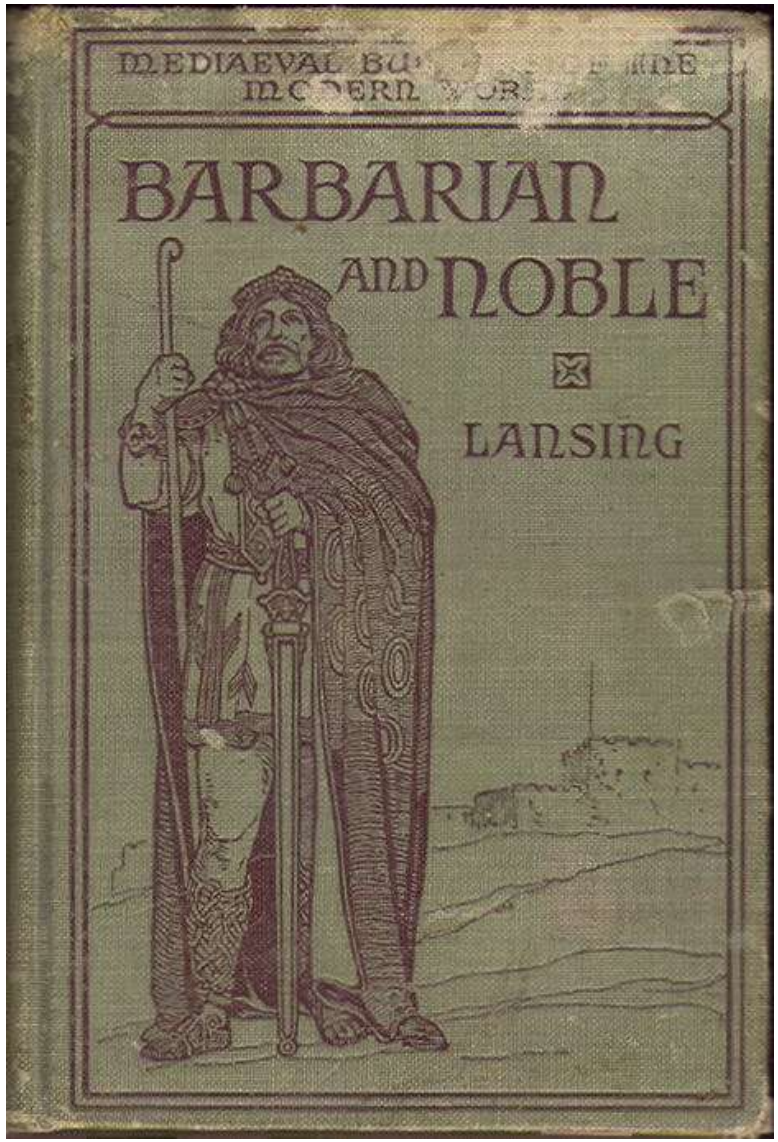

Mediaeval Builders of the Modern World

BARBARIAN AND NOBLE

BY

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PREFACE

MEDIAEVAL BUILDERS OF THE MODERN WORLD

History has no period which makes a more vivid appeal to the young reader than the thousand years which we call the Middle Ages. The mediaeval world is just such a world as he would like to live in, where knights ride off on crusades, and kings wander out from their palaces in disguise, where heroes sail away to explore unknown seas, and gay cavaliers sally forth to tournament and joust. It requires no effort to interest boys and girls in this part of history. They turn to it with the enthusiasm with which they seize fairy tales and legends of chivalry and romance, and find in its reality a satisfying response to the desire for a true story.

The child's interest being assured, the problem is to make this interest of use in the process of his education. The purpose of this series is to relate this fascinating and heroic past to the present by telling the stories from the point of view of the contribution of the Middle Ages to the world of to-day. The heroes gain a new importance and the stories a new meaning by this treatment. Who the "mediaeval builders" were may be seen by the titles of the following books which make up the series: "Barbarian and Noble," "Patriots and Tyrants," "Sea Kings and Explorers," "Kings and Common Folk," "Cavalier and Courtier," "Craftsman and Artist."

BARBARIAN AND NOBLE

In this volume are grouped stories of that early period of the Middle Ages when Europe was the meeting place of many races and tribes which were later to make up the nations of the modern world. In its broad lines the historical epic of the wandering of the nations, and of the formation of Christendom out of a chaos of tribes and peoples and tongues, is as stirring as

any saga; in its details there are many bits of epic prose, many quaint scenes from the life of the time, and many pictures of well known heroes. It is, moreover, with all its tragedy of the fall of the Roman Empire, a tale of hope; for there runs through it a single line of progress,—that the barbarian of one age appears as the noble of the next, taking his turn in defending his world against the onrush of new barbarians. Barbarian becoming noble unconsciously, uncivilized becoming civilized, that is the tale of the early Middle Ages in relation to the world of to day; and it is a tale fascinating beyond one's most hopeful anticipations.

From this material Kingsley and Scott, Dickens and Miss Yonge and Freeman drew what suited their purpose as writers of England's story; but the history of the early Middle Ages in its relation to the progress of civilization has never been adequately told for younger readers. The table of contents will indicate the story interest of the tales; the deeper purpose of the book has been carefully traced out in the notes.

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CHAPTER I

BARBARIAN AND NOBLE

Nobles and barbarians, civilized nations and uncivilized tribes, conquered and unconquered,—so the world was divided in the golden age of the Roman Empire, when the city on the seven hills ruled the world, when it was the proudest boast a man could make to say, "I am a Roman citizen," and he who could claim that right looked on the subject peoples of the north and west and south and east and called them barbarians, while under his breath he termed them slaves.

Thus it was in the days of the great Cæsars, and it was a wise order of things for a time, for so the whole known world was drawn together into a huge framework of law and civilization; so it came about that the great waters were guarded by Roman transports, and merchants might journey over them in safety, and commerce prospered; and so it was that great highways were built across the continent of Europe, until the saying was that "all roads led to Rome."

But there was one region where Roman roads did not penetrate, and where, though legions of trained soldiers marched and countermarched, they did not stay nor hold a lasting place. Down through the map of Europe run two rivers, in the north the Rhine and in the south the Danube, forming a natural boundary which separates the great forests of Germany and Austria and Hungary from the western plains and peninsulas; and this boundary stood as the frontier, the limit of the Roman Empire.

It had not been the wish of the great mistress of the nations that she should stop here; it was the dream of Roman emperors that she should rule the world from the rising of the sun to its setting; but here she had been forced to pause, and the reason why she stopped her imperial progress is told in the first story of the conflict between barbarian and noble.

CHAPTER II

THE STORY OF DRUSUS

Was it the army of some mighty rival power that stopped the lines of Roman soldiery when they came to the banks of the river Rhine? Or did the people who met them there have better swords or mightier engines of war than these veteran warriors,—these world conquerors? No, that was the strange part of it. It was a simple forest people who held those lands west of the river boundary,—a people who dwelt in scattered villages and lived by the hunt and the chase. Men of a later day, looking back on them as they stand out in contrast to their foes, have called them forest children, for, though they were tall and strong, men in stature and in years, yet they were children at heart, and they met their all powerful enemy with the simplicity and courage of children.

The Romans could not understand their Gothic opponents, who were for that very cause the more terrible to them. It was impossible for the crafty Roman to comprehend a chieftain who could cut down a dozen men in battle with merciless cruelty, but who would ride beforehand unarmed into the enemy's camp to appoint the place and hour for the battle, in order that neither side might gain an undue advantage. The mystery of an alien people was more terrifying than a forest of swords.

The Romans did not give up easily. Many a general volunteered for the perilous northern service, and of all those who fought the barbarians none was braver than the mighty Drusus. It was he who was the first Roman captain to sail the dread North Ocean; and it was he who cast up on the farther side of the Rhine those deep and well paved trenches which for centuries were called by his name. Many a time he had put the barbarian to the sword, and when he had driven him far into the

inmost recesses of the forest, had not given over chasing and pursuing. It was surely meet that Drusus be the one to enter the Gothic lands and subdue the Gothic peoples, who, though they came out and made treaties with the Romans and even served for pay in their armies, looking with admiring eyes on their great cities with high walls and towers, yet slipped away into their forest shelters and beat back their former masters with sharp-pointed arrows, shot from behind rough breastworks of trees.

In the reign of the emperor Augustus, greatest of all the Cæsars, Drusus brought his men across the Rhine on flat-bottomed boats, and plunged with them into the forest. It was a hard and toilsome march, for the way led through dense forests and trackless swamps, where many men were lost. When the Romans met a company of Goths drawn up before their village in battle line, they were more often than not able to gain the victory and drive them back in disorder; but the Goths would disappear into the woods, and the next day, as the army was struggling along, trees, half felled the day before, would begin to fall at the touch of unseen hands, until a network of logs was formed which would halt the march for many a weary hour until the Romans could go round it or slowly clear it away. By night strange sounds, more terrifying even than the howling of the wild beasts which must be kept ever at bay, disturbed their slumbers. Now there would be calls and cries from one side, and then a response would come from far away, until the superstitious declared that the forest was bewitched. Yet the brave Drusus pressed on undaunted, and the army plodded along behind him, until they came to the river Elbe, the river in the center of Germany. They had gone many, many miles beyond the farthest point which other armies had reached, and it really seemed as if this barbarian land, never before trodden by Roman feet, was to be forced to yield its secrets to the mighty Drusus and come under imperial sway.

Then a strange thing befell. Perhaps the Romans had gone too near the sacred grove that lay in the midst of the region where Odin, the great god of the Teutons, was born. There none might enter save with a chain around his neck to show his subjection, and if a man fell there he might not raise himself again, but must crawl out backward on hands and knees. In any case the Romans had gone too far. Again and again they had been warned, but they had not heeded the sounds by night nor the spells that had been cast upon them by day. Their hearts had been too full of Roman pride, and their ears too dull of hearing. Then the mystery of the north, the dread, beautiful spirit of Germania, took on human form, that she might be seen by even their mortal eyes, for her land was in danger and she must needs warn back these rude invaders. All at once, in the path over which Drusus led his army, there stood, it is said, a wondrous woman, taller than mankind and of more than mortal beauty. Her appearance was in the likeness of a barbarian woman, with eyes as blue as the sky and flaxen hair that streamed behind her as a cloud. While the soldiers shrank back in terror before this vision, she spoke. Slowly and in his own tongue she addressed the general, and, though the music of the forest was in her voice, yet the Roman shivered as though a cold wind had struck him.

"Whither art thou hastening, insatiable Drusus? Back, I command thee! It is not fated that thou shalt see all this region. Depart! For thee the end of labor and of life is already at hand."

Then the invaders knew that the very gods of these heathen peoples were against them, and they turned and went back all the long way to the river Rhine; but in the midst of their fright they remembered that they were Romans, and on the farthest point which they had reached they set up in the Roman fashion a trophy, a monument of stone, by which generations still unborn should know that in this the ninth year before the Christian era Romans penetrated thus far into the land of the Goths. Because of the misfortune of the expedition, men of a later day called the monument Scelerata, which is to say Accursed; for the prophecy of Germania was fulfilled, and, as the brave Drusus was returning in haste, ere ever he reached the Rhine or set foot on Roman soil he fell from his horse and died.

GERMANIA REPELLING DRUSUS

So the Romans were turned back, and all Rome mourned for the brave Drusus, who had given his life for the Empire. But it was not in the Roman blood to accept defeat, and though the soldiers told their tale of the wondrous vision that had turned them back, men scoffed at them. Before the rule of the great Augustus was over, another Roman general crossed the forbidden line and marched into the land of the Goths. His was a worse fate than that of Drusus, for, while Drusus lost his life, he sent his army safely back to the emperor, while Varus lost two whole legions, the flower of Roman soldiery, in a terrible battle in the swamps. Not for many, many years had Roman arms suffered so great a disaster. When the news came to Rome, the whole city went into mourning. For a month the emperor did not cut his beard nor care for his locks, but let them grow in sign of his grief, and often in his sleep or in his waking hours his courtiers heard him cry, "O Varus, give me back my legions."

Then the words of Germania were heeded, and the wise emperor decreed that the fair standards of Rome should not be risked again across the Rhine, but that there the Empire should stop, and the river should be the frontier. And so it remained for centuries to come.

CHAPTER III

A ROMAN AND A BARBARIAN

There lived in the fourth century, three hundred years after the Rhine-Danube boundary had been established, a fierce old Gothic chieftain who hated the Romans with a bitter hatred. He had fought against them in his young days, but that was not the cause of his bitterness. Now in his old age he must sit in his dwelling on the west bank of the river and see that every year there was more crossing and recrossing, that every year his people were becoming more friendly with the Romans. He had watched his comrades go across that stream. Fine, sturdy young men they had been, and they had gone to serve in the Roman armies as paid soldiers. Then he had seen them come back, middle-aged men, early broken down by hard labor and Roman fever, and worst of all by Roman vices. They had given their best years to the Romans; they had won their victories for them; but they had been carelessly thrown aside when they became too old for service. All this and much else the old man had seen, and he had come to know that friendship with the Romans was an evil thing for a barbarian people.

Long hours the proud old warrior brooded over these matters, and one day he called to him his son Athanaric. Athanaric was a tall, handsome lad, with blue eyes which could blaze with anger when he was roused, and long, flaxen hair, which was the sign that he came of a family of chiefs. All the tribe loved the boy and looked to the day when they should choose him to be their leader, for the Goths were free men and chose whom they would to be their chief. The father's eyes rested on him with pride as he lay stretched on a bearskin at his feet, and then they grew stern and somber, for he had a purpose with the lad this day. He began to tell him tales of his forefathers. Hour after hour he related to him stories of these men who had been the heroes of the whole nation, and had added to the glory of the Gothic name, until the boy's heart was aflame with pride and his eyes shone like stars.

Then the old man changed his tales. They were still of the Goths, but they were recitals of their dealings with the Romans, of Roman treachery, of Roman schemes for rending away their land from the Goths,—always of the Romans as ruthless and overbearing conquerors. Athanaric's cheeks burned with indignation as he listened, and he no longer lay at his father's feet but stood before him with hands clenched. Last of all, in a low, sad voice the old man told of traitor Goths who had forgotten their birthright of independence and sold themselves to the conquerors. First they had been only foolish youths who had sought to win favor from the Romans by imitating their ways of dress and of living. They had been flattered by the attention which the crafty enemy had bestowed on them and by the services which they were allowed to render. They had gone deeper and deeper into the toils and had sold themselves and their honor for gold and position, until at last they had been disowned by their countrymen, and their names were never spoken.

"Never so long as I live will I forgive the Romans," declared the boy, passionately. "Always I will hate them, and when I am a man I will fight them."

"Yes, Athanaric, you shall fight them," replied the old warrior. "These arms of mine have lost their strength, and the blood runs slow in my veins; but you in the strength of your young manhood will lead our people forth and drive the Romans back when they try to cross yonder stream by force, as they surely will ere many years are gone."

Athanaric stood awed by the tone of assurance with which the old man spoke.

"Remember, my lad, when it comes to pass, what I have told you," and the old man looked far away across the river at the Roman towers as though he could see through them and beyond them. "The Goths will rue the day when they crossed to

make friends with the Romans, for Roman armies shall find their way back. And now, Athanaric, promise me yet one thing, and I shall go to my grave in peace. Promise me, by the great Odin, ruler of the world, that never so long as you live will you set foot on Roman soil."

So Athanaric gave his promise, and his father's heart was satisfied, for now he knew that no one could deceive the lad and lure him away to destruction with promises of Roman gold or fame.

It came to pass, as the old man had foretold, that in the days when Athanaric was chief of the Goths the Romans tried to overstep the banks of the river. The strife was long and bloody, and the time came when both sides were glad to come together and discuss terms of peace.

Preceded by two standard bearers, who bore the royal purple banners of the emperor, the messenger came to the rude camp of the Goths. On the outskirts he was halted by a soldier who inquired his errand.

"Let me pass," demanded the Roman in an insolent tone. "I bear a message from my master to yours."

"That it is from your master I doubt not," retorted the guard, "but the Goths have no masters. We are free men, and all nobly born as well."

It was a clever shot, and true withal, for the name of Goth means "nobly born" and the Goths were proud to call themselves a nation of nobles when the Romans taunted them with being a nation of barbarians. The flush on the cheek of the ambassador showed that it had reached its mark, for he was, as it happened, one of the hired foreigners who had been promoted to high rank for the service he had rendered; but it still rankled that he was often looked down upon because he could not call himself a Roman born.

Without further words the guard led him to the hut of Athanaric, and there he learned the second lesson that had come to him that morning, for the haughtiness of the Roman ambassador made no more impression on the barbarian chief than his insolence had made upon the guard. To the message of invitation which Emperor Valens had sent, summoning him to a conference at which a truce could be concluded, Athanaric had but one answer. He had sworn that he would never set foot on Roman soil. Therefore he could not come to the royal tent. Gladly would he receive the Emperor Valens in his camp, but an oath was an oath. Yes, he was willing to confer concerning a truce, and his people were willing to end the war, provided the Romans would make certain promises; but the fact remained, he had sworn that he would not set foot on Roman soil, and set foot he would not! The ambassador threatened and commanded and pleaded, but to no purpose. He was forced to return to the Roman camp with the refusal of the stiff-necked barbarian and the message that Athanaric would gladly receive Emperor Valens in his own camp. The messenger could scarce conceal a smile when he gave the invitation to the emperor and contrasted the tapestry-hung pavilion of Valens, with its silken cushions, with the hut of green boughs in which he had been received across the river. But he knew in his heart that the rude barbarian was more of a man than the spoiled and flattered emperor, and he assured the Roman courtiers in no uncertain tone that it was of no use to try to change Athanaric's mind. He had sworn, and it was final.

Valens stormed and raged and declared that the war might go on for all he cared. It was naught to him if the barbarians were not ready to make peace. The man should come to him, or there should be no peace. That was the end of the matter.

The statesmen and generals who were the emperor's advisers waited till his storm of anger had passed; in truth they were very angry themselves at the barbarian's message. When their wrath had cooled somewhat they set about making a plan, and with it they went to Valens.

"My lord," said the chief general of the army, "we know that you are a god on earth, and this other is but a rude barbarian. Yet remember the battles we have lost and the men who have been drowned in the miserable Gothic swamps or overcome in the tangled forests. It is a wilderness beyond the river, and they are a savage and heathen people who defend it. What care we whether we possess it or not?"

"I care not a fig for the land of the Goths," replied Valens, pettishly. "But no man shall say to me, Come, and force me to come at his bidding, for am I not the emperor of the Romans, and nearer in rank to the gods than any man on earth?" Then they told him the plan which they had made,—that a Roman barge should be moored in the middle of the stream, and on it the truce should be concluded. Thus the dignity of the Roman name should be preserved, and yet the barbarian would be able to keep his vow. And so it was arranged and carried out. On a well-moored barge in the middle of the swift-flowing river the two met, the lordly emperor and the stern, proud chieftain. There a peace was concluded that was dishonoring to neither name. By its terms the Romans were to hold in security all their former possessions, while the barbarians agreed not to cross the river nor attack the Roman frontier. So the old-time boundary of Augustus, which had been in danger, was renewed, and, as his father had desired, Athanaric agreed that neither he nor his nation should cross over to trouble the Romans, provided Rome in her turn gave promise not to disturb the Goths in the possession of all the great region that lay on the east side of the Rhine and Danube rivers.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMING OF THE WITCH PEOPLE

Seldom has a man lived in stranger or more stirring times than Athanaric the Goth. A rough, rude barbarian, born on Gothic soil and bred in the hatred of all that was Roman, he was destined to die in a Roman city and be given at his death honors which were the means of bringing his people into friendly alliance with Rome. Nowhere in all history is there a stranger tale.

Surely no human power could move the man who had made the greatest Roman on earth, the emperor of all the world,

come to him. So Athanaric must have thought in his pride, and the story is that in the years after the conference on the river he grew more and more cruel. His hatred of the Romans increased, and he punished with horrible brutality all the gentler spirits among his own people who sought to better in any way the rough, rude barbarism in which he had been bred. To him all civilization was of the Romans, and therefore to be despised.

But a more than mortal force was guiding the destinies of the nations. Athanaric was living at the beginning of the period of the wandering of the peoples, when a strange spirit of restlessness seized many tribes and nations, and they left their homes and crowded one upon another, pushing their neighbors hither and thither. Europe was in those centuries a chaos of languages and races and peoples, from which there came forth our modern nations of Spain and Italy, France, Germany, and Austria, Russia and Turkey. It was this tide which caught Athanaric in its grasp, and swept him, hurled him, almost against his will or plan, into the arms of Rome; and this is how it befell.

There came to Athanaric in his mountain domain tales of a strange, savage people from the east who were ravaging and destroying the homes of his Gothic kinsfolk many hundred miles eastward in the regions north of the Caspian and the Black seas. Athanaric marveled that any people, however strong, should be able to conquer these fierce and warlike tribes; but he did not dream that he would ever hear more of them. Soon they would be stopped in their march and driven back to their distant homes. Probably they had been already, for news traveled slowly, and the word had come by one tribe and another more than two thousand miles.

In another year, however, the reports arrived more frequently. A frightened chieftain came twenty days' journey to gain a promise that Athanaric would give him his aid, should the Huns march westward and attack his kingdom.

"Why do you fear?" questioned Athanaric. "They have still by your own story eight hundred miles, more than eighty days' journey for such a wandering army, before they can reach your borders. Surely they will be turned back long before that."

"Ah, but they come like the wind, those Huns," replied the chief. "Night and day they live upon their horses. On their backs they take their meat and drink; they even sleep on them and journey thus by night."

"By great Odin, you are all driven senseless by your fear," thundered Athanaric in scorn. "I am ashamed of you. What if they do come on horses? What if they are good fighters? Have you not driven back many tribes? Have you not held your lands against many enemies? Where is the courage of our forefathers? What would they think of those who hold the name of Goth if they saw them cringing before a wandering people from China?"

"You do not know; you do not understand," replied the chief. "Once I spoke as you do; once I taunted my kinsfolk with cowardice. But now I know." "But what is it that you know?" cried Athanaric. "You shake your head and look wise, but you do not say. What is it that makes these Huns so terrible to you that you lose your manhood and become as frightened children?"

Then the chief told him. This was no human folk, it seemed, that was fighting its way nearer and nearer. It was a witch people, born of witch women and evil spirits. Men could not meet them in fair fight, for the awful ugliness of their faces cast a spell upon the strongest men and made them turn and flee rather than gaze upon them. Moreover, there was no stopping their progress, for an evil spirit was leading them. Certain of the Gothic wise men had heard the story of how the Huns came in their wanderings to the banks of the strip of water that separates Asia and Europe. They would have halted and turned another way, toward northern China or the plains of Russia. "Ali! would that they had halted!" sighed the Gothic chief. "But a stag suddenly appeared before them and entered the waters. As he swam across he kept looking back as if inviting them to follow. So they came and found that what they had thought to be a deep

and trackless sea was a shallow strait. An evil spirit brought them, and mortal power will not be able to turn them back."

Athanaric laughed the story to scorn.

"You are the ones who are bewitched," he told the chief, "and by your own foolishness."

The chief went back to his own land, and Athanaric put the story from his mind, wondering only that so brave a man should have been so deceived. But before long he was forced to heed, for his valleys were filled with a constant stream of men, women, and children, who were fleeing from this terror that was behind them. Whole tribes had been seized with panic at the coming of the Huns, and were hastening in blind, unreasoning terror, on, on, on to the river. That was their cry as they passed through the land. "The river, the river! On the other side of the river we shall be safe."

"But the Romans dwell on the other side of the river. They are your enemies; they will make you slaves," protested Athanaric and his people.

The flying tribes did not stop to reply. They had but one thought,—to put the river between them and this terrible witch people. The Romans might enslave them; but the Huns would do worse, for they had the evil eye. Month after month it went on, and though they had not seen the Huns, yet the fear of them began to creep into the hearts of Athanaric's own people. Neighboring tribes fled into the arms of the Romans, throwing themselves, as they said, on Roman mercy. Roman mercy! that was a strange word in the mouths of the Goths, and it came to be a sad word, for it took from them all that they held dear. No man might cross the river and come under the protection of Rome who did not first give up every weapon in his possession. It took from them their sons and their daughters, who were sold away in slave markets. It left them nothing, indeed, but their lives and the lands on which they lived. The long-haired Goths might well have cut their flaxen locks when they set foot on the western bank of the river, for they were meaningless as a badge of freedom on Roman soil.

So it went on during many years, for peoples do not move in a day, and the Huns would pause in their ravages for one year, or two, when they came to a rich and fertile valley, and then the wandering spirit would seize them and they would press on. Athanaric met them in battle not once but many times, for his were the bravest people of the Goths, as they were the most fierce and cruel, and they fought with spirit even though their hearts were filled with a nameless fear. But they were defeated and driven farther and farther into the mountain fastnesses, until the time came when Athanaric alone of all the Gothic chiefs had not asked protection from the Romans. The other tribes turned against him, looking with jealousy on his lands, till the proud old chief was sore beset on every side.

That was the chance for Rome. The emperor (it was the one who succeeded Valens) sent from Constantinople, the eastern capital of the Empire, an embassy to pay respect to Athanaric for his great name and fame, and to offer to him an honorable treaty. Athanaric waited long before he yielded. His people with one accord urged him to accept. If he refused, they would be between two enemies, the Huns, who were ever coming nearer, and their Gothic kinsfolk who had turned against them. Moreover, it was an honorable treaty, written in fair terms. So they persuaded him, and Athanaric yielded. He was an old man and weary of war and fighting. His promise to his father that he would never set foot on Roman soil had grown dim with the years, and he told Himself that times were changed by the coming of the Huns, and that his father would have done the same in his place.

The emperor came out several miles from the city to meet the old barbarian chief, and gave him royal escort.

"Lo, now I behold what I have so often heard with unbelief," the old man exclaimed, as he gazed in wonder at the splendid city.

Turning his eyes this way and that, and beholding its glorious situation, its great harbors crowded with vessels, the strength and beauty of its walls and buildings, and the men of many nations who thronged its streets, he marveled, and exclaimed again in wonder, "The emperor is without doubt a god upon earth, and he who lifts a hand against him is guilty of his own blood."

The Romans feasted the old man and entertained him with all magnificence. Whether he was content in the emperor's palace—this old Roman hater—we do not know. Whether he saw that his father was right, and mourned his broken promise, he never told. After a few months' residence in Constantinople he died, and the emperor made for him a funeral of extraordinary magnificence. The flower of the Roman army bore the old chief to his grave, and the emperor himself in his royal purple robes rode before the bier.

Roman friendship proved, as the father of Athanaric had foretold, an evil thing for a barbarian people. The simple Goths were so pleased by the honor that had been paid to their chief that they were easily led into a closer league than ever before with the Romans. The emperor had given a gorgeous funeral; he gained an army of many thousand men, and it was through the yielding of Athanaric, through his consenting to set foot on Roman soil, that the evil was wrought.

Wise men of the Goths saw, when it was too late, that they had gone too far; but by that time their people were scattered here and there, fighting Roman battles and obeying the commands of Roman generals, and there was none to gather them. For a whole generation they served the Romans, and then from their midst there rose a leader to deliver them, the great Alaric, Alaric the Bold.

CHAPTER V

ALARIC THE GOTH

"Thiudans! Thiudans! (The king! The king!)" So the Barbarians shouted as they raised on the shield, that he might be seen of all men, their newly chosen king, the fair-haired Alaric. They might shout as loudly as they pleased, for there were no Roman spies to hear. They had come away from Rome, across the broad Danube, and on their own plains, with the fresh mountain winds blowing upon them, they were renewing the traditions of their race and choosing a leader who should receive the glory of the Gothic name.

Trained in Roman legions in the years since the death of Athanaric, the young man Alaric had not forgotten that he was born on an island in the Danube. He had not lost the memory of the chill winds of the north, which were to the Goths the signs that they were in a free land. He had learned the lessons of war from the leaders of his enemy; he had risen to captaincy and had won notice from the general for his bravery. Now at the call of his people he had gladly turned his back on the warm southland, to have the breath of freedom blow across his face once more, and behold! to his astonishment they had chosen him king.

It was no secret among the barbarians that this choice was of a leader who could help them throw off the hated Roman yoke. The Romans were not the proud people of the days of Drusus. They had been too fond of power and of luxurious living. They had had too many strong barbarians to fight their battles for them, and had become content to sit idle in their palaces, drinking and gambling and scheming for wealth and position. The Gothic leaders had seen all this; they had come to scorn the conquerors whom once they had feared; and now they had chosen this tall, fair-skinned youth, who combined the strength of the barbarian with the warlike skill of the Roman captain, and bore moreover the prophetic name Alaric, Ala-reichs, which is to say, All-ruler.

The words of the old record concerning the beginning of his reign are full of meaning. "The new king, taking counsel with his people, decided that they should carve out for themselves new kingdoms rather than through sloth continue the subjects of others."

Once and again Alaric led his people forth against the Romans. In Greece and Constantinople and in all the eastern possessions of Rome the name of "Alaric the Barbarian" became a word of terror. Then there came to him a strange call. As he was worshiping in a sacred grove he heard a voice repeating once and again these words, "Proceed to Rome, and make that city desolate."

The young chief brooded over the message for many days, pondering whether he had been deceived by a dream. But ever the words rang in his ears, "Proceed to Rome, and make that city desolate," and he felt a power within him urging him irresistibly on. He marshaled his armies and led them westward over the central plains of Europe, ravaging as he went. The Romans thought the march only one more barbarian invasion. The Goths were taking with them their women and children, but that was the curious custom of all barbarian nations. Their wars were for conquest of land, not for slaughter. If they won the battles they would stay and occupy the land with their wives and their children. Even the Gothic army did not believe that the purpose of Alaric would be carried out. Until he came to the passes of the Alps, to the gates of Italy itself, they doubted whether it could be possible that any barbarian nation would be permitted to meet the Romans in their own land. They had suffered many defeats by the way, and they had lost many brave warriors. Now the day had come when they must choose whether they would pass over into Italy or turn back to settle once again in their chill northern plains.

Alaric called a council, and the record of it, written in Latin on a roll of parchment, has been preserved to this day.

"The long-haired fathers of the Gothic nation, their fur-clad senators marked with many an honorable scar, assembled. The old men leaned on their tall clubs. One of the most venerable of these veterans arose, fixed his eyes upon the ground, shook his white and shaggy locks, and spoke:

"Thirty years have now elapsed since first we crossed the Danube and confronted the might of Rome. But never, believe me in this, O Alaric, have the odds lain so heavily against us as now. Trust the old chief who, like a father, once dandled thee in his arms, who gave thee thy first tiny quiver. Often have I, in vain, admonished thee to keep the treaty with Rome, and remain safely within the limits of the eastern realm. But now, at any rate, while thou still art able, return, flee the Italian soil. Why talk to us perpetually of the fruitful vines of Etruria, of the Tiber,

and of Rome? If our fathers have told us aright, that city is protected by the Immortal Gods, lightnings are darted from afar against the presumptuous invader, and fires, heaven-kindled, flit before its walls."

Alaric burst in upon the old man's speech with fiery brow and scowling eyes:

"'If age had not bereft thee of reason, old dotard, I would punish thee for these insults. Shall I, who have put so many emperors to flight, listen to thee, prating of peace? No, in this land I will reign as conqueror, or be buried after defeat. Only Rome remains to be overcome. In the day of our weakness and calamity we were terrible to our foes. Now in our power shall we turn our backs on those same enemies? No! Besides all other reasons for hope there is certainty of divine help. Forth from the grove has come once more a clear voice, heard of many, "Break off all delays, Alaric. This very year if thou lingerest not, thou shalt pierce through the Alps into Italy; thou shalt penetrate to the city itself.'"

"So he spoke, and drew up his army for battle."

The victory must have been with the Goths that day, for the army went on through the passes into Italy, and ere long we hear of the barbarians as before the walls of Rome.

Then the whole world was in terror. That barbarians, skin-clothed barbarians, should have come to the gates of the great city, for six hundred years the ruler of the world, was a surprise to the barbarians themselves. To the Romans it was as if the sky had fallen.

Day after day the Gothic army lay encamped before the city, guarding the entrances that no food should enter by land or water; and hour after hour the Roman senate watched the north for the looked-for help from the army of the emperor, but none came. First the allowance of food to each person was reduced to one half; then to one third. Two noble ladies, who were entitled to draw from the imperial storehouses, gave of their portions to the people; but it was but a pittance among so many.

ALARIC DESCENDING ON ROME

Then the proud Roman nobles sent out an embassy to Alaric. For all their need they did not cringe or beg. There is the sound in their words of the old days when Rome was mistress of all the world.

"The Roman people," the message read, "are prepared to make peace on moderate terms, but they are yet prepared for war. They have arms in their hands, and from long practice in their use they have no reason to dread the battle."

Alaric heard the words with a shout of laughter, and answered them with a Gothic proverb, "The thicker the grass, the easier mown." The cultured Romans must have shrunk back with disgust from the rough, insolent barbarian with whom they were forced to treat. But their plight was desperate, and they must curb their pride and stay till the rude mirth had ceased and a fitting reply had been given to their message.

"Deliver to me all the gold that your city contains, all the silver, all the treasures that may be moved, and in addition all your slaves of barbarian origin; otherwise I desist not from the siege."

"But if you take all these things," said one of the ambassadors, "what do you leave for the citizens?" "Your lives," returned Alaric with a grim smile. The message threw the Roman senate into the blackest despair. What was there left that they could do? The emperor had deserted them; even the God of the Christians, to whom they had recently sworn allegiance, seemed to have forgotten them. There was but one chance left. Perhaps their heathen gods who had helped their fathers in battle would aid them in this extremity. It is a weird scene that comes before us. On the Capitoline Hill, with Christian churches all about them, the Roman senate assembled to see the old ceremonies practiced, the old fires lighted, and the omens watched, by priests of the heathen faith which had been for a generation discredited. The hour passed and no help came. A second time the gates were opened and a train of suppliant Romans went forth to the camp of the conqueror to see what terms could be obtained.

It is a curious list of things which the barbarians wanted. It reminds us that they were after all but children—forest children—who fought because the desire for victory was on them, but knew not what to do with the power they won save to purchase for themselves toys and gay-colored trifles. Five thousand pounds of gold, thirty thousand pounds of silver, four thousand silken tunics, three thousand hides dyed in scarlet, and three thousand pounds of pepper,—these things Alaric would take in exchange for the city which he had conquered but had not entered.

The Romans went back to see how they could get these things. Was there as much gold in the city as the barbarians demanded? With picturesque justice they turned on the gold and silver idols, images of the gods to whom they had made their appeal in vain, and threw them into the melting pots to make up the required weight. The story goes that they even cast in the statue of Valor, the symbol of Roman bravery and power, and that from that day valor went out from among the Romans, and their courage left them forever.

So ended the first siege of Rome. No swords had been crossed; not a drop of blood had been shed. With his cartloads of treasure Alaric returned to the rich provinces of northern Italy, and, as humbly as though he were not a conqueror feared of all men, sent to the Roman emperor to ask that a portion of land be allotted to him and his tribe, that they and their wives and children might dwell there. It is the strangest part of the whole strange tale of the barbarian invasions of Italy, this reverence for the office of Roman emperor and for the name of Rome. Rome had so long been the height of earthly power to the barbarians that even when it was but a shadow of its former self, even when it was conquered by force and lay in their power, the simple barbarians held back in awe and asked as suppliants of the weak, spoiled Roman emperors that they be granted the land which they had already seized. And the Roman emperors in their foolishness refused, shutting their eyes to the chance that was before them of saving their nation and their city. Two years the emperor dallied with Alaric, promising this and that, and failing to carry out his word, and at last breaking off the negotiations altogether.

ALARIC'S BURIAL

Then Alaric marched once more on Rome. This time he did not stop outside the walls to blockade by famine. The barbarians were not in the mood for delay. They broke open the gates and rushed into the city, and Rome was at their mercy. The orders of Alaric are just and merciful. No sacred buildings were to be destroyed, and any one who entered a church was to be secure from harm. Human life was to be spared as far as possible.

How far his orders were carried out by the barbarian hordes we do not know. No record has come down to us of what happened in those days of Gothic pillage, save that many palaces and beautiful buildings were burned. It was not the actual damage that they wrought that made the sack of Rome by Alaric and the Goths so terrible; it was the fact that Rome, the center of the world, the sign of law and order and civilization, could be taken by rude barbarian hordes. The old odder was passing away, and none could tell what the new was to be; but that there were grievous and troubled times in store for Europe no wise man doubted.

Three days only the barbarians stayed in Rome, and then they wandered southward. In the south of Italy, before he had carried out any of his great plans of conquest and occupation of the land, suddenly death came to Alaric. Perhaps it was the dread Roman fever which laid the northern barbarian low. There he died, and his people were left, as children without a guide. Bitterly they mourned the loss of their great ruler, and before they turned to find their way back to the north they buried him in the land which he had conquered.

Lest the enemy should find his body and dishonor it, they laid him in the bed of a river. They had forced the captives whom they had taken at Rome to build a dam by which the stream might be turned from its course. Here, in the dead of night, they laid the body of their leader in a grave filled with trophies and treasures which he had won from the Romans. When the rude ceremony was over, the captives were ordered to turn back the waters, and after they had done their work they were put to death, that none of Roman blood should know where the barbarian chief lay.

So died, in the year 410, Alaric the Goth, the great barbarian who sounded for the first time the note of doom to the Roman Empire.

CHAPTER VI

ATTILA THE SCOURGE OF GOD

That was what the writers of the Christian faith called him, for they believed that the coming of Attila the Hun and his barbarian hordes into the fair provinces on the western side of the great rivers was a judgment on the nations of Europe, a visitation sent upon them in punishment for their sins.

It was fifty years since Athanaric and his Gothic tribes had been forced by the Huns into the arms of Rome, and for all that half century the danger of Hunnish invasion had hung over Europe like a thundercloud, black and forbidding. The storm might break here, it might break there. None could tell, for the Huns fought not by plan nor by reason, but for sudden impulse, for a mad spirit of restlessness, for a fierce lust of battle.

The Romans kept them at bay for a time by payment of gold. They found that this barbarian mob, clad in dingy skin tunics and living on raw meat and uncooked grain, who chose to make themselves hideous by gashing their cheeks with the sword in infancy that their beards should not grow,—this people, more barbarous than barbarism itself, had developed in the half century of their contact with civilized peoples one engrossing, absorbing passion, the greed for gold. They did not know how to measure its value, for it was new to them. The first year that they threatened, the Romans bought them off from attacking any part of the Empire for nineteen pounds of gold. Nineteen pounds to keep back a nation of ninety thousand warriors! And it was but a few years since Alaric the Goth had demanded and received five thousand pounds of gold, thirty thousand pounds of silver, and much treasure beside, as a price for the safety of Rome. But the Huns learned. Twenty years later the ransom money was three hundred and fifty pounds, and then in a single year it was doubled.

That was the year when in the chronicles of the nations it was written that "the kingdom of the Huns passed unto Attila."

Attila was a typical Hun, little in stature but broad-shouldered and deep-chested, with swarthy skin and small, beadlike black eyes which were never still but darted fierce glances to this side and that, as if, says the Roman narrator, "he felt himself to be lord of all and was perpetually asking of those about him, "Who is he that shall deliver you out of my hand?" He delighted to inspire men with fear of what he would do to them. It was part of his fierce, unquenchable pride that every one should come into his presence with dread. He longed to be a terror to the whole world. Nothing pleased him more than to be called "The Destroyer"; and to see the proud rulers of the proudest nations on earth cringe before him,—that was the aim and ambition of his life. Attila probably never spent a happier hour than when he sat at his banquet table and saw seated before him suppliant ambassadors from the two great capitals of the Roman Empire. It was part of his pleasure that the Romans never passed a more unpleasant day.

The ambassadors had started from Rome and Constantinople, each party without knowledge of the other, with orders to seek the newly elected king of the Huns wherever he might be, and confer with him about the tribute money. The Roman nobles expected it to be a disagreeable mission. They did not dream it was to be as unpleasant as Attila succeeded in making it for them.

Their first task was to find the Hunnish king. They had heard that he held some sort of rude court away off on the Hungarian plains; but as they came nearer the frontiers of the Roman Empire they found that the barbarian king had been on a plundering expedition and was only a couple of days' journey ahead of them. Every city on the route was deserted and empty. The inhabitants had fled at the approach of the Huns, or had been driven out by the sword if they had lingered too long, and they had not yet dared to creep back, for fear the enemy might return.

On the banks of the Danube the Romans came up with the barbarians. Every road was crowded with Huns, and the river was full of unwieldy boats fashioned from hollow logs, in which ferrymen were transporting the people to the farther bank. Roman gold gained for the travelers a speedy passage, and on the second day after crossing the river they came in sight of the tents of Attila.

Rejoicing that they were to be spared the long journey into the interior, the ambassadors began to pitch their tents on a hilltop near by, but their preparations were speedily interrupted. A party of Hunnish horsemen dashed up the hill, and their leader demanded furiously what the Romans meant by presuming to camp on such high land. "It would be quite improper," he declared, "for the Roman ambassadors to occupy the hill while Attila was below in the valley."

This was but the first of a series of petty humiliations which Attila took a fiendish pleasure in imposing on the Roman nobles. He dallied so long about granting any audience to them that they seriously feared lest he should refuse to treat with them at all. Then he allowed them to see him and accepted their gifts, but refused to come to any discussion of terms. Finally he sent a message to their tent, commanding them to go to his "palace" in the interior, where he would give them his answer.

We can imagine the disgust of the Romans at being forced to plunge into the wilderness at the caprice of this rude barbarian. But they had no choice; on their success depended the peace of Europe for a twelvemonth. It was a forsaken country through which they must travel, and they suffered many hardships on the way. They had to cross three great rivers and ford innumerable streams. It was the flood time of the year, and even the roads were little better than swamps. They could buy nothing in the villages along the way but a kind of grain called millet.

After they had journeyed in this fashion for seven days and nights, and were rejoicing that one more day would bring them to their destination, they received abrupt orders to halt. They had been traveling too fast, it seemed, and had got ahead of Attila. He was to come over the road which they were now to take, and it was part of his pride that the Romans must not precede him even on the road to his own home.

While the Romans waited, with ill-concealed impatience, in the miserable little Hungarian village, they met the other Roman embassy, recently arrived from Constantinople and held up, as were their companions in misery, until the royal bridegroom should arrive. Attila's pride might well be satisfied when embassies from the two capitals of the world were forced to wait until he came through and gave them permission to follow in his train. They must stand by and see the barbarian monarch served from a silver table, held up before him that he might eat and drink without dismounting from his horse. At last, when he gave the word, they might come on to the village where he had established his court, and on the second day of their stay they were invited to a banquet.

"Punctually at three o'clock," writes the ambassador, "we went to the dinner and stood on the threshold of Attila's palace. According to the custom of the country the cupbearers brought us a bowl of wine that we might drink and pray for the good luck of our host before sitting down."

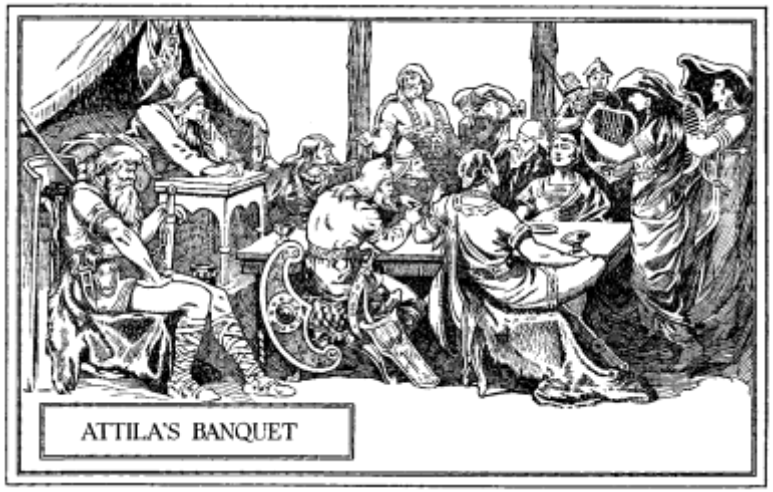
Attila half sat, half reclined on a couch behind a table raised above the board. He would not demean himself by being on a level with his guests. Nor did he converse with them. Throughout the meal he sat silent and sullen at the head of the table.

When the feasting was over, and the singers and harpists came in and chanted verses in praise of his victories and his might, his face did not change. Clowns came and did their tricks and made their jests, and all the company were in roars of laughter, but Attila did not smile. With unmoved face he sat silent while the others shouted with merriment, until at last the

mirth was stilled and the Romans sat silent and uncomfortable, shooting furtive glances at their strange host.

The Huns remained at the table drinking till far into the night, but the Romans slipped away from the wild, barbarous orgy. Three days later they were dismissed with their business accomplished, and turned their backs with rejoicing on the barbarian court.

Attila was content for ten years to receive an ever increasing tribute from the Romans. Then, making alliance with the Vandals in the west and the Franks in the north, he prepared to pour his barbarian hordes into the plains of Europe and wipe out the civilized nations that occupied the land.



ATTILA'S BANQUET

The great question was, Would the Romans and Goths unite against the Huns? We to-day can see that on the answer to that question hung the fate of Europe. If they did, Europe might be saved; if they did not, Europe and civilization were doomed. Attila feared that they would combine, and did his best to prevent it. To the Gothic king he sent messengers to explain that this was the time to destroy Rome, the hated conqueror, and to the emperor he represented that this was a chance to drive out the Goths, against whom they had so long waged war, and regain their supremacy. But the Romans and Goths had learned wisdom since the days of Alaric.

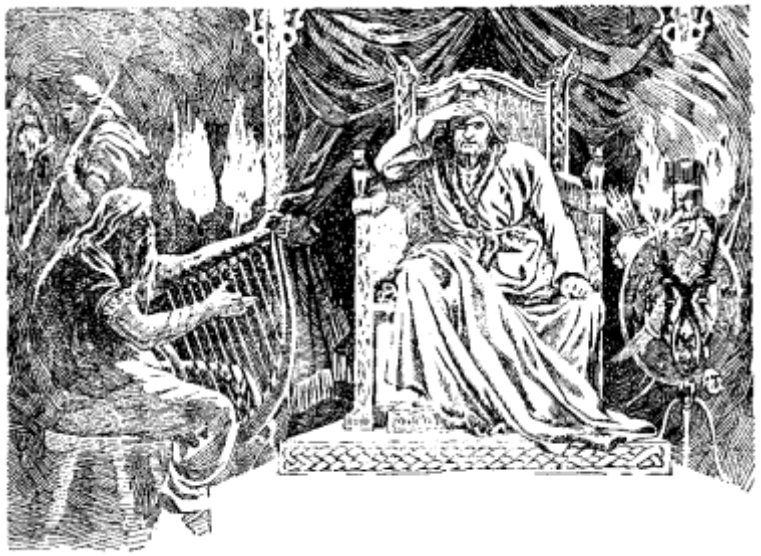
The Gothic peoples had come into Italy by means of the sword. Then they had lost their great leader and been left in the land they had coveted, a vast, unwieldy army burdened with long wagon trains of treasure and great camps of women and children. "Before two years were ended," says the historian, "God moved the hearts of the invaders to occupy the land without wasting it. The wandering hosts settled down and became nations dwelling under their kings on conquered soil."

So the two races had dwelt together, and a new generation had been born to each. They had come to know each other, and though there had not always been peace between them, yet the dark-haired Italian noble had found that his tall, fair-haired, fair-skinned neighbor from the north was not so different from himself as he had supposed. The Goths were the noblest of all the barbarian nations, and if it took them some time to learn all the grace of civilization from their cultured neighbors, yet they brought with them from the north a spirit of freedom, a purity, and an unspoiled strength which the Romans were forced to recognize, and to which they were glad to turn in this hour of need, when this Hunnish people, who were so barbarian that it made the Goths seem in comparison like their own race, threatened to come down upon them.

So the Goths and the Romans united their armies and called in their allies, and in July of the year 451they met Attila and his forces on the battle field of Chalons, midway between the north and the south. Such a confusion of all the barbarian nations was never seen before nor since. On the one side were the Romans, a mere shadow people in numbers or power as compared to their great allies, the East Goths and West Goths, the Alans and the Saxons and the Britons, those barbarian peoples who were so fast being transformed into civilized nations, and who were soon to take up that work of maintaining law and order which the Romans were laying down. Against this army of nations, which had been united only by their common

danger, stood the Huns and the allies from the Vandals and Franks and Ostrogoths whom they had been able to gather about their standard. It was a conflict of barbarian against barbarian, with every nation and tribe represented; and the more noble barbarians won. Attila and his Huns used all the strange customs of fighting with which they had been wont to terrify the European world. They swept down from the neighboring hills with wild, discordant cries. Dashing through the lines of soldiery on horseback, they threw their lassos or nets round the bodies of their opponents, making them helpless. "It was a battle," says an eyewitness, "which for ruthlessness, for multitude of men, for horror, and for stubbornness has not in all stories of similar encounters since the world began a parallel." Night fell, and the weary hosts were forced by the darkness to cease fighting; but neither Goth nor Roman nor Hun knew till morning which side had been victorious. When day dawned the Goths and Romans, seeing that the Huns did not venture forth from their camp, concluded that the victory was theirs. But Attila, though so many of his followers had been cut down that he dared not renew the battle, yet did not admit defeat, "but clashed his arms, sounded his trumpets, and continually threatened a fresh attack. As a lion close pressed by his hunters, ramps up and down before the entrance to the cave, and neither dares make a spring, nor yet ceases to frighten all the neighborhood with his roarings, so did that most warlike king, though hemmed in, trouble his conquerors. The Goths and Romans accordingly called a council of war and deliberated what was to be done with their worsted foe. As he had no store of provisions, and as he had so posted his archers within the boundaries of his camp as to rain a shower of missiles on an advancing assailant, they decided not to attempt a storm, but to weary him out by a blockade. It is said that seeing his desperate plight the Hunnish king had constructed a funeral pyre of horses' saddles, determined, if the enemy should break into his camp, to hurl himself headlong into the flames, that none should boast himself and say, 'I have wounded Attila,' nor that the lord of so many nations should fall alive into the hands of his enemies."

Attila was not forced to this desperate death. Though the victory was with the Goths it was not an unmixed triumph. They had lost their king and many thousands of men, and they deemed it wise not to press their success farther, but retired in their triumph, leaving the defeated chief to return with his conquered army beyond the Rhine. Both sides had suffered immense losses, and the Hunnish invaders had received for the first time a check in their march of destruction.



Attila returned to his log hut, and there on the vast, lonely plains of Hungary he spent the winter brooding over his defeat and nursing his wounded pride. He became more silent and sullen than ever, until his courtiers came to be afraid of the motionless figure of the king, who seemed hardly to heed whether he was alone or whether a company was about him, but sat ever looking, looking toward the world beyond the river, toward Rome, which he longed to destroy.

With the coming of spring Attila's energy returned, and he became once more the active, alert general, planning an Italian campaign by which he hoped to revive his fallen prestige and regain his position as a terror to the world. He was to

succeed in part and for a time, but he was never to sweep things before him as he had in the days when the Huns were surrounded by a mysterious terror far beyond their actual power of destruction. The Italian cities of the Venetian plains were forced to yield, but it was after long sieges and sharp battles. Still it was a terrible invasion, and Rome began to tremble lest once more she should find herself in the power of barbarians.

The cities which Attila was conquering were the most beautiful cities in all Europe. Here had been collected treasures of art, statues of the golden age of Greek and Roman sculpture, paintings, beautiful vases, all preserved in the splendid palaces and churches and public buildings of Aquileia, Verona, Milan, and Pavia. In these marble palaces and amid these priceless treasures Attila and his Huns camped.

To-day we cherish in museums the fragments which they left when they had thrown aside and smashed what was in their way or did not for some reason please them. In the palace where he stayed in Milan, Attila came one day, in the course of his wanderings through the great salons, upon a picture which filled him with rage. It was entitled "The Triumph of Rome over the Barbarians," and pictured the two Roman emperors sitting on their golden thrones, while conquered Scythians crouched at their feet in abject subjection. The "Scythians" were without doubt Goths, and the period of the picture at least a century before Attila's time; but Attila took it as a personal insult to his race. With one of those strange impulses which make us see what shrewdness and humor were combined in this world conqueror with his more terrible qualities, he did not destroy the picture, but called an artist, whom he commanded to paint a companion picture on the opposite wall. In this painting Attila sat on his throne, and the two emperors knelt humbly before him, one with a huge sack of tribute money still on his shoulder, the other pouring out before him a heap of gold pieces from another bag.

ATTILA BEFORE THE POPE

Another side of the character of this strange man was soon to be shown. It was time for him to turn southward in his march toward Rome. As Alaric had paused in the passes of Switzerland, so he paused, and his counselors, filled with the awe which every barbarian host felt when it came face to face

with the world power which they had so long reverenced, reminded him of the fate of Alaric which came on him so soon after he had taken the Eternal City, and advised him to turn back.

Attila did not turn back, but the strange awe of Rome began to steal over his heart. As he rode on at the head of his army he was met by an embassy from Rome, headed by a commanding figure. Pope Leo I, head of the great Christian Church, which stood for the spiritual power of Christendom, had come to turn Attila from his purpose of attacking Rome. One man—of commanding presence, it is true, and quiet strength—but one man against an army of barbarians! Ah! but he stood for all which the superstitious barbarian feared. He had behind him a might before which Attila did well to tremble. Civilization, with all its constructive power of religion to uplift and lead men, stood over against barbarism, with its superstition and its fierce power of destruction. And civilization triumphed. The awe of Rome fell upon Attila, and he turned back, murmuring, "What gain indeed if I conquer like Alaric, to die with him?"

CHAPTER VII

THEODORIC

King Theudemir sat in his carved seat at the head of the long Gothic hall, thinking deeply. Warriors of hostile nations, who met the king only when he was commanding his troops in war, could not understand why his people called him "Theudemir the Affectionate," "Theudemir the Good," and "Theudemir the Beloved." To them the stern, fierce general who was always in the forefront of the battle, seemed more like some old Teutonic war-god, appearing on earth once more in human form. Had they seen him to-night, as the firelight played about his features, they would not have wondered at the love his

people bore him, for the piercing blue eyes were gentle, and the stern lines of his face were softened. All the court had gone on a hunt, but Theudemir had remained at home to consider what answer he should give to the message which had come that morning from the Roman court. His little son, Theodoric, had come with his tiny broadsword to show him the new drill which he had learned, and his wife, the fair queen Erelieva, had sat with him for a time; but he had sent them both away and was alone with his problem.

It was the old story of tribute money and boundaries, but now it was the Romans who paid, the money, hiding its real meaning under the name of "New Year's presents," and they paid it only to the barbarian nations from whom they feared attack. When at the beginning of the new year the money failed to come, the East Goths had known that something was wrong. The messengers whom Theudemir sent to Constantinople returned from their mission humiliated and angry. The emperor had transferred his friendship to another Gothic chieftain, another Theodoric, who sat at his table and took the money that had been theirs, assuring the emperor that the East Goths were a feeble and unimportant nation of whom he need not take an anxious thought.

The East Goths had soon shown Emperor Leo his mistake. Theudemir smiled as he thought of the quick raid into the nearest Roman provinces which had followed closely on the return of the ambassadors. There was never a Goth who would not rather ravage his neighbor's field for corn and grain, even at the risk of his life, than plant and till and harvest by his own slow, laborious toil.

The message of conciliation had come from the emperor that morning, and the Goths had gone wild with delight. "Leo has learned his lesson!" "Now the emperor knows that the East Goths are not a weak people to be trodden down and neglected." The hall with its high Gothic arches had rung with the boasts and taunts of the nobles, and then they had gone on a great hunt to celebrate the occasion. But Theudemir had remained behind. One part of the message the others had passed over lightly and seemed to forget. The emperor would pay the friendship money which was due; he would promise that henceforth an even larger sum should come regularly. But he demanded of the Goths one pledge,—that they would keep the faith and not send any more war parties across the Danube. They must give over to be brought up as a hostage in the Roman court the heir to the East Gothic throne, Theodoric, the eight-year-old son of Theudemir.

It was no wonder that the king had sent the child away when he came to him with his happy, thoughtless prattle. To deliver this child, the pride and hope of the Gothic nation, over to the Romans to be trained by Roman teachers in Roman ways in a court hundreds of miles away! To have his son the price of Gothic peace! The father's heart might well be troubled. The Goths loved the lad, but would they remember, through the long years while he was growing to manhood, that his life was forfeit if once they broke the peace? One expedition of plunder into the forbidden territory, and Theodoric's life would be worth nothing at the imperial court, where murder and assassination were far too common for the putting to death of a hostage to be questioned. Moreover the boy must be prepared for the Gothic kingship. Would he not lose in the Roman life that love of freedom which was the safety of the Gothic nation?

These questions King Theudemir had been pondering all day, and in the evening, when darkness had fallen and the great hall was lighted only by the fires on the hearths, he came to his decision. He owed it to his people to give his royal consent and let the boy go. He must trust the God of the Christians, whose faith his nation had so lately adopted, that Theodoric would return safely when his period of exile was over. Moreover his old heathen superstition, in which he still half believed, gave him encouragement. Theodoric had been born on a lucky day, the day of the last great defeat of the Huns. The messenger who brought Theudemir the news of his son's birth had carried back to the anxious house hold the report of the victory which meant that the Goths had been delivered from their forty-year-long

subjection to a barbarian despot, and that their prince was born to the kingship of a free and independent people. Remembering that day, could he not take it as a prophecy that Theodoric would go through this new peril unharmed, and carry further the fulfillment of the family name which his father and many generations of kings before him had borne so proudly, the noble name of Amal, which means in the Gothic language "the fortunate"?

Of the life of the boy Theodoric at Constantinople little is reported. That he never learned to read or write we know, for when he was ruler of a great empire he could not sign his own name, but had a gold plate with the first four letters of his name pierced through it, so that when he wished to sign any document he could place the plate upon the parchment and trace through the lines the first four letters of his name, "THEO." Whether no one took pains to teach the young barbarian, or whether he scorned the young Romans who knew better how to use the pen than the sword, we do not know. His handsome face and his ready wit found him a place in the close circle of the emperor's favorites, and his skill at arms and his horsemanship made him a leader in the drill and sports which were the occupation of every Roman youth. It was with regret that Emperor Leo granted his request, when he was seventeen years old, that he be no longer detained at the court, but be allowed to return to his own people and his father's palace, and he sent him home loaded with royal presents.

King Theudemir's fears that the Roman training would spoil the Goth in Theodoric were soon dispelled. The feasting and merrymaking over his return had hardly ended before the young prince was missing and with him a group of young Gothic nobles who had been his playmates in childhood and with whom he had fallen into a cordial comradeship on his return. The king smiled when the word of his son's absence was brought to him, and waited well pleased for the report which soon came from the frontier of the Gothic kingdom. A Roman army had just been defeated by Babai, the king of the Sarmatians, who had conquered and taken from the Romans one of their leading eastern cities, the modern Belgrade. Babai was gloating over his victory when the young Roman trained barbarian appeared before the gates of the city with an array of forces which he had carried off from his father's army, and succeeded in wresting it from him. If the Emperor Leo had thought he had tamed the young barbarian into a submissive Roman courtier, he soon found he was mistaken. Theodoric did not hand back to the Romans the city which their army had just lost, but kept it for his own private rulership.

The Goths had given Theodoric a warm welcome when he returned from his long exile in Constantinople. Now they took him to their hearts. In spite of his Roman dress and Roman ways he was no foreigner. He had followed the unwritten law of the Gothic nobility that every young man must prove himself by some warlike deed, and had shown himself worthy of their love and pride. With one accord the people declared that he and he alone should succeed his father as their king.

CHAPTER VIII

GOTH AGAINST GOTH

The chief problem of a barbarian king was to find means to feed his people. In the century of the wandering of the nations the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire had been so often plundered and devastated by barbarian peoples that they had become barren and unfruitful. It was a heavy responsibility which fell on the shoulders of the young king Theodoric, coming to the Gothic throne when he was only twenty years old, and he deemed himself fortunate that he was able to render assistance to the new claimant to the imperial chair of Rome, which was left vacant in that year by the death of Emperor Leo. Roman favor meant Roman gold with which to pay his armies and buy corn and grain. When the new emperor, Zeno, assumed the purple robes, he did not forget the protection which Theodoric had given him when, a fugitive from his enemies, he had been forced to flee into Gothic territory, but presented to him a position and title which few men as young as he had held,—the office of Patrician and Master in Arms. Besides this he publicly adopted him as his own personal son in arms. The good fortune which had begun on the day of his birth seemed to be continuing with the young king.

No one's fortunes were secure, however, from one day to another in the fickle Roman court. The second year of Zeno's reign and Theodoric's favor had not closed before the other Theodoric, known in history as the One-eyed, who had made trouble for King Theudemir by obtaining the friendship of Emperor Leo fifteen years before, appeared at Constantinople to stir up trouble for Theudemir's son with the new emperor. Again he claimed that he was the rightful king and leader of a much larger nation of East Goths than that over which the boy Theodoric ruled. The wily Zeno was in a quandary. There was not money enough to pay both sets of Goths. Loyalty bade him stand by the son of Theudemir, the prince of the house of Amal; but Roman emperors cared little in those days for loyalty and much for power. Zeno only wanted to keep on his side the one who could help him most, and to leave as his enemy the one who could do least harm, and it is a rare compliment to our young Theodoric that he decided it was better policy to keep friendship with him.

Theodoric the One-eyed promptly began to make trouble. He and his people plundered neighboring cities, and came southward toward Constantinople. Reports reached the Roman capital of large armies which he was gathering on the frontier. Zeno began to repent of his decision and to wonder if he had done well to antagonize one who was proving himself so powerful a leader. He tried to make terms with him, offering to take him into the circle of allies on the same conditions which he had come to Constantinople to seek a few months before; but this time it was the turn of the Goth to refuse. He would not yield until the quarrel was settled once for all, and Theodoric the Amal was discredited forever.

The emperor had now no choice. There must be a war, but who should carry it on? Who, he reflected, but the man over whom he was having all this trouble? So he sent to Theodoric the Amal a pressing and peremptory message, saying that the time had come for him to prove himself worthy of the honors bestowed upon him, by assisting in the war which was being waged against his rival.

Theodoric had not been brought up in the midst of Roman intrigue for nothing. He refused to come into the quarrel until the emperor and senate had bound themselves by a solemn vow to enter into no treaty with the other Gothic leader. Then, knowing that otherwise he would lose his important alliance with the Romans, and that his people would lose the money which meant meat and drink to them in the impoverished province where they lived, he proceeded to the war. A campaign was laid out by which his troops and Roman forces from two neighboring provinces were to arrive at the same time in the

Balkan country where the One-eyed had stationed his forces. Theodoric carried out his part of the program and found himself, after a terrible march through wild mountain country, alone with his Gothic troops in the presence of the enemy, who were occupying an impregnable position at the top of a steep cliff. The Romans had failed to appear.

There was no chance for battle. Parties of horsemen came down the steep paths from the heights and skirmished with Theodoric's men, who attacked in their turn when the horsemen from the cliff had to come into the plains to get fodder for their horses; but there could be no decisive fighting till the enemy were willing to come down into the valley and take their chances in an open battle. So it went on from day to-day. Still the Romans did not come; and each morning Theodoric the One-eyed would take advantage of his unassailable position and, sheltered by some rock from the arrows of the warriors in the valley, would stand on his hilltop and pour forth a storm of reproach on the young Theodoric, "that perjurer and enemy to the whole Gothic race," as he called him.

"Silly and conceited boy!" he would shout, and Theodoric was powerless to stop him or to prevent his people from listening, "you do not understand the Romans nor see through their design. They intend to let the Goths tear one another to pieces, while they sit by and watch the game at their ease, sure of the real victory, whichever side is defeated. And we the while, turning our hands against our brethren, are to be left an easy prey to the tricks of the Romans. O son of Theudemir! which of their promises have they kept? They have led you to your own destruction, and the penalty of your stupidity will fall on the people whom you have betrayed."

Such were the words which came from the cliff one morning, and then the voice ceased, and Theodoric's people were left to think over what had been said. The next morning it would begin again.

"Ho, Theodoric, scoundrel! why art thou leading so many of my brethren to destruction? Why hast thou made so many Gothic women widows? What has become of all that abundance of good things which filled their wagons when they first set forth from their homes to march under thy standard? Then they owned two and three horses apiece. Now, without a horse they must needs limp on foot through Thrace, following thee as if they were thy slaves. Foolish boy, not long will they heed thy calls. They will be wiser than their king."

Theodoric could have fought with flesh and blood, but against these cool and cutting taunts delivered by an unseen voice he was powerless, for the picture drawn by his rival was all too true. Roman ingenuity and treachery had devised this new scheme of slipping out of the war at the last moment and leaving the Goths to fight against and destroy each other. When the men and women of the Gothic camp came to the tent of the young king, clamoring for peace with their kinsmen, he had nothing to say. It was a bitter moment for Theodoric when he came to the banks of the stream to make terms with the man who had been the cause of his childhood exile in the court of Constantinople, and whose voice he had daily heard in reproach and insult. He went through his part like the king he was, and made a formal treaty of reconciliation and peace with his namesake, but he did not forget to whose treachery this humiliation was due. It took ten years of Roman favors to wipe out from the memory of the proud young barbarian the bitterness of that hour.

So Emperor Zeno found himself with two enemies instead of one, and for a time even he was baffled by this new turn of affairs. He went to work with his usual weapon of intrigue, trying to make terms secretly with each party of the Gothic alliance, but his efforts were in vain. Both sides stoutly maintained that they had come at last to see reason. Goth would no longer fight with Goth for no quarrel of their own, but at the bidding of an outsider.

Theodoric the One-eyed met the Roman ambassadors with high flown protestations about the unity of the Gothic race

and the evils of brothers fighting with one another. His only quarrel was with the young king Theodoric, whose army, as a matter of fact, he hoped to win over to his standards. Theodoric the Amal met the Roman advances with a recital of his grievances which Emperor Zeno must have found it hard to answer.

"I was willing enough," said he, "to live in peace and quiet in my Gothic province, beyond the Roman territory, giving obedience to the emperor and doing injury to no man. Who summoned me forth from this retirement and insisted on my taking the field against this rival Goth, Theodoric the One-eyed? The emperor. He promised that the Master of the Soldiery for Thrace should join me with an army; he never came. Then that Claudius, the keeper of the funds, should bring me pay for my troops; he, too, did not appear. Thirdly, guides who were given to me, instead of taking the smooth and easy roads which would have led me straight to the camp of my foe, brought me up and down all kinds of steep and dangerous places where, if I had been attacked, with all my long train of horses and wagons and my following of women and children, I must without doubt have been destroyed. Brought at a disadvantage into the presence of our enemies, I was forced to make peace with them. Yea, in truth, I owe them great thanks for saving me alive, when owing to your treachery they might easily have wiped out me and my army forever."

These personal claims and his desire for revenge he would nevertheless lay aside for the sake of his hungry people, if the emperor would assign to him some district for a permanent dwelling place and would provide rations of corn for his people until they could reap their own harvest. Otherwise, he added significantly, he could not prevent his famished army from supplying their needs in any way they could. It was a noble and kingly answer, but it did not suit the emperor, who had no intention of drawing so heavily on the imperial treasures if he could help it.

Things began to look serious in Constantinople. The generals called in their troops from Greece and Turkey. This might be the end of Roman intrigue and the beginning of the great Gothic-Roman war which had so long been predicted. But Zeno had not used all his schemes. He had not yet tried personal bribery. To Theodoric the Amal he now offered large sums of gold and silver and a Roman damsel of the imperial family in marriage. The straightforward son of King Theudemir and the good queen Erelieva would not hear to such proposals. But the One-eyed was not so upright. He only waited till the offers became large enough, and then he forgot his horror of Goth fighting Goth, and agreed to turn upon his ally and drive him out of the country. He did not, however, succeed. For the next few years Theodoric the Amal proved a troublesome enemy to the Romans. One unchanging need controlled and guided his movements. He must have food for his wandering peoples. So we hear of him now in one city, now in another, with his army, always victorious but never despoiling save to win food and shelter for his people. Other barbarian tribes tore down the treasures of art from the palaces and churches and stripped the buildings of all that made them beautiful. Theodoric had lived too long at the Roman court to allow such barbarities save when the inhabitants refused him corn and provisions. Then his Gothic temper came to the front, and he burned and pillaged without mercy.

There was never a lasting peace between the Roman emperor and our Theodoric till the One-eyed died. Then Theodoric became the undisputed leader of all the Goths. Thirty thousand men were added to his armies, and he was able to terrorize the whole Roman border. Zeno made haste to conclude a satisfactory peace with him, and we see him once more in Constantinople, this time as consul, giving his name to the year and exercising all the prerogatives of that honorable office. Three years he enjoyed the luxuries of life at the Roman court, and to the Roman-bred young ruler they must have had many charms over the hard life as leader and provider for a wandering people. But Theodoric had too much nobility of character and

too much Gothic blood in his veins to be satisfied as the petted dependent of an alien race. The call of his people came to him, and he responded. This is the way the historian tells it:

"Meanwhile Theodoric, who was bound by covenant to the empire of Zeno, hearing that his nation were not too well supplied with the necessaries of life while he was enjoying all the good things of the capital, and choosing rather, after the old manner of his race, to seek food by labor than to enjoy in luxurious idleness the fatness of the Roman realm while his people were living in hardship, made up his mind and spoke to the emperor."

With the wisdom which was to make him a world famous ruler, Theodoric had seen that there was no chance for him or his people in the crowded eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. Ignoring, with an audacity which leaves us breathless but admiring, the thousand miles of mountain and valley and river which lay between, he announced to the Roman emperor that he would like to go over with his people into Italy, and requested that he and his people be given that kingdom to hold "as a gift and under his imperial protection." Both parties seem to have ignored the fact that Italy was held by a barbarian people and ruled over by Odoacer, a Goth who had lost favor with his people by becoming, in his young manhood, a courtier of the hated Attila. The emperor had little friendship for these barbarian occupants of Italy, although they were nominally under his control; but he could not give any real help to Theodoric, who must win the land by hard fighting. He went through the form of granting Theodoric's request, and with many expressions of regret allowed the Goths to go. But we must think that he was more willing to spare them than he admitted, and that he was glad to get so powerful and difficult a "son in arms" safely out of his way in the distant land of Italy.

So Theodoric started with his nation army of more than two hundred thousand Goths on the long, hard journey over into Italy. "Since Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness," says the chronicler, "so great a migration had not been undertaken." Putting into the wagons the women and children and as much furniture as they could take, the men set out on the great highway that followed the course of the Danube River, but their way did not lie for many miles over smooth roadways. There is a story of a great swamp to which they came. Enemies pressed upon them before and behind, and there was no chance to turn aside. The Gothic vanguard drove their horses into the swamp. Many sank in the treacherous waters, and those who came safely across were falling before the lances which their foes on the other side were hurling against the reed woven breastplates of the Goths. Then Theodoric shouted: "Whoso will fight the enemy let him follow me. Look not to any other leader, but only charge where you see my standards advancing. The Gepids shall know that a king attacks them; my people shall know that Theodoric saves them."

KINGS DOING HOMAGE TO THEODORIC

Cool and watchful in the moment of peril, he had seen in the apparently trackless swamp a narrow way which he believed to be solid ground. Urging his horse to a gallop he dashed across it, and his people followed his lead. "As a swollen river through the harvest field, as a lion through the herd," so did Theodoric charge upon the enemy, and they fell back in terror before him. The victory was doubly important because in their flight the enemy left their wagons of provisions behind them, and the

Goths were delivered from famine for another stage of their journey.

No other leader could have planned such a march, and no people less hardy and courageous could have carried it through. Queen Erelieva and the Gothic women suffered untold miseries in the wild mountain passes, where the cold was so intense that the yellow locks of the chiefs were whitened with frost, and the icicles hung from their beards. But the day came when the pastures were green again and the rich lowlands of Italy lay before the eyes of the weary company. On the plains of Verona Theodoric met Odoacer, the soldier-general who then ruled Italy.

As Theodoric was donning his armor, buckling on his breastplate of steel and hanging his sword by his side, his mother Erelieva and his sister Amalfrida came to the royal tent.

"Bring forth, O my mother and sister, my most splendid robes, those on which your fingers have worked the most gorgeous embroidery," he said to them. "I would be more gayly dressed on this day than on a holiday. Mother, to-day it behooves me to show to the world that it was indeed a man child whom you bore on that great day of the victory over the Huns. I too, in the play of lances, have to show myself worthy of my ancestor's renown by winning new victories of my own. Before my mind's eye stands my father, the mighty Theudemir, he who never doubted of victory, and therefore never failed of it. Clothe me therefore in rich apparel for this great day. If the enemy do not recognize me, as I intend they shall, by the violence of my onset, let them know me by the brilliancy of my raiment. If fortune give my throat to the sword of my enemy, let them at least say, 'How splendid he looks in death,' if they have not had the chance to admire me fighting."

With such brave and confident words Theodoric cheered his mother and sister, and then went forth to fight for the land which he had come a thousand miles to conquer. His good fortune did not desert him, and though it took more than one battle to win so great a land, yet within five years he was the conqueror and acknowledged ruler of all Italy.

Another barbarian approaching Rome, but this time with a new purpose,—not to destroy but to buildup! It has been said that until they met the Teutonic peoples the Romans had been able to Romanize every nation with which they came in contact, but that the Goths succeeded in Teutonizing Roman institutions. It was this which Theodoric was to do in Italy. With his Gothic inheritance and his Roman training he took up the work, which the Romans had been forced by weakness to lay down, of ruling the barbarian nations of Europe. By an administration in which Gothic strength was tempered with Roman wisdom he earned the title of "The Gothic Civilizer."

CHAPTER IX

CLOVIS, KING OF THE FRANKS

Conqueror and civilizer, Theodoric sat on his Italian throne, and for the first time since Alaric and his barbarians crossed the Alps the land had rest. "He was an illustrious man and full of good will towards all," says the chronicler. "He reigned thirty-three years, and so great was the happiness attained by Italy that even the wayfarers were at peace. For he did nothing wrong. Thus did he govern the two nations, the Goths and Romans, as if they were one people. So great was the order which he maintained that, if any one wished to leave gold or silver on his land, it was deemed as safe as if within a walled city. An indication of this was the fact that throughout all Italy he never made gates for any city, and the gates that were in the cities were not closed. Any one who had any business to transact did it at any hour of the night as securely as in the day. He was a lover of manufactures and a great restorer of cities."

Nor was it only Italy that prospered. Merchants came flocking from all the countries round about to carry on their trade under his protection, and neighboring peoples desired to have a share in this wonderful peace and prosperity, or, as the quaint record reads, "Thus he so charmed the neighboring nations that they came under a league with him, hoping that he would be their king." That Theodoric did everything in his power to strengthen the friendship between his people and the Teutonic nations with which he was surrounded, and to maintain the peace of Europe, is shown by the system of marriages which he arranged. His sister Amalfrida he gave in marriage to the king of the Vandals, who ruled in Carthage and. northern Africa, his two daughters were the wives of the kings of the West Gothic and Burgundian peoples, and he himself married the sister of that greatest barbarian of them all, Clovis, the king of the Franks. The Franks were a new branch of the Teutonic peoples and had come but lately within the pale of civilization. They lived in the northwesternmost corner of Europe, in the land to which they have since given their name, and came first into the great family of barbarian nations on that day when all Europe united to drive back the terrible Attila and his Huns. They were not even united under one king until the days of Clovis, who came to the chieftainship in 481, eight years before Theodoric came over into Italy. Clovis was but fifteen or sixteen years old when he became king, but he went speedily to war with all his neighbors and succeeded in so extending his territory that the statesmanlike Theodoric thought him sufficiently powerful to be included in his system of family alliances, and sought and obtained in marriage Audefelda, the sister of the Frankish lord.

Clovis was a shrewd as well as a savage and brutal king. He looked upon the great alliance of Teutonic nations which

Theodoric was building up, and decided that it would be a help to him to have a Christian wife of royal family. To this end he selected Clotilda, niece of the king of the Burgundians, whose own family had all been put to death by her uncle Gundobad, that he might seize the throne.

Clotilda was living in partial exile at Geneva. The story is that Clovis knew that Gundobad would never allow him to see her, and he therefore sent a Roman who was at his court, by name Aurelian, to try to see the lady. Aurelian went alone to Geneva, clothed in rags and with a wallet on his back like a beggar, but carrying with him the ring of Clovis to show his true purpose. Clotilda, who was famous for her piety and charity, received the wandering pilgrim kindly, and herself brought water to wash his feet that she might show her humility before this holy man of her faith. As she knelt before him Aurelian gave his message.

"Lady," he whispered, "I have great matters to announce to thee if thou wilt deign to listen to me in secret."

"Say on," replied Clotilda, consenting.

"Clovis, king of the Franks, hath sent me to thee; if it be thy will, he would fain raise thee to his high rank by marriage; and that thou mayest be assured of his purpose, he sendeth thee this ring."

Clotilda accepted the ring with pleasure, and said to Aurelian: "Take for the recompense of thy pains. as messenger these hundred sous in gold and this ring of mine. Return promptly to thy lord, and tell him that if he would fain unite me to him by marriage, let him send without delay messengers to demand me of my uncle Gundobad, and let the messengers who shall come, take me away in all haste, so soon as they shall have obtained permission, for my uncle and his counselors, my enemies, would fain prevent such a marriage by craft and deceit, but they will not dare to openly oppose your lord."

Clovis was glad at the message and sent an embassy who did even as Clotilda had said. Gundobad dared not refuse the powerful Frank, and gave Clotilda over to the envoys, who took her promptly to the king. "Clovis," the chronicler adds, "was transported with joy at the sight of her, and married her at once." So Clovis took his first step out of barbarianism, and it was due to the influence of Clotilda that he made his next great move.

Night and day the queen had pleaded with her heathen husband that he would come into the Christian faith, for she was an ardent believer. But he would not. Her one God had never, he declared, been proved any stronger if as strong as his many gods, and wherefore should he change?

Meanwhile a son was born to them, and the queen presented him for baptism. She had the church adorned with tapestry, seeking to attract her husband by the splendor of the ceremony. But the child died in his white baptismal robe. Then Clovis reproached her bitterly, saying: "If the child had been consecrated in the name of my gods he would be alive still. But now because he is baptized in the name of your God, he cannot live."

Clotilda unceasingly urged the king to acknowledge the true God, but he could not be won over. Five years went by, and

Clovis's power grew ever greater and greater till he ruled from the ocean to the western bank of the river Rhine, and there he came upon a nation from the north, equally barbarous and equally strong in battle. He had thought to cross over easily into the fertile land which they held, and dispossess them of it. But they crossed over instead to meet him and surprised his troops and drew them into battle before they were ready. For once the Frankish king had met his match, and it seemed as if he was to be defeated.

Then in the midst of the battle, when all was going against him, Clovis bethought him of the God of Clotilda, who she had declared had all power. Right on the battle field, while the fighting went on about him, he stopped, and raising his arms to heaven cried out loudly:

"O Jesus Christ, whom Clotilda declares to be the Son of the living God, who art said to give victory to those who put their hope in thee, I beseech the glory of thine aid. I have called on my gods, and have proved that they are far from me and have no power to help me. Now will I test that power which thy people say they have proved concerning thee. If thou wilt grant me the victory over these enemies, I will believe on thee and be baptized in thy name."

The tide of battle turned, and the enemy began to flee before the Franks. Their king was killed, and when they saw that they were without a leader they submitted to Clovis, saying: "We wish that no more people should perish. Now we are thine." Then Clovis forbade further war, and after praising his soldiers he returned to the queen and told her how he had won the victory.

At the Christmas festival Clovis, who had meantime been instructed in the principles of the Christian faith, received baptism in the church of Rheims. The story of the coming of the royal convert is written thus in the records of the church:

"Preparations had been made along the road from the palace to the baptistery; curtains and valuable stuffs had been hung; the houses on either side of the street had been decorated; the baptistery had been sprinkled with balm and all manner of perfume. The procession moved from the palace; the clergy led the way with the holy book, the cross, and the standards, singing hymns and spiritual songs; then came the bishop, leading the king by the hand; after him, the queen; lastly the people. On the road it is said that the king asked the bishop if the land through which he passed was the kingdom promised him. 'No,' answered the prelate, 'but it is the entrance to the road that leads to it.'"

Even at the moment of submission the barbarian king had evidently dreams of earthly conquest. But at the font of baptism he was to receive his rebuke.

"Bow thy head in humility, Barbarian!" cried the bishop. "Henceforth adore what thou hast burned, and burn what thou hast adored."

The king's two sisters and three thousand men of the Frankish army, besides many women and children, received baptism on that day, and from that time the Franks were reckoned a Christian nation.

Clovis had bowed his head to the word of the Church. He was to meet another power before which he must pause. In the course of his wars he dealt cruelly with a people who, driven from their homes, sought protection and received it from Theodoric in Italy. Clovis prepared to pursue them and wipe them off the earth in his fierce anger, but Theodoric wrote him a

letter, of which the tone is more one of command than of advice, warning him not to come farther. No one else on earth could have said to the fierce Frankish king, "Thus far shalt thou come and no farther," and been obeyed. But Clovis turned from his march and went back to his own domain.

For a time Clovis did not encroach on the Gothic territory. Then his ambition led him to his undoing. He could not rest in the thought that Theodoric had commanded him and he had turned back, and he provoked a war with his nearest Gothic neighbor, the son in law of the great king. Once more Theodoric warned him, but this time he did not heed, and there followed a war in which Theodoric himself after his long years of peace was forced to join, and in which Clovis was defeated and forced to give up part of the lands which he had won by conquest, and make a lasting peace with Theodoric.

Our last picture of Clovis is a strange one. Returning to Paris, humiliated no doubt by the thought that while he could hold his own wide kingdom he could not harm Theodoric, he set up his government there and, longing for recognition of his power, entered into negotiations with the far off Roman emperor at Constantinople. It is a sign of the wonderful hold which Rome had gained in the past over the minds of the barbarians that now, when she was but a name, they sought her titles. Theodoric, who had made the world forget his barbarian origin by his noble work as civilizer and peacemaker, still refrained from adopting the title, to which he had a right, of "Emperor of the Western World," out of respect to a Roman emperor hundreds of miles away. And Clovis, the most barbarian of the Teutonic rulers, as Theodoric was the most noble, was pleased as a child when the Roman emperor sent him the tunic of purple and the diadem which signified that he was a Roman consul. Putting them on, Clovis mounted his horse, and calling his people together that they might see him he rode in his purple garment from one end of Paris to the other, scattering with his own hand gold and silver coins among his subjects in response to their admiring cries of "Clovis Consul!" "Clovis Augustus!"

Three titles the ambitious barbarian had won for himself in the forty-five years of his life. He had been crowned "King of the Franks," and in that name was written the story of his success as a warrior. To be "King of the Franks" when Clovis was chosen chief of his tribe at the age of sixteen would have meant to be lord over all the other Frankish chieftains and tribes, as well as head of his own. The father of Clovis would have doubted if any one man could gain such power. But that would have been to rule only a small part of the region west of the Rhine. To be "King of the Franks" when Clovis died was to rule the Roman and the Teutonic peoples who dwelt in the lands from the Rhine to the Pyrenees. This Frankish empire which Clovis had founded was soon to lead all Christendom.

At his baptism Clovis had been greeted as "Eldest Son and Supporter of the Church," a title which was to lead his successors into crusades against the whole Mohammedan world. Now, at the end of his life, he received the empty honors of the dying Roman Empire, and it was over these that he and his people went wild with delight.

CHAPTER X

RODERICK AND THE SARACENS

Legend tells us that there was in the heart of Spain a palace, built within a cave in the olden days of magic and mystery, wherein was hid the fate of the Gothic kingdom in Spain, and that it was because Roderick penetrated its secrets that he was the last king of the Goths.

An ancient prophecy had foretold, so the story ran, that barbarians would one day cross over from Africa and conquer the fair land of Spain. A wise old king heard this prophetic word and determined to use the powers of magic, in which he was well versed, to set this evil day as far along as possible. For this purpose he built within the great cave a palace with many windings and turnings, and cast over it a spell. In the innermost room he placed a secret talisman, and by the powers of magic he brought it to pass that as long as this talisman remained undisturbed and none knew its secret, so long Spain should be safe from invasion. He could not prevent the prophecy from coming true some time, for so it had been decreed by the Fates; but because of his wisdom and his great love for his land it was given to him to set this check upon the coming of that terrible day.

A strong iron gate barred the entrance to the palace, and upon this the king put a huge lock. In the centuries which followed, every king of Spain came upon the day of his accession to the throne and added a lock, until the door was covered with fastenings.

Thirty-two padlocks, most of them rusty with age, hung from the gate when Roderick came to the throne. It was two hundred years since the death of Theodoric, and the Goths had lost in that time their former glory and supremacy in Europe. The Teutonic kingdom which Theodoric had tried to build up had fallen to pieces when his strong leadership was gone. Only in Spain did the Goths retain their power, and in that luxurious southern land, with its vineyards and its palaces, they had gradually lost the strength and simplicity which they had brought from the north, and had become a weak and sinful people. Kings had vied with their nobles in oppressing the common people and making the court a place of wickedness. The last monarch had been deposed for his tyranny; and his cousin Roderick had seized the throne by force but with the support of the people, who saw in him bravery and daring, and thought they discerned wisdom and sagacity as well.

The day came when Roderick should add his lock to the collection on the gateway, but the story spread through the startled kingdom that the new king had declared his intention of opening the gate instead. Perhaps the story of the reason for the locked door had been forgotten in the centuries; perhaps the fatal curiosity and reckless daring of Roderick would not have been held back even by the ancient tale of the evil which would befall his realm when the secret was known. The pleasure-loving Goth met the protests of his counselors with a laugh and a shrug of the shoulders.

"It is no talisman, but a treasure house," he said to them. "The old king was a miser who desired to keep his wealth from others, and so he made this clever story of a spell and magic, and his ruse has succeeded with a credulous people all these centuries. Gold and silver and jewels lie hidden in its moldy depths. My coffers are empty, and I should be a fool to let a cluster of rusty locks keep me from filling them from this ancient storehouse."

The fear of the mystery was so heavy on the wise men of the kingdom that they offered to raise the needed money for Roderick, if he would refrain from disturbing the palace. Then Roderick showed that he was a true Goth. Gold had tempted him greatly, but these words set the seal on his purpose.

"Now I will surely go," he said; "it shall never be said that Don Rodrigo, king of the Goths, was halted by fear!"

The ancient locks were filed and torn from the gate; the rusty hinges were forced to yield; and the king, bearing a torch in his hand, passed through he creaking portals and, followed by his train, entered the cave palace. The dust of centuries lay upon the rooms, but as the king strode through one chamber after another he found no gold nor hidden treasure. He had almost thrown off the feeling of dread with which, in spite of his bold words, the entrance into the century-old cavern had inspired him, when he came to the last room of all, where the fatal secret was reported to be shut away.

Roderick glanced curiously about this inner shrine to see wherein lay the terrible magic. Before him was a marble urn containing a parchment scroll, and on the wall opposite the door was a rude painting, drawn on the plastered wall and so brightly colored that even the dust of centuries could not wholly dim the gay reds and yellows and greens. The picture represented a group of strangely dressed horsemen. The steeds upon which they sat were of Arabian breed, small and well formed. Some of the warriors, for such their lances and pennons showed them to be, wore turbans; others were bareheaded, with locks of coarse black hair hanging over their foreheads. All were dressed in skins and presented a strange and warlike appearance.

Puzzled over the meaning of this rude picture Roderick turned to the scroll and read these words: "Unfortunate king, it is an evil hour in which thou hast come. Whenever this room is entered and this scroll read, the people shown in yonder picture shall invade the land and overturn the throne of its kings. The rule of the Goth shall end, and the land and the people shall be degraded by barbarian invaders."

Roderick had read the ancient inscription slowly, spelling out aloud the dim old lettering as he deciphered it. As he finished, the long silent passages gave back the echo, so that the courtiers, who had drawn back in fear when their king entered the magic room, heard it repeated, and the sound of it came with an unearthly force to Roderick: "The rule of the Goth shall end,—the land and the people be degraded by barbarian invaders."

Then King Roderick looked back at the picture, and his eyes were opened to see its meaning. The peoples who had looked strange yet familiar were the Arabs (the turban wearers) and the Moors (the black-haired warriors) who had conquered all Africa and were already gazing longingly across the Straits of Gibraltar into the sunny provinces of Spain. He had broken the spell, and now they would come over. The rash king fled through the empty passages,—his courtiers had already disappeared,—and escaped into the open air where they were waiting in terror. That night an earthquake destroyed the cave palace.

It was a simple magic when it came to the light. The power of fear, which the old king by his words had held away from them for so long, came upon the king and all the people. They had sinned, and their hour had come. There was no hope for them. They were doomed. So Roderick felt in his heart when within a year the hordes of Arabs and Moors—Saracens the people of Europe called them—came over into Spain.

"The Hun," a wise writer has said, "was a more terrible foe than the Saracen. But the Goth conquered him in a generation, almost in a day, when he came to meet him face to face. Against the Mohammedan peoples, the barbaric races of Arabs and Moors, the Teuton had to fight for five hundred years."

The Goth was the first member of the Teutonic family of nations to meet the Saracen, but whereas in the days of Attila, the Goth had been the noblest of the peoples, now he was the weakest, and he went down in defeat before the Eastern races which swarmed into his land.

A traitor Goth gave the Saracens the opportunity to come over into Spain at a time when King Roderick was quelling a

disturbance in the north, and they had landed in great numbers and established themselves in his kingdom before he could reach the south. In the state of a Gothic king he had traveled from the north, riding in a chariot of ivory lined with cloth of gold, drawn by three white mules. Pearls, rubies, and other jewels sparkled from the rich silken awning, and the king, when he rode on the battle field of Guadelete, where the two armies were drawn up, was clad in a robe of silk interwoven with strings of pearls, and wore upon his head a crown of gold. Only his yellow hair and his blue eyes would have reminded one that he was of the race of the old barbarian kings who had sent terror into Europe from the north even as the Saracens were bringing it from the far south.

It was not personal vanity which made Roderick approach in this splendor; it was the custom of Spanish kings, and the people took new courage as he rode on his throne of ivory through the ranks and reminded them of the glory of their Gothic ancestors and of the holy Christian faith which they were defending. When the battle began, the king did not sit idle in his chariot. He laid aside his crown and, "donning his helmet adorned with horns of gold after the old Gothic custom, mounted his milk-white war horse Orelia and took his place in the forefront of the battle. As he came in sight of the heathen host it is said that he exclaimed, "By the faith of the Messiah, those are the very men whom I saw painted on the walls of the chamber of the palace."

If fear entered Roderick's heart at the sight of the pictured barbarians on the palace wall, it did not govern him when he met them face to face in battle. In the three days during which the conflict raged he was everywhere in the fiercest of the fight, encouraging and leading his men. At first the victory seemed to be with the Christians. Then the tide of success turned and the attacks of the Moslems beat the Goths back, back, back toward the mountains. Here and there resistance would be attempted and the line would be broken for a moment, but soon the forces would be cut down and scattered, and the steady, relentless pressure would go on. King Roderick was thrown from his fleet steed Orelia and wandered defenseless on the field till at last he threw aside his purple mantle and his embroidered sandals, by which he would be recognized by the enemy as king, and among the very last followed the example of the survivors of the Gothic army and fled from the field. A picture of the defeated king wandering about after the battle has been preserved in an old ballad, dear to the hearts of Spaniards, and to those who know it in English by Mr. Lockhart's translation.

The hosts of Don Rodrigo were scattered in dismay,
When lost was the eighth battle, nor heart nor hope had they;
He, when he saw that field was lost, and all his hope was flown,
He turned him from his flying host, and took his way alone.

His horse was bleeding, blind, and lame,—he could no farther go;
Dismounted, without path or aim, the king stepped to and fro;
It was a sight of pity to look on Roderick,
For, sore athirst and hungry, he staggered, faint and sick.

All stained and strewed with dust and blood, like to some smoldering brand
Plucked from the flame, Rodrigo showed:—his sword was in his hand,
But it was hacked into a saw of dark and purple tint;
His jeweled mail had many a flaw, his helmet many a dint.

He climbed unto a hilltop, the highest he could see,
Thence all about of that wide rout his last long look took he;
He saw his royal banners, where they lay drenched and torn,
He heard the cry of victory, the Arab's shout of scorn.

He looked for the brave captains that led the hosts of Spain,
But all were fled except the dead, and who could count the slain?
Where'er his eye could wander, all bloody was the plain,
And, while thus he said, the tears he shed run down his cheeks like rain:—

"Last night I was the King of Spain,—to-day no king am I;
Last night fair castles held my train,—to-night where shall I lie?
Last night a hundred pages did serve me on the knee,—
To-night not one I call mine own:—not one pertains to me.

"Oh, luckless, luckless was the hour, and cursed was the day,
When I was born to have the power of this great signiory!
Unhappy me, that I should see the sun go down to-night!
O Death, why now so slow art thou, why fearest thou to smite?"

Neither Goth nor Moslem ever knew the fate of the unhappy king, whose defeat at Guadelete ended three centuries of Gothic rule in Spain and ushered in eight centuries of Saracen dominion. One story is that he found his way to a monastery and there did penance for his sins until the death he longed for delivered him. Those who tell this tale say that in a hermitage in Spain there was found two hundred years later a tomb with the simple inscription, "Here lies Roderick, last king of the Goths."

CHAPTER XI

CHARLEMAGNE

Christendom would have fared ill if it had had in the eighth century no stronger defender than Roderick and the weakened Goths, for it was pressed on every side by heathen and barbaric peoples. There had been indeed no united Christendom since the death of Theodoric two hundred years before. The union of Christian nations, into which the barbarian Clovis had been the last king to be admitted, had fallen to pieces at Theodoric's death, and no man had been strong enough to unite the warring tribes and nations of the Teutonic and Roman races

until there succeeded to the throne of Clovis the Frankish Charles, known in history as Charlemagne, or Charles the Great.

Charlemagne was the hero of Europe for all the Middle Ages. Even the Saxons, who had every reason to hate him as their conqueror, wrote on the pages of history, "The best man on earth and the bravest was Charles: truth and good faith he established and kept." In the hour when they trembled before his "fierce fury" the barbarian nations admired the Frankish king. But how they feared him! There is a story of Didier, a Lombard king who opposed him and was driven by his armies within the walls of the strongest city of the Lombards.

Didier had never seen the Frankish king, but Otger his friend had been at his court. When they heard that the formidable Charles was approaching, the two went up to a high tower to spy him from afar.

When the baggage train appeared, followed by the engines of war with which to attack the city, Didier said to Otger, "Is Charles in that great host?"

"No," replied Otger, "Charles is not yet there."

Then Didier saw a host of common soldiery coming, and spoke confidently, "Of a truth Charles advances now in this throng."

"No, no," replied Otger, "not yet."

The king fretted himself and cried, "What then shall we do if he has more than these?"

"The manner of his coming you will see," replied Otger, solemnly, "but what shall become of us I know not." For Otger was afraid; well he knew the wealth and might of the peerless Charles. "When you see the plain bristle with a harvest of spears, and rivers of black iron come flowing in upon your city walls, then you may look for the coming of Charles."

While yet he spoke, as the chronicler tells it, a black cloud arose in the west and the glorious daylight was turned to darkness. The emperor came on; a dawn of spears darker than night rose on the besieged city. King Charles, that man of iron, appeared. Iron his helmet, iron his gauntlet, iron the corselet on his breast and shoulders. His left hand grasped an iron lance. Iron the spirit, iron the hue of his war steed. Before, behind, and at his side rode men arrayed in the same guise. Iron filled the plain and open spaces; iron points flashed back the sunlight.

"There is the man whom you would see," said Otger to the king.

Charlemagne is described as "large and strong, and of lofty stature, though not over-tall. His eyes were very large and animated, his nose long, his hair fair, and his face laughing and merry. His appearance was always stately and dignified, whether he was standing or sitting."

"Charlemagne used to wear," the chronicler continues, "the national, that is to say the Frankish, dress,—next his skin a linen shirt and linen breeches, and above these a tunic fringed with silk; while hose covered his lower limbs, and shoes his feet, and he protected his chest in winter by a close fitting coat of otter or marten skins. Over all he flung a blue cloak, and he always had a sword girt about him, usually one with a gold or silver hilt and belt; he sometimes carried a jeweled sword, but only on great feast days. On these he made use of embroidered clothes, and shoes bedecked with precious stones; his cloak was fastened by a golden buckle, and he appeared crowned with a diadem of gold and gems; but on other days his dress varied little from the common dress of the people. Above all things he despised foreign costumes, however handsome."

This is the portrait, as it has come down to us by pen and picture, of the great ruler who came in the year 800 to the gates of Rome, the first Teuton to receive the title "Emperor of Rome,"—the man who stands in history halfway between the ancient world and the modern, the central figure of the Middle Ages. The barbarian of one age had become the noble of the next. The Pope of the Christian Church received him at the gates of the city, for had he not restored and extended the ancient bounds of Christendom? He had found Christendom smaller than in the days of Theodoric, much smaller than the extent of the Roman Empire. Spain had been lost since the three days' battle of Guadelete; Slavic peoples held the eastern lands which Theodoric and his Goths had forsaken to come over into Italy; and beyond the Rhine border heathen Saxons had occupied the northern regions which Goths had held in the days of Drusus and Athanaric. In twenty-five years of conquest Charlemagne had driven back the Saracens, who had been looking with longing over the mountains into the fertile plains of France. Only at fearful cost had they been checked. Roland and Oliver and flower of the Frankish army had fallen on that terrible day at Roncesvalles, celebrated in song and story, but they had not died in vain if they had held back the stream of Moslem warriors from Christendom. The Saxons had been conquered and brought to Christianity; their heathen king Wittekind had received baptism in the presence of Charlemagne on Frankish soil; the Slavic peoples had been driven back and subdued; and now in a realm where peace and prosperity reigned, the great warrior had laid down his arms and come to Rome to receive the title which had been handed down by the proudest people on earth for many centuries.

On Christmas Day the Franks and Romans went to the great church of St. Peter's to worship. It must have been an impressive scene,—the huge building but dimly lighted with candles, save for the altar, where three thousand candles made a great triumphal arch; the Pope and his attendants in the rich robes of their office conducting the stately Christmas service; Charlemagne and his sons kneeling before the altar, a little apart from the crowd. Then when the service was over, as the king rose from his knees, the Pope suddenly came forward with a great crown of gold, which he set upon his head. Instantly the huge assembly responded with the shout: "Long life to Charles the Augustus, the mighty Charles, crowned of God, the great and pacific Emperor of the Romans," and the Pope and all the people gave him homage.

CHAPTER XII

THE SCHOOL OF THE PALACE

Think of a school where all the pupils were of royal blood, and where an emperor, three princes, heirs to the thrones of Europe, two archbishops, a queen, three young princesses, and two or three courtiers of various ranks all sat down and studied lessons together. That was Charlemagne's School of the Palace, a school of more than a thousand years ago, which traveled about with him wherever he went.

The barbarian invasions had destroyed the schools of Rome, and since then there had been hardly any schools in all Europe, save those for the few boys who lived in the monasteries. The four centuries had been so full of warfare and bloodshed and conquest that scholarship and the arts of peace had almost disappeared from Europe. People have called those times the "Dark Ages," because the light of learning seemed to have been blotted out. But Charlemagne was determined that his subjects should not remain barbarians. So he set up the first free public schools in Europe and made a decree, which was published in the farthest corners of his realm, that every boy, whether rich or poor, son of a serf or of a freeman, should be allowed to go to them. But the most interesting of all and the most famous was his own School of the Palace.

If we had come to the court during a session, I doubt if we would have known that it was a school at all. In the first place we should look for books, but there would be hardly any books, for this was long before the invention of printing, and the few books which were written had to be laboriously copied letter by letter and sentence by sentence by practiced scribes. So books were very rare and very precious: There would be no writing paper like ours, but scrolls of heavy parchment, on which the learned scholars might write with quill pens, and wax tablets and steel points with which beginners might practice the forming of letters.

Charlemagne could never learn to write. He began too late in life, and, though he used to keep blanks and tablets under his pillow in bed that he might practice when he was wakeful, his hand was too familiar with the mighty sword Joyeuse to use skillfully so tiny a weapon as a pen. But in all else that was taught in the school he was the best student of all, and his sons and his daughters had hard work to keep up with him.

THE SCHOOL OF THE PALACE

With so few books to study, everything depended on the teacher, who had to give out what should be learned, and Charlemagne sent across the channel to Britain and persuaded the great English scholar, Alcuin, to come over and be master of the Palace School. Alcuin had to get permission of the English king, for he was a very famous scholar, and learning was greatly prized in England; but he came and taught Charlemagne and his court for fourteen years, and this is the way he taught them. He would make up a series of questions and answers, and the pupils would ask the questions and he give the, answers until they knew them thoroughly. Sometimes the scholars would think up their own questions; and Alcuin tells us that he used to rise before daybreak and study out answers to some of the emperor's

perplexing questions, for there was no subject in heaven or earth about which Charlemagne did not have a passionate curiosity.

The names of some of the studies which were taught are like ours,—grammar, arithmetic, physiology, and astronomy,—but to us the lessons seem very queer. Here are some of the questions in the dialogue exercise which Alcuin gave to his sixteen-year-old pupil, Pepin, Charlemagne's son. It began with physiology. Pepin was to ask, "What is the mouth?" and Alcuin would answer, "The nourisher of the body, because all food comes in through it." "What is the stomach?" would be the next question, and the answer would be, "The cook of the food." "What is the head?" "The preserver of memory." "And the eyes?" the boy was to ask, "what are they?" "The eyes, my son, are the guides of the body, the organs of light, the index of the soul." The hands, Alcuin taught, were the workmen of the body, the bones were the strength of the body, and the limbs were the columns of the body. Twenty-six questions and answers like this would be all that Prince Pepin would ever be required to know about physiology, and then Alcuin would turn to another subject, perhaps to arithmetic, where he would teach, among other things, that man was placed between six walls, the names of which were "above, below, before, behind, right and left."

Some of the answers in this exercise were very pretty and poetical. Spring was called "the painter of the earth" because it brought so many fresh colors to the barren fields and trees and hill slopes, and autumn was "the barn of the year" because the earth brought forth at that time her rich harvests, which must be stored up to preserve life through the long, unfruitful winter. When Pepin inquired of his master what snow was, he was told "dry water," and frost was described to him as "a persecutor of plants and a destroyer of leaves." The sun distributed the hours of the day, the moon was thought to dispense the dew and give warning of storms, while the stars were "the pictures of the roof of the heavens, the guides of sailors, the ornament of night."

To us they seem strange lessons taught at a very queer school, where old men and children sat down together and puzzled over the wonderful world in which they lived, trying to understand and explain it. But remember that this and other schools like it were the beginning out of which all our schools have grown, and that if Charlemagne had cared only for war and conquest and destruction, as did Attila the Hun, the world would have remained barbarian for a great many years longer than it did.

CHAPTER XIII

VIKINGS FROM THE NORTH

When Emperor Charlemagne was an old man, nearing the end of his life, he came, so the story goes, to the Frankish seaport town of Narbonne. As he sat at meal in the hall, he looked out and saw white sails on the horizon. The townspeople watched the ships as they came nearer, and commented on their strange appearance. Some thought that they were Jewish merchants, some that they hailed from African ports, and others that they came from Britain. But the wise king, knowing from the shape and swiftness of the vessels what sort of crews they carried, said to those about him, "These ships bear no merchandise, but cruel foes."

The Franks marveled at his words and prepared to defend their city should the strangers attack it. But there was no need. The Northmen, hearing that there stood the man whom they were wont to call Charles the Great, were afraid lest all their fleet should be taken in the port and broken to pieces. Their flight was so rapid that they "soon withdrew themselves not only from the swords but even from the eyes of those who wished to take them." The Franks rejoiced at their speedy departure, congratulating themselves that the danger was so soon overpast. But the wise Charles, seized by a deep foreboding, rose from his seat at the table and looked out of the window toward the east. Long he remained in that position, and those who watched him saw tears in his eyes. No one ventured to question the venerable emperor, but turning to his followers he said: "Know ye why I weep? Truly I fear not that these will injure *me*. But I am deeply grieved that in my lifetime they should have been so near landing on these shores, and I am overwhelmed with sorrow as I look forward and see what woes they will bring upon my posterity and their people."

Thus the great emperor, who had reorganized the whole Christian world and driven back barbarians without number, saw in his old age the beginning of the great Viking invasions, which were to change the face of northern Europe and the British Isles.

Men of the south had always since the days of the Romans looked upon the far north as a region of mystery. Drusus had won great fame by being the first Roman captain who had ventured to set sail on that dread Northern Ocean, of which a Roman historian had written: "Beyond Germania lies the Northern Ocean, and in it lies an island rich in arms and ships and men. Beyond that is another sea, which we may believe girdles and encloses the whole world. For here the light of the setting sun lingers on till sunrise, bright enough to dim the light of the stars. More than that, it is asserted that the sound of his rising is to be heard, and the forms of the gods, and the glory round his head may be seen. Only thus far, and here rumor seems truth, does the world extend."

What happened in these far northern regions the men of heathendom did not venture to say. Perhaps the souls of the dead dwelt there, and these boatmen who appeared from time to time rowed the souls of those who were departing this life across to the better land of the sunrise and the sunset whence none might return. It was all mystery to the superstitious Teuton, and those who came forth from the north were therefore invested with a strange terror.

The dragon ships which appeared in their peaceful harbors did not make the men of Christendom less fearful. On the curved prow of every Viking ship was the head of a dragon or worm or other fantastic creature, and in the vessel were tall, blue-eyed barbarians with terrible two-handed axes, which they wielded with fearful force and dexterity. Swiftly and silently a fleet of such vessels would enter a French port, or sail up the mouth of a wide river, and proceed inland, stopping at every rich farm to seize produce, plundering the cities for treasure, attacking the merchantmen which lay along the wharves; and then, before a force could be summoned to beat them off, they

would be gone, and none knew whether it would be a year or a month or a generation before they would come again. Only, as the ninth century went on, it became certain that they would come oftener and oftener, till the forebodings of Charlemagne were realized and the terrified and helpless people inserted in the ritual of their church a new petition, "From the Northmen's fury, O Lord, deliver us."

VIKINGS SAILING UP THE RIVER TO PARIS

There came an hour when the Franks believed that no human power could have saved them, and gave thanks that their prayer had been answered. The Northmen, or Vikings as they were called, for the word "Viking" had come to mean *sea robber*, made their way up the Seine River to Rouen. Then, having taken that city and made their progress thus far unchecked, they sailed farther up the river into this inland realm, with its walled cities and tilled fields, which was as strange to these foreigners from the bleak Northland as their mountain islands would have been to the Franks. On and on they sailed, a fleet of one hundred and twenty dragon ships, till for the first time Vikings and Viking boats lay under the walls of Paris. That was as strange an hour in history as that day, more than four hundred years before, when Alaric and his barbarians stood before the city of Rome; and not the least strange part of it was that in the great family of races these Northmen and the Goths of that former day were kindred peoples.

Ragnar, the Viking leader, stood at the prow of the foremost ship and gazed with wonder and fierce longing at the turrets and towers of the fair Frankish city. Then he landed, and his men after him,—the crews of one hundred and twenty ships,—and rushed through the gates. They took the people of Paris wholly unawares, for no one had dreamed that the northern pirates would ever come so far inland. Up and down the streets the wild bands of Northmen went, slaying those who came in their way, till the people fled in terror to their homes, leaving their city in the hands of the barbarians.

For a few hours the Vikings pursued their work of destruction, unchecked save by groups of brave men who withstood them here and there in the city. They robbed the palaces and public buildings of their treasures, and set fire to each before they left it. They had no respect even for the churches, but entered them and tore down pillars of marble and precious stone and stripped the altars of their gold and silver vessels. But while the marauders were in the church of St. Germain a thick fog fell upon the city. To the religious Parisians it seemed that "God blinded the heathen by the darkness of their own wickedness," and in the Viking accounts of this "Raid of Ragnar" we read that on this voyage the ships went too far

inland and "came into a strange region of mists and enchantments."

The Vikings came out from their plundering to find the face of Paris changed. A thick gray mist shut everything from their view. Before they had gone a dozen steps, the church from which they had come was hidden, from them. They could not tell which way the street turned, but blundered about in the narrow ways. In their haste for treasure and slaughter none had noticed carefully where they were going, and now a cry of panic arose in the gloom when they realized that they did not know which way the ships lay. They lost each other, and many were killed in the fights in the darkness when no one could tell which was Frank and which was Northman. Those who found their way back to the ships waited as long as they dared for the others, but at last terror seized them lest they should never be able to escape to the broad ocean. In a panic they drew up their anchors, and setting their black sails and pulling on their oars besides, they departed with all haste down the river Seine.

When they came into their own waters, the Vikings had thought they could shake off forever the spell of that evil day in Paris. But they found, so the story goes, that the enchantment followed them. The fog had been a sickness breeding mist, one of those warm mists, blown up from the river lowlands, which were more terrible than the sword to the mountain dwellers of the north. The sickness pursued them to their own land, and there many died; until the heart of Ragnar was smitten with fear, and he went to the king and confessed to him that he had robbed the churches and had brought back many Christian prisoners, and that he feared the God of the Christians was sending this sickness as a punishment. The king hearkened unto Ragnar's word and returned all the Christian prisoners to the Franks, and with them a wondrous porphyry pillar (which Ragnar had wrenched from the church of St. Germain, where the fog fell upon him) and a host of silver vessels. "When this offering had been made," the legend reads, "the God of the Franks was satisfied, and our men recovered of their sickness."

CHAPTER XIV

ALFRED AND THE DANES

Europe was not the only realm to be caught in the flood of the Northmen's invasions. "This year," reads the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of 787, "first came three ships of the Northmen out of Norway. These were the first ships of Danish men that sought Angle-land." Across the waters into Britain where the Angles and Saxons had dwelt for four hundred years, and where they were beginning to build up a peaceful and united and civilized order of national life, came the fierce northern invaders in their black dragon ships. Invasions Britain had seen before. The Romans, the Picts and Scots, and the Saxons had all in their turn seized the kingdom by force. But such an invasion as this Britain had never suffered, for there was no end to it. To conquer in one battle was of no avail, for the enemy would shortly invade some other spot with a larger fleet and a stronger force, till it seemed to the weary Saxons that all the barbarians in the world were come to their shores.

At first the Northmen came only to harry and plunder the land, and returned after their summer raids to their own land with their spoil. Henry of Huntington gives a graphic picture of the distress and perplexity of the kings and nobles during these summer raids. "Wonder was it," he writes, "how when the English kings were hasting to meet the Danes in the East, ere they could come up with their bands a breathless scout would run in, saying, 'Sir King, whither marchest thou? The heathen have landed in the South, a countless fleet. Towns and hamlets are in flames; fire and slaughter are on every side.' Yea, and that very day another would come running: 'Sir King, why withdrawest thou? A fearsome host has come to shore in the West. If ye face them not speedily, they will hold that ye flee, and will be on your rear with fire and sword.' Again on the morrow would dash up yet another, saying: 'What place make ye

for, noble chieftains? In the North the Danes have made a raid. Already have they burnt your dwellings. Even now they are sweeping off your goods, dishonoring your wives, and haling them to captivity.'"

It was no wonder that the king and the people "lost heart and strength both of mind and body, and were utterly cast down"; nor that it seemed to the young Alfred, brought to the throne of the West Saxons at the age of twenty-two because the Danes had killed his brother the king in battle, that "never might he, all alone, with but God for aid, endure so grievous a stress and strain of heathendom."

Alfred had to face a greater peril even than the fierce but brief summer raids, for the Danes had begun twenty years before his accession to the throne to winter in England. At first Northmen who came to Britain had been only Vikings, sea robbers out for spoil, who cared nothing for land and conquest; but in these later years the Danes had come and had begun to bring their wives and children and goods and settle in the provinces which they spoiled.

One month only the young king Alfred was allowed to reign in peace, he who cared more than any king of England before him for learning and arts, and desired nothing so much as to rule a quiet, peaceful land. Then he was attacked by the Danes, and was forced to defend his kingdom against them lest soon he have no kingdom at all, for the Danes "thought it scorn that any part of England should yet be Alfred's." Nine battles he fought against the heathen in the first year of his reign, to say nothing of numberless raids which he and his captains made with small companies of men, and for the time being the invaders were held back. But by the seventh year of his kingship they had conquered and occupied all the land from the Thames northward. In Northumbria and East Anglia and in Mercia and around London barbarian kings reigned. Alfred alone of all the kings of the provinces of Britain remained supreme in his own realm. In more than two thirds of England the Danes held sway.

Alfred had fought the Danes successfully both on land and on the water, but in the year 878, in mid winter, when no campaigns had been fought before, Guthrum and two other kings of the Danes with a mighty force "stole away to Chippenham, and over ran all the land of the West Saxons, and sat them down there. With wondrous swarms newly come in from Denmark the barbarian kings spread over the land, covering the face of the earth like locusts, and taking all for themselves, for none could withstand them. Many of the folk drave they oversea, and, of the rest, they brought under the most, and forced them to yield to their sway,"—Had the story ended here, as it did in the tale of the conquest of every other province in Britain, all history would have been changed. Danes instead of Anglo-Saxons would have ruled the British Isles, and instead of Angle-land, or England, we should to-day have Daneland. But that was not the end of the story. "Many of the folk drave they oversea, and, of the rest, they brought under the most, and forced them to yield to their sway, *save only King Alfred. He, with a small band, gat him away to the woods, and that hardly, and to the fastnesses of the fens."*

A fugitive and in peril of his life, Alfred sought a place where he might dwell in hiding within his own realm. For a time he wandered with his men in the woods of Somerset, and then he came to a region of salt marshes, in the midst of which lay an island called Athelney, or Isle of Nobles. "Athelney," says the chronicler, "was girded in by fen on all sides, so that by boat only could it be come at. On this islet was there a thicket of alders, full of stags and goats and other such creatures, and in the midst a bit of open ground, scarce two acres. Hither in his distress came Alfred all alone," and hither followed him Ethelnot, one of his nobles, and a few of his faithful followers.

Englishmen have always looked back with pride on that dark hour in English history, when England's only hope was in this young king, living a homeless and dangerous life on the tiny island, in the midst of his foes, for as they think of those months of suffering and discouragement they see the true greatness of

Alfred. When every one else was disheartened he was brave and strong and hopeful.

ALFRED IN THE DANISH CAMP

Many stories have been handed down to us of the things which befell Alfred in those three months in hiding, and though we know they are probably not true history like the dates and names of battles, yet they give us a picture of how people thought and felt and acted in Alfred's day, and how he perhaps may have thought and felt and acted. First, there is the story of the cakes,—of Alfred's coming to a hut one day and being recognized by the master of the house, a goatherd, who did not tell his wife who it was who came to their house for food and shelter. The story is that the old woman left Alfred to mind the cakes on the hearth, and when he let them burn she rated him soundly for his carelessness, and Alfred, king of England though he was, took his scolding meekly, for he knew he deserved it. None can doubt that many times in those sad months Alfred must have gone hungry, for the little group of nobles had nothing to live on but what they could get by hunting or fishing, and very likely he came more than once to the home of some of his humble subjects and was fed by them, unbeknown to themselves; and that is how this story grew up.

Again there is a tale of how Alfred ventured forth, disguised as a minstrel, with one trusty servant, and went to the Danish camp. That he was a very good minstrel we may be sure, for he loved the Saxon songs of his fathers and learned many of them by heart and had them written down. First he played to the soldiers in their camps, and then because he played and sang so well they led him to the tent of the Danish king, Guthrum. Little did the blue-eyed Norse barbarian dream that he should so soon meet the handsome and skillful minstrel in another and more terrible guise. Guthrum was so charmed with the music and the songs of Alfred that he desired him to stay; and the story is that Alfred found great difficulty in getting away from the Danish camp, not because he was in danger, but because he had won such a place by the charm of his bearing and by his talents that they would not let him go. But the English king had learned all which he needed to know of the Danes and their strength and position, and he returned as soon as possible to his people.

This story puts Alfred's return to the war immediately after his visit to the Danish camp; but there is yet another tale

which is written in the books of the Church, telling how, when he felt himself most forsaken, Cuthbert, one of the saints of England, appeared to him and gave him cheer. The people felt that without the help of God England could never have been saved in this dark hour, and they loved to tell this tale, which some say they heard from the lips of Alfred himself, "how one night the king could not sleep, but lay pondering on all that had come to pass. And presently he saw a great light which shone upon his bed brighter than the beams of the sun. In the midst of this light he saw the form of an old man, who blessed the king. Then Alfred said unto him, 'Who art thou?'

"And he answered: 'Alfred, my son, rejoice; for I am called Cuthbert, the soldier of God, and I am come to tell thee what thou must do to win back the kingdom from which thou hast been banished. Now therefore be strong and courageous and of joyful heart, and I will thee what thou must do. Rise up early in the morning, and blow thine horn thrice, that thine enemies may hear it and fear. Then about the ninth hour of the day five hundred of your loyal followers shall come to your help. And by this sign thou shalt know that after seven days an army of all your folk shall be gathered unto you. Thus shalt thou fight the enemy, and doubt not that thou shalt gain the victory.'"

History tells us that Alfred was not long left deserted on his island. While he was waiting there, making occasional raids till the power of winter was broken, word came that in Devon the Danes had met a terrible defeat and had lost the banner of the Raven, which they believed brought them victory and could never be taken. "So in the seventh week after Easter," reads the chronicle, "rode Alfred to Egbert's Stone, and there met him all the whole folk of Somersetshire and Wiltshire and all the folk of Hampshire, such as had not, through fear of the Heathen, sailed beyond seas. And when they saw the King, they were filled with joy untold, and they hailed him as one alive again from the dead. So came he, the third day after, with a mighty host, to the place called Ethandune; whereat, hard by, he found no less mighty forces of the Heathen, drawn up in one dense mass for battle. With the first bright rays of the rising sun did the King alike and all the flower of his folk beclothe themselves in their war gear. . . . All the long day did the two nations fight; and far off might you hear the shouting and the crash of arms. Stoutly and long they kept at it, and in the end Alfred got the victory.

"Then the remnant of the foe came to Alfred and cried ever aloud, for sorrow of heart, and for bitter hunger, and for cold, and for mighty dread. Mercy do they implore, mercy, mercy and peace—they who had ever been enemies unto peace, of direst mood. Sureties they proffer; trothplight they would swear. The King should name and take from them such sureties as he would, giving them none in return. Never before had they made a peace with any one after this sort."

So the Danes were humbled as they had never been humbled before, and Alfred in the kindness of his heart showed the mercy which they besought of him. Alfred's wisdom and greatness never showed forth more plainly than in the famous treaty which he made with the Danes at this time, the treaty of Wedmore, as it is called, from the name of the place where the English and the Danish kings met.

Besides the sureties which had been given by the Danes, it had been agreed that Guthrum the Danish king should become a Christian and receive baptism without delay. Seven weeks after the victory Guthrum came with thirty of his best nobles, and they presented themselves to Alfred for baptism, and donned with solemn ceremonies the white robes which they must wear for the first seven days of their Christian life. Alfred was to stand as godfather to his former enemy Guthrum, giving to him the English name of Athelstan. According to the custom King Guthrum wore the white robe, and on the eighth day it was taken off or "loosed" by Ethelnot, the noble who had shared Alfred's exile.

The Danish leader remained twelve days with Alfred, and they made a peace which began after this wise "This is the peace that King Alfred and King Guthrum, and the Wise Men of all the English nation, and all the people that are in East Anglia, have all ordained and with oaths confirmed, for themselves and their descendants, as well for born as for unborn." Bounds, it went on, were to be established between Alfred's territory and that over which Guthrum was still to hold sway with Alfred as his over lord, and all the necessary laws were made by which the Danes and the English could carry on trade and community relations. Best of all, neither nationality was to regard the other as a conquered people, but both were to be equal before the law.

Thus Alfred in his wisdom recognized that the Danes were never to be driven wholly from the island, but that the English must receive them as neighbors and treat with them in fairness and justice. And in token of the relation which should be maintained by all men of each nationality, he took Guthrum, the barbarian king, to be his own godson; and Guthrum kept his part of the peace until he died, as did Alfred. Peace had not come to Alfred for all time. He was forced to fight the Danes again and again during his reign before a final peace was established; but in this treaty comes the beginning of our united England. Soon "all England turned to him," we read, "and of their own free will did many Franks, Gauls, Danes, Britons, Scots, and Angles, bow them to his sway, highborn and lowborn alike; and all of them, in his own worthy wise, did he rule and love and honor, even as his own folk," for although the saying was "amid arms laws are still," yet "amid all the clash of weapons" was Alfred a lawgiver, and never ceased in his tendance on the helm of his kingdom.

When you read of Alfred's greatness in other lines,—as a poet, as the founder of a navy, and as a king,—remember this story of his dealings with the Danes, and think of him as England's defender, the first man to be king of a united England, and the wise ruler who was great enough to make the barbarian invaders his neighbors and allies instead of his foes.

CHAPTER XV

ROLLO THE VIKING

Rollo, or Rolf the Walker his companions called him, for he was so large and tall that he could not ride on the little Norwegian ponies which scrambled up and down the steep mountain paths, but always walked wherever he wished to go. He was a splendid Norse hero, such as the poets loved to describe in their sagas, tall, broad-shouldered, with yellow hair, and "fiercely blue" eyes, which could command the roughest sea robber and bring him to his will. And he was a typical Northman, too, in his restlessness and love of adventure. His father was Jarl Roegnwald, a chieftain highly honored by the king of Norway, but the narrow limits of the group of islands over which his father ruled were too close for him, even as his father's horses were too small. The wild blood ran too swiftly in his young veins for him to be content at home; and after the fashion of young Norse nobles he built him a ship, and gathering a company of men, betook himself to the wide sea where he might wander wherever he pleased. There was no harm in that, for the calling of sea rover, which meant as well sea robber, was an honorable one among the Northmen; but the king of Norway, Harald Haarfager, had made a law that while the sea roving nobles of his realm might plunder every other land, and might rob any other peoples, they should never exercise their right of *Strandhug* or appropriation on their fellow countrymen. So when Rollo, voyaging home from a long cruise in the Baltic Sea, where he had been very short of food, landed on the island of Vigen and plundered a Norwegian village, Harald, who happened to be staying near by, was very angry, and caused a court of justice to be assembled to banish Rollo from Norway.

Hilldur, the mother of Rollo, went as soon as she heard this to the king to intercede for her son, but Harald was inflexible. Though Rollo was indeed the son of his most trusted chieftain and dearest friend, and though there were none that the king held in greater esteem than Jarl Roegnwald and the lady Hilldur, nevertheless his son must be punished for his lawlessness. Finding her prayers ineffectual, Hilldur departed from the king, chanting mournfully as she went the song written about another Norse hero:

> You then expel my dearest son (named after my father!)
> The lion whom you exile,
> Is the bold progeny of a noble race.
> Why, O King, are you thus violent?

But the king could not be moved from his purpose, and Rollo sailed away from Norway, an outlaw, in the boat which was become his only home.

We hear of Rollo presently in the Hebrides, off the coast of Scotland, where a company of Northmen had settled who became his willing allies, and again we read in the chronicles of England how in the early years of Alfred's reign "Rollo and his gang" landed in Britain, "and started to harry the land." Then in one of the intervals of rest from Danish attack comes the welcome entry, "In this year Rollo and his mates made their way over into Normandy." Alfred had made peace with them, and Rollo, ever restless and longing for adventure, had led his men over into France.

History tells us that Rollo left England because Alfred had defeated him in battle, but legend has another tale of his going, which I have copied from an old, old book, where it is headed "The Vision of Rollo."

"At night, as Rollo slept, there seemed that a swarm of bees flew quickly over him and his host, and hummed off southward, and flew over the mid sea, and so came to land. And there drew they together, and settled on the leaves of diverse trees, and in short time, filled they all that land, and began to bring together unto one place flowrets of many a hue. Here woke Rollo, and thought on that dream, and the interpretation thereof. And when he had diligently considered the thing, he guessed that

he might find rest from his toil in those parts where the bees had settled. So crossed he the sea, and put to shore in Normandy."

"Rest from his toil" would have seemed to the terrified Franks the last thing which Rollo or any of his Viking band wanted. The Charles who ruled that portion of the empire of Charlemagne—whose great union of the countries of Europe had fallen to pieces in the hands of his weaker sons—was called by his subjects Charles the Simple or Charles the Fool, by which we may guess that he was not wise or strong enough to manage his own people, much less to drive out a great company of Northmen such as came in the mighty fleet of Rollo and his allies. He was far away inland when the Northmen, or Norsemen, as the name came to be pronounced, came up the Seine and made their camp at a town five leagues from Rouen, and the terrified people did not know to whom to turn. But a bold archbishop, by the name of Francon, taking his life in his hands, went over into the Norsemen's camp, and came before the terrible Rollo, of whose wild exploits he had heard for twenty-five years, and proposed that he and the barbarian leader make a treaty concerning the safety of the city of Rouen.

It took a brave man to enter the barbarian camp with such a proposition, the more as Francon knew that the emperor Charles was far away and the walls of Rouen were so broken down by the previous Norse invasions that the city was hardly defensible. But Rollo was a leader who admired a brave man, whether friend or foe, though the archbishop could not know that. Moreover we begin to see here for the first time in Rollo's life that perhaps he was more than a splendid barbarian. Perhaps after all the Norse sea king, now for twenty or thirty years a rover, did desire "rest from his toil" and a home where he might dwell with his people. At all events he made a treaty with the archbishop of Rouen that if his people might have possession of the city and might occupy it without opposition from the inhabitants, they would neither plunder nor kill nor harm in any fashion the city or its people.

The citizens of Rouen did not know what to make of this message which the archbishop brought back. They did not have much faith in the promise, but they were helpless, so it mattered little what they did. It was with many misgivings that they threw open their gates and gave over their keys, but the barbarians kept their word, and no man of Rouen suffered from their entry into the city.

Outside the gates of Rouen the Norsemen built a huge camp, and hither came Charles with all the Franks he could muster to fight them. To tell the tale of the battles between the Franks and the Norsemen were a weary matter. Other Vikings came and joined Rollo, and other leaders became his allies. One of these was Siegfried, who came so near to taking Paris in the famous thirteen months' siege of the year 885, but was at last driven back by the noble count Odo in command of the Franks. Meanwhile Rollo, who could never be content to have taken one city, led his men here and there in the western part of France, taking one city after another, and behold! the conquered people found that this terrible Rollo of whom they had heard such tales was not the barbarian of their fancy, but a strong ruler, who in spite of his rude ways treated them fairly and was better able to preserve order in the land than their absent emperor, whose overlordship had not kept the Frankish nobles from constant strife among themselves.

Year by year the Norsemen gained more power, until, some eight or ten years later, Rollo made plans for an extensive conquest of the kingdom. All the Norsemen in France were to unite and move in three great armies up the three rivers of France, the Seine, the Loire, and the Garonne, ravaging and taking possession as they went.

Charles the Simple was filled with panic at this plan of invasion. He had met Rollo before, and he remembered well the answer which Rollo had given one of his messengers who asked the Norse chieftain, "For what end have you come to France?"

"To drive out the people who are here, or make them our subjects, and to gain for ourselves a new country," Rollo had answered.

"Will you submit to King Charles?" the ambassador had asked.

"No. We yield to none," had been the proud reply. "All that we take by our strength and our arms we will keep as our right."

Charles had not forgotten that defiant message which had come to him soon after Rollo's first coming to France. Now he wrote to Archbishop Francon, who had dealt with Rollo at Rouen, entreating him to solicit from Rollo, in whose province at Rouen he still dwelt, a truce of three months.

"My kingdom is laid waste," wrote the alarmed monarch, "my subjects are destroyed or driven into exile; the fields are no longer plowed or sown. Tell the Northman that I am well disposed to make a lasting peace with him, and that if he will become a Christian, I will give him broad lands and rich presents."

Rollo consented readily to this proposal, and the truce was strictly observed by both sides; but at the end of the three months the Franks resumed hostilities without notifying the Northman that they considered the truce to be at an end. This Rollo regarded as an act of bad faith, to which he promptly responded by renewing his invasions with even greater violence. The fair valleys of France were for many months the scene of bloodshed and slaughter, and the people of the land despaired of ever seeing prosperity again, even as the people of England had lost heart before the coming of Alfred. A great council or parliament of barons and nobles and bishops came together to entreat Charles the Simple to take pity upon the land.

"Look upon the sufferings of your people," they said to him. "Their life is become altogether wretched. The land is desolated and brings forth no more crops, for of what use is it to sow seed when bands of Norsemen will shortly trample down the growing harvest, or if perchance the wheat should come to its growth, they will reap it before the very eyes of the starving people. The vineyards have been laid waste, the vines broken down, the peasantry wander hither and thither through the land in search of food, and because of the unsettled state of the country the highways are infested with robbers and murderers, and neither pilgrim nor merchant dares to travel on the highways."

They did not tell him so in words, but Charles could not help seeing that the people blamed him for the state of affairs, and said among themselves, "All this comes because we have a weak king, who will neither meet the enemy in battle nor make nor keep a wise peace with him, but leaves us at his mercy." What they needed was a king like Alfred who had delivered England from just such a state of misery.

Either King Charles was wiser than he had seemed, or else he had farseeing counselors whose suggestions he followed, for he roused himself and did the wisest thing which could have been done. He sent Archbishop Francon to Rollo, offering him the province of Neustria and the hand of his daughter, the beautiful young Gisela, in marriage, provided he would become a Christian and live in peace with the Franks. The nobles had by this time come to see that in Rollo they had a chieftain of very different temper from the wild sea robbers who came into the land for naught but treasure and slaughter. Perhaps Rainier, the count of Hainaut, had the ear of the king, and told him how he had been taken prisoner by the Norseman, and how his wife Alberade, the countess Brabant, had gone to Rollo, requesting her husband's release and offering to set free twelve captains of the Vikings, who had been taken by her men in the battle, in exchange for Count Rainier, and to give up as well all the gold which she possessed. She would have counted herself fortunate to save her husband, even though it left them impoverished and destitute, but Rollo had restored to the countess not only her husband but half the gold which she offered. At all events the

king made known to Rollo his willingness to give him a province of his realm, and Rollo accepted the offer, objecting only to the lands offered to him, which he considered too much devastated by war.

At the little village of Saint-Clair King Charles and Rollo met, even as Alfred and Guthrum had met in England. The Franks pitched their tents on one side of the river, and the Norsemen on the other. After much bargaining it was settled that Rollo should have a great province, of which Rouen was the center, in the north of France, and he came across the river where the counts and bishops and nobles and lords were assembled to witness the ceremony of receiving the Norseman into the kingdom.

Rollo had to take an oath of allegiance to Charles as his overlord, making himself one of the emperor's crown vassals, and this he consented to do, putting his hands between the king's hands in token of homage for the province and saying, "From this time forward I am your vassal, and I give my oath that I will faithfully protect your life, your limbs, and your royal honor."

Then the king and all the nobles and abbots and dukes, and the great crown vassals, repeated a like oath, confirming the cession of land made to Rollo. They swore that they would protect Rollo in his life, his limbs, and his folk, and his honor; and would guarantee to him the possession of the land, to him and his descendants forever. After this Rollo was declared the duke his province, and the wandering outlaw of Norway was a rightful landholder once more.

There is an old story, which may or may not be true, that when the terms had all been agreed upon, the Frankish nobles told Rollo that for so great a gift as this he was bound to kiss the king's foot.

"Never," quoth Rollo, "will I bend the knee to any, and I will kiss the feet of none."

When the Franks pressed the point, he ordered one of his followers to come forward and take his place. The man stepped forward. No Norseman would dispute a command from Rollo. But he did not relish the duty, and he did not intend to bend the knee any more than his master. Instead, therefore, of stooping before the king, he took the king's foot in his hand and raised it to his mouth, lifting it so high that the poor old monarch fell over backward, amid shouts of laughter from the throng. The barbarian was not all gone from the Northman yet.

At Rouen Rollo received baptism from the hands of his Frankish associate and neighbor, Archbishop Francon, and wore, as King Guthrum had done in England, the white robe of the Church for seven days. It must have been a strange sight to see the old Norse sea king stalking about in the long white garment. Rich presents were given on both sides, and many of his followers were baptized at the same time. Those who refused to come into the new settlement received presents of arms, money, and horses, and went whither they would, beyond the seas, to return to their native land or to pursue their life of adventure. Then Rollo was married by Christian ceremonies to the lady Gisela, and went to his province, which soon came to be known as the duchy of Normandy, while the men who dwelt there and their descendants were known as Normans, which was easier to say than Northman or Norseman.

Normandy was in a sad state when Rollo became duke; but he ruled wisely and well, so ordering the affairs of his duchy that he was honored of all men. The laws which he gave out were fair, and he was careful to have them justly administered. The farmers and tillers of the land he protected with great diligence, and the land became rich and prosperous. Robbers and murderers were dealt with so severely that they ceased to frequent that duchy. The pretty story is told of the safety of the kingdom which is told of the realms of Alfred and other wise kings also, and which shows how happy and serene the people were under their ruler.

When Duke Rollo was hunting one day, he and his company came to a fair glade, where they sat down to rest and refresh themselves. As they feasted together Rollo said that he would prove the honesty of his people and the security of his duchy. So he took off two gold bracelets and hung them on a tree close by; and though the tree was. beside the highway, yet when the duke went many weeks later to seek them, they hung there still.

It is a beautiful page of history,—this tale of the Northman become Norman,—and it does not end with Rollo and his men. They could not wholly throw off the effects of their wild lives of conquest and strife. But their descendants, keeping the strength and vigor of their Viking ancestors, took on the culture of the Franks, forming a race which became the conquerors and leaders of Europe, the foremost champions of her religion and her civilization and her arts. It was Rollo's descendant, known in history as William the Conqueror, who one hundred and fifty years later conquered England, and introduced there Norman customs and language and literature. Feudalism and chivalry, the two great institutions of the Middle Ages, come to us in Norman guise.

Rollo died an old, old man, and was buried in the church of Rouen; and with him ends the last great barbarian invasion from the North. The North, the "forge of mankind," as an old Roman writer had called it, had sent one Teutonic people after another down on the gentler Southland, and with the mingling of the races the tale of the wandering of the nations in Europe is complete.

CHAPTER XVI

SAINT WINFRED

There were all kinds of people in the early Middle Ages, and the ones of whom we hear the most are the warriors and kings and emperors and scholars. But there was another group of men without whom Roman and barbarian Europe would never have been transformed into Christendom. They were the preachers and teachers and missionaries of the Christian Church, whom the people of the Middle Ages called saints. They did not speak of themselves that way; no real saint ever thought himself such. But they lived to serve the Church and to fight heathendom and wickedness, and when they were gone the people who had known them best, recalling the beauty of their lives and the remarkable amount of good they had done, would say, "He was a saint"; and sometimes, if his place in the world had been very important, the Church would write his name in its catalogue of saints.

Such a one was Winfred of England, who was the great apostle to the Germans; though if you looked for his name in the annals of the Church, you would be more likely to find him described as Saint Boniface than Saint Winfred, for Boniface was his church name. But Winfred was his boyhood name and his Anglo-Saxon name, by which we like to call him, for it reminds us that he was of our own blood.

In Winfred's time parents chose for their boys, while they were yet children, whether they should be soldiers or landholders or churchmen and scholars. When Winfred was seven years old his father and mother decided that because he was so bright and quick, and so thoughtful too, he must be given to the Church. So little Winfred went to live in an Anglo-Saxon monastery,—just such a one as Alcuin left a century later to go over and teach Charlemagne's School of the Palace, for we have

turned back in our history to a time before the days of Charlemagne or Alfred, to the year 680, when this "Apostle to the Germans" was born.

In the monastery Winfred learned many wonderful things. He found that the Anglo-Saxons had not always been Christians, nor had they always dwelt in England. His own forefathers had come over in wooden boats from Friesland, which was in the northern part of Europe, and they had been heathen barbarians. It was not two hundred years since they landed, and it was just ninety years since St. Augustine had sailed over from Europe to bring Christianity to Britain.

Two stories Winfred liked best of all those which the monks told him, and they were the two which were to decide his afterlife. The first was of some British boys with fair hair and blue eyes like his own, who had been stolen away by pirates and taken to Rome, where all were of southern birth and had dark eyes and black hair. They were offered for sale in the slave market, and as they stood there, Pope Gregory, the head of the Christian Church, who happened to be passing by had seen them and was struck by their appearance. "Who are they?" he had asked. "They are called Angles," their master replied. "Angels should they be called rather, for the fairness of their faces, if only their hearts were made pure by the true faith," the Pope had replied; and from the desire that came into his heart at the sight of these fair northern lads resulted Augustine's journey and the conversion of Britain to Christianity.

When this tale was finished Winfred would beg for his other favorite, the story of his Saxon forefathers: how they had been called by the Britons to come over and help to defeat the Picts and Scots; how they had left their wild country of Friesland, where they worshiped strange gods who dwelt in trees and rocks, and whom they thought to appease by offering sacrifices and wearing charms and repeating weird songs and spells; and how they had come over as warriors and remained to dwell in the land of Britain, and had been delivered from the religion of fear and cruelty.

WINFRED AT THOR'S OAK

"You should thank God daily, Winfred, that you are delivered from such heathendom," the old father would end his tale.

"Are the people who stayed in Friesland heathens now?" Winfred asked once.

"Alas, yes, my son. Though our good brother Benedict labors among them, they are still, he writes me, held in the bondage of fear."

Winfred made no reply, but at that hour he made up his mind that when he was a man he would go to preach Christianity to these barbarians of his own race and blood.

Places of high honor in the churches and schools were open to Winfred when he came to manhood, but he set his face steadfastly toward Friesland and the work of his boyhood purpose. But it was not to be as he had planned. As the eager young monk was entering the wild region of the Frisians, he was met by missionaries of his own faith, who were being forced by the heathen to depart with all their goods. The Frisians were at war, and no foreigner was allowed to remain within their borders.

It was not Winfred's way to turn back or remain idle. Seeing that his chosen work must be delayed for a time, he turned southward into Germany, and there he found German Saxons who were even as the Frisian forefathers of his boyhood tales. Every tree and stone, every hill and valley, were to them the dwelling places of angry spirits to whom sacrifice must be offered lest they sally forth and punish them. Goats and sheep and even human beings must be offered to appease these gods, and many signs and charms must be constantly practiced. It was a cruel religion, and the people listened with longing to Winfred's words about a kind and loving God who ruled the world. Sometimes they were almost persuaded to believe, but when night fell and the wind whistled in the forests and the rain and thunder came, they would slip away to the heathen altars and pray to the gods for forgiveness. "Your God is very beautiful and kindly," they would say to Winfred, "but he is not so strong as Woden or Thor."

Then Winfred saw that preaching was not enough. He let it be known that on a certain day he intended to cut down the Great Oak, the sacred tree of Thor, where the people had worshiped and sacrificed for generations, and which they feared almost as if it were the god Thor himself. An angry crowd was gathered about the sacred grove when Winfred appeared with his ax, but he walked calmly through their midst. The people expected to see him fall dead the moment he stepped within the holy circle, which no heathen priest dared enter. But they looked again, and there he stood, calmly hacking away at the holy oak. Then a thunderstorm arose, and the Saxons trembled with fear, thinking that their gods were speaking out their wrath in the crashes and reverberations of the thunder. But marvel of marvels! the lightning struck *not* Winfred, the impious blasphemer, but the oak itself. With one flash it completed Winfred's work, splitting the great tree into three fragments and bearing it to earth. Then the people shouted with one accord that Winfred's God was stronger than their gods, and that they would serve him henceforth.

Winfred made an oath which every one must take before he could become a Christian, which would show truly that he had put away the old religion of fear and superstition. This is the way it read: "I forsake the devil and all his family and all his works and words, Thor and Woden and Saxnote, and all those who are his companions." No little imp of darkness could slip in to trouble the believer after that.

Thirty years Winfred labored in Germany, and when he was an old man he could look out on a broad land dotted with Christian churches and schools and monasteries which he and his helpers had founded. But his heart was not satisfied. Far to the north lay the heathen land of Friesland where the gospel was not yet known. "At last," he said, "the time has come when I may leave this work and go to Friesland." With a few faithful followers he went away, when he was seventy years old, into this wild, barbarian land, and there he labored for five years, and many thousands believed and praised God that he had come.

When the number of believers was so great that churches must be formed, he summoned them to come together on a June day in 755 and be received into the Christian Church. But as he and his followers were preparing for the service a great number of armed heathen appeared, and of all Winfred's company of fifty-two, not one escaped death at the hands of these savage barbarians. So Winfred died in Friesland, giving his life when he was an old man to carry out the dream of his boyhood.

CHAPTER XVII

RICHARD THE CRUSADER

The story of the struggle between races and peoples in the early Middle Ages is almost finished. Only one chapter remains, and if we look back over the stories, we get here and there a hint of what this last contest is to be. There have been two kinds of conflict in these centuries,—the strife between North and South, and the strife between East and West. The North and South have come together and fought their battles, and then settled down to live side by side in the provinces of Europe, until at last there is no North nor South, but a united Christendom. But the East and West have met and fought and separated. The Huns came over from Asia and tried to conquer Europe but failed; the Moslem peoples came in by way of Spain but were driven back. Whenever armies from the East entered Europe all the western peoples united against them; for they came to see that the differences between themselves were slight, while between them and the men from the East there lay a great gulf of manner and speech and thought and religion,—a gulf so wide that there could be no union.

Thus far in our story the East has come over each time and invaded the West. Now in the eleventh and twelfth centuries Christendom sends her armies into the East in an attempt to win back from the Moslems Palestine, the Holy Land of the Christian faith; and it is with one picture from this long period of the Crusades that our story will close.

Richard of England took part in the third of these Crusades. There was never a king who loved warfare and adventure more than this tall Englishman, "with hair halfway between red and yellow," "with arms somewhat long, and, for this very reason, better fitted than those of most folk to draw or wield the sword," and "with long legs, matching the character of

his whole frame." It is no mere chance that in the ten years during which he was king of the English people he spent barely six months on the island which he ruled. The blood of Viking wanderers and Saxon warriors flowed swift in his veins and drove him forth from the narrow limits of his realm.

Just before Richard was made king the news came to Christendom that Jerusalem, which had been ruled by Christian kings since the days of the First Crusade, had fallen into the hands of a new and powerful Moslem prince named Saladin. On the day of his coronation Richard made preparations to set out as soon as possible with his brother in arms, Philip, the king of France, to rescue the Holy City.

Philip and his army went round to Asia by the land route, across Europe and down through the provinces which form modern Turkey, while Richard and his fleet embarked from Spain and Italy and sailed the whole length of the Mediterranean. Here is the picture an Arabic writer drew of the coming of Richard and his huge fleet to one of the ports of Sicily. "As soon as the people heard of his arrival, they rushed in crowds to the shore to behold the glorious king of England, and at a distance saw the sea covered with innumerable galleys: and the sounds of trumpets from afar, with the sharper and shriller blasts of clarions, resounded in their ears: and they beheld the galleys rowing in order nearer to the land, adorned and furnished with all manner of arms, countless pennons floating in the wind, ensigns at the end of the lances, the beaks of the galleys distinguished by various paintings, and glittering shields suspended to the prows. The sea appeared to boil with the multitude of the rowers; the clangor of the trumpets was deafening."

Philip had already reached Palestine and was besieging Acre, the strongest Moslem fortress. As Richard and his fleet were preparing to leave Sicily, "lo! there now went abroad a report that Acre was on the point of being taken: upon hearing which the king with a deep sigh prayed God that the city might not fall before his arrival. Then with great haste he went on board one of the best and largest of his galleys and being impatient of delay, as he always was, he kept right on ahead. And so, as they were furrowing the sea with all haste, they caught their earliest glimpse of that Holy Land of Jerusalem."

Acre had not fallen when Richard arrived. But within a month the Turks were forced to surrender the stronghold. Then the hopes of the Crusaders ran high, and they dreamed that with Richard as their leader they could soon conquer the whole land. But King Philip had grown weary in this month of hearing the praises of the English king sung by every soldier of the army, and in spite of the protests of Richard he declared that he was weary of the war and sailed away home with a large part of his army.

The story of this war between Christian and Moslem is too long to tell here. For a year and a half the Crusaders fought in Palestine, but though they won many victories they were too few to conquer the land. In every battle King Richard's bravery won him new honor, till his feats were the talk of both armies. Not only did his own men call him Richard the Lion-Hearted, but his name was so feared among the Turks that it became a byword with them. A hundred years later an Arab rider would exclaim to his horse when it started in the way and pricked up its ears, "What! dost think King Richard is in front of thee?" and Arab mothers would frighten their children into silence by whispering, "Hush, King Richard is coming."

Richard was twice very ill with fever during these months, and at last, having made terms with Saladin, by which the Christians were to have many rights in the Holy City, he decided to sail away to England, where he was much needed. But as he was on the point of embarking, envoys came to say that Jaffa had been taken by Saladin. They stood before the king in rent garments, beseeching him to come to the aid of the city, and he broke short their words in the middle of their pleading, saying, "God yet lives and with his guidance I will set out to do what I can."

So the remnant of the army set sail for Jaffa, and "a favorable wind blew up from behind and brought the fleet smoothly and safely to the port of Jaffa in the deep gloom of Friday night. Meanwhile, when the Turks learned that the king's galleys and ships were putting into shore, they rushed down to the beach in bands. They did not wait for the newcomers to reach land, but flung their missiles into the sea against the ships; while their horsemen advanced as far as they could into the water for the purpose of shooting their arrows with greater effect. Meanwhile the king, who had been scanning all things with a curious eye, caught sight of a certain priest, who was throwing himself from the land into the sea in order that he might swim up. This man, when taken on board the galley, with panting breath and beating heart spake as follows: 'O noble king, those who still survive are longing for thy arrival. Assuredly they will perish at once unless, by thy means, divine aid reaches them.' On hearing this the king said, 'Then, even though it please God, on whose service and under whose guidance we have come to this land, that we should die here with our brethren, let him perish who will not go forward.' Then the king's galleys were thrust on toward the shore and the king himself, though his legs were unarmed, plunged up to his middle into the sea, and so, by vigorous efforts, gained the dry land; and all the others followed, leaping into the sea, and they boldly set upon the Turks who were lining the beach, and carried on the pursuit till the whole shore was cleared. The king was the first to enter the town, and immediately he had his banners displayed on the highest part of the walls, so that the besieged Christians in the tower might see them. They, on seeing it, took heart, and snatching up their arms, came down from the tower to meet their deliverer."

So Jaffa was saved, and King Richard pitched his tents once more on the soil of Palestine. But here again a sore sickness came upon him, and since none of the princes of the army would stay and guard the land without him, he sent messengers once more to Saladin to make terms for a truce. When the messengers returned, they brought the draft of a treaty by which Jerusalem was to be open to all pilgrims for the space of three years and three months and three days and three hours. They placed the paper in Richard's hands and told him what was in it (for he was very ill), and he answered, "I have no strength to read it, but here is my hand on the peace."

In October Richard sailed away from Palestine. Before he went he sent word to Saladin, his chivalrous adversary, for whom he had a great admiration, and who had shown him during his illness many kindnesses though they were enemies at war, that when the three years' truce was over he would come again to rescue Jerusalem; and Saladin said in answer that if he must lose his land he would rather lose it to Richard than to any man alive.

RICHARD'S FAREWELL TO THE HOLY LAND

It was late in the afternoon when Richard's fleet set sail from the Holy Land, and as the vessels weighed anchor all the people wept and lamented, crying, "O Jerusalem, who will protect thee if the truce is broken, now that thou art reft of such a champion." And the king, "looking back with pious eyes upon the land behind him, after long meditation, broke out into prayer: 'O Holy Land, to God do I intrust thee. May he, of his mercy, only grant me such space of life that, by his good will, I may bring thee aid. For it is my hope and intention to aid thee in some future time.' And with this prayer he urged his sailors to display full sail so that they might make a speedier course."

Richard never returned to the Holy Land, and though other kings led Crusades during the, next hundred years, Christendom never enlarged her domain to include Palestine. But though they failed to extend the bounds of Christendom, these Crusades served to strengthen the bonds by which, after the barbarian invasions, Europe was gradually united. They are the sign that out of the Roman Empire and the barbarian kingdoms had come forth Christendom.

CHAPTER XVIII

NOTES

THE MEDIAEVAL WORLD.

OUTLINE

By centuries

The Wandering of the peoples	
1st period (Goths and Huns)	5th century
2nd period (Danes and Norsemen)	8th and 9th centuries
The attempts for a united Europe	
Theodoric's kingdom	5th and 6th centuries/TD>
Charlemagne's empire	8th and 9th centuries
The Saracen invasions	8th, 9th, and l0th centuries
The Crusades	11th, 12th, and 13th centuries

By dates

The expedition of Drusus	9 B.C.
The sack of Rome	410 A.D.
The battle of Chalons	451
Theodoric's reign in Italy	493-525
The baptism of Clovis	496
The battle of Guadelete	711
The coronation of Charlemagne	800
Ragnar before Paris	845
Alfred's treaty with the Danes	878
Charles's treaty with Rollo	912
Richard's Crusade	1090-1192

SOURCES

To give even a partial list of the sources of this book would be to recite a succession of names of chronicles and of historians, with most of which the teacher would probably be

unfamiliar. The repetition would serve no practical purpose save to give the volume an air of scholarship and erudition. Edward Freeman, the great English historian, has voiced the experience of all students of the early Middle Ages when he says: "The history of these years has to be made out by piecing together a great number of authorities, none of which are of first rate merit. We have an unusual wealth of accounts, such as they are, written by men who lived at the time; but there is none who claims high place as a narrator, still less is there any who could understand the full significance of his own days. Nor is there any who gave himself specially to remark and to record that particular chain of events with which we are specially concerned. All is fragmentary; one fact has to be found here and another there."

Yet the reader of to-day need not enter this vast and somewhat unexplored field of history without a guide. The reason why we turn to the history of the Middle Ages is not that the children may glean a few facts or learn a few names with an episode attached to each. It is because there is a continuity in this record of events, because these men were, all unconsciously to themselves, laying the foundations of the modern world. That the chroniclers of those early days were graphic in their stories and that the men and the times were picturesque and interesting is our good fortune. That is why children enjoy the stories. They will enjoy them all the more and remember them the longer if they see in the heroes not merely "famous men" but builders of the world of to day. Great historians have within the last century interpreted the Middle Ages in the light of modern thought. They have seen in the succession of events an epic of civilization. Kings and warriors have been to them actors in a great world drama. It is these men who must be our guides. They wrote essays and histories for older people; the author has tried to put their spirit into stories for children. To the thoughtful child the purpose of the tales will be plain; but it would have spoiled the artistic story side of the book to have the joints of the framework too visible. The following quotations and notes are given with the purpose of taking the teacher and older reader a little further into the author's plan, and in the hope that thereby the work may be made more simple and more rewarding.

THE STORY OF DRUSUS

The two mighty streams that protected the provinces of Europe. —GIBBON

In the drama of Europe the Rhine-Danube river line claims a place as one of the chief factors. Men and nations come and go; but pick up the story where we will, there are civilized peoples on one side of the line, barbarians on the other. Call the child's attention to this, and let him watch for the rivers in every story, till at the end he can trace them on the map and give some such outline as this.

I. Boundary between the Roman Empire and the Barbarian.
1. Frontier fortified by the Romans (p. 2).
2. Romans try to cross over and fail (pp. 4—9).
3. Neutral meeting place (pp. 10—17).
4. The barbarian Goth crosses over to escape the more barbarian Hun (pp. 22, 23).
5. Alaric crosses back to be made king (p. 27).
6. Romans cross to beg the barbarian Attila not to enter the Empire (pp. 43—46).
7. Attila retires beyond the river in defeat (p. 52).

II. Boundary between Christendom and the Barbarian.
1. Clovis establishes it (pp. 85—91).
2. Charlemagne restores it (p. 107).
3. The Church sends Winfred across it to convert the barbarian tribes (pp. 151—158).

A ROMAN AND A BARBARIAN

There is one sentiment, one in particular, which it is necessary to understand before we can form a true picture of a barbarian: it is the pleasure of personal independence,—the

pleasure of enjoying, in full force and liberty, all his powers in the various ups and downs of fortune; the fondness for activity without labor; for a life of enterprise and adventure. Such was the prevailing character and disposition of the barbarians; such were the moral wants which put these immense masses of men into motion. . . . It was the rude barbarians of Germany who introduced this sentiment of personal independence, this love of individual liberty, into European civilization.—GUIZOT

In discussing Athanaric and the other Gothic heroes we should keep it constantly in mind that our interest in the barbarian is in him as an actor in the drama of civilization, as a builder of the modern world. We do not ignore his cruelties or vices; neither do we dwell on them. The Teuton fulfilled the definition of a barbarian by being "a man in a rude, savage, and uncivilized state." He was a true barbarian, but he was something more; else Kingsley's word would not have been spoken that "the hope and not the despair of the world lay in the Teuton." It was true, as Myers has said, that the Teutons "had neither arts, nor sciences, nor philosophies, nor literatures. But they had something better than all these things: they had personal worth. It was because of this, because of their free, independent spirit, of their unbounded capacity for growth, for culture, for accomplishment, that the future time became theirs."

THE COMING OF THE WITCH PEOPLE

Against the empire of the Ostrogoths the endless Asiatic horde moved on.—HODGKIN

Here the distinction may be made between the two kinds of barbarian: the Teuton, "who had in him the power of rising to the highest level"; and the Hun, who is classed with "dull barbarians, mighty in destruction, powerless in construction, essentially and incurably barbarous." Bring out for the children the contrast between the two: "the fair-haired, fair-skinned, long bearded, and majestic Goth on the one side; the little, swarthy, smooth-faced Tartar Hun on the other; here the shepherd merging into the agriculturist, there the mere hunter; here the barbarian standing on the threshold of civilization, there the irreclaimable savage."

The Huns are supposed to have originated in central China, and to have come into Europe by way of the Sea of Aral and the region north of the Caspian Sea. Let the child trace the long path of the migration on the map in his geography.

It has been well said that "the exclamation of the Goth Athanaric, when led into the market place of Constantinople, may stand for the feelings of his nation: 'The emperor is without doubt a god upon earth, and he who lifts a hand against him is guilty of his own blood.'"

ALARIC THE GOTH

So, under the health-bringing waters of the rapid Busento, sleeps Alareiks the Visigoth, equalled, may it not be said, by only three men in succeeding times as a changer of the course of history. And these three are Mohammed, Columbus, Napoleon.—HODGKIN

There is a story that as Alaric was making his march down from the Alps into Italy a monk came to him in his royal tent and warned him to refrain from slaughter and bloodshed such as would attend an invasion of the land. "I am impelled to this course in spite of myself," replied Alaric; "for something within urges me every day irresistibly onwards, saying, 'Proceed to Rome and make that city desolate.'" Such is the feeling of destiny with which ancient historians record the calamity.

The importance of the sack of Rome is immeasurably greater than its three days' occupation would suggest. As Freeman has said, Rome had so thoroughly spread herself over the whole of her world that "her actual capture and sack was a solemn and terror striking incident; it was a sign that an old day was passing away and that a new day was coming; it was a thing to be remembered in later days as no other event of those times

was likely to be remembered; but at the moment it made little practical difference to any but those who immediately suffered by it. What really changed the face of Western Europe was not that Rome was taken but that Rome was threatened. It was the presence of Alaric in Italy, a presence of which the taking of Rome was as it were the formal witness, which opened the way for the separation of the Western lands from the Empire and for the beginning of the powers of the modern world."

The ransom demanded by the barbarians is particularly interesting,—gold and silver, the Nibelung treasure, as Kingsley has said; silken tunics, and hides dyed in scarlet; and three thousand pounds of pepper, which was an expensive luxury brought from India, and which suggests that the appetites of these northerners had become capricious in the southern lands.

ATTILA THE SCOURGE OF GOD

The amount of abject, slavish fear which the little swarthy Kalmuck succeeded in instilling into millions of human hearts is not to be easily matched in the history of our race. . . . The impression left upon us by what history records of him is that of a gigantic bully.—HODGKIN

It is easy to make so many events turning points in the world's history that the words lose their meaning; but no one can over estimate the importance of these battles when the Huns were defeated and driven out of central Europe. The invasions of the Goths retarded civilization, but when the "tumult and the shouting die" we find the Goth perpetuating the Roman law and the Christian faith, "endeavoring everywhere to identify himself with the system he overthrew. For it is hardly too much to say," continues Bryce, "that the thought of antagonism to the Empire and the wish to extinguish it never crossed the mind of the barbarians [Teutons]." The Huns came with no purpose or ambition but to destroy.

Attila has often been compared to Napoleon, our latest world conqueror, and the passage in which Hodgkin, having spoken of their many unlikenesses, sums up their likenesses is so suggestive as to be worth quoting. "Like Attila, Napoleon destroyed far more than he could rebuild: his empire, like Attila's, lasted less than two decades of years; but, unlike Attila, ... he outlived his own prosperity. . . . The insatiable pride, the arrogance which beat down the holders of ancient thrones and trampled them like dust beneath their feet, the wide-stretching schemes of empire, the haste which forbade their conquests to endure, ... and, above all, the terror which the mere sound of their names brought to fair cities and widely scattered races of men,—in all these points no one so well as Napoleon explains to us the character and career of Attila."

THEODORIC

No man's history better shows the strange relations between the Teutons and the dying Empire.—KINGSLEY

It has been suggested that in this old Gothic custom that each young warrior must perform some exploit before he is recognized by the tribe, may be found the origin of the similar requirement of chivalry for knighthood.

GOTH AGAINST GOTH

The failing Emperors bought off the Teutons where they could; submitted to them where they could not; and readily enough turned on them when they had a chance.—KINGSLEY

One picture of the difficulties of the barbarian life, and one chronicle of the migration of a nation it has seemed worth while to give, lest in our stories the impression be made on the child of an easy and inevitable flow of events, and of swift successes and changes. We talk glibly of "The Wandering of the Peoples"; but for a nation to move a thousand miles is for them,

and for the lands through which the journey is made, a convulsion like an earthquake prolonged for days and weeks and months.

In connection with the conditions which must accompany such a migration, Freeman has given us a wise caution. "The rough dealings," he says, "of a barbarian invader with men and things in the invaded land have nothing in common with the prolonged and carefully studied cruelties of a Visconti. . . . Ravage, plunder, even slaughter, done among the whirl of feelings which must accompany the armed entry into a strange land, are really not inconsistent with much true kindliness of heart lurking below."

CLOVIS, KING OF THE FRANKS

The mere warrior and conqueror halts at the bidding of one who, warrior and conqueror no less than himself, is also the ruler, the lawgiver, the judge between contending men and nations.—FREEMAN

Historians are one in their estimate of the importance of Theodoric's position and work, and in our story he is a striking illustration of the transition from barbarian to noble which took place with all the barbarian nations except the Huns and the Saracens.

"The first real attempt," writes one historian, "to blend the peoples and maintain the traditions of Roman wisdom in the hands of a new and vigorous race was reserved for a more famous chieftain, the greatest of all the barbarian conquerors, the forerunner of the first barbarian Emperor, Theodoric the Ostrogoth." "No prince in history," writes another, "ever held a position of greater dignity, or used it with greater moderation." That his union of nations died with him is a sad testimony to his greatness. "Because he had done for a generation what no other man could do, his work was to pass away with his generation."

The greatness of Theodoric should not, however, overshadow the importance of Clovis, the founder of the Frankish kingdom. It was through the change, which in his life is so picturesque, from barbarian to Christian that Europe was to be transformed and to appear before many centuries "in the higher garb of Christendom."

RODERICK AND THE SARACENS

Of strange tradition many a mystic trace,
Legend and vision, prophecy and sign;
Where wonders wild of Arabesque combine
With Gothic imagery of darker shade.
SIR WALTER SCOTT

So Scott characterizes this legendary history of Spain at the opening of his poem based on this story, which has been also used by Southey as the subject of a poem. The frequent use of this incident as the theme of poets "does not," says Coppee, "seem to me due solely to its interest as a story: it has a meaning, and an important one; and thus we accept these legends as containing valuable contributions to the true history."

CHARLEMAGNE

That imperial figure which, like some magnificent colossus, flings its shadow athwart the boundary that divides the ancient from the modern era.—MULLINGER

In whatever point of view, indeed, we regard the reign of Charlemagne, we always find its leading characteristic to be a desire to overcome barbarism, and to advance civilization.—GUIZOT

Up to this point the characters dealt with in this volume have been men whose modern interest was from a single point of view,—the conflict between barbarian and noble and the transition from barbarian to noble. Charlemagne is the first of a

large number of many sided heroes, whose greatness lay in the share they had in all the movements of their time. The treatment of Charlemagne calls attention to the method of the series, already stated, of grouping characters and events about different phases of the progress of civilization rather than giving full biographies. Charlemagne is an admirable example of the advantages of this method. To give a continuous biography of the "central figure of the Middle Ages" is no easy or satisfactory matter. We may select certain parts of his life, but we must be constantly digressing to explain why this or that item or anecdote is important. If we try to tell most of the stories about him, we must present a curious jumble of his boyhood, his fondness for hunting, his success as a warrior in whose wake flowed rivers of blood, his coronation following immediately upon these victories, his patronage of arts and learning, and in the next breath his Bluebeard list of wives. Moreover, there is the Charlemagne of chivalry and romance clamoring for a place in the story.

It is our belief that the child will get a more just and more attractive impression of Charlemagne by coming upon him several times in the course of the story of the Middle Ages. Certainly he could not be better introduced than as the noble overcoming the barbarian. The child is now ready to appreciate his place in history, "repeating the attempt of Theodoric to breathe a Teutonic spirit into Roman forms," and bringing about "the union, so long in preparation, so mighty in its consequences, of the Roman and the Teuton, of the memories and the civilization of the South with the fresh energy of the North." "And from that moment," says Bryce, "modern history begins." Recall to the child at this point that it is nearly four hundred years since the first Teuton conquered Rome, but that Charlemagne is the first to receive the title of Emperor.

Yet Charlemagne's political empire fell to pieces at his death, and in the reason for its breaking up we come upon another aspect of Charlemagne's position. A new spirit, which was to triumph in Europe, was beginning to make itself felt,—the spirit of nationality; and in another book of the series, "Patriots and Tyrants," we see Charlemagne as the representative of the theory of empire standing over against Wittekind, the hero of national liberty. Again, the emperor's huge jeweled crown is one of the triumphs of the Renaissance art of which the story is told in "Craftsman and Artist." And so we find him in this series, as in the chronicles of history, appearing at every turn. The Charlemagne of chivalry and romance belongs to literature rather than history, and will be found in the author's companion series, The Open Road Library.

Read in connection with the "man of iron" picture Longfellow's version of the same incident in The Poet's Tale: Charlemagne of "Tales of a Wayside Inn."

THE SCHOOL OF THE PALACE

The history of the schools of Charles the Great has modified the whole subsequent history of European culture.—MULLINGER

Four great influences played the leading parts in the transformation of the barbarian peoples,—chivalry, feudalism, the school, the Church. A story has been found for the beginnings of each.

In The Student's Tale: Emma and Eginhard, Longfellow gives a charming picture of the time:

"When Alcuin taught the sons of Charlemagne,
In the free schools of Aix, how kings should reign,
And with them taught the children of the poor
How subjects should be patient and endure,

In Booth, it was a pleasant sight to see
That Saxon monk, with hood and rosary,
With inkhorn at his belt, and pen and book,
And mingled love and reverence in his look,
Or hear the cloister and the court repeat

The measured footfalls of his sandaled feet,
Or watch him with the pupils of his school,
Gentle of speech, but absolute of rule."

VIKINGS FROM THE NORTH

"Now give us men from the sunless plain,"
Cried the South to the North,
"By need of work in the snow and rain
Made strong, and brave by familiar pain!"
Cried the South to the North.

The relations between men from the north and dwellers in the south is a fascinating starting point for a study of history. It is hard at first to see any advantage which was to come from that second outbreak of the Wandering of the Peoples, when "the torrent of barbarism which Charles the Great had stemmed was rushing down upon his empire." But out of the blending of these peoples were to come the strong nations of the modern world.

Of this incident of the Northmen before Paris, Keary has said with truth that "a volume could not better express than this one fact "the conditions of the time,—the ignorance of the invaders of the world into which they were forcing their way, and the mystery with which they were enshrouded by the superstitions of Europe about the north. This tale may be used also as a perfect illustration of the way history and legend grow up together. The simple fact of an attack, and a retreat in the fog is the historic material. In Norse legend the city with its vaporous mist becomes a part of the lower world; in Paris the story becomes a monkish legend of miracle.

ALFRED AND THE DANES

Alfred is the most perfect character in history. . . . A saint without superstition, a scholar without ostentation, a warrior all whose wars were fought in the defense of his country, a conqueror whose laurels were never stained by cruelty, a prince never cast down by adversity, never lifted up to insolence in the hour of triumph—there is no other name in history to compare with his.—FREEMAN

It is always a delight to come upon Alfred in our reading of history, and we shall come upon him many times again. Here he is rendering England an immeasurable service in fighting and then civilizing the barbarian Danes. His distinction as the founder of England's navy gives him a place in "Sea Kings and Explorers"; his patronage of the arts gains him "honorable mention" in "Craftsman and Artist"; and no English speaking readers would be satisfied without seeing him also in his private life as "England's Darling" in "Kings and Common Folk."

ROLLO THE VIKING

A young Viking, Rolf, . . . was destined . . . to create the only permanent northern state within the limits of the ancient Carlovingian Empire.—KEARY

The story of Rollo tells itself. It should only be noticed that in the ceremony which made him a vassal of the king, and in his distribution of land among his men, we have the signs of the feudalism which established property rights and organized men and tribes in a settled society which ended all nomadic life.

SAINT WINFRED

When at the fall of the western empire . . . she found herself surrounded by barbarian kings, by barbarian chieftains wandering from place to place, or shut up in their castles, with whom she had nothing in common, between whom and her there was as yet no tie . . . only one idea became predominant in the Church: it was to take possession of these newcomers—to convert them.—GUIZOT

In our earlier stories the spread of Christianity has seemed a political matter, accomplished by war. Personal missionary work always followed and sometimes preceded the national change from heathendom, "and the work that Winfred did, unlike that of Charlemagne, has never been undone, but, ever fresh and vigorous, bears fruit more and more abundantly."

RICHARD THE CRUSADER

Honor enough his merit brings,
He needs no alien praise
In whose train, Glory, like a king's
Follows through all his days.
ITINERARIUM REGIS RICARDI

The story of the struggle between barbarian and noble on European soil is finished; the outline map of Europe is fairly well defined, though no permanent lines of division can be drawn within her borders. But in the Crusades we have an epilogue. The barbarian no longer invades Europe, but a war like Christendom, stimulated by the Church and organized by the institution of chivalry, seeks out the former invaders—the barbaric races of Arab, Moor, and Turk—in their homes, and wages with them a struggle of three centuries. With Richard the Crusader our drama closes. We do not even wait to see him imprisoned on his way home and rescued by Blondel; that tale belongs in "Cavalier and Courtier."

CONCLUSION

Sum it up before you leave it and see what a drama it is: Roman generals halted at the doors of barbarian Germany; Alaric and his Goths coming down upon Rome; Goths and Romans uniting to drive out the more barbarian hordes of the Huns; Theodoric, the Gothic civilizer, receiving homage from that fierce barbarian, Clovis the Frank; the barbaric Saracen defeating in Spain Roderick, the last king of the Goths, but falling back fifty years later before Charlemagne, the descendant of Clovis; Alfred defending England from the Danes, and Charlemagne's kingdom threatened by Rollo the Viking; last, Rollo's descendant, Richard the Lion-Hearted, crusading beyond the bounds of Europe in behalf of Christendom.

The foundations have been laid upon which every nation of modern Europe was to rise. If it seems that favorite heroes and familiar names have been omitted, the brief limits of sixteen stories and the opportunities of the remaining five volumes of the series must be the excuse. And if it seems that England's story has been under emphasized, the author would point once more to the later books, and repeat the words of Freeman in his lectures on "Western Europe in the Fifth Century": "Every event that I have dwelled on in continental history, every picture that I have striven to give of continental life, during this great period of the Wandering of the Nations, has been meant as an indirect contribution to the history of Britain and of the Teutonic conquerors of Britain."