promises of free tenure and free trade will be worth nothing unless accompanied by the permission to elect all magistrates and councils.

Sometimes the victory rests with the lord, and sometimes with the burgesses. Accordingly, there are two kinds of chartered town. The larger class includes communities enjoying certain privileges under the rule of seignorial functionaries. A smaller class consists of those which are not only privileged but "free," that is, self-governing bodies corporate. The distinction between the two classes is not precise enough to satisfy a modern lawyer. Often a "free" town is obliged to allow the lord some voice in the appointment of magistrates; while the humblest body of traders may enjoy the right of doing justice in a market-court without the interference of a bailiff. The one class shades off into the other, if only for the reason that "freedom" is usually won by a gradual process of bargaining or encroachment on the part of towns which are already privileged. The higher type is simply a later stage in the natural course of municipal development.

If we analyse the privileges of those towns which remain in leading-strings, the first in order of time and of importance is the town-peace, which only the king or his delegate

can grant. Invested with this peace the town becomes, like a royal palace or the shrine of a saint, a sanctuary protected by special pains and penalties; the burgess stands to the king in the same relation as the widow and the orphan; to do him wrong is an outrage against the royal majesty. Next comes the right of trade. The burgesses are allowed to commute their servile dues and obligations for a fixed money-rent, that they may be at liberty for pursuits more lucrative than agriculture. They also receive a licence to hold a weekly market, and possibly a yearly fair as well; it is agreed that all disputes of traders, which arise in fair or market, shall be decided according to the law of merchants, the general usage of the commercial world; and a safe-conduct is granted to all strangers who resort to either gathering for lawful purposes. At first the tolls of the fair and market are collected by the lord, and the law-merchant is administered in the court of his bailiff. Often, however, he ends by leasing both the tolls and the commercial jurisdiction to the townsmen. When they are permitted (as in Flanders and in England) to form a merchant-gild, it is with this body that such bargains are concluded; and the gild usually purchases from the lord a quantity of other privileges—the monopoly of certain

staple industries in the town and neighbourhood; rights of pre-emption over all imported wares; and the power of making by-laws to regulate wages, prices, the hours of labour, and the quality of manufactured goods Where the lord is a sovereign prince, he is often induced to make concessions of a wider scope: freedom from inland tolls and from customs at the seaports; the right of making reprisals upon native and foreign enemies who rob the merchants or infringe the privileges of the town; immunity, in civil suits, from every jurisdiction but that of the town-court.

It would be easy to multiply examples of this type of town, but we can only mention here a few whose history and customs are particularly instructive. One of the oldest is St. Riquier in Ponthieu, a notable instance of an industrial community dating from Carolingian times and fostered by the policy of a great religious house. The second half of the eleventh century is remarkable for the speculative acumen displayed by lay and secular lords in fostering the development of new commercial centres; the Norman *bourg* of Breteuil, founded in 1060 by a seneschal of William the Conqueror, deserves special consideration as a model extensively imitated in England, Wales, and Ireland; the Suabian towns of Allensbach and Radolfszell, chartered

by the great Abbey of Reichenau a few years later, are monuments of German seignorial enterprise. Lorris en Gâtinais, a town on the demesne of the French monarchy, received from Louis VI a set of privileges which became the standard for the numerous *villes de bourgeoisie* founded under the immediate sway of the Capetian dynasty.

But the charters thankfully accepted by new colonies or embryonic market-centres were insufficient to satisfy the aspirations of older and greater cities. At the very time when far-sighted seigneurs are scattering commercial privileges broadcast, there begins among the urban classes of North France, of Flanders, and of some Italian provinces, an agitation for more extensive rights, for "free" municipal constitutions of our second type In these regions the popular cry is "Commune," *novum ac pessimum nomen*; and it is blended with complaints of feudal tyranny, which often develop, since the seigneur of the town is commonly a bishop or an abbot, into complaints against the Church. The commune is a sworn confederacy (*conjuratio*), which bears some resemblance both to the fraternities established for the enforcement of the Truce of God (*supra*, p. 103) and to the merchant-gilds. But it has also new and striking features. It is formed in defiance

of authority, and for the purpose of seizing rights which are legally vested in the seigneur or the Crown. It is hostile to the ruling classes of society; and the object of the members is to establish a republican form of government within their city. They are largely merchants or artisans; but they concern themselves with wider interests than those of trade, and often insist that no man, of whatever avocation, shall remain in the city unless he joins the commune.

We should be glad to know more of the bold spirits who directed the communal movement in this early stage. They startled contemporaries by their radicalism, and their conduct gives the lie to our preconceived idea that a townsman is a man of peace. These medieval burgesses were accustomed to defend their rights by force; there is nothing abnormal in the rule of the merchant-gild of Valenciennes that the gild-brethren should always bring their weapons with them to the market, and should ride in armed companies to distant fairs. The Milanese and the men of Ghent are typical in their greed for empire, in their readiness to strike a blow for their own profit whenever war is in the land. If the seigneurs of such cities gave cause for dissatisfaction, they found that they had brought a hornet's nest about their ears. In

the struggle for liberties the popular party displayed a high courage which rose superior to defeat, though in the hour of triumph it was too often sullied by ferocious acts of vengeance. They threw themselves with intelligence and energy into the feuds of other interests and classes, backing the Church against the State, the State against the baronage, or the weaker against the stronger of two rival lords. The policy of the towns was often double-faced, material and separatist; but it also embodied ideals of justice and of citizenship which were destined to prevail in the struggle for existence, and to produce a wholesome reformation in the structure of society.

The communal programme was not realised in a day; the struggle for free governments, which began in the eleventh century, was continued into the thirteenth and fourteenth; and the forces of the movement were already exhausted in North France and Italy before it reached a head in South France or in Germany. Naturally, in a conflict waged over so wide an area for several hundred years, the watchwords were often modified, and many different patterns of town government were devised. In its later stages the movement was more peaceful, and the purse was often found a better argument than the sword; the communal parties ceased to be

democratic, though they never ceased to be republican; and power was practically if not formally monopolised by a municipal patriciate. The mass-meeting of the burgesses, all-powerful in the days when the commune was an organised rebellion, gradually became insignificant in the older communes, and in many of the late foundations was never recognised at all, its powers being distributed among the craft-gilds meeting in their separate assemblies. Concurrent with this diminution in the importance of the ordinary burgess, there is a tendency to restrict the franchise by demanding higher and higher qualifications from the candidates. The commune, in fact, sinks almost to the level of a trades union or a benefit society, and membership is valued chiefly as a title to exclusive rights of trade and poor-relief. The political aspect of the institution is almost forgotten in countries where the power of the state gains ground upon the centrifugal forces of society; and, in those communes which preserve the dignity of states, an internecine conflict between the rich and poor, the rulers and the ruled, usually becomes the main feature of domestic politics.

In spite of these changes in principles and spirit, the organs of communal government are almost everywhere the same The executive power is vested in a board or committee,

called in Italy the *consules*, in France the *échevins*, *jurati*, or *syndics*, in Germany the *Rath* (council). Commonly this board has a president, known in France and England as the mayor, in Germany as the burgomaster, who represents the body-corporate in all negotiations with the seigneur or the Crown or other communes. One or more councils (*sapientes*, *pares*, etc.) are often found assisting the executive with their advice; and in the older type of commune the mass-meeting plays a conspicuous part, not only electing magistrates and councils, but also voting taxes, auditing the accounts of expenditure, and deciding on all questions of exceptional importance. Where the general assembly is non-existent or moribund, offices are filled either by co-optation or by elections in the assemblies of the craft-gilds, or are even allowed to descend by hereditary right. As the popular control over the executive declines, jealousy of the executive leads to some disastrous changes: to the multiplication of offices, to the shortening of terms of office, to the creation of innumerable checks and balances, to the organisation of this or that powerful interest or party as a state within the state. But the morbid pathology of the communes in their last stage of decline is a subject with which we need not here concern

ourselves. These intricate expedients, which are best exemplified in the constitution of fourteenth-century Florence, weakened the government but could not make it more impartial or more tolerant. By the end of the Middle Ages, the ordinary burgess was prepared to hail the advent of a royal bailiff or a self-constituted despot, as the only cure for the inveterate disorders incident to freedom.

It is refreshing to turn back from the period of disillusionment to that of sanguine expectations, and to study the commune in the period of infancy and growth, when no other refuge from anarchy and oppression was open to the industrial classes, and when emancipated serfs were still intoxicated with the dream of liberty.

Curiously enough, the communal revolution began most quietly in the land where it was ultimately responsible for the fiercest conflicts. The cities of North Italy gained their first instalments of freedom, at different periods in the eleventh century, by bargains or by usurpations of which few records have come down to us. At Pisa we hear of an agreement between the bishop and the citizens (1080–1085) under which the latter are permitted to form a peace-association, to hold mass-meetings, and to elect *consules* who shall co-operate with the bishop in the

government. At Genoa, on the other hand, the commune appears (in 1122) after several earlier *conjurationes* have been successfully resisted and dispersed. Probably the case of Pisa is more typical than that of Genoa, since we usually hear of a commune for the first time when it is already a fully developed institution. In most of the North Italian cities it was at the expense of a bishop that the commune was established. Legally the change meant the transference, from the bishop or another seigneur to the town, of powers derived by delegation from the Emperor; and it took place in the course of the Investitures contest, when the bishops, conscious of simony and other offences which made their position insecure, were more concerned to dissuade their citizens from siding with the party of ecclesiastical reform than to fulfil their duties as officials of the Empire. The Emperors themselves, hard-pressed in the struggle with the Papacy and eager to purchase support at any price, contributed to the success of the communal movement by the charters which they bestowed on some important cities.

In Northern France the situation was less favourable to the towns. Often indeed it suited the policy of the Capets to weaken an over-mighty subject by protecting his

rebellious serfs. But the bishops and the lay seigneurs offered a pertinacious opposition to all demands for enfranchisement; the King was a timid and vacillating ally, always inclined to desert the cause of the townsfolk for a bribe, always in fear that the movement might spread to his demesne. Whatever his sympathies, he could do little, when it came to blows, but stand aside and watch the conflict. Two examples will serve to illustrate the general features of these feuds between municipalities and lords.

(1) In 1070 the men of Le Mans were driven to rebellion by the lawlessness of the local baronage, and by the oppressions of the governor whom an absentee count had put over them. They formed a commune, and compelled the more timid of their enemies to swear that they would recognise it. Others they caught and hanged or blinded; and they made systematic war against the castles of the neighbourhood, which they took one by one and burned to the ground—and this, says the outraged chronicler, in Lent and even on Good Friday! The citizens themselves thought no season too sacred for such a crusade against anarchy; once, when their militia went out to attack a castle, the bishop and his clergy were induced to lead the vanguard, bearing crosses and consecrated banners.

But after a time the fortune of war turned against the commune; the militia were routed and the count's lieutenant recovered the castle which dominated Le Mans. The citizens offered their allegiance to the Count of Anjou, if he would deliver them. He came to the rescue, the governor fled, the castle was surrendered by the garrison and at once demolished. But, before the citizens had settled their future relations with Anjou, an English army appeared, led by William the Conqueror, their lawful suzerain. The Angevins effaced themselves; the citizens, making a virtue of necessity, opened their gates to the King; and since he would only confirm their ancient liberties, the existence of the commune was abruptly terminated (1073).

(2) At Laon in the next generation there was a wilder and more calamitous rising against the misrule of the bishop. His name was Waldric; he had been Chancellor to Henry I of England, and was elected by the chapter of Laon (1106) because of the great wealth which he had accumulated, none too honestly, in the course of his short official career. Much of his private fortune was expended in procuring the Pope's approval of his very irregular election. The remainder was soon squandered in extravagant and riotous living; and the bishop then began

to exploit his seignorial rights in Laon. His extortions were the more resented since he kept no order; the environs of the city swarmed with brigands and footpads, and kidnappers were allowed to work their will inside the city. At length the burgesses seized an opportunity, when the bishop was away in England, to set up a commune. On his return he was obliged to accept the situation and to recognise the commune in return for a substantial payment. But he further recouped himself by debasing the local currency, till it was practically worthless; and he gratified his spite against the citizens by an atrocious crime. Professing to have discovered a conspiracy against his life, he arrested the Mayor and caused the unhappy man to be blinded by a black slave, whom he employed as his bodyguard and executioner. The friends of the Mayor complained to the Pope; but the bishop got before them with his own version of the story, and by the help of bribery secured an honourable acquittal. By the same arguments he induced the King to quash the charter of the commune, and then seemed master of the situation. But the men of Laon conspired to kill him as he was going in state to the cathedral; he was with difficulty rescued by his knights, and found it necessary to garrison the episcopal

palace with villeins from his country estates. Arrogant as ever, he boasted of his power and the satisfaction that he would exact; the time was coming, he said, when his black slave should pull the noses of the most respected citizens, and the fellows would not dare to grunt. He was soon undeceived. The mob of Laon stormed the palace and massacred the defenders; they found the bishop in the cellars, disguised as a peasant and hiding in an empty cask; they dragged him forth by the hair of his head, and hacked him to pieces in the street (1112). When a calmer mood returned, the citizens were appalled at the prospect of the King's indignation. Those who were conscious of guilt fled from the city, which was left half-deserted. The barons and the serfs of the surrounding country swooped like vultures upon Laon, pillaged the empty houses and fought with one another for the spoil. For the next sixteen years the remnant of the citizens lived a miserable existence as the mere serfs of Waldric's successors. In 1128 the King permitted them to associate under a Mayor, for the better maintenance of the public peace; but they were denied the title of a commune, and continued to be subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop.

These dramas of oppression and retaliation, though characteristic in the sense that they

reveal the worst faults and the best excuses of the communal movement, were happily exceptional in Northern France; not because oppression was rare, but because rebellions defeated their own object. No seignorial concessions were worth the parchment on which they were inscribed, without a confirmation from the King; and it was not the King's interest to condone sacrilege or overt treason against a feudal lord. Hence the founders of a North French commune preferred to keep their agitation within the bounds of law. They invoked the King's help, and he, for an adequate consideration, destroyed seignorial rights by a few strokes of the pen; which he did the more readily since his lawyers had formulated the doctrine that communes were tenants of the Crown, liable to military service and to taxation at the royal pleasure. From the close of the twelfth century there was a firm alliance between the Third Estate and the French monarchy. On the whole it was more advantageous to the King than to the communes. Under St. Louis and his successors, when the power of the feudatories was broken, the commune presented itself as an obstacle in the path of central government. On one pretext or another, here because of faction-fights and there for mismanagement of the communal

finances, the cities lost their charters and passed under the rule of royal commissioners. It was a poor compensation that the Third Estate obtained the right of sending delegates to the States General of the Kingdom. Representation brought new liabilities without corresponding rights. The Third Estate, holding jealously aloof from the estates of the nobles and the clergy, was powerless against a determined sovereign.

The French commune, in fact, was a special expedient for the cure of a transitory evil. Republican institutions were in France an exotic growth, inconsistent with national traditions, and only welcome to classes which had neither the political intelligence nor the material resources to maintain their own ideals in the face of persistent opposition. It is significant that the charters of the French communes were frequently cancelled with the approval of the citizen assemblies. The situation was different in Flanders and North Italy, where the city was the natural unit of society, and the burgher class, enriched by foreign trade, were strong enough to negotiate on equal terms with their nominal superiors. Cities such as Ghent and Milan were shielded from contact with the great monarchies until the habit of self-government was firmly rooted in the citizens. When

at last they were confronted with the absolutist claims of the Capets or the Hohenstauffen, these cities did not shrink from a direct appeal to arms; and the wars which they waged for independence are not the least interesting chapter of medieval history.

Flanders was vexed by a problem of overpopulation, for which neither the continuous exodus of emigrants nor the systematic reclaiming of marsh-lands offered a permanent solution. At an early date her middle-classes discovered the grand principle of modern industry: that by manufacturing for foreign markets the production of wealth can be accelerated to an indefinite degree, and the most prolific communities maintained in affluence upon a sterile or restricted territory. The superfluous labour of the Flemish countryside flocked into towns, at the bidding of Flemish capital, and found remunerative employment in the weaving trade. From 1127 onwards these towns were bargaining with the Counts of Flanders for emancipation. Bruges, Ypres, Lille and Ghent were only the most successful among forty thriving communities which, at the close of the twelfth century, enjoyed a large measure of self-government but found their liberties threatened by the King of France. To meet the danger the Flemish communes embarked on

the stormy sea of politics. At first they fought the King, in the name of the Count, and made their first appearance as a military power on the disastrous field of Bouvines (1214), which cost Count Ferrand his liberty and the communes the flower of their militia. The successors of Ferrand sank deeper and deeper into dependence on the Capets, until the communes were forced in self-defence to assume the leading rôle. At Courtrai (in 1302) they turned the tables on the Crown, and took an ample vengeance for Bouvines, by a terrible slaughter of French knights and men-at-arms, demonstrating to a startled Europe that feudal tactics were obsolete, and that pikemen on foot were a match for the best mailed cavalry. Cheated by a treacherous Count of the due fruits of their victory, the Flemish communes nursed their resentment and waited for new opportunities, while consoling themselves with savage persecution of the nobles, the clergy, and all others whom they suspected of French sympathies. The ambition of Edward III came at length to their assistance; under the leadership of Jacques van Artevelde, a merchant-prince and demagogue of Ghent, they signed a treaty with the English King for the invasion and conquest of France (1339). It was a brief and ill-starred alliance, ruinous to

Flemish trade and abruptly ended by the fall of Artevelde, whom his fellow-citizens tore limb from limb under the impression that he was aiming at a tyranny (1345). But events soon justified the bold proposals of the fallen statesman. In 1369 the heiress of the county was given to a French prince of the blood; the French party in Flanders reared their heads; Bruges, to the alarm and fury of all patriots, joined the foreign cause from jealousy of Ghent. War broke out between the two great rivals; and the men of Ghent, commanded by Philip, the son of Jacques van Artevelde, gained the upper hand. Victorious in a pitched battle, they pursued the beaten army into Bruges, massacred the partisans of France, and put the city to the sack. No other commune dared to imitate the policy of Bruges, or to dispute the supremacy of Ghent in Flanders. The younger Artevelde, like his father before him, stood out for a brief moment as the dictator of a league of free republics. But the generals of France had profited by their hard experience in the wars with England; at Roosebeke (1382) the men of Ghent, charging the French cavalry "like wild boars," found themselves outflanked, and were crushed by the weight of superior science and numbers. They fought with the fury

of despair, neither expecting nor receiving quarter. More than twenty thousand of the citizens fell in the battle, and were left, by the King's order, unburied on the field. The corpse of Artevelde, who had been suffocated in the press, was hanged on a gibbet for a warning to all demagogues With him died the day-dream of an independent Flanders. Though her cities remained prosperous, they were destined to be successively the subjects of the Burgundian, the Spaniard, and the Austrian. It was only in 1831 that Flanders at length became a province in a kingdom based on the Walloon nationality.

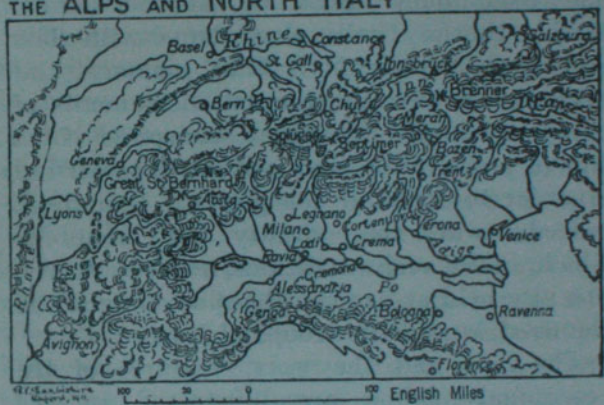
The Italian communes present, in their sharp vicissitudes of fortune, a spectacle not less dramatic and infinitely more momentous for the general history of Europe. In Italy, as in Flanders, the fair ideal of civic freedom was blurred and defaced by party feuds and personal ambitions, by the fickleness and passion of the mob, by the lust of conquest and the fratricidal jealousies of neighbouring republics. Yet to the influence of this ideal we must attribute both the solidarity of the Italian city-state and the wealth of individual genius which it fostered. The Italian Renaissance was little more than the harvest-time of medieval

Italy, the glorious evening of a day which had dawned with the Fourth Crusade and had reached high noon in the lifetimes of Dante and Giotto. In the fifteenth century the aptitudes which had ripened in the intense and crowded life of turbulent republics were concentrated upon art and letters. The leisure and the security which the specialist demands were bought by renouncing the Utopian visions of the past. But the growth of technical dexterity was a poor compensation for the narrowing of interests; the individual was sacrificed to make the artist; and art, too, suffered by the divorce from practical affairs. If we are moved to impatience by the waste of life and energy involved in the turmoils of medieval Italy, we must remember that in no atmosphere less electric would the national energies have matured so early, or piled achievement on achievement with such feverish speed.

The city, from time immemorial the meeting-ground for the best elements in Italian society, had become in the early Middle Ages the one bulwark between the Italian middle-classes and a particularly lawless form of feudalism; and it had served this purpose well. The number of these cities, their population and resources, the luxury of the citizens, the splendour of the palaces and public buildings,

were the admiration of all Europe at a time when the Flemish burghers still lived in wooden houses and the Flemish cities were still rudely protected by palisades and earthen ramparts Nature had done much for Italy Thanks to the central situation of the peninsula, the trade between northern Europe and the Mediterranean converged upon her

THE ALPS AND NORTH ITALY



seaports and the Alpine passes which stand above the valley of the Po. The untiring industry of Italian capital and labour made Lombardy and Tuscany the homes of textile manufactures, of scientific cultivation, of banking and finance. In every port of the Levant, the Aegean and the Black Sea, the shipmen and merchants of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa hunted for trade like sleuth-hounds,

and fought like wolves to secure a preference or a monopoly. By land and sea the rule of life was competition for territory and trade. War was a normal and often a welcome incident in the quest for wealth; few Italians were free from the belief that conquests are a short cut to prosperity, that trade follows the flag, and that the gain of one community must be another's loss. Within the city walls, class strove with class and family with family. Riot, massacre, and proscription were the normal instruments of party warfare; minorities conspired from fear of proscription, and majorities proscribed in order to forestall conspiracy. Boundless, indeed, was the vitality of republics which, under such conditions, not only throve, but also held at bay the ablest sovereigns and the most formidable troops of Europe.

The best and the worst features of the communal régime are illustrated in the resistance of the Lombard cities to Frederic Barbarossa, the first Emperor who formulated and applied to Italy a scheme of absolutist government. Between 1154 and 1176 the Lombards turned the course of history. They prepared the way for Innocent III to plant his foot upon the necks of kings, and for Innocent IV to destroy the House of Hohenstauffen. That this would

be the result of their stand for liberty, neither they nor the other parties to the struggle could foretell. But on both sides it was felt that the greatest issues were at stake. The question was whether Italy should, once for all, accept a German yoke; whether the Papacy should become a German patriarchate; whether free institutions, both in Church and State, should give place to a bureaucracy.

The question did not take this shape from the beginning. When Frederic first intervened in Lombardy he came to protect the smaller cities against the imperialist ambitions of Milan, to restore the public peace, to investigate innumerable complaints of force and fraud. Many of the cities hailed him as a deliverer; against him were only the clients of Milan, or those who, on a humbler scale, aspired to emulate her policy. Even so it was no easy matter to chastise the most insignificant of the contumacious communes; and Milan, who refused point-blank to give satisfaction for her lawless acts of conquests, or even to renounce what she had won, could not safely be attacked.

Two circumstances were against the Emperor. Any war against the Lombards must be a war of sieges; but the military science of the age was more skilful in defence than in attack. And no war could be carried

to a prosperous conclusion without Italian help; for it was impossible to interest the German princes in the wars of Italy, or to exact substantial help from them. The first of these difficulties Frederic Barbarossa never overcame. With the second he was more successful in the middle period of the conflict (1158–1162); and it was then that the representatives of Lombard independence were most nearly overwhelmed.

In 1158 he came back from Germany to besiege Milan, having carefully concluded treaties with her rivals in Lombardy, in the Mark of Verona, in Emilia and the Marches. With their help he starved the impregnable city into a surrender on terms dictated by himself. In these there was nothing to excite suspicion or alarm. It was a matter of course that the Milanese should take the oath of allegiance and emancipate the enslaved cities. He stipulated further for a palace in the city, and for the restitution of all imperial prerogatives (*regalia*) which the consuls had usurped; but the full import of these latter articles only became clear some two months later, when he announced his future policy at a Diet held on the plain of Roncaglia. He disclaimed the intention of ruling as a tyrant, but demanded that his lawful rights should be respected As guardian of the public peace,

he would permit no private wars to be waged and no leagues to be formed among the cities. As lord of the land, he claimed, under the title of *regalia*, a formidable list of rights and dues which the jurists of Bologna had compiled at the expense of much historical research. It included the nomination of the highest magistrate in every city; the supreme jurisdiction in appeals and criminal causes; the control of mints, markets, and highways; and rights of purveyance and taxation. Some of these had been in abeyance from time immemorial; most of them had been exercised by the cities for more than fifty years. Frederic held that no prescription could avail against the Crown; and, if this attitude seemed more appropriate to a Justinian than to a King of the Lombards, there was still something to be said for his claims on grounds of public policy. Till a strong monarchy was re-established in Italy, city would oppress city, and the strong would rob the weak. But such a monarchy could only be maintained if an ample revenue were assured, and if the powers arrogated by the communes were curtailed.

Even those cities which had originally supported Frederic began to waver when they saw the logical consequences of his policy. They were not disposed to cavil at

any measures that he might take against Milan. But to deal with friend and foe on the same principles struck them as injustice. To run the risk of enslavement by a neighbour was an evil; but it was worse to lose for ever the prospect of enslaving others. And what guarantee was there that the new absolutism, once firmly in the saddle, would always be benevolent, or would always be represented by officials of integrity? The claims of the Emperor might be in a sense historical; but the cities knew, if he did not, that the so-called restoration of *regalia* was in effect a revolution. The time was nearly ripe for general defection; loyalty was strained to breaking-point when Frederic began to appoint for each city a resident commissioner (*podestà*), empowered to exercise the regalian rights and to collect the revenue accruing from them. But Milan was still feared and hated. When she alleged that her recent treaty of capitulation was infringed by the decrees of Roncaglia, and when she expelled the envoys whom Frederic had sent to instal a *podestà*, the other cities rallied to the imperial cause. There was one notable exception. The little commune of Crema had been ordered to destroy her walls; she refused, and made common cause with her great neighbour.

The imperial ban was issued against both

cities (April 1159); troops were hurriedly called up from Germany, and contingents were obtained from the Italian allies, until Frederic had in the field a force estimated at 100,000 men. But for six months he was held in check by the resistance of Crema, which he had planned to reduce with a small force while the main bulk of his levies were gathering for the siege of Milan. The attack on Crema was cordially seconded by the citizens of the neighbouring Cremona, who gave their assistance in diverting the watercourses which ran through the city, and lent Frederic the most famous of living engineers to make his siege-machines. Crema was completely invested; and every known method of assault was tried. The moat was filled with fascines, and movable towers of wood, so high as to overtop the battlements, were brought up to the walls; which were also attacked with rams, and undermined by sappers working in the shelter of huge pent-houses. But breaches were no sooner made than repaired; every scaling-party was repulsed; and the defenders derided the Emperor in opprobrious songs. For once in his life he descended to bluster and ferocious inhumanity. He swore that he would give no quarter, he executed captives within sight of the walls, and he suspended his hostages in baskets from the most exposed parts of the

siege-towers. Fortunately for his fame he relented, when hunger and the desertion of their master-engineer compelled the Cremesi to sue for terms. They received permission to depart with as much property as they could carry on their backs. The rest fell to the imperial army; and the men of Cremona were commissioned to demolish the city, which they did with a goodwill. The turn of Milan followed; the Emperor, warned by experience, fell back upon the slow and costly, but irresistible method of blockade. At the end of eight months (May 1161–Feb. 1162) the city was surrendered, evacuated, and condemned to destruction—a sentence which it was found impossible to execute completely, so solid were the ramparts and so vast the buildings they enclosed. For the moment all resistance seemed at an end. The policy outlined at Roncaglia could at length be put in force through the length and breadth of Lombardy; and Frederic departed for Germany, leaving trustworthy lieutenants to complete the vindication of his Italian rights. It only remained to try conclusions with a recalcitrant Pope and the evasive Normans of the South. The Emperor already saw himself in imagination the master of Italy, and even of the Western Mediterranean.

Five years passed without bringing him nearer to his goal. Then Frederic returned to effect the expulsion of Alexander III from Rome. He succeeded in this object, and was crowned in St. Peter's by the anti-Pope of his own choosing (August 1167). It was the highest point of his fortunes, and the calamities which followed were so unforeseen and terrible that contemporaries saw in them the hand of God. While he was still in Rome, a pestilence broke out which cost him two thousand knights and his best counsellors. He was forced to fly from the infected city. On his way to the north he found the road barred by a new and formidable coalition. The Lombard League had come into existence —an alliance organised by Cremona, hitherto the staunchest of imperial allies, and closely linked with Venice, which Frederic had regarded as a negligible quantity. Of the intentions of the League there could be no doubt. The members were already engaged in the rebuilding of Milan; they had admitted to their inmost councils a legate of Alexander III; they announced that they would only render to the Emperor his ancient and undoubted rights. Frederic would not trust himself in their vicinity. Accompanied by a handful of knights he escaped ignominiously to the north, taking a circuitous

route through Savoy The Leaguers no longer troubled to mask their true intentions. As a token of their unity they built the city of Alessandria, named after Frederic's bitterest enemy, the lawful Pope; and they solemnly repudiated the appellate jurisdiction of the imperial law-court (1168).

Six years elapsed before Frederic could return to demand satisfaction, and even then he could only muster some eight thousand men. From October 1174 to April 1175 he was engaged, first in besieging Alessandria, and then in making fruitless overtures to the League for a compromise. By the end of 1175 he was virtually blockaded in Pavia with a dwindling remnant of his army. Reinforced in the spring, he made a rapid march on Milan, in the hope of taking unawares the headquarters of the League. But the Lombards were forewarned, and met him, at Legnano (29th May 1176), with a force outnumbering his by more than two to one. The battle was hotly contested. The Lombard vanguard, composed of cavalry, scattered before the onslaught of the Germans. The Emperor then led a charge which penetrated to the centre of the enemy's position. Here was the banner of Milan, mounted on a triumphal car (*carroccio*) and guarded by picked burgesses, who had sworn to defend

their trust to the death. Round them the fighting raged for hours; the Germans made no impression on their ranks, and by degrees the Lombard troops who had fled returned to renew the battle. At length the imperial standard-bearer was slain, and Frederic himself unhorsed. Thinking all was lost, the imperialists fled confusedly towards Pavia, which they reached after suffering more loss in the flight than in the battle. Frederic, cut off from his followers, only escaped capture by hiding for some days until the road to Pavia was clear.

Legnano was no overwhelming catastrophe, but it was ominous that citizen levies had defeated German knights in a fair field. Frederic's counsellors insisted that it was foolhardiness to pursue the war interminably, when at any moment the papal interest might gain the upper hand in Germany. Peace must be made at any cost with Alexander, and he would accept no peace from which the Lombards were excluded. Frederic yielded to the inevitable with a good grace. A treaty was concluded with the Pope in the same year (November 1176); a few months later, a six years' truce with the Lombards was arranged at Venice; and at Constance, in 1183, this was converted into a lasting peace. In form there was a compromise,

The cities, while retaining the regalia and the free election of their consuls, recognised their allegiance to the Emperor and his appellate jurisdiction. In reality the Emperor had surrendered everything of value, and the cities ignored any stipulations in the treaty which were unfavourable to them.

So matters remained until Frederic II, the grandson of Barbarossa, having firmly established himself in his Sicilian heritage, began to meditate a closer union between his dominions north and south of the Alps. The better to secure his communications with Germany, he prepared to enforce in Lombardy the imperial rights reserved at Constance (1226). At once the dormant Lombard League revived. The Alpine passes were so effectually blockaded that Frederic was left entirely dependent on his Sicilian forces. He turned the flank of the League at length, by an alliance with Ezzelin da Romano, the tyrant of Verona, which gave him access to the Brenner pass; but the League retaliated by lending support to his rebellious son, Henry, King of the Germans. So began another war in Lombardy. Legnano was brilliantly avenged on the field of Cortenuova (1237), where the Emperor routed the Milanese and captured the *carroccio*, the symbol of their independence. But he, like

his grandfather, was worn out by the difficulties of siege warfare; and in 1240 he turned southward to reduce the States of the Church. One more attempt he made on Lombardy in the winter of 1247–1248. But a disastrous fiasco destroyed his hopes and gave a mortal blow to his prestige. For five months he blockaded Parma, and the city was at the last gasp, when he imprudently dismissed a part of his troops. The garrison saw their opportunity, and made a desperate sortie while the Emperor was absent on a hunting expedition. They surprised and burned the strongly fortified camp which he had named Victoria; his baggage and even his crown jewels were captured; more than half of his army were slain or taken, and the rest fled in confusion to Cremona (18th February 1248). It was necessary for Frederic to beat a retreat, and he appeared no more in Lombardy His son Enzio, whom he left to represent him, was captured next year by the Bolognese and sentenced to perpetual captivity.

Frederic died in 1250; and from this year we may date both the disruption of the Empire and the decadence of the free Italian communes. What he had failed to effect, with the united power of Sicily and Germany behind him, was accomplished by a score of

petty local dynasties. At Milan the Visconti completed the enslavement which the Della Torre had first planned; at Verona it was the Scaligeri who entered on the imperial inheritance; at Ferrara, the Este; at Padua, the Carrara; at Mantua, the Gonzaga. The tide of despotism rose slowly but surely, until in the fifteenth century Venice alone remained to remind Italy of the possibility of freedom.

It is to Germany, rather than Italy or Flanders, that we must look for the last and perhaps the most fruitful phase in the development of medieval town life. Free institutions were acquired by the German towns comparatively late; and although it was the Lombard commune which they aspired to reproduce, they never succeeded in securing so large a measure of independent power, or in making themselves the capitals of petty States. The Hohenstauffen, like the early Capets, were sensible of the advantages to be gained by alliance with the Third Estate; but Frederic II was obliged to renounce the right of creating free imperial cities within the fiefs of the great princes; and most towns were left to bargain single-handed with their immediate lords. Shut off from any prospects of territorial sovereignty, the towns, even those which held from the Empire, were also excluded from the Diet until the close

of the fifteenth century. Trade afforded the only outlet for their activities. But in trade they engaged with such success that, by the close of the Middle Ages, Augsburg rivalled Florence as a centre of cosmopolitan finance, and the Baltic towns had developed a commerce comparable to that of the Mediterranean. It was the Baltic trade which gave birth to a new form of municipal league, the famous Hansa. The nucleus of this association was an alliance formed between Lübeck and Hamburg to protect the traffic of the Elbe. Other cities were induced to affiliate themselves, and in 1299 the Hansa absorbed the older Gothland League of which Wisby was the centre. By the year 1400 there were upwards of eighty Hanseatic cities, lying chiefly in the lower Rhineland, in Saxony, in Brandenburg, and along the Baltic coast; but the commercial sphere of the league extended from England to Russia and from Norway to Cracow.

The Hanseatic cities were subject to many different suzerains, and were federated only for the protection of their trade. The League was loosely knit together; there was a representative congress which met at irregular intervals in Lübeck; but the delegates had no power to bind their cities. There was only a small federal revenue, no standing

fleet or army, and no means of coercing disobedient members save by exclusion from trade privileges. Yet this amorphous union ranked for some purposes as an independent power. The Hansa policed the Baltic and the waterways and high roads of North Germany; it owned factories (*steelyards*) in London, Bruges, Bergen, and Novgorod; it concluded commercial treaties, and on occasion it waged wars. In the fourteenth century it monopolised the Baltic trade, and was courted by all the nations which had interests in that sea. In the fifteenth it began to decline, and in the age of the Reformation sank into insignificance. New sea-Powers arose; England and the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, came into competition with the Hansa; the growth of territorialism in Germany sapped the independence of the leading members of the league; and the Baltic trade, like that of the Mediterranean, became of secondary importance when the Portuguese had discovered the Cape route to India, and when the work of Columbus, Cortes, and Pizarro opened up a New World in the Western hemisphere.

NOTE ON BOOKS

THE beginner will find useful guides in three text-books published by Messrs. Rivington: C. Oman's *Dark Ages*, T. F. Tout's *Empire and Papacy*; and R. Lodge's *Close of the Middle Ages*. The Pitt Press (Cambridge, England) has in preparation a co-operative work, the *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, which will be valuable for advanced students; to whom in the meantime may be recommended the first three volumes of the French *Histoire Générale*, edited by E. Lavisse and A. Rambaud. Of the more comprehensive works which are available in English, the following may be specially mentioned: (1) Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (ed. Bury); Gibbon narrates in chapters 29–36 the story of the break-up of the Western Empire; his survey of early Christianity will be found in chapters 15, 16, 20, 21, 28, 37, 47, 49; accounts of the invaders of the Western Empire in chapters 26, 38, 45, 52. Gibbon does less than justice to the Eastern Empire; which may be studied in Finlay's *History of Greece*, Oman's *Byzantine Empire*, and Bury's *Later Roman Empire*. (2) Milman's *History of Latin Christianity* covers the whole of the medieval period; though written in 1855 it is still valuable and suggestive. (3) Gregorovius' *History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages* (tr. Hamilton) is a more recent work which includes a useful summary of the history of the Papacy, in the form of biographies of the leading Popes. (4) Hodgkin's *Italy and her Invaders*, which relates only to the Dark Ages, gives vivid accounts of the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Lombards, and Franks.

National history cannot be studied satisfactorily without the use of French and German works. For French history may be recommended the manual by Jalliffier and Vast, *Histoire de l'Europe et particulièrement de la France* (395–1270), and the continuation (1270–1610) by Vast; both are published by Garnier Frères, Paris. Both are well illustrated. The co-operative *Histoire de la France*, edited by Lavisse, devotes four large volumes to the medieval period, and is written by leading specialists.

For Germany there are available, in English, E. F. Henderson's *History of Germany in the Middle Ages*, Fisher's *Medieval Empire*, and Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire* (new ed. 1904). For details, however, the reader must have recourse to such works as W. Giesebrecht's *Deutsche Kaiserzeit* and Lindner's *Deutsche Geschichte unter den Hapsburgern und Luxemburgern*. Useful narratives in short compass are supplied by Hampe, *Deutsche Kaisergeschichte im Zeitalter der Salier und Staufer* (1909), and by Loserth, *Geschichte des späteren Mittelalters* (1903). For Italy, Butler's *Lombard Communes*, Carew Hazlitt's *History of Venice*, Villari's *Two First Centuries of Florentine History* (translated), and Coulton's *From St. Francis to Dante*, may be recommended. For England the reader may be referred to the first four volumes in Longmans' *Political History of England*; also to Oman's *England before the Norman Conquest*, and Davis' *England under the Normans and Angevins*.

A few biographies only can be mentioned. "The Heroes of the Nations" series contains lives of Constantine the Great, Theodoric, Charlemagne, the Cid, Saladin, William the Conqueror, Edward I, St. Louis. The lives of St. Bernard by J. Cotter Morison, of Abélard by Rémusat (French), of St. Francis by Sabatier (translated), of Innocent III by Luchaire (French), are valuable as illustrations of medieval thought. Other notable books bearing on miscellaneous topics are Vinogradoff's *Roman Law in Mediaeval Europe*, Montalembert's *Monks of the West* (translated), H. C. Lea's *History of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages*, Rashdall's *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. i., Gierke's *Political Theories of the Middle Ages* (tr. Maitland), Beazley's *Dawn of Modern Geography*, Oman's *Art of War in the Middle Ages*, Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*. The new *Encyclopædia Britannica* contains good medieval articles: *e.g.* on the "Crusades," by E. Barker. But for systematic surveys of the literature centring round the Middle Ages, the reader must refer to the footnotes and bibliographies of the larger works which we have cited above.

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