choice of governing instruments, administrative efficiency had far outrun constitutional development. To this important historical fact, rather than to fear of baronial anarchy or to vulgar personal rivalries, was due the widespread anxiety aroused by Henry's death. The Lion was dead and it was implicit in the law of the period that his justice died with him. Without a king there could be no King's Peace. A contemporary Chronicle tells us by way of comment on this convention of the constitution that within a few days of Henry's death the royal forests were denuded of deer.

There were three claimants to the throne. Matilda, the Conqueror's granddaughter, descended through the male line, and Theobald and Stephen of Blois, the Conqueror's grandsons, descended through the female line. Theobald held no English fiefs, and Stephen, with the rest of the English barons, had recognised the ex-Empress Matilda as heir to the throne. But when the time came Matilda made no move to England. The Norman baronage elected Theobald, but Stephen, with the help of his brother Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, had secured the support of William of Corbeil, Archbishop of Canterbury and standing Papal Legate,¹ Roger of Salisbury the justiciar and the London burgesses. By them and by a handful of barons Stephen was chosen king. He was crowned at Westminster on December 22nd. His brother at once resigned his claim and negotiated a six months' truce on Stephen's behalf with Geoffrey of Anjou.

Innocent
II, pope,
1130-1143.

Stephen's claim was weak and so was the case of the prelates and barons who supported him. One and all, including Stephen himself, had violated their oaths. Matilda at once appealed to Rome and Stephen hastened to send representatives; Roger, Bishop of Chester, Arnulf of Sées, later Bishop of Lisieux, and Loyal, a chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The case was heard by Pope Innocent II, who convened a special Council for the purpose and presided over it. Matilda's case was opened by the Bishop of Angers, who charged Stephen with perjury

¹ On William of Corbeil's death in the next year (1136) no standing legate was appointed to succeed him, but Cardinal Alberic was sent as legate from Rome. Alberic sanctioned the appointment of Theobald and consecrated him archbishop. Alberic remained till 1139, when Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, was appointed standing legate.

and usurpation. The defence appears to have been many-sided; that the oath was extorted by force, that the oath was to Matilda as heir but that she was not in fact the true heir, and that Henry I on his deathbed had nominated Stephen as his heir. There was no force in any of the three contentions; each was destructive of the other two. The Pope, after hearing Stephen's defence, adjourned the Council and refused to pronounce any sentence.

He nevertheless accorded to Stephen *de facto* recognition and addressed a letter to him "confirming him in all honours vindicated to his predecessor by the Holy See." Stephen was at pains to style himself in an early charter "Dei gratia assensu cleri et populi in regem englorum electus . . . et ab Innocentia Sanctae Romanae sedis Pontifice confirmatus."

This formula has two points of significance. Firstly, Stephen does not recall his ancestry as Henry I had done in his charter. Secondly, he felt it necessary to rest his claim in part on his recognition by the Pope. It is noteworthy that Matilda in her charters usually signed herself "regis Henrici filia." Heredity was in fact gradually getting the better of the fiction of "election" in the constitutional theory of the times, and Stephen throughout his reign was for that reason to a substantial extent the prisoner of the Church. Without the Church's tacit support, representing as it did that of the Pope, he could never have even begun to reign. The only other support he enjoyed was that of the French monarchy, who wished at all costs to prevent the union of Anjou and Normandy, and that of the people of London, who wanted continuity of administration above everything. Stephen had, in the eyes of the men of God as well as in those of London and Scotland, one over-riding advantage. He had sworn fealty to Matilda; he was a perjured man: and perjured men must pay for the favours they expect. As the price of his coronation Stephen conceded free elections to bishoprics and abbeys and free legislative rights to Church synods. To London he conceded rights which soon led to a Commune on the continental pattern. To the king of Scotland for his son he conceded upper Westmorland and Cumberland and his father's earldom of Doncaster, with vague promises of a Northumbrian earldom. A true knight of chivalry, Stephen readily sacrificed the reality for the glittering appearance of majesty.

He remained strikingly content with his choice.

Across the water, Geoffrey of Anjou was intermittently

ambitious and raided Lisieux, but he was no Norman and was ill at ease with his imperious and masterful wife, ten years his senior. The true challenger was Matilda's half-brother, Robert of Gloucester, the ablest of Henry I's sixteen illegitimate children. For twelve years, until his death in 1147, this cool and calculating grandson of the Conqueror kept England divided and Stephen powerless to consolidate his dynasty. Brave, chivalrous and personally popular, Stephen was a pawn in the English struggle between the Church and the State, which came to a head in the reign of Henry II, and in the French struggle between Norman and Angevin for the control of the duchy of Normandy, which continued until 1204.

Stephen,
king,
1135.

Stephen had barely ascended the throne when he heard, in January, 1136, that the king of Scotland had advanced into England. He assembled an army and went to meet him and it was on this occasion that he first showed the weakness of his position by his precipitate concessions. He returned to hold his first Easter Council at Westminster. It was a splendid occasion, perhaps the greatest of Stephen's reign. Of the charters issued on this occasion, one was attested by 36 bishops and barons, the others by no less than 55. The accumulated treasure of Henry I was being spent lavishly. The splendours of the Conqueror's courts were being revived.

But there was something lacking. Robert of Gloucester did not attend. The Council was adjourned to Oxford where in April, 1136, Stephen concluded with this formidable man what was nothing less derogatory than a treaty such as he had already concluded with the Londoners, with Miles of Gloucester and with the hierarchy. The significant part of this arrangement is that it was an abnormal relationship, not a relationship of subject to sovereign. It was a relationship which could be broken almost at will. Robert of Gloucester was playing for time. The Angevin aim was to keep Stephen quiet until the time came when their hold on Normandy was secure and they could proceed to attempt the throne of England. The aim of the English hierarchy was to sell their support as dearly as they could. The motives in each case were excellent; the methods were the methods of the age.

Only in 1137 was Stephen able to visit Normandy and when there he antagonised the Normans by his reliance on Flemish mercenaries and by the power and authority which he gave to their commander, his friend William of Ypres. The Norman baronage came to realise that they had very little more to

expect from the House of Blois than from the House of Anjou. When Stephen left Normandy, after an inconclusive campaign against Geoffrey of Anjou, he had secured recognition by the French king, but the ducal administration retained authority only in eastern Normandy; the rest was under the direct control of Matilda or in the hands of disaffected barons, among whom was Richard of Gloucester, another illegitimate son of Henry I, who controlled the Bessin, William of Warenne and Hugh of Tournay.

The next year, 1138, saw the first serious revolt against Stephen. In February King David of Scotland crossed the border, though not in force, for the third raid of the reign, and there was a widespread revolt of barons in the west and south. Geoffrey Talbot of Hereford was the nominal leader, but Robert of Gloucester sent Stephen a formal defiance when Stephen was besieging Talbot's castle at Hereford, and Dover, Canterbury, Bristol, Exeter, Dorchester, Wareham, Corfe, Castlebury, Dunster, Ludlow and Shrewsbury were held for the Angevins against the king.

This was in the spring. In August the king of Scotland invaded Northumbria with a large army, and for a moment it looked as though Stephen's position were hopeless. The aged Thurstan, Archbishop of York, momentarily saved the day for Stephen. He rallied considerable local forces and the Scots were defeated near Northallerton on August 22nd. The battle is known as the Battle of the Standard because the English set up in the centre of their line the banners of the patron saints of York, Beverley and Ripon, the archbishop's three minster churches hung from a mast on a car and surmounted by the Host in a silver pyx. The political consequences of the battle were inconclusive. The Scots retreated to Carlisle and remained allied to Matilda and yet in possession of the territory ceded to them by Stephen at the beginning of his reign. Militarily, the battle allowed Stephen a little time, and time, for Stephen, was opportunity for folly.

Battle
of the
Standard,
August,
1138.

In 1139, although half the rebels in the south and west were still in arms against him, he decided to challenge the power of the bishops of Salisbury, Lincoln and Ely. The Bishop of Salisbury was Roger, the chief justiciar (1107-39); the Bishop of Lincoln was Roger's nephew Alexander, and the Bishop of Ely, who was also treasurer, was Roger's nephew Nigel, father of Richard, the author of the *Dialogus*. The chancellor, Roger le Poer, was the son of the Bishop of Salisbury. Whether there

was in fact a conspiracy by the members of this powerful family who undoubtedly controlled the machinery of government, or whether Stephen was forced into action against them by the jealousy of the lay baronage, and notably of the formidable house of Beaumont, we do not know. Certainly he overplayed his hand. In 1138 Stephen's nominee, Theobald of Bec, had been made Archbishop of Canterbury and early in the following year Stephen's brother Henry, Bishop of Winchester, had been made Papal Legate. Archbishop Thurstan of York had given notable proof of his loyalty. Stephen clearly believed that he had enough support to make strong measures against the three bishops safe. By force, sieges and threats he had got his way with the conspirators, if such they were, and by May, 1139, the bishops were forced to surrender their castles; the Bishop of Lincoln, who had openly defied the king, was deprived of his temporalities. When Roger of Salisbury died a little later, his plate and jewels were confiscated. But Stephen had been summoned on August 29th by his brother the legate to a legatine council at Winchester to answer for his forceful invasion of the rights of the bishops who, if guilty at all, should have been brought, it was claimed, before an ecclesiastical tribunal. Stephen was present but sat apart: his representatives argued the familiar case—he had proceeded against the bishops in their capacity as the holders of fiefs, not in their capacity as bishops. If judgment were pronounced against him he would appeal to Rome, and those who went to Rome without license would find it easier to go than to return.

Within a month of Stephen's bold but unwise defiance of his chief supporters, Matilda and Robert of Gloucester landed in England. What has been miscalled the Anarchy began.

Matilda and Robert, now supported by Miles, sheriff of Gloucestershire, made their headquarters at Gloucester, thanks to a safe conduct furnished by Stephen for his rival. Hereford was the northern outpost of their influence, but in the struggle now beginning, Westmorland and Cumberland played no part, and the great earldom of Chester, with what is now Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland, relapsed into semi-independence. The king's writ ran generally in the eastern half of the country south of the Humber. The Angevins, broadly speaking, held the west. Wallingford gave them control of the upper Thames. Stephen attempted to consolidate his hold on the east by making three new earldoms, Norfolk, Lincoln and Essex, which he conferred on Hugh Bigod, William of Roumare

and Geoffrey of Mandeville. The treachery of the Earl of Chester and the new Earl of Lincoln at the end of 1140 led to the siege of Lincoln and the defeat and capture of Stephen by Robert of Gloucester on February 2nd, 1141. The victory of the disinherited, the chroniclers call it. Immediately, Stephen's government collapsed.

Capture of
Stephen,
February,
1141.

Decisive as was the treachery of the Earl of Lincoln, it is the part played by Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex by Stephen's creation, that is most symptomatic. The charter creating this earldom is the only charter of the kind issued by Stephen of which the original survives. It is undated, but it is now generally agreed that it antedates the more generous charter issued to Geoffrey by the empress, and that it was issued in 1140. It creates him earl and preserves the dignity to his heirs *hereditaris jure*. Otherwise it is void of favours or conditions or grants. We know of four successive charters to Geoffrey: two from the king, of which this is the first; and two from the empress. Each of the other charters contains more lavish grants than the last. It is clear that the sword and influence of this formidable and reckless man were openly for sale, but it is equally clear that both claimants to the throne thought it necessary to buy him. We must conclude that the balance of forces was remarkably even. In the course of his brief and turbulent life—he died in 1144, a rebel against all claimants—Geoffrey acquired vast wealth, which was escheated on his death, but his second son regained his title and some of his estates from Henry II.

After the fall of Lincoln, only Kent held out against Matilda, who was recognised as queen by the clergy at Winchester on April 7. In June Matilda entered London but was soon forced to withdraw without being crowned but not before she had granted a charter to Geoffrey de Mandeville confirming his earldom, giving him lands to the value of £100 yearly, the earl's "third penny" of the pleas of the county and the offices of sheriff and justiciar of Essex. He was also granted twenty additional knights. The intention in part was to add to the *servitium debitum*, so that the Crown could get the advantage of a larger contingent from Geoffrey's lands, but there must have been some compensating advantage to Geoffrey which is not clear. An interesting feature of the charter is the permission given to deduct from the sheriff's farm the value of the Essex estates granted to him.

Despite the lavishness of this charter, there is no evidence

that Geoffrey did any notable service to the empress's cause. William of Ypres now held London for Stephen and the Londoners, always hostile to Matilda, were happy once more. In September Matilda was driven westwards from Winchester to Gloucester and in the pursuit Robert of Gloucester was captured. Robert was exchanged for Stephen and on December 7th the clergy guided by the legate withdrew their recognition of Matilda. On Christmas Day it seems that Stephen was re-crowned at Canterbury by Archbishop Theobald. Stephen's position was nevertheless not secure. The empress and her party were reassembled at Bristol. All depended on the great earls of the east and north, who had played Stephen false once and would do so again if the opportunity served. His strategy was clear. He must win back Geoffrey de Mandeville, who with his relations, the Veres and the Clares, would hold the eastern counties. Then Stephen could go north and make terms with Lincoln. Not until then could he safely move against Matilda.

Stephen
re-
crowned,
1141.

We have Stephen's second charter to Geoffrey, confirming and improving on the empress's charter. He is appointed sheriff of London, Middlesex, Essex and Hertfordshire. He is to pay in respect of London and Middlesex only £300 as in the Conqueror's time, and in respect of Essex and Hertfordshire £360 as in the Conqueror's time instead of £532 as under Henry I. He is given land to the value of £500 yearly and more land to the value of £100 yearly for his son Ernulf.

This astonishing charter was issued at Canterbury immediately after the second coronation. It is reasonable to infer that the arrangements were not made as an afterthought. The clergy must have needed assurances that Stephen could maintain his position before they proceeded to the second coronation. Geoffrey of Mandeville held the key. Unless he could be suborned, Stephen was pinned in the south and the north was left free to mobilise against him. As it was, immediately after the grant to Geoffrey the king moved to York, stopping on the way at Stamford to make terms with Earl William of Lincoln and Earl Ranulf of Chester. He kept his Easter court at York and then prepared to move south against the empress. Meanwhile Geoffrey and the Earl of Pembroke moved to Ely to occupy and hold these lands for Stephen. Here Stephen over-reached himself, for Nigel, Bishop of Ely, had sent an envoy to Rome when he had been deprived of his lands earlier in the year, and the envoy now returned with a message from

the Pope demanding Nigel's instant reinstatement. Stephen dared not refuse, and Geoffrey had to withdraw.

At this point Stephen was taken ill and had to give up his march south and disband his forces. Geoffrey at once went to the empress, who had moved to Oxford, and entered into negotiations with her. The story draws to its inevitable end. Matilda promised him everything he had obtained from Stephen and much land in addition, both in England and Normandy. But she was now a suppliant, not a sovereign. The document setting out the arrangement is a treaty and the empress was forced to give sureties for its execution and also to confer an earldom on Aubrey de Vere. Both charters were to be confirmed by her husband and her son.

The object of this final act of treachery is, from Geoffrey's point of view, very obscure. He had everything to lose and very little more to gain. We must infer that he either expected Geoffrey of Anjou to land in such strength that the empress would be bound to regain the throne, or, as is far more probable, knew that Stephen would not for long tolerate his enjoyment of such vast possessions. The plan, assuming the arrival of reinforcements from Normandy, was sound enough. A rising in the eastern counties combined with an attack up the Thames valley on London would cut Stephen off from his capital. Nothing of the kind, however, was to happen. Geoffrey of Anjou did not land and in June, 1142, Stephen recovered his health, sacked Wareham and Cirencester and besieged the empress in Oxford. The Duke of Gloucester and Prince Henry came to her rescue and regained Wareham and Cirencester, but Oxford was lost in December and the empress's forces regrouped themselves at Wallingford in no mood for further fighting.

For some time there were no further moves of importance on either side, but after Michaelmas, 1143, at St. Alban's, Stephen felt strong enough to arraign Geoffrey of Mandeville before the Council and had him arrested. But soon afterwards he foolishly liberated him whereupon Geoffrey at once raised a revolt in Cambridgeshire, assisted by Hugh Bigod in East Anglia. The Bishop of Ely, unhappy as to Stephen's intentions, had gone to Rome in person and Geoffrey de Mandeville appears to have occupied Ely, seized the abbey of Ramsey and made himself master of the district. Most of the stories of the "anarchy" derive not from the legalised warfare between the king and the empress but from the atrocious conduct of

Celestine
II, pope,
1143-4.

Lucius II, pope, 1144-5. Geoffrey de Mandeville and his paid followers when he was in rebellion in the isle of Ely against both claimants alike. Geoffrey's conduct is, at this distance of time, inexplicable. Even if his break with Stephen was inevitable owing to the jealousy of the Beaumonts and others, he would have been welcomed by the empress. The key to the riddle is missing. His story ends in a nightmare twilight of robbery, murder and sacrilege. The town of Cambridge and the rich abbey of St. Ives were sacked, plundered and fired. According to the somewhat hysterical local chronicles every man of property in the neighbourhood was in turn captured, tortured and held to ransom. Not a plough remained on the land, the fields were untilled. The peasants and the monks starved. Every castle was a gangster stronghold; corpses lay unburied by the roadside. Such things, if the stories be true, and there is some evidence for them, were not to be seen again in England.

Geoffrey de Mandeville, d. 1144. Stephen had found it hopeless to rout out de Mandeville from his stronghold, but he had posted men at all the exits from the fenlands and it was in an attack on one of these posts, at Barwell, that Geoffrey met his end, in August or September, 1144. Mortally wounded, he was carried to Mildenhall in Suffolk, where he died. Stephen's troubled reign knew now an interval of peace.

The Angevin mills were grinding slowly, none the less, and by the spring of 1145 Arques was the only castle left to Stephen's adherents in Normandy. Arques surrendered to Geoffrey of Anjou in the summer and the Anglo-Norman monarchy was at an end. Stephen's position in England, however, remained safe for the time. Matilda and her young son Henry maintained their hold only in Dorset and Wiltshire and in 1147 Robert of Gloucester died. Matilda and Henry left for Normandy early in 1148 and Stephen had perhaps only to make a determined attack on Wallingford (now again in Angevin hands), Gloucester, Bristol and Worcester, to make himself master of the whole country. Stephen preferred to quarrel with the Church. The aged Thurstan retired and died in 1140 and the king had nominated William Fitzherbert Archbishop of York in his place, and had secured his election. Theobald refused to consecrate him. The Cistercian reforms, under the inspiration of Bernard of Clairvaux, the most powerful figure in Europe, had long since spread to England and the reformers' candidate for the throne of York was Henry Murdac, Abbot of Fountains. Stephen's conduct in this matter

justifies fully Walter Map's description of him as "vir armorum industria praclarus, ad cetera fere ydiota."¹ 1147 was the year of the Second Crusade, the plans for which had been begun two years earlier. England had been stirred to great enthusiasm. A big fleet left England to help in the siege of Lisbon, held against Alphonso I of Portugal by the Moors. No worse moment since the conquest could have been found for a quarrel between the king and Canterbury. Stephen, nevertheless, persisted and unsuccessfully forbade the archbishop to attend the Council of Rheims summoned by Pope Eugenius III in 1148. The Pope cancelled Fitzherbert's election and appointed the Abbot of Fountains. Theobald, who had attended in defiance of Stephen's orders, was exiled but was recalled later in the year in response to popular clamour, or, more probably, because of the interdict which had been imposed. But the new Archbishop of York was not recognized by the king. Shortly afterwards, Theobald was made Papal Legate.²

Second
Crusade,
1147.

The next year Henry of Anjou returned and went north to Carlisle to meet the earl of Chester and the King of Scotland. Stephen outbid Prince Henry for the Earl of Chester's support and Henry was unable to raise an army. He returned to Normandy, which he was now ruling as duke, and for two more years there was peace. Stephen failed to use what was his last chance to consolidate his power and end his quarrel with the Church.

In 1151 Geoffrey of Anjou died and his son Henry, now lord of Maine and Anjou and already invested with Normandy, married Eleanor, the heiress of Aquitaine and in her right became Count of Poitou and overlord of all the fiefs from Limoges to the Pyrenees. The next year (1153) Henry landed with 140 knights and 3000 foot soldiers. He captured Malmesbury and relieved Wallingford and the Earl of Chester came over to his side.

Henry of
Anjou
marries
Eleanor of
Aquitaine,
1152.

Stephen was beaten even before Henry landed. He had tried long after the eleventh hour to patch up his quarrel with the Church and in 1152 recognised Murdac as Archbishop of York. He then asked Theobald to crown his son Eustace as king of England and so to pre-judge the issue of the succession. The

¹ *De Nugis Curialium*. Ed. James, 236. Quoted by F. M. Stenton, *First Century of English Feudalism*, page 221.

² On the death of Innocent II in 1143 the legatine commission given to the Bishop of Winchester lapsed and was not renewed by the new pope Lucius II. Henry of Blois was succeeded as legate by Cardinal Imar. The appointment of Theobald by Eugenius III in 1150 was a direct challenge by Rome to Stephen's authority.

Pope refused permission on Theobald's instigation. The papacy and the English bishops had finally decided in favour of the Angevin succession. Pope Celestine II, Innocent II's successor, had long ago gone as far as was possible to undo his predecessors' *de facto* recognition of Stephen and had issued an instruction that there should be no further "*innovatio in regno Angliae circa coronam*" (no acquiescence, that is, in any new departure from the strict line of succession), and this instruction had been confirmed by Celestine's successors, Lucius II and Eugenius IV. The papal refusal to endorse the choice of Eustace as heir to the throne followed automatically. Without an *innovatio*, Henry of Anjou (Henry II) was the legal feudal heir. When Eustace died in 1143, Stephen gave up the struggle and authorised Theobald to negotiate a peace which would secure the succession to Henry. Stephen's private estates in England and Normandy were secured to his surviving son William, Earl of Surrey.¹ Henry was to be acknowledged as heir, Stephen's followers were to do homage to him and Henry was to be consulted on all business of the kingdom. Mercenaries on both sides were to be disarmed, and unlicensed castles, of which, according to the chroniclers, there were more than a thousand, were to be destroyed. To the last, Stephen showed himself honourable but incapable. He found himself unable to work on friendly terms with Henry, but Henry was prepared to wait. Stephen was failing in health and died in October, 1154. On December Henry II was crowned at Westminster, the first undisputed successor to the English throne since Aethelred the Unready.

Death of
Stephen.

Henry II,
king,
1154.

The secular consequences of Stephen's incapacity were decisive and affected the whole of Europe. The Angevin monarchy, which brought great French possessions under the rule of England, became so powerful that the conquest of Wales and Ireland followed naturally. The long wars with France were equally inevitable but these wars had very diverse

¹ Stephen's surrender of his son's claim to the throne has seemed to many historians almost inexplicable, but it is probable that the vast personal inheritance of William of Blois, who had married the daughter and heiress of Earl de Warenne, provides the explanation. Stephen's heir, once he renounced his claims to the throne, would succeed unchallenged to estates far greater than those of any of his peers. Before coming to the throne, Stephen had held the vast Boulogne fief, which had 120 enfeoffed knights, the forfeited fiefs of Robert Malet (comprising 250 manors) and Roger of Poitou (comprising 400 manors) and various crown lands granted him by Henry I. The Warenne honour included three castles, one of the Sussex rapes, and 200 manors. All this stupendous inheritance could be safeguarded by Stephen with no effort. The chance of winning the succession to the throne for his son was, on the contrary, extremely hazardous.

effects. They delayed the unification of France but they speeded up constitutional developments in an England already united. The combined effect was to give England permanently an influence, wealth and power quite disproportionate for many centuries to her population or resources and at odds with her geographical position.

It would in the circumstances be pedantry to dismiss the political history of Stephen's unhappy reign as unimportant. The reign is perhaps the supreme example in English history of the falsity of the saying that wars settle nothing. At the same time it is doubtful if the struggle between Stephen and Robert of Gloucester appeared at all to their contemporaries as it appears to us, or if at any time military considerations really determined the course of action.

Such a centralised government as that of Henry I was, in the middle of the twelfth century, not so much an innovation, though it was surely that, as an anachronism. The feudal monarchy was not, as far as home affairs were concerned, a centralising but a decentralising agency; its task was not to gather into its own hands the machinery of government with a view to providing even justice, a fair distribution of the burden of taxation and a uniform code of laws. Rather it was to provide, in the form of the overlord, the apex of the feudal pyramid, a piece of machinery essential to the most decentralised system of law and government ever devised by human ingenuity. While the result of the disputed succession was, inevitably and logically, impotence abroad, through the loss of Normandy, it is almost certainly incorrect to speak of "anarchy" in England.

There was substantial destruction of property, as we know by comparing the Pipe Rolls of Henry II with the Pipe Roll of 1130. For the first eight years of Henry II's reign allowances had to be made by the Exchequer to "wasted" districts, notably in the west and in the midlands. The wail of the clerical Chronicles, never for long silent throughout the whole course of their records, rises to something like a climax of woe in Stephen's reign. Henry of Huntingdon speaks of the reign as "the most atrocious of all times" (*tempus atrocissimum*). But outside the fenlands there was no breakdown of government as it affected the relations of man and man, or man and lord. It was only between tenants-in-chief that there was anarchy. It was inherent in the nature of feudalism that, if the great honours acknowledged different overlords, the absence of a

common allegiance severed all constitutional relations between them and placed them automatically in a position where any dispute could be settled only by force. It was equally inevitable that the main object of the great tenants-in-chief should be to consolidate their authority and to extend its area. Only by getting back into their own hands the powers assumed by the monarchy in the reign of Henry I and his father could they be sure of being able to maintain order in the absence of a strong monarchy. Even so, unless they could dispense law and maintain order over a wide area, they could create no substitute for the King's Peace. Badly though the baronage behaved throughout this reign, there is no evidence of any real encroachment on the traditional rights of the Crown, but merely of a general tendency, in the absence of an efficient overlord capable of discharging his feudal responsibilities, to regain the relative independence of the baronage on the Continent. This was particularly true of the great earldoms, and we have two famous treaties, the one of alliance between the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford, and the other for regulating disputes between the Earl of Chester and the Earl of Leicester, which illustrate how far this movement towards independence had gone without degenerating into anarchy. The Earls of Chester and Leicester arrange for the orderly conduct, with due notice, of any dispute between them, and the Bishop of Lincoln is sponsor for both parties and the pledge of their good faith. It is a clear case where, in despair of a stable central government, the feudal nobles are determined to create a substitute in the form of an inter-baronial charter or covenant, the terms of which shall take the place of the ruling of the king's *Curia* as the final reference in any dispute.

Another constitutional departure of this period was the control exercised by many barons, in their capacity as wardens of castles, over the burgesses in the neighbouring town. Apart from the chief towns of the great marcher earldoms, Chester, Shrewsbury and Hereford, the only county towns "mediatised" up to 1130 were Gloucester, Worcester, Leicester, Colchester and Northampton, and all of them except Chester, Warwick, Gloucester and Leicester were in the king's hands when the Pipe Roll of 1130 was written.¹ There is evidence, however, that in the civil wars of Stephen's reign, the wardens of the castles dominated and controlled the towns, and the only method by which either claimant could be sure of the allegiance

¹ F. M. Stenton, *English Feudalisms, 1066-1166* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 233-66.

of a town was by giving the Crown's rights to the baron who held the castle. Members of the house of Beaumont, for instance, were lords of Leicester, Warwick and Worcester and probably Bedford. Ranulf, Earl of Chester, received Lincoln conditionally from Stephen in 1149 and in 1153 received Nottingham, Derby and Stafford from Henry, Duke of Normandy.

These arrangements, for which documentary evidence survives, attest not an anarchy but merely a remarkably brisk trade in jurisdictions. Of all the baronage, only Geoffrey of Mandeville appears actually to have asserted independence and openly to have placed himself outside the law, and he was killed for his pains.

Within the honorial jurisdiction, there is no evidence whatever of a breakdown of feudal justice and some considerable evidence of real efforts to compensate the Church, in particular, for damage done. The ordinary procedure of enfeoffment went on and indeed from Stephen's reign have come down to us many of the key documents illustrating the intricacies of Norman feudalism in the twelfth century and in particular the systematic creation and consolidation of knight's fees.

Even more remarkable is the growth of the new monastic orders, the spread of education and the architectural achievement, in this so-called period of anarchy. The magnificent remains of the great Cistercian abbeys of Rievaulx and Fountains (with its pointed arches) belong to Stephen's reign. The only English monastic order, the Gilbertine, was founded in this reign by Gilbert of Sempringham. The White Canons of Prémontré first came to England and in all more than fifty religious houses were founded by the baronage during these troubled years. The Chapter House of Durham, the towers of Exeter and Peterborough cathedrals and the naves of Norwich, Bury St. Edmunds and Romsey Abbey were built in this reign. It is probable that in 1149 the famous Lombard Vacarius taught Roman law at Oxford. In the great episcopal palaces, the statesmen, lawyers and bishops of the future were taught the beginnings of the new learning, and they completed their education at the great Continental universities. Becket, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, began his education in Henry I's reign with the Austin Canons at Merton; he then trained in legal business in the office of a great London burgess, and then went to Bologna and Auxerre to study law. Another

Becket,
b. 1118,
d. 1170.

great school was that of Bishop Alexander of Lincoln, where Hebrew as well as Latin was taught, and the students would go on to Paris to study philosophy under Abelard or theology under Pullen (although Pullen lectured at Oxford for a brief period in 1133). Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote some of his famous romances in this reign and was rewarded by the bishopric of St. Asaph. Abelard, the pioneer student of Arabic science and philosophy, wrote his treatise on the astrolabe at Bath and dedicated it to Prince Henry; Robert of Cricklade abridged Pliny's *Natural History*.

The stirring of the spirit was universal through western Europe and was to lead directly to the great intellectual and artistic achievements of the thirteenth century. It is only relevant to note here some significant names and achievements because they throw light on the political conditions of the times. They strongly confirm the conclusions we have drawn from the strictly political evidence. At no time was the religious or social order threatened, and even the economic order was hardly disturbed. There was a spirit of ardent inquiry and the constant wars in England and on the Continent did not interrupt the coming and going of students and teachers. Nationalism had not invaded the spiritual or intellectual sphere. In becoming political man had not yet become an animal. For all its disorder and instability, the age of Stephen was an age of progress and freedom in most directions.

Most notably was this the case with the Church. After 1143 when Henry of Blois ceased to be legate, election to bishoprics became canonically free; the chapters really began to choose their own bishops. Disputes with Canterbury inevitably followed and in consequence appeals to Rome and to the papacy not infrequently decided the election. Secondly, in the absence of a strong overlord, the great monasteries looked to Rome for protection and received it. It was an age of reform and Rome regarded the new Orders as the best reformers. As a result of this fashion in reform, and because the assignment of some part of the revenues of a parish church to a monastery was a very cheap form of gift, we find a great number of parishes coming under monastic control in the twelfth century. According to Professor Stenton the number of such parishes runs into hundreds.¹

Finally, the so-called period of anarchy marked a new and

¹ *Cambridge Historical Journal*, Vol. III, page 1, quoted Brooke, *op. cit.*

definite stage in the history of the canon law in this country. Archbishop Theobald may be described as the founder of canonical jurisdiction in England. Lanfranc laid the foundations of the knowledge of canon law in England but Theobald was the first to build on it. His episcopate came at a notable time. Gratian's great work, known to all students as the *Decretum* but published under the official title of the *Concordia Discordantium Canonum* was published about 1140. Gratian separated canon law from theology and with him the science of ecclesiastical jurisprudence begins. We cannot assert, nor is it very likely, that the *Decretum* reached England in Stephen's reign, but it is certain that during his reign new and better collections of decrees were introduced and studied in this country. In this reign were sown the seeds of the dispute between Henry II and Becket which had such historic consequences. Canon law began to outstrip the Anglo-Norman law in precision and clarity and therefore to exercise a compelling attraction. Men began to seek the Church courts. The Church, for her part, sought to extend her jurisdiction. There was a large debatable field, including suits relating to Church lands, suits to which clerks were parties and suits dealing with wills and kindred matters. Precisely as the great barons had been forced in Stephen's reign to extend the scope and area of their jurisdiction in the absence of a strong central monarchy, so the Church would have felt it necessary in any event to see that cases of interest to her did not go by default. It happened that this hour of the Church's need was also the hour of opportunity. The new law came to meet the needs of the new situation.

Chapter Fifteen

HENRY II AND THE ANGEVIN EMPIRE

ON the 19th December, 1154, Henry of Anjou, Duke of Normandy, and his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, were crowned King and Queen of England at Westminster. Thus there came into being what has been called the Angevin Empire, the union under one sovereign of England (whose suzerainty over Wales, Scotland and part of Ireland was first fully acknowledged in this reign), Normandy whose suzerainty over Brittany was re-established), Maine, Anjou, Touraine, Poitou and Aquitaine.

This vast dominion stretching from Scotland to the Pyrenees was no empire in the modern sense. It possessed no centre of government, and no one part was subordinate to another. It implied neither the union of England with the Angevin possessions on the Continent nor the accretion of those possessions to the English kingdom. It is, however, still more wrong to regard the vast dominion which fell to Henry II and Richard I and which was lost by John as a merely fortuitous aggregation of fiefs through inter-marriage and the chances of succession under very varying feudal and constitutional customs.

The quarrel between the House of Blois and the House of Anjou, in which England had become involved when, failing a male heir, the succession to the English throne had been disputed between Stephen of Blois and Matilda, the wife of Geoffrey of Anjou, was of long standing and cardinal military and political significance. It concerned, primarily, the right to Touraine.

Paris was not yet the geographical, any more than it was the political, centre of France. The road system of the Romans was still dominant in the north-west, and the main south-north-west communications lay through Angers and Tours, by-passing Paris. In particular the narrow strip of road from Tours through Poitiers, protected at its northern end by the great fortresses of Angers, Loudun, Chinon and Loches, was the military key to north-west France. Who held it could unite or divide the north from the south, and as long as it

was outside the control of the kings of France, the French monarchy was a mere political expression. The House of Anjou, seeking to control Touraine, had planned with deliberation. Because of the Angevin hold on Touraine, the union of Anjou and Normandy, which came about when Geoffrey of Anjou was acknowledged Duke of Normandy in 1144, had been a political reality, firmly based on the facts of geography, and for the same reason no French king could weaken the hold of the Angevins on Poitou and Aquitaine, when these territories came to Henry II on his marriage with Eleanor. Henry II, a shrewd judge alike of legal claims and political practicalities, himself regarded his Continental possessions as one, and on at least one occasion, at his court at Verneuil in 1177, promulgated a statute dealing with the debts of Crusaders which applied to the whole of his French territories.

The event proved that the Angevin position was in fact militarily impregnable, as long as the frontiers of Normandy securely barred the way to Rouen from Paris by the valley of the Seine: (from Rouen the whole position could be turned). And here again Henry II is our witness that we are not reading history backwards. The strategic key to Rouen was the Norman Vexin and Henry's first important moves on the Continent were to oust his younger brother Geoffrey from the control of Anjou and Touraine, and then, by treaty with Louis of France, to regain the Norman Vexin, which his father had ceded to the king of France.

The first years of Henry II's reign presaged its remarkable character, and in particular its combination of energy, ambition and provident calculation. He took as his chief English advisers Theobald, the aged Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert, Earl of Leicester, and Richard de Lucy (the latter of whom had served under Stephen) who were appointed justiciars, and Nigel, Bishop of Ely, who had been treasurer under Henry I and was now recalled to reorganise the exchequer, although he was in the first instance formally appointed chancellor. To this body of experienced counsellors, drawn, it may be noted, from the ranks of the greater baronage, was added almost immediately Thomas Becket, who succeeded the Bishop of Ely as chancellor a few weeks after the coronation. Becket was in no sense a man of the people. His father, a small Norman landowner, a *petit noble*, had at one time been sheriff of Middlesex. He himself, after a short time in commerce, had been employed by Archbishop Theobald and in the preceding

Thomas
Becket,
b. 1118,
d. 1170.

reign had carried out important diplomatic missions to Rome and had been in part responsible for the Pope's refusal to recognise Eustace as Stephen's heir.¹ Later he had studied Roman and Canon Law at Bologna and Auxerre and at the time of Henry II's accession was Archdeacon of Canterbury, a man clearly marked out by experience and training for promotion to higher office. He was no doubt appointed on the recommendation of Archbishop Theobald, to whose diplomacy Henry so largely owed his throne.

On Christmas Day, six days after his coronation, Henry held a council at Bermondsey, decreed the expulsion of the Flemish mercenaries, whom William of Ypres had brought in to sustain the cause of Stephen, and the destruction of adulterine castles. Then he moved north to receive the submission of William of Aumäle, Earl of York, and William Peverel of Nottingham, the most notable supporters of the late king. William Peverel surrendered his fiefs and went into a monastery; William of Aumäle surrendered part of his lands and his great fortress of Scarborough and retained his earldom. A further resumption of lands granted by Stephen sent Roger, Earl of Hereford, and Hugh of Mortimer into revolt, but Roger was induced by the Bishop of Hereford to make his submission, and Hugh's castles at Wedmore, Cleobury, Mortimer and Bridgnorth were quickly reduced. By April Henry was at Wallingford, where the Council swore fealty to William, Henry's son, and acknowledged him and, failing him, the infant Henry (born in February) as heir.

Council of
Walling-
ford, 1155.

In the interval between the Council of Wallingford and that of Winchester in September, John of Salisbury was sent to the Pope, Adrian IV, to secure his approval for an English invasion of Ireland. The Pope, according to John of Salisbury, claimed to dispose of the sovereignty of Ireland under the so-called Donation of Constantine. It is possible, however, that in fact he approved Henry's scheme for the same reasons as had led an earlier Pope to approve the Conqueror's invasion of England. Law and order in civil affairs were conditions precedent to the effective assertion of papal authority over the Irish Church. Henry, for his part, had in mind a fief for his youngest brother William, no doubt as part of his plan to force his other brother Geoffrey to give up Anjou and Touraine. At Winchester the Council approved this strange Irish crusade, but the king's mother, Matilda, was opposed to

¹ See p. 483-4 *supra*.

it and nothing was done, although the papal approval was recorded and duly used many years later. In January, 1156, Henry left for France, English affairs being entrusted to the justiciars.

Henry first met the King of France and did homage for his French possessions, then met the Count of Flanders, and finally called on his brother Geoffrey to give up his claims. Geoffrey refused and retired to put his castles at Chinon, Mirebeau and Loudun in a state of defence. Henry followed with an army, probably mainly drawn from Normandy, and captured Chinon and Mirebeau. Geoffrey then submitted and accepted a money pension and a castle in exchange for his inheritance. A little later, Geoffrey became Count of Nantes, as part of a settlement under which Conan of Richmond, with Henry's assistance, established himself as ruler of upper Brittany. By the end of 1156 Henry had thus consolidated under his own personal hand the whole of the Angevin possessions and reasserted the historic Norman claim to suzerainty over Brittany. The spring of 1157 was spent in Normandy and Aquitaine and on the 8th April Henry and his family returned to England, to resume possession of the castles still held by William, Earl of Surrey (Stephen's younger son), and Hugh Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, and to receive the homage of King Malcolm of Scotland, who abandoned his claim to the northern counties and acknowledged Henry's suzerainty. These important resumptions preceded the Council of Northampton where a military expedition against Wales was approved. A scutage had already been taken and an army raised. After desultory fighting Owen of Gwynedd, prince of North Wales, did homage, as did some southern chieftains.

The next year, 1158, saw the climax of Henry's diplomatic war. Geoffrey of Nantes died and Henry claimed the succession. Becket went on an embassy to France and arranged a marriage treaty between the infant Prince Henry and Margaret, the six month's old daughter of King Louis. Louis agreed that on the solemnisation of the marriage he would cede the Norman Vexin and meanwhile the border fortresses including Gisors were handed over to the Knights Templars for safe custody. The two kings met in person on the 22nd August when the arrangements were confirmed, and Louis promised to support Henry's claim to Nantes. Conan of Brittany at once ceded Nantes, and Theobald of Blois at the same time ceded Amboise and Freteval. In 1159 Henry, after making a treaty with the Count of Barcelona, called England, Normandy, Anjou and

Aquitaine to war against Toulouse. Scutage was levied on all ecclesiastical tenants and on all lay mesne tenants, and additional sums were raised by forced "gifts" from the clergy and the towns. The total sum raised was approximately £8000 and this was employed in hiring mercenaries. For all the disproportion between the effort and the objective, the expedition had the appearance of a fiasco. King Louis refused to support Henry's claim to Toulouse, which came through Queen Eleanor, and appeared in person to assist the Count of Toulouse. Henry refused to fight his overlord in person and the expedition degenerated into a blockade. After a few months the two kings made peace and Henry granted a truce to the Count of Toulouse and his allies. The pattern of Henry's diplomacy was however made clearer in the next year, 1160, when the second wife of the French king died and he at once married Alice of Blois. Theobald of Blois had in 1159 been on Henry's side and the change in the balance of forces was disturbing. Henry at once solemnised the marriage between his son Henry (now five years old) and Margaret of France, and the Templars, under the terms of the original treaty, handed over the Norman Vexin. The balance was restored.

It is not, we believe, an anachronism to say that at this point of time England stood at the summit of her power in Europe, occupying a position which she was never again to enjoy. It was not less important that for the first time since the days of Charlemagne "a common system of government had been imposed upon a great part of western Europe."¹ To a remarkable extent this systematisation of government was Henry's objective. He was neither ruthless, nor a conqueror. He was hardly a good soldier, certainly not a great one, but he was a master of policy, carried through with the greatest economy of force. Almost always at war, he fought little and achieved nothing by force. He won by skilfully anticipating the conditions of success and creating them before showing his hand. Above all, he moved quickly and methodically. He secured enough power and authority in England within twelve months to leave for France, and asked nothing of the French king until he had secured the submission of his brother. Having done this he returned to complete the organisation of his power in England before putting pressure on France to secure the Vexin and Brittany.

Beneath feudal forms and the gestures of chivalry we can

¹ F. M. Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy* (Manchester U. Press, 1913), Chapter 1.

see the technique of a cool and subtle diplomacy of action. It is rash to assume that Toulouse was just a mistake. It was a demonstration in force and it enabled him the next year to acquire without a war the Norman Vexin which was one of the necessary keys to his Continental power. It is quite clear that Henry at no time was tempted by dreams of conquest. All that he did was under authority and within the forms of law, and his real power rested on the goodness of his government. It may well be that, as Bishop Stubbs held, his simple objective was "the consolidation of the kingly power in his own hands," that his was the wisdom of a prudent selfishness, but if so, to a large extent, as time drew on, the means became the end. He never lost his taste or aptitude for administrative reforms and what he did was done consciously. The pattern within which he had to work was not of his choosing, unless, maybe, he should have detected in Thomas Becket a taste for martyrdom. For the rest, he alone stood between France and anarchy, and he alone saw that the only cure for feudal excesses alike in France and in England was centralised administration and the association of the middle classes with local government.

Henry II left a greater mark on his contemporaries than any other English king—greater even than the Conqueror who was so cold, aloof and stark. Henry had all the qualities and most of the defects of the strange hot-tempered and invariably unfortunate Plantagenet family. Square, thick-set, red-faced, he was restless, passionate in temper but with a strangely contrasting genius for personal intercourse, eloquent, affable and persuasive. He was a secret reader, Peter of Blois tells us curiously, and Becket complained half-admiringly of his subtlety, commenting on his "mousetraps." He had little religion and no morals. He heard mass daily but talked all through it, or attended to his papers—a characteristic piece of legalism which insisted on the form and ignored the substance. Like all cool calculators, he was betrayed by his occasional lapses into emotion. The failure of his foreign policy, the anarchy into which he ultimately plunged his French possessions, was due first to his affection and then to his deep disgust for Thomas Becket, and to his unrestrained affection for his sons.

In 1161 Theobald of Canterbury died and a year later Thomas Becket, the Chancellor, was appointed by Henry in his place.

Becket was essentially a romantic, with not a little *folie de*

grandeur. It is a common mistake to imagine that saints, who are so called because they have been deemed to possess supernatural virtues, are necessarily pleasant and kindly people. Becket was neither pleasant nor kindly. He was an actor with the actor's gift of exalting the role he was playing. He was a politician, with the political gift of adapting his character to his office. That gift is of all the most unpopular. We like simple men for their strength but great men for their weaknesses. Becket became widely detested by regulars, seculars, and the baronage who knew him best, and he had, while he lived, no personal popularity with the people.

Becket had been a splendid figure as Chancellor; a great collector and dispenser of revenues, a great ambassador who had led Louis into the treaty which surrendered the Norman Vexin, a considerable figure in the field (he had taken to Toulouse 700 knights and 4000 men). Although Archdeacon of Canterbury (an office he had retained with its emoluments after his appointment as Chancellor) he was only in minor orders. It is a minor curiosity of the appointment of this saint that although it was a year in the making, and must evidently have been under close consideration for a long time, Becket was only ordained priest on the 2nd June, 1162, the day before his enthronement, and six days after his election as archbishop by the monks of Canterbury and the suffragan bishops in the presence of the justiciars at Westminster. Subject to this formality, Becket was appointed by the king. Contemporaries tell us that he warned the king that the consequences would not be to his liking, but the story does not ring true unless Becket had knowledge, which he strongly denied, of the king's intentions in regard to the Clarendon constitutions. Becket was no zealot. The quarrel with the king was of the king's making. It was the king, not Thomas Becket, who was possessed of the politician's zeal for new measures and root-and-branch administrative reforms.

Henry was no protestant: he was, however, born in the atmosphere of the legal renaissance. He saw law, as other men have seen force, as an instrument of policy, and, so seeing, it was natural that he should resent the great growth of ecclesiastical jurisdiction which was encroaching not only on the criminal but on the civil administration. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, the Church had held the balance of power during Stephen's reign and had taken advantage of the fact to assert the right of appeal to Rome from the decisions of the Church

courts, of papal legates to enter the kingdom and exercise their authority there, and of the cathedral chapters to influence if not to determine the choice of bishops. All this was clearly contrary to the ancient customs. Secondly, the fifty-four years which separate the death of Henry I from the accession of his grandson had seen the introduction of a codified and more up-to-date version of the Canon Law into England, largely through the activities of Archbishop Theobald. Such encroachments as the Church courts had made on the proper province of the English courts had been in part due to the fact that they administered a written code. They had, for instance, secured some jurisdiction even over civil contracts on the flimsy ground that breaches of contract were a form of perjury. It was, however, in its bearing on Henry's attempt to re-establish old customs that the new codified Canon Law was decisive. What could be tacitly conceded when the Church law was unwritten and largely undefined could not be tolerated when it was clearly known.

As is usual in bitter political disputes, both sides were in the right. Henry II, although a reformer and a legislator by temperament, and far from adverse to change, was in this particular case only planning to restore in new circumstances the customs prevailing in the reign of his grandfather and was right in his description of what those customs were. Those customs were, however, themselves uncanonical and once they were put into writing could never be accepted by any bench of bishops in 1166.¹ To deny at this date the right of appeal to Rome from the Church courts was to deny the authority of what had become and was to remain for more than two centuries a part, if not indeed the whole, of the public law of Europe, and to deny to the reformed papacy, then by far the most powerful political force in the western world, an instrument essential to the enforcement of its restored discipline. Henry II, we repeat, was no protestant, but in his desire for what is now called "tidy administration" he challenged the one power in the world of his time which was stronger than he was. As with everything else that Henry did, it happened according to plan. He made Becket archbishop because he wished to unify all jurisdiction in one man's hands, and that

¹ You may wish to restore ancient customs and yet be a revolutionary. An English politician who wished to restore the customs of 1848 in regard to the franchise and public education could not well defend his case by claiming that he was merely anxious to preserve the framework of the Constitution as his great-grandfather had known it.

man his own chosen instrument and personal friend, the Chancellor of England. The office of chancellor was not yet, as it was to become, the most important in the official hierarchy. The justiciar's office ranked above it. The chancery, however, issued the king's writs and determined, by their wording and the conditions attached to their issue, the course of much litigation. For this reason, with the growth of litigation, the chancellor's influence was increasing.

The lay courts had been encroaching, in Becket's time and under his authority, on the criminal jurisdiction of the Church courts over criminous clerks. Henry wished those encroachments to be legalised. He disliked seeing clerks in minor orders getting off virtually scot free for even the gravest criminal offences, yet that was in fact what happened. The bishops could not sentence a man to be hanged or mutilated, and they had no prisons: degradation was in practice their only sentence. This meant little or nothing to a criminal in minor orders, and might well be too severe a penalty for a priest, unless he were indeed guilty of some very grave offence. Still more did Henry dislike appeals to Rome, and indeed, in so far as the Church courts had succeeded in getting control of important branches of the civil law, such as the law of contract or the law of probate, it was impossible to allow appeals to Rome which could hold up actions indefinitely and were as highly objectionable on constitutional grounds then as we should regard them to-day. Unhappily for Henry, less certainly so for Becket, Henry had chosen the wrong instrument for his policy of unifying and controlling the rival jurisdictions. Becket was either the king's man or the Pope's man. He would not serve two masters and once he was on the throne of Augustine his loyalty was pledged to Rome.

Hadrian
IV, pope,
1154-59.

The Pope was now, in 1162, Alexander III, a great jurist and a strong character. He had succeeded Hadrian IV, the first and last Englishman to sit in the Chair of Peter. Alexander was faced with the enmity of the great Emperor Frederic Barbarossa and, as its concomitant, with an anti-pope Victor IV. Alexander was no willing protagonist in the conflict between Becket and Henry II. As far as we know his personal views, he had no objection to criminous clerks, after degradation, being suitably punished by the civil courts. But he had no alternative but to support Becket when the dispute was forced to an issue by Henry, for criminous clerks, though they bulk largely in our history books, became an unimportant side-issue.

Alexander
III, pope,
1159-81.

The first quarrel between Becket and Henry was over his chancellorship, which Becket insisted on resigning. He then proceeded to resume all the Canterbury lands which had been alienated by his predecessors, and to deprive the exchequer clerks of the income they had been drawing as absentee incumbents of livings within the gift of Canterbury. The king should live on his own and not out of the revenues of the archdiocese. Next he challenged the right of a lord of the manor of Canterbury land to make the appointment as in the past to the local living. Finally, three cases (two of murder and one of robbery and sacrilege) had arisen where clergy had been, in the king's view, too lightly punished. In all three cases the king asked for the criminals to be handed over for retrial, or sentence, in the king's courts, and Becket refused.

We infer that Henry had determined already to force matters to an issue, because when Becket's friend, John of Salisbury, one of the greatest scholars of the day, was made bishop of Poitiers in 1162, Henry had instructed the justiciars to warn him that he must not hold pleas relating to wills, intestate estates or real property claimed by clerks. This was in Normandy, not England, but clearly these activities of the English Church courts were already condemned by Henry in his own mind and he was determined that our English churchmen should not carry over into Normandy practices he regarded as pernicious.

On the 1st October, 1163, Henry moved. The bishops were summoned to Westminster and asked to abandon their claims to deal with criminous clerks. Becket refused, except in the case of clerks who had already been degraded for a previous offence. In the case of first offenders, handing them over to the King's Court after the Church Court had taken the measures necessary in the interests of Church discipline involved, so Becket argued, two trials for one offence. The argument was a poor one by our view. A member of the House of Commons forfeits his seat on conviction for felony but does not thereby secure immunity from sentence under the ordinary criminal law. The same applies to those condemned by professional tribunals such as the Law Society and the General Medical Council. In other words, the judgment of time has gone wholly against Becket. But the most interesting feature of Becket's position was not that he took a bad legal point, but that he preferred to take a legal point, good or bad, rather than stand on the rights of the Church to exercise jurisdiction in its own

THE COUNCIL OF CLARENDON

way over its own officials. Becket clearly felt that on this point at any rate the king's mind was made up, and this is borne out by subsequent events. The king appealed to the bishops, in reply to Becket's legal point, to agree to stand by the ancient customs, meaning the customs of the Conqueror and Henry I, not the customs of Stephen. The bishops at Westminster would only agree "saving their order", which we must take to mean only in so far as the customs, still undefined, did not on examination turn out to be in conflict with Canon Law.

Not only the king but the rest of the bishops and the Pope himself were dissatisfied with this position. Under strong pressure from his fellow bishops, headed by the Archbishop of York and Gilbert Foliot, the Bishop of London, and at the instance of mediators sent by the Pope, Becket waited on the king at Oxford and promised honest observance of the customs. The Pope was disinclined for a quarrel with the king of England which might well have weakened him in his quarrel with the Emperor, but evidently all the mediators hoped that the matter would not be brought to an issue. Henry intended otherwise and summoned the great council to meet at Clarendon when a written definition of the customs would be published.

Council of
Claren-
don, Jan.,
1164.

We have the names of fourteen bishops, ten earls and twenty-seven barons who attended this fateful council, destined to lead, as things turned out, to the unchallenged reception of the Canon Law in England for three centuries. The king strove to clinch the proceedings by producing the text of the customs—a document in sixteen clauses now known as the Constitutions of Clarendon. The issues raised went far beyond the question of criminous clerks. The important clauses indeed deal with other matters. No cleric was to leave the country without the king's consent (c. 4); no tenant-in-chief to be excommunicated or his land laid under an interdict without reference to the king (c. 7); no appeals to Rome were to be made without the king's consent (c. 8); canonical elections to sees and monasteries in the king's gift were to take place in his chapel, with his assent and by the advice of persons deputed by him for the purpose (c. 12).

Of these clauses two things can be asserted without qualification. They truly set out the ancient customs of the Conqueror and his sons and they amount to an invasion of papal authority and rights which had not always been recognised but which were recognised in 1164 not only in England but throughout the whole of western Europe. To go back from the situation

of 1164 to the situation of 1100 was not a restoration but a revolution; it was a revolution attempted at a time when for a variety of reasons the authority of the papacy was growing and was soon, under Innocent III, to reach its apex. Becket, under protest, and prefixing his acceptance with the words "If my Lord will have me perjure myself," accepted the customs, but refused to seal them. Becket himself said later that he had been coerced—" *observantia per vim et metum extorta.*"

There is no satisfying explanation of Becket's conduct. The bishops, led by Gilbert Foliot, the most powerful and upright figure on the bench, were prepared to stand firm. Becket was not. His estrangement from his fellow bishops dates from this time. Almost at once Becket admitted his fault, and suspended himself from the service of the altar, until the Pope told him to resume his functions. The Pope, however, refused Henry's request to approve the Constitutions and seems to have authorised Becket to disregard any promise which he may have made which went against ecclesiastical liberties or the rights of Rome.

Council of
North-
ampton,
Oct., 1164.

Henry was determined now to force Becket into the open. He must either truly accept or resign. Following a minor legal dispute, Becket was summoned to a Council at Northampton and charged with contempt of the royal court. For this he was fined a small sum but was then called on to account for very large sums which had passed through his hands as chancellor. This outrageous request had what was no doubt the desired result. Becket came out into the open and in defiance of the Constitutions appealed to Rome. For this breach of the law he was condemned by the lay barons, the bishops refusing to sit in judgment. Becket at this last moment rose to his full stature and refused to hear the sentence; silencing the justiciar with the force of his just anger, he left the court and the kingdom. On the 2nd November he reached Gravelines.

Meanwhile the king allowed an appeal to Rome by the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of London and others for the deposition of Becket and agreed that, pending an appeal, Becket should retain the revenues of the see. Alexander III was at Sens, where he received the king's ambassadors but refused to entertain the appeal until he had heard Becket. Louis of France also refused Henry's request to detain Becket and Becket saw the Pope early in 1165. The Pope received him cordially, but reproved him for his lapse in having assented to the Constitutions. These he condemned, although no formal pro-

nouncement was made at this point. Henry had already confiscated the Canterbury revenues, banished Becket's relations, ordered the sheriffs to arrest any one trying to appeal to Rome, and suspended the collection of Peter's Pence.

What Henry expected from these activities beyond money for the exchequer is a mystery, only soluble on the assumption that he was completely wrong in his judgment of the strength of the papacy. Once the matter had been referred to Rome, and this had been done with the king's consent, the Pope, not Becket, was Henry's antagonist, and the English bishops, willing enough to see a less truculent, angular and litigious personality at Canterbury, were never willing even to consider a break with Rome. The tangled and rather sordid negotiations between the Pope, his successive legates, Becket and the king, which went on intermittently from 1165 to 1170, are therefore historically unimportant. A settlement was inevitable in the long run, once the papacy had decided formally to stand by Becket. This it did at Easter, 1166, after a year's delay on which Alexander had insisted, no doubt in the hope that Henry would come to his senses. Becket was now given a legatine commission over all England, excluding the province of York, and was specially authorised to excommunicate all persons invading Canterbury property. On Whitsunday at Vézelay Becket excommunicated a number of clergy and notables, including Richard de Lucy, the justiciar, for his share in drafting the offending Constitutions. This was followed by a fresh appeal to the Pope by the king, and Alexander suspended the archbishop's sentences and announced that he was sending legates to settle all matters in dispute. The legates did not in fact arrive until November, 1167, and as Henry was not yet prepared to give way, he entered a further appeal to Rome for the 11th November, 1168. As a result new missions from the Pope came in the summer of 1168 and in the spring of 1169, when the king was warned that the archbishop would not be kept silent much longer. Nor was he. On Palm Sunday, 1169, at Clairvaux, Becket excommunicated the Bishop of London and nine notables and threatened further sentences, which he pronounced a little later.

Sentences
of
Vézelay,
1166.

Negotiations continued with no success throughout 1169 and the first half of the following year. Henry's position, owing to his fundamental miscalculation, was now rapidly weakening. The Bishop of London, protesting against Becket's sentence, had none the less accepted it as coming from a Papal

Legate acting fully within his powers. Henry had to beg for the reinstatement of his bishops and ministers and was actually successful in getting the Bishop of London absolved. But he was always subject to the threat of an interdict, which would outrage the feelings of his subjects and perhaps turn them wholly against him. When Henry had his young son Henry crowned by the Archbishop of York in Westminster on the 14th June he put himself finally in the Pope's power, for the archbishop and the other participating bishops had laid themselves open to excommunication and the coronation itself could be invalidated. The Pope's patience had, in any case, been exhausted and envoys were waiting in Normandy with information that Henry's continental possessions would be put under an interdict unless the king made his peace with Becket within forty days.

Following as it did on years of negotiations, the final settlement was quick. The formula had clearly been agreed. Becket asked for peace and favour to him and his, and reinstatement in his and their possessions and prayed the king that he would "mercifully amend" the injury done him in the matter of the coronation. The king, we are told, nodded his assent. The last and decisive word rested, however, with the Pope who gave Becket, before he finally returned to England, a letter suspending the nine bishops who had taken part in the young king's coronation, reviving the excommunication of the Bishops of London and Salisbury and condemning their original acceptance of the Constitutions.

Henry fulfilled his part of the bargain and sent a letter to the young king proclaiming peace to Becket and his friends and ordering them to be admitted to all that they had held three months before they left England. Becket had no peace immediately in his heart. His chief objective was to get the Pope's letters into the hands of the bishops and, fearing lest he might himself be prevented from delivering them, he sent them by a messenger. Ironically enough, Becket had asked for and been promised different letters from the Pope, making no specific reference to the Constitutions, but Becket could not wait for them because of a direct order from the king at the end of November to return to England at once.

Becket landed at Sandwich on the 1st December. On the 3rd December the regents asked Becket to withdraw the suspensions, and Becket refused. On the 19th December he was told by the regents to stop the visitation of his province which

he had begun. On Christmas Day he preached at Canterbury and confirmed the suspension of the bishops: on the 29th December he was murdered in Canterbury cathedral by four knights, prompted to the deed by Henry's passionate outburst at Bures on the 26th, complaining of worthless servants who could allow him to be so plagued by a turbulent priest.

Murder of
Becket,
Dec. 29,
1170.

The murder of Becket was an historical accident; it arose out of the character neither of Henry nor of Becket. It was an outrage unparalleled even in a severe age and had, it may be, a lasting effect on European history. It certainly killed the Constitutions of Clarendon. Appeals to the Pope became for a time more frequent in England than anywhere else; the Canon Law was finally and wholly accepted; the Church retained its jurisdiction over criminous clerks. Which goes to show that the real victor was not Canterbury but Rome.

The Canon Law, by encouraging appeals from the bishops to the *Curia*, strengthened monastic independence and on the whole weakened the authority of the diocesans. The see of Canterbury was to suffer worse indignities from its own monks in the next thirty years than ever Becket had suffered from Henry II. The question remains whether the victory, such as it was, had not in fact been already won before the fatal 29th December. Henry II could not have renewed the struggle even had he wished to do so. Before any king's government could challenge the papacy on a matter vitally affecting the power and influence of the Church it had to be supported by forces themselves opposed to that power and influence. In the still feudal world of 1170, where so many of the great fiefs whose feudal aids and dues supported the monarchy were in the hands of churchmen who owed to Rome, if not their election, at least their right to continue in their office, an open conflict between the king and the Pope could lead only to constitutional anarchy. It would in fact be necessary to set up an anti-pope because a pope was a necessary piece of the political machinery of the feudal age. The shock of Becket's murder was felt all over Europe, and not least by the king himself, but the last word in the controversy lies, we believe, with Bishop Stubbs, who remarked that in this matter of the Church Henry was not three centuries ahead of the time but a century behind it. He mistook 1164 for 1066. A century of strong, zealous and single-minded men at Rome and at Canterbury had profoundly changed the public attitude to the authority of the Pope and

the rights of the Church, which they had once so readily ignored.

Too much is made, for certain, of Becket's obstinacy and savagery. He was obstinate because every attempt at a settlement was met by an appeal by Henry or the English bishops to Rome. He had only to wait for the inevitable moment when the king needed the support of the Church. If it had not come over the coronation of the young king, it would nevertheless have come sooner or later. As for suspensions and excommunications, these were the technique of papal diplomacy. They were machinery not for war but for enforcing negotiation and achieving compromise. To save his throne Henry had to await the sentence of the Pope, but when the sentence came it was no more, as far as the relations of the Crown and papacy were concerned, than would have been enforced had Becket lived.

It was in quite other directions that Becket was so much more powerful dead than alive. Miracles were worked at his tomb, and tens of thousands went on pilgrimage to his shrine. The man who stood so long alone became one of the people of England, as well as one of the saints of God. Both transitions must have been equally surprising to those who had known him. We do not expect heroics from heroes but Becket's life and death provide the warning exception.

The true consequences of the martyrdom, those consequences, that is, which would not have ensued had Becket lived, however greatly he had triumphed, were outside the constitutional sphere and were intangible. But certainly Henry II never again exercised on the Continent that compelling force which had previously made all his antagonists assume opposition to be futile. Some magic had gone out of him. He had been publicly humiliated and in a romantic age the consequences were perhaps decisive. As for England, a new pride was born in the English Church.

From March, 1166, to March, 1170, Henry had been on the Continent. His government in England was not at the time shaken by the quarrel with Becket, and when Henry visited England in the spring of 1170 it was to continue and strengthen his policy of administrative reforms begun by the Assize of Clarendon and the Assize of Novel Disseisin in 1166. This reform was later extended by the Assize of Mort d'Ancestor (1176) which placed the heir of a sitting tenant under the

ROYAL JUSTICE DEVELOPS

protection of the King's Court, and by the Grand Assize of 1179, which gave all men called on to answer for a free tenement the right to have the case heard in the King's Court and determined by the verdict of neighbours. These reforms had had two clear objects: to substitute the official class for the baronage as the chief instrument of local government and to popularise royal, at the expense of feudal, justice. The Assize of Clarendon gave the travelling justices exclusive jurisdiction over the major criminal offences, robbery, homicide, theft and the harbouring of those guilty of these offences. It left to the sheriffs the duty of apprehending the guilty but reserved the sentence for the king's judges. The duty of informing against suspected persons was in the Assize of 1166 entrusted to juries of the hundreds, but these juries were as yet witnesses and magistrates committing for trial rather than juries as we understand them. The old criminal law, the trial by ordeal, still survived, and the chief change in criminal procedure made by the reform of 1166 was a speeding up of justice as a result of the regular and systematic supervision of the sheriffs. Travelling justices were no new thing, but after 1166 they became the rule. The king's justice was no longer, as it had been since Anglo-Saxon times, "exceptional." This important principle was enforced in a more revolutionary way by the Assize of Novel Disseisin. In the ill-fated Constitutions of Clarendon, in 1164, it had been laid down that the question so often in dispute between Church and baronage—"Is this land alms or is it lay fee?"—should be decided by an inquest in the presence of the king's justiciar, a recognition by twelve lawful men, in effect, to decide the issue. This, unlike the jury of the hundred, was in deed if not in name a "fact-finding" jury. By the Assize of Novel Disseisin the same procedure, we believe (although the text of the Assize is lost), was made applicable in all cases when a sitting tenant or freeholder was threatened with eviction from his free tenement. If it was found that an eviction had occurred the dependant was at once reinstated. This reform was later extended by the Assize of Mort d'Ancestor (1176) which placed the heir of a sitting tenant under the protection of the King's Court, and by the Grand Assize of 1179 which gave all men called on to answer for a free tenement the right to have the case heard in the King's Court and determined by the verdict of neighbours.

What led the king to appoint the Inquest of Sheriffs in 1170 is uncertain. The baronage appear to have complained

Inquest of
Sheriffs,
1170.

of exactions and it may well be that the sheriffs, stimulated in their activities by the supervision imposed on them by the Assize of Clarendon, had been acting harshly. It is more likely that the real object of the inquest was to compare what the baronage had been paying, or should have paid, in the way of taxes and "dona" with what the sheriffs had been paying into the exchequer. In any case, the result of the inquest was the dismissal of most of the sheriffs. Nine were retained. The fifteen new sheriffs came from the official class, and the majority of them were exchequer officials and justices.

Henry was only in England three months in the year 1170: the last of the year, as we have seen, was taken up with the Becket affair, and after the murder Henry remained in Normandy, sending to the Pope ambassadors who promised his absolute submission to Alexander's decision. On Maundy Thursday, 1171, the Pope excommunicated the murderers and all who should harbour them and announced a mission of two cardinals to deal with the case of the king. Meanwhile the interdict on Henry's continental possessions was confirmed, but the Bishops of London and Salisbury were conditionally absolved.

Nothing shows the character of Henry's greatness better than his conduct at this time. An imaginative historian has described him as stunned. On the contrary, during the interval between the assassination of Becket and the settlement with the Pope at Avranches in 1172 Henry arranged for the inquest of sheriffs in England, reorganised the finances of Normandy, holding a great inquest in 1171, settled the succession of Brittany for his son Geoffrey¹ and planned and carried out the invasion and conquest of Ireland.

This was a long-standing project of which the papacy had expressed approval, and it was probably undertaken now with a dynastic objective, but the immediate purpose was different. In 1166 Henry had authorised Dermot MacMurrough, king of Leinster, to recruit followers from among the barons of the Welsh marches to help him regain his kingdom; he had been robbed of it by Roderick O'Connor, high king of Ireland. Dermot enlisted the help of Richard of Clare, second Earl of Pembroke, a short and very lightly built man who had inherited his father's nickname of Strongbow, and in 1169 numerous border adventurers landed in Ireland, followed in

Strong-
bow in
Ireland,
Aug.,
1170.

¹ Geoffrey was the husband of Constance, daughter of Conan IV, who died on the 20th February, 1171. The ill-fated Prince Arthur was their heir.

HENRY RECONCILED WITH THE POPE

August, 1170, by Strongbow himself with 200 knights and 1000 archers. These allies had enabled Dermot to recapture more than all he had lost. By May, 1171, Strongbow and his friends held Dublin and Waterford and were in control of the government of Leinster, but Dermot was dead and the adventurers had temporarily lost Wexford. Further, they were at odds with Henry, who had no intention of allowing any of his barons to become king of Ireland. It was in these dubious circumstances that Henry decided on his Irish expedition. He went there primarily to assert his authority over his own subjects. He succeeded, as so often, in his chief objective before military operations began. At Newnham in Gloucestershire, Strongbow, faced with the king and his great host (Henry sailed to Ireland with over 4000 men, of whom over 400 were knights), did homage for Leinster and surrendered Dublin, Waterford and Wexford to the English Crown.

Henry II
in
Ireland,
Oct., 1171-
Apr., 1172.

Henry crossed to Ireland with no intention of making a complete conquest. He was content with the facile homage of Irish chieftains and with planting garrisons in the ports and a colony of English traders in Dublin. At the head of the administration he placed Hugh de Lucy as justiciar; Strongbow, loyal and scrupulous if not contented, retired to his fief of Leinster. Such was the curious origin of the English Pale in Ireland, and of so much hatred and bloodshed between the two countries. It happened that the Irish were never to be strong enough to eject the English nor weak enough to merge their identity with them. The sequel was to be seen in the sixteenth century when Ireland was the only country in Europe in which a Protestant government failed to impose the Reformation. Had Henry II been less of a statesman he would no doubt have completed the conquest of Ireland, but he had first to wait on the Pope's mission, and, putting first things first, he left Ireland in April, 1172. The further adventures of the English in Ireland, fateful for both countries, were without immediate consequence and cannot be told here.

On the 21st May, 1172, Henry II was formally reconciled with the Pope at Avranches. He had made a voluntary oath of innocence but accepted responsibility for the effect of his words. For his personal atonement, he had to find 200 knights for the defence of Jerusalem for a year and take the Cross at Christmas for a three years' Crusade, unless excused by the Pope. For the rest, appeals to Rome were to be freely allowed, new customs

Henry
reconciled
with pope,
1172.

were disclaimed and full restitution was to be made to Canterbury.

From this moment events moved rapidly towards the rebellion of 1173. The extent of this shows us how widely Henry's authority had been shaken by the Becket affair; its complete failure shows equally clearly that the deep foundations of Henry's power were still secure.

On the 27th August, 1172, Henry had the young king and his queen, Margaret (who had not taken part in the previous ceremony), crowned at Winchester. This was a move to placate Louis of France who was making ready to use the grievances of the young king and Eleanor, his mother, as a basis for a coalition against Henry before he was fully re-established in his former power. The young king after his coronation asked for the government of one of the provinces given to him and was refused. He went at once to Paris and before Easter, 1173, Louis had organised a league comprising the king's three sons, the King of Scots, the Counts of Flanders and Blois, and Matthew of Boulogne. Supporting them among the greater English barons were the earls of Chester, Leicester, Derby and Norfolk, Geoffrey of Coutances, Robert of Beaumont and Roger Mowbray. On Henry's side were the official classes, the smaller nobles, the towns and the clergy, and in England he was supported also by the Earls of Cornwall, Surrey, Gloucester, Hertford, Pembroke, Essex, Salisbury, Warwick and Northampton.

Revolt of
Barons,
1173.

The time had indeed passed for a purely feudal revolt either in France or England. However unpopular Henry's exactions may have been, and there is no evidence that they were, the taxpaying classes were now much larger than of old and the chief interest of the majority was to see that the great feudal nobles paid their proper share. The resort to scutages levied on a broad basis, to tallages, to taxes on movables and to frequent *dona* and *auxilia* meant not that more money was being raised (the total revenue in 1189 was under £50,000 as compared with something over £60,000 in the 31st year of Henry I) but that the old basis of assessment had completely broken down. The sheriffs' farms brought in at the beginning of Henry's reign only £8000 as against the customary £12,000, the reduction being due partially to allowances for "waste" but mainly to alienations of land to the growing body of the official classes for whom an income had to be found. The danegeld had over the generations been subject to so many

THE REVOLT OF 1173

remissions that it yielded in 1157 barely half of the £4500 which the tax provided under Henry I and this in itself was a reduction on the yield in earlier reigns. Danegeld was in fact given up after the first year of Henry II's reign. As for scutages, the *servitium debitum* of the tenants-in-chief had been fixed, as we have seen¹, quite arbitrarily. Under Henry II, the ecclesiastical fiefs were from the first taxed on the fairer basis of the number of knights actually enfeoffed, and ultimately, and probably as early as 1159, all feudal tenants were called on to pay on a more realistic basis. Finally, from 1170 onward, the sheriffs became to all intents and purposes officials of the exchequer and we may assume that a larger proportion of the miscellaneous revenues, notably the fines, amercements and the forest courts, found its way to the exchequer. The sheriffs were also responsible for collecting *dona* from the shires, these being presumably, like the *auxilia* of the feudal tenants, additional sums bringing the customary "farm" into relationship with the contemporary capacity to pay.

Bearing in mind that the effect of these measures was not to increase the total revenue from taxation, it is clear enough that the more equitable the basis of assessment, the less opposition there would be, except from the great feudal chieftains who, under the system prevailing in the Conqueror's time, and indeed until the organisation of the exchequer under Henry I, were tax gatherers rather than tax payers, and tax gatherers moreover who were judges in their own court. The revolt of 1173, as far as it had any origins other than mere personal caprice, was a revolt of the great feudatories against the new centralised government and its machinery for the orderly and systematic collection of revenues not on an arbitrary basis of custom determined by favour but, by and large, on the basis of ability to pay. No wonder that the revolt was limited to the seizure or defence of a few castles, and that like a fire of straw it blazed up ferociously only to burn itself out innocuously and almost at once.

This view is strongly supported by the character and circumstances of the two decisive military engagements, the first at Dol, in Brittany, on the 26th August, 1173, and the second at Alnwick in Northumberland in mid-July, 1174. Once the border countries of Brittany and Scotland were brought to heel, the rebellion in the territories directly governed was brought to an end.

Battle of
Dol, 1173.

¹ See p. 378, *supra*.

At Dol, where Henry commanded in person and achieved one of his very rare military successes, a great number of notables were captured, and Louis of France was ready at once to discuss peace. Henry met Louis at Gisors, and although no agreement was reached, and Louis professed to stand by Henry's sons and their demand to be placed in positions of absolute independence, their demand, that is, for the partition of the Angevin dominion, the continental revolt was over. The rest, as far as the Continent was concerned, was face-saving. In the spring of 1174 Henry made a triumphal progress through Maine, Anjou and Poitou and stormed Saintes. On the 8th July, 1174, he sailed for England and on the 12th July did penance at the tomb of Becket at Canterbury. On the 17th July he had the news of the great victory won by the Yorkshiresmen under Ranulf Glanvill and the Stutevilles over the King of Scots and their capture of the king at Alnwick. The official classes had proved their superiority over the feudal nobility in the field as well as in the courts. It was a significant and pregnant development.

Battle of
Alnwick,
1174.

By the 6th August all was over and Henry returned to France, where on the 30th September his three sons submitted and were given generous annuities but no territorial jurisdiction. Henry, the young king, was held bound to recognise the provision about to be made for the youngest brother, John, who was to marry the heiress of the Gloucester and receive numerous scattered fiefs in England, Normandy, Maine, Anjou and Touraine.

Later in the same year William the Lion, King of Scots, who had been kept prisoner since Alnwick, agreed to do homage to the king at York in a form which would make Scotland completely subordinate to England, an arrangement which but for Richard's recklessness in 1189 might well have led to the union of the two kingdoms. The treaty with Scotland was ratified on the 8th December, 1174, at Valognes, and the Scottish king was sent to England to be released as soon as he had surrendered as security some hostages and the castles of Berwick, Roxburgh, Jedburgh, Edinburgh and Stirling.

Treaty of
Falaise,
10th Aug.,
1174.

The formal homage of the Scottish king, which was rendered at York in 1175, ended the last purely feudal rebellion in England's history. It had shown that a strong and just government had nothing to fear from even the most powerful of its subjects in England. The issue on the Continent was less clear-cut. The jealous ambitions of the young princes and

the resentful hostility of the king of France remained unsatisfied and unappeased. Nevertheless, we must resist the temptation to read history backwards. When on the 31st October, 1175, the Papal Legate, Cardinal Hugo, was received by the king at Winchester and allowed to settle the outstanding differences between Canterbury and York, it must have seemed to every one that the king's power stood once more supreme in western Europe, hallowed once more by the favour and friendship of the papacy.

The next six years were the years of fulfilment. In England, Church and baronage alike were quiet and co-operative and the great programmes of administrative and legal reform foreshadowed at Clarendon nine years before could now go forward. Abroad, Louis of France, failing in health and never superabundant in energy, was giving up the unequal struggle to expand his territory at Henry's expense. When on the 22nd August, 1179, Louis came on a pilgrimage to Canterbury, the drama was played out. Three months later he had a stroke, and his son Philip began his long and formidable reign. But Philip, self-styled Augustus, was only a boy and Henry in 1179 was at the height of his physical and intellectual powers. He could still exercise an effortless superiority. For two more years he played unchallenged his role of the elder statesman of the west, setting a fashion in kingship which few have followed. His daughter Matilda was already married to Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony. Eleanor he had married in 1176 to Alfonso III of Castile and, in the same year, his youngest daughter Joanna, had been engaged to William II of Sicily. Frederick Barbarossa was his distant cousin. A king among kings, he mediated in 1180 between the young king of France and his mother and relatives, and in the following year between the Pope and the King of Scots and the King of France and the Count of Flanders, once more an English ally. In 1182 he arranged new settlements between France and Flanders and France and Burgundy.

Philip
Augustus
of France,
king,
1180-1223.

The year before, in 1181, Alexander III and Roger, Archbishop of York, had died. Of all the chief actors in the great drama which had begun at Westminster in 1163 and ended in Canterbury Cathedral in December, 1170, only Henry remained. He might—a lesser man must—have felt secure as well as supreme. But it was in this year, 1181, that Henry ordered, as the last of his great English reforms, the Assize of Arms.

Assize of
Arms,
1181.

The Assize prescribed a helmet, coat of mail, shield and lance as the equipment to be maintained not only by all knights but by all others who owned property or rents to the value of sixteen marks. Men worth ten marks had to have an iron skull-cap, hauberk and lance, and burgesses and lesser freemen a quilted jacket with iron skull-cap and lance. The Assize also forbade men to serve abroad without the king's consent and forbade the export of ships or ship timber. Considered as a military measure, the new regulations consolidated the old fyrd in one organised army under the central government. Politically, the Assize was even more significant. First, it marked the end of the licence extended by the feudal system to private adventuring abroad by the great fief holders. Secondly, the new army was not a feudal levy but subject to the sheriffs and justices. Thirdly, the Assize equated in status and responsibility the small landholder with the knight. Fourthly, it enjoined the justices to hold inquests and extract sworn testimony from juries as to the men liable in every hundred and borough in the different categories. It was thus, politically, in line with the Assize of Clarendon and the Assize of Novel Disseisin, with which Henry had begun his great reforms in 1166, with the Assize of Mort d'Ancester of 1176 and with the Grand Assize of 1179. Broadly speaking, for military obligations dependent on and arising out of land tenure and enforced by the machinery of the lord's court is substituted a common obligation of service to the Crown, the nature and amount of the obligation being determined by the king's officials in the king's courts in the light of the sworn testimony of the neighbours.

The extension of the protection of the king's courts to freeholders was perhaps the most immediately significant of Henry's reforms, but between 1176 and 1179 changes were made in the organisation of the king's courts, which have exercised a permanent influence on the British constitution. These reforms are probably to be associated with Ranulf Glanvill, who had risen high in favour since his victory at Alnwick in 1174 and who succeeded Richard de Lucy as justiciar in 1179. Glanvill's name is famous in the history of English law for the book, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Anglie*, which colloquially bears his name,¹ and is, after the *Dialogus de Scaccario*, our principal authority for the legal procedure of the period.

Ranulf
Glanvill,
justiciar,
1179.

¹ More probably it was compiled under his direction, possibly by Hubert Walter, justiciar and Archbishop of Canterbury in the next reign.

The most important change was the separation, at all but the highest level, of the judicial from the administrative functions of the king's *Curia*. In 1178 a tribunal of five judges, "*justiciarii in banco sedentes*" as Glanvill calls them, was set up to deal with all ordinary cases which came up for hearing at the *Curia Regis*, other than cases touching the financial rights of the Crown, which were already separately dealt with by the Exchequer. The old *Curia* consisted of the great officers of the household, the justiciar, the chancellor, the treasurer, the barons of the exchequer, with such clerks, stewards and other officials as the king might summon. The *Curia in Banco* was a judicial committee of the old *Curia*, and was appointed annually from the panel of judges. But the old *Curia* still retained judicial functions, for the king in council remained the last court of appeal, and from this function descends the equitable jurisdiction of the courts, the judicial powers of the chancellor and the judicial committee of the Privy Council. The *Curia Regis in Banco*, though it remained for a time a travelling court, waiting on the king, came eventually to sit permanently at Westminster and is the unquestioned legal ancestor of the later Court of King's Bench.

At the same time that the court of five judges was instituted, the circuits of the travelling justices were revised and their numbers appear to have been reduced. The *iters* of 1178 were served by eight judges, as compared with the previous eighteen.

Justice under this procedure was neither swift nor sure, but it was justice as distinct from executive act or royal favour. Writs could be had of right, and a suitor who obtained his writ could be sure that sooner or later he would get an impartial if not what we should to-day consider a judicial hearing. The complaints we hear concern mostly the forest laws, where justice was of the old kind, arbitrary and not subject to appeal. Fines for offences against forest laws were severe and came to form a quite substantial portion of the revenue. Within the boundaries of a royal forest—and there were 69 belonging to Henry II—royal prerogative ruled. "The ordinary law of the land did not prevail."¹ As agricultural values increased, the tendency to encroach on the forests, to cut timber and to snare game also increased and the king's revenues were not such as to make any of these practices tolerable. The rights of the king in these matters were immemorial, so the case ran, but con-

¹ H. W. C. Davis, *England under the Normans and Angevins*, p. 275.

temporary opinion held otherwise. The fact remains that the forest administration was a great provider of revenue. The same is true of the Jews who were also outside the law and conducted their chief trade of usury at the sole discretion of and by favour of the king. They made a lot of money and much of it was taken from them when they lived and the rest of it when they died. They were playing an increasing part in the nation's economy, and probably a useful one. The great monastic landlords used them regularly to finance their estate management and the Crown used them as regularly to finance the country. But the Jews were, in a sense, privileged, in as much as they enjoyed the king's protection, and their debts, like those of the king, took precedence over those due to ordinary creditors. The Jews alone had the right to lend money at interest, usury being forbidden to Christians under the Canon Law, and, as men enjoying a protected monopoly, they became exceedingly and, no doubt, excessively unpopular. They could rely on obtaining interest at 20 per cent, and often at a higher figure. Much of their profits ultimately came to the exchequer—the annual revenue from the Jews was probably over £3000 a year—but the public paid dearly, as did the Jews themselves, if only by reason of the unpopularity which they were acquiring, which led to disgraceful acts of riot and robbery in the next reign. If there was a lack of Christian charity in the Jewish lenders, there was an even greater lack of it in the hearts of the borrowers.

Admirable though Henry II's record is as a reformer, he never came near putting the nation's finances beyond the need of such adventitious sources of revenue as the forest laws and the Jews. An experiment with a tax on movables had been made in 1166 and in 1188 the so-called Saladin tithe was a further move towards sane taxation, but such taxes were still, by the custom of the times, regarded as exceptional and kings had to bow to the prevailing prejudice.

The Christmas of 1182 was kept by Henry II at Caen. The young King Henry fitz Henry and his queen, Richard, Geoffrey and the Duke and Duchess of Saxony were with him. The gathering was intended apparently to lead up to a general and final family reconciliation, particularly between the young king and his brother Richard, but it ended with another bitter quarrel between Richard and his father and brother, and within a few months the young king also was in arms against Henry. Richard was more or less in possession of his mother's

lands in Aquitaine and had a covetous eye on the key fortresses in Touraine. If there is a rational explanation of this last and final quarrel between Henry and his sons it lies here. On Henry's death the brother who held Touraine would hold the key to Henry's continental dominions. Richard was the greatest soldier of all the Plantagenets, and had also from his mother inherited a little of the romantic knight errantry of southern France, where the gestures of a romantic chivalry concealed tempestuous passions.

Richard was a lover of war, but his wars may well have had a purpose and his jealous Plantagenet brothers may well have known better than we can what this purpose was. In the summer of 1183 the young king died, and Richard and Geoffrey were nominally reconciled with each other and with Henry. But there was to be no more peace. Richard was now heir and Normandy and Maine, Anjou and Touraine became his natural inheritance. Henry wished now to place John in Richard's shoes in Aquitaine. Richard refused and desultory fighting broke out between John and Geoffrey on the one side, and Richard on the other. A more serious matter was that Philip of France was growing up. On the death of the young king, the Norman Vexin, which had come back to Henry as part of the dowry of Margaret, Philip's half-sister, should have been returned. Instead, a fresh treaty was negotiated under which Philip ceded the Vexin on condition that Richard or John should marry Alais, Philip's sister. For some reason—it has been suggested that Alais was or had been, or later became, Henry II's mistress—Henry was to be unable to fulfil this condition, and in an age when wars between kings were invariably conducted under the form of law and to enforce fulfilment of legal claims, the existence of such a valid ground for war was a permanent diplomatic asset which Philip, grown to manhood, would know well how to use. Nevertheless, the next two years were relatively peaceful.

In 1184 Pope Lucius III, hard pressed by rebels in Rome, asked leave to tax the English clergy. Henry left the decision to the clergy themselves and on their advice leave was refused. Otherwise there was little of note, except a new Forest Assize, largely a codification of laws already too harsh, and the appointment of Baldwin of Worcester to be Archbishop of Canterbury, on the death of Archbishop Richard. The election in 1185 can be described as almost canonical.

Lucius III,
Pope,
1181-5.

Christmas was kept at Windsor with another great family

gathering, although Richard was absent with the king's leave. Early in 1185 an embassy came from the kingdom of Jerusalem, backed with the Pope's approval, offering the crown to Henry and imploring his assistance against the Saracens. A Grand Council was called to Clerkenwell, which obediently refused to agree to the king going to Palestine, and the Pope did not press the matter, as he well might have done, in view of Henry's promise to take the Cross. Henry had duly had from Alexander III an indefinite extension of time but he was still bound. Furthermore, he alone had the power and authority to lead an effective Crusade and the statecraft to reap the fruits of the victory which he could have won. But Henry's loyalty was to his inheritance alone and his greatness was circumscribed within its broad but clear limits. Rather, he would make John king in Ireland and the new Pope, Urban III, agreed, and sent a Bull of approval. John's misconduct and the conduct of his friends merely led to a revolt, and in December, 1185, he was recalled, the military command being handed over to John de Courcy, the ablest of the original adventurers. Meanwhile peace was kept in France by yet a fifth promise to Philip to celebrate the marriage of Alais.

Urban III,
Pope,
1186-7.

But the clouds were gathering. In August, 1186, Geoffrey of Brittany died and seven months later his widow gave birth to a son, the ill-fated Arthur. Philip of France rightly claimed the wardship, as Henry's overlord, and had a further just grievance in Richard's attack on Toulouse. There were desultory French inroads into Normandy in the autumn of 1186 and a final breach with France in April of the next year. Henry placed four armies in the field, under Richard, John, his illegitimate son Geoffrey, now chancellor, and the Earl of Essex, and the demonstration of force was sufficient to win a two years' truce; but Philip retained Issoudun and Fréteval. The days of bloodless victory were over. Winter was near.

Gregory
VIII, pope,
1187.

On the 4th October, 1187, Jerusalem fell to the Saracens and the new Pope, Gregory VIII, appealed to the world for help. Richard first and on his own responsibility took the Cross from the Archbishop of Tours. In January, 1188, Henry, Philip of France and the Count of Flanders met near Gisors and all three and their followers took the Cross from the Archbishop of Tyre. The kings of France and England agreed to call on their subjects for a tenth of all their rents and movables and Grand Councils, called by Henry at Le Mans and at Geddington in Northamptonshire, agreed. In England and in

THE DEATH OF HENRY II

Normandy the money was assessed by local juries and collected by royal commissioners under stringent regulations applied equally to all classes. If Henry was no crusading zealot, his careful husbandry and his inheritance contributed something at least to the cause.

But the soul of Europe was hardly aflame with zeal. While Henry was in England, a revolt broke out in Aquitaine and as a sequel war came between Richard and Philip. Henry's cup of bitterness was filled when a disgraceful quarrel between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Canterbury monks threatened to disturb the peace of the Church and to embroil him once more with the papacy.

Clement
III, pope.
1187-91.

On the 10th July, 1188, Henry left England for the last time.

Much that followed remains obscure. Henry had been manœuvred in his absence into war with Philip. When the usual negotiations began, he found Philip and Richard united against him to demand for Richard recognition as his father's heir and, evidently, the immediate possession of Poitou, Maine, Touraine and Anjou. When Henry refused Richard did homage to Philip and rode off with him to Amboise. The same night he summoned his followers to war.

The Pope tried to reconcile Philip and Henry and to avert a war which must fatally delay the Crusade, but he failed and in June, 1189, Philip and Richard entered Maine to drive Henry from Le Mans. Here the curtain falls. The rest was darkness, despair, humiliation and death. Driven from Le Mans, which he set on fire, Henry II went with only a handful of followers by devious ways to Chinon. His two armies he sent back to Normandy. Normandy he would save for John, and for John's sake would be a suppliant for peace. He was forced to concede all that was asked. It mattered not at all. He was a dying man. He met Philip and Richard near Colombières on the 4th July. On the 6th July he died at Chinon, at the age of 56, having been king of England for thirty-five years and ruler of his great continental dominion since his boyhood. He died alone, and full of resentment and ready to the last with his inveterate legalism to justify all his actions. He was buried at Fontevrault on Saturday, the 8th July.

Death of
Henry,
1189.

Henry II had been a dying man when he came to terms with his foes, but he had given away nothing of his dominions except his claims to Auvergne. He had left to his heir the obligation to pay an indemnity to Philip of 20,000 marks and,

inevitably, to marry Alais. Otherwise Richard entered substantially into the whole great inheritance which Henry, until he learned on his death-bed that John too had deserted him, had perhaps meant to leave to his younger and more worthless son.¹ The end of Henry II, bitter and grievous, was thus not in the nature of a tragedy. His life's work remained, and his historic achievement in creating in England a strong central government broadly based on the rule of law and the co-operation of all the middle classes was unaffected by the blow to his fortunes in Normandy.

Richard
Cœur-de-
Lion,
king,
1189-1199.

The friendship of Philip and Richard lacked the cement of mutual advantage now that Henry was dead, but with both kings pledged to the crusade, and Richard fully determined on his splendid adventure, the appearances were preserved because they must be. Richard and Philip duly conferred, Richard undertook to pay the indemnity and to marry Alais, and the kings agreed to start for the Holy Land in the spring of the following year. On the 13th August Richard landed in England.

Richard the Lion-hearted knew England less than any of her kings since the Conqueror. He was by nature and habit a rebellious French nobleman of the expiring Feudal Age, an age which Henry II had brought to a clear sharp end in the country of which Richard now found himself king. He regarded war as the normal occupation for a nobleman in the age of chivalry and, like Bertrand de Born, that "meteoric and malignant troubadour" who had been behind most of the risings and rebellions and treasons in southern and central France during Henry's reign, Richard probably welcomed the coming of spring because it was the season when knights go to war, "when the meadows are white with pavilions, when hinds and their flocks scurry over the plains before the advance-guards of armies."² Within the code of this flamboyant chivalry, there was no political morality and only the loose laws of personal allegiance enforced restraints. The insupportable disorder which naturally arose in lands where these manners prevailed had never been known in England, nor, for that matter, in Normandy. England was now to pay dearly for having even the best of the knights errant as king.

¹ He had instructed his son Geoffrey, the Chancellor, and the Earl of Essex that in the event of his death the castles in Normandy should be handed over to no one save John.

² Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

Richard had the qualities of his defects. He was a great soldier, brave, energetic and skilful. He was reckless in his statecraft, but generous between man and man, quick to anger and quick to forgive. He regarded the lands and wealth of England as so many sources from which to draw money to sustain his adventures and redeem the misfortunes to which the troubadour in action was inevitably subject. But just as in the field he showed strategic insight and tactical skill as well as personal gallantry, so there was in the short run a certain shrewdness in his statecraft. On the whole he chose his advisers well and trusted them when they deserved it. Yet he began his reign with a profligate sale of offices, by releasing the kingdom of Scotland from the English suzerainty in return for a huge money payment, and by taking Ranulf Glanvill, Archbishop Baldwin and Hubert Walter, the three ablest and most trustworthy of his counsellors, to the Crusade and leaving England at the mercy of the intrigues of his brother John. With reckless generosity he had established John, already in possession of the important honour of Lancaster, not only as heir of the Gloucester lands, but as virtual king of the western counties—Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, where he received all the royal revenues and was responsible to no one.

As a counterpoise, perhaps, to his brother, Richard set in the justiciarship William Longchamp, Bishop of Ely. There is some mystery over Ranulf Glanvill's resignation of this office. Some chroniclers regarded it as voluntary; others say he was dismissed and fined. In his place, Richard had first appointed his father's old friend, the Earl of Essex (son of the infamous Geoffrey de Mandeville of Stephen's reign) jointly with Hugh Puiset, Bishop of Durham, but the earl died almost at once and Longchamp quickly and with Richard's consent ousted Puiset, despoiled him of his estates and offices (for which he had paid 2600 marks to Richard) and became for a short time the chief man in England, receiving a legatine commission from the Pope as well as the sole justiciarship.

Longchamp himself is said to have paid Richard £3000 for his offices. Godfrey de Lucy, son of the former justiciar, was made Bishop of Winchester but bought at the same time two royal manors worth £200 a year for £3000. All but seven of the sheriffs were dismissed and the new sheriffs had to pay a fine on their appointment. Such payments by sheriffs had been customary in the past, but there is no doubt that Richard sold offices and forestalled Crown revenues on a large scale. Richard

of Devizes reports him as saying that he would sell London if he could find a purchaser.

Richard's objective, of course, was to collect more money for the Crusade and the permanent loss to the Crown was probably small as Richard never hesitated to deprive a man of the office or the estates which he had sold to him if the results of the bargain proved unsatisfactory. The moralisings of the historians are indeed altogether too easy. Henry's French campaigns were financed by the feudal revenues and served by the feudal levies of his French possessions and by small forces of mercenaries paid for out of the proceeds of English scutages raised for the purpose of specific expeditions which were usually relatively short. The provision of a fleet and army for three years' service in Asia Minor was, however, an undertaking quite beyond the regular financial resources of any government in the twelfth century. The Saladin tithe had not brought in all that was needed and contemporary political science knew only two other methods of filling a large gap between revenue and expenditure: one was the sale of offices and the other the alienation of lands or the surrender of rights. Both methods were employed by Richard, and had the Crusade succeeded, history would have long since forgotten the means by which it was financed.

Beyond forming the new administration and raising revenue, Richard was called on to settle, for a time at least, the great quarrel between Archbishop Baldwin and the Canterbury monks, which had begun in 1185 and was not finally settled until 1200, after having engaged the attention of three English kings and five popes, to say nothing of the Emperor Barbarossa, the king of France, the king of Sicily, and the count of Flanders.

Baldwin,
Arch-
bishop of
Canter-
bury,
1180-1190.

Archbishop Baldwin was a Cistercian monk of high character. The monks of Canterbury present a less edifying picture. After the murder of Becket, Canterbury became one of the great pilgrimage centres of the western world. We have already noted how Henry II and Louis of France came in state to do penance at Beckett's tomb. Humbler men came in their thousands. The monks grew very rich and their hospitality world famous. At the prior's table at dinner seventeen courses would be served. Baldwin desired to resume for the see of Canterbury—in contradistinction to the monastery—the Church oblations and the revenue of four churches appropriated to the convent almoner. These revenues had been given over

to the monks by Anselm to avoid the Crown securing them when the see was vacant and because the Canterbury monks were at that time famous for their school and their learning. By 1185 things had changed, and Baldwin, an ascetic monk, found conditions at Canterbury extremely offensive. At the same time, he had plans for founding, with the revenues which he wished to resume, a new school under secular control and a new ecclesiastical foundation whose canons would be the suffragan bishops of the see.

The monks of Canterbury appealed to Rome both against the resumption of revenues (which two popes had specifically approved) and against the new foundation. The dispute was carried on over many years with the utmost bitterness and all the usual weapons of ecclesiastical warfare, suspensions, withdrawal of faculties, appeals and counter-appeals, and excited a surprising amount of attention all over western Europe because the autonomy of the monastic order was, or was felt to be, the chief bulwark alike of the Church's power against the State and of the Pope's claims to universal jurisdiction in Church affairs.

The monks of Canterbury were, politically speaking, in the wrong. The revenues of the chief cathedral church of England could not morally be claimed by them from the archbishop, and the new school which their archbishop proposed could only damage them if their own school had fallen into relative disrepute. But others, who backed the monks, looked perhaps farther. The monks' real case was that the new collegiate church and school would rival and eclipse their influence and come to dominate the election to the see, that the link with Rome would be cut once the most ancient and historic monastic foundation in England became subordinated to the secular clergy, and that a schism in the western Church might well follow. "It is curious," says Bishop Stubbs, certainly no ultramontane papist, "to note how nearly their" (the monks') "instincts led them to anticipate the results which, four centuries later, did follow the abolition of the monastic orders in England." It is probably true to say that the quarrel between the monks and their archbishop, which lasted over three reigns, was more important in its ultimate bearing on the strength and cohesion of the Church in the west than the far more dramatic conflict between Henry II and Becket. In this case the archbishop, supported usually by the king, was the ultimate loser. But there were no battle honours.

The affair was half fought when Richard first had to deal with it. The archbishop had deposed the prior and appointed a new one, and the monks had been blockaded in their monastery and forbidden the service of the altar. Baldwin as a coronation gesture had raised his blockade but had failed to induce the monks to settle the quarrel. Richard, anticipating an uninvited and unwelcome Papal Legate, went in state to Canterbury, on the 28th November, 1189, and a compromise was reached. The archbishop cancelled the appointment of the new prior and agreed to restore the convent estates, to demolish the new college buildings at Hackington and to transfer the material and the establishment to Lambeth. For the rest, the monks threw themselves, in no very humble frame of mind, we may suppose, on the mercy of the archbishop.

The end of the story may well be told here. In 1192 the new church at Hackington was also pulled down at the insistence of the monks and in 1197 they appealed to the Pope to order the Lambeth college to be closed. The Pope at the time was Celestine III and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Hubert Walter. Richard took the college under his protection and occupied the conventual estates, forbidding the monks to obey the Pope's mandate, which was in their favour. In 1198 the Pope delivered his final judgment, wholly in the monks' favour, and ordered both Richard and the archbishop to obey it. Richard refused but at the critical moment he died. In the middle of the following year a final settlement was reached wholly in the monks' favour, except that, in form, the settlement was a compromise freely arrived at between equals and not a settlement dictated by Rome. It was shown once and for all that there was to be no rival pope at Canterbury. The monks had won their fight; no second attempt was made to apply the revenues of the monasteries to public purposes.

Important as was this dispute, its details are inevitably elbowed off the crowded pages which have to tell the history of the years from the 24th June, 1190, when Richard received the scrip and staff from the Archbishop of Tours, to the beginning of the thirteenth century. These are, indeed, decisive years, which saw the failure of the Third Crusade and the consolidation of that Moslem power in Asia Minor which still presents the west with a problem, the significant growth of the national monarchy of France, and, in 1204, the loss of Normandy to the French king. At that point of time we shall bring this introduction to a close. The thirteenth century sees

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 1204

England no longer an integral element in the feudal society of western Europe but the first of the independent nation states beginning slowly to speak her own speech and find her own way of life. It only remains to summarise the disastrous events, as they must have seemed to those who lived among them, which so sundered us from the political fortunes of Europe that we became before any others a separate and distinct people, albeit within the fellowship of the still homogeneous and Christian civilisation of the west.

Chapter Sixteen

FROM 1154 TO THE LOSS OF NORMANDY

THE First Crusade had been relatively successful because the power of Islam had been weakened by schism. The Fatimite Caliphs who had set up a rival dynasty in 909 had established themselves in Cairo in 969. The religious loyalties of Islam were thus divided. The first Crusaders had established themselves on the Syrian coastline and had thus secured their communications with the west through the sea-ports of Sidon, Tyre, Acre, Haifa, Caesarea and Jaffa. Between the coast and the mountainous uplands to the east and north is a narrow plain which the Crusaders held by their command of the sea and by a chain of inland fortresses. From south to north the more famous of these fortresses were Eila (on the Gulf of Akabah at the head of the Red Sea); Montreal (near Petra) and Kerak; then a chain of secondary forts covering the defiles leading to the Jordan; lastly, the castles of Akkar, Krak des Chevaliers and Montferrand watching the chain of the Lebanon. "The sea to supply and castles to defend; these were the abutments of the Crusader's strategy."¹

The strategy was unsound. However great the European resources on which they could draw, the Crusaders could not hold Syria permanently unless they placed themselves astride the north-south communications between the Moslems in Egypt and Arabia and the Moslems in the north-east. There were three lines of communication: the coast road, which the Crusaders held; the valleys of the Jordan, the Litani and the Orontes which they partially controlled through their castles; and the desert road, east of the river valleys, which ran through Damascus to Aleppo. As Allenby was to find in 1918, this road and not the coast road was the key to Palestine and Syria. The First Crusade had fulfilled its task; it had gained control of the ports and had reoccupied Jerusalem. The failure of the Second Crusade in 1148 to capture Damascus and so to control the desert road was a misfortune which was bound to prove a disaster if ever the Moslems became reunited. This reunion, facilitated by the internal quarrels and jealousies of the four Crusaders' principalities of Edessa, Antioch, Tripoli and

¹ Fuller, *Decisive Battles*, Vol. I, p. 231.



Jerusalem, was accomplished by Zangi of Mosul who captured Edessa in 1144; by his son Nur-ad-din who captured Damascus from a rival Moslem prince in 1154 and so united all the Moslem states of Syria under one rule; and by Saladin, nephew of Shirkuh, Nur-ad-din's vizier who in 1164 had begun the conquest of Egypt. Saladin completed the conquest in the autumn of 1169, abolished the Fatimite Caliphate in 1171 and when Nur-ad-din died in 1174 displaced the child-heir and became ruler of all the Moslems in Syria and Egypt.

At this point, while the Moslems under a great leader were preparing to strike at the Crusaders and destroy them, the Frankish power was at its lowest. The Franks had failed equally in political and in strategic understanding. They saw their four feudal states (over which the king of Jerusalem exercised a very nominal suzerainty) not as component parts of a near-eastern federation situated in a dominating strategic position across the communications between Africa and the uplands of Asia Minor, but as so many separate outposts of the feudal civilisation of western Europe. For their defence they relied largely on the military orders of the Knights Templars and the Knights of St. John who were recruited from Europe and who, being sworn to chastity, retained in great measure both their health and their vigour. It was far otherwise with the descendants of the earlier Crusaders. Only the first four kings of Jerusalem,¹ all born in Europe, were physically and morally equipped for their task, and even as early as the reign of Baldwin II the Frankish dominions had begun to disintegrate. The elaborate organisation described in the so-called Assize of Jerusalem² never existed, for the principality of Edessa in the north was lost in 1143 and Ascalon, the southern bastion of the kingdom of Jerusalem, was not captured by the Christians until ten years later. The principalities were each subdivided, in the fashion of southern France, into semi-independent baronies and in all of them, and in no fewer than 37 towns, were courts of High Justice. When new Crusaders arrived, and apart from the specific Crusades there was a constant flow to the Holy Land of adventurers good and bad, they were drawn off to take part in the continuous feudal struggles between these baronies or in the hardly less continuous dynastic quarrels.

¹ *Godfrey of Boulogne* (1099-1100), *Baldwin I* (1100-18), *Baldwin II* (1118-31), *Fulk of Anjou* (1130-43).

² Compiled in the thirteenth century and preserved in the archives of the Kingdom of Cyprus.

Whether as a result of the climate or of immorality—the absence of European women was probably important—the eastern-born Franks were unhealthy, sterile and very short lived. This was necessarily fatal to an administration based on feudalism, and meant that the deterioration was not only continuous but progressive. It was an added misfortune that during the forty years which separated the Second from the Third Crusade there had been little contact between the Latin east and the Latin west. This was partly due to the conflict between the Empire and the Papacy, but also to the efforts of the Eastern Empire, which should have seen the Moslem danger, to conquer southern Italy. Manuel Comnenus, the third of that Comnenian dynasty which ruled at Constantinople from 1081 to 1185, had come to the throne in 1143 and his reign saw the failure of the Second Crusade and the final consolidation of Moslem power under Saladin. Only once had he been able, or at least willing, to co-operate with the Franks and that was when he sent a fleet to assist the king of Jerusalem, Amaury I, in his abortive invasion of Egypt in 1169. After 1171 the Eastern Empire played no part in the affairs of the Latin East.

Manuel
Comnenus,
1143-1180.

Amaury died in 1174, the same year as Nur-ad-din, but there was no Christian Saladin to consolidate the crumbling kingdom. There was only Baldwin IV, a boy and a leper. Raymond of Tripoli was chosen as regent. Baldwin was doomed to an early death and the marriages of his sisters, Sibylla and Isabella, became fateful. Sibylla first married William of Montferrat, who died within a year, and then in 1183 Guy of Lusignan, a representative European-born soldier of fortune who enjoyed, as Baldwin's lieutenant, the support of many of his fellow adventurers, but incurred the deep and, it may be added, the deserved mistrust of the eastern-born Franks, whose one idea was to preserve their fiefs and live at peace with the Saracens. When Baldwin died in 1185 the native party secured the re-appointment of Raymond of Tripoli as regent and Sibylla's infant son (by her first husband) was crowned as Baldwin V. Raymond at once concluded a truce with Saladin but the death of the infant king in 1186 changed the situation. Sibylla and her husband were now entitled, under feudal custom, to the succession and the favour they enjoyed with the military orders and the soldiers of fortune decided the matter. Guy of Lusignan became king of Jerusalem. The truce with Saladin was foolishly broken by Reginald of Châtillon, an independent

Battle of
Hittin,
1187.

and feckless adventurer, and on 1st May, 1187, the Moslems crossed the Jordan. The campaign for the destruction of the kingdom had begun. On the 4th of July came the battle of Hittin, followed almost at once by the loss of the whole kingdom of Jerusalem except Tyre. Jerusalem itself fell on October 2nd, when king Guy was captured.

Hittin has long been reckoned one of the world's decisive battles, but it was lost before it was begun. Raymond, the ex-regent, was actually in negotiation with Saladin and threatened with an attack from Guy of Lusignan when Saladin crossed the Jordan. Tyre under Conrad of Montferrat, the brother of Sibylla's first husband, took no part in the struggle, nor had a mind to. The operations which led to the disaster were foolish and unskillful. Saladin with his back to the sea of Galilee was besieging Tiberias. Guy's army was based on Acre, with its forward base at Sefhoria. From there they had to advance across the desert to reach Saladin's army, which lay between them and water. It was a reckless adventure for an army riddled by faction and in part disloyal to its leader.

Such was the background of the Third Crusade which from its beginnings seemed foredoomed to failure. Yet it preserved the substance if not the shadow of the kingdom of Jerusalem for another hundred years. The glamour was lost; Jerusalem was never recaptured; the dream perished. But the trade was preserved; the ports were regained. The Moslem conquest of the Eastern Empire, which, had there been no crusade, must have followed quickly on Hittin, was indefinitely postponed. These decisive if irrelevant consequences were due to one man, Richard of England, the one great country in Europe which had no interest then perceptible in either of these achievements, nor could greatly profit by them.

Third
Crusade,
opens
1188

The Third Crusade began in January, 1188, when Henry II and Philip of France took the Cross. Its beginning was disgraced by treachery and dynastic quarrels among the Crusaders and marked by military disasters in the field. The quarrel between Richard and his father, and the resulting war between Henry II and Philip has already been described. Because of this, the military effort of the Crusaders was crippled from the first. Frederic Barbarossa had been forced to set out alone from Ratisbon in May, 1189, with a large and well equipped force, and at the same time a small fleet of Londoners, Norsemen and Frisians sailed from Dartmouth and arrived at Acre in September. The main English, Norman and Gascon fleets, with

the rank and file of the French and English armies, did not sail until March, 1190, and only reached Messina on September 14. King Richard and the king of France did not meet at Messina until September 23.

Before this, disaster had come to the forces of the imperial army. Barbarossa was attacked in Greece by the forces of the Eastern Empire, which had concluded an alliance with Saladin and thus finally discredited itself in the eyes of the west. He had fought his way through and crossed the straits of Gallipoli into Asia Minor when he was again attacked, this time by the Seljuks from Iconium. He fought through to Cilicia, where he was welcomed by the Armenians, but in June he was accidentally drowned and his army, which then came under the command of his son, Frederic of Suabia, was almost destroyed by plague at Antioch. Only a small remnant reached Acre in August, 1190.

The news of this disaster, which placed the whole burden of the campaign on the English and French would, in a different age, have had a sobering effect upon their leaders, but Richard was a soldier of fortune and Philip a scheming dynast. The one embodied the basic irresponsibility, the other the basic selfishness, of French feudalism. In the long record of political folly there is no chapter so crowded as that which records Richard's activities at Messina and Cyprus. The throne of Messina was in dispute between Constance, the sister of Henry VI of Germany, who was the aunt and heiress of William II (who had died in 1189) and a local usurper, Tancred. Richard's sister Joanna, the widow of William II, had been imprisoned by Tancred and Richard's chief object in deciding to winter at Messina was to rescue her and to secure the repayment of her dowry. Meanwhile the Crusaders would live on the country and the French king, who was uninterested in the whole affair, would wait on Richard's pleasure.

Richard's overbearing conduct and the indiscipline of his forces provoked a riot and antagonised not only the Sicilians but the French. Fighting broke out and Messina was stormed and sacked by the English, Richard personally leading the assault. He proceeded to extract a large indemnity and the repayment of his sister's dowry from Tancred, but as part of the bargain recognised Tancred as the lawful ruler of Sicily and offered to Tancred's daughter the hand of Arthur of Brittany.

Richard at
Messina,
Sept.,
1190-Apr.
1191.

By this time it was too late in the year for the fleet to sail

so the whole Armada settled down for the winter at Messina, leaving the Crusaders before Acre without reinforcement.

Richard
marries
Beren-
garia of
Navarre,
1191.

Early in 1191 Richard continued his diplomatic preparations for the failure of the Crusade by announcing his intention of marrying Berengaria of Navarre and breaking his engagement to Alais of France. A fresh treaty was patched up between the two kings, under which Richard had to pay 10,000 marks to Philip and make a fresh compromise over the Norman Vexin. This was settled on Richard and his heirs by Berengaria with remainder to Philip and his heirs.

Richard's was evidently the dominating force in Sicily and he had used it with reckless improvidence. He had made an enemy of the future Emperor, Henry VI, by recognising Tancred in Sicily and of Philip of France by breaking his solemn engagement to marry Alais. He had delayed the Crusaders' campaign by a year and exposed the advanced guard of his own forces and the native Franks and the Germans encamped before Acre to the terrible dangers from plague which were inseparable from siege warfare in an eastern climate.

But for Richard the winter was one of splendour and pleasure. Not until the spring came would he resume the responsibilities of kingship.

Richard possessed to the full his father's gift for the quick and effective transaction of any business he cared to take in hand. As a man of action he was even his father's superior, but his separate acts were never related to any end. Above all, he lacked completely Henry's instinctive timing. When he decided to break with Philip, he knew already that England was in a state of turmoil and that he was faced with a difficult campaign in Syria, rendered doubly difficult by his own delays. It was nevertheless sufficient for him that the balance of forces on the spot enabled him to force a new treaty on Philip. The consequences he would deal with as they arose.

Queen Eleanor arrived at Messina in March with Berengaria and gave Richard a full account of England's situation, where Longchamp's ruthless exactions and personal arrogance threatened to lead to a revolt. Richard sent the Archbishop of Rouen back to England with a letter authorising William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, and the Regency Council to take such action against Longchamp as the state of the country required. He left it to the archbishop to use this letter or not at his discretion. Philip and the French had left for Acre when

Eleanor arrived; Richard left ten days later and reached Cyprus on May 6th. Here he was within a few days' sail of the Syrian coast, but he delayed a month, partly to celebrate his marriage,¹ partly because of a series of quarrels with Isaac Comnenus, so-called Emperor of Cyprus, a kinsman of Leopold of Austria, the only country with whose leader he had so far failed to quarrel. In the end, Richard conquered the whole island and took Isaac to Acre with him as a prisoner. He reached Acre on June 8th, 1191, laden with booty and with a base for his forces provided by his latest conquest. He found the besiegers and the besieged at their last gasp. Five weeks later Acre surrendered.

Surrender
of Acre,
July, 1191.

It seemed an empty, or at least an unremunerative triumph. Philip of France, for one, took that view and left for home on August 3rd with half his followers. Most of the first leaders of the Crusade and thousands of their followers were dead of disease or the chances of war. Frederick Barbarossa and his son the Duke of Swabia, Queen Sibylla and her two daughters, the Patriarch Heraclius, Philip of Flanders, Theobald of Blois, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the former justiciar, Ranulf Glanvill, William, Earl of Derby, four archbishops and twelve bishops were among the dead. Guy of Jerusalem had survived, but his title, such as it was, had died with his wife and his claim was challenged by Conrad of Montferrat, the lord of Sidon and supported by the French. Richard inevitably had to pledge his support to Guy. Of the armies, Archbishop Baldwin's chaplain, who lived to tell the tale, tells us that there was "no sobriety, no faith, no charity, a state of things which, as God is my witness, I could not have believed had I not seen it."

Even before Acre fell, Richard had had a bitter quarrel with Leopold of Austria, already aggrieved by Richard's treatment of Isaac Comnenus. French, Germans and English were thus divided into separate and mutually hostile factions and although a settlement of the disputed succession to the kingdom of Jerusalem was patched up, Guy receiving a life tenancy with the succession to Conrad's heirs, Conrad had left for Tyre with his followers after the fall of Acre and remained there for most of the Crusade a doubtful and unwilling ally.

Celestine
III, pope,
1191-8.

To complete the tale of disaster, Saladin failed to fulfil the terms of the capitulation of Acre, which were that the True

¹ The ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Bordeaux at Limasol on 12th May.

Cross and the prisoners should be returned and an indemnity of £20,000 be paid in three monthly instalments. The first payment was due early in August and when it was not paid and the negotiations made it clear that it would not be, the Saracen prisoners taken at Acre, who were held as hostages by Richard and the French under the terms of the surrender, were executed. According to the English Chronicles, Saladin had previously murdered the prisoners taken from the Crusaders.

Richard now for the first time showed his temper and his generalship. His immediate task was to clear his flank by securing the coast as far south as Ascalon before marching on Jerusalem. This meant marching to a flank and exposing his army to desultory but damaging attacks from the land side, but he kept his forces, still formidable, under close control and succeeded in occupying Caesarea and in bringing the enemy to action on the road to Jaffa. At Arsuf on September 7th he won his first and decisive victory against Saladin. On September 9th he entered Jaffa; three weeks later he reached Lydda. In November he entered Ramleh; Ascalon had been abandoned by the Saracens and the stage was set for the advance on Jerusalem.

All this time Richard had been negotiating with Saladin for the cession of Palestine and he appears to have suggested a marriage between Saladin and his sister Joanna. These negotiations were the common form of feudal warfare which was essentially a war of position, in which the final trial of strength was always avoided. In December Richard advanced to Beit-Nuba, only ten miles from Jerusalem, and Saladin fell back before him. The road was clear for the capture of the city.

It was not to be. The real interest of the native Franks was the security of their own possessions and their fortresses. Once the coast was regained, they imagined that these were secure, and only those with personal possessions in or around Jerusalem desired to prolong the campaign. To keep an army in being, Richard had to agree to the abdication of Guy of Lusignan in favour of Conrad of Montferrat (Guy being consoled with the kingship of Cyprus), but the dissensions in his army and the complete indifference of the majority of the nobles to the religious purposes of the Crusade had forced him, early in January, to give up a direct attack on Jerusalem. While the intrigues of the French were active, he wisely decided to fortify Ascalon, which he reoccupied on January 22nd, 1192. In the spring Richard strengthened his hold upon the coast and re-

occupied the fortresses between the coast and Jerusalem. In June he advanced again to Beit-Nuba and captured, in a brilliant operation under his own command, an important caravan of 4700 camels carrying treasure and supplies from Egypt to Jerusalem.

At this high point of success, the Crusade was abandoned, and after an abortive counter-offensive by Saladin against Jaffa, a three years' truce was negotiated by Hubert Walter under which the Franks retained the coast towns from Joppa to Tyre, with free access for pilgrims to the Holy Places. Ascalon was to be demolished and the site left unoccupied. The settlement was a wise one and the proof was that it lasted a hundred years. Jerusalem could easily have been captured but, unless the Franks were willing to extend their operations and capture and hold Damascus, it would not have been held. The lords of Antioch and Tripoli, whose territories had never been in danger, the Genoans and the Pisans whose interest began and ended with the freeing of the seaports, and the overwhelming majority of the Crusaders themselves were anxious for peace. The consciences of all were satisfied by the restoration of the right of access of the pilgrims to Jerusalem.

Richard himself was ill and on October 9th, soon after the conclusion of the truce, he sailed from Acre. His sister, Queen Joanna, and his wife, Queen Berengaria, had already left.

The campaign had been an almost unbroken succession of military triumphs, all won under Richard's personal command. But the roughness of the age, the deep disunity of the forces under his command, and his own temperament, which remained to the last that of a soldier of fortune to whom victory was more important than its fruits, had roused deep personal enmities. Richard had imposed on selfish and disloyal allies a measure of discipline temporarily effective and had asserted his own personal ascendancy by a consistent display of ruthless and aggressive intolerance of opposition. Now, and for the rest of his life, he had to face the consequences.

Leopold of Austria he had personally insulted by tearing down his banner on the walls of Acre. He had dethroned Constance, the sister of the Emperor. He had made Philip of France an enemy for life by his marriage to Berengaria. The Greeks as well as Leopold deeply resented his seizure of Cyprus. In the background was the sinister figure of Conrad of Montferrat, cousin to the Emperor and to Leopold of Austria, the Germans' candidate for the throne of Jerusalem, whose

Crusade
aban-
doned,
Oct., 1192.

Death of
Saladin,
1193.

treachery had contributed to the disaster of Hittin and whose tardy loyalty to the Christian cause had never risen above the level of a sordid and selfish bargain. Conrad was now dead at the hands of an assassin, but the evil done by this first exponent of the *drang nach osten* lived after him. German feudalism, strong and jealous, was anxious to wound and not afraid to strike.

Historians talk glibly of the Age of Faith and it is certain that Christian beliefs were widely held, but they were effective only within the narrowest limits in determining conduct. By all the laws of Church and State the crusaders should have been united by their faith and ready to subordinate in its service every personal consideration, and on their return voyage should have been safe from attack, but the hand of every ruler in Europe was against Richard, and when he was shipwrecked at Aquileia he must try to make his way in disguise across a hostile Europe. He was captured outside Vienna on December 20th and became the prisoner of Austria and the Empire.

Richard's
capture,
1193.

The Archbishop of Rouen had reached England from Messina on April 27th, 1191, but he did not use Richard's letter authorising action against Longchamp because he found John in revolt against the Regency Council. He used his position as Richard's envoy to attempt to patch up a settlement, but no agreement was reached, and in October John was formally declared Richard's heir and Longchamp deprived of his office. John became virtual regent and the Archbishop of Rouen justiciar. So matters rested, more or less peacefully, until January, 1193, when the news that Richard was a prisoner reached England.

John at once crossed to France and did homage to Philip for all his brother's Continental possessions. He returned to demand recognition as king of England, optimistically asserting that Richard was dead. War broke out, but only on a desultory scale. John held his castles but he failed to get any support, and when Hubert Walter returned, the Regency Council had no difficulty in concluding a truce. Meanwhile, the justiciars had sent envoys to Richard, whom they found at Ochsenfurt on the Main on March 19th. Richard heard of John's attempted seizure of his throne with indifference. "Brother John," he said, "is not the man to win land by force if anybody cares to oppose the least force to him." He was

more concerned to see that Hubert Walter filled the vacant see of Canterbury and in this he was successful. Hubert was elected on May 30th and immediately afterwards he was appointed chief justiciar.

Hubert
Walter,
Arch. of
Canter-
bury,
1193-1205.

The outstanding problem was Richard's ransom, first fixed at 100,000 and later at 150,000 marks, of which 130,000 were to go to the Emperor and 20,000 to Leopold of Austria. Richard had also to liberate Isaac of Cyprus and to promise the hand of his niece, Eleanor of Brittany, to Leopold's son. Richard sent Longchamp back to England to settle the details of the ransom with the Regency Council, but they refused to discuss the matter with him. On their own initiative the council called for a levy of one quarter of all movables and rents and appointed Hubert Walter, Richard Fitz-Nigel the treasurer, two earls and the lord mayor of the recently recognised Commune of London as a committee to receive the ransom.

On the 29th of June, 1193, the Emperor gave a formal pledge to set Richard free on payment of 100,000 marks out of the total indemnity, and Philip of France warned his vassal John that "the devil was unchained." Richard was actually freed in February, 1194, and landed at Sandwich on March 13th to find John in open revolt in England after having surrendered most of Normandy to Philip. Richard himself had made reckless concessions to Philip the previous year in the idle hope of keeping him from an alliance with John, but this treaty was never meant to be kept, and Richard could and no doubt intended to plead that it was made under duress while he was a prisoner. The question never arose because Philip himself had broken his engagement by the time of Richard's return.

Richard
returns to
England,
1194.

John's castles at Tickhill and Nottingham were still holding out, but now they were quickly reduced. John was in Normandy and peace returned to England. Between March 30th and April 2nd a Grand Council was held at Nottingham and John was ordered to appear for trial within forty days. Meanwhile, many offices were bought and sold and scutage was taken for the war which must now be fought in Normandy to recover the territories alienated to Philip by John and others which Philip was actually attacking. On May 12th, after a stay of two months exactly, Richard left England for the last time, and Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, chief justiciar and, from the spring of the following year, papal legate, exercised all the powers of the king and the Pope

and ruled supreme in England over Church and State. The history of England until the end of Richard's reign is the history of Hubert Walter's stewardship, and the measure of his genius for government is that there is little to record save some wise and constructive measures of constitutional reform.

Yet this phrase must be used with reservations. There was no weakening of the idea that the new machinery of justice and inquest was the king's personal machinery to be used by other persons only by purchase and permission. That there was any conscious purpose of constitutional reform is uncertain. "To improve the machinery of justice," we are reminded, "was to improve the collection of the revenues and increase the royal income." On the other hand, as the same writer has pointed out, "the age is one in which the processes of justice, the organisation of the courts and the procedure necessary to secure justice in them, was greatly improved. There is no reason why we should not suppose that these improvements were foreseen and desired."¹

These considerations apply with particular force to Hubert Walter's most important reforms which placed on knights and small freeholders elected from each shire a great deal of administrative responsibility previously exercised by the sheriff. Four "Coroners," for instance, elected in each shire had the right to decide which cases were pleas of the Crown and therefore must come before the king's justices, and four elected knights had the duty of forming the juries required whether for the presentation of the cases to the justices or as fact-finders for fiscal inquiries. These elected knights and the juries which they formed tended to become under Hubert Walter's reforms actually juries of assessment and we have in them some of the direct ancestors of the mediaeval Parliament. It was found in effect that heavy direct taxation could only be imposed by consent. It would be, nevertheless, wrong to suppose that the discovery was a welcome one to the Crown.

These reforms went, logically enough, with a further restriction on the powers of the sheriffs, who were soon to be deprived not only of their right to select the juries but of the right to act as justices in their own territories. The sheriff indeed was fast losing all power, and the king's justices exercised, with the assistance of juries, a strict control over the sheriff's own court.

The list of inquiries submitted to the juries in 1194 has

¹ Adams, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-9.

come down to us. They had to report what pleas of the Crown are to be heard and for what private pleas permission to use the court had been obtained by writ (these would include writs obtained under the Assizes of Novel Disseisin and of Mort d'Ancestor and under the Grand Assize of 1179). Escheats had to be reported, and also wardships and marriages. They had to report on aids not yet paid and forfeited lands and chattels for which the sheriff was accountable. They had to see to the stocking and care of royal manors and that the property of Jews was enrolled and accounted for. Finally, they might have to assess the contributions due under one or more taxes. Juries had been used to assess the contributions to the Saladin tithe and were under Hubert Walter used regularly for fiscal purposes.

The constitutional implications of these reforms are evident to us. In times of stress it became customary to rely, in order to force through an unpopular tax, or to control a disloyal or corrupt sheriff, on the co-operation of elected representatives of the middle classes. To summon these elected representatives from the shires to Westminster was not a long step forward.

Under Richard I, or, no doubt, we should more accurately say, under Hubert Walter, there was a great extension of self-government to the towns. London had been given a charter by John when in rebellion against Richard and it had not been formally taken away; at any rate London retained the right, which Lincoln obtained in 1194, to appoint its own magistrates. Other charters were given in this reign to Winchester, Northampton, Norwich, Ipswich, Doncaster, Carlisle, Scarborough, and York. In John's reign a great number of other boroughs obtained charters, many of them getting the right to pay fixed sums for their privileges instead of being arbitrarily assessed to tallages; in 1215 London obtained the privilege of electing their own mayor every year.

The administration of justice under Hubert Walter was important not for new laws but for the machinery now generally used and, above all, for its continuity and regularity. The king's justice was becoming the "Common Law" and was hardening into fixed forms which it became powerless to alter. This also had constitutional consequences, albeit unforeseen. To secure justice denied by the rigid forms of the Common Law it was to become necessary to enact much new law and to expand the equitable jurisdiction of the king in council. The

Constitutions of Clarendon had been recommended as a statement of old custom, and the accepted constitutional principle, even under a legal reformer such as Henry II, was that the old laws of England were immutable. All this was to change. Men were soon to say that if the law failed to provide the right remedies it was the duty of the king to override the law or to amend it.

Hubert Walter's personal character did not impress his contemporaries but he was not the type to appeal to monkish chroniclers or ambitious politicians. He was neither saint nor scholar, and his chief administrative tasks were to raise money for the ransom of an almost unknown king—in his ten years' reign Richard spent less than ten months in England, which he had never previously visited for more than a few days—and to finance the wars in Normandy. Both taxes inevitably made Hubert unpopular. That he retained his office and the confidence of the Pope and two sovereigns is more valuable evidence of his quality. It is true that in 1198 he was directed by Innocent III to give up his justiciarship because he had dragged a rebel Londoner from sanctuary two years earlier and executed him. But he retained his position as legate and archbishop, and the Pope's ruling was given on the grounds that a conflict of duties had arisen which made it necessary, as a precaution for the future, to forbid one man to be the executive head of the Church and the State at the same time. When John appointed Walter to the lesser office of Chancellor on his accession the same Pope raised no objection. Richard for his part appears to have inquired at least once into Hubert Walter's financial administration, and the Abbot of Caen whom he sent over for this purpose died suddenly after dining with the archbishop. Needless to say, the heedless malice of a chronicler has suggested poison. We can disregard the charge. Hubert Walter was not only the first English commoner since the Conquest to rule supreme and with a free hand for any length of time but was by no means the least able and conscientious of that long line of chief ministers of the Crown to whom we owe so much more than we care to acknowledge.

Meanwhile, in Normandy, Richard, having allowed John to make his peace on the easiest of terms, was bringing victory out of defeat between 1194 and his death in 1199. He was almost continuously in the field and was almost always successful. The turning point came in 1197 when Richard re-created the old alliance between Normandy and Flanders.

Innocent
III, pope,
1198-1216.

Philip immediately signed a long truce and Richard proceeded to assemble his forces. He had no support from England. The baronage in the Great Council at Oxford in the autumn of 1197 refused his request for three hundred men at arms to serve abroad for a year, and in the next year a tax at the rate of 5s. a hide (not levied on the old artificial assessment but on the actual number of ploughs maintained) met with so much opposition that the clergy appear to have been exempted from it and the yield from the shires was negligible. Possibly the inquest, conducted by the knights of the shires and directed to ascertain the real number of ploughlands in each manor, was not intended to be followed immediately by a general levy. More probably, the protests received in the course of the inquest were so strong that the council postponed the collection of the tax. Certainly we have in these two years clear evidence that the baronage was tired of the French wars, which had been going on intermittently for half a century. Richard remained tireless, and when Baldwin of Flanders laid siege to St. Omer and Philip advanced to its relief, Richard intervened and inflicted two severe defeats on him. By the end of the year Philip was ready to surrender all his Norman conquests except Gisors, but Richard was not ready to concede anything. The Pope now took a hand and a truce for four years was nearly concluded on terms even more favourable to Richard when the negotiations were adjourned to enable Richard to deal with a recalcitrant vassal in the Limousin. In laying siege to the castle at Châlus on March 26th, 1199, Richard was struck by a bolt from a crossbow and died of blood poisoning on April 6th. He was buried by Hugh of Lincoln at Fontevrault on Palm Sunday, April 11th.

Death of
Richard,
1199.

Richard's death was emblematic of the dazzling misfortunes of his career. The foremost soldier of his age, he never won a campaign or lost a battle. Even Châlus surrendered before his death, but the triumphant humiliation of Philip was never accomplished. The Vexin was never recovered. He had wit without wisdom and generosity without charity, but worst of all he was ambitious without being calculating. Two very great men, Hugh of Lincoln and Hubert Walter, loved him well and to the end. He clearly dominated those with whom he came into personal contact and won the affections of those whose purposes he shared. But he could not serve the time. He was spendthrift of money and left his subjects in England and in France impoverished and hungry for peace. All that

he left to buttress his great dominions was the fortress of Chateau-Gaillard on the island of Andelys on the Seine. This magnificent structure was perhaps modelled on the Latin fortresses in Syria and marks an important development in the history of western fortifications. It was built to replace the lost fortresses and natural defences of the Norman Vexin and to cover Rouen. It was judged impregnable, but it proved in the event no substitute for the Lion's Heart.

"The figure of the great soldier," says the historian of the Loss of Normandy, "has stood as a screen between the Normans and the operation of those forces which were working in favour of Philip Augustus." These forces were military-political, sentimental and financial. Normandy could never be held as an outpost of an Angevin England on the flank of a united France. The French monarchy had strengthened its position during Richard's captivity not only by securing the line of the Epte, the natural frontier of Normandy east of the Seine, but by securing Artois from Flanders. The turning point would come if Anjou and Touraine could be detached from Normandy, which would then be cut off from Poitou and Aquitaine. The union of Anjou and Normandy was not a natural one and with Richard's death there was every hope of a disputed succession. Maine and Anjou, no doubt with every expectation of help from Philip, had declared for Arthur, and Constance, his mother, at the head of Breton forces had entered Angers immediately she heard of Richard's death.

Anjou was emphatically, by sentiment as well as in theory, a fief of the French monarchy. In this it differed from Aquitaine, which had once been a kingdom and was now a loose aggregation of semi-independent fiefs, or from Normandy, which had been conquered from France by an invading army and had been virtually independent for 250 years. Anjou also occupied a dominating strategic position either uniting or, if it seceded, cutting in two the Continental empire of the Angevins. It was thus probable that the fate of that Empire, and of the kingdom of France, would turn on the decision of Anjou.

In that decision sentiment could play only a small part, but the mingled fear and respect which Richard had inspired was not felt for his brother, to whom men looked neither for strong nor wise government. Philip Augustus, on the other hand, had been growing in strength and prestige during the

ten years of Richard's reign. He had increased his territories by securing not only the Norman Vexin but Artois, and his reign had coincided with a growing, if still largely romantic, respect for the Carolingian tradition. It is still far too early to talk of French nationalism, but the literature of the period tells none the less clearly of a measure of reaction from the extreme and selfish tendencies of French feudalism. The belief in the restoration of France as a political ideal was gaining ground.

The swift collapse of the Angevin power at the beginning of the twelfth century was, nevertheless, wholly unexpected, at any rate to the Angevins. John was accepted without question as Duke of Normandy and as King of England, although Hubert Walter is reported to have told John that by hereditary right he had no real claim to the throne. If he said so, he was not wholly correct, for the English law on the point was still undefined. The so-called representative principle—"the principle which allows the children or remoter descendants of a dead person to stand in that person's stead in a scheme of inheritance"¹—was still struggling for recognition, and it was not until Edward I's reign that the son of an elder brother could recover land from his uncle by writ of right. Primogeniture was in England only slowly becoming the recognised rule and precedent was certainly on John's side.

John,
king,
1199.

Arthur's claim to Anjou and Maine was, of course, based on primogeniture as we understand it to-day, but the real importance of his position was that he provided the rebellious and discontented nobles with a bargaining counter. Fortunately for John, Richard's seneschal, Robert of Turnham, had surrendered to John the important castles of Chinon and Saumur, and Mercadier, the leader of Richard's mercenaries, was also faithful. But Angers, Le Mans and Tours were held for Arthur, and Constance, his mother, gave her son into Philip's keeping and allowed French troops to garrison the towns which had declared for him.

While John was being crowned in England, Queen Eleanor and the Duchess Constance toured Poitou and the Bordelais and secured a large body of support for Arthur. But the all-powerful William des Roches had yet to be won, and when Philip, relying on William's support, demanded from John the cession of Anjou, Poitou, Maine, Touraine and the Vexin, John refused to discuss the matter. Philip began the war by taking

¹ Pollock and Maitland, *History of English Law*, II.

Conches and Ballon but the sequel showed how even still was the balance of forces.

Philip, as the result of his separation from his wife and his marriage to Agnes of Merania, was weakened by a quarrel with the Pope, and his lands were threatened with an interdict. John's position, on the other hand, was by no means unfavourable on the surface: he had as allies Baldwin of Flanders and Reginald of Boulogne. He was supported by his cousin, the Emperor Otto, and by the Pope, and when in September after the destruction of Ballon, William des Roches, Arthur's chief supporter, came over to John, bringing Arthur and Constance with him, Philip had to conclude a truce. This was prolonged at the insistent request of the Papal Legate, and following a meeting between John and Philip in January, 1200, the Treaty of Le Goulet was concluded on the 22nd May.

Treaty of
Le Goulet,
1200.

This treaty, historically important as the last between a French and English king which acknowledged the English king's rights in Normandy, is on the face of it a puzzling document. John appears to have accepted the frontiers of 1195, which confirmed Philip in the possession not only of the Norman Vexin but also of key positions west of the Seine. The only modification John secured was that he retained the Chateau Gaillard on the island of Andelys which had been fortified subsequently. Further, John accepted Anjou and the overlordship of Brittany as an award made to him by the French court at Paris, and undertook to break his alliance with the Emperor and to release his allies of Flanders and Boulogne from any obligation to assist him against the interests of the French king. John further agreed to pay to Philip a relief, on succeeding to his French fiefs, of 20,000 marks in return for the recognition of his title by the French king.

We know neither why William des Roches came over to John (unless he resented Philip's destruction of Arthur's castle at Ballon) nor why John, having his support and the abandonment of Arthur's claims to Anjou, concluded a none too favourable treaty. Probably the matter was determined by the refusal of the nobles in the Angevin territories to fight for either king and the inability of the kings to finance a war which, if it could not be fought by English and French feudal levies, would have to be fought by mercenaries.

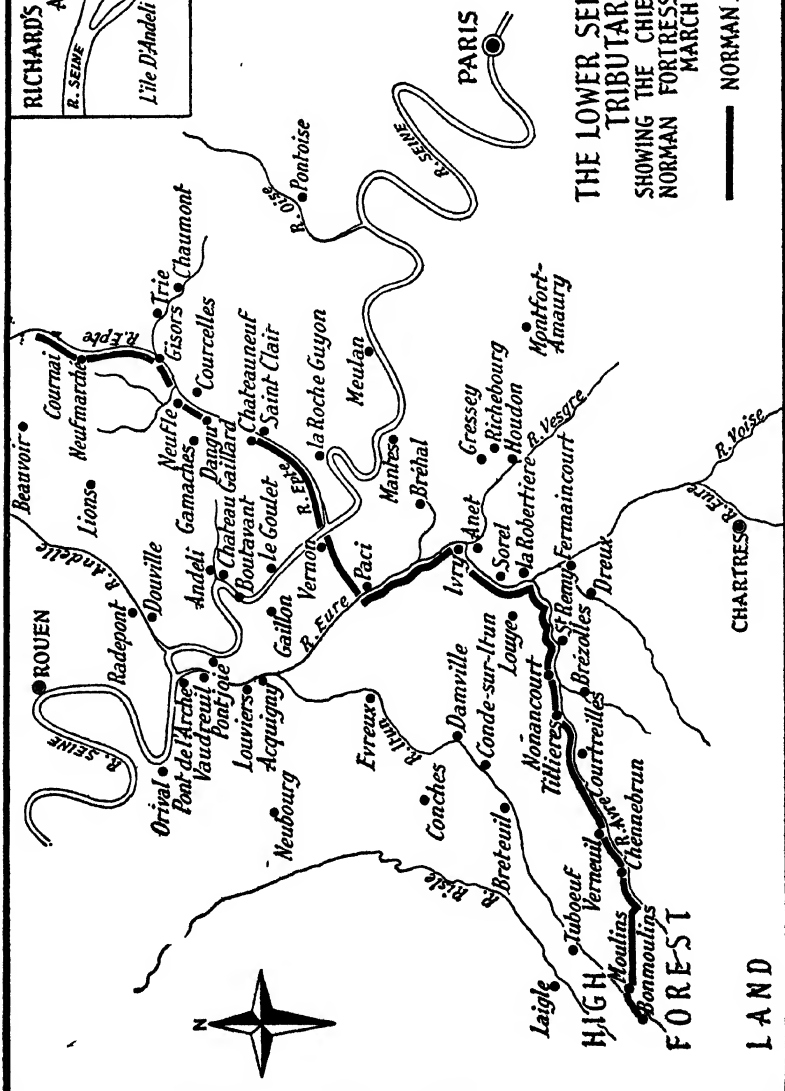
The cost of feudal warfare was growing apace, and so, at the same time, was the reluctance of the tenants-in-chief to serve in person. Vast sums were spent on the building of

RICHARD'S FORTIFICATIONS AT ANDELI



THE LOWER SEINE AND ITS TRIBUTARIES
SHOWING THE CHIEF FRENCH & NORMAN FORTRESSES ON THE MARCH

NORMAN BORDER, 1189



HIGH FOREST LAND

fortifications and provisioning of castles and on the wages of their garrisons. In 1184 the Earl of Arundel had over £4000 Angevin to carry out minor repairs to the castles at Gisors, Neufre, Neuf-chateau and Dangu on the Lower Epte. The fortifications of Chateau Gaillard and its armament cost in the years 1197 and 1198 over £55,000 Angevin or more than half the total ordinary revenue of England. By the beginning of the thirteenth century the great majority of the men in the service of Richard and John were either foreign mercenaries or knights and men-at-arms who fought for fixed wages, the knights for 6s., the sergeants for 2s. 6d., and the unmounted man-at-arms for 1s. a day. At such wages armies could not be kept in the field for any length of time and the will to peace of those who had to pay for them must have been strong. Yet the most important of the factors operating to make feudal wars unpopular was mechanisation. War was becoming at once a skilled and a dangerous trade. Powerful siege engines and the eastern crossbow with its iron missiles required expert handling and at the same time made warfare an unromantic affair of fortifications, mines and sieges. The inevitable growth of professional military leaders and expert technicians drawing large pay and monopolising weapons against which the feudal levies were largely powerless meant that the military and therefore the political power of the feudal nobility threatened to decline as warfare became endemic in any country. The towns were fellow victims with the nobles, because on them fell, at any rate in France, the greater part of the financial burden imposed by the new warfare. The chief social effect of war on the burgesses was that the Treasury was forced to borrow largely from the growing number of Italian and Jewish moneylenders. The result was a constant inflation, which penalised the whole trading community.

To these fundamental discontents must be added the physical havoc wrought in town and country by the endless wars of Richard's reign. We know from the life of Hugh of Lincoln that he received from his friends among the clergy of Anjou a terrifying account of the ruthlessness which Richard had been forced to show in order to keep his forces in the field. Violence, lawlessness and bad harvests had added famine to the other horrors of war, and in desperate conditions, war itself had degenerated into rapine and loot. Hungry and frightened men do not form disciplined armies. As the end of the century

approached men were widely prophesying the coming of anti-Christ.

While Richard's brilliant energies dominated the Norman scene, none of these powerful forces came effectively into play. The growing professionalism of the military machine which was to be John's undoing had worked in favour of the finest and most feared soldier of his age. If fighting for Richard was a doubtful joy, fighting against him was a thing to be avoided at all costs. Under John the position was reversed. Philip's reputation, second to Richard's, stood far higher than that of John, alike as a man and a soldier. He was, moreover, abreast of his times and expert in siege warfare. If ever there was to be an end of war and the recurrent paralysis of the countryside and, indeed, of all government (for the castles, which were now the supreme military objective, were still in Normandy and Anjou the centre also of civil administration), now was the time.

Peace was maintained for two years after the treaty of Le Goulet largely owing to Philip's quarrel with the Pope and the consequent interdict. Meanwhile John showed great energy in pulling together the administration of his still vast dominions. He had divorced his first wife and in 1200 he married Isabella, the daughter of the Count of Angoulême. This marriage, shortly followed by the crowning of Isabella at Westminster (on the 8th October, 1200) seemed at first to have strengthened John's position, for Angoulême lay in the heart of Aquitaine, across the roads between Poitou and Bordeaux: John by his marriage had thus improved his communications. He had, however, mortally offended the great house of Lusignan to one of whom Isabella had been engaged and one of whom was the Count of Eu, an important Normandy fief. John soon had news of a threatened revolt and took strong measures to prevent it by seizing the castle of Drencourt and authorising attacks on the lands of Ralph of Lusignan. At the end of May, 1201, John returned from England to Normandy with money taken from the feudal host that had met him at Portsmouth. Still Philip preferred to wait, and to put his influence on the side of peace. He met John and, after several inconclusive interviews, invited him to Paris. John accepted the invitation and after his visit, feeling secure, went south and began negotiations with Navarre, but more trouble with the Lusignans followed, and they again appealed to Philip of France to do justice in their cause against John.

It is impossible not to think that the events which followed were planned some time before. Philip's quarrel with the Pope had been finally settled in May, 1201, and his hands were thus free for the first time since John's accession. Philip and John had a meeting on the 25th March, 1202, near Le Goulet, when Philip ordered John to appear in Paris to answer for his conduct towards the Lusignans. He also demanded, as though to make his intentions clear, the surrender of Andelys, Arques and Falaise, the key defences of Normandy. John had summoned Hubert Walter to assist the negotiations but there was nothing to negotiate about. Philip's mind was made up and his court formally judged John to be deprived of all his French possessions when he failed to answer the summons to appear before the French court. He proceeded to invade Normandy and overran the whole north-eastern frontier, capturing Eu, Drencourt, Mortemer, Lions and Gournai. After these victories, Philip knighted Arthur and received his homage for Brittany, Aquitaine, Anjou and Maine. The young duke went off with 200 knights to attack Poitou.

Siege of
Mirebeau,
1202.

At this point John, with the assistance of William des Roches, won his only victory of the campaign and captured Arthur, three of the Lusignans and many knights at Mirebeau on August 1st, 1202. But William des Roches had been anxious to get Arthur into his own power, not to help John, and when John refused to do as he wished he deserted to Philip. This was the beginning of the end. A hostile league was soon gathered at Angers; the Bretons were demanding Arthur's release; rumours were circulated that he had been murdered. Early in 1203 John moved Arthur to Rouen, where he disappears from history. The manner of his death is unknown. After Easter, Philip, who had by now consolidated his hold on Maine, Anjou and Touraine and cut the Angevin dominion in two, renewed his invasion of Normandy. There were widespread defections and virtually no fighting. Robert of Séz, Hugh of Gournai and Guerin de Glapion, a former seneschal of Normandy, deserted. Le Vaudreuil was surrendered. By December, 1203, only six administrative districts out of fifteen which appeared in the Treasury records for 1198 were paying anything to John. On the 5th December John left Normandy for the last time.

On the 6th March, 1204, Chateau Gaillard was captured and the road to Rouen lay open. Early in April, after rejecting proposals from John for a truce, Philip marched again into

Normandy. Falaise surrendered after a week's siege. Domfront, Sées, Lisieux, Caen, Bayeux, Barfleur, Cherbourg and Coutances made no resistance. Only Arques, Verneuil and Rouen held out for a little, but all three towns made a truce on the 1st June and soon opened their gates. Normandy was lost.

Loss of
Nor-
mandy,
1204.

Save for Chinon and Loches, Maine, Anjou and Touraine were already gone. Robert of Turnham still held out in Poitou. Poitiers, however, surrendered in August, and Loches, Chinon and Thouars in the summer of 1205 after the English barons had refused to allow John to organise a powerful overseas expedition. La Rochelle and Niort continued to resist and John organised a successful local resistance from them. In October, 1206, a truce with Philip left John full rights to such of his possessions as he still held south of the Loire. In effect this meant the whole of Gascony and the western portion of Poitou. Bordeaux and Bayonne were the chief centres of trade and population which remained subject no longer to the Angevins but henceforward to the English throne.

The change in emphasis was decisive. It had been a Norman, not a French, conquest which the Conqueror achieved. It had been as constitutional rulers of an independent Duchy that English kings had been not an intrusive but a natural and proper force in the politics of France. When Anjou became linked with Normandy it had been the normal feudal consequence of the inter-marriage of two French houses, and the dispute between Anjou and Blois over the Norman and English succession had been a normal feudal incident. Had there been no English claim at issue, the struggle between Blois and Anjou for Normandy would still have taken place precisely as it did.

With the loss of Normandy in 1204 all this was changed. The Gascons and to a much lesser extent the Poitevins remained loyal to their old overlord not because they wished to see the restoration of an Angevin Empire but because they did not wish to see France united under a Capetian monarchy. Their wish was to be independent of Paris and this wish could only be gratified with the protection of the English kings, precisely because they were English and destined inevitably to find their interests increasingly divergent from those of the French monarchy. Whereas, then, the Norman and Angevin connection had tended very greatly to delay the growth of English

nationalism and had, in fact, prevented that unification of the three kingdoms of England, Wales and Scotland which would otherwise certainly have taken place, the fact that Gascony remained under the overlordship of the English kings strengthened very greatly the force of nationalism in England. It was never again to be as French feudal princes but always as foreign invaders that English kings would set foot in France. At the same time, the fidelity of Gascony to the Plantagenets, a fidelity born of invincible separatism fostered by commercial interest, ensured that for another two centuries no English king should lack a secure base for operations against the French monarchy. The distractions bred of the temptation which this afforded continued greatly to affect the course of English history but in a new way.

For this reason 1204 is the decisive date, rather than the date when John's great coalition which he organised for the reconquest of his possessions was miserably, if unluckily, defeated at Bouvines. The campaign of 1214 was not the campaign of an overlord putting down a rebellion; it was a foreign invasion; the spearhead of the attack was not the feudal levy of the Angevin overlord but the army of the Empire under Otto of Brunswick.

Bishop Stubbs has judged that the Angevin Empire was needlessly lost, and a severe view is taken by almost all English historians of John's frivolity and inertia in facing the decisive challenge to his power and dominion after the summer of 1202. Certainly, if John had made use of Arthur instead of murdering him (if he indeed did so) or allowing him to be murdered or to die of ill-usage, (which is a better explanation of Arthur's disappearance after January, 1203), and if he had sacrificed the substance for the shadow of Empire by conceding to William des Roches and his Breton allies whatever it was that they asked, the Angevin Empire could have been preserved by diplomatic finesse for a few more years. To that extent the conventional indictment of John's conduct is well-founded. No soldier, however, would endorse it, and John was no mean soldier, nor was he lacking in energy. John's original plan for the 1203 campaign was sound; it was to have been a southern expedition starting from Argentan and passing through Alençon and le Mans, to reassert his authority in Anjou and Touraine. John had drawn great sums from England to pay the garrisons of the Norman march at Arques, Radepont, Pont de l'Arche, Vaudreuil, Chateau Gaillard, Verneuil and else-

where, and had even made provision for the burgesses of Dieppe, should they be forced to evacuate the town. Wide and new privileges were given to many Norman towns—communes, for instance, were granted to Falaise, Auffay and Domfront in February, 1203—and money grants were made to many individual leaders. Had the southern expedition succeeded, the forces of the French must have been divided and under these arrangements the Norman March would have held. The southern expedition failed because, when John reached Le Mans, Robert of Sécz handed Alençon to the French, thus cutting John off from his base. The rest of the barons of Maine and Anjou were in arms against him and the roads to Chinon were impassable.

John fell back by devious ways on Argentan and made his way with his Queen Isabella to Falaise. It was here that his inactivity provoked the most caustic comments from contemporary writers, who ascribed it to the presence of his wife and to his reluctance to get up before dinner. Much of this gossip can be safely disregarded. The plain truth is that John was powerless to act in the south of his dominions. He had removed William des Roches and appointed as seneschals in his place mercenary leaders of proved loyalty and capacity, but the resources of his treasuries were not enough to hold down Maine, Anjou, Touraine and Poitou by these means. He needed at least a measure of baronial support. He received none. They were all against him. His only hope was to show the feudal lords of those provinces that he and he alone could make war and maintain peace at his will. To do this he must decisively defeat Philip of France and destroy his army. When he returned to Normandy, he watched the key fortresses fall one by one, and was the seemingly impotent spectator of one treachery after another. But the key to this inactivity, so fatal in the result, lies, we believe, in the great expedition which he organised under William the Marshall for the relief of Les Andelys in the autumn of 1203. For this purpose he had clearly husbanded and concentrated his forces and the Marshall had under his command some eight thousand men and nearly a hundred ships. Could the French forces at Andelys be broken and the siege raised, the flower of the French army and the king himself would be caught in Normandy, cut off from their base and forced to accept a peace on John's terms. As we know, the great plan was unsuccessful. All was put to the hazard of a night attack and all failed, but the strategy at least was

right. The plan was bold and courageous and must have taken many months of action and ingenious preparation. Richard would have led the assault himself, as he did at Messina and time and again in Palestine, but John, though an able soldier, as he was to prove beyond a doubt when fighting the French in England in 1216, was not the lion-hearted leader of forlorn hopes. He entrusted the command to the best of his generals and awaited the result. When the great scheme failed he reached the conclusion that without a large army from England Normandy could not be saved, and the conclusion was right.

So also beyond question was the decision of his English advisers that no great English army should be allowed to go overseas. The loss of Normandy meant that England was threatened, as in 1040, with invasion, and the English barons were ready to assist with full loyalty and co-operation in organising the kingdom for defence. More than that none would advise, and the time was past when, without the financial and political support of the barons and the knights, an English king could wage victorious war.

The time was to come again when the longbow gave to the yeomen the power to break the ranks of chivalry, but war was going through one of its static periods in 1200, when the fortress dominated the scene and those who held the fortresses were either feudal lords or mercenary captains who had to be paid and who in any case lived on the country and earned an ever increasing dividend of hatred for the king whom they served.

How far the defections of the Norman and Angevin baronage were inspired by John's personal character, how far by their belief that he had murdered Arthur, and how far by their belief that the best chance of lasting peace lay in an accommodation with the growing powers of the French monarchy are questions which historians must ask but cannot certainly answer. It is, however, crystal clear that the Norman baronage chose wisely. It is equally clear that the development of English and French nationalism in the thirteenth century was the consequence rather than the cause of the loss of Normandy. Immediately, Normandy was lost through the chances of war. Ultimately, as we believe, it was lost because the burden of an overseas empire and the need imposed by the new technique of fortress warfare for keeping a large professional army was far too disturbing to the very rigid

economy of a feudal age. War had ceased to be an aristocratic adventure and had not yet become a national industry. Its residuary beneficiaries were the scum of Europe, usurers, soldiers of fortune, camp followers, and men whose only recreation was rape, murder and loot. The world of the early thirteenth century had had enough of it.

A new century was beginning and the thoughts of men were already turned to other things. Just as the failure of the later Crusades was to lead to a new and healthier development of missionary effort, so the restriction of feudal power by the centralising force of the English and French monarchies was to foster, as a new counterpoise to monarchical autocracy, the growth of the towns. Trade and learning were to subserve a far healthier and more productive internationalism than had ever been produced by the cosmopolitan feudalism of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Nationalism failed to develop in these earlier centuries not because men looked farther and deeper but because they refused to look as far even as the boundaries of their own country. Nationalism in the thirteenth century was to produce not a narrower but a wider society in which men were to learn slowly but surely the art of living and working together. It was the world's great good fortune that the terrible disease to which nationalism is to-day subject, the disease of exclusiveness extending to religion, politics and economics, was one against which the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were largely immunised by a common faith and a common inheritance. The growth of vernacular literature was thus not to narrow the field of knowledge and speculation but to introduce the learning of the past and present to ever increasing numbers.

The structure of English society under Henry II and Richard I was still substantially feudal and agricultural. London, as we have seen, only got its first charter in the course of John's abortive rebellion against Richard, and the great age of incorporations only began with Richard and John. The merchant guilds, too, were but in their infancy, although in 1180 no fewer than eighteen guilds in London were fined for being set up without the king's permission. England, indeed, in this matter, as in the use of inquests and juries, had lagged behind Normandy, where the commune had for more than a century been as much a part of the landscape as the castle. By 1204, however, coming events were casting a well-defined shadow before them. The growing wealth, and growing un-

popularity of the great Cistercian order reflects the growth of sheep-farming and foreshadows the great trade in cloth and wool which was to be in the next centuries the backbone of the English economy. Exchequer entries in the time of King John show some twenty towns including Worcester, Gloucester, Newcastle, Lincoln, Nottingham, and Norwich "fining" for leave to deal in cloth.

The twelfth century none the less saw no very great development of the English, nor, for that matter, of the Norman towns. It was in Italy that the high civilisation of the Middle Ages was first attained and the same year, 1204, that marked the loss of Normandy saw the capture of Constantinople by Venice and the beginnings of the brief Latin Empire of the east. The Pisans, the Genoese and the Venetians had been the chief beneficiaries from the Crusades, and the moneylenders of Lombardy were already rivalling the Jews in wealth and power. To Italy, too, we must look for the beginnings of that revival of classical learning and, notably, of the scientific study of Roman and Canon Law which was the foundation of the intellectual revival of the thirteenth century. The universities were the children of the towns. Of the universities of the north-west only Paris had achieved international fame at the end of the twelfth century, but here was fame indeed. "The conditions which made the French such an illuminating force in the thirteenth century were already present. They were the main force of the great Cistercian influence in art. The students of their great university were destined to become prelates in all the lands of western Europe and to send to the Ile de France for the artists, carpenters and masons whom they required."¹

England in the twelfth century had nothing equivalent to show, although Oxford was already a centre where, according to Gerald of Wales, "the most learned and famous English clerks were to be found." But there was, none the less, a revolution in English life and thought coming to birth, which is reflected in the highly critical chronicles of "Benedict of Peterborough" (now believed to be by Richard Fitz-Nigel, Bishop of London, treasurer and author of the *Dialogus*), of Roger of Howden, a clerk of the royal chapel, and of Ralf de Diceto, Archdeacon of Middlesex and later Dean of St. Paul's, in the satires of Walter Map, one of Henry II's justices who was also employed as an ambassador and ended his career as

¹ Powicke, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

Archdeacon of Oxford, and in the writings of Gerald of Wales, the first of the long, useful and much abused school of popular historians. Gerald's lifelong ambition, which he never achieved, was to be Archbishop of St. David's and Primate of Wales, although he was nominated by the Chapter in 1198. Posterity is the gainer because he devoted the rest of his life to literary work.

The distinguishing mark of all these writers is that they were men of the world, with a personal knowledge of the men and affairs of which they wrote. They wrote with ease and freedom. Walter Map and Gerald of Wales are remarkably critical of kings and prelates: all reflect a growing disillusion with the state of the Church and the character of the clergy, regular and secular, at the end of the twelfth century. It is this critical temper which has led some to feel that only the murder of Becket and the consequent revulsion of feeling in favour of Rome and the Roman claims prevented a twelfth century reformation. It is perhaps more historical to ask whether the manifest decline in the prestige and repute of the Church in official circles towards the end of the century does not show that there was an important cleavage between these circles and the generality of the common people. When Archbishop Baldwin, in the course of his quarrel with the monks of Canterbury, tried to force them into submission by blockading them in their monastery, the voluntary gifts of food which passed into the monastery from pilgrims from all over England and also from Europe was so great that during the whole eight months of the blockade the monastery was able not only to feed itself but to provide meals for 200 poor people every day. It was in high places that there was a feeling of resentment against the wealth of the Church, and this feeling was fostered by the reluctance of the Church to pay taxes. The Cistercians were particularly backward. But there was an equally strong feeling of resentment growing up in the country, and particularly among the smaller freemen of the shires and towns, against feudal licence and the expenses of endless wars. It had been Henry II's policy, carried on by his sons, to make use of this feeling and to associate the rising middle class with the new centralised government. What was to come was little more than the logical conclusion of this policy; the support of the new middle class would be given now to the barons against the king and now to the king against the barons, and the political weight and influence of the Church

was bound relatively to decline, as the new political force, ultimately to be crystallised in parliamentary form, grew stronger. But the faith of the people was still strong, and the temper of the new middle class, although shrewd and sceptical, was definitely conservative in matters of Church and State alike. It would have supported Henry against Becket and Westminster against Canterbury, but never Henry against the Pope or England against Rome.

The beginning of the thirteenth century was an age when sanctity was at a discount all over Europe. The disillusion bred of the Third Crusade was severe and evil in its results, but the belief that men lost was the belief in the goodness of men, not the belief in the wisdom or the mercy of God. The effects of the Crusades, as a consequence, were social and political, not intellectual.¹

The collapse of the Angevin Empire was, without a doubt, a by-product of the prevailing political scepticism. The curious fact about John's policy is not that he did so little to avert the collapse but that he was sufficiently alive to the temper of the age and the force of circumstance to do no more than he did. England owes far more to his prudent refusal to fight a hopeless battle—once it had become hopeless—than to his surrender at Runnymede, the consequences of which are only writ large in our history because the precedents of 1215 became munitions of war in the totally different struggle waged between the king and the Parliament men in the seventeenth century.

We can, if we like, see the shrewd and calculated policy of Henry II collapsing at Runnymede, when barons and clergy combined to humiliate a king who had already lost that inheritance which Henry II had aimed above all else to preserve. Henry II, too, would probably have seen it so, because he was essentially a man of his time. But the consolidation of England and the strengthening of her central institutions through the sanctions of a law enforced on rich and poor, on layman and cleric alike, had been Henry's main task. He never let any foreign adventure distract him from this purpose, and in this important respect John was his father's son. Henry had largely succeeded in his aims, except in the matter of Canon Law. John was to fail, as far as his personal policy was concerned; but before his death he had salvaged the security of England from the ruins of his earlier diplomacy. The work of Henry II,

¹ It is not the case that the classical revival was materially assisted by the Crusades. The recovery of Greek came chiefly through Spain.

and of the great ministers who carried on that work under Richard and John, was saved. The great historians of English law say of Magna Carta itself that "in the main the reforms of Henry II's day are accepted and are made a basis for the treaty. . . . In a few cases there is even retrogression."¹ There was certainly neither a political nor an ecclesiastical revolution. The new learning, the new commerce, the new buoyant life of the towns with their guilds and their foreign trade grew up together within a constitutional framework of law and custom which had been rationalised and grown strong and become generally acceptable in the days of the Angevin Empire.

The thirteenth century was to see the splendid beginning of English literature and at the end the clear emergence of the English speech as one of the great languages of the world. But in matters of law and government, so little was native English used that French and Latin held the field without challenge not only throughout the thirteenth century but for many years later. Latin, as the official language of judicial record, was not displaced until 1731. In pleadings the vernacular naturally prevailed, but that vernacular was still French at the end of the twelfth century, and when in 1362 a statute of Edward III ruled that all pleas should be "pleaded shown defended answered debated and judged" in English it was in an English in which every cardinal word was French.² Down to the reign of Richard III French was the usual language of the enacted law.

We can, however, truly say that by 1204 the lines of English political and constitutional development were set, that the relationship of Church and State, as it was to endure until the middle of the sixteenth century, was established, and that the framework had thus been created within which the English

¹ Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 172.

² ". . . observe how widely and deeply the French influence has worked. Contract, agreement, covenant, obligation, debt, condition, bill, note, master, servant, partner, guarantee, tort, trespass, assault, battery, slander, damage, crime, treason, felony, misdemeanour, arson, robbery, burglary, larceny, property, possession, pledge, lien, payment, money, grant, purchase, devise, descent, heir, easement, marriage, guardian, infant, ward, all are French. We enter a court of justice: court, justices, judges, jurors, counsel, attorneys, clerks, parties, plaintiff, defendant, action, suit, claim, demand, indictment, count, declaration, pleadings, evidence, verdict, conviction, judgment, sentence, appeal, reprieve, pardon, execution, every one and every thing, save the witnesses, writs and oaths, have French names. In the province of justice and police, with its fines, its gaols and its prisons, its constables, its arrests, we must, now that outlawry is a thing of the past, go as far as the gallows if we would find an English institution."—Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 81.

genius was to bear its characteristic fruits. It would have needed a far cleverer man to foretell in 1204 what those fruits might be than to foretell the probable character which the English law and constitution would assume and hold until the modern age. Only the writings, albeit in the indifferent Latin of the age, of the new school of historians can be described as at all characteristically English in their humour, their detachment and, above all, their indifferent approach to things and persons however grave or exalted. For the rest, the culture of the age was Norman French and Latin Christian and not, yet, English. It was the new middle class, Norman, mainly, or French in blood, although with a good deal of English blood intermixed, which was to develop the English speech and manifest the English genius. But by 1204 the better Anglo-Saxon freeman had not become sufficiently French, nor the French landed gentry and merchants sufficiently English, for a new culture to be born.

We stand, therefore, still in 1204 on the threshold of our English history. Most of what we had by then borrowed was retained, and Englishmen were to be joint heirs with western Europe of the thirteenth century intellectual renaissance, based largely on the re-discovery of Aristotle and the development of a broadly based system of university teaching. For the rest, England was to work out her own salvation and to win her place in the world by her own efforts. She started late in the race. So long as the Mediterranean was the centre of the world's trade and Europe must look eastward for the sources of its wealth and its learning, England must remain an outpost only of western civilisation. But this very fact compassed her unity and gave to her culture an individual quality and to her people a peculiar self-reliance which can be critically appraised as self-sufficiency. When in the fullness of time the Atlantic Age began and men turned their eyes westward for the first time in civilised history, this insular and idiosyncratic quality in our race became a great historical force: our habit of free and easy political associations in guild and borough and parliament was found to have bred in us habits and customs which made us, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, ready and apt competitors in the struggle for the riches of the new world.

Before that, great constitutional battles had to be fought, the heady wine of the fifteenth century renaissance had to be digested, the crisis between Church and State in the sixteenth

century was to be fought and compromised and the stage cleared for the battle between privilege and property, between the establishment and dissent, which was to lead through dictatorship to oligarchy and through the tyranny of the sectaries to the easier prescriptions of the philosophers.

In the course of telling that story the historian will be soon compelled to notice an important shifting of the centre of interest. Throughout the half-million years traversed in this volume, what is most significant is always something that has happened outside England. Richard I is the first king of England, and we cannot call him an English king, whose personal actions materially affected the course of world history. As time goes on, the English people begin to make rather than to experience history, to create institutions rather than to borrow and adapt them. The change did not come suddenly. It was not fully accomplished in any sphere until the very end of the seventeenth century, and has never been fully accomplished in the world of ideas. England has never, even in the heyday of her greatness, occupied the intellectual position held at different times by the Greeks, the Romans, the Italians or the French. She has given to the world not much that is formative in philosophy and has added very little to the world's art or music. Only in pure literature and in the theory of politics has she ever at any time reigned intellectually supreme. But in the tasks of government and the business of living she has, in times now past, achieved an effortless superiority which gives to English social and political history an importance which is lacking in that of some other countries richer and more powerful than our own.

If we have said less of the common man and less of art and letters at the close of the century than might have been expected, it is because the year 1204, politically of decisive significance, is no turning point in social development. The re-birth of town life and the great agricultural revolution associated with the growth of the wool trade were only in their very faint beginnings at this date. Neither of those great men of the century, Dante and Thomas Aquinas, whose words and works have permanently enriched the small stock of human wisdom, were born in 1204. The thirteenth century Gothic cathedrals which have remained the greatest architectural achievement of the west were either incomplete or not yet begun. The task of the twelfth century, historically considered, was to provide the framework of law and security, of respect for private

rights and public order, which are the prerequisites of that vigorous intellectual and social progress which make the thirteenth century one of the most splendid in the Christian era.

The task in England, as elsewhere, had been well begun by 1204. The field had been prepared for the sower and the soil long fallow would yield a rich harvest.

Of the great individual figures of the thirteenth century, two only, Innocent III and Dominic Guzman, founder of the Dominican Order of Preachers, were already active in 1204. It was in that year that the two first met, and the intellectual foundations of the thirteenth century reformation which we associate with the names of St. Dominic and St. Francis were laid. Innocent III was above all else a lawyer and a canonist and his importance lies in his reassertion of the natural law as something governing and limiting the discretion of all secular rulers. Of this natural law he claimed to be the interpreter. In an age hungry for order Innocent III found his opportunity and he carried the political prestige of the papacy to heights never reached before or since. But the papal claim did not go unchallenged. The barons and clergy of France refused at Mantes in 1203 to tolerate papal interference in the war they were waging against John, and we can see here, if we wish, at once the first clear assertion of French nationalism and the first hint of the coming challenge in western Europe to papal authority. But Innocent III had only restated the claim put forward both before and many times since in the name of Christianity that all governments are bound by a higher law than that made by men and that if they disobey they may rightly be overthrown.

To that argument six centuries of later history have provided neither an answer nor a conclusion.

Certainly the only answer found by the men of the twelfth century would not be acceptable to-day for, seeking a counterweight to the papacy and its claims to world government, men set up the theory of monarchy as a divinely created institution with almost priestly functions. This view was far more widely held in the Middle Ages than we realise to-day. That

“the breath of worldly men cannot depose
the deputy elected by the Lord”¹

was the serious conviction of a school of mediaeval philosophers and it was particularly strong in France, where the monarchy

¹ Shakespeare, *Richard II*, Act iii, Sc. 2.

had only survived as part of the ritual of politics. The mystical sense of kingship determined the attitude alike of kings and their subjects to an extent which historians have perhaps been slow to appreciate; the anointing at the coronation was to the mind of the Middle Ages no formality but the outward sign of an inward grace implanted in the sovereign. And some uplifting there was, because the burden sustained, the volume of intricate business discharged by the mediaeval kings, was immeasurably beyond either the energy or the capacity of the politicians of later ages. The itinerary of Henry II shows him travelling on the business of his great dominions from the day of his accession to his death and very seldom staying a week in the same place. He was at one and the same time the chief legislator, the fountain of justice and the commander-in-chief, functions which he combined with the personal rule of an empire, and the personal conduct of complex and continuous diplomatic negotiations with the Papacy, the Emperor, the King of France, and the rulers of Flanders and Castile. Richard was even more active in the field and hardly less assiduous in the council chamber. John, after the loss of Normandy, travelled the length and breadth of England and was probably the first English king to be known personally throughout his kingdom. If indeed the loss of Normandy was due to his lack of energy it is a striking reflection on the immense responsibilities of mediaeval kingship and the equally immense energy with which they were customarily discharged.

Nor were the Angevins exceptional among their contemporaries. Barbarossa, Philip Augustus and Innocent III were cast in the same mould. Their energy was inexhaustible, their mastery of detail consummate, their policies deep and far-sighted.

It was by their personal acts and achievements that these men, and our Angevin kings were not the least among them, laid the foundations of the political structure of that Europe which at the beginning of the twentieth century we could still call the Europe of our own day. It has recently perished at the hands of men perhaps equally energetic but certainly less well informed of the principles of wise government and the essential conditions of progress, prosperity and social justice.

THE END

APPENDIX I

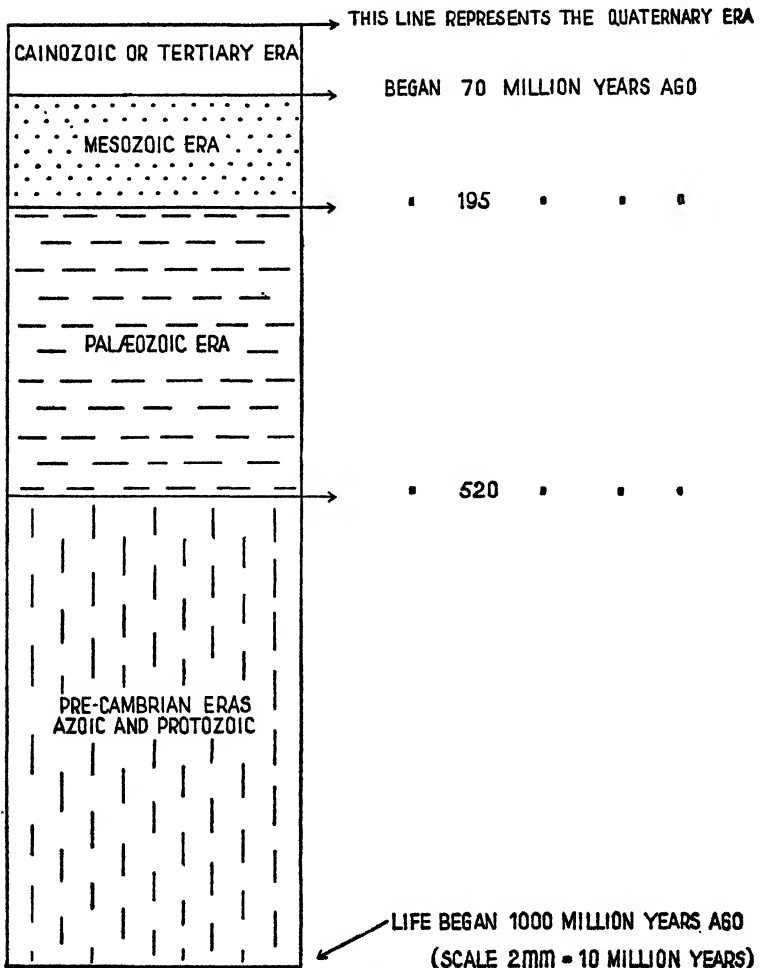
THE SEQUENCE AND RELATIVE DURATION OF GEOLOGICAL ERAS

A. *Pre-Tertiary Eras*

B. *Tertiary and Quaternary Eras*

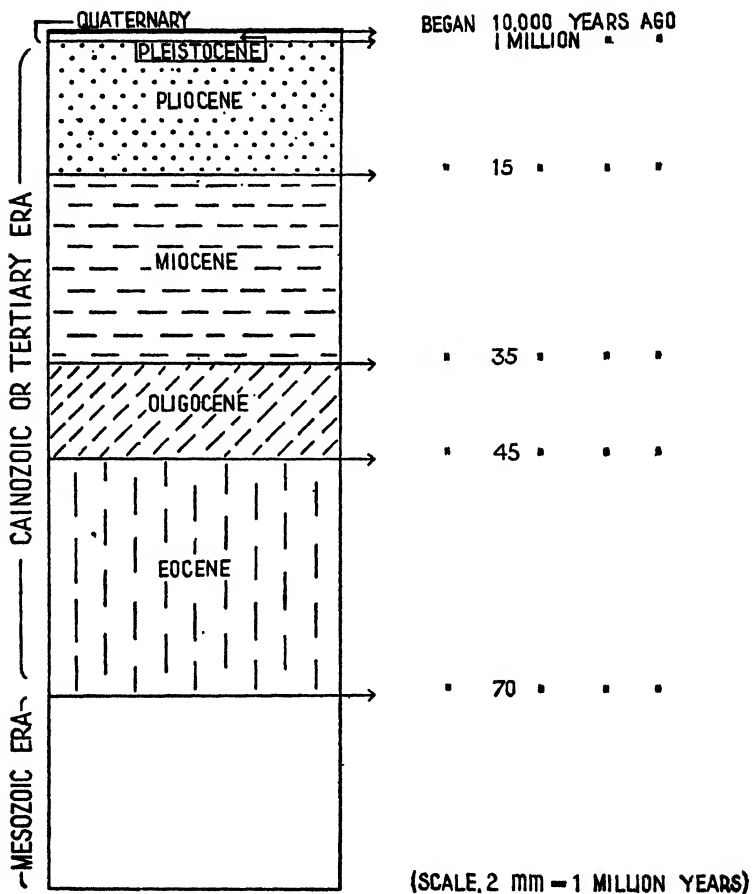
Diagram A is constructed upon the assumption that life began on our planet a thousand million years ago. Although there is a wide measure of agreement as to the relative duration of the different periods, there is no general agreement as to the duration of geological time.

A. PRE-TERTIARY ERAS



APPENDIX I

B. PERIODS OF THE CAINOZOIC OR TERTIARY ERA



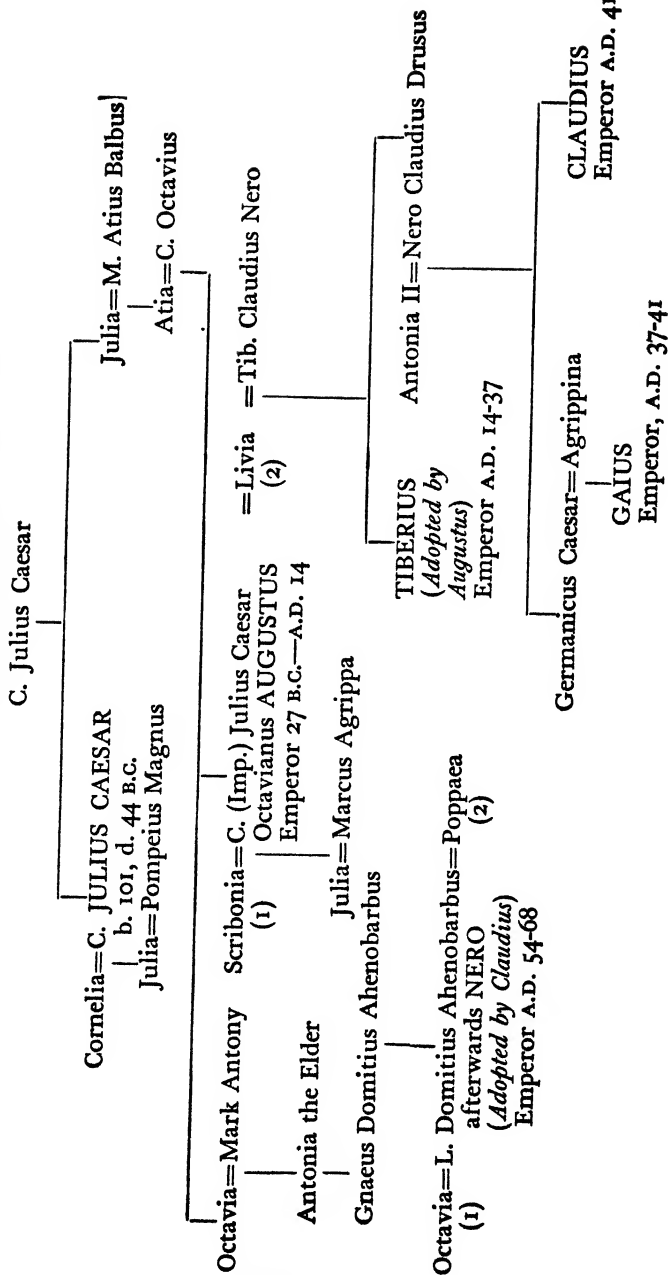
APPENDIX II

THE MAIN BRITISH PREHISTORIC CULTURES

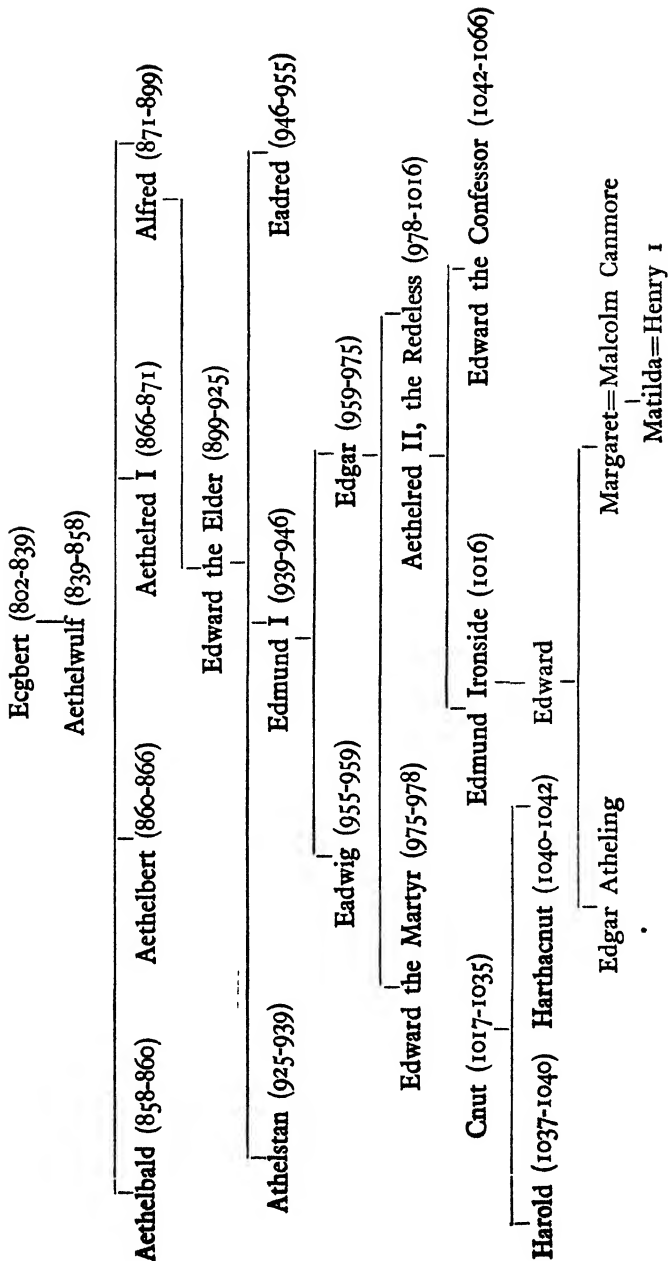
<i>Approximate date</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
c. 2500 B.C.	Windmill Hill Culture	Hoe agriculture Stock raising Flint mining Pottery Causeway camps
	NEOLITHIC AGE	
	Peterborough people	Pottery
c. 2100 B.C. — 2000 B.C.	Megalith builders from Brittany and the Mediterranean	Long barrow collective tombs and gallery graves
c. 1900 B.C.	Beaker people from Brittany and Holland	Beaker pottery Copper daggers Avebury and Stonehenge Early Bronze Age weapons
c. 1800 B.C.	First Beaker Battle Axe invasion from the Rhineland	
c. 1700 B.C.	Further invasion of warrior peoples from Brittany	
	BRONZE AGE	
c. 1400 B.C.	Middle Bronze Age	See Text—pages 75-76
c. 1000 B.C.—500 B.C.	Late Bronze Age	
c. 750 B.C.	Urnfield Culture— (Deverel-Rimbury people: The first Celtic "invasion")	The broadsword and the light plough Beginnings of true peasant agriculture
c. 500 B.C.	British Iron Age A (The second Celtic "invasion")	Hallstatt Iron Age culture reaches Britain Wessex Hill forts
c. 350 B.C.	IRON AGE	
	Iron Age B (La Tene) (The third Celtic "invasion")	Glastonbury marsh village Northern hill forts
c. 75 B.C.	Iron Age C (Belgic "invasion")	The heavy plough The first British currencies

APPENDIX III: GENEALOGICAL TABLES

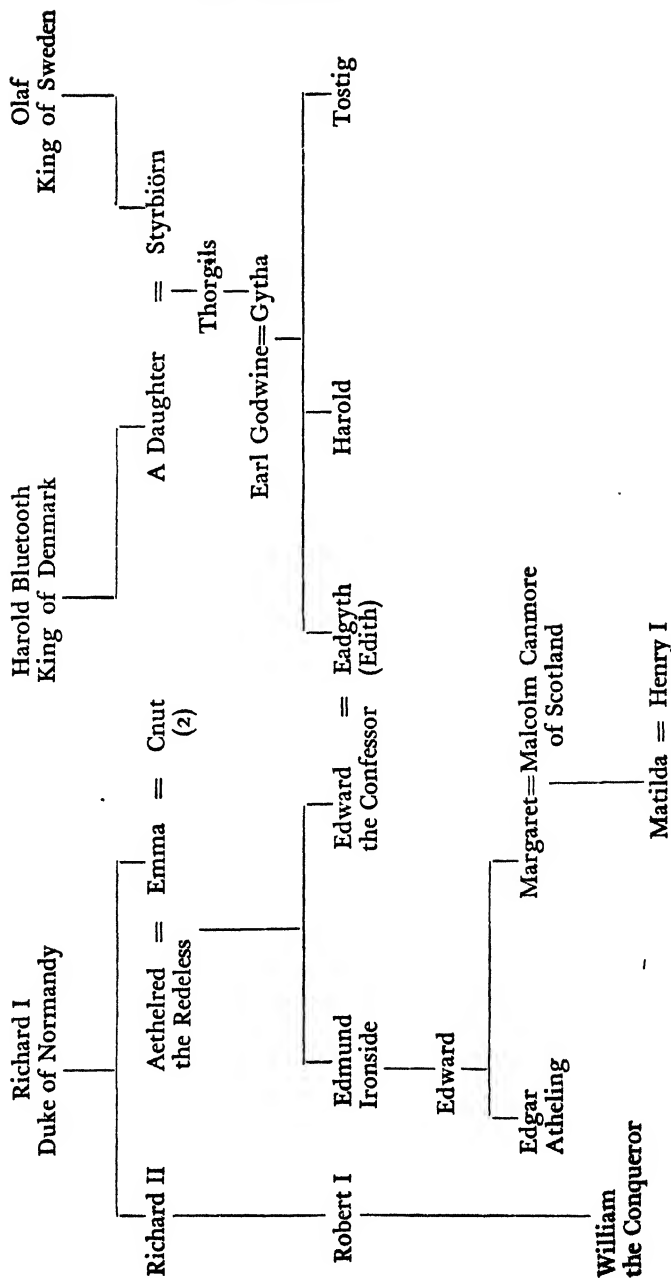
(a) THE JULIAN—CLAUDIAN EMPERORS



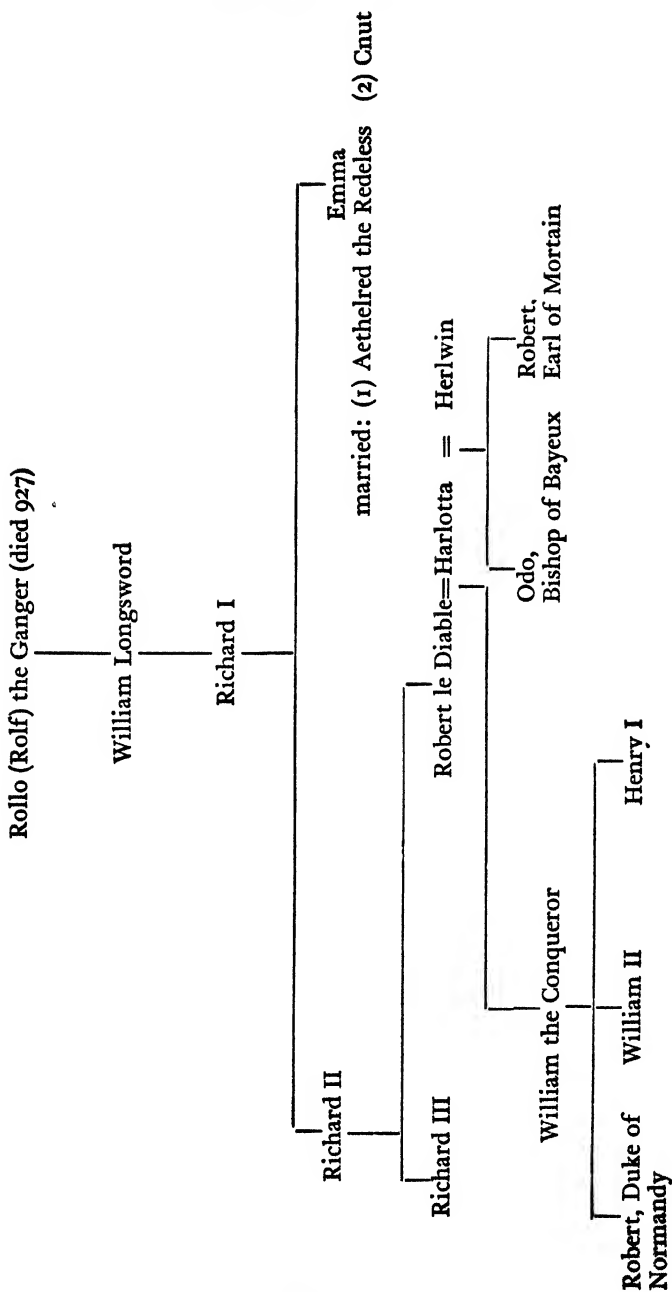
(b) THE SUCCESSION OF THE ENGLISH KINGS FROM ECGBERT TO
EDWARD THE CONFESSOR



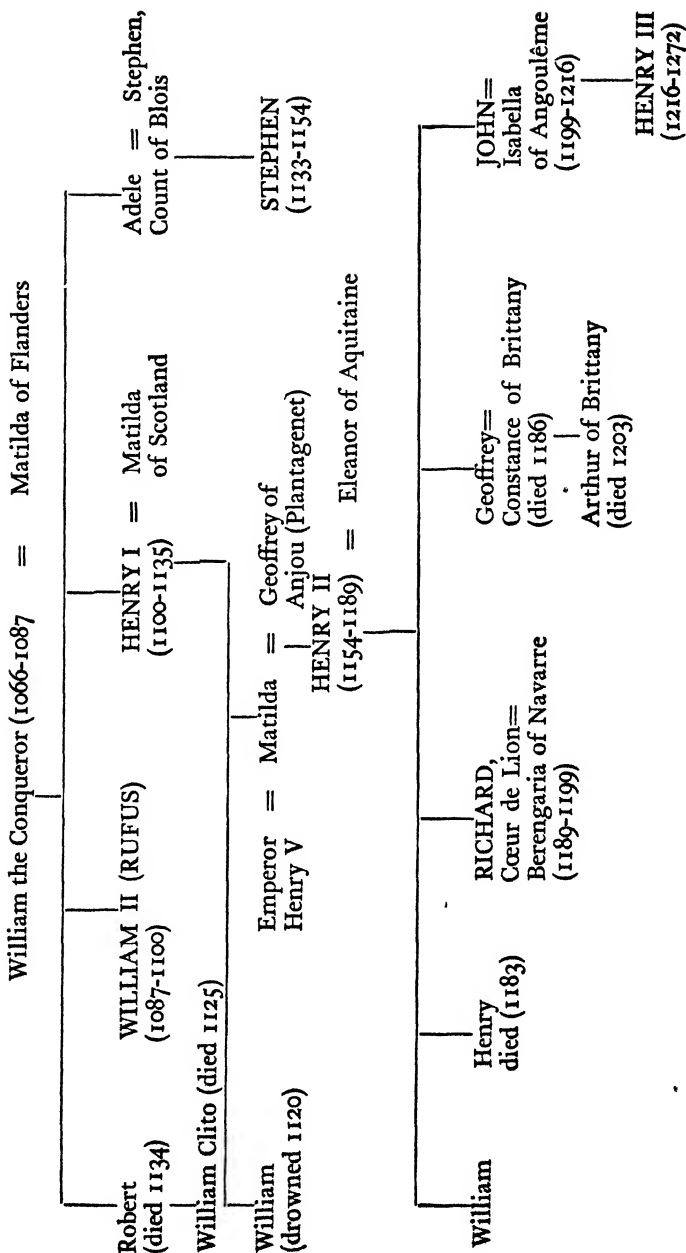
(c) THE CLAIMS OF HAROLD, WILLIAM I. AND EDGAR ATHELING
TO THE ENGLISH THRONE



(d) THE DUKES OF NORMANDY



(e) THE SUCCESSION OF THE NORMAN AND PLANTAGENET KINGS



APPENDIX IV

(a) *An Early Enfeoffment of a knight by Abbot Gilbert of Westminster*

The Latin text is printed in A. Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin* (1911), p. 38. The dating clause given in the first sentence creates some difficulties and it is possible that it formed no part of the original charter. Even if the charter be dated a few years after 1083, it remains a very early record of an enfeoffment.

(In the year of the Incarnation of our Lord, one thousand and eight-three.) We Gilbert, the abbot, and the convent of Westminster have given to William Bainard a certain farm¹ in the township² of Westminster, by name "Totenhala" to house him, and to be held by him for the whole of his life for the service of 1 knight, and with all things that pertain to it, as well and as freely as ever Wulfric the thegn surnamed "Bordewayte" held it from the church. Therefore William shall himself have the customs and the liberties which we have in the same, always excepting the aids which we receive from our knights on other lands of our church and always excepting the tithes of this land which are assigned to our house in alms. We have granted these things to be held of him because of the love and service he has shown to our church; but on the condition that after his death the aforesaid land may remain bound to our church and quit of obligations. And in respect of this, the aforesaid William has pledged us that he will neither sell this land or place it pawn, or part with it to anyone to the loss of our church. Witness: Robert the prior; Nicholas, William and Herbert monks; Ralph Bainard; Herluin brother of "Gunzo"; and many others.

(b) *An Episcopal Land-Grant of 1085*

This document which is printed and discussed by V. H. Galbraith in *English Historical Review*, Vol. xlv, p. 359, creates a tenancy for life at Holm Lacy (Herefordshire) to be held by military service from the Bishop of Hereford.

This privilege Robert Bishop of the Church of Hereford

¹ Berwicum. ² villa.

APPENDIX IV

ordered to be recorded as agreed between him and Roger son of Walter concerning certain land which is called "Hamme" (i.e. Holm Lacy), and those things which pertain to it. This land belongs to the church of Holy Mary the Mother of God, and of St. Ethelbert the Martyr, and this land the aforesaid bishop has formerly held as his own demesne and for the sustenance of the Church. This land the aforesaid knight, to wit Roger, asked from the Bishop through his friends and by the offer of money. But the Bishop, by the counsel of his vassals gave him this same land in return for a promise that he would serve the Bishop with two knights as his father did whenever the need arose. This also was part of the contract: that the men of the Bishop belonging to King's Hampton and Hereford and to the estates pertaining thereto should be at liberty to take timber from the wood for the use of the Bishop as often as it should be needed for fuel or for repairing houses; and the pigs of these manors should feed in the same wood. This refers to the men belonging to the Bishop. And this contract further enjoins that if Roger becomes a monk, or dies, neither his mother nor his wife nor his sons nor his brothers nor any of his kinsfolk shall have rights in the aforesaid land, but let the Bishop receive whatever in this estate may be to the profit of Holy Church and his men shall receive the same without any dispute. This instrument was executed in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord 1085, it being the 8th Indiction. The following were witnesses to this matter: Earl Roger, and his son Hugh, and his other son Everard, and the countess, and the sheriff Warin. Osbert son of Richard; Drew son of Pons; Gerard of Tournay-sur-Dive; William 'Malbedan'; Gilbert the constable of Earl Roger. Of the men of the Bishop; Gerard his brother; Humfrey the archdeacon; Ansfrid the priest; William; Leafwine; Aelfweard; Sœwulf; Alwine. Laymen: Udo; Athalard; Franco; Arnulph; Tetbald; Robert; Gozon; Osbert. Peter. Richard the Butler. Of the men of Roger: clerks: Ralph; Geoffrey; Odo; Gerold; laymen: Walter; Heribert 'de Furcis'; Richard of Stanton; Herman 'de Drewis'; Robert of Boscherville; Richard of Ectot; William of Evreux; Ralph of Le Saussey; Nicholas; Godmund. The aforesaid Roger holds other land devoted to the sustenance of the Bishop, to wit at Onibury, on these conditions: As long as he lives he shall give each year on St. Martin's Day 20 shillings, and after his death, or if he becomes a monk, the land shall be returned to the Bishop in

the same condition as it now is. Of this matter the following are witnesses: Ansfrid of Cormeilles; Edric of Wenlock; Another Edric, to wit the Steward; and all the aforesaid except Earl Roger and his household.

(c) *The Record of an enfeoffment on the lands of the Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds*

This important text is only preserved in confused copies made in the fourteenth century. The translation here supplied must thus in places be regarded as tentative, and should be compared with the Latin version. The Latin text is printed in D. C. Douglas—*Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds* (1932), p. 151, and is discussed on pp. lxxxix-xciii of that book. The original belongs to the period 1066-1087.

Be it known to all of you that Peter, a knight of King William, will become the feudal man of St. Edmund and of Baldwin the Abbot by performing the ceremony of homage. He will do this by permission of the King and with the consent of the monks, and in return for the service which will here be stated, saving always the fealty which he owes to the King, the fief having been freely received except for the six royal forfeitures. Peter promises that he will serve on behalf of the Abbot within the kingdom with three or four knights at their own expense if he has been previously summoned by the King and the Abbot to take part in the earlier or later levies of the King's host. If he is bidden to plead on the abbot's behalf at any place within the kingdom they shall likewise bear their own expense. But if the Abbot shall take him with him anywhere else then the expense of his service shall be borne by the Abbot. Besides this he shall equip a knight for service outside or within the kingdom where and when the Abbot shall require to have this knight as his own retainer. This is the description of the fief: The land of Edric the Blind with 14 free men and as many peasants. Wulmer the priest and his land with 3 freemen. Thorkill with his wife and land. And Guthred and his land. Grimbald the priest. Leofstan. Gunulf. Osferth. Acwulf. Wlfgive. Leogeat. Wlfgive. Lufe. Wulfric. Tonhard. Thurstan. Oslac. Thurstan 'Cati.' Thurstan 'Rumpe,' Godwin the priest. Glupus with the

following 7 free men who are his neighbours: Thurkeda. Brother. Brunstan. Wulfmer. Godgive. Deorun. Stubhart. All these and their lands are free. Witnesses on behalf of the Abbot: Robert Blunt. Frodo. Robert 'de Vals.' Arnulph. Fulcher. Burgard. Jocelyn. Witnesses on behalf of Peter: Randolp. Richard. Hardwin. Philip. Ralph 'Facheiz.' William son of Robert. Thorold 'papilio.'

(d) *An Enfeoffment made between 1136 and 1145 by Alan, a Count of Brittany, and Earl of Richmond (Yorks)*

The Latin text is printed by C. T. Clay in *Early Yorkshire Charters*, Vol. IV (1935), p. 18; and in *Registrum Antiquissimum* (Lincoln Rec. Soc. 1933) II, p. 5.

Alan, a count of Brittany and (earl) of Richmond to all his men and friends both clerks and lay greeting. Know that I have given and granted to Alexander, bishop of Lincoln and to such of his heirs as he may wish to give it, Kneeton, with all its appurtenances in fee and heredity to be held of me and my heirs by the service of 1 knight. And in particular let Robert 'de Alvers' the son of the niece of the same Bishop Alexander be his heir unless the bishop in his lifetime shall grant it to some other of his heirs to hold in heredity. These are the witnesses: Roald the constable; Scolland the steward; Geoffrey son of Aldroan; Ralph son of Ribald; Roger son of Wimar; Alan of Mumby; Geoffrey of Trehampton; Odo of Grainsby; Robert son of Gilbert the falconer.

APPENDIX V

The Barony of the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dec. 1093—Oct. 1096)

This is a very early description of a complete feudal honour in England. The numbers which follow the names represent knight-service expressed in terms of the knight's fee and its fractions. This document is printed in Douglas, *Domesday Monachorum* (1944), p. 105, and is fully discussed in the course of that work. A translation is in *Victoria County History, Kent, Vol. III, p. 269.*

Concerning the Knights of the Archbishop

The Bishop of Rochester	10	Rodulf of Bec	1
Haimo the sheriff	6	Hugh of Port-en-Bessin	2
Hugh of Montfort-sur-Risle ¹	4	Wulfsige ² of Croydon	1
Gilbert Fitz Richard	4	Geoffrey 'de Munbro'	1
Robert son of Wazo	6	Buselin of Dives	1
William son of Ralph	7½	Niel of Whiteacre	½
The Count of Eu	4	Aethelwine son of Brihtmaer	1
William of Briouze	1	Robert son of Godbert	1
Godfrey of Thanington	3	Ulf and Herebert	1
Lambert of Romney	3	William of Pagham	1
Vitalis	3	Ralph 'de Ferno' and William 'Pollex'	1
Godfrey of Malling	3	Osbern the Butler	½
Bainard	2	Reiner	½
William Peverel	2	Robert Leofgyth ³	½
Wimund of Leaveland	1	Robert of Hardres	½
Ralph 'Guiz'	1	Robert 'Brutin'	½
William Folet	2	William of Wrotham	½
Anquetil of Rots	1½	Withard	½
William of Adisham	1	William of Ifield	½
Godfrey the archer	1	William of Detling	½
Ralph of Eastry	1	Deormann ⁴	½
Wibert	1	Osbern Pasforir	½
Arnold	1	Albold	½
Herengod	1	Ordgar	½
Niel of Monville	1	Mauger	½
Roger the Butler	1	Peter 'de Buresto'	½
William son of Hermerfred	1	Wulfnoth of Barham	½
Richard of the Marsh	1	William of Meopham	½
Geoffrey of Rots	1	Walter of Ricarville	½
Talbot	1	Osmelin	½
Biset	1	Salomon son of the Archdeacon	½
Restwold	1		
Osbern	1		

¹ MS.—Mundford. ² MS.—Wulsi. ³ MS.—Liuegit. ⁴ MS.—Dirman.

APPEN
CHRONOLOGICAL

<i>Year</i>	<i>Britain</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Europe</i>
A.D.			
407	Possible end of Roman occupation of Britain	409	Vandals in Spain
410	Honorius refuses to send back troops to Britain	410	Alaric sacks Rome
c. 446	Coming of Anglo-Saxons (see text, p. 210)	451	Attila defeated at Chalons
c. 473	Foundation of Saxon kingdom of Kent (legendary date)	455	Vandals sack Rome
c. 477	Aelle founds Kingdom of South Saxons (Sussex) (legendary date)	476	End of Roman Empire of the West
c. 500	Battle of Badon Hill (Age of Arthur)	481	Clovis, King of the Franks, founds Merovingian kingdom
c. 514	Cedric and West Saxons settle in Wessex	493	Theodoric, Ostrogoth King of Italy
547	Ida founds Kingdom of Bernicia (legendary date)	507	Battle of Poitiers
c. 559	Aelle founds Kingdom of Deira (legendary date)	518	Justin I, Eastern Roman Emperor
560	Ethelbert, King of Kent; Ceawlin, King of West Saxons	527	Justinian, Eastern Roman Emperor
577	Battle of Deerham (Saxons reach the Bristol Channel)	536	Belisarius captures Rome
597	Augustine lands in Thanet	565	Justin II, Eastern Roman Emperor
602	Archbishopric of Canterbury founded	568	Langobards invade Northern Italy
604	Death of Augustine	589	Visigoths converted to Catholicism
c. 613	Aethelfrith defeats British at Chester	603	Langobards converted to Catholicism
625	Paulinus in Northumbria; baptism of Edwin of Deira	623	Dagobert I; King of Franks; Pepin the Elder, Mayor of the Palace
632	Penda of Mercia defeats and kills Edwin		
633	Oswald, King of Northumbria	638	Clovis II; King of Neustria and Burgundy
641	Penda defeats and kills Oswald		
654	Oswiu of Northumbria defeats and kills Penda		

DIX VI
TABLE

<i>Year</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Culture</i>
		418	Pelagian heresy condemn- ed by Synod of Carthage
429	Germanus in Britain	426	St. Augustine's <i>Civitas Dei</i>
432	Patrick in Ireland		
440	Leo the Great, Pope		
447	Second visit of Germanus		
452	Pope Leo meets Attila		
463	Death of Patrick		
c. 480	Benedict of Nursia born		
492	Gelasius I, Pope	500	Neo-Platonic writings of so-called Dionysius the Areopagite
c. 520	Illtud in Wales	524	Boethius's <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i>
529	Benedict founds monastery of Monte Cassino	529	Justinian closes Neo- Platonic Academy at Athens; Justinian's Codex issued
		532	Justinian begins building St. Sophia
550	Death of Benedict	547	Gildas: <i>De Excidio Brit- anniae</i>
563	Columba (Columcille) at Iona	542 to 565	Byzantine <i>Histories</i> of Procopius
590	Gregory the Great, Pope	590	Gregory the Great's <i>Pastoral Letters</i>
		594	Death of Gregory of Tours, author of <i>Historiae Francorum</i>
604	Death of Gregory	c. 600	Aethelbert's Code pro- mulgated
615	Death of Columbanus, founder of Luxeuil	622	Flight of Mahomet from Mecca
625	Honorius I, Pope		
628	Conversion of East Anglia by Paulinus		
633	Oswald calls Aidan from Iona	634	Arabs conquer Syria
638	Conversion of Wessex by Birinus		
653	Conversion of Mercia by Finan		7th cent. <i>Widsmith, the Far- Traveller</i> (A.S. poem) <i>Beowulf</i> (A.S. poem)

APPEN
CHRONOLOGICAL

<i>Year</i>	<i>Britain</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Europe</i>
A.D.			
655	Oswiu, King of Northumbria		
671	Death of Oswiu		
680	Synod of Heathfield		
686	Kingdom of Sussex converted	687	Pepin II, Mayor of the Palace
688	Ine, King of Wessex; his Code of Laws (693)	711	Arabs invade Spain
716	Aethelbald, King of Mercia	717	Charles Martel, Mayor of the Palace
		732	Charles Martel defeats Moors at Poitiers.
735	Death of Bede		
740	End of 60 years' peace between Mercia and Northumbria	752	Pepin III, King of the Franks (End of Merovingian dynasty)
757	Offa, King of Mercia	768	Charlemagne, King of the Franks
775	Offa conquers Kent	778	Moors defeat Franks at Roncesvalles
784	Offa's dyke	800	Charlemagne crowned Emperor at Rome
787	First landing of Vikings	804	Charlemagne completes conquest of Saxons
794	Offa conquers East Anglia	814	Death of Charlemagne
802	Egbert, King of Wessex		
815	Egbert's campaign in Cornwall		
820	Settlement of Vikings in Ireland		
825	Egbert defeats Mercians at Ellendun	843	Treaty of Verdun dividing Carolingian Empire
839	Aethelwulf, king	845	Vikings raid Paris
849	Birth of Alfred (the Great)	846	Arabs sack Rome
850-1	Danes winter in England	859	Viking raids in Mediterranean
856	Aethelbert, king		
860	Aethelbert reunites Wessex		
865	Aethelred, king; Danes occupy Northumbria		
868	Death of Edmund the Martyr		
871	Alfred, king	875	Disintegration of Empire; Charles the Bald, Emperor
876	Halfdan settles in Yorkshire		
877	Danes settle in East Mercia		

DIX VI
TABLE

<i>Year</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Culture</i>
663	Synod of Whitby		
669	Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury	671	Schools at Canterbury founded
c. 675	Boniface born at Crediton	680	Death of Caedmon; 'first English poet'
687	Death of Cuthbert		
690	Willibrord's mission to Frisia	c. 698	Lindisfarne Gospels
714	Death of St. Guthlac of Crowland	c. 700	Franks Casket, whalebone carving (Brit. Mus.)
719	Boniface commissioned by Pope Gregory II to preach to the Germans	731	Bede's <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
		744	Boniface founds Fulda Abbey (Germany)
756	Donation of Pepin establishes Papal States	750	(fl) Cynewulf, Anglo-Saxon poet
		778	Alcuin, Master of York School
		782	Alcuin inaugurates Charlemagne's educational reforms
787	Offa creates archbishopric at Lichfield	789	Egbert at Court of Charlemagne
		804	Death of Alcuin
824	Eugene II Pope		
827	Gregory IV Pope	829	End of the Official Chronicle of the Franks
847	Pope Leo IV fortifies Rome (Leonine City)	847	John Scotus (Erigena) at the court of Charles the Bald
850	Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals forged in France		
		851	John Scotus <i>De Praedestinatione</i>
858	Nicholas I, Pope		
		860	John Scotus's translation of Dionysius the Areopagite
864	Moravia and Bulgaria christianised		

APPEN
CHRONOLOGICAL

<i>Year</i>	<i>Britain</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Europe</i>
A.D.			
878	Alfred defeats Danes at Edington (Ethandun)	881	Charles III (the Fat) reunites Empire
878	Guthrum baptised and Danes occupy East Anglia	885	Danes defeated before Paris
		887	Arnulf, King of Germany
		890	Harold Fairhair unites Norway
892	Second Danish war	891	Arnulf defeats Normans; Battle of Dyle
895	Alfred defeats Danes on River Lea	893	Charles the Simple, King of France
899	Death of Alfred; Edward, king	896	Arnulf crowned Emperor
910	Edward defeats Northumbrian Danes at Tettenhall	900	Gorm founded Danish kingdom
911	Edward and Athelflaed of Mercia begin reconquest of Danelaw	911	Treaty of St. Clair-sur-Epte between Duke Rollo and the French king; establishes Dukedom of Normandy; Conrad of Franconia, Emperor
925	Athelstan, king	919	Henry the Fowler, Emperor
927	Athelstan occupies York	924	Germany's nine years truce with Magyars
		931	William I, Duke of Normandy
937	Athelstan's victories in Scotland, Battle of Brunanburh	936	Harold Bluetooth, King of Denmark; Louis IV, King of France
939	Edmund, king	936	Otto I (the Great), King of Germany
946	Murder of King Edmund; Eric Blood-axe seizes York; Eadred, king.	962	Otto I, Emperor
954	Eric Blood-axe killed	965	Harold Bluetooth of Denmark baptised
955	Eadwig, king	965	Duke Richard I of Normandy's alliance with Hugh Capet
959	Edgar, king	983	Otto III, King of Germany
973	Cession of Lothians to Scotland	987	Hugh Capet, King of France (End of Carolingian, beginning of Capetian Dynasty)
975	Edward the Martyr, king		
978	Aethelred the Redeless, king		
980-	Vikings raids		
993			
994	Swein and Olaf of Norway attack London	991	Anglo-Norman treaty of Rouen

DIX VI
TABLE

Year	Church	Year	Culture
882	John VIII murdered by Roman nobles	887	Alfred begins his <i>Handbook</i> (published 888)
		890	Alfred's Preface to Gregory the Great's <i>Cura Pastoralis</i>
		891	Alfred's revision of <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> ; his translation of Bede's <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
		893	Asser's <i>Life of Alfred the Great</i>
900	Benedict IV, Pope	c. 900	Oseberg ship burial
c. 909	Birth of Dunstan		
910	Duke William of Aquitaine founds Cluny		
927	Odo, second Abbot of Cluny revives strict Benedictine rule	c. 930	Ekkehard of St. Gaul; <i>Walter of Aquitaine</i> (epic poem)
931	Papal Charter for Cluny		
933	Cluniac Reform spreads to France		
936	Leo VII, Pope	937	(after) <i>Battle of Brunanburh</i> , poem celebrating Athelstan's victory over Scots
943	Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury		
954-994	Cluniac Reform supported by Otto I and II		
959	Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury		
961	Oswald, Bishop of Worcester		
963	Aethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, his monastic reforms	963	Aethelwold's (<i>Regularis Concordia</i>)
975	English Nobles revolt against monastic revival	c. 970	Hrosvitha of Gandersheim; her plays
978	Death of Dunstan	c. 975	<i>Benedictional of St. Aethelwold</i> (Winchester MS.)
990	Truce of God	c. 990	Aelfric's <i>Homilies</i>
994	Odilo, Abbot of Cluny	991	(after) <i>Battle of Maldon</i> (Anglo-Saxon poem)
999	Sylvester II (Gerbert), Pope	997	Aethelred's Code III

A P P E N
CHRONOLOGICAL

<i>Year</i>	<i>Britain</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Europe</i>
A.D.			
1013	Swein of Denmark conquers England; Aethelred flees to Normandy	995	Olaf Tryggveson, King of Norway introduces Christianity
1014	Death of Swein (February) Aethelred recalled (April)	996	Otto III, Emperor; Richard II, Duke of Normandy; Hugh Capet died
1015	Cnut lands in England	1015	Olaf II, King of Norway
1016	Death of Aethelred; Edmund Ironside, king; defeats Cnut at Orford; death of Edmund; Cnut, king.	1027	Robert I, Duke of Normandy
1035	Death of Cnut; Harold Harefoot, king	1035	William (the Conqueror), Duke of Normandy
1040	Harthacnut, king	1039	Henry III, German Emperor
1042	Edward the Confessor, king	1046	Henry III, crowned Emperor
		1053	William marries Matilda of Flanders
		1054	French invasion of Normandy
		1054	Henry IV, German emperor
		1058	William defeats French at Varaville; Philip, King of France
		1063	William invades Maine
		1064	William defeats Conan of Brittany at Dinan
1066	Death of Edward. Harold, king. Tostig's revolt (May). Hardrada of Norway defeated by Harold at Stamford bridge (Sept.) Battle of Hastings (Oct.); William crowned (Dec.)	1066	Council of Lillebonne
		1070	Tughril Beg conquers Syria and Jerusalem
		1070	Disputed succession in Flanders
		1076	Synod of Worms; Gregory VII excommunicates the Emperor; beginning of contest of Empire and Pope
1085	Domesday Inquest ordered	1077	Henry IV does penance at Canossa
1086	Oath of Salisbury	1092	William annexes Cumberland and Westmorland
1087	Death of William I; William II (Rufus), king	1095	Urban II proclaims First Crusade
1092	William annexes Cumberland and Westmorland	1099	Crusaders capture Jerusalem
1100	Death of William II		

DIX VI
TABLE

<i>Year</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Culture</i>
		c. 1000	<i>Pseudo</i> Caedmon poem, including <i>The Harrowing of Hell</i> and <i>Chanson de Roland</i>
1012	Benedict VIII, Pope	c. 1006	Burchard of Worms edits <i>Decretals</i>
1024	John XIX, Pope	1036	Avicenna, Arab philosopher, dies
1040	Truce of God proclaimed	1039	Lanfranc at Avranches; his <i>Corpus of Church Law</i>
1049	Leo IX, Pope	1050	Collection in 74 Titles published
1057	Stephen IX, Pope	1052	Saxon Westminster Abbey begun
1059	Nicholas II, Pope; establishes independent election of Pope by Sacred College	1060	Anselm's treatises at Bec (<i>credo ut intelligam</i>)
1061	Alexander II, Pope; Decrees against lay investiture, simony and marriage of clergy		
1063	Lanfranc, Abbot of Caen	1065	Westminster Abbey consecrated
		1067	Abbey church of Tewkesbury begun
1070	English Church reforms begin; Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury		
1073	Gregory VII (Hildebrand), Pope	1077	Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester; architect of Tower of London
1077	First Cluniac monastery founded in England (Lewes)	1079	Winchester Cathedral begun
1084	Bruno founds Carthusian Order	1086	Domesday Survey
1085	Death of Gregory VII	1089	Gloucester Cathedral begun
1089	Death of Lanfranc		
1093	Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury	1093	William of St. Calais rebuilds Durham Cathedral
1098	Cistercian Order founded at Citeaux	1097	Norman part of Westminster Hall

APPEN
CHRONOLOGICAL

<i>Year</i>	<i>Britain</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Europe</i>
A.D.			
1100	Henry I, king	1105	Henry V submits to Pope
1107	Investiture dispute ends in England	1113	Henry's alliance with Anjou
1109	Death of Anselm	1116	Louis VI invades Normandy
1120	William, Henry's son, drowned	1119	Henry defeats Louis at Brémule
1133	Empress Matilda marries Geoffrey of Anjou; Henry II born	1125	Emperor Henry V dies
1135	Henry I dies; Stephen of Blois, king	1143	Manuel Comnenus, Byzantine Emperor
1152	Henry of Anjou marries Eleanor of Aquitaine	1155	Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor
1154	Death of Stephen (Oct.); Henry II crowned (Dec.)	1159	Henry II secures the Norman Vexin
1155	Thomas Becket, Chancellor, Council of Wallingford		
1164	Council of Clarendon; Constitutions of Clarendon		
1166	Assize of Novel Disseisin		
1170	Murder of Becket		
1171	Henry II in Ireland; Irish 'pale' created		
1179	Ranulf Glanvill, justiciar	1180	Philip Augustus, King of France
1189	Death of Henry II; Richard Coeur de Lion, king	1186	Geoffrey of Brittany dies; Arthur born
1190	Richard joins Crusade	1187	Saracens capture Jerusalem
1191	Richard lands at Acre	1188	Third Crusade opens
1192	Crusade, abandoned; Richard captured near Vienna	1190	Destruction of Barbarossa's army
1193	Hubert Walter, chief justiciar; Richard ransomed (June)		
1199	Death of Richard I; John, king	1200	Treaty of Le Goulet between John and Philip of France
1200	John marries Isabella of Angoulême	1204	Venetians capture Constantinople
1204	Loss of Normandy; Angevin empire ends		

DIX VI
TABLE

<i>Year</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Culture</i>
1100	Henry I recalls Anselm	1104	Gloucester Candlestick (Vic. and Albert Mus.)
1112	Bernard of Clairvaux at Cîteaux	1117	Gilbert Crispin died; founded Abbey School of Westminster
1118	Order of Templars founded	1124	Ernulf of Peterborough died; compiled <i>Textus Roffensis</i>
1119	Callixtus II, Pope	1125	William of Malmesbury completes <i>Gesta Regum Anglorum</i>
1120	Province of York recognised as independent of Canterbury	c. 1130	Adelard of Bath, student of Arabic science and mathematics
1122	End of Investiture dispute between Papacy and Empire	1133	Pullen lectures at Oxford
1128	Waverley, first Cistercian monastery in England	1140	Gratian's <i>Decretum</i> published
1130	Innocent II, Pope	1149	Vacarius teaches canon law at Oxford
1131	Rievaulx abbey founded	1154	Henry of Huntingdon's <i>Historia Anglorum</i> ; death of Geoffrey of Monmouth; his <i>Historia Regum Britanniae</i>
1147	Second Crusade	1159	Robert of Cricklade (later Chancellor of Oxford) abridges Pliny's <i>Natural History</i>
1154	Hadrian IV, Pope	1170	University of Paris; Guild of Masters recognised.
1159	Alexander III, Pope	1172	Wace's <i>Roman de Rou</i>
1162	Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury	1174	William of Sens builds Choir of Canterbury Cathedral
1164	Becket exiled	1180	John of Salisbury died; a humanist pupil of Abelard
1170	Becket returns to Canterbury; is murdered	1185	Lincoln Cathedral rebuilt
1173	Canonisation of Becket	1190	Death of Ranulf Glanvill, reputed author of <i>De Legibus Anglicis</i>
1180	Baldwin (Cistercian), Archbishop of Canterbury	1200	Foundation Charter of Paris University
1182	Francis of Assisi born		
1187	Clement III, Pope		
1191	Celestine III, Pope		
1193	Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury		
1198	Innocent III, Pope		

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