HISTORY

In the preceding unit we came to see Western civilization as the product of those generations of men, chiefly in northwestern Europe, who lived after the Roman Empire had entered upon a social and intellectual disintegration. Like a great glacier on a long summer's day, that ancient civilization retreated eastward, carrying with it to Constantinople the center of intellectual life and learning. In its wake it left the detritus of civilization in the hands of those who lived "beyond the fringe," so to speak, in the wilds of northern and western Europe.

The population of these regions was for the most part not of that stock that had produced ancient civilization, but rather a mixture of the earlier Gauls and other indigenous peoples whom the Romans had civilized at the opening of the Christian era and of a smaller number of Germanic invaders from the east. Even in Roman Italy itself the population came to be formed by these newer "barbarians."

The shift of focus northward and the new people emerging from an amalgamation of cultural and racial elements gave the life of the period the look of pioneer days on a new frontier. The frontier image itself was reeinforced by a disintegrating economic basis and the disappearance of centralizing forces such as the state and its bureaucracy. Indeed, we would not be far off the mark were we to compare that situation to what prevailed in America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Northwestern Europe corresponded to what was then the Mississippi Valley and the western United States, and conditions in the area must have appeared truly "barbaric" to the more sophisticated Easterners at the seat of civilized life. It is because Western Europe was essentially a pioneer society, struggling to develop a new country, and in the process having little time to devote to the things of the mind, that there lies whatever justification exists in the term "Dark Ages" as applied to that period. In northwestern Europe the period was "dark" not because of any lack of energy or power or promise in its inhabitants, but because those lands were then, as the American frontier later, devoting their considerable talents to tasks that had to be done before a more cultivated society could hope to exist.

Had there been factories or surplus capital anywhere in the world desiring a market, the early Europeans would surely have been assigned the role of "backward peoples," and it is certain that writers would have been found to prove that such races, so incapable of learning from the Hellenistic world of the East that after centuries only the externals of a rude Christianity marked their acquisition of culture, could never furnish more than a servile labor force, could never become more than "a

yellow man's burden." Such writers would have misread the true situation, of course, but not without some justification and evidence; European society before 1100 was characterized by feudal forms of government and manorial ways of life and production. The economy was essentially one of barter in which one commodity was exhanged for another within a local market. On the whole, the scene was one of stultification, disorder, and anarchy, and social relations clearly reflect the times. In such a situation only the most astute observer could have noticed that movements were afoot which would lead to what may be referred to as a "Gothic Renaissance."

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REVIVAL IN EUROPE

From about the year 1000 there began in Western Europe a revival of culture built upon, but eventually transcending, the institutions of feudalism, manorialism, the Church, and the learning preserved and transmitted during the early Middle Ages. On the tide of this rebirth, people were able to produce wealth which was new in both size and kind, to create larger and more enduring political entities, to build cities, and to develop new social classes; in sum, the men of Western Europe were able to expand their material, aesthetic, and cultural horizons by using "tools" newly developed. In such cases of rebirth, it is difficult to single out a "first cause," that single factor or source from which all others emanate. Rather, such events more often appear as a process of interdependent stimulation, wherein we find less a rigid series of causes and results than a chain of links being forged at much the same time.

One significant factor in the economic growth beginning in the tenth century was the rather dramatic increase in population. It has been estimated that Western Eruope grew from 27,000,000 in 700 to about 73,000,000 in 1300. Of course such figures are difficult to check and can provide us with a mere "guesstimate," but even with qualification, such growth as occurred remains startling. Contributing to this growth were the relative freedom from bubonic plague, the more or less stable social conditions, and technological improvements in agriculture. Of these, the last seems most important, for it resulted in larger crop yields, which could support an expanding population, and eventually produced a surplus supply of goods that could be converted into different forms of wealth. At bottom, the expansion of production was technologically based: larger amounts of land were put under cultivation by clearing forests and resettling peasants, and this in turn was made possible by the introduction of the heavy-wheeled plow and the horse harness. From such mundane inventions are civilizations built. Methods of tillage and animal husbandry were improved, greater use was made of fertilizers, breeding in crops and animals was improved, and new irrigation systems were introduced. In general, one perceives a greater inventiveness and ingenuity in agricultural entrepreneurship, and it should be noted that much of the impetus was provided by the diligence and intelligence of monks working the fields of their religious orders.

Concomitant with the growth of population and the expansion of agriculture, a revival in trade began in the late tenth century. As in all ages, trade and commerce were among the first to derive the benefits from greater political stability and political, military, and social expansion. The first area to be opened up was the Mediterranean, long in the hands of Eastern powers. During the period of the Crusades, trade developed between Europe and the eastern end of the sea and from there to the Far East. Italian merchants, breaking the grip of Muslim traders, ventured from Venice, Genoa, and Pisa and carried goods from India and China to Italy and the rest of Europe. In addition to the oversea lanes, overland routes carried goods by way of Baghdad and Damascus to Sidon, Tyre, and the so-called Crusader States. By the thirteenth century two other routes were opened: an all-sea route connecting the Mediterranean ports with England and northern Europe, and the land route from northern Italy through the Alpine passes north. Internally, Europeans were brought closer together by inland trade; travellers from Marseilles could journey up the Rhone Valley to northern Europe, and the Varangians of Russia followed the rivers into the south.

This increase in trade brought significant changes to the economic and social life of Western Europe. Fairs like those at Champagne, Leipzig, Venice, and Seville became important meeting places for merchants engaged in the exchange of goods and were, thereby, largely responsible for the growing use of credit and money. Difficult to measure, but impossible to underestimate, is the amount of intellectual exchange which took place as well.

As was mentioned in the preceding unit, town life practically disappeared during the feudal age. Rome declined from about 1,000,000 to 50,000 people, and towns less favored by circumstances were completely depopulated. This process, however, was reversed by the increase in trade which encouraged manufacturing and the revitalization of towns. Indeed, many new towns found their origins in the permanent trading centers which were beginning to appear where geographical conditions were favorable. River fords, mountain passes, natural harbors, and castle fortifications all provided likely spots for the settlements fed by a growing population. From such centers skilled craftsmen produced quality items which found an international market, and businessmen and bankers accumulated the wealth that would make them a social force to be reckoned with.

Seldom is dramatic economic growth without progeny. Changes in trade and commerce entailed social change as well. New classes were created and old social divisions were dissolved. As a result of increased trade and urbanization, city dwellers began to challenge the prerogatives of the feudal lords and to undermine the very foundations upon which those privileges were based. Merchant associations and craft guilds began to replace the old feudal ties even as money came to replace land as the primary source of wealth.

Probably the most outstanding political development in Western history was the formation of the national state which started toward the end of the early Middle Ages. As we have seen, feudalism arose out of a matrix of chaotic conditions; it was an improvisation of the times rather than a coherent system, an attempt, simply put, of the people of each local area to protect themselves. In the changing circumstances just described, feudalism was unable to guarantee law and order and to meet the demands of the bourgeois city-dwellers and the growing population. More important, it was unable to defend itself against the rise of royal power which found powerful allies in the middle class and the Church.

Germany

After the collapse of Charlemagne's empire, the political unit known as Germany began to develop east of the Rhine. At first a loose confederation of five duchies--Bavaria, Franconia, Lorraine, Saxony, and Swabia--formed a union and chose Conrad of Franconia as their nominal king. During his eight-year reign, Conrad attempted to establish a strong government, but the years of devastation wrought by the Slav and Magyar invaders had created a strong tradition of localized power. In the anarchy of social and political arrangements, dukes and counts ruled virtually as free agents, and Conrad's attempts at kingship were of little avail. Upon his death he recommended that the Saxon dynasty take over. Henry I, the Fowler (919-936), was chosen and founded the line that lasted from 919 to 1024. Henry strengthened the boundaries by establishing a line of defense against the Danes (referred to as Schleswig-Holstein), held back the Magyar invaders on the east, and set up Brandenburg as a defensive mark.

Otto I, the Great (936-973), succeeded his father and, wishing to exalt the status of German kingship, was crowned at Aachen. To deal with unruly nobles, he uprooted some of the old ducal families and replaced them with his relatives. To strengthen the monarchy further, he allied it with the Church by distributing vast lands to the bishops, which, as fiefs, were to contribute to the treasury and provide men for the army. In this way the king gained control over the bishops, a development which became significant in the later lay investiture controversy with the papacy. Otto also attempted to incorporate Italy and thereby revive Charlemagne's empire. First moving into Lombardy, he married the deposed queen, Adelaide, and then took over the throne and was crowned king of Lombardy in 951. In 962 he was crowned emperor by the pope, and his kingdom eventually became known as the Holy Roman Empire. Like his father, he continued efforts to push back the frontiers. With a truly German army, he was completely victorious at the battle of Lechfeld in 955, and the Magyars gave up invading Germany and settled in Hungary.

The Saxon successors, Otto II and Otto III, continued to pursue the policy of penetrating Italy; Otto III 9983-1002) even moved to Italy and

made Rome his capital, styling himself "Emperor of the Romans." Although the Saxon kings were successful in some ways, some of their policies proved disastrous for Germany: It remained until modern times a country of political localism or particularism and royal impotence; the Saxon alliance with the Church miscarried and led to a bitter struggle between the popes and the emperors; and the interest in Italy was a divisive and distractive force--all of which impeded national unification of Germany.

England

The Anglo-Saxon period had seen the rise of a government that was quite well centralized. The king enjoyed the allegiance of his subjects, the army was under his command, and the Witan (council) advised him on important matters. There were a number of local institutions that had a long history in England. The country, for instance, was divided into shires, each having a sheriff as the chief official and its own court; these shires, in turn, were subdivided into hundreds, each with its own local court.

The Norman conquest of England really started during the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), who spent many years in France and promised William of Normandy the throne of England at his death. When Edward died, however, the Witan chose Harold, a powerful English earl, to be king. William, using Edward's promise and a flimsy heredity right as justification, decided to invade England. He gathered a large army and, with favorable circumstances for the crossing of the channel, landed in England. In the famous battle at Hastings (1066), Harold was killed and William victorious.

William the Conqueror (1066-1087) preserved many of the Anglo-Saxon institutions--the danegeld (a unique land tax), the local courts and fyrd, the custom of general allegiance to the crown, and the advisory Witan; but he built energetically upon the system of feudal practices in Normandy and upon his own ideas--all of which were intended to strengthen and enrich, the monarchy. He broke up the large earldoms and granted fiefs to some of the Normans; by the Salisbury Oath he required direct allegiance to the king by all nobles; and he placed the Church under his direct control, denying the right to appeal cases to Rome without his consent. For tax purposes, he carried out his famous Domesday Survey to get an accurate census of economic resources.

Henry I (1100-1135), William's son and next important ruler, continued to strengthen the central government. Two institutions were established: the *Curia Regis*, which replaced the Witan and advised the king on matters of state; and the Exchequer, which proved a remarkably effective accounting agency. In the administration of the king's law, itinerant justices traveled about the kingdom to bring justice to all citizens. Upon Henry's death in 1135, the throne was claimed by a nephew, Stephen, Henry's son William having drowned in 1125. (Henry's daughter, Mathilda, was married to Geoffrey Plantagenet of Anjou.) For nineteen years anarchy prevailed during the dispute over the throne.

Order was finally restored in 1154 with the accession of Henry II (1154-1189), the son of Mathilda and Geoffrey. The house of Plantagenet (or Angevin) now became the ruling house of England. Henry II's marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine gave him control over a vast territory north and south of the English Channel, but he and his sons had difficulty in keeping order over these large and diverse territories. Henry II was an energetic, brilliant, and exhuberant man who ruled during a period of great intellectual and cultural flowering. Like his predecessors, he sought to strengthen royal authority and to increase royal revenues. The scope and importance of the Exchequer expanded greatly, as did the Chancery, the royal secretarial office. The old system of service in return for land gave way to *scutage*, or money payment. One of the chief accomplishments of Henry II was the expansion of royal justice. In his *Assize of Clarendon* of 1166, he widened the scope of royal justice to include the indictment and prosecution of local criminals by a group of responsible citizens (*jurati*, or "sworn men"), the forerunner of our modern-day grand jury; he also expanded the court system to deal with ownership of land.

One of the problems in England, as well as elsewhere, was the conflict between royal and ecclesiastical authority. In 1162 Henry appointed his chancellor and good friend, Thomas a Becket, as Archbishop of Canterbury. Henry and Becket became locked in a furious quarrel over the issue of royal control of the English Church. Henry insisted that churchmen were subject to royal courts. Becket was forced to flee to France but returned to England when Pope Alexander III was able to gain a truce. But soon another quarrel arose, and four overly enthusiastic royal knights murdered Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, thus making Becket a martyr and forcing Henry do do penance. Henry was finally able to bring the Church under tight rein, another step toward administrative and legal centralization.

Henry II was succeeded by his son, Richard the Lion-Hearted (1189-1199), who spent most of his time outside England and was chiefly known for his part in the Third Crusade. He was able to prevent the Angevin territories in France from falling into the hands of King Philip Augustus of France. When his younger brother, John (1199-1216), succeeded him, events took a turn for the worse, since John antagonized everyone. Philip Augustus wrested almost all of the French territories from him; and in a quarrel with Pope Innocent III, he was forced to accept the Pope's recommendation in the appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the overlordship of the English Church. Then in 1215 John was forced to sign the Magna Carta, which, among other things, decreed that royal taxes not sanctioned by custom were to be levied only by the common council of the kingdom. While the Magna Carta limited the king only in relation to the nobles, there was implied the principle that the king is bound by traditional legal limitations in his relations with all classes of free Englishmen. When John died in 1216, England was in the midst of a full-scale revolt.

John's son, Henry III (1216-1272), proved a petulant, erratic monarch, and before the end of his long reign the barons again rebelled. To try to curb an incompetent, arbitrary, spendthrift king, the barons, led by Simon de Montfort, captured Henry in 1264, and Simon ruled briefly

with the Great Council called "Parliament," which, in addition to the barons, included two knights from every shire and two burghers from every town.

The next king, Edward I (1272-1307), was far wiser than his father. Continuing the practice of summoning representatives of counties and towns to meetings of the Great Council, he convened, in 1295, the so-called Model Parliament, the most representative group yet assembled. From Edward's reign on, Parliament became more and more essential to English government. Early in the fourteenth century Parliament divided into two houses--the House of Lords, representing the barons, and the House of Commons, composed of the knights and the middle classes. The Commons soon learned that its power was the main source of money for the king; with this "power of the purse" Parliament forced the king to agree that no tax could be levied without its consent.

France

When William of Normandy conquered England in 1066, the French king controlled only a small territory around Paris known as the Ile-de-France and had virtually no power over the great feudal duchies such as Normandy and Aquitaine. However, under the Capetian dynasty, which ruled from 987 to 1328, the French monarchy became a great political power. The success of the Capetians was due to a number of factors: From the time of Hugh Capet, the first Capetian, the line always produced a male heir, who was crowned before the old king died. Hugh Capet was recognized as suzerain of all feudal lands in France, and the Capetians considered themselves to be successors of Charlemagne. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a series of remarkably capable Capetian kings achieved the mastery of Ile-de-France, brought additional territory under direct royal authority, and made their lordship over the great vassals real.

The first Capetian to consolidate royal control in the Ile-de-France was Philip I (1060-1108); and his policy was followed more vigorously by his son, Louis VI, the Fat (1108-1137), who destroyed the castles of the nobles and at last reduced them to obedience. Ably counseling and aiding Louis was Abbot Suger of the great royal abbey of Saint Denis.

The French monarchy came of age under Philip II, or Philip Augustus (1180-1223). Shrewd and calculating, Philip Augustus attempted to wrest the vast French territory from Henry II, who had acquired these holdings through his father, Geoffrey Anjou, and his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Philip plotted with Henry's sons and dissatisfied members of the Angevin family, but it was not until John became king that he succeeded, winning a decisive victory over John's German allies at Bouvines in 1214. Philip Augustus strengthened the royal administrative system by devising new agencies for centralized government, tapping new sources of revenue, and recruiting new officials, called *bailles*, from the ranks of the bourgeoisie (these loyal servants soon developed into expert governmental advisors and administrators). Thus the Capetian rulers were creating an efficient central government that was gradually to eliminate competition from

feudal barons and other powerful nobles.

When Pope Innocent III called a Crusade in 1208 to stamp out the heretical Albigensian sect in Toulouse, Philip gave his assistance; and under his son and next king, Louis VIII (1223-12]6), the Albigensians were crushed. Toulouse was escheated to the French. The French king's realm now stretched from the chilly coast of the English Channel to the warm shores of the Mediterranean.

The reign passed to Louis IX (1226-1270), who was better known as Saint Louis because of his nobility of character. Although he did not add much territory to the realm, he did imbue the monarchy with a moral dignity and played the role of peacemaker among Christian princes. During his reign town life flourished, Gothic cathedrals were built, and great universities, such as the University of Paris, flourished.

Philip IV, the Fair (1285-1314), climaxed three centuries of Capetian rule. The antithesis of his saintly grandfather, he was crafty, violent, and deceitful. Philip waged an indecisive war against Edward I of England over the remaining English fiefs in southern France and Flanders but was more successful in his policy of aggression against the Holy Roman Empire. In his unscrupulous campaign against the rich Crusading order of Knights Templars, he had many members tortured and burned at the stake and confiscated their property. In a bid for popular support (in his conflict with the pope over taxation of the clergy) he summoned the first great representative assemblies, the Estates General.

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

During the early Middle Ages the Church grew in importance; not only did it develop an autonomous organization with its own hierarchy, but it also acquired large landholdings and broadened its secular power to encompass many aspects of life. The Church worked to ensure uniform belief, and papal persistence overcame local authority and achieved international conformity.

The Church as "the body of Christ" was interpreted to mean that the Church included all of Christian society itself. Every baptized child of Christian parents automatically began life within the ranks of the Church. According to the theology of the Church, all people from the time of Adam were born into original sin, but Jesus, the Son of God, had sacrificed himself on the cross to atone for mankind's sin, and through his sacrifice mankind could gain salvation. Those who believed in redemption through Christ's atonement received salvation through the grace of God, which, according to theologians, was bestowed on people by means of sacraments administered by the Church and its officials. Thus to deny sacraments to people was to deny them God's grace and to imperil their salvation.

Obedience to the Church was enforced by all political as well as

religious rulers in Western Christendom. The Church developed its own legal system of canon law and Church courts to enforce its teachings and commands. Canon law--based upon the scriptures, the writings of the Church Fathers, and the decrees of the Church councils and popes--guided the Church courts in judging perjury, blasphemy, sorcery, usury, and heresy. The medieval Church enforced its beliefs often by psychic intimidation and sometimes by physical punishment, but the most effective spiritual penalty was excommunication, which brought the denial of the sacraments and, therefore, endangered salvation. The interdict was a means of penalizing the inhabitants of an entire area by withholding church services and some of the sacraments. In the thirteenth century the Church devised the Inquisition, with its own ecclesiastical court, to cope with the rising tide of heresy and to bring about religious conformity.

The medieval Cuurch rested upon the most highly organized administrative system in the West. At the head was the pope, or bishop of Rome. He was elected by the College of Cardinals, which had operated until 1059 as the *Curia*, the papal court. Europe was divided into ecclesiastical provinces, each presided over by an archbishop, who was a powerful prelate. The province was subdivided into diocese, each including many parishes and religious houses and presided over by a bishop, who was usually of high social origin and maintained an elaborate household. In his duties of confirming the young, ordaining deacons and priests, and dedicating churches, he did not come into close personal contact with the common people. The real foundation of the medieval Church was the village priest--who administered the sacraments, attended the sick, heard confessions, and supervised the morals of the parish--and the ordinary people of the parish.

During the Middle Ages the Church became very wealthy since it had several sources of revenue: donations in the form of gifts and legacies, often including landed property which was inalienable; the tithe, the one-tenth of a person's income that was supposed to be given to the Church; and the Peter's pence, a penny from each household. The Church could also collect dues for investiture and feudal dues from vassals. In addition, great revenue came to the Church through its confiscation of the property of heretics, and later the sale of indulgences became one of its most profitable methods of raising money, an activity which came to play considerable importance in the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

It was in protest against the worldliness of the Church that monasticism chiefly developed. Initiated as a reform movement, it generally involved withdrawing from the world and living within the confines of a monastery. The purpose of the Benedictine movement in the sixth century, for instance, was to withdraw from the world to find a closer communion with God. However, Benedictines were soon involved in teaching, evangelism, and ecclesiastical reform, and the monasteries controlled vast estates and contingents of knights and worked closely with secular princes.

In 910 the new monastic order of Cluny started in Burgundy. The Cluniac reform called for enforcement of clerical celibacy and abolition

of simony (the practice of selling ecclesiastical offices to the highest bidders). The most ambitious proponent of the Cluniac reform was Gregory VII (1073-1085). Unfortunately, the Cluniac order relaxed its early strictness, and a new order, the Cistercian, was founded in 1098 at Citeaux, a wild, remote site in eastern France. Established in solitary places, the Cistercian abbeys were stark and primitive (sculptured figures were not permitted), and the monastic discipline emphasized austerity and manual labor. St. Bernard, the abbot at Clairvaux, became the leading Christian of his age. A profound mystic and a brilliant religious orator, he became a crucial figure in the meteoric rise of the Cistercian order. By the end of the twelfth century, there were over five hundred Cistercian houses.

At the opening of the thirteenth century two radically new orders emerged--the Dominican and Franciscan--which were devoted to a life of poverty, preaching, and charitable deeds. These orders were pledged to both personal and corporate poverty and were, therefore, known as mendicants. Rejecting the separated life of the cloister, they dedicated themselves to religious work in the world, and provided moral and intellectual leadership at a time when it was badly needed.

St. Dominic (1170-1221), a well-educated Spaniard, spent his early career fighting the Albigensian heresy in southern France. Dominic's Order of Friar Preachers, dedicated to preaching as a means of spreading the doctrines of the Church and of converting non-believers, expanded at a phenominal rate, its friars carrying their evangelical activities across Europe and into the Holy Land, central Asia, Tartary, Tibet, and China. Their life included such rigors as regular midnight services, total abstinence from meat, frequent fasts, and prolonged periods of mandatory silence. Included in their ranks were such notable scholars as St. Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Francis (1182-1226), a contemporary of St. Dominic, rejected riches and spread the gospel of poverty and Christian simplicity, which became fundamental in the Rule of St. Francis. Both the Dominicans and Franciscans fought heresy with vigor, and the Dominicans later played a prominent role in the Inquisition.

Despite attempts at reform, there was continuing criticism of the clergy and dissatisfaction with the Church, which resulted in the growth of heretical doctrines. The Church seemed unable to minister effectively to the vigorous and widely literate new burgher class. In some cases, the critics crossed the boundary of orthodox reformism and preached without episcopal or papal approval and denied the exclusive right of the priesthood to perform sacraments. Heresies flourished particularly in the rising towns of southern Europe.

Two major heretical groups were the Waldensians and the Albigensians located in southern France and northern Italy. The Waldensians derived their name from Peter Waldo, a merchant of Lyons, who in 1176 gave all his possessions to the poor and took up a life of poverty. The principal target of the Waldensians was the wealth and worldliness of the Church. The Albigensians thought of the world as a battleground of the opposing forces of good and evil; they stressed a rigorous rejection of all