

THE
EMPIRE
AND THE
PAPACY,
918-1273

Thomas Tout



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Investiture Contest, Crusades & the Famous Conflicts

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PREFACE

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The absence of any existing text-book, narrating with any approach to fulness the history of the period with which this work is concerned, induced the writer to think that the most useful course that he could pursue would be to cover as much of the whole ground as his space allowed. Finding that there was not room to treat all the aspects of European history with the same fulness, the author resolved to limit himself to the central struggle between the Papacy and the Empire, and to the events directly connected with it. He has therefore only busied himself with the affairs of Scandinavia, the Baltic lands, and the Slavonic kingdoms of the East so far as they stand in direct relation to the main currents of European history. The history of the Mohammedan Powers has been treated in the same way, and even Christian Spain has only been allowed a very small number of pages. This necessary limitation has afforded more room for the main purpose of the writer, which has been to narrate, with some amount of detail, the political and ecclesiastical history of the chief states of Southern and Western Europe, and in particular of Germany, Italy, France, and the Eastern Empire. The expansion of the Latin and Catholic world at the expense of both the Orthodox Greeks and the Mohammedans, stands so much in the forefront of the history of the period that it could not be neglected, though the writer has avoided treating the Crusades in much detail. Some account of the general movements of thought and of the development of the ecclesiastical system and of the religious orders seemed to him necessary for the understanding even of the political history of a time when everything was subordinated to the authority of the Church. He has, however, endeavoured to bring this into some sort of connection with the political history of the period, and has

not felt it in his power to enlarge upon the general history of civilisation in the way adopted by the very valuable *Histoire Générale de l'Europe*, edited by MM. Lavissee and Rambaud. He has, however, frequently availed himself of the help of that book in his selection and arrangement of his facts, and would like to refer his readers to it for such parts of the history as do not fall within his scheme. He has indicated in notes at the beginning of the various chapters some useful authorities in which readers will find a more detailed account of various aspects of the time.

In conclusion, the writer must express his thanks to his wife, who has helped him materially in nearly every part of the book, and has taken the chief share in preparing the maps, tables, and index.

In preparing for fresh impressions such errors have been corrected as the author has been able to find.

MANCHESTER, *Dec. 1908.*

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To the general modern authorities for French history for this period must now be added the valuable new *Histoire de France* edited by M. Ernest Lavisse (Hachette), of which the three half-volumes covering this period are now published. They are: *Les Premiers Capétiens (987-1137)*, by Achille Luchaire, II. ii.; *Louis VII., Philippe Auguste, Louis VIII.*, by Achille Luchaire, III. i.; and *Saint Louis, Philippe le Bel, les derniers Capétiens directs*, by Ch. V. Langlois, III. ii. A large collection of facts covering the whole subject of this book will soon be available in the relevant volumes of the Cambridge Mediæval History. The maps in R. L. Poole's *Oxford Historical Atlas* are very valuable for the elucidation of the historical geography of the period.

Chapter I.

INTRODUCTION

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General Characteristics of the Period—The End of the Dark Ages—The Triumph of Feudalism—The Revival of the Roman Empire and Papacy—The Struggles of Papacy and Empire—The Spread of Religion and Civilisation—The Crusades and the Latin East—The Growth of National Monarchies. The general characteristics of the period.

It is a trite thing to say that all long periods of European history are ages of transition. The old order is ever passing gradually away, and a new society is ever springing up from amidst the ruins of the dying system that has done its work. But the period with which this book is concerned is transitional in no merely conventional sense. We take up the story in the early years of the tenth century, when the Dark Ages had not yet run their course. We end it in the closing years of the thirteenth century, when the choicest flowers of mediæval civilisation were already in full bloom. Starting at the end of a period of deep depression and degradation, we have to note how feudalism got rid of the barbarian invaders, and restored the military efficiency of Europe at the expense of its order and civilisation. We learn how the revival of the Roman Empire again set up an effective and orderly political power, and led to the revival of the Church and religion, and the subsequent renewal of intellectual life. But the Empire was never more than a half-realised theory; and while the world had theoretically one master, it was in reality ruled by a multitude of petty feudal chieftains. Thus was brought about the universal monarchy of the Papacy, the Crusades, the monastic revivals, the strong but limited intellectual renaissance of the twelfth century, and the

marvellous development of art, letters, and material civilisation that flowed from it. The conflict of Papacy and Empire impaired the efficiency of both, and made possible the growth of the great national states of the thirteenth century, from which the ultimate salvation of Europe was to come. Turbulent as was the period during which these great revolutions were worked out, it was one of many-sided activity, and of general, but by no means unbroken, progress. It was the time of the development and perfection of all the most essential features of that type of civilisation which is called mediæval. It was the age of feudalism, of the Papacy and Empire, of the Crusades, of chivalry, of scholasticism and the early universities, of monasticism in its noblest types, of mediæval art in its highest aspects, and of national monarchy in its earliest form. Before our period ends, the best characteristics of the Middle Ages had already manifested themselves. Fertile as were the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in their promise of later developments, they bore witness only to the decline of what was most characteristic of the period that we now have to consider.

Let us dwell for a moment on some of the leading features of this period in a little more detail. The Dark Ages.

We begin in a time of gloom and sorrow. The Carolingian Empire, which had united the vigour of the barbarians with the civilisation of the Roman world, had broken up. The sacred name of Emperor had been assumed so constantly by weaklings that it had ceased to have much hold upon the minds of men. The great kingdoms, into which the Carolingian Empire had resolved itself, seemed destined to undergo the process that had destroyed the parent state. The East Frankish realm—the later Germany—was breaking up into its four national duchies of Saxony, Franconia, Bavaria, and Swabia. The West Frankish realm was the prey of the rivalry of the Carolings and the Robertians. The

Middle Kingdom was in still worse plight. Italy had fallen away under a line of nominal Italian or Lombard kings, but the south was Greek or Saracen, and the north was in hopeless confusion. The northern parts of the Middle Kingdom, to which alone the name Lotharingia clung, were tending towards their ultimate destiny of becoming a fifth national duchy of the German realm, though their loyalty for the Carolingian house brought them more than once back to the West Frankish kingdom. The lands between this restricted Lotharingia and the Mediterranean had become the kingdom of Arles or Burgundy by the union, in 932, of the two Burgundian states that had grown up in the days of chaos. But of the six kingdoms which now represented the ancient Empire, not one was effectively governed. The administrative system of the Carolingians had altogether disappeared. The kings were powerless, the Church was corrupt, the people miserable and oppressed, the nobles self-seeking and brutal. The barbarian invader had profited by the weakness of civilisation. The restored Rome of Charlemagne, like the old Rome of Constantine and Theodosius, was threatened with annihilation by pagan hordes. The Norsemen threatened the coasts of the west; the Saracens dominated the Mediterranean, captured the islands, and established outposts in southern Gaul and Italy. The Slavs overran Germany. The Magyars threatened alike Germany and Italy. Everywhere civilisation and Christianity were on the wane.

Yet the darkest hour was already past when the tenth century had begun. The feudal system had saved Europe from its external enemies. The feudal cavalry and the feudal castle had proved too strong for the barbarians. The Norse plunderers had gone home beaten, or had settled with Rolf in Neustria, or with Guthrum in eastern England. ¹ The Saracens had been driven from Italy, and were soon to be chased out of Provence. The Wends and the Magyars were

soon to feel the might of Henry the Fowler. The Saxon dukes were restoring the East Frankish realm. The Robertians were getting the upper hand in France. Even the consolidation of the two Burgundies made for unity. In the east the Macedonian dynasty was ruling over the Greek Empire in uneventful peace, and extending its sway to the farthest limits of Asia Minor. In Spain the Christians had definitely got the better of the Moors. The break-up of the Caliphate robbed Islam both of its political and religious unity, and destroyed for the time its capacity for aggression. ² The first gleams of a religious revival began with the foundation of Cluny. But despite all these glimpses of hope, the state of western Europe was still deplorable. The feudal nobles were the masters of the situation. Their benefices were rapidly becoming hereditary, their authority more recognised and systematic. But no salvation was to be expected from a system that was the very abnegation of all central and national authority. It was but little more than organised anarchy when the west had to depend upon a polity that made every great landholder a petty tyrant over his neighbours. The military strength of feudalism had given it authority. Its political weakness was revealed when the feudal baron had to govern as well as fight. The Holy Roman Empire.

Feudalism was not long in undisputed possession of the field. From the revival of the German kingdom by the Saxon kings sprang the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, beginning with the coronation of Otto the Great in 962. Less universal, less ecclesiastical, less truly Roman than the Carolingian Empire, the Empire of the Saxons and Franks was based essentially upon the German kingship, yet was ever trying to outgrow its limitations, and to claim in its completeness the Carolingian heritage. Within a century of the coronation of Otto, the revived Empire included in its sphere the German, Italian, Burgundian, and Lotharingian

realms—in short, all the Empire of Charles the Great, save the West Frankish states, ruled since 987 by Hugh Capet and his descendants. Moreover, the Empire had pushed forward the limits of Christianity and civilisation in the barbarous north and east. It had extended its direct rule over a wide stretch of marchlands. The Scandinavians, Wends, Poles, Bohemians, and Hungarians all received the Christian faith from missionaries profoundly impressed with the imperial idea, and their conversion involved at least temporary dependence upon the power that again aspired to be lord of the world. At home the Emperors checked and restrained, though recognising and utilising, the feudal principle. In their fear of the lay aristocracy, no less than in their zeal for religion and order, they associated themselves closely with the work of reforming the Church. But the restoration of religion soon involved the restoration of Papacy and hierarchy, and thus they raised up the power before which Emperors were finally to succumb. Yet the Empire did not fall until it had kept central Europe together for nearly three centuries, at a time when no other power could possibly have accomplished the task. From the coronation of the Saxon to the fall of the Hohenstaufen, the Holy Roman Empire had no small claim to the lordship of the world. The Hildebrandine Reformation and the Papacy.

The darkest hour of the State was the darkest hour of the Church. The last faint traces of the Carolingian revival of religion disappeared amid the horrors of Danish, Saracen, and Hungarian invasions. The feudalism that saved Europe from the barbarians now began to infect what remained of Christian life with its own ferocity, greed, and lust. The spiritual offices of the Church were becoming heritable property, dissociated from all effective spiritual duties. But amidst the turmoil of feudal times, a few nobler spirits sought salvation from the wickedness that lay thick around them in the solitude of the cloister. Before the end of the

tenth century, the Cluniac revival presented to Europe an ideal of life very different from feudal militarism. In alliance with the Empire, the Cluniacs restored religion in central Europe, and missionaries, working in their spirit, spread the Gospel beyond the bounds of the Empire among the barbarians of the north and east. But from Cluny also came new theories of the province of the Church, which soon brought religion into sharp conflict with the temporal authority. When the power of the State lay almost in abeyance, it was natural that the Church should encroach upon the sphere it left vacant. From Cluny came the Hildebrandine Reformation, and from the theories of Hildebrand sprang two centuries of conflict between Papacy and Empire. ³ The great struggle of Popes and Emperors (the highest expression of the universal struggle of the spiritual and temporal swords), was the central event of the Middle Ages. It first took the form of the Investiture Contest, but when the Investiture Contest had been ended by the substantial victory of the Church, the eternal strife was soon renewed under other pretexts. It inspired the contest of Alexander III. with Frederick Barbarossa, of Thomas of Canterbury with Henry of Anjou, of Innocent III. with half the princes of Europe, and the final great conflict between the successors of Innocent and Frederick II. At last the Empire succumbed before the superior strength of the Papacy. But the Hohenstaufen were soon revenged; and, within two generations of the death of Frederick II., the victorious Papacy was degraded from its pride of place by its ancient ally. Religious and monastic revivals.

From the triumphs of Hildebrand and his successors sprang the religious revivals that enriched the Middle Ages with all that was fairest and most poetical in the life of those times. The Cistercians and the Carthusians revived the ideals of St. Benedict, with special precautions against the dangers before which the old Benedictine houses had

succumbed. The orders of Canons Regular sought to unite the life of the monk with the work of the clerk. They paved the way for the more complete realisation of their ideal in the thirteenth century, when the mendicant orders of Friars arose under Francis and Dominic. From the monastic movement sprang a revival of spiritual religion and a renewed interest in the world of thought and art. ⁴ The artistic impulses of the time found their highest expression in the vast and stern Romanesque minsters of the older orders, and in the epic literature of the *chansons de geste*. The transition during the twelfth century from Romanesque to Gothic architecture, and the parallel change in vernacular literature from the epic to the romance, mark a new development in the European spirit. Side by side with them went the great intellectual renaissance of the same momentous century. While an Anselm sought to enlist philosophy in the service of the Church, an Abelard began to question the very sources of authority. In Abelard the intellectual movement outgrew its monastic parentage, and in his conflict with Bernard the dictator of Christendom, the old and the new spirit came into the sharpest antagonism. ⁵ The systematic schoolmen of later ages had neither the independence of Abelard nor the limitation of Bernard. Learning passed from monastic to secular hands, but the scholastic philosophy was already enlisted on the side of the Church, and active as was its intelligence, it henceforth worked within self-appointed limits. Side by side with the revival of philosophy, came the work of Irnerius and Gratian, the revival of the systematic study of Civil Law, and the building up of the great structure of ecclesiastical jurisprudence. ⁶ From the multiplication of students and studies sprang the organisation of teachers and learners into the universities. ⁷ From the ignorance and barbarism of the tenth century, there is a record of continuous progress until the end of our period. Yet the thirteenth century does

not only illustrate the crowning glories of the Middle Ages: it suggests new modes of thought that indicate that the Middle Ages themselves are passing away. The triumph of the Church bore with it the seeds of its own ruin, in the world of thought as well as in the world of action. The Crusades and the Latin rule in the East.

From the Hildebrandine revival sprang also the Crusades, and the combination of the military and religious ideals of the Latin world in the pursuit of a holy war for the recovery of Christ's Sepulchre. The Turkish advance was checked; the Eastern Empire was saved from imminent destruction; and a series of Latin states in Syria and Greece extended the scope of western influence at the expense of Orthodox and Mohammedan alike. But the diversion of the Fourth Crusade to overthrow the Empire of Constantinople indicates the high-water mark of the Latin Christian power in the East; and the change in the current of western ideas made the Crusades of the thirteenth century but vain attempts to restore a vanished dream. Before the end of our period, the Christian domination in the East had shrunk to the lordship of a few Greek islands. The Palæologi brought back Byzantine rule to the Byzantine capital; and the strongest kings of the West could not save the remnants of the Latin states in Syria. The Mongol invasions threatened Christian and Saracen alike. While the western prospects were so fair, in the East barbarism was on the highway to ascendancy. The Feudal Age.

The failure of the Empire to rule the world led to a feudal reaction, that was not least felt in the lands directly governed by the Emperors. Our period witnesses both the triumph and the decay of feudalism. It is the time when feudal ideas prevailed all over the western world, following the Crusaders into the burning deserts of Syria, and the lands of the Eastern Emperors. The Normans took feudalism to southern Italy and Sicily, and developed the feudalism

that they already found in England. Even Scandinavia evolved a feudalism of its own, and the sons and grandsons of the followers of William the Conqueror planted feudal states side by side with the Celtic tribalism of Wales and Ireland. For nearly four centuries the mail-clad feudal horseman was invincible in battle, and the stone-built feudal castle, ever becoming more complex and elaborate in structure, was impregnable except to famine. The better side of feudal social ideals—chivalry, knighthood, honour, and courtesy—did something to temper the brutality and pride of the average baron, and found powerful expression in the vernacular literatures, written to amuse nobles and gentry. But before our period ends, the days of feudal ascendancy were over. Hopeful of triumph in Germany, where the German state suffered by its kings' pursuit of the imperial vision, feudalism found in Italy a powerful rival in strong municipalities closely allied with the Church. In western Europe it was beginning to give ground. The greater feudatories crushed their lesser neighbours, and built up states that were powerful enough to stand by themselves. The Church, though fitting itself into the feudal organisation of society, could never repose simply on brute force. ⁸ The towns, whose separate organisation was, in some parts of Europe at least, as much the result of military, as of economic necessities, became the centres of expanding trade and increasing wealth. Within their strong walls they were able to hold their own, and claim for themselves a part in the social system as well as baron or bishop. But feudalism had at last met its master. With its decline before the national spirit, we are on the threshold of modern times. The growth of national monarchies.

The division of the Empire into local kingdoms, begun at the treaty of Verdun, paved the way for the modern idea of a national state. The Empire stifled the early possibilities of a German nation, and Empire and Papacy combined to make

impossible an Italian nation. But in France other prospects arose. Through its virtual exclusion from the Empire, France had been delivered from some very real dangers. The early Capetians were shadows round which a mighty system revolved; but they had a lofty theory and a noble tradition at their back, and the time at last came when they could convert their theory into practice. Philip Augustus made France a great state and nation. ⁹ Under St. Louis the leadership of Europe passed definitely from the Germans to the French—from the people ruled by the visionary world-Empire to the people ruled by a popular and effective national monarchy. The alliance between France and the Church, the preponderance of French effort in the Crusades, the spread of the French tongue and literature as the common expression of European chivalry, had made the French nation famous, long before a large proportion of the French nation had been organised into a French state. The Spanish peoples acquired strong local attachments; the English became conscious of their national life. Alfonso the Wise of Castile and Edward I. of England rank with St. Louis and Philip the Fair. Even Frederick II. owed his strength to his national position in Germany and Naples, rather than to his imperial aspirations. Before our period ends, the national principle had clearly asserted itself. Trade, art, literature, religion began to desert cosmopolitan for national channels, and the beginnings of the system of estates and representative institutions show that the great organised classes of mediæval society aspired to share with their kings the direction of the national destinies. The Empire had fallen; the Papacy was soon to be overthrown; feudalism was decayed; the cosmopolitan culture of the universities had seen its best days. It is in the juxtaposition of what was best in the old, and what was most fertile in the new, that gives its unique charm to the thirteenth century. The transition from the Dark Ages to the Middle Ages had been

worked out. There were signs that the transition was beginning that culminates in the Renaissance and the Reformation.



Chapter II.

**THE SAXON KINGS OF THE GERMANS,
AND REVIVAL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE
BY OTTO I. (919-973)¹**

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The Transference of the German Kingship from the Franks to the Saxons—The Reign of Henry the Fowler—The Defence of the Frontiers and the Beginnings of the Marks—Otto I.'s Rule as German King—The Feudal Opposition and its Failure—The First and Second Civil Wars—The Reorganisation of the Duchies—The Marks established—Battle on the Lechfeld—Otto's Ecclesiastical Policy—His Intervention in Italy and its Causes—Italy in the Tenth Century—Degradation of the Papacy—Theodora and Marozia—Alberic and John XII.—Otto's Second Intervention in Italy—His Coronation as Emperor—His later Italian Policy—His Imperial Position and Death. Election of Henry the Fowler, 919.

The death of Conrad I., in December 918 (see Period I. pp. 475-7), ended the Franconian dynasty. In April 919 the Franconian and Saxon magnates met at Fritzlar to elect a new king. On the proposal of Eberhard, Duke of Franconia, and brother of the dead king Conrad, Henry, Duke of the Saxons, called Henry the Fowler, was elevated to the vacant throne. Henry had been already marked out for this dignity, both by the great position of his house and nation, and by the wish of the last king. Yet the voluntary abdication of the Franconian and the transference of the monarchy to the Saxon forms one of the great turning-points in the history of the German nation. The existence of a separate German

state had been already secured by the work of Louis the German and Arnulf of Carinthia. Yet so long as the sceptre remained in the Carolingian hands, the traditions of a mighty past overpowered the necessities of the present. Down to the death of Conrad, the Franks were still the ruling nation, and the German realm was East Frankish rather than German. The accession of the Saxon gave the best chance for a more general development on national lines. [10](#) For of all the five nations of Germany, the Saxons were the least affected by the Carolingian tradition. Christianity was still less than a century old with them, and formal heathenism still lingered on in the wilder moors and marshes of the north. Roman civilisation was still but a sickly exotic; and, free from its enervating influences, the Saxons still retained the fierce barbaric prowess of the old Teutonic stock, while the primitive Teutonic institutions, which were fast disappearing in the south before the march of feudalism, still retained a strong hold amidst the rude inhabitants of northern Germany. In the south the mass of the peasantry were settling down as spiritless and peaceful farmers, leaving the fighting to be done by a limited number of half-professional soldiers. But among the Saxons every freeman was still a warrior, and the constant incursions of heathen Danes and Wends gave constant opportunities for the practice of martial habits. The old blood nobility still took the leadership of the race. Not only were the Saxons the strongest, the most energetic, and most martial of the Germans, but the mighty deeds of their Ludolfing dukes showed that their princes were worthy of them. It was only the strong arm of a mighty warrior that could save Germany from the manifold evils that beset it from within and without. The Ludolfings had already proved on many a hard-fought field that they were the natural leaders of the German people. The dying Conrad simply recognised accomplished facts, when he urged that the Saxon duke

should be his successor. The exhausted Franconians merely accepted the inevitable, when they voluntarily passed over the hegemony of Germany to their northern neighbours. Henry's German policy.

There were, however, insuperable limitations to the power of the first Saxon king of the Germans. Henry the Fowler was little more influential as king than as duke. There was no idea whatever of German unity or nationality. The five nations were realities, but beyond them the only ties that could bind German to German were the theoretical unities of Rome—the unity of the Empire and the unity of the Church. From the circumstances of his election and antecedents, Henry could draw no assistance from the great ideals of the past, by which he was probably but little influenced. He feared rather than courted the support of the churchmen. When the Church offered to consecrate the choice of the magnates by crowning and anointing the new king, Henry protested his unworthiness to receive such sacred symbols.

Thus Germany became a federation of great duchies, the duke of the strongest nation taking precedence over the others with the title of king. Even this result was obtained only through Henry's strenuous exertions. His power rested almost entirely on the temporary union of the Saxons and Franconians. The southern and western nations of Germany were almost outside the sphere of his influence. Lotharingia fell away altogether, still cleaving to the Carolings, and recognising the West Frankish king, Charles the Simple, rather than the Saxon intruder. Henry was conscious of the weakness of his position, and discreetly accepted the withdrawal of Lotharingia from his obedience, receiving in return an acknowledgment of his own royal position from Charles the Simple. Swabia and Bavaria were almost as hard to deal with as Lotharingia. They had taken no practical share in Henry's election, and were by no means disposed to acknowledge the nominee of the Saxons and Franconians.

It was not until 921 that Henry obtained the formal recognition of the Bavarians, and this step was only procured by his renouncing in favour of Duke Arnulf every regalian right, including the much-cherished power of nominating the bishops. Henry was no more a real king of all the Germans than Egbert or Alfred were real kings over all England. His mission was to convert a nominal overlordship into an actual sovereignty. But he saw that he could only obtain the formal recognition necessary for this process by accepting accomplished facts, and giving full autonomy to the nations. His ideal seems, in fact, to have been that of the great West Saxon lords of Britain. He strove to do for Germany what Edward the Elder and Athelstan were doing for England. It is, from this point of view, of some political significance that Henry married his eldest son Otto, afterwards the famous Emperor, to Edith, daughter of Edward, and sister of Athelstan. Yet, like England, Germany could hope for national unity only when foreign invasion had been successfully warded off. The first condition of internal unity was the cessation of the desolating barbarian invasions which, since the break-up of the Carolingian Empire, had threatened to blot out all remnants of civilisation. Saxony had already suffered terribly from the Danes and Wends. To these was added in 924 a great invasion of the Magyars or Hungarians, the Mongolian stock newly settled in the Danube plains, and still heathen and incredibly fierce and barbarous. The Magyars now found that the Bavarians had learnt how to resist them successfully, so that they turned their arms northwards, hoping to find an easier foe in the Saxons. ¹¹ Henry, with his Franks and Saxons, had to bear the full brunt of the invasion, and no help came either from Swabia or Bavaria. Henry had the good luck to take prisoner one of the Hungarian leaders, and by restoring his captive and promising a considerable tribute, he was able to procure a

nine years' truce for Saxony. Two years later the Magyars again swarmed up the Danube into Bavaria, but Henry made no effort to assist the nation which had refused to aid him in his necessity.

Thus freed from the Magyars, Henry turned his arms against the Danes and the Wends. In 934 he established a strong mark against the Danes, and forced the mighty Danish king, Gorm the Old, to pay him tribute. He was even more successful against the Slavs. In 928 Brennabor (the modern Brandenburg), the chief stronghold of the Havellers, fell into his hands, and with it the broad lands between the Havel and the Spree, the nucleus of the later East Mark. ¹² But more important than Henry's victories were his plans for the defence of the frontiers. He planted German colonists in the lands won from the barbarian. He built a series of new towns, that were to serve as central strongholds, in the marchland districts. The Saxon monk Widukind tells us how Henry ordered that, of every nine of his soldier-farmers, one should live within the walls of the new town, and there build houses in which his eight comrades might take shelter in times of invasion, and in which a third part of all their crops was to be preserved for their support, should necessity compel them to take refuge within the walls. In return, the dwellers in the country were to till the fields and harvest the crops of their brother in the town. Moreover, Henry ordered that all markets, meetings, and feasts should be held within the walled towns, so as to make them, as far as possible, the centres of the local life. Some of the most ancient towns of eastern Saxony, including Quedlinburg, Meissen, and Merseburg, owe their origin to this policy. Henry also improved the quality of the Saxon cavalry levies, teaching his rude warriors to rely on combined evolutions rather than the prowess of the individual horseman. So anxious was he to utilise all the available forces against the enemy, that he settled a legion of able-bodied robbers at Merseburg, giving

them pardon and means of subsistence, on the condition of their waging war against the Wends.

The effect of these wise measures was soon felt. Henry had laid the foundation of the great ring of marks, whose organisation was completed by his son. He had also inspired his subjects with a new courage to resist the barbarian, and a new faith in their king. When the nine years' truce with the Hungarians was over, the Saxons resolved to fight rather than continue to pay them a humiliating tribute. ¹³ A long series of victories crowned the end of Henry's martial career. He was no longer forced to strictly limit himself to the defence of his own duchy of Saxony, and the southern nations of Germany could honour and obey the defender of the German race from the heathen foe, though they paid but scanty reverence to the duke of the Saxons. Lotharingia reverted to her allegiance after the sceptre of the western kingdom had passed, on the death of Charles the Simple, from her beloved Carolings. Yet Henry never sought to depart from his earlier policy, and still gave the fullest autonomy to Saxon, Bavarian, and Lotharingian. He still lived simply after the old Saxon way, wandering from palace to palace among his domain-lands on the slopes of the Harz, and seldom troubling the rest of the country with his presence. Yet visions of a coming glory flitted before the mind of the old sovereign. He dreamed of a journey to Rome to wrest the imperial crown from the nerveless hands of the pretenders, whose faction fights were reducing Italy to anarchy. But his end was approaching, and the more immediate task of providing for the succession occupied his thoughts. His eldest son, Thankmar, was the offspring of a marriage unsanctioned by the Church, and was, therefore, passed over as illegitimate. By his pious wife Matilda, the pattern of German housewives, he had several children. Of these Otto was the eldest, but the next son, Henry, as the first born after his father had become a king, was looked

upon by many as possessing an equally strong title to election. The king, however, urged on his nobles to choose Otto as his successor. He died soon after, on 2nd July 936, and was buried in his own town of Quedlinburg, where the pious care of his widow and son erected over his remains a great church and abbey for nuns, which became one of the most famous monastic foundations of northern Germany. 'He was,' says the historian of his house, 'the greatest of the kings of Europe, and inferior to none of them in power of mind and body.' But Henry's best claim to fame is that he laid the solid foundations on which his son built the strongest of early mediæval states. Coronation of Otto I., 936.

Otto I. was a little over twenty years of age when he ascended the throne. While his father had shunned the consecration of the Church, his first care was to procure a pompous coronation at Aachen. As strong a statesman and as bold a warrior as his father, the new king was so fully penetrated with the sense of his divine mission, and so filled with high ideals of kingcraft, that it was impossible for him to endure the limitations to his sway, in which Henry had quietly acquiesced. Duke Eberhard of Franconia was the first to resent the pretensions of the young king. He felt that he was the author of the sway of the Saxon house, and resolved to exercise over his nation the same authority that he had wielded without question in the days of King Henry. Meanwhile, the death of Duke Arnulf of Bavaria gave Otto an opportunity of manifesting his power to the south. ¹⁴ He roughly deposed Arnulf's eldest son, Eberhard, who had refused to perform him homage, and made his younger brother Berthold duke, but only on condition that the right of nominating to the Bavarian bishoprics, which had been wrung from the weakness of Henry, should now be restored to the crown. Moreover, he set up another brother, Arnulf, as Count Palatine, to act as a sort of overseer over the new

duke. But while Franconia and Bavaria were thus deeply offended, Otto's own Saxons were filled with discontent at his policy. They resented Otto's desire to reign as king over all Germany, as likely to impair the dominant claims of the ruling Saxon race. They complained that he had favoured the Franks more than the Saxons, and the sluggish nobles of the interior parts of Saxony were disgusted that Otto had overlooked their claims on his attention in favour of Hermann Billung and Gero, to whom he had intrusted the care of his old duchy along with the government of the Wendish marches. Thankmar, the bastard elder brother, Henry, the younger brother who boasted that he was the son of a reigning king, were both angry at being passed over, and put themselves at the head of the Saxon malcontents. In 938, a revolt broke out in the north. The faithfulness of Hermann Billung limited its extent, and the death of Thankmar seemed likely to put an end to the trouble. But Henry now allied himself with Duke Eberhard of Franconia; and Duke Gisibert of Lotharingia, Otto's brother-in-law, joined the combination. A bloody civil war was now fought in Westphalia and the Lower Rhineland. The army of Otto was taken at a disadvantage at Birthen, near Xanten; but the pious king threw himself on his knees, and begged God to protect his followers, and a victory little short of miraculous followed his prayer. However, the rebels soon won back a strong position, and the bishops, headed by Archbishop Frederick of Mainz, intrigued with them in the belief that Otto's term of power was at an end. But the king won a second unexpected triumph at Andernach, and the Dukes of Franconia and Lotharingia perished in the pursuit. Henry fled to Louis, king of the West Franks, whose only concern, however, was to win back Lotharingia from the eastern kingdom. At last Henry returned and made his submission to his brother; but before long he joined with the Archbishop of Mainz in a plot to murder the king. This nefarious design was equally unsuccessful, and Henry,

under the influence of his pious mother, sought for the forgiveness of his injured brother. At the Christmas feast of 941 a reconciliation was effected. The troubles for the season were over. The reorganisation of the duchies.

Otto now sought to establish his power over the nations by setting up members of his own family in the vacant duchies. Franconia he kept henceforth in his own hands, wearing the Frankish dress and ostentatiously following the Frankish fashions. Over Lotharingia he finally set a great Frankish noble, Conrad the Red, whom he married to his own daughter, Liutgarde. The reconciled Henry was made Duke of Bavaria, and married to Judith, the daughter of the old Duke Arnulf. Swabia was intrusted to Otto's eldest son, Ludolf, who in the same way was secured a local position by a match with the daughter of the last duke. But the new dukes had not the power of their predecessors. Otto carefully retained the highest prerogatives in his own hands, and, by the systematic appointment of Counts Palatine to watch over the interests of the crown, revived under another name that central control of the local administration which had, at an earlier period, been secured by the Carolingian *missi dominici*. Its failure. The Second Civil War, 953.

The new dukes soon fell into the ways of their predecessors. They rapidly identified themselves with the local traditions of their respective nations, and quickly forgot the ties of blood and duty that bound them to King Otto. Henry of Bavaria and Ludolf of Swabia soon took up diametrically different Italian policies, and their intervention on different sides in the struggle between the phantom Emperors, that claimed to rule south of the Alps, practically forced upon Otto a policy of active interference in Italy. Ludolf was intensely disgusted that his father backed up the Italian policy of Henry, and began to intrigue with Frederick of Mainz, Otto's old enemy. Conrad of Lotharingia joined the

combination. Even in Saxony, the enemies of Hermann Billung welcomed the attack on Otto. At last in 953 a new civil war broke out which, like the troubles of 938, was in essence an attempt of the 'nations' to resist the growing preponderance of the central power. But the rebels were divided among each other, and partisans of local separatism found it doubly hard to bring about an effective combination. The restless and turbulent Frederick of Mainz died during the struggle. Conrad and Ludolf made their submission. A terrible Hungarian inroad forced even the most reluctant to make common cause with Otto against the barbarians. But the falling away of the dukes of the royal house had taught Otto that some further means were necessary, if he desired to continue his policy of restraining the 'nations' in the interest of monarchy and nation as a whole. That fresh support Otto found in the Church, the only living unity outside and beyond the local unities of the five nations. The organisation of the Marks.

Even King Henry had found it necessary, before the end of his reign, to rely upon ecclesiastical support, especially in his efforts to civilise the marks. There the fortified churches and monasteries became, like the new walled towns, centres of defence, besides being the only homes of civilisation and culture in those wild regions. But King Henry had not removed the danger of Wendish invasion, and the civil wars of Otto's early years gave a new opportunity for the heathen to ravage the German frontiers. In the midst of Otto's worst distress, Hermann Billung kept the Wends at bay, and taught the Abotrites and Wagrians, of the lands between the lower Elbe and the Baltic, to feel the might of the German arms. His efforts were ably seconded by the doughty margrave, Gero, of the southern Wendish mark. By their strenuous exertions the Slavs were for the time driven away from German territory, and German rule was extended as far as the Oder, so that a whole ring of organised

marchlands protected the northern and eastern frontiers. These marks became vigorous military states, possessing more energy and martial prowess than the purely Teutonic lands west of the Elbe, and destined on that account to play a part of extreme prominence in the future history of Germany. Owing their existence to the goodwill and protection of the king, and having at their command a large force of experienced warriors, the new margraves or counts of the marches, who ruled these regions, gradually became almost as powerful as the old dukes, and, for the time at least, their influence was thrown on the side of the king and kingdom. Under their guidance, the Slav peasantry were gradually Christianised, Germanised, and civilised, though it took many centuries to complete the process. Even to this day the place-names in marks like Brandenburg and Meissen show their Slavonic origin, and a Wendish-speaking district still remains in the midst of the wholly Germanised mark of Lausitz. To these regions Otto applied King Henry's former methods on a larger scale. Walled towns became centres of trade, and refuges in times of invasion. Monasteries arose, such as Quedlinburg, and that of St. Maurice, Otto's favourite saint, at Magdeburg. A whole series of new bishoprics—Brandenburg and Havelberg, in the Wendish mark; Aarhus, Ripen, and Schleswig, in the Danish mark—became the starting-points of the great missionary enterprise that in time won over the whole frontier districts to Christianity. Hamburg became the centre of the first missions to Scandinavia. Never since the days of Charles the Great had the north seen so great an extension of religion and culture. There was many a reaction towards heathenism and barbarism before the twelfth century finally witnessed the completion of this side of Otto's work.

The Hungarians were still untamed, and, profiting by the civil war of 953, they now poured in overwhelming numbers into south Germany. But the common danger was met by

common action. On 10th August 955, Otto won a decisive victory on the Lechfeld, near Augsburg, at the head of an army drawn equally from all parts of Germany, and including among its leaders Conrad the Red, the former Duke of Lorraine, who died in the fight. [15](#) This crushing defeat damped the waning energies of the Magyars, and the carrying out of the same policy against them that had been so successful against their northern neighbours resulted in the setting up of an east mark (the later Austria), which carried German civilisation far down the Danube, and effectually bridled the Magyars. In these regions Henry of Bavaria did the work that Hermann Billung and Gero were doing in the north. The final defeat of the barbarian marauders, and the wide extension of German territory through the marks, are among Otto's greatest titles to fame. Moreover, Otto forced the rulers of more distant lands to acknowledge his sovereignty. In 950 he invaded Bohemia, and forced its duke, Boleslav, to do him homage. Nor did he neglect the affairs of the more settled regions of the west. Already in 946 he had marched through north France as far as the frontiers of Normandy, striking vigorous blows in favour of the Carolingian Louis IV.—who had married his sister Gerberga, Duke Gisbert's widow—against his other son-in-law, Hugh the Great, the head of the rival Robertian house [see page [69](#)]. He also took under his protection Conrad the Pacific, the young king of the Arelate.