YONGE CHARLOTTE MARY

HISTORY OF FRANCE

Charlotte Yonge
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History of France:

Содержание

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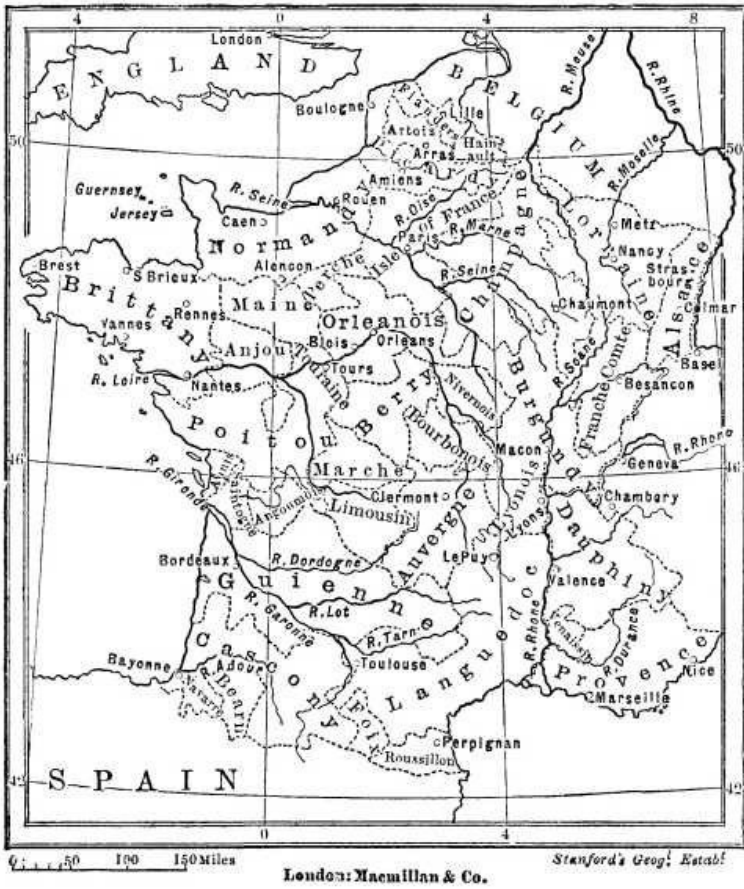
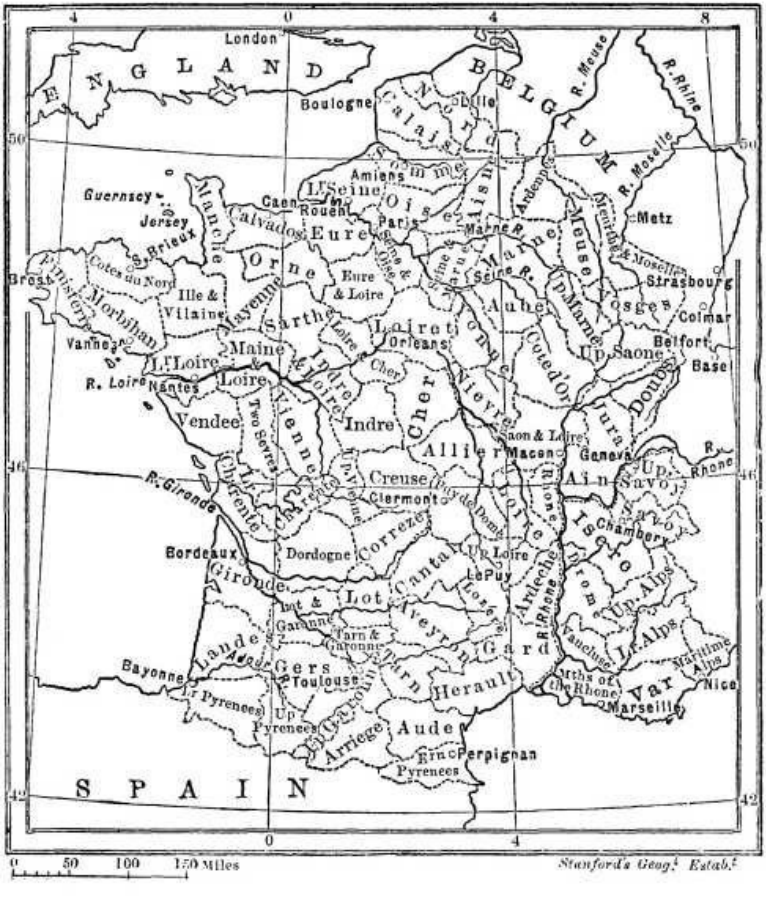
MAP OF FRANCE.



Shewing the Provinces.

MAP OF FRANCE



Shewing the Departments.

CHAPTER I.
THE EARLIER KINGS OF FRANCE

1. **France.**—The country we now know as France is the tract of land shut in by the British Channel, the Bay of Biscay, the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean, and the Alps. But this country only gained the name of France by degrees. In the earliest days of which we have any account, it was peopled by the Celts, and it was known to the Romans as part of a larger country which bore the name of Gaul. After all of it, save the north-western moorlands, or what we now call Brittany, had been conquered and settled by the Romans, it was overrun by tribes of the great Teutonic race, the same family to which Englishmen belong. Of these tribes, the Goths settled in the provinces to the south; the Burgundians, in the east, around the Jura; while the Franks, coming over the rivers in its unprotected north-eastern corner, and making themselves masters of a far wider territory, broke up into two kingdoms—that of the Eastern Franks in what is now Germany, and that of the Western Franks reaching from the Rhine to the Atlantic. These Franks subdued all the other Teutonic conquerors of Gaul, while they adopted the religion, the language, and some of the civilization of the Romanized Gauls who became their subjects. Under the second Frankish dynasty, the Empire was renewed in the West, where it had been for a

time put an end to by these Teutonic invasions, and the then Frankish king, Charles the Great, took his place as Emperor at its head. But in the time of his grandsons the various kingdoms and nations of which the Empire was composed, fell apart again under different descendants of his. One of these, *Charles the Bald*, was made King of the Western Franks in what was termed the Neustrian, or "not eastern," kingdom, from which the present France has sprung. This kingdom in name covered all the country west of the Upper Meuse, but practically the Neustrian king had little power south of the Loire; and the Celts of Brittany were never included in it.

2. **The House of Paris.**—The great danger which this Neustrian kingdom had to meet came from the Northmen, or as they were called in England the Danes. These ravaged in Neustria as they ravaged in England; and a large part of the northern coast, including the mouth of the Seine, was given by Charles the Bald to Rolf or Rollo, one of their leaders, whose land became known as the Northman's land, or Normandy. What most checked the ravages of these pirates was the resistance of Paris, a town which commanded the road along the river Seine; and it was in defending the city of Paris from the Northmen, that a warrior named Robert the Strong gained the trust and affection of the inhabitants of the Neustrian kingdom. He and his family became Counts (*i.e.*, judges and protectors) of Paris, and Dukes (or leaders) of the Franks. Three generations of them were really great men—Robert the Strong, Odo, and Hugh the White; and

when the descendants of Charles the Great had died out, a Duke of the Franks, *Hugh Capet*, was in 987 crowned King of the Franks. All the after kings of France down to Louis Philippe were descendants of Hugh Capet. By this change, however, he gained little in real power; for, though he claimed to rule over the whole country of the Neustrian Franks, his authority was little heeded, save in the domain which he had possessed as Count of Paris, including the cities of Paris, Orleans, Amiens, and Rheims (the coronation place). He was guardian, too, of the great Abbeys of St. Denys and St. Martin of Tours. The Duke of Normandy and the Count of Anjou to the west, the Count of Flanders to the north, the Count of Champagne to the east, and the Duke of Aquitaine to the south, paid him homage, but were the only actual rulers in their own domains.

3. **The Kingdom of Hugh Capet.—**The language of Hugh's kingdom was clipped Latin; the peasantry and townsmen were mostly Gaulish; the nobles were almost entirely Frank. There was an understanding that the king could only act by their consent, and must be chosen by them; but matters went more by old custom and the right of the strongest than by any law. A Salic law, so called from the place whence the Franks had come, was supposed to exist; but this had never been used by their subjects, whose law remained that of the old Roman Empire. Both of these systems of law, however, fell into disuse, and were replaced by rude bodies of "customs," which gradually grew up. The habits of the time were exceedingly rude and

ferocious. The Franks had been the fiercest and most untamable of all the Teutonic nations, and only submitted themselves to the influence of Christianity and civilization from the respect which the Roman Empire inspired. Charles the Great had tried to bring in Roman cultivation, but we find him reproaching the young Franks in his schools with letting themselves be surpassed by the Gauls, whom they despised; and in the disorders that followed his death, barbarism increased again. The convents alone kept up any remnants of culture; but as the fury of the Northmen was chiefly directed to them, numbers had been destroyed, and there was more ignorance and wretchedness than at any other time. In the duchy of Aquitaine, much more of the old Roman civilization survived, both among the cities and the nobility; and the Normans, newly settled in the north, had brought with them the vigour of their race. They had taken up such dead or dying culture as they found in France, and were carrying it further, so as in some degree to awaken their neighbours. Kings and their great vassals could generally read and write, and understand the Latin in which all records were made, but few except the clergy studied at all. There were schools in convents, and already at Paris a university was growing up for the study of theology, grammar, law, philosophy, and music, the sciences which were held to form a course of education. The doctors of these sciences lectured; the scholars of low degree lived, begged, and struggled as best they could; and gentlemen were lodged with clergy, who served as a sort of private tutors.

4. **Earlier Kings of the House of Paris.**—Neither Hugh nor the next three kings (*Robert*, 996-1031; *Henry*, 1031-1060; *Philip*, 1060-1108) were able men, and they were almost helpless among the fierce nobles of their own domain, and the great counts and dukes around them. Castles were built of huge strength, and served as nests of plunderers, who preyed on travellers and made war on each other, grievously tormenting one another's "villeins"—as the peasants were termed. Men could travel nowhere in safety, and horrid ferocity and misery prevailed. The first three kings were good and pious men, but too weak to deal with their ruffian nobles. *Robert, called the Pious*, was extremely devout, but weak. He became embroiled with the Pope on account of having married Bertha—a lady pronounced to be within the degrees of affinity prohibited by the Church. He was excommunicated, but held out till there was a great religious reaction, produced by the belief that the world would end in 1000. In this expectation many persons left their land untilled, and the consequence was a terrible famine, followed by a pestilence; and the misery of France was probably unequalled in this reign, when it was hardly possible to pass safely from one to another of the three royal cities, Paris, Orleans, and Tours. Beggars swarmed, and the king gave to them everything he could lay his hands on, and even winked at their stealing gold off his dress, to the great wrath of a second wife, the imperious Constance of Provence, who, coming from the more luxurious and corrupt south, hated and despised the roughness

and asceticism of her husband. She was a fierce and passionate woman, and brought an element of cruelty into the court. In this reign the first instance of persecution to the death for heresy took place. The victim had been the queen's confessor; but so far was she from pitying him that she struck out one of his eyes with her staff, as he was led past her to the hut where he was shut in and burnt. On Robert's death Constance took part against her son, *Henry I.*, on behalf of his younger brother, but Henry prevailed. During his reign the clergy succeeded in proclaiming what was called the Truce of God, which forbade war and bloodshed at certain seasons of the year and on certain days of the week, and made churches and clerical lands places of refuge and sanctuary, which often indeed protected the lawless, but which also saved the weak and oppressed. It was during these reigns that the Papacy was beginning the great struggle for temporal power, and freedom from the influence of the Empire, which resulted in the increased independence and power of the clergy. The religious fervour which had begun with the century led to the foundation of many monasteries, and to much grand church architecture. In the reign of *Philip I.*, William, Duke of Normandy, obtained the kingdom of England, and thus became far more powerful than his suzerain, the King of France, a weak man of vicious habits, who lay for many years of his life under sentence of excommunication for an adulterous marriage with Bertrade de Montfort, Countess of Anjou. The power of the king and of the law was probably at the very lowest ebb during the

time of Philip I., though minds and manners were less debased than in the former century.

5. **The First Crusade (1095—1100).**—Pilgrimage to the Holy Land had now become one great means by which the men of the West sought pardon for their sins. Jerusalem had long been held by the Arabs, who had treated the pilgrims well; but these had been conquered by a fierce Turcoman tribe, who robbed and oppressed the pilgrims. Peter the Hermit, returning from a pilgrimage, persuaded Pope Urban II. that it would be well to stir up Christendom to drive back the Moslem power, and deliver Jerusalem and the holy places. Urban II. accordingly, when holding a council at Clermont, in Auvergne, permitted Peter to describe in glowing words the miseries of pilgrims and the profanation of the holy places. Cries broke out, "God wills it!" and multitudes thronged to receive crosses cut out in cloth, which were fastened to the shoulder, and pledged the wearer to the holy war or crusade, as it was called. Philip I. took no interest in the cause, but his brother Hugh, Count of Vermandois, Stephen, Count of Blois, Robert, Duke of Normandy, and Raymond, Count of Toulouse, joined the expedition, which was made under Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine, or what we now call the Netherlands. The crusade proved successful; Jerusalem was gained, and a kingdom of detached cities and forts was founded in Palestine, of which Godfrey became the first king. The whole of the West was supposed to keep up the defence of the Holy Land, but, in fact, most of those who went as armed

pilgrims were either French, Normans, or Aquitanians; and the men of the East called all alike Franks. Two orders of monks, who were also knights, became the permanent defenders of the kingdom—the Knights of St. John, also called Hospitallers, because they also lodged pilgrims and tended the sick; and the Knights Templars. Both had establishments in different countries in Europe, where youths were trained to the rules of their order. The old custom of solemnly girding a young warrior with his sword was developing into a system by which the nobly born man was trained through the ranks of page and squire to full knighthood, and made to take vows which bound him to honourable customs to equals, though, unhappily, no account was taken of his inferiors.

6. **Louis VI. and VII.—**Philip's son, *Louis VI., or the Fat*, was the first able man whom the line of Hugh Capet had produced since it mounted the throne. He made the first attempt at curbing the nobles, assisted by Suger, the Abbot of St. Denys. The only possibility of doing this was to obtain the aid of one party of nobles against another; and when any unusually flagrant offence had been committed, Louis called together the nobles, bishops, and abbots of his domain, and obtained their consent and assistance in making war on the guilty man, and overthrowing his castle, thus, in some degree, lessening the sense of utter impunity which had caused so many violences and such savage recklessness. He also permitted a few of the cities to purchase the right of self-government, and freedom from the ill

usage of the counts, who, from their guardians, had become their tyrants; but in this he seems not to have been so much guided by any fixed principle, as by his private interests and feelings towards the individual city or lord in question. However, the royal authority had begun to be respected by 1137, when Louis VI. died, having just effected the marriage of his son, *Louis VII.*, with Eleanor, the heiress of the Dukes of Aquitaine—thus hoping to make the crown really more powerful than the great princes who owed it homage. At this time lived the great St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, who had a wonderful influence over men's minds. It was a time of much thought and speculation, and Peter Abailard, an able student of the Paris University, held a controversy with Bernard, in which we see the first struggle between intellect and authority. Bernard roused the young king, Louis VII., to go on the second crusade, which was undertaken by the Emperor and the other princes of Europe to relieve the distress of the kingdom of Palestine. France had no navy, so the war was by land, through the rugged hills of Asia Minor, where the army was almost destroyed by the Saracens. Though Louis did reach Palestine, it was with weakened forces; he could effect nothing by his campaign, and Eleanor, who had accompanied him, seems to have been entirely corrupted by the evil habits of the Franks settled in the East. Soon after his return, Louis dissolved his marriage; and Eleanor became the wife of Henry, Count of Anjou, who soon after inherited the kingdom of England as our Henry II., as well as the duchy of Normandy, and betrothed his

third son to the heiress of Brittany. Eleanor's marriage seemed to undo all that Louis VI. had done in raising the royal power; for Henry completely overshadowed Louis, whose only resource was in feeble endeavours to take part against him in his many family quarrels. The whole reign of Louis the Young, the title that adhered to him on account of his simple, childish nature, is only a record of weakness and disaster, till he died in 1180. What life went on in France, went on principally in the south. The lands of Aquitaine and Provence had never dropped the old classical love of poetry and art. A softer form of broken Latin was then spoken, and the art of minstrelsy was frequent among all ranks. Poets were called troubadours and *trouvères* (finders). Courts of love were held, where there were competitions in poetry, the prize being a golden violet; and many of the bravest warriors were also distinguished troubadours—among them the elder sons of Queen Eleanor. There was much license of manners, much turbulence; and as the Aquitanians hated Angevin rule, the troubadours never ceased to stir up the sons of Henry II. against him.

7. **Philip II. (1180—1223).**—Powerful in fact as Henry II. was, it was his gathering so large a part of France under his rule which was, in the end, to build up the greatness of the French kings. What had held them in check was the existence of the great fiefs or provinces, each with its own line of dukes or counts, and all practically independent of the king. But now nearly all the provinces of southern and western France were gathered into the hand of a single ruler; and though he was a Frenchman in

blood, yet, as he was King of England, this ruler seemed to his French subjects no Frenchman, but a foreigner. They began therefore to look to the French king to free them from a foreign ruler; and the son of Louis VII., called *Philip Augustus*, was ready to take advantage of their disposition. Philip was a really able man, making up by address for want of personal courage. He set himself to lower the power of the house of Anjou and increase that of the house of Paris. As a boy he had watched conferences between his father and Henry under the great elm of Gisors, on the borders of Normandy, and seeing his father overreached, he laid up a store of hatred to the rival king. As soon as he had the power, he cut down the elm, which was so large that 300 horsemen could be sheltered under its branches. He supported the sons of Henry II. in their rebellions, and was always the bitter foe of the head of the family. Philip assumed the cross in 1187, on the tidings of the loss of Jerusalem, and in 1190 joined Richard I. of England at Messina, where they wintered, and then sailed for St. Jean d'Acre. After this city was taken, Philip returned to France, where he continued to profit by the crimes and dissensions of the Angevins, and gained, both as their enemy and as King of France. When Richard's successor, John, murdered Arthur, the heir of the dukedom of Brittany and claimant of both Anjou and Normandy, Philip took advantage of the general indignation to hold a court of peers, in which John, on his non-appearance, was adjudged to have forfeited his fiefs. In the war which followed and ended in 1204, Philip not only gained

the great Norman dukedom, which gave him the command of Rouen and of the mouth of the Seine, as well as Anjou, Maine, and Poitou, the countries which held the Loire in their power, but established the precedent that a crown vassal was amenable to justice, and might be made to forfeit his lands. What he had won by the sword he held by wisdom and good government. Seeing that the cities were capable of being made to balance the power of the nobles, he granted them privileges which caused him to be esteemed their best friend, and he promoted all improvements. Though once laid under an interdict by Pope Innocent III. for an unlawful marriage, Philip usually followed the policy which gained for the Kings of France the title of "Most Christian King." The real meaning of this was that he should always support the Pope against the Emperor, and in return be allowed more than ordinary power over his clergy. The great feudal vassals of eastern France, with a strong instinct that he was their enemy, made a league with the Emperor Otto IV. and his uncle King John, against Philip Augustus. John attacked him in the south, and was repulsed by Philip's son, Louis, called the "Lion;" while the king himself, backed by the burghers of his chief cities, gained at Bouvines, over Otto, the first real French victory, in 1214, thus establishing the power of the crown. Two years later, Louis the Lion, who had married John's niece, Blanche of Castile, was invited by the English barons to become their king on John's refusing to be bound by the Great Charter; and Philip saw his son actually in possession of London at the time of the

death of the last of the sons of his enemy, Henry II. On John's death, however, the barons preferred his child to the French prince, and fell away from Louis, who was forced to return to France.

8. **The Albigenses (1203—1240).**—The next great step in the building up of the French kingdom was made by taking advantage of a religious strife in the south. The lands near the Mediterranean still had much of the old Roman cultivation, and also of the old corruption, and here arose a sect called the Albigenses, who held opinions other than those of the Church on the origin of evil. Pope Innocent III., after sending some of the order of friars freshly established by the Spaniard, Dominic, to preach to them in vain, declared them as great enemies of the faith as Mahometans, and proclaimed a crusade against them and their chief supporter, Raymond, Count of Toulouse. Shrewd old King Philip merely permitted this crusade; but the dislike of the north of France to the south made hosts of adventurers flock to the banner of its leader, Simon de Montfort, a Norman baron, devout and honourable, but harsh and pitiless. Dreadful execution was done; the whole country was laid waste, and Raymond reduced to such distress that Peter I., King of Aragon, who was regarded as the natural head of the southern races, came to his aid, but was defeated and slain at the battle of Muret. After this Raymond was forced to submit, but such hard terms were forced on him that his people revolted. His country was granted to De Montfort, who laid siege to Toulouse, and was

killed before he could take the city. The war was then carried on by *Louis the Lion*, who had succeeded his father as Louis VIII. in 1223, though only to reign three years, as he died of a fever caught in a southern campaign in 1226. His widow, Blanche, made peace in the name of her son, *Louis IX.*, and Raymond was forced to give his only daughter in marriage to one of her younger sons. On their death, the county of Toulouse lapsed to the crown, which thus became possessor of all southern France, save Guienne, which still remained to the English kings. But the whole of the district once peopled by the Albigenses had been so much wasted as never to recover its prosperity, and any cropping up of their opinions was guarded against by the establishment of the Inquisition, which appointed Dominican friars to *inquire* into and exterminate all that differed from the Church. At the same time the order of St. Francis did much to instruct and quicken the consciences of the people; and at the universities—especially that of Paris—a great advance both in thought and learning was made. Louis IX.'s confessor, Henry de Sorbonne, founded, for the study of divinity, the college which was known by his name, and whose decisions were afterwards received as of paramount authority.

9. **The Parliament of Paris.**—France had a wise ruler in Blanche, and a still better one in her son, *Louis IX.*, who is better known as *St. Louis*, and who was a really good and great man. He was the first to establish the Parliament of Paris—a court consisting of the great feudal vassals, lay and ecclesiastical, who

held of the king direct, and who had to try all causes. They much disliked giving such attendance, and a certain number of men trained to the law were added to them to guide the decisions. The Parliament was thus only a court of justice and an office for registering wills and edicts. The representative assembly of France was called the States-General, and consisted of all estates of the realm, but was only summoned in time of emergency. Louis IX. was the first king to bring nobles of the highest rank to submit to the judgment of Parliament when guilty of a crime. Enguerrand de Coucy, one of the proudest nobles of France, who had hung two Flemish youths for killing a rabbit, was sentenced to death. The penalty was commuted, but the principle was established. Louis's uprightness and wisdom gained him honour and love everywhere, and he was always remembered as sitting under the great oak at Vincennes, doing equal justice to rich and poor. Louis was equally upright in his dealings with foreign powers. He would not take advantage of the weakness of Henry III. of England to attack his lands in Guienne, though he maintained the right of France to Normandy as having been forfeited by King John. So much was he respected that he was called in to judge between Henry and his barons, respecting the oaths exacted from the king by the Mad Parliament. His decision in favour of Henry was probably an honest one; but he was misled by the very different relations of the French and English kings to their nobles, who in France maintained lawlessness and violence, while in England they were struggling for law

and order. Throughout the struggles between the Popes and the Emperor Frederick II., Louis would not be induced to assist in a persecution of the Emperor which he considered unjust, nor permit one of his sons to accept the kingdom of Apulia and Sicily, when the Pope declared that Frederick had forfeited it. He could not, however, prevent his brother Charles, Count of Anjou, from accepting it; for Charles had married Beatrice, heiress of the imperial fief of Provence, and being thus independent of his brother Louis, was able to establish a branch of the French royal family on the throne at Naples. The reign of St. Louis was a time of much progress and improvement. There were great scholars and thinkers at all the universities. Romance and poetry were flourishing, and influencing people's habits, so that courtesy, *i.e.* the manners taught in castle courts, was softening the demeanour of knights and nobles. Architecture was at its most beautiful period, as is seen, above all, in the Sainte Chapelle at Paris. This was built by Louis IX. to receive a gift of the Greek Emperor, namely, a thorn, which was believed to be from the crown of thorns. It is one of the most perfect buildings in existence.

10. **Crusade of Louis IX.—**Unfortunately, Louis, during a severe illness, made a vow to go on a crusade. His first fulfilment of this vow was made early in his reign, in 1250, when his mother was still alive to undertake the regency. His attempt was to attack the heart of the Saracen power in Egypt, and he effected a landing and took the city of Damietta. There he left his queen, and advanced on Cairo; but near Mansourah he

found himself entangled in the canals of the Nile, and with a great army of Mamelukes in front. A ford was found, and the English Earl of Salisbury, who had brought a troop to join the crusade, advised that the first to cross should wait and guard the passage of the next. But the king's brother, Robert, Count of Artois, called this cowardice. The earl was stung, and declared he would be as forward among the foe as any Frenchman. They both charged headlong, were enclosed by the enemy, and slain; and though the king at last put the Mamelukes to flight, his loss was dreadful. The Nile rose and cut off his return. He lost great part of his troops from sickness, and was horribly harassed by the Mamelukes, who threw among his host a strange burning missile, called Greek fire; and he was finally forced to surrender himself as a prisoner at Mansourah, with all his army. He obtained his release by giving up Damietta, and paying a heavy ransom. After twenty years, in 1270, he attempted another crusade, which was still more unfortunate, for he landed at Tunis to wait for his brother to arrive from Sicily, apparently on some delusion of favourable dispositions on the part of the Bey. Sickness broke out in the camp, and the king, his daughter, and his third son all died of fever; and so fatal was the expedition, that his son Philip III. returned to France escorting five coffins, those of his father, his brother, his sister and her husband, and his own wife and child.

11. **Philip the Fair.**—The reign of *Philip III.* was very short. The insolence and cruelty of the Provençals in Sicily had provoked the natives to a massacre known as the Sicilian

Vespers, and they then called in the King of Aragon, who finally obtained the island, as a separate kingdom from that on the Italian mainland where Charles of Anjou and his descendants still reigned. While fighting his uncle's battles on the Pyrenees, and besieging Gerona, Philip III. caught a fever, and died on his way home in 1285. His successor, *Philip IV., called the Fair*, was crafty, cruel, and greedy, and made the Parliament of Paris the instrument of his violence and exactions, which he carried out in the name of the law. To prevent Guy de Dampierre, Count of Flanders, from marrying his daughter to the son of Edward I. of England, he invited her and her father to his court, and threw them both into prison, while he offered his own daughter Isabel to Edward of Carnarvon in her stead. The Scottish wars prevented Edward I. from taking up the cause of Guy; but the Pope, Boniface VIII., a man of a fierce temper, though of a great age, loudly called on Philip to do justice to Flanders, and likewise blamed in unmeasured terms his exactions from the clergy, his debasement of the coinage, and his foul and vicious life. Furious abuse passed on both sides. Philip availed himself of a flaw in the Pope's election to threaten him with deposition, and in return was excommunicated. He then sent a French knight named William de Nogaret, with Sciarra Colonna, a turbulent Roman, the hereditary enemy of Boniface, and a band of savage mercenary soldiers to Anagni, where the Pope then was, to force him to recall the sentence, apparently intending them to act like the murderers of Becket. The old man's dignity, however,

overawed them at the moment, and they retired without laying hands on him, but the shock he had undergone caused his death a few days later. His successor was poisoned almost immediately on his election, being known to be adverse to Philip. Parties were equally balanced in the conclave; but Philip's friends advised him to buy over to his interest one of his supposed foes, whom they would then unite in choosing. Bertrand de Goth, Archbishop of Bordeaux, was the man, and in a secret interview promised Philip to fulfil six conditions if he were made Pope by his interest. These were: 1st, the reconciliation of Philip with the Church; 2nd, that of his agents; 3rd, a grant to the king of a tenth of all clerical property for five years; 4th, the restoration of the Colonna family to Rome; 5th, the censure of Boniface's memory. These five were carried out by Clement V., as he called himself, as soon as he was on the Papal throne; the sixth remained a secret, but was probably the destruction of the Knights Templars. This order of military monks had been created for the defence of the crusading kingdom of Jerusalem, and had acquired large possessions in Europe. Now that their occupation in the East was gone, they were hated and dreaded by the kings, and Philip was resolved on their wholesale destruction.

12. **The Papacy at Avignon.**—Clement had never quitted France, but had gone through the ceremonies of his installation at Lyons; and Philip, fearing that in Italy he would avoid carrying out the scheme for the ruin of the Templars, had him conducted to Avignon, a city of the Empire which belonged to the Angevin

King of Naples, as Count of Provence, and there for eighty years the Papal court remained. As they were thus settled close to the French frontier, the Popes became almost vassals of France; and this added greatly to the power and renown of the French kings. How real their hold on the Papacy was, was shown in the ruin of the Templars. The order was now abandoned by the Pope, and its knights were invited in large numbers to Paris, under pretence of arranging a crusade. Having been thus entrapped, they were accused of horrible and monstrous crimes, and torture elicited a few supposed confessions. They were then tried by the Inquisition, and the greater number were put to death by fire, the Grand Master last of all, while their lands were seized by the king. They seem to have been really a fierce, arrogant, and oppressive set of men, or else there must have been some endeavour to save them, belonging, as most of them did, to noble French families. The "Pest of France," as Dante calls Philip the Fair, was now the most formidable prince in Europe. He contrived to annex to his dominions the city of Lyons, hitherto an imperial city under its archbishop. Philip died in 1314; and his three sons—*Louis X.*, *Philip V.*, and *Charles IV.*,—were as cruel and harsh as himself, but without his talent, and brought the crown and people to disgrace and misery. Each reigned a few years and then died, leaving only daughters, and the question arose whether the inheritance should go to females. When Louis X. died, in 1316, his brother Philip, after waiting for the birth of a posthumous child who only lived a few days, took the crown,

and the Parliament then declared that the law of the old Salian Franks had been against the inheritance of women. By this newly discovered Salic law, Charles IV., the third brother, reigned on Philip's death; but the kingdom of Navarre having accrued to the family through their grandmother, and not being subject to the Salic law, went to the eldest daughter of Louis X., Jane, wife of the Count of Evreux.

CHAPTER II.
THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

1. **Wars of Edward III.**—By the Salic law, as the lawyers called it, the crown was given, on the death of Charles IV., to *Philip, Count of Valois*, son to a brother of Philip IV., but it was claimed by Edward III. of England as son of the daughter of Philip IV. Edward contented himself, however, with the mere assertion of his pretensions, until Philip exasperated him by attacks on the borders of Guienne, which the French kings had long been coveting to complete their possession of the south, and by demanding the surrender of Robert of Artois, who, being disappointed in his claim to the county of Artois by the judgment of the Parliament of Paris, was practising by sorcery on the life of the King of France. Edward then declared war, and his supposed right caused a century of warfare between France and England, in which the broken, down-trodden state of the French peasantry gave England an immense advantage. The knights and squires were fairly matched; but while the English yeomen were strong, staunch, and trustworthy, the French were useless, and only made a defeat worse by plundering the fallen on each side alike. The war began in Flanders, where Philip took the part of the count, whose tyrannies had caused his expulsion. Edward was called in to the aid of the citizens of Ghent by their leader

Jacob van Arteveldt; and gained a great victory over the French fleet at Sluys, but with no important result. At the same time the two kings took opposite sides in the war of the succession in Brittany, each defending the claim most inconsistent with his own pretensions to the French crown—Edward upholding the male heir, John de Montfort, and Philip the direct female representative, the wife of Charles de Blois.

2. **Creçy and Poitiers.**—Further difficulties arose through Charles the Bad, King of Navarre and Count of Evreux, who was always on the watch to assert his claim to the French throne through his mother, the daughter of Louis X., and was much hated and distrusted by Philip VI. and his son John, Duke of Normandy. Fearing the disaffection of the Norman and Breton nobles, Philip invited a number of them to a tournament at Paris, and there had them put to death after a hasty form of trial, thus driving their kindred to join his enemies. One of these offended Normans, Godfrey of Harcourt, invited Edward to Normandy, where he landed, and having consumed his supplies was on his march to Flanders, when Philip, with the whole strength of the kingdom, endeavoured to intercept him at *Creçy* in Picardy, in 1348. Philip was utterly incapable as a general; his knights were wrong-headed and turbulent, and absolutely cut down their own Genoese hired archers for being in their way. The defeat was total. Philip rode away to Amiens, and Edward laid siege to Calais. The place was so strong that he was forced to blockade it, and Philip had time to gather another army to attempt its relief;

but the English army were so posted that he could not attack them without great loss. He retreated, and the men of Calais surrendered, Edward insisting that six burghers should bring him the keys with ropes round their necks, to submit themselves to him. Six offered themselves, but their lives were spared, and they were honourably treated. Edward expelled all the French, and made Calais an English settlement. A truce followed, chiefly in consequence of the ravages of the Black Death, which swept off multitudes throughout Europe, a pestilence apparently bred by filth, famine, and all the miseries of war and lawlessness, but which spared no ranks. It had scarcely ceased before Philip died, in 1350. His son, *John*, was soon involved in a fresh war with England by the intrigues of Charles the Bad, and in 1356 advanced southwards to check the Prince of Wales, who had come out of Guienne on a plundering expedition. The French were again totally routed at Poitiers, and the king himself, with his third son, Philip, were made prisoners and carried to London with most of the chief nobles.

3. **The Jacquerie.**—The calls made on their vassals by these captive nobles to supply their ransoms brought the misery to a height. The salt tax, or *gabelle*, which was first imposed to meet the expenses of the war, was only paid by those who were neither clergy nor nobles, and the general saying was—"Jacques Bonhomme (the nickname for the peasant) has a broad back, let him bear all the burthens." Either by the king, the feudal lords, the clergy, or the bands of men-at-arms who roved through

the country, selling themselves to any prince who would employ them, the wretched people were stripped of everything, and used to hide in holes and caves from ill-usage or insult, till they broke out in a rebellion called the Jacquerie, and whenever they could seize a castle revenged themselves, like the brutes they had been made, on those within it. Taxation was so levied by the king's officers as to be frightfully oppressive, and corruption reigned everywhere. As the king was in prison, and his heir, Charles, had fled ignominiously from Poitiers, the citizens of Paris hoped to effect a reform, and rose with their provost-marshal, Stephen Marcel, at their head, threatened Charles, and slew two of his officers before his eyes. On their demand the States-General were convoked, and made wholesome regulations as to the manner of collecting the taxes, but no one, except perhaps Marcel, had any real zeal or public spirit. Charles the Bad, of Navarre, who had pretended to espouse their cause, betrayed it; the king declared the decisions of the States-General null and void; and the crafty management of his son prevented any union between the malcontents. The gentry rallied, and put down the Jacquerie with horrible cruelty and revenge. The burghers of Paris found that Charles the Bad only wanted to gain the throne, and Marcel would have proclaimed him; but those who thought him even worse than his cousins of Valois admitted the other Charles, by whom Marcel and his partisans were put to death. The attempt at reform thus ended in talk and murder, and all fell back into the same state of misery and oppression.

4. **The Peace of Bretigny.**—This Charles, eldest son of John, obtained by purchase the imperial fief of Vienne, of which the counts had always been called Dauphins, a title thenceforth borne by the heir apparent of the kingdom. His father's captivity and the submission of Paris left him master of the realm; but he did little to defend it when Edward III. again attacked it, and in 1360 he was forced to bow to the terms which the English king demanded as the price of peace. The Peace of Bretigny permitted King John to ransom himself, but resigned to England the sovereignty over the duchy of Aquitaine, and left Calais and Ponthieu in the hands of Edward III. John died in 1364, before his ransom was paid, and his son mounted the throne as *Charles V*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.