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MAN AND HIS WORLD

A COURSE IN HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

By
JAMES MAINWARING, M.A., D.Litt, F.R.Hist.S.

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN BLACK AND WHITE
BY THE AUTHOR, M. L. SHIPTON, AND OTHERS*

BOOK I

THE EVOLUTION OF THE OLD WORLD

SECOND EDITION

LONDON
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1945*

MAN AND HIS WORLD

BOOK I. THE EVOLUTION OF THE OLD WORLD.

BOOK II THE EVOLUTION OF THE MODERN WORLD.

BOOK III. THE WORLD AND ITS WEALTH.

(In preparation.)

FIRST EDITION. *January, 1941*

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PREFACE

The course represented by this series of books began some years ago with a series of tentative experiments designed to impart to the teaching of elementary history and geography a number of basic principles.

The first of three general principles was that, if education is to be regarded as a genuinely purposive activity, scholastic studies should have an aim and purpose of real and practical value to the student. Secondly, if maximum efficiency is to be achieved with the minimum wastage of effort, the aim should be intelligible to the student and capable of being related by him to his own life, needs and experiences. Thirdly that the interrelation of facts is of greater educative value than mere fact accumulation. In *Man and His World* the aim selected has been the understanding of the present by regarding it as a phase of human development traced from the beginning ; by interrelating the facts of history and geography and by relating them to the preceding and succeeding events and thence to the present, to show Great Britain as an element in a world fabric ; and, further, to relate them to the reader, whose life so obviously must have been influenced by her or his immediate and remote past, and immediate and remote environment.

The main specific principle underlying the course is that every event is the resultant of two groups of interrelated factors: the historical or temporal factor of events which have already occurred, and the geographical or spatial factor of environmental influences. The books are, therefore, based on the assumption that the study of human development, at least in its elementary stages, can be rationally approached only by regarding it as the joint product of human and environmental influences, as being the product of mutually related historical and geographical factors,.

This is not a materialistic conception of the study of history but one which implies that the story of human development is intelligible only when related to the human ideals, needs, desires, hopes, fears and hatreds, instincts, sentiments and habits which have influenced human behaviour in the past, *and* to the world to which these human motives have directed Man's attention for his material satisfaction. It may in fact be regarded as idealistic in that such an interrelating of human and material factors presses home the truth that the satisfaction of needs and desires involves a human contribution of work and service, and that possession and authority involve responsibility from nations and individuals alike.

An effort has been made to make the maps included as interesting to look at as possible and to simplify them by illustrating only a few points at a time. They are not intended to supplant the regular use of good historical and geographical atlases and of a globe.

Teachers using these books as aids in class-instruction will understand that the suggestions appended are not intended to intrude into their own methods but are included as suggestions only for class activities which actually formed part of the original course.

The writer wishes to acknowledge his grateful appreciation of the encouragement and helpful criticism of Professor C. W. Valentine and of his colleagues (especially of Miss Irene G. Grafton) and to express his indebtedness to the many books and atlases on which consciously and subconsciously he may have drawn,

J.M.

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FOREWORD

BY

C W. VALENTINE, M.A., D.Phil.,
Professor of Education in the University of Birmingham

To the many who have for long recognised the desirability of some revision of our historical and geographical studies the present volumes by Dr. Mainwaring should be welcomed in the first place as a noteworthy and stimulating experiment. To produce continued interest during and after school the study of history and geography must be closely linked with everyday events. Too often the study ends with the Battle of Waterloo or even earlier, and with some confined geographical region, while living present-day problems tend to be avoided because they are controversial. Here is a work which brings us down to the outbreak of the War in September 1939 ; which dares to discuss Communism and the Russian Revolution ; which maintains clearly that there are two or more sides to every political question and that we should not be content with studying only one side.

Further, Dr. Mainwaring seeks to avoid the making of history and geography into a mere matter of memorising. He holds that a class book should be a guide, and stimulus to activity and thinking and to the rational interrelating of facts rather than to the mere acquisition of knowledge of which the items are unrelated to each other or to any end.

Here he is helped by his original and interesting co-ordination of the study of geography and history. In doing this his underlying principles seem to be :

- (1) That history and geography, in the earlier stages of their study, say, to School Certificate standard, can best be presented as interrelated aspects of the story of human development and treated as a single " subject."
- (2) Geography gains, from the historical presentation of it, in that the world can untold itself as Man discovered

more of it, made use of his discoveries and was influenced by a wider environment—as his "world" increased from the little worlds of primitive and relatively immobile men to the whole world of to-day.

- (3) History gains in that the story of human development can be consistently shown as the joint product of human achievement and environmental factors, by temporal and spatial factors. This is not an environmental and materialistic conception of history in that it permits the inclusion of idealism, humanitarianism, religious and ethical influences as potential factors in human progress.
- (4) The study of both gains in that, instead of being an abstract and academic study, it becomes a practical study in which the present can be shown as a stage in human evolution, with its problems and tragedies emerging naturally from the past, as the joint product of human and material influences. The study gains, further, in that it has a purpose, intelligible to the student.

Incidentally, the method of combining the studies, while it is bound to involve some sacrifices which some specialists in either subject may regret, has the additional advantage of avoiding that unfortunate necessity (as the work of some schools is organised) of "dropping" one or other of the subjects in the School Certificate year.

In the last of these three books especially the student is also introduced to some elementary ideas of political science and economics. Here especially are difficult problems, with which Dr. Mainwaring has dealt vigorously and, as it seems to me, most wisely. There are no doubt individual statements which each of us may think he would like to modify; but dull and tame would a book be on such topics if that were not the case.

More perhaps than ever in the past the students of to-day will need, as the public of to-morrow, an intelligent and broad-minded understanding of international, economic, and social problems. It is, therefore, an urgent necessity that the teaching of to-day should bear that end in view. When lecturing to classes of about a hundred graduates and discussing with

them the teaching of history it has been my custom to ask whether they have been led to a liking for the reading of history as a result of their schoolwork. To one who has found in history a real delight it has been distressing to find such a large proportion (about a third on the average of several years) who have felt no interest in history after leaving school, and who indeed attributed this indifference or even dislike to the kind of history-studies pursued at school.

Most people, I think, will agree that if the early study of history leaves such a large proportion even of these selected students with no permanent interest in history it has failed in its main purpose, in so far as these pupils are concerned. Clearly, the need for the creation of such an interest and of relating the early studies to the practical problems of the present applies equally to the study of geography, and, equally, such studies have failed in their main purpose when they fail to achieve these ends.

If my results are at all representative and these inferences sound, they would seem to justify bold experiments in the revision of our methods of study, such as those on which this course is based. But lest it should be thought that the scheme is based on merely theoretical considerations I may add that not only has Dr. Mainwaring made a great success of it in his own practice but others who have been sent to observe his methods have applied these ideas elsewhere with marked advantage.

I cannot close without first a word of special praise for the admirable and original maps : and second, a warm commendation of these volumes to teachers not only in Secondary but in Central and Senior Schools. Actually I feel that the books should have a larger public and that such organisations as the W.E.A. should find them extremely useful.

C. W. VALENTINE,

MAN AND HIS WORLD

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

IN THE BEGINNING

MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO there were no men. Hundreds of millions of years ago there were no living, creatures at all—not even plants or worms. Still farther back into the mysterious past there was a time when even the earth did not exist, at least in the form in which we think of it now. Instead, a whirling, molten mass, which had probably broken away from the sun, was spinning itself into the shape of a ball as it rushed round the sun through the vast emptiness of space.

Gradually the outside of the molten world began to cool into a rocky crust, torn and twisted by the volcanic outbursts of the hidden fires. Mixed with the smoke and fumes was enough steam to make all the seas, lakes, and rivers of the world. When it had cooled enough, torrents of rain would fall, to be turned into boiling streams or pools or to be hurled back into the stormy skies as steam and vapour again.

Sometimes this gradual cooling process was interrupted and the earth would grow hotter again, perhaps because its path in space changed or perhaps because something happened in the sun. Then it would cool again still more, and some of the water would stay on the earth, filling up the **valleys** left by the volcanic upheavals, making great **pools and seas, and rushing down the sides of the rocks in wild rivers.**

Furious winds, tremendous floods of hot rain, and great earthquakes all helped to mould the shape of the growing crust of the earth. Even the sun seemed restless and moved rapidly across the sky, for the earth was spinning faster then. But it was only a restlessness of lifeless things. As yet there was no living thing on the earth: the seas were empty, the rocks barren and bare.

It is impossible to explain all these strange happenings in space or even to say why anything was there at all; but an even greater mystery is the beginning of life on the earth. In the water living things first appeared, perhaps just a green scum or particles of floating jelly—but *alive* !

What does it mean to be " alive " ? In what ways are all living things alike, but different from non-living things ? When we think of a living creature we think of something that can do certain things for itself instead of having to wait for something to be done to it. To do anything, which means to *work*, requires energy, and living creatures can energise themselves. This means that living things take nourishment into themselves in the form of food, water, and part of the air. To do this they have to *move about*, for even the plants spread out their roots and branches. A third difference is that all living creatures *grow*. Gradually they develop until they reach perfection, then they seem to become tired and die. Most wonderful of all, they alone, of all things, can *reproduce* themselves :. that is, they can create a new living creature, very like but not quite like themselves.

This little difference between parent and offspring, which is true of all living things, plant or animal, has made all the history of the world. It means that all living things are slightly different from each other, and that some will be better fitted than others to succeed in the hard task of living. As these will be the ones to survive, these little differences which helped them will become fixed, and still more useful ones in the next generation, and the next, and in, thousands of generations will gradually develop. This long, very slow

process of gradual change in the form, structure, and habits of living creatures is called *evolution*, and we shall understand more about it if we return to our story.

It was hundreds of millions of years ago that life first began in the seas of the stormy, wild, and ancient world, for even then the world was at least eight hundred million years old. From tiny beginnings different creatures slowly began to evolve, very much like the creatures you can see when you look at a drop of water from a summer pool through a microscope. Gradually the bigger and better-protected ones survived, and a variety of worms, shellfish, seaweeds, and "creeping things innumerable, both small and great," were evolved. Some hundreds of millions of years went by before the appearance of fish with bones and teeth and all their wonderfully complicated structure.

Great numbers of these creatures must have been left to die on the water's edge in this age of changing tides and moving seas, but some would not die. Those which, through some fortunate little difference from their fellows, could find sufficient moisture, food, and air in the swampy land on the shore would have a chance to survive. Gradually plants began to fringe the edges of the sea, and in time ferns, bigger plants, and trees appeared, able to obtain sufficient nourishment from the wet, hot earth, and from the steamy atmosphere of this age of the swamp forests.

Creatures which could live equally well in the swamps or in the sea had now invaded the shores, and gradually great reptiles were evolved, never needing to leave the great forests and jungles. Some of these creatures could fly, and grew to an enormous size. There were, too, gigantic insects ; some, like great dragon-flies, were nearly a yard wide in flight.

The earth was not uniformly hot even in this age, and **there were**, too, long periods of time when the earth hardened into **cruel winters that lasted thousands of years. Only those**



Fig. i.—Evolution.

ZOE=life. PALÆO=old. MESO=middle. CAINO=recent.

creatures which could resist the harder climate could survive, and new types of life were evolved. Scales gradually turned to feathers, which are a warmer covering, and some of the flying reptiles turned, after thousands of generations, into birds.-

Reptiles after laying their eggs had left them without further attention. Now, in the colder parts of the world, the birds learned to protect their eggs by using the warmth of their bodies. Even the young birds, before they grew their own warm covering and before they had *learned* to fly, had to be fed and cared for by the parent birds.

This marks a great step forward in the story of evolution, for creatures had learned to make homes, to protect their young, and even to feed them.

Colder still grew the land, and as conditions grew harder more wonderful creatures were evolved, because only more wonderful creatures could survive and pass on their new tricks and habits and their useful little differences in shape and structure to succeeding generations.

The most wonderful new kind of creature was the mammal, which word means a "mothered" animal. It was too cold for eggs to hatch in safety, and in some parts of the world only those creatures in whose bodies the eggs remained until they were hatched could save their young, which were born alive. These little creatures were even more helpless than the birds, and were fed directly from the mother.

By this time, in the mammals, feathers had turned to hair or fur, and an enormous number of different kinds of mammals began to develop, according to the demands made on them by the world around. The weaker ones could survive only if they could flee fast enough from the stronger ones, and some of these developed strong legs. Some learned to climb trees, and, by *handling* the branches, learned to use their front legs and paws as arms and hands and to walk again, like the birds, on two legs. Kangaroos can do this, but monkeys can do it

far better, and can use their "hands" for all kinds of purposes.

The idea of *purpose* suggests that the animal *intends* to do something and *knows* what he is doing. Evolution had reached the stage when intelligence, the ability to think, had dawned. A weak animal, which could not run very fast, but which could use a weapon, such as a stone, might have some chance of surviving. In this way, and very slowly, Man was evolved. In the rocks traces of strange creatures, like men but not quite men, have been discovered. It was during the last of the great Ice Ages, of which there were four in the last half-million years, that real or true men appeared.

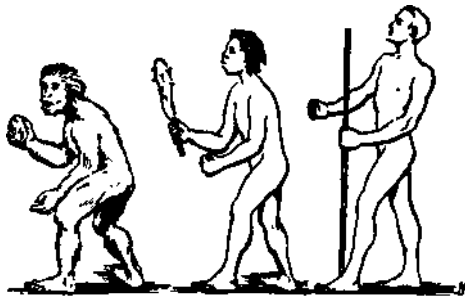


Fig. 2.—The process of man's evolution.

It had taken millions of years for Man to evolve, slowly developed by reason of the tiny changes in each generation of his innumerable ancestors.

These early men were hunters, making crude weapons of rough stone and rock and living in caves. For the most part they were naked savages, but when it was exceptionally cold they wrapped themselves in rough skins, which they never learned to fasten. In Kent's Cavern, near Torquay, many relics of their lives have been found, and of the sabre-toothed tiger which in those days helped to make life hard for them.

One of the most interesting things about these men is their wonderful ability to draw and paint, on the walls of their caves, amazing pictures of the animals which shared this life with them, and especially of bison and reindeer. This is really the most important development in the story of evolution, for birds and animals build homes, feed and protect their young, use materials, and even the wasp has been known to use a small stone as a tool to seal the entrance to its nest. But Man alone, of all living creatures, became an artist.



Fig. 3.—Paleolithic man.

These men are called Palaeolithic, which means "Old Stone," to distinguish them from the later men of the New Stone Age. The men of the New Stone Age, the Neolithic Men, had learned how to polish stone, to sharpen their axes and arrow-heads, to make pottery, to tame animals, and even to cultivate the earth. They, too, were artists, making crude music from whistles, drums, and such simple instruments. They also made curious statues and decorated their pots, but the realistic art of the Palaeolithic Man had gone.

Although Man, more than ten thousand years ago, had developed so far from his remote ancestors which crawled from the seas in the distant past, he still shared with them, and always will share with all living things, the need for a sufficient supply of food, water, and air. The story of evolution makes it clear that, although living creatures can adapt themselves in time to almost any kind of conditions, there must always be some food, water, and air within reach.

Unlike the plants, which are fixed to the soil from which they derive their food, all other creatures, fish, reptiles,

insects, birds, animals, and Man, can move about. This power enables them to select, within certain limits, the places which can best provide them with their needs. Man, however,

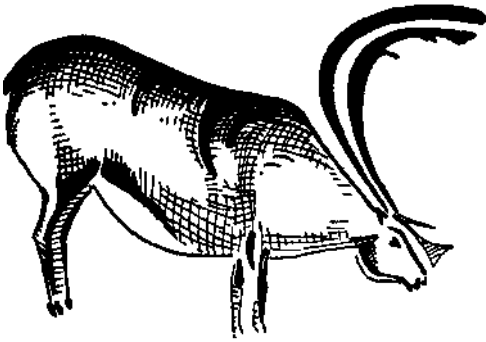


Fig. 4.—An example of paleolithic art.

is by nature able only to walk or run, and although he can learn to swim, he cannot move very far or very fast by any of these methods. Certainly Man is unlikely, by any of these means, to wander sufficiently far from the place in which he happens to be born to find a new kind of surroundings.

The importance of this is that primitive Man knew only the little world around him, and that particular kind of "environment," as it is called, moulded his life. His diet was limited to that particular kind of food which he could obtain from that kind of place, and he was satisfied because he knew of no other kind of place where conditions were different. His life would consist very largely in a constant struggle to obtain sufficient food, and therefore his usual occupation and the kind of skills he acquired would depend on the kind of food the place provided. He might be a gatherer of fruits, a fisherman or a hunter.

In such a place life is a sort of balance between Man's skill and Nature. If it is an exact balance, with nothing to spare, there is no chance for Man to develop any farther in that environment. We shall find that there are many places like that in the world.

In such an environment fear always plays a great part in Man's life. A bird, when it has found a morsel of food, never stays to enjoy its meal in comfort. It pecks hurriedly, then turns its head in fear, both for its own safety and lest some other hungry bird should rob it of the food it has discovered. In the same way primitive Man had to watch

for. his own safety and for the security of his own food if it were scarce.

The kind of weapons he used, the tools he employed, and the kind of shelter he constructed would depend on the kind of materials he could obtain from his little world- In the cold Arctic deserts of ice and snow, the Eskimo is limited to a diet of fish, and the flesh of seals or drifted whales. Sealskins, bones, sinews, frozen snow, perhaps a little drifted wood from the warmer south, and the ivory from the tusk of a walrus constitute the main materials which his world provides-

In some parts of the world are miles and miles of dense jungle where the thick grass provides food for those animals which, like the antelope and the giraffe, are fleet enough to escape from the animals which feed on them, such as the lion and the tiger. Man cannot live on grass, so in this kind of world men became hunters. They had to develop great fleetness of foot, an agile skill, and habits of cunning and stealth to combat the like qualities in the animals they hunted.

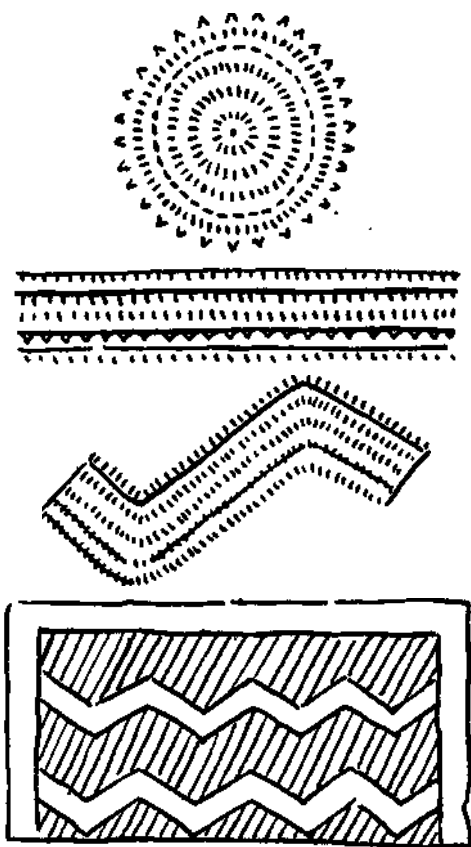


Fig. 5.—Examples of neolithic art.

It will already be clear that human life anywhere is always a product of two kinds of influences. It is partly a result of the world around us, that*is, of environment, and it is

partly a result of the long story of the past. This is why the story of Man's development is really a combined story of geography and history. It will also be clear that the main influence of all the factors of environment is climate.

Climate, the average kind of weather in a place, the average amount of its heat and moisture, affects first the plant life or vegetation, and it is an interesting study to observe how different plants have so evolved as to maintain their own struggle to live. The cactus in the desert regions has fleshy leaves to store its moisture, and thorns to protect it from hungry and thirsty animals.

As vegetation forms the sole food of many animals and part of the food of other animals and Man, it follows that as climate controls vegetation, so vegetation in turn controls the kind of animal life which characterises certain parts of the world. Thus, the food of primitive Man, whether animal or plant, root, leaf or fruit, depends on the climate of that part of the world in which he happens to live.

Climate affects Man in another way. If the food supply is rare and difficult to obtain, then Man's life becomes a struggle for existence. If the supply is abundant and easy to obtain, then he has time for leisure. He probably becomes indolent, but idleness rapidly grows boring, and ways are devised for occupying leisure. Such men have time to observe and to think ; to make patterns on weapons and tools ; to become mischievous ; to develop their cunning and to become a nuisance or a menace to their fellows. They may have to be restrained or even punished.

This means that in such a land men are in authority over others, that some sort of organisation has been developed, and that some men are busy serving the needs of the organised group of men and women. Such men are no longer struggling for their food, but other men provide it for them, **I** build their houses, and provide their necessities or luxuries. In these ways Man's progress has been aided by a kindly climate.

The climate may, however, be too kind. **Man** does **not** develop best where life is too easy, and he needs sufficient activity to keep fit. The warmer regions, like the beautiful Mediterranean, with their abundance of fruit and natural foods, have provided the leisure from which great civilisations have sprung; but it is the harder climates of north and central Europe, and the similar climates in parts of North America, which have produced the most energetic and active peoples of the world.

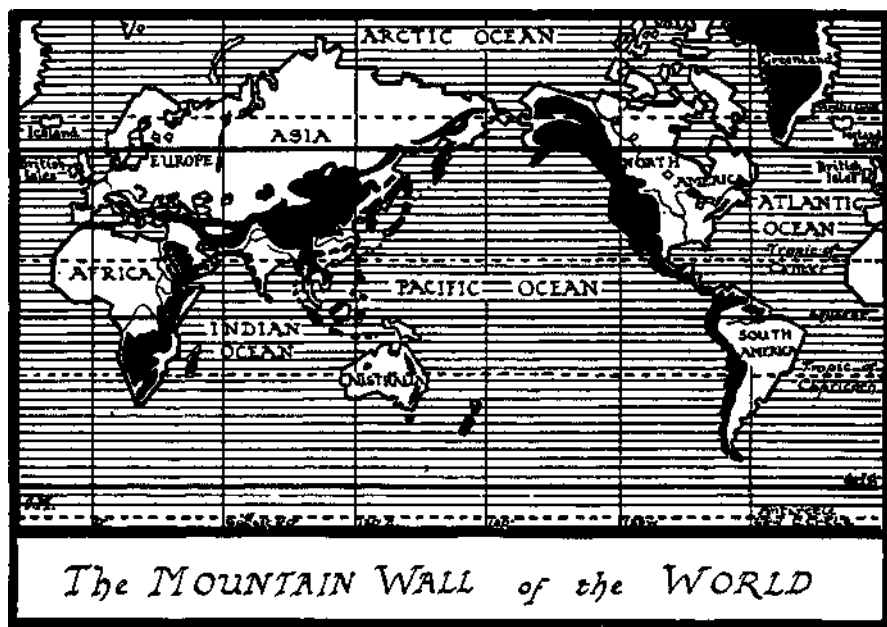


Fig. 6.—The Mountain Wall of the World.

Before continuing the story of Man from where we left him ten thousand years ago, polishing his stone axe and his flint arrow-heads, we shall have to take a bird's-eye view of the world in which he found himself, and try **to understand** something of this important factor of climate.

CHAPTER U

THE WORLD

As WE WATCH the sun as it sinks below the horizon at sunset, it is difficult to realise that it is we who are moving and that the earth on which we are standing is turning away from the light into the darkness of night. Through the dark, cold hours, when our world is sleeping, we continue to spin round in what we call an easterly direction until the earth brings us round again to the sun and to another day.

At first the sun's rays only glance over the horizon, almost parallel to the gently sloping earth. By noon it is warmer, for we have turned to face the sun, and it is always hottest when the sun's rays are most nearly vertical. In our part of the world the sun is never directly overhead, even at noon, but always in the south. If we were to travel south, therefore, we should come to a place where the sun was really overhead at noon. It might not be noon when we arrived there, but if we stayed there for twenty-four hours and let the earth carry us right round, we should have travelled along a circular path on which every point had passed under the sun directly overhead at midday.

If we hated the heat so much that we hurried on south, we should in time reach the cooler lands again, and find the midday sun behind us, in the north. If we followed our shadows and still continued south, we should reach at last the frozen seas of the Antarctic, where the sun never rises very far above the horizon.

Thus, it is easy to understand why the earth has a belt of great heat round its centre, like a girdle, where the sun is quite or nearly overhead. This belt is called the Torrid

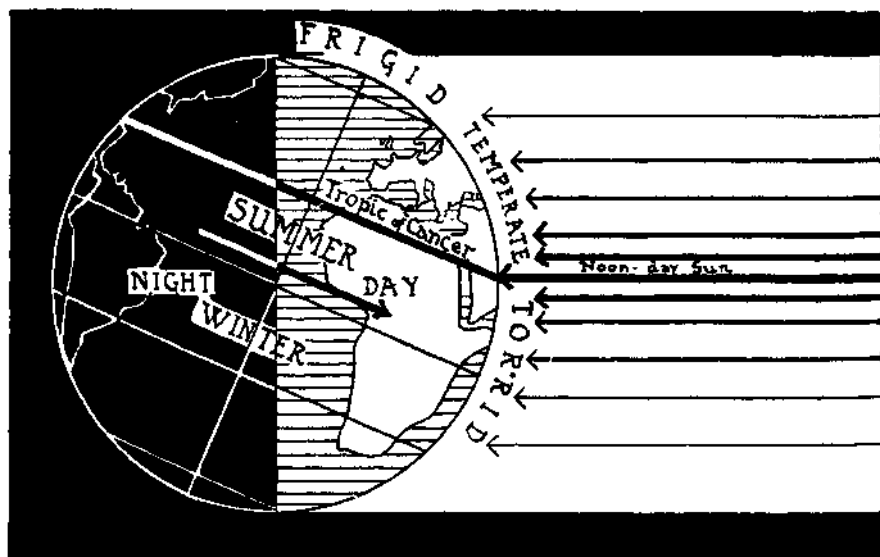


Fig. 7A.—The June Solstice.
(See also Fig; 8, p. 15.)

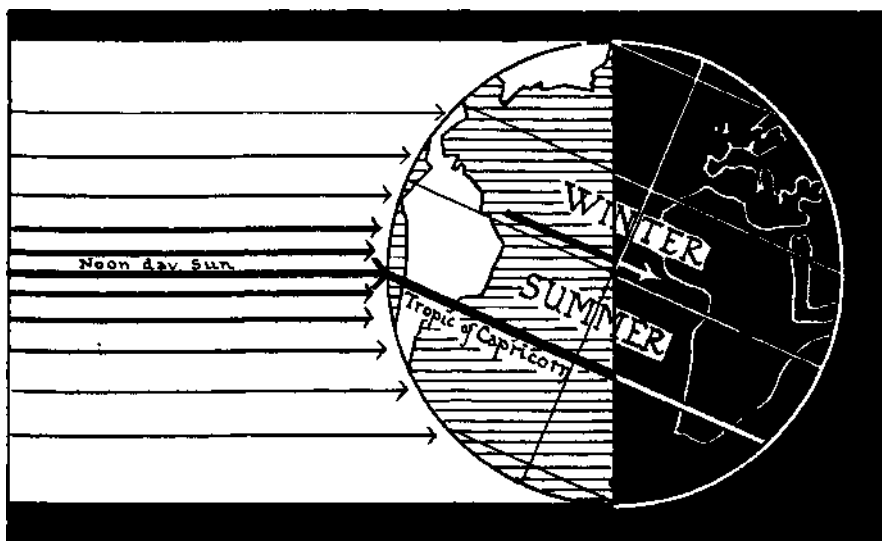


Fig. 7B.—The December Solstice,
(See also Fig. 8, p. 15.)

Zone, because "torrid" means burnt or parched. On each side of it, in the northern and southern halves of the world, is a cooler belt, called the Temperate Zone, which grows gradually colder until it reaches the great frozen circles of snow and ice which, like enormous white caps, surround the North and South Poles. These frozen wastes are called the Frigid Zones, for "frigid" is really the same word as "frozen," and means "stiffened with cold."

There is no vegetation in these barren regions, not even moss or lichen, yet even in the Arctic North, Man has learned to live, but we shall have to wait until the next chapter to discover how he has learned to adapt himself to his cruel environment.

All that we have said about the earth would still be true if the earth were spinning like an upright top as it travels round the sun. If this were true, then the midday sun would be always exactly overhead somewhere on the Equator, which is the line we draw on maps and globes to divide the world into two equal or *equated* parts. There would be no seasons, and every day, in every part of the world, the sun at noon would be in the same position in the sky. This we know is not what actually happens.

Because the earth rotates on a sloping axis, as a top often does, one half of the world is sometimes turned towards the sun sufficiently to make a great deal of difference to *it*. This fact enables one half of the world to be gradually warmed and to have a Spring and Summer, while the other half, turned away a little from the sun, is cooling through its Autumn and Winter.

If we pretend to stop the earth in its long journey round the sun it will give us time to examine what is really happening, for in imagination we can even stay the earth. We will choose June 21st, because it is our longest day, our midsummer, when the sun seems highest in our sky.

The diagram shows what an enormous difference the

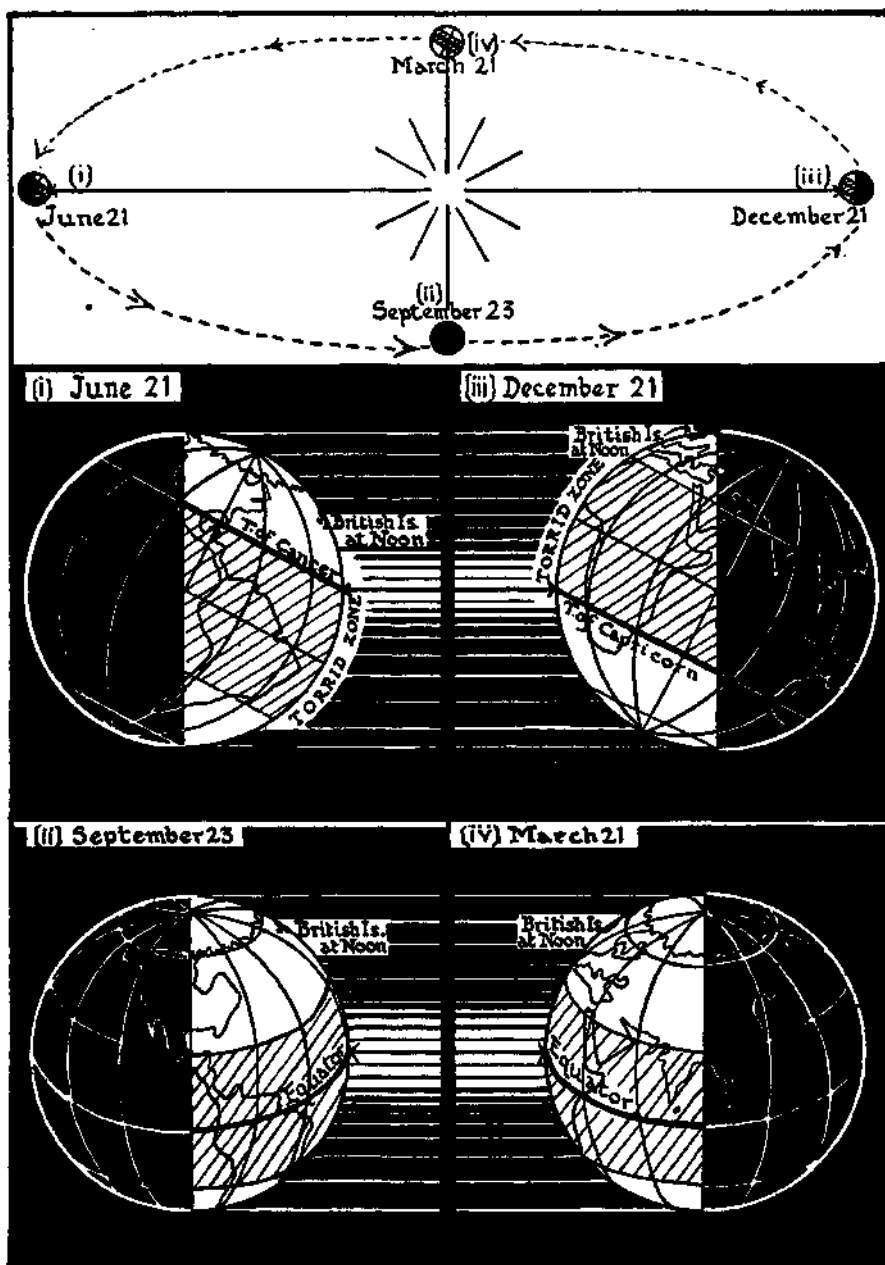


Fig. 8.—The Solstices and Equinoxes.

The solstices (the word means "the sun stands still") are the points over the tropics where the sun is about to turn back in its apparent journey.

Equinox ("equal night") is the time when the sun is apparently crossing the equator, making the night equal to the day.

slope of the earth's axis really makes. The northern half of the world is well turned towards the sun, whose direct overhead rays are not over the Equator, but over another line in our hemisphere.¹ This line is called the Tropic of Cancer, and the word "tropic" is used because it means a "turning." The Temperate Zone is being warmed and will continue to grow hotter still, for the sun will only gradually move to the south again. Even the snow of the Arctic region begins to melt, and the ice to break and float away into warmer seas.

Meanwhile the southern hemisphere is turned away from the sun, so much so that its rays cannot reach the South Pole at all! For months it will be dark in this dreary, frozen, cruel region.

Now, if we start the earth on its journey again, we can let it travel until December 21st, when it will have completed half its annual distance. Then it will be on the opposite side of the sun, and will have travelled about three hundred million miles. The southern hemisphere will now be turned towards the sun, which is overhead at noon on a line south of the Equator called the Tropic of Capricorn. In the northern hemisphere it is midwinter, and the Arctic is plunged into its long night. Even the North Temperate Zone is cold, and migratory birds have flown south to find again a kinder climate.

Rapidly we let the earth continue its journey, and by March 21st the midday sun will be directly overhead at the Equator again, preparing to reawaken the northern hemisphere into spring and new life.

If we could take a bird's-eye view of the world, from the North Pole to the Equator, or even farther south, in the ancient days before Man started to cut down forests and to build towns, we should see many things which we ought now to expect to see, and some which would surprise us. Gradually, as we journeyed south, the frozen wastes called

¹ "Hemi," "demi," and "semi" all mean "half."

Tundra would begin to produce tufts of moss; then an occasional struggling shrub would appear ; then more shrubs and even a tree. The trees would increase in number until we found ourselves over the great cone-bearing forests of pines, firs, and larches. A great belt of these stretches, wherever there is land, right round the world. Everything about these trees illustrates the process of evolution, for only trees with their long straight stems, their cone-shaped, drooping branches, and their hard, needle-like foliage could survive the heavy snows and fierce winters of this fringe around the Arctic Circle.

In the forests live fur-covered animals ; there are silver foxes, whose coats turn nearly white in winter, the beautifully marked white ermine, the dark-brown sable, and the weasel-like marten. Beavers live in and near the rivers, and brown, black, and grizzly bears live in the forests and in the hills.

Farther south, as we really enter the Temperate Zone, new kinds of trees appear. They are trees such as we all know and can still see growing, though the great forests have gone. These trees shed their leaves in the autumn, which for this reason is called " the Fall " in North America, where they have the same kind of trees as we have. For the same reason these trees are called " deciduous," which, like " decay," means to fall off.

These trees need a great deal of moisture, and therefore grow only in lands sufficiently near to the sea. Farther inland are the great grass plains which for thousands of years have stretched across central Europe and Asia and the similar land in North America. In Europe and Asia they are called Steppes ; in America they are called Prairies.

As we should expect, the grass begins to look brown and coarse as we approach the Torrid Zone, and finally disappears, except for an occasional oasis, as we reach the deserts of the " parched " lands. Though the grass-lands turn to deserts long before we leave the Temperate Zone^ the forests do not. The sea not only brings moisture to the land it washes by



Fig. 9.—Vegetation Belts of the World.

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filling the winds with rain clouds, but it warms the land in winter and keeps it cool in summer, for water changes its temperature more slowly than does the land. This is why there is such a beautiful climate and vegetation round the Mediterranean.

Another surprise is that the Torrid Zone is not all burnt and "parched, but as we approach the Equator great wet jungles of tall grass and trees, then more massive trees, appear, until we discover the dense forests of giant trees on the Equator itself. Their huge trunks are entwined with great climbing plants which try to pierce through the dense foliage to reach the hidden light. Everywhere it is wet and hot, like a fragment left over from the Age of Swamps, and here too are reptiles, giant snakes coiled round the thick branches, huge elephants, monkeys, and strange undeveloped men. Why in the very heart of the Torrid Zone should we find the world's wettest region, and consequently the world's most vigorous vegetation?

In a room, the ceiling, unless it has been freshly whitened, will probably look dustiest over the radiator farthest away from the windows. This is because hot air expands and is therefore less densely packed than cold air. This means that it is relatively lighter than the colder air which will rush in through the open window and push up the hot air to the ceiling. This is what happens in the Torrid Zone. The air is hottest when the sun is directly overhead, somewhere between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. Colder air comes rushing from each side, north and south, in the form of winds. Owing to the spinning of the earth these winds are left behind a little, and blow towards the tropics from the north-east and south-east. As they rise when they meet over the hot land the moisture with which *they* are laden is shed in the great *torrential* downpours which **cause the** jungles and the dense equatorial forests.

For similar reasons, great winds, icily cold, rush from the Arctic region towards the Temperate Zone, bringing snow, hail, and cold rain.

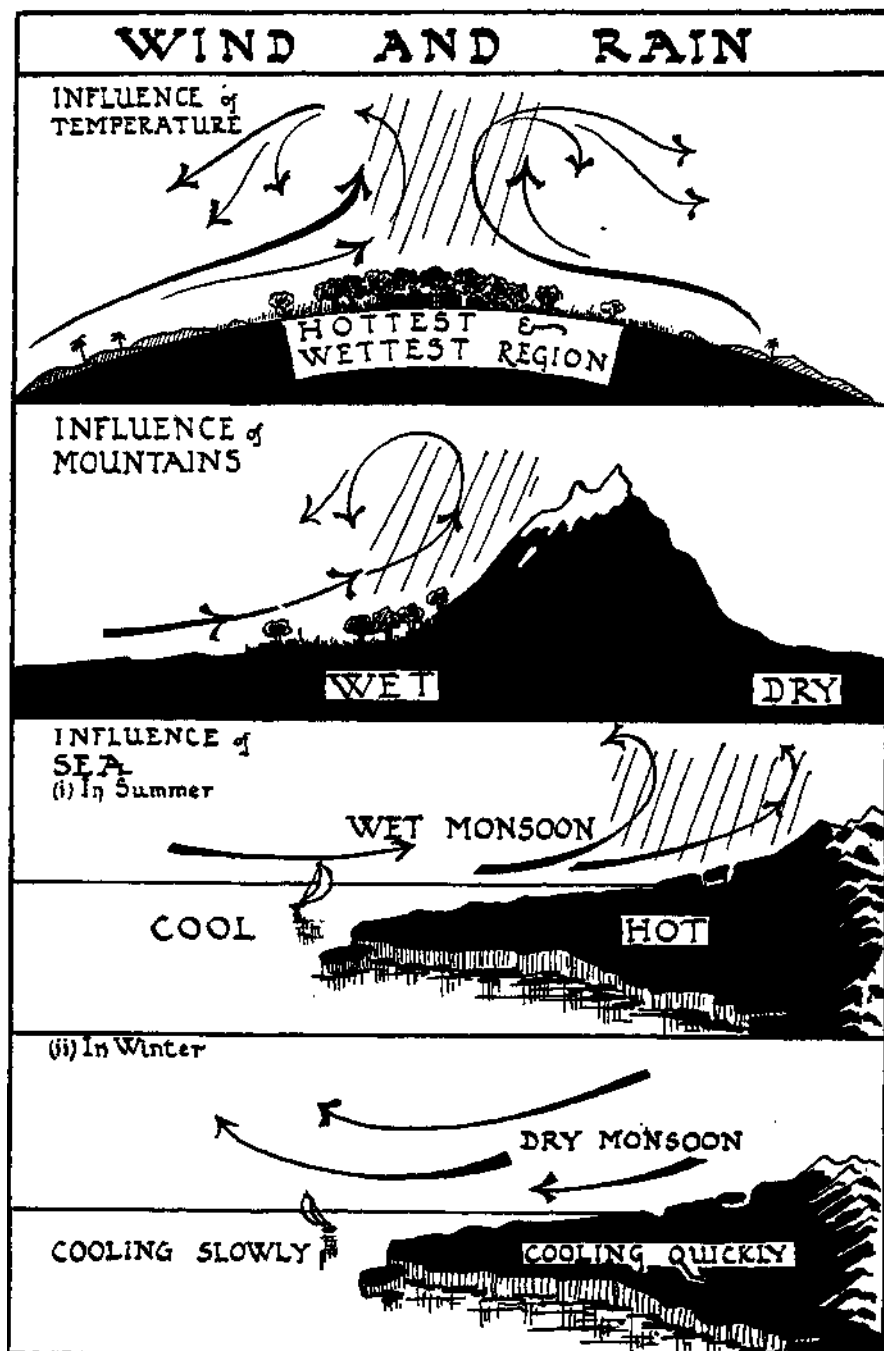


Fig. 10.—Wind and Rain,

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" The north wind doth blow,
And we shall have snow."

It has been written that " the wind bloweth where it listeth; no man knoweth whence it cometh, or whither it goeth." But these two wind systems, as they are called, are very regular and easy to understand. What happens to the rising air over the wet regions ? The diagram will help to explain how it returns to replace the denser, relatively heavier air over the dry regions, where it keeps falling and pushing up the expanded air of the wet regions. For this reason a third system of wind blows over the Temperate Zone from the *south-west*. As these winds, called the " westerlies," cross the sea, they gather the moisture which falls over our land. We always expect rain when the wind comes from the south-west.

All kinds of things help to modify these wind systems and to cause minor changes in climate. Only two are of great importance, at least to our story : the position of mountains, and the position of the sea. Mountains act as a barrier to winds which have to rise in order to cross them. Away from the warmed earth, they shed their moisture, which falls as rain on one side of the mountains. The other side is therefore sheltered and dry.

The sea is important because it changes its temperature more slowly than the land does. It may have been noticed at the seaside that the sea breeze of the day-time, when the land is warmer than the sea, changes in the evening to a land breeze, because the sea and the air over it are warmer than the rapidly cooling land,

This makes a great difference to the lands round **India**, where there is sufficient sea round the lands which jut **into** the Torrid Zone to cause a six-month sea breeze **and** a six-month land breeze. In July the sun is overhead just **south** of the Tropic of Cancer, and India, already grilled from **south** to north, has to endure the experience again as the **midday** sun, directly overhead, travels, from north to **south**. **The**

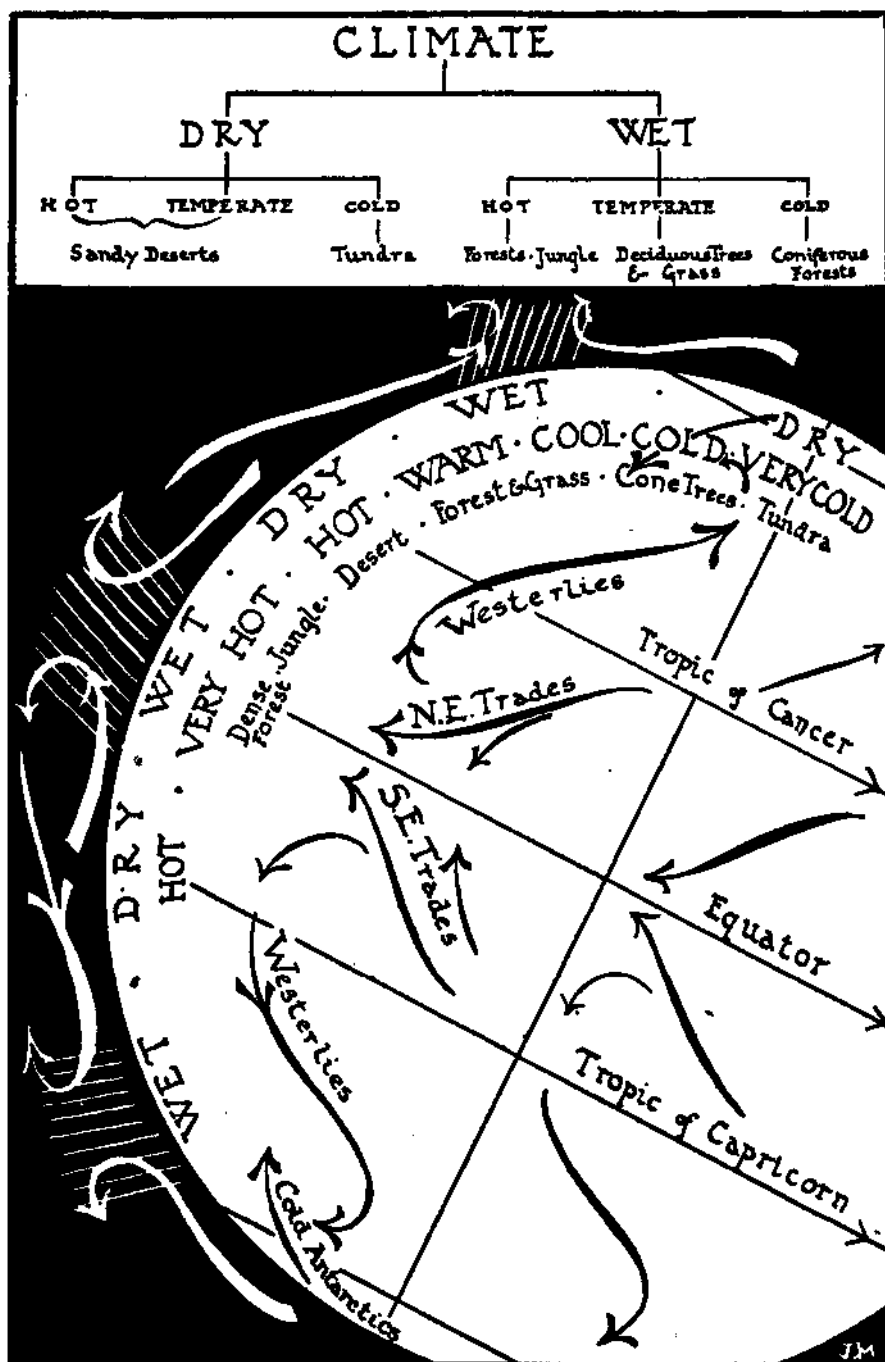


Fig. 11.—The World's Climate.

south-east wind which we have already discussed turns aside from the cooler seas and rushes towards the hotter lands.

The opposite happens when the southern hemisphere is turned towards the sun, for then the lands of Southern Asia

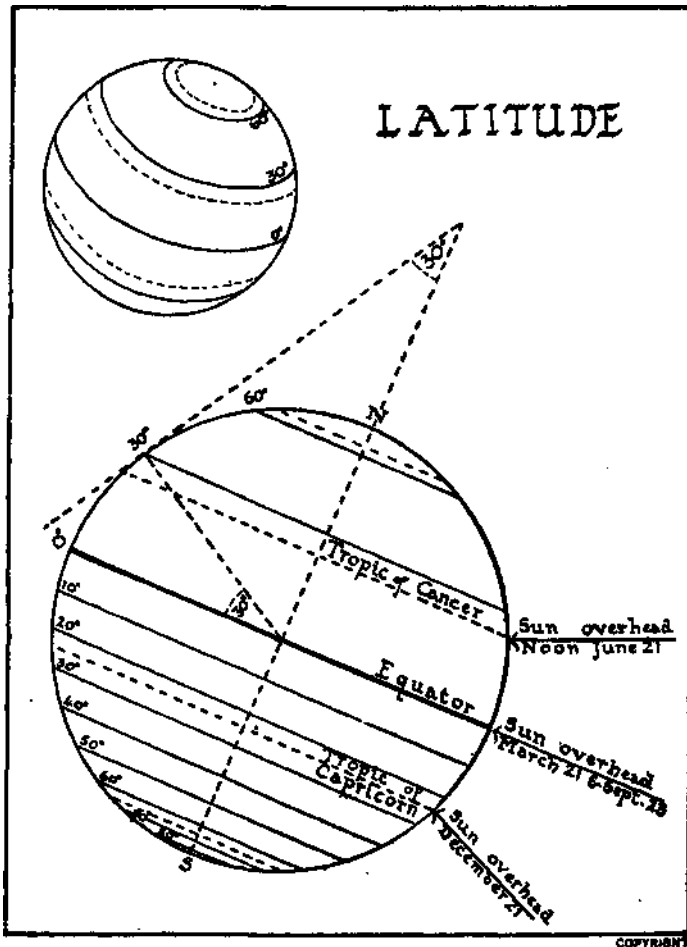


Fig. 12.—Diagram to illustrate the meaning of, and method of calculating, Latitude.

cool more rapidly than the seas, and the winds blow from the land. These special winds are called monsoons ("monsoon" means a "season") because they cause a long wet season and a long dry season in the lands where they blow.

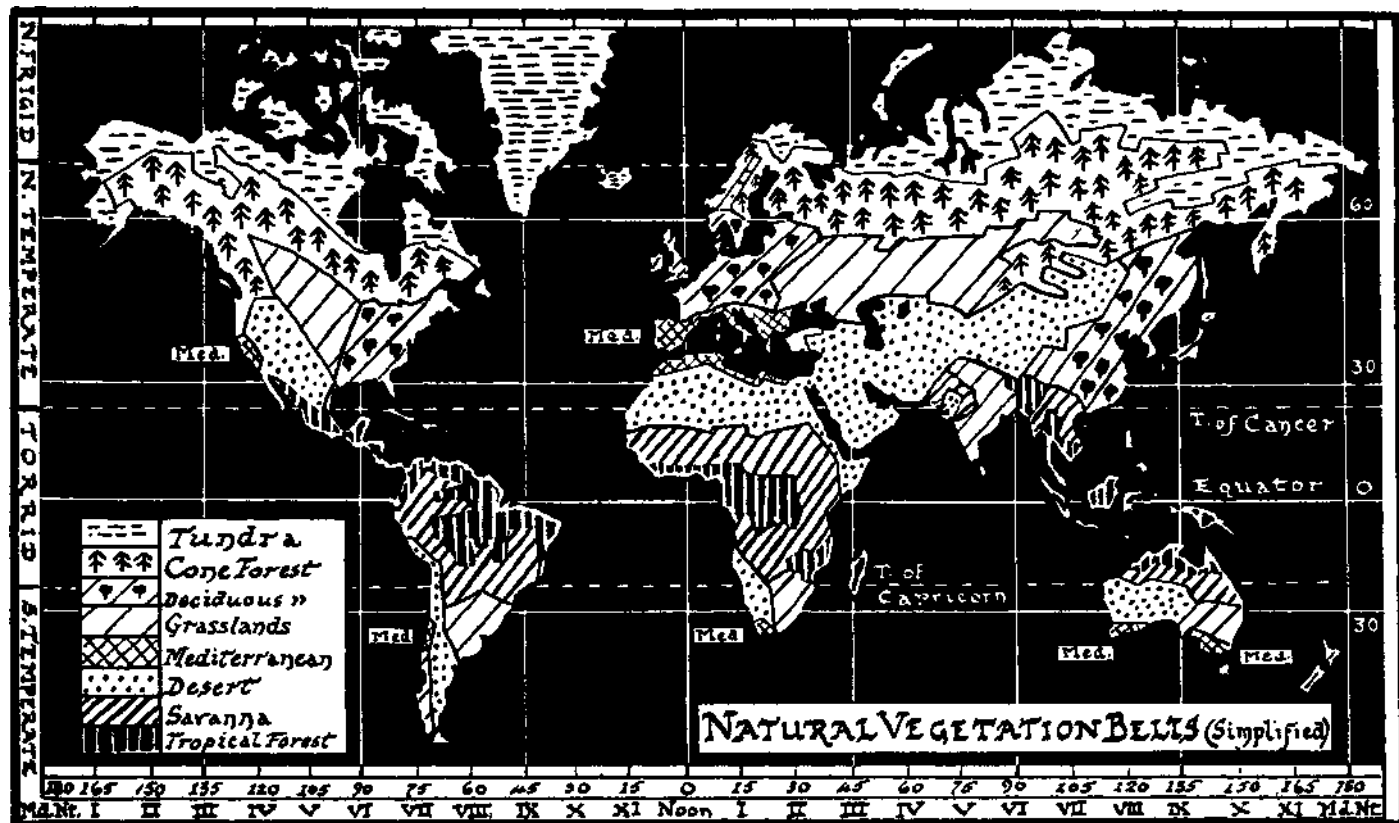


Fig. 13.—Simplified Map of the World showing Natural Vegetation and Climatic Belts, the Zones, and Relative Times when it is noon at Greenwich.

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We ought now to turn to the map of the world on page 24, which is really a summary of all the things we have tried to learn in this chapter. We have been trying to think of the world all the time as a globe, spinning in space, and travelling round the sun. It is, of course, impossible to spread out the surface of a globe on to a flat piece of paper, but if we always remember the real shape of the world, and the causes and effects of its climates, then maps will be the most useful and the most interesting part of your study.

Only one more thing remains before we turn to the map. If we were lost out at sea or in the middle of a desert, and noticed at midday that the sun was directly overhead, we should know now that we were somewhere between the tropics. If we knew the date, we should know exactly how far north or south of the Equator we were. For example, if it were June 21st, we would be somewhere on the Tropic of Cancer. Wonderful use has been made of this fact. By drawing circles round the globe and numbering them north and south of the Equator, which starts at "O," it is possible to say exactly how far north or south of the Equator we are by measuring the angle of the sun's rays at noon, *if we know the date*. These parallel circles are called lines of latitude (which means "width"). The instrument used to measure the angle the sun's rays make with the earth is called a sextant.

But this only tells us on which parallel we are. How could we discover on which particular spot on that huge circle we happened to be? We could do this, too, if we knew what time it was in England at the moment. If, for example, it is midnight in England and noon where we are standing, measuring the angle of the sun's rays, then we must be on the opposite side of the world to England. If it is 6 a.m. in England, we are a quarter way round the world. As the earth spins round once in twenty-four hours, it follows that there is one hour's difference in time for every twenty-fourth part of the distance round the earth. The earth turns through one twenty-fourth of its complete spin in one

hour. This is, of course, true whatever line of latitude we may be on, for the earth travels as a whole—it cannot leave one part behind. A twenty-fourth of the Equator is a distance of over a thousand miles, so twenty-four divisions are not sufficiently accurate. Actually we divide the earth into 360 equal sections, like the portions of an orange, and draw 180 great circles, all passing like great hoops through the points at the ends of the axis round which the earth rotates, the North and the South Poles. These circles cut each line of latitude into 360 equal parts and are separated by four minutes of time. This is because four minutes are a fifteenth of an hour, and we have divided each twenty-fourth into fifteen more parts. These lines are called lines of longitude, which means lines of "length," The diagram, which represents the world cut through the middle, will help to make clear why these lines are numbered in degrees.

If we divide the circumference of a circle into a number of equal parts and join these points to the centre of the circle, the angles between the lines will remain the same, however big or small the circle may be. The circles made by the lines of latitude are smaller and smaller as we approach the Poles, but the angles which the sections between the lines of longitude make at the centre of the earth always remain the same. They are all measured from the line of longitude which passes through Greenwich, near London.

It is an interesting fact that the spot on the earth's surface from which all positions are calculated, the spot where the "O" degree of longitude cuts the Equator, is a point in the sea, off the coast of Africa.

CHAPTER HI

PRIMITIVE MEN AND THEIR WORLDS

The Eskimos.—Beside a hole in the ice which covered the frozen sea, a man, short and fat, lay flat on the hard snow. A dull, greenish, gloomy twilight made the dreary, silent wastes more miserable, but he was used to that. For many weeks it was never light, so he did not expect it to be.

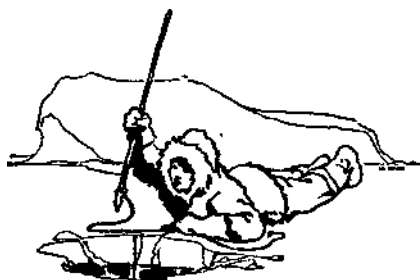


Fig. 15.—An Eskimo watching for seal at a hole in the ice.

Very little of the actual man could be seen, for he was covered from head to foot with skins of animals, roughly shaped into clothing and worn inside out. But his face looked plump and brown, simple, content, and patient.

He needed patience, for his task was like that of a cat when it waits for its food to appear through a mouse-hole. He was waiting to catch a seal. Seals live on the fish down under the ice, but they have to come to the surface to breathe, and they break holes in the ice for that purpose.

This is the Arctic region round the northern end of the world's axis, beyond the pine forests—the land which is sometimes turned away from the sun altogether for months at a time, and is never sufficiently turned towards it for any vegetation to grow. Food is therefore very difficult to obtain, and only fish, or animals that can live on fish or on the fish-eating animals, can live at all. Such animals are the seal, the walrus, the polar bear, dogs, and men. Sometimes

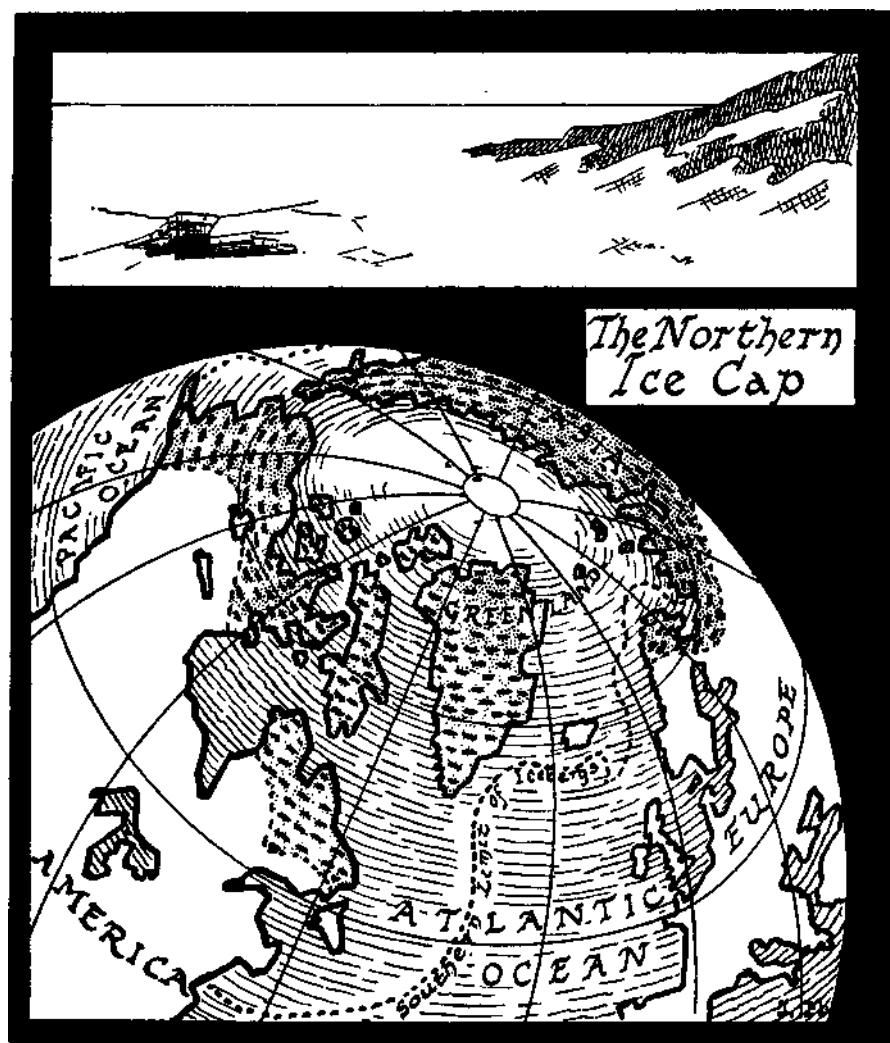


Fig. 16.—The Northern Ice-cap.

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dead whales drift north when the ice melts, and form a variation in the Eskimos' diet, for hunger does not permit them to be too particular in their choice of food.

At last the patience of the waiting Eskimo is rewarded! His short harpoon or spear is hurled into the hole and the wounded seal plunges painfully away. Escape is impossible,

for a long leather line is fixed to the harpoon, and the expert hunter, walking back a few yards, allows the animal to exhaust itself before he begins to pull it in, a meal for himself and his family. To-day, and thousands of years ago, the same kind of man, wearing the same kind of clothing, hunted seal in just the same kind of way. The word "eskimo" means "seal-eater."

He possesses little besides his spear, his fishing tackle, a tiny skin-covered canoe which he calls a "kayak," a sledge, and a few bone tools. The only raw materials the ice deserts provide are whalebone, the ivory tusks of the walrus, skins, bones, sinews and oil, stones, and occasionally a piece of



Fig. 17.—An Eskimo in a kayak.

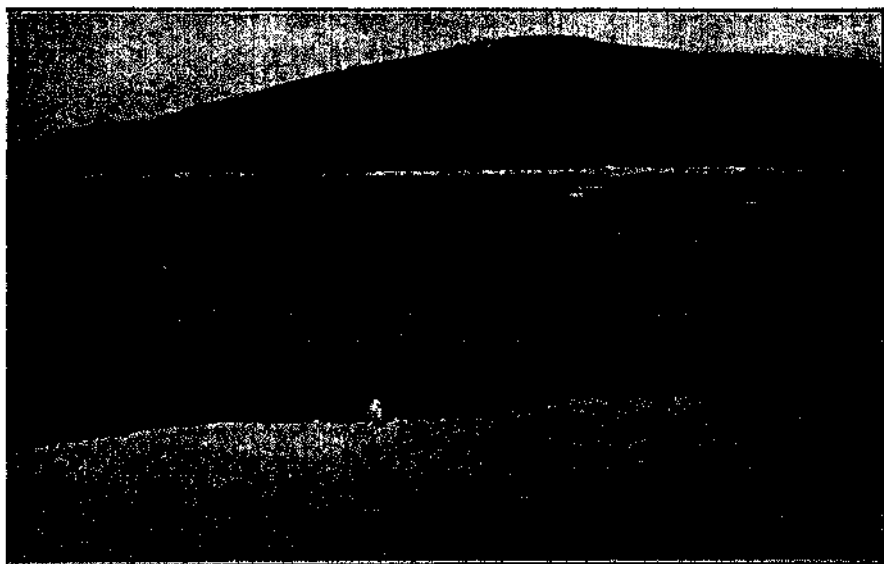
drifted timber from the distant south. With bone needles and sinew thread the women make the clothing, the tent, and the covering for the kayak. The tent, or "tupic," is light and

easily moved. The edges are kept down by heavy stones, for the winds are often fiercely strong.

The winter home is a more solid shelter, made from large stones, driftwood, whalebone, and earth. There is little inside except a heap of skins, the primitive tools already described, and the curious little oil lamp which is their greatest treasure.

The life of the women and children is hard, and in comparison with ours, dull and monotonous. The whole life consists in obtaining food and shelter and in making the things necessary for these purposes. The children have to be nourished until they are able to support themselves. It is very much like the lives of the birds and wild animals. The nest is made for a season. The mother remains there with the young ones while the father hunts for food. But is this very different from the lives of most of us ?

The Eskimo cannot live any other kind of life or do anything else with his life. With him the task of living exhausts everything that his world provides. It is an exact balance between his needs and what his environment produces, with nothing to spare. Everything is put to some use, and the total is just enough to keep Man living. Invention ceased when Man had discovered how to make his tools, the boat, the tent, the sledge, and most wonderful of all,



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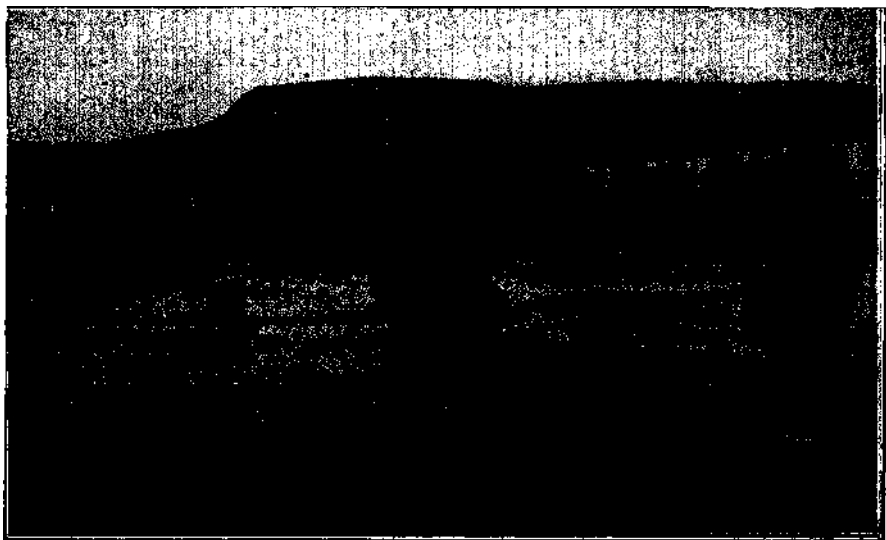
Fig. 18.—The dreary waste which is the Eskimo's world.

the oil lamp. Art is limited to the carving of little ivory and bone toys.

But there are some compensations even in this tiny world. There is nothing to covet, nothing to accumulate, so there are no wars. Quarrels are limited to private disagreements. The whole world within reach is of the same kind, so there is no temptation to wander; there is nothing to create dissatisfaction, for the Eskimo knows of nothing different with which to contrast his world.

So life goes on, placidly, silently, with no change possible

from within, and little except curiosity or a desire to learn more about the world to tempt people from the distant worlds beyond the frozen horizon. One such traveller has added a rather pathetic touch to our knowledge of this kind of life, reminding us that under whatever conditions men live, they remain very much alike. There are no flowers in this colourless land, and he tells us that when an Eskimo child dies its ivory toys are buried with it.



[Will F. Taylor

Fig. 19.—* Gradually the deserts of ice pass into the great forests of cone-bearing trees."

Laplanders.—In the icy regions in the north of Europe and Asia, known as the Tundra, live a similar people called Lapps or Laplanders. Their land is a little farther south, so moss and lichen grow in sheltered corners. This does not seem a great matter, but actually it is of great importance and makes all the difference to the life of Man in this region, for reindeer can feed on even such scanty vegetation. The Lapps have long ago learned to tame the reindeer, which provide them with milk, pull their sledges, and, when dead, provide meat, skin, bone, and sinew. In the southernmost parts of the Eskimos¹ land, where mosses begin to appear, an animal

similar to the reindeer lives, called the caribou. But he is untamable, and in recent years efforts have been made to introduce reindeer, into Northern Greenland and into similar regions to provide a new valuable productive element into the Eskimos' tiny world.

The Hunters of the Pine Forests and Prairies.—Gradually the deserts of ice pass into the great forests of cone-bearing trees which spread like a fringe all round their southern border, wherever there is land.

These forests are hundreds of miles wide and, except near the sea, gradually merge into the great grassy plains called prairies in North America and steppes in Europe and Asia.

It is on the southern border of the American cone forests that for thousands of years a strange people lived an undisturbed life. These people were the Red Indians, and a similar people, living just the same sort of life, were the Ostiaks of Siberia, on the edge of the Steppes.

Cold, biting winds from the north were the only evidence of a different world beyond, for these winds came laden with the heavy snows which lay like a mantle over everything through the long wintry months. Picture the tall dark trees, pines, firs, and larches, with their hard, needle-like foliage and curious down-sweeping branches, spreading from straight, mast-like trunks. One can imagine the squirrels feeding like the birds on the berries and nuts which grow in profusion in the shelter of the cone trees. Bilberries, crowberries, cranberries, and many others provide the furry world with autumn and winter food. Man, too, in this world is a gatherer of berries and nuts, and of roots and leaves of plants.

But he is not merely a gatherer. Wherever there are grass-eating or berry-eating animals, there are also bigger animals which feed on them. Bears, lynxes, and martens, all of which can climb trees, feed on the squirrels and the birds. Below there are foxes, beavers, and skunks, and all these animals are fur-covered as a protection against the intense cold. So they are worth the hunting 1 Not only do they

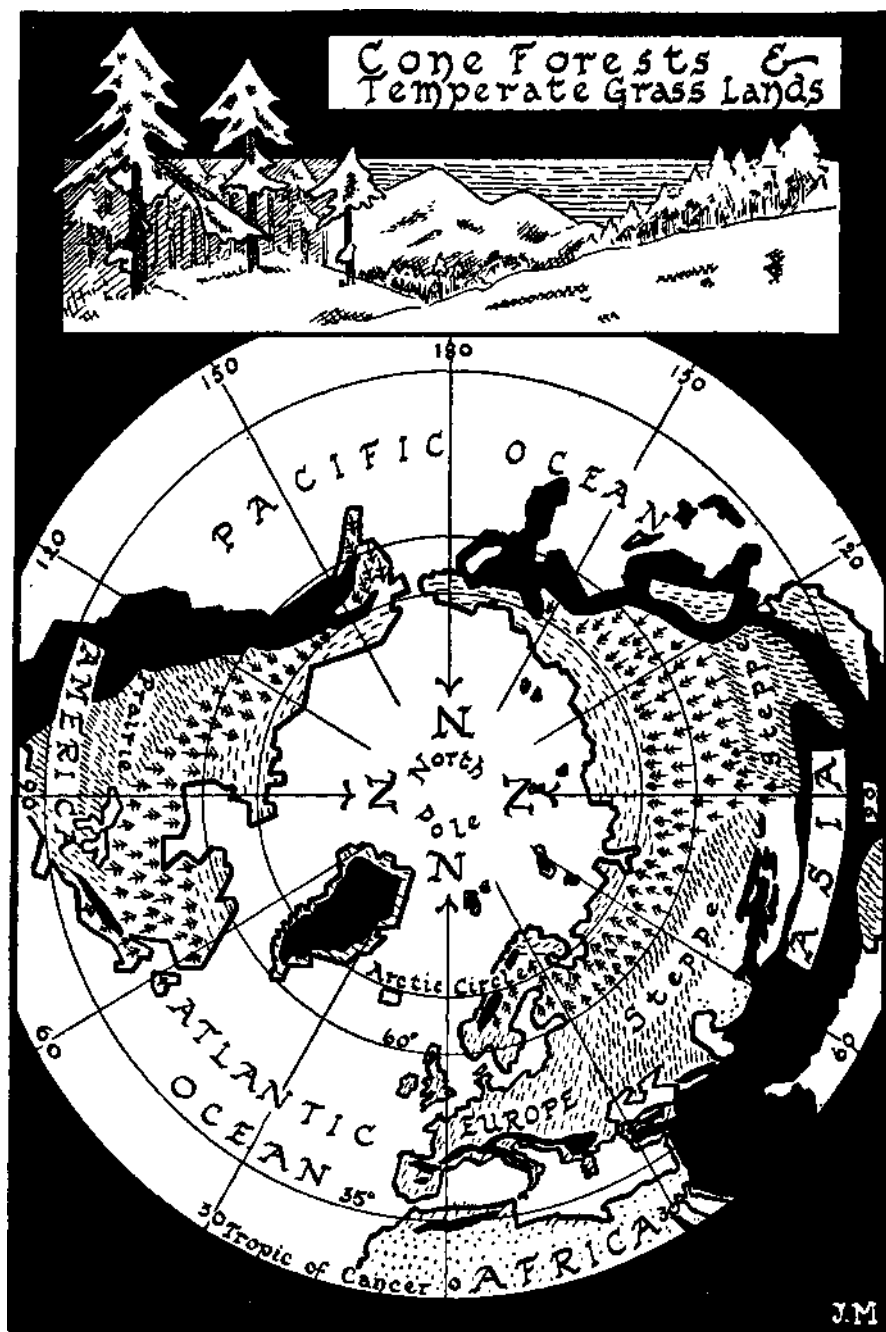


Fig. 20.—Areas, in the Northern Hemisphere, of cone forests and temperate grasslands.

supply Man with food but, like the seal of the north, they provide him with clothing and shelter, and material for a multitude of uses.

The Red Indian and the Ostiak, then, are essentially hunters and, as they cannot hunt for long in one place, they live a roaming life. They have to have therefore as little equipment as possible. Their home is the rapidly erected wigwam or tepee. Sometimes it is made of skins, like the tupic of the Eskimos. Sometimes it is made of the bark of the birch tree. By sewing strips of this together the women of the tribe make baskets, cradles, dishes, and all sorts of simple articles. If the hunters should succeed in catching a bison, its great skin would save a great deal of sewing when a new tent had to be made.



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Fig. 21. -Typical scenery of the Red Indian's world.

There are many dangers in forest life, even for those who live only on the forest edge. The people of such lands therefore usually keep together in families or groups of families called tribes. This tribal form of life, and the dependence of its members on skill in hunting, have great effects on the way such people develop. It is sure to happen that some men will become more skilled in hunting than

others, and that one man will assert his authority over the rest. He will become the leader in the hunt, and as there must be no division among the hunters the habit will grow of accepting his authority without question. Instead of the equality that exists among the people of those lands where there is no danger so great as that of starvation, tribes of hunters become organised under chieftains. Once this has begun, qualities of leadership and qualities of obedience begin to appear. Pride in the possession of a fearless courage, pride of skill and of achievement, customs regulating the

relation between the chieftain and the others, begin to develop. The chieftain is distinguished by outward signs of his greatness, such as more decorative clothing and a more elaborate tent.



Fig. 22.—A Red Indian encampment showing teepees.

The young male members of the tribe, instead of merely acquiring the various skills as best they can, have to gain a fixed

proficiency before they are allowed to hunt with their elders. They have to win their place in the team, but the game they are playing is the game of life. They have to learn how to track animals and to recognise from the tracks the particular kind of animal they are tracking. They learn to move silently, to recognise the presence of danger, to discipline themselves, and to accept the customs and traditions of the tribe.

In these regions life is taken very seriously; it is a life of hard rules and stern discipline.

Life is especially hard*for the women and children.

Their home is the wandering tent, so there is little possibility of comfort. Everything they wish to keep they have to carry, and the children may have to be carried, too. Children are of no use to the hunter and are so many more for him to supply with food. Their noisy presence is a danger, and

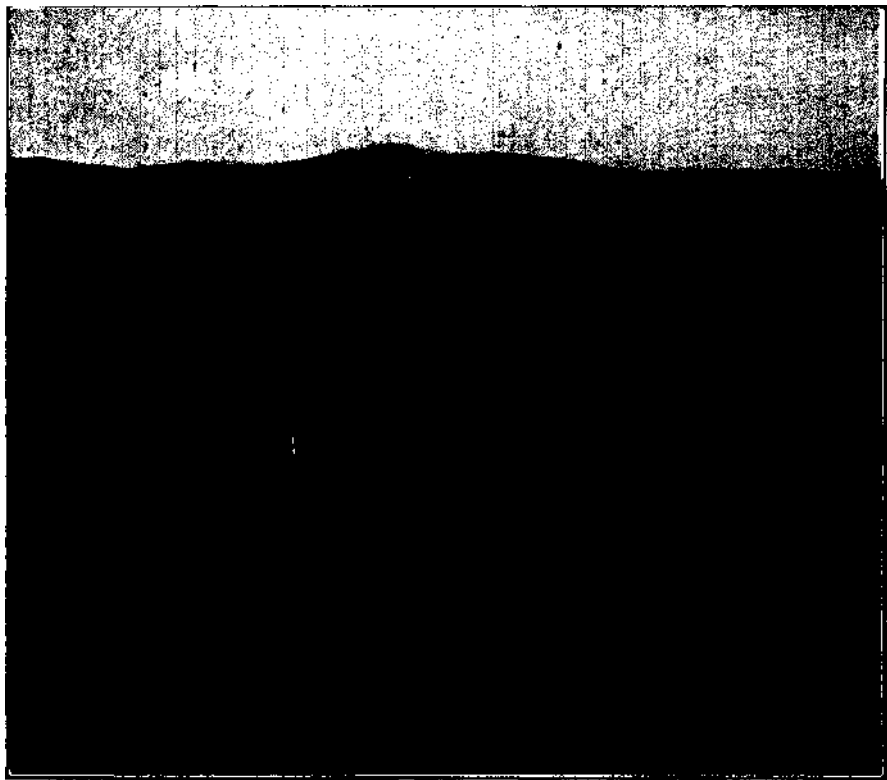


Fig. 23.—Typical scenery of the jungle world.

[Will F Taylor

should they stray into the forest and be lost or eaten, most of the primitive tribes would not worry very much. It is easy to understand why, in such tribes, it is the male that is the more important, and why there is so little chance for the development of all those things which make a real home.

Again, just as in the frozen lands of the north, a balance has been achieved between Manx's needs and Nature's store.

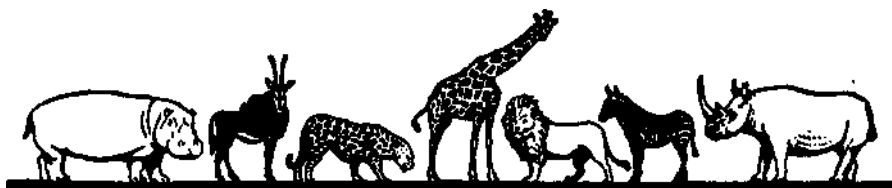


Fig. 24.—Animals of the jungle.

with nothing to spare, so, unless some new element is brought in from the outside world, there is little chance of further progress.

In continuing our journey south, we can pass over the rest of the North Temperate Zone, where Man could more easily develop, and look for a moment at some of the primitive men in the hot, wet lands beyond the deserts.

The Men of the Jungle.—In the dense tropical grasslands or jungles, plants and grasses grow higher than Man, for vegetation thrives on heat and moisture. Here live the grass-eating animals which can run fast enough to escape from the terrible flesh-eaters. The thin-legged antelopes, gazelles, and giraffes always seem to look afraid. Checked by danger in the act of eating, they swallow whole as much as they can in the moment of safety, and then rush away to "chew the cud" in a safer place. That is why all grass-eating animals, such as the sheep and the cow, have developed this ability, for in their wild state it was their only way of obtaining sufficient food.

In the jungle they have many terrible enemies. Lions and tigers, hidden by their colour in the tawny grasses, wait for the prey which they must catch in order to live. Snakes, too, are waiting for food.

And so is Man.

Here Man's struggle with Nature is hardest of all. Able

to eat almost any kind of food, it is rather surprising that Man cannot live on grass. Nor can he move sufficiently fast or far to outdistance the other creatures which share with him the dangers of the jungle. Nor by his single strength could he master the flesh-eating animals, which have no objection to Man as a change of diet.

Yet even here Man does live, but he can do so only by capturing alive some of the grass-eaters, and by keeping them to supply his needs. All animals need water and, while they are drinking, Man has learned to capture them. Round his little group of huts he has built fences to protect himself and his family from the flesh-eating animals, and in this enclosure he keeps the animals who keep him alive. He must be, too, a great hunter, fearless and skilled.

Here again there will be chiefs, tribes, rules, and strange ceremonies, and curious traditions. But there are great differences between these peoples and those of the cold northern grass-lands. Something is missing of the hardy, stern discipline of the dwellers of the prairies, partly because the jungle-dwellers do not live a wandering life, but more especially because of the effect of living in a hot climate. We ourselves feel less vigorously active in summer than in winter.



Fig. 25.—The world of the pygmies of the Congo forests.

The Pygmies of the Tropical Forests.—Farther south still, and near to the sea, the jungles grow thicker and wilder, with increasing numbers of giant trees, until they merge into the dense forests of the world's hottest and wettest

lands. In these dark, almost impenetrable, tropical forests, surrounded by gloom, danger, and mystery, lives a strange race of tiny men and women called pygmies.

Their world is really smaller even than that of the men of the cold lands, for everywhere seems always the same, and the forest stretches on and on in whatever direction they might wander, as though for ever and ever.

The giant trees grow so vast in this strange land that only a gloomy, greenish light can penetrate their dense foliage. Massive creeping plants have climbed their gigantic trunks in an effort to reach the light. Here, too, are berries and roots for the gathering; there are birds and eggs, fat



Fig. 26.—Pygmy huts.

caterpillars, and monkeys.

In the hollow trunks of the trees, hidden in the dense undergrowth, or curled round branches, are the deadly pythons. Wild elephants crash through the forest, making tracks for lesser beasts and men. Everywhere there is danger, but the

pygmies are used to it and know no other life. They fear nothing except that which is new and strange.

The monkey is their favourite food, and they are expert in killing it with their poisoned darts, shot through blow-pipes. The monkey, captured and slain, is bound with the strong strands which the climbing plants provide, tied to the pygmy's back, and taken then to his hut.

The huts are clustered together in a little clearing. They are round, like beehives, and cunningly made. First, a number of pliant saplings are fixed in the ground in a circle. These are then bent inwards until the tops of them meet in the centre of the circle, where they are fastened together with more strands from the useful creeping plants. Some

of these are then intertwined round the frame of bent saplings and the spaces are filled with large leaves. Reddish earth is beaten down to form the floor, and the hut is complete.

Some forest tribes have built crude homes in the trees, like the nests of gigantic birds, but there is no other difference in their lives from those spent on the ground.



Fig. 27.—Typical scenery of the tropical forest.

[*Wide World*

Even here Man has succeeded in bending Nature to his will sufficiently to live, but here again there is nothing to spare. His whole life is taken up with the task of living: the finding of food, the provision of shelter, and the avoidance of danger. These curious, dwarf-like men have learned even to trap and slay the great wild elephants. This they do by digging pits in the elephants⁵ tracks, and covering them with loose branches and grass.

Because they live in the midst of danger, their habits are like those of the wild animals and birds, which start in alarm at a strange sound and flee to the security of their hiding-place's. Timid, yet courageous, savage and wild, yet inventive and resourceful within the limits of their world, they live a strange life.

There are many more parts of the world where Man has succeeded in striking a hard bargain with Nature, and where Man continues to live, but where no further progress is possible so long as no new element is introduced from the world without. As far as the Eskimo or the tropical pygmy knows, the whole world is as he sees it. However far he should wander it would be the same. What new thing could happen to people like these? What great deed or strange event could alter the sameness of their lives, to make a story to be handed down from generation to generation, or to create a hero?

CHAPTER IV

HOW MAN'S WORLD WAS FIRST EXTENDED

IT IS RARE that desert land is all desert. Here and there, like islands in the sea, are scattered spots of vegetation called oases. Sometimes a spring of water brings life to a group of date palms and to a patch of brownish, hardy grass. Sometimes, in the shelter of a low valley, the moisture remains long enough to keep alive extensive pasture. Just this fact is sufficient to explain how desert people have continued to live.

As we have already noticed, although man can eat roots, leaves, fruit, berries, nuts, fish, seal, whales, monkeys, and even other men, he cannot live on grass. In the deserts, as in the jungle and other grass-lands, man has to depend on the grass-eating animals.

The chief animals of the desert are camels, sheep, goats, and asses. The camel is the specially evolved desert animal. His hump provides him with a sort of natural storehouse of food, and it continues to nourish and energise him over long periods when there is no fresh food. In the same way he can store more water than he needs at a time. His great flat feet are ideal for moving over sand. The desert people have learned to control him, and to use him when they move about the desert.

On the scattered grass-lands feed the sheep and goats, which, with the camel, supply the people of the deserts with all their needs. Wool and hair are the raw materials of their garments; milk is both food and drink, and when shaken or churned in little skin containers it supplies them with butter **and** cheese. In due time the animals provide meat, **skin**,



Fig. 28.—The desert belt of the Old World, showing areas of waterless desert and semi-desert.

bone, and sinew, all of which we have seen in use in other parts of the world. But meat is not regularly eaten by the desert-dwellers, who prefer dates from the palm trees as a variation from their diet of milk and cheese.

As such people are dependent upon their flocks and herds, which are in turn dependent upon the supply of grass and water, they are forced to live a wandering life, travelling from pasture to pasture. Wandering tribes are called "nomads," though the word really means "pasture."

One of the finest accounts of the kind of life led by pastoral nomads of the desert lands is in the Old Testament. There you can read about their flocks and their herds, their



Fig. 29.—An oasts.

Frith & Co

camels and wild asses, their wanderings, their tents, their wells and their water-skins. Many curious facts you notice, it you read intelligently. Jacob was willing to work for seven years for a wife. When we read about the hunters we noticed that they thought very little about their wives and children, and hardly troubled if they were lost.

The reason why the nomadic people think so much more of their women and children is that they are so much more useful to the pastoral nomad than to the hunter. The children can tend the flocks, as David did, and as his ancestors, the

sons of Jacob, did. The women make the tents and put them up and down. They make yarn from the wool and hair, cloth from the yarn, and clothing from the cloth. They make butter and cheese, and in general attend to the comforts of their lord, the father of the family.

In such a society the father does little. He is absolute lord and master, for he knows of no higher human authority, and he regards his wife, or his wives, and his children very much as he regards his sheep and lambs. He is the "patriarch" or "ruling father."



Fig. 30.-A Bedouin tent.

Nothing is accumulated except the useful animals, for travelling is so much a part of their lives that even necessities are a burden. Moreover, everything is so easily replaceable that there is no need to store anything except water. So long as

there is enough water, everything is well; but a drought is disastrous.

This last word, which comes from a word meaning a star, reminds us how these people of the wide, open deserts studied the mysterious movements of the stars for signs. To the stars they looked for good news, as they did for the birth of Christ, and for "disasters." Of one such disaster the Bible tells, when Jacob and his family, faced with famine, packed their belongings and went into the land beyond the desert.

Deserts, like seas, can act both as barriers and as connecting links between distant lands, and this fact led to great changes in the lives of pastoral nomads. When their world had ceased to supply them with the means of living they had to find a new environment which would, or die. Such a

movement into a new land " flowing with milk and honey " had to be a complete movement of all the peoples. Those left behind would die. It had also to be rapid, for deserts are wide.

Many times in history do we find a whole population moving into a new land to transplant there the customs and habits learned in the old. As soon as men had learned to increase the speed and distance of movement, many motives prompted them to search for new lands. Sometimes it was the joy of adventure or the thrill of conquest; sometimes *it* was greed or ambition ; but usually it was hunger.

The discovery of a new sort of land brings the invader into contact with new materials and products, and the things the invader brings may be new to the home-dweller. To necessities are added luxuries, as needs are increased by desires. The possibility of exchange develops, and a revolution in men's lives has taken place ; one little world has been extended to include the products of another.

When a tribe of adventurous desert nomads discovered such another land and peoples on the borders of the desert, such a system of exchange would rapidly develop. But it goes further than this. There may be another and different land on the other side of the desert, with different people and different products. While the children of the desert-dweller tend his flocks of sheep and goats, he himself, no longer inactive, is travelling with the caravans along the route of the oases, developing a regular system of exchange.

It is the dweller on the desert edge who is most changed when this takes place. No longer dependent on what his own little world provides, he has produce from lands beyond the desert brought to him in exchange for his surplus. Moreover, as his actual needs were supplied before this development, or he could not have lived, he now has things beyond his needs ; he has luxuries. Soon he desires to accumulate more than he wishes to keep for himself to make exchanges for further luxuries, The cunning, the thought-

ful, the unscrupulous, the powerful, accumulate more than the simpler or more honest. The wealthier purchase leisure, as the greatest luxury, and enforced labour performs their necessary services. Life is revolutionised.

As the traffic increases, and the caravans increase in size, because of the growing danger of robbery, there are always increasing numbers of them at the desert edge. There they must remain for some time, while the merchants are bargaining, buying, and selling, unloading, and reloading.



Fig. 31.—An imaginative drawing of ancient Damascus.

On the oases conveniently near, on the side of a river suitable for further transport, or at other convenient places of exchange, desert posts grow into cities, controlled by merchants grown wealthy. The nomads have made a permanent settlement. Such a city was Damascus.

A second revolution had been necessary to convert the nomad into a settler. As man had discovered how to avoid the necessity of hunting by breeding animals himself, so he had learned how to tame the land, and force it to produce for him the grain he had found growing wild. At least twelve thousand years ago, Neolithic Man had learned to cultivate the soil, and to mark the miracle of harvest by a blood sacrifice to the sun which had ripened the grain. Flocks could still be sent to nearby or even distant pastures,

under the care of children or shepherds, as Jacob's flocks were when Joseph was sold to the passing traders.

There is a very close parallel between the desert and the sea in the way that each has aided human progress. Just as the oases of the desert formed convenient stopping-places on the route by which the desert traders were connecting distant peoples, so the islands could perform a similar service for the sea traders.

Once a coastal people began to explore the seas it was certain, if they went far enough, that they would find new lands, with special forms of climate, vegetation, and life. The seamen would begin to exchange of to trade just as the desert-dwellers had done, and so increase the number of things available to Man.

All this development could have taken place only in a region where the deserts or seas were not too wide, where there were sufficient oases and islands to make regular journeys possible, and where on the desert edge or sea-coast there really was a land of plenty. A land where the people were struggling to live would have been of no use, for there would be nothing to exchange unless there were more than enough to supply the needs of the settled peoples. The lands round the Eastern Mediterranean had all the qualities necessary for the development of civilisation by these means.

Along the narrow valley of the Nile was a fertile land of plenty, where men had long learned to live without wandering, with the deserts stretching away on either hand. Another similar land of plenty lay on the other side of the deserts of northern Arabia, watered by the great rivers Tigris and Euphrates. Between these two fertile regions wandered the desert tribes, often hungry, often driven to raid the outposts of the more fortunate settlers, and helped in their wanderings by the oases which are more frequent as one approaches the beautiful Mediterranean. Where this sea washed the coast was another fertile land, the "promised land" of the wandering Jewish or "Semitic" tribes, the land "flowing with milk and honey." It was just where



Fig. 32.—The cadle of Western Civilisation.

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this fertile land merges into the deserts that Damascus grew. From this land, too, went out the sea adventurers, the Phoenicians, helped in their voyages by the numerous islands, which were almost like bridges to the lands beyond.

The headquarters of the Phoenician traders were the famous cities of Tyre and Sidon, and their growing luxury, greed, cruelty, and selfishness is mentioned in the Bible.

It is easy to understand why this region is sometimes called "The Cradle of European Civilisation," for here Man's world was most easily extended. Here a mixture of poverty and plenty, of barren lands and fertile ones, led to constant movements of peoples, to raids and warfare, to new settlements, and new exchanges. The fear of new invasion meant that settlements had to be protected, and towns had to be fortified. It was within the protecting walls of the fortified cities that civilisation developed, and all that civilisation means.

Separated from this developing civilisation by barriers of great mountains, Asiatic peoples seem to have been passing through the same process. From the valley of the River Tarim, north of the Himalayas, the great desert of Gobi stretched to the east, to the basin of the Hwang-Ho and the sea. To the south of the Hwang-Ho flowed the Yang-tse Kiang. Invaders from the northern deserts and nomads, wandering between the river valleys, made this region the cradle of Chinese civilisation, in just the same way as civilisation was developing, at the close of the Neolithic Age, in the lands east of the Mediterranean, from about 5000 to 3000 B.C.

We have looked at this growing civilisation through the eyes of the nomad, who found a land of plenty and a settled people on the frontiers of his own impoverished world. We ought now to look at the story from the point of view of the dwellers in the fertile valleys, where life slowly changed

from a peaceful though primitive existence to one of an elaborate, organised, civilised society.

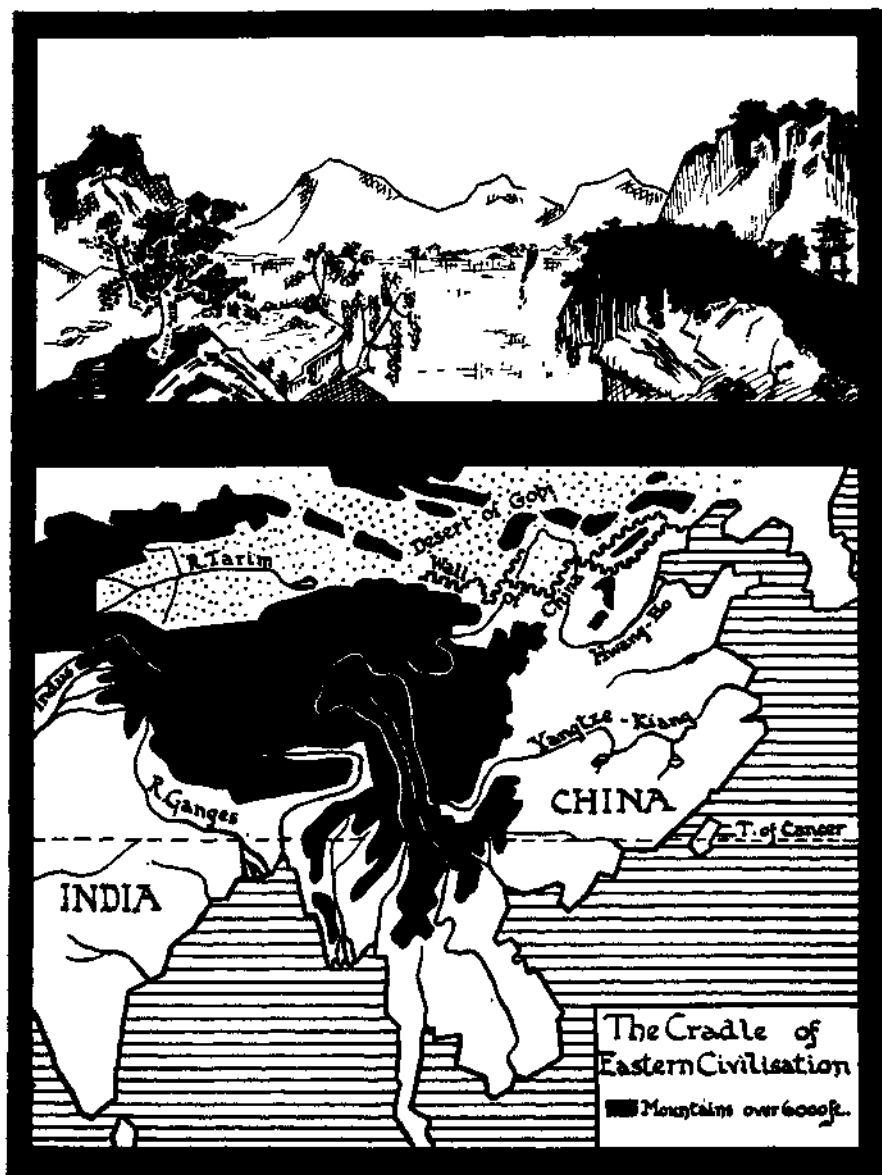


Fig. 33—The cradle of Eastern Civilisation,

CHAPTER V

EGYPT AND THE NILE

IN THE HEART of the mountains of Abyssinia the Blue Nile has its source, and every summer the melted snows of the mountain heights and the heavy summer rains swell its waters so that it overflows its banks as it flows north through the deserts towards the Mediterranean Sea. Another river, the White Nile, starts its long journey from Lake Victoria, in the mountains on the Equator, and joins the Blue Nile over a thousand miles from the sea.

Each year the river overflows its banks, and when the floods subside again they leave a rich deposit of mud and clay on each bank of the long, narrow valley. Gradually it will all grow dry and dusty again, for no rain falls in Egypt, and but for the river all would be desert.

It is because the river overflows that Man can live and settle along its banks. Crops of wheat, barley, and flax provide them with food; and there is pasture, too, for the cattle. There are pomegranates, date palms, reedy grasses, and flowers of every colour. Tropical river animals—the hippopotamus and the crocodile—live in the swamps, and there are the desert animals, the camel and the ass.

About two hundred miles from the sea the river widens, choked with mud, into a vast delta. When the waters, spread by the mud into many streams, reach the sea, the delta is one hundred and fifty miles wide. It is a vast, muddy triangle of sandbanks, streams and wide lagoons, with on either side an expanse of coastal grass-lands which soon merge into desert. This northern region of the delta is called Lower Egypt. The long, narrow river valley, farther south, varying

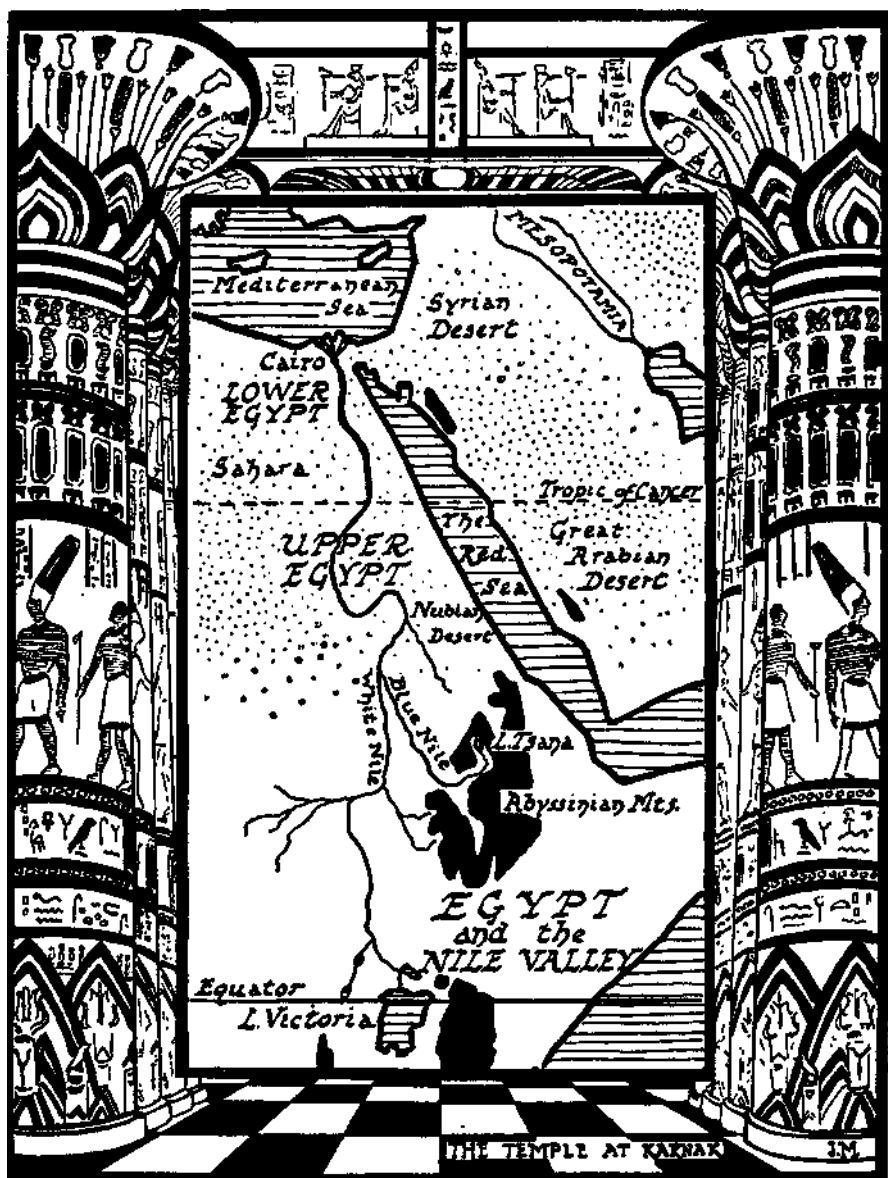


Fig. 34.—Egypt and the Nile Valley.

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EGYPT AND THE NILE

in width from about fifteen miles yards, is Upper Egypt.

The earliest peoples of the Nile valley made rude shelters of mud and reeds. Skins and gourds provided them with easily made vessels; bones and stone made easy tools. Some years the river would rise twenty or even thirty feet; other years, though rarely, it would rise but little, and there was famine in the land. The cattle were "lean," and unless the people of the valley had stored a surplus from the "fat" years, their plight would be a pitiable one.

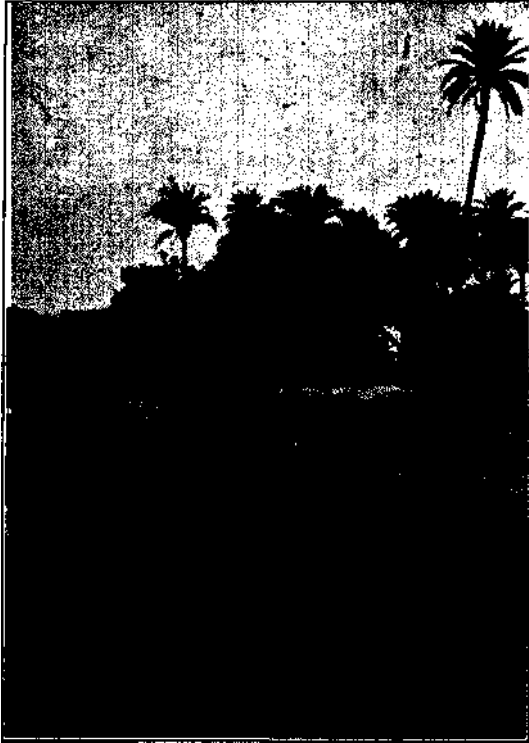
At first sight, these people might seem to have achieved the same kind of balance with Nature as the people had in the regions we have already examined. But these people had not exhausted the possibilities of their environment; there was material, opportunity was there, too, and Man's creative genius had scope for development. The fact that soft clay-like mud was baked into a hard shape by the sun, in the dry season, suggested in time that Man might control the shape by moulding things in the wet clay, and then baking them hard. The art of pottery-making is a great factor in human progress. There is no limit to the designs a man can make, and invention, genius, ingenuity, originality, and the joy of creation turn the uncultured native into a primitive artist and craftsman.

There are other and less obvious influences which had begun thousands of years before the birth of Christ to develop the Egyptian people. The Nile is a narrow valley, and the families which had settled along its banks were therefore stretched in scanty numbers over a long, narrow region. This made it very difficult for the peoples of the Nile to keep in touch with each other, except those immediately next along the river. There were two reasons which made them anxious to keep in touch. Firstly, there was the ever-present danger of invasion from the desert when the hungry wanderers heard that there was "corn in Egypt." Unless the tribes could act together they would

stand no chance *of* defending themselves against the hungry invaders.

Gradually a second reason made them desire to communicate, one tribe with another, along the length of the river valley. In the long distance travelled by the Nile from south to north it was inevitable that the natural products

should change slightly and that exchanges of goods should begin to take place between the Upper and Lower regions. For example, it was only in the southern or Upper region that ostrich eggs and plumage were obtainable, when the ostriches wandered so far north. Trade, too, began with the nearby desert-dwellers, and successful trading makes it desirable that records should be kept.



[Keystone

Fig- 35—By the Nile.

History, over and over again, illustrates the truth of the old saying that "Necessity is the mother of in-

vention," It was the growing need for some means of inter-tribal communication which led to the gradual evolution of writing.

However crude may have been the first attempts to send a written message, or to make a written record, once the ability had been discovered Man had found the greatest single factor in his development. Continued development is possible

because the record of one generation's achievements and discoveries can be handed on to the next. Each generation has the benefit of this great heritage of the past.

The first Egyptian writing was in the form of pictures. They conveyed the same kind of message as the modern advertisement posters. Then gradually the picture writing made an important advance. The pictures, instead of representing *things*, began to represent *sounds*, like the picture puzzles in some of the popular modern newspaper competitions. The reeds of the river produced a convenient substance called papyrus on which the picture messages could be painted. We derive our word "paper" from this word.

Fig. 36.—Egyptian hieroglyphics—A portion of the Rosetta Stone.

Pictures take a long time if they are to be drawn accurately, and so long as they were recognisable this was really all that was necessary. So soon the pictures became mere forms and symbols, but quite recognisable at first. After a time the symbols became so complicated that they had to be learned to be understood. The learned men who taught the meaning of the symbols were the priests, so the writing began to be regarded as having a sacred quality. This kind of picture writing has since been called hieroglyphic, which means "sacred writing."

This wonderful development in communication was, however, not enough. It helped the trading process, and

all kinds of records could be made, but something more was needed to defend the Egyptians from attack. Defence was impossible without some form of organisation. The tribes had to be united under a leader. This was particularly important for the Egyptians, whose dependence on the river forced them to remain for ever in a long thin line.

The process of uniting tribes takes a very long time, even when it is helped by the ability to send messages by writing and by a powerful body of priests. Actually the real cause which encouraged them to unite more rapidly came in another way.

As the tribes began to develop a higher state of intelligence they began to accept less willingly the decrees of Nature. The idea slowly dawned that it would be possible to extend the area watered by the river by digging channels (or canals, for it is the same word). But so long as the tribes were all separate there was a serious danger that a tribe higher up the river might, by digging canals, rob the more northern tribes of their annual water supply. It was obvious that if any artificial system of controlling the floods were to be adopted, such a system must be controlled. It was the creation of this control which made Egypt.

It was not accomplished without much fighting, and after long tribal wars there emerged two Egypts—the Upper or Valley kingdom, and the Lower or Northern Egypt of the Delta.

Over Upper Egypt ruled a king who wore a white helmet. Over the delta there reigned a king who wore a white crown, and whose symbol was a reed. This was nearly 5000 B.C. The king was responsible for the control of the floods, and each year, with great ceremony, he performed the task of opening the channels.

So separate in formation are the two sections of Egypt, the delta and the valley, that it was not until 3500 B.C. that they were united under a Pharaoh or king called Menes. Even then the union was not very real, for the Pharaoh had

to appoint a sort of viceroy, "The Bearer of the King's Seal," to represent him in Northern Egypt while he kept command in Upper Egypt. Sometimes the heads of the tribes would overthrow the king, and all would be confusion again until a new leader appeared, strong enough to restore order.

These developments in the organisation of Egypt made great differences to the lives of the people. When powerful rulers, priests, and nobles appear in a land of increased luxury, they need or desire more elaborate dwellings; temples and



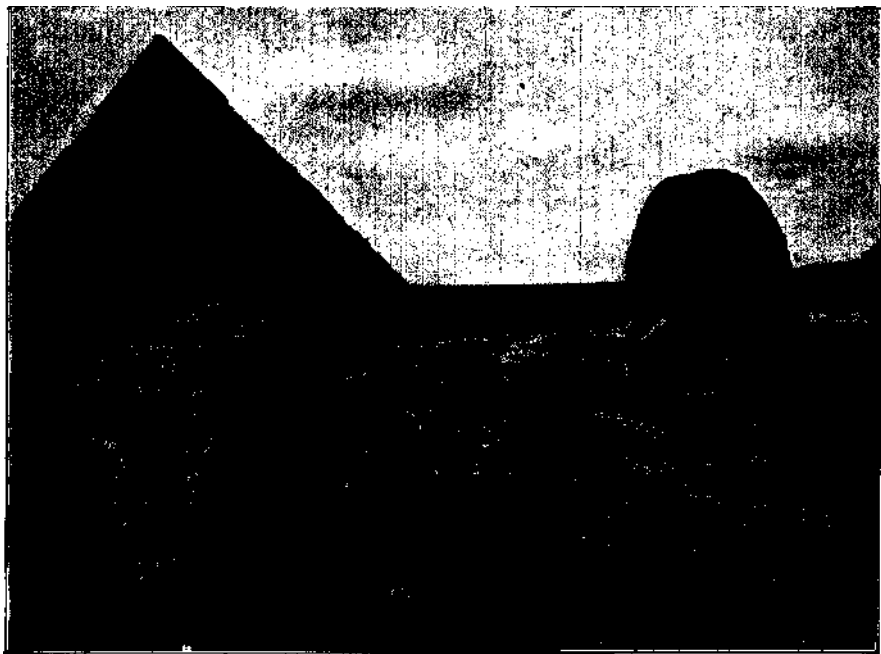
Fig. 37.—Rich Egyptians feasting whilst beggars stand at the doors.

palaces which were storehouses of luxury began to appear in Egypt. This meant that men had to be found to toil for the leisured mighty and for the priests. The time had gone when everyone worked to provide himself with food. Slaves had appeared, and control had turned to tyranny.

While the mass of the population continued to live in poor little houses, little better than the baked mud ones of the early Egyptians, splendid cities grew, where industries **and** art flourished. Potters, leather-workers, masons, jewelers, sculptors, **and** painters were kept busy to meet the **ever-increasing** desires of **the** rulers and nobles which

civilisation had created. There are still in existence wonderful examples of Egyptian furniture, toys, ornaments, and musical instruments, and it is difficult to realise that they actually played a part in the lives of people thousands of years ago.

The most marvellous of all the things they have left, and one of the most wonderful achievements of Man, is the



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[Egypt Information bureau

Fig. 38.—The Sphinx and one of the Pyramids.

group of great pyramids at Gizeh. They were royal tombs for the proudest of the Pharaohs. One of these, called the Great Pyramid, was built about 3700 B.C. by Cheops, a Pharaoh sometimes known as Khufu. Thousands of slaves moved the massive slabs of stone on rollers, and raised them, step by step, with mighty levers, along a sloping platform, until the immense structure over four hundred and fifty feet high was finished. Then the whole of the outside, which looked like a series of great steps, was made smooth,

but the outer casing has long since worn away. Right in the heart of the pyramid is a tiny room in which the dead king was placed. There are long passages and other chambers inside the pyramid, and one of these, under the king's, was for the body of the queen.

The two other pyramids at Gizeh, which is near Cairo, were built by Chephren and Mycerinus respectively.

This curiously elaborate method of trying to safeguard the body after death was due to the belief that the soul, which left the feody at death, would one day return to it. The bodies therefore were carefully embalmed and wrapped so that they would be ready for the soul whenever it should return. The wonderful preservation of 'these mummies, some of which can be seen in the British Museum, is due largely to the dryness of the Egyptian climate.

All kinds of things have been found with the mummies in the royal tombs. There were chairs and other articles of furniture, musical instruments, and, strangest of all, models of the royal servants. Whether these were intended to be of use when the spirit re-entered the body, or to assist the waiting body, no one knows.

About 1750 B.C. destruction fell upon the Egyptians. A great invasion of pastoral tribes from the deserts of Arabia put an end for a time to its peaceful development. The conquerors burned the Egyptian cities and established themselves in authority. The new period of Egyptian history is called the Age of the Shepherd Kings, or Hyksos, for " Hyk " means king and " Sos " means shepherd.

One of the most important results of this conquest was the introduction of the horse. We have already seen that the greatest factor in limiting Man's world was, in the early days, his inability to move fast or far. When Man discovered how to tame and ride horses, his life was revolutionised. In war, especially, the horse was of remarkable value, and if only one side used them it was almost certain to win.

The Shepherd Kings remained in power until about

1600 B.C. Then the Egyptians rebelled and overthrew them. Once more in command of their own country, they began to use the horse and their new horse-chariots to conquer the "regions round about." Tribute and slaves were wrung from the conquered peoples to aid in the erection of those temples whose ruins still amaze the traveller.

It was about three hundred years later, from 1300 to 1250 B.C., that the great Rameses II ruled Egypt. He is thought to be the Pharaoh in whose reign Moses led the Israelites from captivity.

In all, the history of the great Egyptian civilisation covers a period of over four thousand years, which includes the rise and fall of thirty-one separate dynasties or ruling families. But from the time when we began to trace the story to the time when Egypt was conquered in 332 B.C. by Alexander the Great was a period of nearly seven thousand years. Another two thousand years brings us to modern times, and in all that time other peoples and other civilisations have been developing—but Egypt is not forgotten. The influence of her wonderful culture and the greatness of her peculiar art exerts an influence on the European sculpture of our own generation.

CHAPTER VI

THE VALLEYS OF THE TIGRIS AND THE EUPHRATES

BEYOND THE RED SEA and across the deserts of Syria and Arabia lay another fertile land where another civilisation grew. It grew in the same kind of way, along the muddy banks of the great rivers Tigris and Euphrates and in the land "Between the Rivers": this is what the word "Mesopotamia" means.

Flowing swiftly from the high mountains, these rivers carry their rich mud down to the Persian Gulf, where their vast common delta, with its network of waterways, has for thousands of years been pushing the coastline farther into the sea.

Their double valley is intensely fertile, especially in the south. Like the Nile valley, it is a gift of Nature's wealth in the heart of the desert.

South-west of this land of plenty stretch the Arabian deserts, the home of the "Semitic" peoples: the Jews, the wandering tribes like the Ishmaelites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, and all the famous nomads of Bible story.

On the other-side of the valley are mountains, equally barren except for a coveted belt of forest-land. This was coveted because trees are practically unknown in the **land** between the rivers.

The earliest peoples of whom we know anything interesting in this land were the Sumerians, who were spread over the fertile lands near the delta. They learned to **drain the land and to** grow corn. The date palm and the fig **tree**



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Fig- 39—The Tigris and Euphrates.

gave them fruit. There were pastures, too, where their cattle and sheep were tended by their children. At first their homes were little more than huts of mud and reeds.

All this is just as it was in Egypt, because in these respects the conditions of life were identical. The villages, however, were not stretched over a long, thin line, as they were along the Nile's narrow valley. The same need for protection, however, against shepherd tribes from the deserts drove them to develop some form of unity. The same need also forced them to create some form of written communication, and they, too, developed a picture language. In time the same learned priests began to appear; then later came the cities with magnificent temples and palaces, a ruling class, and people of all classes, from noble to slave.

It is a similar story.

About 3000 B.C. (the actual date is uncertain but lies between 3800 B.C. and 2780 B.C.) a great host of desert peoples, led by Sargon, conquered the Sumerians. One of the larger villages gradually grew into a great city and was known as Babylon. From this city the whole region became known as Babylonia. Though many desert tribes invaded the land, they generally mingled with its settled peoples and helped to swell the growing population of Babylonia without altering much its civilisation.

Differences are usually more interesting than similarities, and one difference between the Babylonians and the Egyptians was in the form of writing. There was no papyrus in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, but there was plenty of clay, so writing was done with a wedge-shaped tool on tablets of clay which were then baked hard. Such writing could never develop in the same way as that of the Egyptians did; instead it developed into a complicated arrangement of short, wedge-shaped straight marks.

There was very little stone in this muddy land, so this same abundant clay baked into bricks provided the main material for the palaces of the mighty. The great brick

dwellings were built in terraces out of reach of the floods. Great walls, too, were built round the city so wide that five chariots could be driven abreast along the top.

However Man lives, whether in the heart of the tropical forests, in the icy Tundra, or amongst the civilised peoples of Babylon or Egypt, he must have food and water. To these bare necessities he adds all the desires that the world in



Fig. 40.—The River Tigris.

[Shepstone]

which he lives can satisfy. To obtain the food, clothing, shelter, and all the other things needed or desired somebody has to work, and in Babylonia there was a great deal of necessary work. There was the drainage of the fields ; crops had to be sown, tended, and reaped; the flocks and herds needed attention and wool had to pass into yarn, cloth, and clothing ; even the poorest homes had to be made and repaired. All these things each family had for thousands of years done for itself.

But there are always things one prefers to do rather than the customary, necessary daily labour, and the first boon that civilisation brings to some is the luxury of leisure. Moreover, the specialised tasks of ruling, of fighting, and the specialised office of priesthood have the same influence on society as has the desire for leisure. Someone has to be compelled to do all the necessary work. Hired workers and slaves are certain to appear. As the possibility of still greater luxury grows with the desire for temples and paiaces, ornaments, and comfort, and all the arts and crafts necessary to supply these things, the artists and craftsmen have to have their work done, too. There have to be still more slaves. As the luxury and comfort of the few increase so the number of the slaves increases and the corresponding wretchedness of their lot. So it had been in Egypt and so it was in Babylon.

It was about 2000 B.C. that Hammurabi, after pounding the peoples of the outlying lands into an empire, gave to Babylonia a code of laws. It is probably the oldest in the world's history. Hammurabi had it engraved on great pillars which were set up in various parts of his kingdom. At the top of each pillar his own image was engraven in the act of receiving the laws from the Sun God. The principle behind the laws was the simple one of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." If a man should cut off another man's arm, then he was to be punished by having his own arm cut off.

Protected by laws and walls, by a government strong enough to enforce its laws, and by its soldiers, the population of Babylon grew in prosperity and in numbers. Traders from the deserts settled in the city, helping to increase its wealth, its population, and its magnificence.

But in the midst of her prosperity trouble was threatening Babylon. North of the Tigris another city had grown, the great city of Nineveh, which with the daughter towns which surrounded it was called Assyria.

The climate of Assyria is rather different from that of

Babylonia. The land is higher, and it is sufficiently farther north to make a difference to its temperature. Its people, who were Semitic like the Jews, developed rapidly into a harder and more warlike race than the Sumerians of Babylon. They conquered the peoples of nearby districts, then turned to Elam, the land of the coveted forests, on the left bank of the southern Tigris.

In the thirteenth century B.C, they conquered Babylon



Fig. 41.—An artist's reconstruction of one of the Gates of the ancient city of Babylon.

itself, and for nearly seven hundred years were the greatest people in the world.

The Assyrians built marvellous palaces and guarded the entrances with great images of monsters wonderfully designed. These monsters had the body of a bull to typify the strength of the great Assyrian Empire ; they had the wings of an eagle to signify the swiftness with which the Empire carried out the destruction of its enemies ; each monster had the head of a man to suggest the intelligence of the Assyrian rule.

Beyond these " guardians of the king's feet" were wide

courtyards lined with coloured pictures of the hunt or of royal victories.

Some of these picture stories which still can be seen now in the British Museum are especially interesting because they throw light on some of the Bible stories. There are pictures of a great flood with an ark and a dove. On another, flocks and herds, women and children are being taken into captivity by the Assyrian king Pul, whose full name was Tigluth Pilesh III. Other great conquerors were Sen-nacherib and his grandson Ashur-bani-pul, who carried his conquests even into Egypt. He was "King of all the Peoples from the Sea of the Rising Sun to the Sea of the Setting Sun"—from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean.

It is the first example of such an empire based on the enforcement of a harsh, cruel rule on the conquered peoples.

Such empires could not endure for long. With the increase of power the government and central city became more arrogant, more cruel, and more corrupt. The captive people were treated with a ferocious, barbarous, and stupid cruelty. One Assyrian conqueror boasted, and his boast was baked in brick, that he had burned some of his captives, cut off the hands and limbs of others, of some their noses and ears, while of many he had put out the eyes. Their children were burned, their towns razed to the ground.

This meant that the Empire was kept together only by force and by fear, and that at the first sign of weakness the oppressed and tortured peoples would rise to overthrow it with a vengeance equally terrible. Treason, revolt, hatred were always present and made the Empire rotten at the core, destined to fall at the first really serious blow.

The blow came in 609 B.C., when the Medes and Persians, helped by the conquered Babylonians, attacked Assyria and destroyed Nineveh so completely that no trace of it remained. To make certain that the destruction should be complete they caused the waters of the Tigris to flow through the city, turning its clay-brick dwellings to shapeless mounds.

We shall have to turn back for a moment to find out **who** were the Medes and Persians, for they came from a race of people destined to change the history of the world.

For hundreds of years, somewhere near the Caspian Sea, had lived a hardy race of people whom we now call Aryans, which comes from a word meaning "noble." Some of the Aryan peoples had wandered eastwards into India; others had gone westwards, some into the Balkan peninsula, some still farther west to become the ancestors of the peoples who have made European history. For this reason the Aryans are sometimes called Indo-Europeans. A few of the tribes had settled in western Asia and developed into two kingdoms whose people were known later as the Medes and the Persians. After they had invaded the land of Assyria, no new settlers came to dwell on the ground they desolated. Mud, wind, and rain completed the ruin, making a grave for the dead cities.



Fig. 42.—Assyrians shooting birds.

An example of Assyrian art. From a relief in the Louvre, Paris.

The Babylonian general who had helped the destroyers took Babylon for his prize. He was Nabopalassi, father of the Nebuchadnezzar of whom we read in the Bible. For a time Babylon rose to power again and formed a second empire. Nebuchadnezzar captured the Jews, and in accordance with the custom of his time carried them into captivity.

Then it was that Daniel was taken captive and that the Jews sang their lamentation.

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept:
When we remembered thee, O Sion.
As for our harps we hanged them up :
Upon the trees that are therein.
For they that led us away captive
Required of us then a song and melody
In our heaviness.
" Sing us one of the songs of Sion."
How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a strange land ?



Fig. 43.—"By the waters of Babylon."

It was Nebuchadnezzar who built the gardens which were regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. A marvellous series of lofty terraces confronted the palace, and each terrace was a garden.

We can understand something of the pride of this upstart

monarchy whose wealth and magnificence were the wonder of mankind. Then in the midst of its pride it fell. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 561 B.C. there were three short and feeble reigns during which the priests became all-powerful. In 556 B.C. they placed Nabonidus on the throne ; but while he spent his time in restoring the temples, he entrusted to his son the task of ruling. This son was the famous Belshazzar, before whose eyes there appeared the " writing on the wall," The Bible story may not be accurate in detail, but it gives a wonderfully vivid picture of Belshazzar's last night on earth.

Belshazzar had made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. As they all feasted and drank from the golden vessels which had been taken from the temple at Jerusalem, there " came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace." When Belshazzar saw this " his knees smote one against the other." When all the wise men of Babylon had failed to interpret the mysterious message, Daniel was called. After he had blamed Belshazzar for his pride, he read and interpreted the writing, which was " Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." Daniel said : " This is the interpretation of the thing. MENE : God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL : thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. PERES : thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." In that night was Belshazzar slain.

While Babylon had been sinking into a luxurious idleness, a little tribe of Aryans, called Anshan, had created a small but energetic army, and under Cyrus had started a career of conquest. First it overthrew the king of the Medes and began to form a Persian Empire. At last Cyrus turned to Babylon itself. It was then that Belshazzar was slain and that Babylon was captured without a blow.

CHAPTER VII

THE GREEKS AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

AFTER LEAVING THE desert lands and the narrow river regions where ancient civilisations flourished, it is delightful to find ourselves at last entering from the east the Mediterranean Sea.

This lovely sea is almost a vast lake. Into its warm, calm waters three peninsulas extend—the Balkan peninsula, Italy, and Spain ; and they can therefore enjoy to the full the advantages these waters offer. These lands are never really cold, and their summers, too, are temperate. Mountain ranges shelter them from the cold winds which come from the north and cause the moist, warm winds from the south-west to water the lands with their rain.

In such a perfect climate life is very easy. Grapes, olives, lemons, oranges, and all kinds of fruits and nuts grow in profusion. Wheat and, in the damper areas, rice are easily cultivated. In the Balkan peninsula are many mountains and hills, some barren, others wooded, but all merging into fertile valleys fringed with pasture.

If the population is very small—for the valleys are not extensive—life is almost too easy. After the reaping season is over, the fruit has to be gathered—the figs, the olives, and the grapes. In the autumn, the laziest ploughing is sufficient, and through the winter, when the sheep and cattle are brought down from the hills, there is little to do. Spring brings a dazzling array of colour, of incomparable flowers, making the valleys as beautiful as they are fertile. The ancient peoples could add to their diet by fishing off the coast or by hunting in the mountains.

This was the home of the Greeks, a branch of the Aryan race from the grass-lands north-east of the peninsula. For a long time there was no progress, partly because life was easy, but more especially because *nothing more was possible in the circumstances*. Ease does not mean the same as abundance, and the Greek world was a small world. The mountains were relatively-barren, and the valleys, though rich, were small. To keep the population small, only healthy children were allowed to live, and according to the ancient legends a father could expose an unwanted child to starvation or to a worse fate. Something had to happen to extend the world of the Greeks.

It was when adventurers from the east began to sail from island to island in the Ægean Sea that the Greek world began to grow. Both the islands and the mainland had something to offer in return for corn or for the beautiful purple cloths brought from Tyre and Sidon by the Phoenicians. Oil from the olive, dried fish and dried grapes were bartered in return.

Just as had happened on the edge of the deserts, where trade had brought the luxuries which had begun the development of cities and of civilisation, so it happened in the Ægean. In the island of Crete the same kind of development took place and the great city of Cnossus grew. There was a palace with winding staircases, wine cellars, underground storehouses for grain and oil, a system of drainage, and bathrooms. From Cnossus the traders sailed, founding centres of exchange which were to grow into cities and centres of culture. One of these cities was the famous Troy which guarded the northern route from Asia Minor into the Balkan peninsula. In the southern peninsula was Mycenae, guarded, as all these cities were, by mighty walls.

For many centuries the hardy Aryan peoples who had settled in the peninsula watched the growth of these cities on their coast. Gradually they, too, learned to make and to use *little* sailing vessels, and to learn the use of the terrifying iron weapons which the peoples of the iEgean had brought

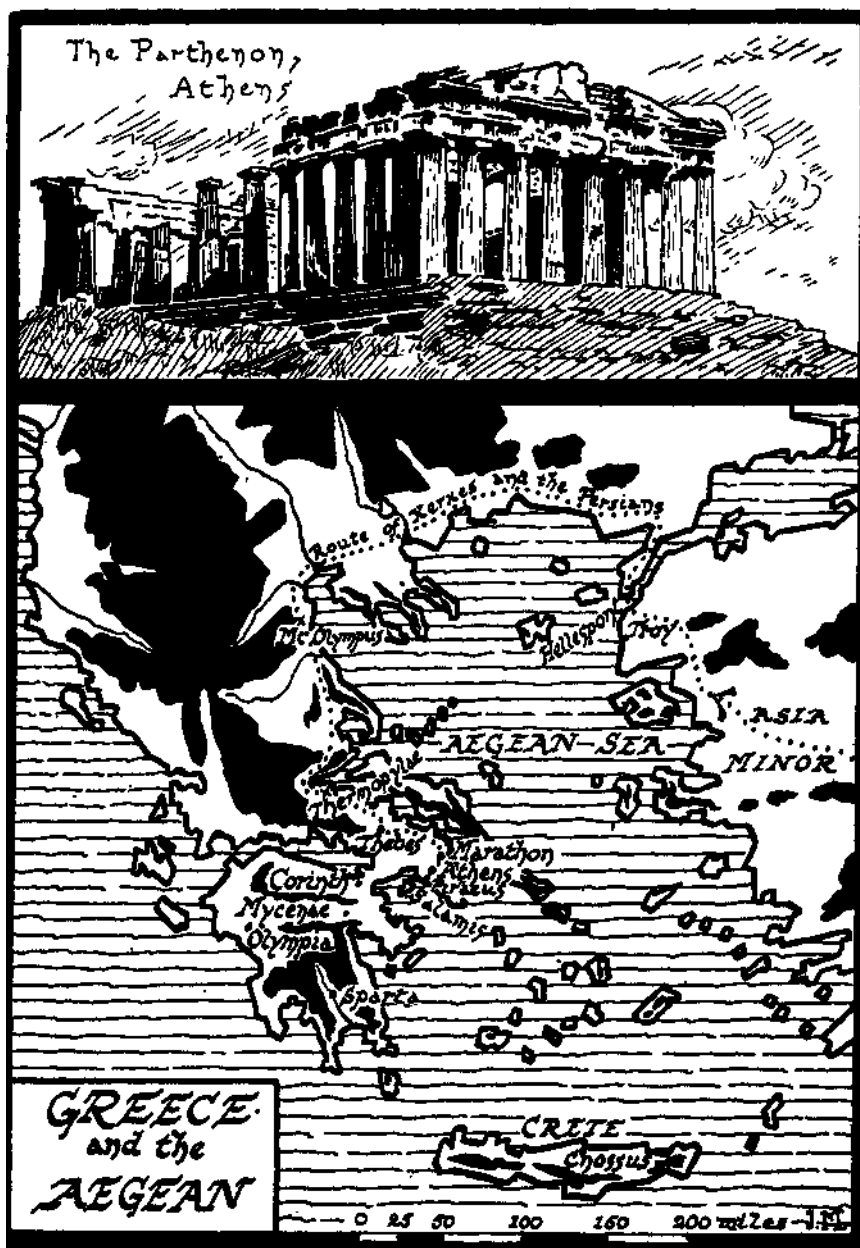


Fig. 44.—Greece and the Aegean.

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from Babylon. We know nothing of how they conquered the great cities, but after clearing the mainland, they began to conquer the cities of the islands. In the fifteenth century B.C. Cnossus was burnt, and when four hundred years later Troy fell, too, the Greeks or Hellenes, as they called themselves, were masters of the eastern Mediterranean.

Now that these long wars of conquest were over, the Greeks began peaceably to develop a more wonderful civilisation than the world had yet known. In some ways it was similar to the civilisations of Egypt and of Babylon. It was enclosed, as they were, within city walls ; there was the same division of people into freemen and slaves ; there were priests and temples, and for a time at least there were tyrants, imposing their will on the people, by force. But again it is the differences which really matter, for on them all evolution depends.

Like all evolutionary processes, human development depends on two kinds of influences ; it depends on history, the influence of the past, and on the geographical factor of environment. In Egypt, Babylon, or Assyria, civilisation grew gradually round the temple and the palace. Greek civilisation grew on the ruins of an older one. The conquering Greeks had no fear or awe for a mighty priesthood. The pomp and purple of princes meant nothing to them ; nor did all the elaborate ceremony of a magical and mysterious religion. Their minds were not deadened by superstition or by centuries of an enforced obedience. They entered on their inheritance with habits of freedom and independence, and they never lost their love for either. Accordingly they developed the ability to think for themselves, to think clearly and to reason.

This development was helped by the special features of the Greeks' environment. The Balkan peninsula is a land of mountains and valleys, and a land into which the sea makes deep inlets. In such a land the people were enclosed in little worlds of their own, each of which was cut off from its neighbours either by mountains or by a long arm of the sea. As a result the Greeks developed into tiny separated

village communities, some of which grew into cities which remained separate and independent.

During the centuries when Greek civilisation was developing, no empire or vast kingdom, like the Egyptian or Assyrian, ever united these cities under one rule. There was no awe-inspiring monarch somewhere beyond the mountains, no outside sovereign whose representatives could enter suddenly to demand men or goods, and whose will had to be obeyed.



Fig. 45.—Typical Balkan Scenery.

[Wide World

There was just the little city and nothing more. Everyone who was not a citizen of a particular city by right of birth was regarded as a foreigner, and marriage between members of different cities was forbidden.

The chief city in the southern peninsula was Sparta. North-east, on a little peninsula of its own, grew the famous seaport Athens. Marathon was twenty-six miles away. There were many such tiny city states, but except in Athens the total population of any of them never exceeded fifty

thousand, including from twenty-five to forty thousand slaves and "foreigners," women, and children, and a comparatively small number of freemen.

For any of such a small body of freedom-loving citizens to have clothed themselves in elaborate garments or to have surrounded themselves with splendour would have been absurd. Such men would have been mocked and ridiculed, and probably driven from the city. There was no room for boastfulness, which they taught men to despise.

This love of simplicity in their lives, their homes, their clothing, and their habits, meant that there was very little for the citizen to do, especially as all his necessary work was done by slaves. Greek slaves made and mended, provided and prepared the food, looked after the estates, kept the accounts, and even were responsible for teaching the Greek children how to read and write. The freeman lived a life of complete leisure.

In Athens, at the beginning of the sixth century B.C., Solon was given the task of making just laws for the Athenians. One of his laws provided that a citizen could present a grievance before a jury of thirty citizens. Another insisted that all freemen should take a share in the government of the city. All had the right to speak, and it was the duty of all to attend the discussions.

Apart from this political work or service to the city (for "polis" is a Greek word which means "city"), the Greek citizen had no compulsory work.

To lead a life of leisure, by men too intelligent to be idle, in a small community where mischief was dangerous, where stupid behaviour was despised and arrogance ridiculed, where life was simple, healthy, and sincere, such was the lot of the Greek who was free.

In such a life certain things were bound to happen. The Greeks became marvellous artists because there was time to make beautiful things and to make them as beautiful as

possible, for there was no other motive for making them. They were not made to be sold at a profit. The Greeks' world was itself beautiful, and the Greeks had time to think about beauty, and truth and goodness ; they had time to think about life, the world, and all its wonders. Some became lovers of beauty, others became lovers of wisdom, or " philosophers."

Some thinkers who also loved beauty became poets, and from poetry and music developed the love of acting and singing, of drama and the theatre.

Greek leisure produced, too, great athletes, for they believed in the development of the body as well as of the mind, in health and cleanliness, for these things are necessary for freedom. An unhealthy man is not really a free man.

At the beginning of the fifth century B.C. these peaceful developments were interrupted by war.

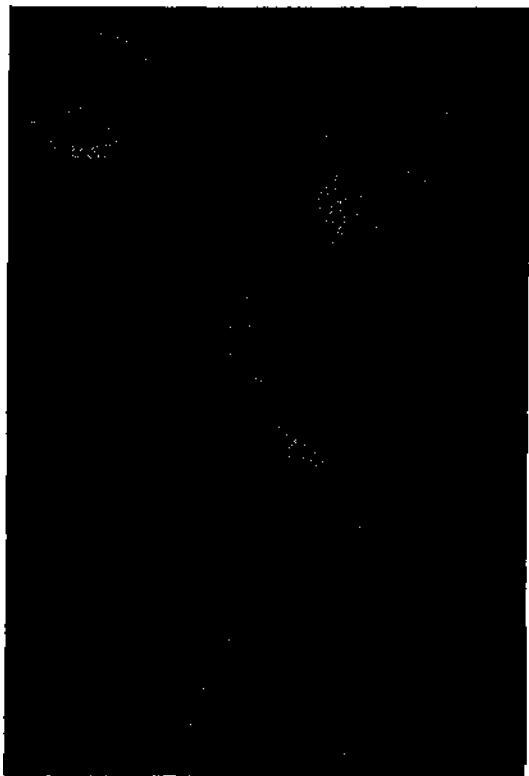


Fig. 46.—The Discus Thrower.
A Sculpture in the Vatican Museum.

Cyrus, the Persian conqueror of Babylon, was succeeded by his son Cambyeses, who went mad whilst conquering Egypt. The next Persian king, Darius the Great, created by conquest the greatest empire the world had yet known.

Gradually the Persian conquests had crept nearer to the tiny world of the Greeks, and at last threatened the Greek.

"colonies" in Asia Minor. Encouraged and helped by Athens, they refused to pay the tribute demanded by Darius. When the angry emperor sent envoys to Athens to demand earth and water as a sign of subjection, the Greeks threw the messengers into a well, where they could find plenty of both.

In 492 B.C. a Persian fleet sailed to destroy the Greek cities, but it was wrecked by a storm near Mount Athos. Two years later another fleet arrived and landed a mighty Persian army at Marathon. An Athenian runner named Pheidippides ran from Athens to Sparta, a distance of over a hundred miles, in four days to ask for help. The other cities were jealous of Athens, and one only, Plataea, sent a thousand men. Athens had ten thousand, but the Persians had a hundred thousand ! But Athens defeated the Persians and set fire to many of their ships. Pheidippides, who had hurried back from Sparta to help in the battle at Marathon, ran to Athens, though exhausted, to bring the news of victory. It was twenty-six miles, but he reached the city, announced his message, and fell—dead.

Nearly twelve years later, in 481 B.C., the Persians sent another army to avenge her defeat. Darius' successor, the Emperor Xerxes, came himself to witness the destruction of the Greeks. This time Sparta helped and placed an army under Leonidas to guard a narrow ledge over which the Persians were expected, known as the Pass of Thermopylae. A Greek traitor showed the Persians a way round the hill, so that they could attack the Spartans in the rear. Three hundred of them, with Leonidas, refused to abandon the pass, and were killed to a man.

The way was open to Athens and the Persians burnt the city. The Athenians fled across the narrow strait to the island of Salamis and all seemed lost. But the Athenian fleet attacked the Persian fleet and destroyed *it*. Encouraged by the victory, the Greek cities united and defeated the army of Xerxes near Plataea. The Greeks had driven out the

invader. They were not again to be troubled by the Persians.

The unfortunate struggles which periodically occurred between the cities need not concern us. Of greater importance is the reconstruction of Athens, for in this age it reached the greatest height of its culture.

The rebuilding of Athens was mainly the work of Pericles, who, believing that the Persian danger was over, used the war treasure to make Athens the most beautiful city in the world.



[British Museum

Fig. 47.—A portion of the sculptured frieze of the Parthenon.

The Parthenon, one of the world's most lovely buildings, was built on the hill called the Acropolis. Some of the greatest sculptors of all time, including Phidias, helped to adorn it with wonderful statues and carved friezes. Even the hidden parts were perfect.

It is easy to create from this Golden Age of Pericles a false picture of Athens itself. Behind the few outstanding men whose brilliant genius dazzles the view were the less noble and less worthy men who form the background of human life. Jealousy of the dignified Pericles, who scorned the simple pleasures of lesser men, brought him many enemies.

They accused him of wasting the money of the Greeks to ornament Athens "as a proud and vain woman decks herself out with jewels." In 428 B.C. Pericles died in poverty. Phidias died in prison.

Walking through the streets of Athens at this time could have been seen the barefooted Socrates, wearing a shabby old cloak, asking questions, arguing, teaching men to think. He was one of Greece's greatest philosophers, but the Greeks found his questions too disturbing. On the charge that he was corrupting the youth of Athens, he was condemned to death by poison. He is said to have drunk the cup of poison with a smile.

After Socrates' death in 399 B.C., one of his pupils, named Plato, opened in his garden a kind of university called the Academy. He wrote, too, a great deal of what Socrates had taught him, and many of his own thoughts. The fame of Plato spread far beyond the walls of Athens, and men came to his Academy from long distances. One such pupil was Aristotle, one of the greatest thinkers of all time.

Aristotle had come from the land north of the Balkans, called Macedonia. The Macedonians were Aryan-speaking peoples who had been united into a great state by Philip their king. Aristotle was the son of Philip's physician and was tutor to Philip's son Alexander, later known as Alexander the Great.

By this time the Greeks seem to have exhausted their strength in the periodic wars between city and city; they seem, too, to have lost much of their love for simplicity. Philip of Macedonia, though he admired Greek art and learning, despised their endless quarrelling, and decided to add their cities to his dominions. He met with little resistance, and with the help of the Greeks, determined on the conquest of Persia. The Greeks were willing enough, as it would avenge the burning of Athens.

As Philip was about to set out he was stabbed, and the

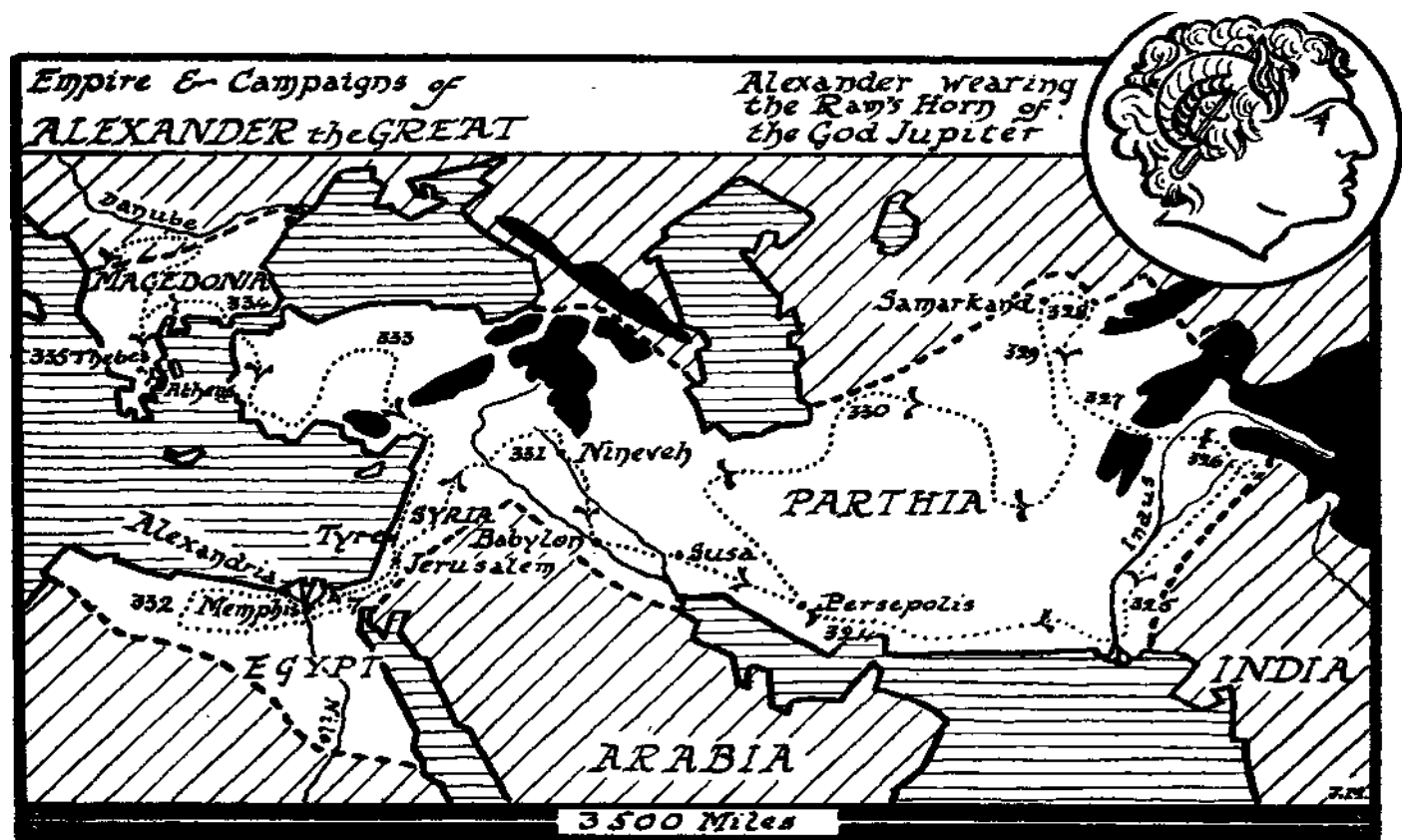


Fig. 48.—The Empire and Campaigns of Alexander the Great.

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leadership fell to his son Alexander the Great, as yet hardly twenty years old.

In less than twelve years Alexander conquered the Persians, made himself king of the Egyptians, ordered the rebuilding of Babylon, and reached India itself. There he defeated an army which used elephants, animals which the Europeans had never seen.

Though this vast empire split up on Alexander's death at the age of thirty-two, in Babylon in 323 B.C., his work was not lost altogether. The pupil of Aristotle built and rebuilt cities in the lands he conquered, and encouraged Greek teachers to settle in them. In Egypt he founded the city of Alexandria, which became a centre of Greek learning. There was formed a school of medicine, a great library was opened, and thinkers and students from many lands flocked there to teach, to discuss, and to learn. It was in Alexandria that Euclid laid the foundations of the study of geometry; there, too, Archimedes developed the study of physics, and invented a crane that would lift a ship. Six centuries after the time of Aristotle, a philosopher from Alexandria, named Plotinus, was teaching Greek philosophy to the people of Rome.

The lessons which the Greeks taught have never been quite forgotten. In the little valleys where they had their homes they taught men to love beauty, truth, and goodness, to love simplicity and sincerity, freedom and independence, reason and knowledge. Their lives, their writings, and the incomparable beauty of their art seem all the more amazing when they are contrasted with the civilisations that had gone and with those that were to follow.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

THE ITALIAN PENINSULA did not attract the adventurous traders who sailed from the ports of Eastern civilisation to found new trading centres in the Mediterranean. The eastern coast of Italy looked very inhospitable with its mountain ranges quite close to the sea, so the traders passed on to the opposite coast of northern Africa. There they founded Carthage, which rapidly grew into a flourishing Phoenician port.

Carthage was a city of merchants who cared for nothing except the accumulation of wealth and profits. Selfishness and cruelty go hand in hand, and as Carthage spread its authority along the coast and into Spain, it wrung profits, tribute, and slaves from its conquered subjects.

Italy seemed hardly worth coveting. It was a land of mountains and marshes, choked rivers, and stagnant pools. The mountains which sloped gently down to the western sea were well wooded and there was plenty of pasture. But timber and cattle, the natural products of such a region, were not popular articles of sea trade. The people looked poor, so they were left alone.

Most of the inhabitants were Aryan-speaking peoples who had invaded Italy from the grass-lands of the north-east, when in the distant past they had wandered from their Caspian home. Earlier peoples, in the Palaeolithic Age, had made curious lake-dwellings in the lagoons and marshes of the water-locked basin of the Po.

From the plentiful timber they had made stakes which they drove into the water to support a crude pier. At the

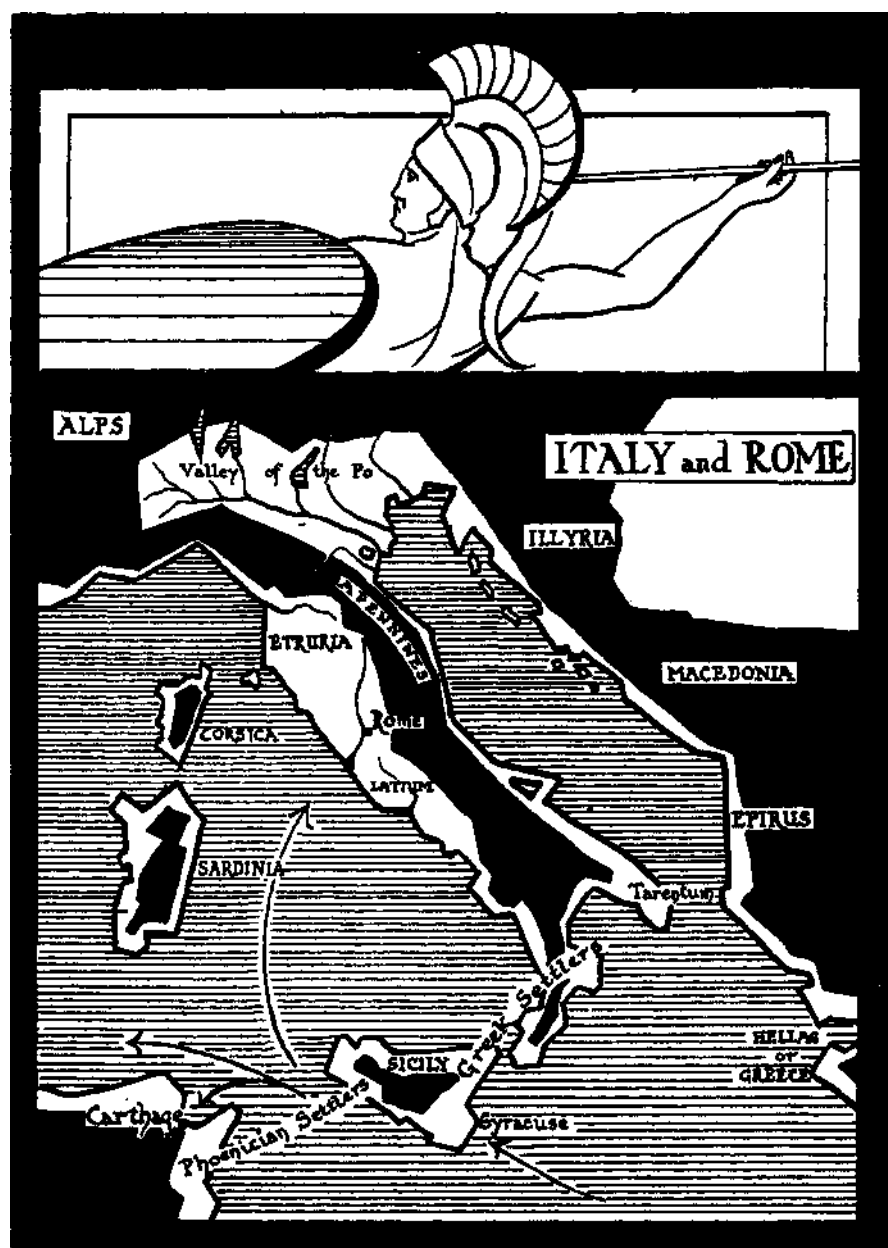
end they made a little platform for their wooden huts. They had lived mostly on fish; and the strands of flax, like the stringy part of celery, provided them with material for clothing and fishing tackle. Apples, cherries, and plums grew wild, and there were many different kinds of nuts.

As the ages rolled by, they gradually learned to tame and to herd cattle when they were near enough to meadow strips or hills, and they learned to grow corn. There was little other change in their lives from the Stone Ages, except that they grew in numbers, and exhausted the lakes. Then they had gradually pushed into the fens and marshes, and ultimately even into the Apennines, where they dammed streams to make artificial lakes. Even on dry land they continued to build their platform homes, and this love for piers and platforms survived in Italy for hundreds of years.

Across the centre of Italy flows the Tiber, a turbid yellow river which carries down so much silt and mud that twelve miles from its mouth it was possible, with the help of a convenient icland, to ford it before the days of bridges. This geographical fact helped to alter the lives of millions of men.

Across the ford men began to pass, to exchange a cow for corn, wine, or perhaps for a few sheep. It was mere barter, but it grew. Exchanges began to be made at the ford, and goods were valued by comparing the worth of so many of them with the worth of an ox.

It was natural that the dwellers on the neighbouring seven hills should have discovered, sooner or later, that they could make great use of the growing importance of the ford. By guarding the ford they could demand a toll. In time a rough wooden bridge appeared, a toll-gate, and men always guarding both. There was already a market, and this combination of things was the beginning of Rome. Such an easy source of profit would need careful guarding, so from the very beginning, Rome was a little town of farmers, determined to protect the market and the bridge which brought them an easier wealth than their farms.



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Fig. 49.—Italy and Rome.

At some time or other, a strong, dark-skinned people began to settle in Italy, north of the Tiber. They called themselves Etruscans, but no one knows who they really were. Probably they came from the Ægean or Asia Minor, for they brought with them much of the culture of the East. They also brought iron tools and weapons, and many things strange to the Latin peoples of Italy. The word Latin, like latitude, comes from a word meaning wide, and the Latin people were the people of Latium, or the wide plains south of the Tiber.

The trade across the river rapidly increased, and the Etruscans soon took possession of the little town which had grown at the ford. For two hundred years they held it, and turned it from a poor town of stagnant pools into a city. The bridge was improved, the land drained, and a great number of well-constructed houses replaced the former poor dwellings. For a long time Rome was very similar to the cities of the Eastern civilisations, but there was always an important difference, and this difference was to mould the character of its life. From the very beginning of Rome it was planned to protect a commercial traffic. It was, therefore, a fortification and a market, a city of soldiers and merchants, a military community which loved wealth and power, and this is not a very healthy combination.

In the sixth century B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar was ruling in Babylon, the Latin people overthrew their Etruscan overlords and took Rome for themselves. After organising it as a city republic under the rule of two military commanders called consuls, the government of Rome was confronted with the hard task of trying to satisfy its own discontented peoples without giving away any more of its own power than could be helped. For two hundred years there was a struggle between the aristocratic families which had accumulated wealth and power, and the "plebeian" or poorer class of citizens. By threatening to withdraw from the city, by employing capable popular leaders, and similar methods, the plebeians succeeded at last in gaining equal political

rights, but they had lost, in fact, more than they had gained. They had to fight in Rome's constant wars, for all this time Rome was fighting against the Etruscans or against others of her neighbours who were jealous or afraid of Rome's growing power. When they returned from the wars they often found their farms ruined, and were forced to borrow money in order to reconstruct them. Nor could they hope to sell their produce if they succeeded in making a new start,



Fig. 50.—The Castle of St. Angelo and River Tiber, Rome. [Will F. Taylor

because the wealthier owners of vast estates, which were worked by slaves, could always sell their produce more cheaply. Loaded with debts, for which they could be tortured or imprisoned, many became paupers. The streets of Rome were filled with an ever-increasing number of ragged beggars who crept from the filthy slums ready for any crime to avoid starvation.

Rome was strong enough to ignore these troubles, and even to survive an invasion by barbarians from Gaul,

though in 390 B.C. these sacked Rome itself! But Rome was not really injured and, having finally conquered the Etruscans, set out to establish her authority over the whole peninsula.

For another hundred years there was warfare with periods of uneasy peace. By 290 B.C. Rome was mistress of all Italy except the south and the island of Sicily. On the coasts of Sicily and the southern mainland there were scattered colonies of Greek and Phoenician traders. Across the narrow strip of water which separates Sicily from Greece was the little kingdom of Epirus, ruled by an ambitious king named Pyrrhus. He was quite ready to help the Greek colonists when Rome threatened them, and he landed in Italy with an army and elephants. Twice he defeated the Romans, but in 275 B.C. he was defeated. Rome was supreme in Italy.

Even had Rome wished now to lay down her arms and to develop peaceably this was denied to her, for the Phoenicians were not likely to give up Sicily without a struggle, and Carthage, the great city of the Phoenicians, suddenly awakened to the fact that Rome was now a rival power.

From 264 to 241 B.C. there waged the first great war against the Carthaginian Phoenicians or Punici, as the Romans called them. At first the Romans fared badly, for they were unaccustomed to sea fighting; but the invention of a new kind of fighting ship with a hinged platform enabled them to board the ships of Carthage. In 241 B.C. Carthage sued for peace and Sicily became a Roman province.

The mere statement of this fact conveys nothing of the mad cruelty, hatred, and passion for bloodshed which grew out of these long wars. Soldiers returning to Carthage had to mutiny for their pay, and thousands of them were crucified. Rome, seized by panic because of another invasion of Gauls, began to offer human sacrifices and to examine the bodies of human victims for signs. In 219 B.C. Sardinia and Corsica, Carthaginian provinces, revolted, and Rome went to their aid. A Carthaginian army under Hannibal, with elephants and horses, set out from Spain, crossed the Alps, and after defeat-

ing two Roman armies, invaded Italy from the north. The second Punic war had begun.

Though Hannibal won victory after victory, to his surprise the people of Italy did not join him to throw off the yoke of the Romans. Rome had already learned how to control her conquests by enrolling men from subject lands in her own armies, by placing garrisons of soldiers in conquered territory, by connecting them with great roads, and by the granting of citizenship. Italy remained loyal to Rome, and Hannibal, alarmed in spite of his victories, sent to Carthage for help.

His brother Hamilcar, marching to his aid, was defeated, and his head was sent to Hannibal.

Meanwhile Carthage itself was being attacked by a Roman army under Scipio Africanus, and Hannibal had to be recalled to save the city. It was already too late. Carthage was conquered, and Hannibal fled for help to Asia Minor, where he committed suicide. The war had lasted sixteen years. Spain, Corsica, and Sardinia became Roman provinces. Rome was founding an empire almost unawares. Hatred of Carthage lingered on, until fifty-six years later, Rome, on the advice of Cato, decided that the city should be blotted out. Accordingly, in 146 B.C. Carthage was attacked and burned ; the land on which the city had existed was ploughed and cursed.

War, war, and still more war. Even between the second war against Carthage and the destruction of it Roman armies were busy conquering the fragments into which the empire of Alexander the Great had fallen. The most important of these sections were Macedonia, under Philip ; Syria, under Antiochus, the King of Kings ; and Egypt, under Ptolemy. These states were constantly trying to conquer one another, and when Hannibal had rushed east for help, Syria and Macedonia were on the point of invading Egypt. Ptolemy invited Rome's aid. In less than half a century Macedonia and Syria were Roman provinces; the

Greek states passed under Roman rule and a Roman Governor was sent to Athens ; Corinth was burned and Egypt had to pay tribute.

The Mediterranean had become a Roman lake. Women and children from conquered lands were sold as slaves in the Roman slave market. Slaves were cheap now and were often worked until they dropped dead. A typical Roman of this time wrote that a slave when not asleep ought to be working.



Fig. 51 A Roman Legionary.

In Rome the long years of warfare had increased the number of paupers and their wretchedness. More and more land, wealth, and power had passed into the hands of a few who were either victorious generals, laden with spoils and flattered by triumphs held in their honour, or cunning profiteers who had taken advantage of the wars to seize the property of soldiers driven into hopeless debt. Founded on militarism and greed, the Roman state had become increasingly brutalised by the wars, and its wealthy members looked undisturbed on the wretchedness of the ragged families which were dying of disease and hunger in filthy slums. If they should rise in desperation there was always the whip or the sword, the prison or the rack.

Behind the walls of their enormous villas, where there were often a hundred slaves, they felt secure, and that was all that mattered.

Years of anarchy followed the wars, and would-be reformers like the brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus were murdered. Wilder men, such as Marius, seized the power for a time, and spent weeks in slaughtering their enemies.

Meanwhile more plunder was arriving, Pompey, having

avenged a Syrian revolt by destroying Jerusalem, marched through Asia Minor and returned with a fleet laden with spoil and captive princes destined to swell his triumphal procession. Pompey then determined to seize the power and make himself master of Rome; but two other men, Julius Cæsar and the wealthy Crassus, had the same idea.

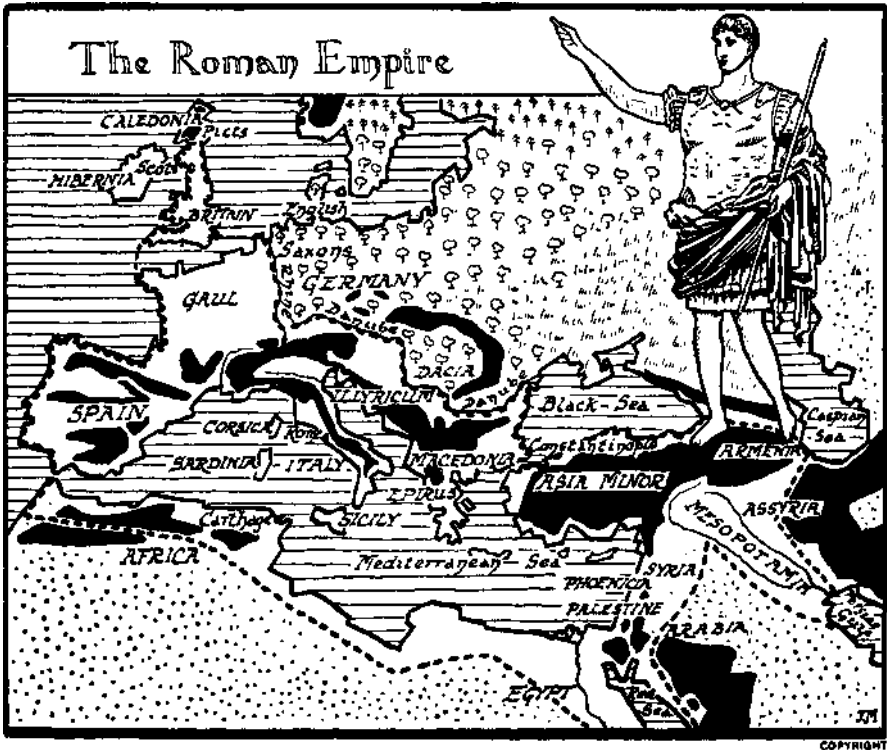


Fig. 52.—The Roman Empire.

They began by sharing the power between them, but Crassus was slain on an expedition. Caesar, feeling, as a more recent ambitious general said, that "the pear was not yet ripe," set off to conquer Gaul. Twice he visited the little-known land of Britain, in 55 B.C. and 54 B.C., then suddenly returned with his victorious army. Pompey, who had no doubt of Caesar's intentions, fled to Egypt, where he was promptly murdered.

Caesar, appointed dictator, refused to accept a crown, but he accepted everything else that mattered and everything that a crown would have meant. The republic was doomed, and in a futile effort to save it, twenty-three patricians plunged their daggers into Cæsar in 44 B.C. It is a tragic story, but it was not quite ended yet.

As one general lost the power he had seized other men hastened to grasp it. On this occasion it was Antony, Caesar's secretary, and Octavian, Caesar's nephew, who fought for supremacy. Antony, who had tried to copy his fallen master even to the extent of falling in love with Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, formed with her help a fleet which Octavian destroyed. Antony had deserted the fleet before the battle was over and committed suicide. Cleopatra, finding that Octavian had no more interest in her than the hope of including her in his triumphal procession, also committed suicide.

Octavian was without a rival, supreme in Rome. Hailed as "Augustus" and later as a god, he had created the office of Roman emperor.

No single man has ever wielded greater authority than the Roman emperors. There was no higher authority in the world, and as they were regarded as gods, there was no higher authority recognised anywhere else. Therefore their lives were completely unrestrained by any moral, spiritual, or civil authority. Their own will was supreme. When to this limitless power to do as they pleased is added the fact of their fabulous wealth, when it is remembered that they were accustomed to habits of cruelty, that they were flattered by fawning courtiers in life and worshipped after death, it is easy to understand something of the brutish cruelty **and** selfish excesses which characterised most of their lives.

Octavian was himself a **great** exception. **He rebuilt Rome, making it a city of marble. Virgil, Horace, and Ovid made Latin poetry immortal. But this "Augustan Age"**

was brief. Tiberius, after a series of conquests, settled in the Isle of Capri, to live a drunken and debauched life of extraordinary licentious luxury and cruelty. And so the tale goes on with an occasional welcome break such as the reigns of the Antonines, but Commodus, son of Marcus Aurelius, last of the Antonines, plunged again into an orgy of vice and crime until assassination ended it.

The pleasures of the Romans tell the same story of a people brutalised by the conditions under which the city had grown. In the specially constructed theatres men were hired to fight against wild animals imported from Africa or against other men. In these gladiatorial contests the spectators could insist on the death of the vanquished. More and more of these men were needed for the shows, and when there were not enough prisoners of war, there soon began the practice of selling slaves to the trainers who supplied them at a price. Once some thousands of these men escaped from a training camp, determined to rebel. It was a hopeless effort, and miles of the Roman road called the Appian Way were lined with their crucified bodies.

This deplorable story is the story of Rome, not the story of the Roman Empire. Though rotten at its heart, the Empire, like a vast machine, endured for nearly five hundred years. It was because it was organised so thoroughly and could continue like a machine that the emperors had the leisure which they abused. Each part of it, enjoying the peace which the presence of Roman soldiers made possible, developed in its own way. Under the guidance of Roman engineers roads were constructed, and though they were originally intended mainly to connect garrisons and permanent camps, they soon began to connect the towns and cities which the Romans built for their comfort.

These cities became miniature Romes, with markets and shops, theatres, luxurious baths, public buildings, and villas with heated pipes under the floor.

As Rome demanded wealth it was inevitable **that she**

should have developed to the utmost the natural products of her provinces. Marshes were drained, cultivation improved, mineral wealth explored, and mining extended. As a result the people of one province no longer depended on the produce of their own little world. They were now part of a vast world whose products were available to anyone who could buy in its markets. Rome itself had grown from the tiny market at the ford to the largest market the world had ever known.



Fig. 53.—A Roman Villa.

From the province of North Africa, from Britain and Egypt, Rome imported corn. From Egypt, too, came carpets, embroidered rugs, and tapestries, linen, paper, and glass. From the Far East came spices, precious stones, jewelled caskets, and fabulously priced silken goods. From Greece came beautiful vases, pottery, and sculpture; the purple dye which the Phoenicians had made from shellfish; honey, wine, and even furniture. Some of Rome's marble came from Greece; some of it came from Africa, in ships carrying ivory, gold, and probably lions. Gaul and probably Britain supplied wool, and, in addition to the oysters which had early attracted Rome's attention, Britain supplied lead and tin. Copper was obtained from Spain; iron, timber, skins, and furs from the northern barbarian lands beyond the frontier of the Empire,

It is doubtful to what extent these very material advantages ever really benefited the people of the Roman provinces. Even in Rome only a very small proportion of her population could actually buy goods. As Rome could not pay for these luxurious imports by producing things in return, she had to pay for them with money. The necessary metal was wrung from the provinces in the form of tribute or tax and reissued from the imperial mints as Roman money. As a result a small number of people became increasingly and enormously wealthy, while the mass of people in and out of Rome grovelled in the wretchedness of hopeless poverty.

There is another point of interest. None of Rome's wealthy minority produced any of the wealth it so selfishly accumulated. This wealthy group included the emperors, the money-lenders, successful generals, governors of provinces, and the tax-gatherers. The emperors, wealthiest of all, obviously produced nothing, and paid with metal seized from subjects ; the money-lenders paid with the value of the goods forfeited by their unfortunate debtors or with the interest exacted from the more fortunate ones. Generals had spoil and rewards; governors, who had the right to tax their provinces, sold the right to professional tax-gatherers, to the advantage of both. Thus the bulk of the vast produce which made up the wealth of the Roman Empire was concentrated in the hands of a small minority which contributed nothing towards its production.

There is little wonder that in such a worldly, selfish age, the things that had meant so much in the little world of Athens should have been forgotten. The marvellous beginning of scientific thought and experiment which had passed from Greece to Alexandria was forgotten. It is significant that the marvellous library of Alexandria, every book of which had to be copied by hand, was burnt when Julius Cæsar set fire to the Egyptian fleet and placed Cleopatra on the Egyptian throne. Love of wisdom and love of knowledge had been

replaced by love of power ; love of beauty, truth and goodness had been replaced by love of wealth ; yet it was in a Roman province that a new kind of love was being taught to very unwilling listeners. We shall have to leave Rome at the height of her power in order to tell the story. Though the story is a simple one, it seems to have been the most misunderstood story in the world. To make it easier to understand we must tell another story first.

CHAPTER IX

GAUTAMA BUDDHA AND JESUS CHRIST

ABOUT 500 B.C., when Darius was about to interrupt the peaceful development of Athens by warfare and when Rome was only beginning to conquer Italy, there lived away in India a young prince named Gautama. He had a beautiful queen, great wealth, a magnificent palace with lovely gardens, and complete leisure to enjoy a life of luxury. In addition to these advantages which his position as prince had brought to him, he himself seems to have had a very unusual share of natural gifts. He was strong and handsome, with the ability to attract all who knew him ; he was without fear, and had a wonderful intelligence.

Unlike most of the millions of men who lived then and who have lived since, he found no satisfaction in mere possession and power, and like the Greek philosophers, he spent a great deal of his leisure in wondering about life and the mystery of living.

Around him were poverty, suffering, and wretchedness, but Gautama could not just accept these things, as his servant accepted them, with some such phrase as " That is life." For him they were a problem that ought to be solved; so one night he crept quietly from his palace, trying not to waken his wife and baby son, and with one servant rode miles away from his city.

With his sword he cut off his long hair ; then he took off his jewels and sent them all back to the palace by his servant. Meeting a beggar, he changed clothes with him, and in his rags sat By the wayside.

Other men had had the same kind of thoughts that

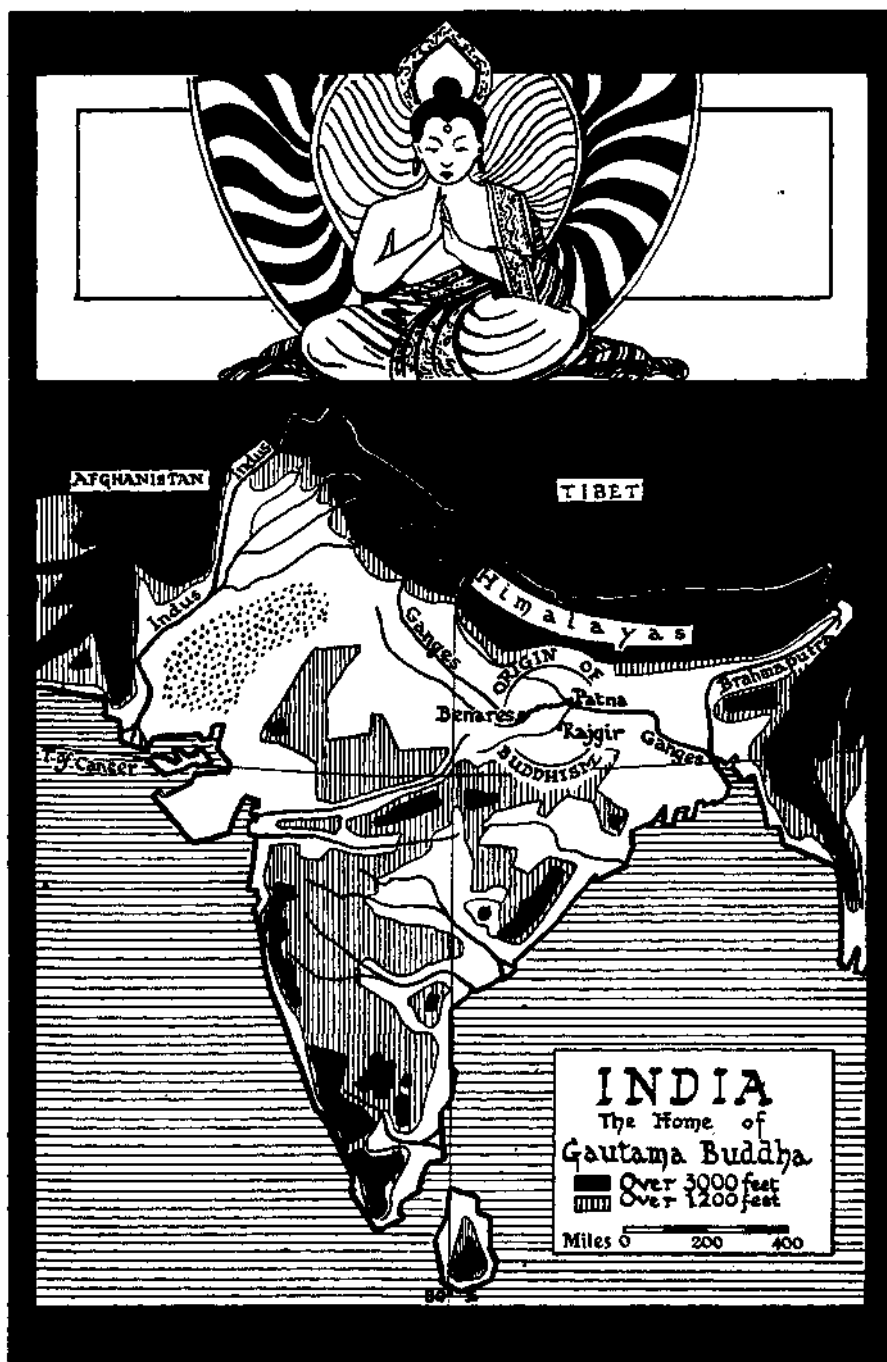


Fig. 54.—India.

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Gautama had, and they, too, had left the comforts of easy life to live a harder life of fasting in solitude or in small groups. Gautama joined such a brotherhood of hermits and fasted so thoroughly that he grew exhausted. More intelligent than the others, he realised that he could solve no problems when his mind was enfeebled by the weakness of his hungry body, so he left his companions and gave up the practice of fasting. When he was restored to health he withdrew to a place where he could think hard and undisturbed.

We can never know by what processes of thought Gautama finally reached the conclusions which he decided to teach mankind, but we can leave him for a time and try to think for ourselves. It is possible that we may reach the same conclusions, for we have a great advantage over Gautama in that we know a great deal more about the other parts of the world and about the evolution of Man. We know that Man only slowly evolved from the more primitive forms of life, and that for thousands of years he was just a more cunning brute than they. His developing intelligence enabled him to satisfy his crude desires more readily and to protect himself against stronger animals. The point is that his intelligence was developing only to serve the same ends as those of the lesser animals ; it is true, therefore, that he was as yet just a more cunning brute than the others. He still shared and still shares with the animals two very important traits: he rapidly grew accustomed to things that happened regularly and ceased to bother about them; and secondly, new and strange events frightened him. Because of these two qualities even lions can be tamed, and so can Man.

Sometimes when the sun darkened and the skies were rent by lightning, when the hills echoed to the thunder and the seas were lashed into fury by the storm, then he was afraid and felt that some terrible unseen power was destroying his little world. Fear of thunder still lingers among people even though they know what it is. Among many primitive

peoples some of the stronger or wiser would insist that the terrible hidden power must be displeased with them, and to pacify him they must offer him gifts. A lamb or young goat must be sacrificed as a peace-offering to the angry god, and it is easy to understand how certain places would be set aside for that purpose. It is easy, too, to understand how

special men would develop to act as intermediaries between the people and the terrifying god. These were the priests, who became all-powerful.

The priests would interpret all sorts of things as signifying the pleasure or anger of the god or gods, and in this way their power increased enormously. They built great images of ugly, leering gods, to increase the fear of the people and their own power. Lambs and kids soon became insufficient to satisfy the gods, for they failed to stop the thunder or to

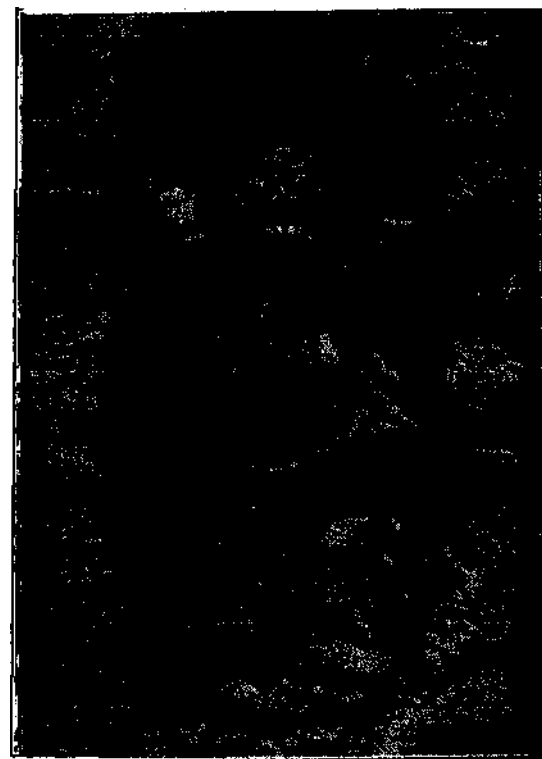


Fig. 55.—A Hindu Goddess

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stave off famine ; so they were offered even human sacrifices.

The ceremony of sacrifice became more and more elaborate, with special clothing for the priests and with special music. Temples were built to house the images of the gods and the altars. As civilisation developed, temples, priests, ceremonies, garments, and sacrifices grew more and more elaborate, but the essential organisation and the idea remained

the same. The gods were known by different names, but that made no difference to the idea that somewhere there seemed to exist a terrible power capable of destruction, a power which had to be pacified by sacrificial gifts.

As the chief interest of Man lay in his food supply, the dependence of the crops on uncontrollable things like sunshine and rain made the great destroyer responsible also for the mysterious process of producing the crops. He was creator as well as destroyer, the giver of life as well as the being responsible for the mystery of death. So the sowing of the crops was the occasion of the greatest sacrifices.

Few people were satisfied to leave the creator and destroyer as a mysterious, hidden power; they had to try to picture the god or gods. Some thought it was the sun and became sun worshippers. Most of them imagined the gods to be men like themselves, or men and women. They could give to these imagined gods only the same qualities which they themselves had, however much they exaggerated them.

As civilisations continued to develop, the habits of the centuries remained fixed. Temples became more and more magnificent, priests more ornate, ceremonies more elaborate, sacrifices more cruel. The influence of habit, of superstition, and of fear continued to strengthen the priests, and as they were frequently the learned men, as in Egypt, or as the Druids were in Britain, their power became enormous.

It is important to realise that in all these religions there was no thought of happiness, and that the gods were given the same cruelty, passion, selfishness, and the same destructiveness that were the qualities of Man.

But even in these religions the idea of *behaviour* does enter in, though in a curious way. The gods when angry must have been made angry, which meant that someone had done something wrong. Someone had disobeyed the will of the gods as interpreted by the priests. Therefore, the

gods had to be made pleased again by gifts, as a chieftain might have been pacified by the gift of a big meal. It also meant that the disobedient people had to be punished. In this way the priests were judges, punishers, and sacrificers all combined.

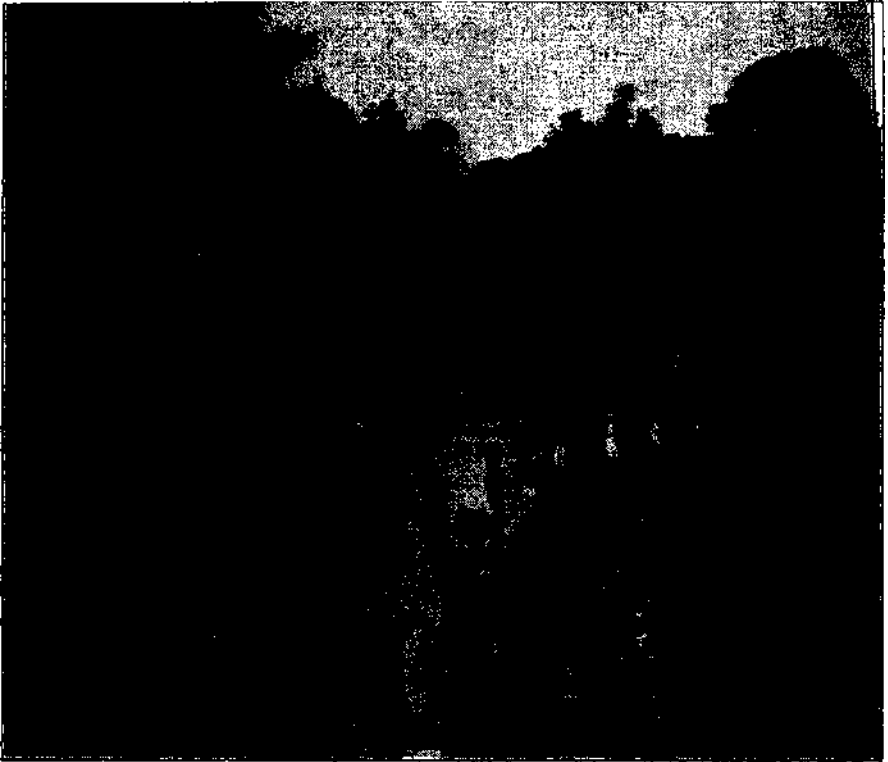


Fig. 56.—A typical scene on the banks of the Ganges.

[Keystone

These religions recognise only two motives for man's behaviour : fear and reward. Both these are selfish motives, both would ignore suffering and misery and say " This is life." So the centuries would go on and people would continue to suffer while others were wealthy and powerful. They would still obey the priests, offer sacrifices, accept the gods without thinking, believe that the gods were angry, and that their own wretchedness was a punishment. Men

continued to believe that fear or the satisfaction of desire were the only two motives for Man's behaviour, and millions of people still behave as though this were true. It is so much easier than thinking about things, especially when our own life is sufficiently comfortable.

But Gautama was too intelligent a man to accept ideas which were obviously untrue. It was obvious to him that it is not always Man's own fault that he should happen to be wretched, poor, and oppressed. The wealthy and powerful have not always deserved their comfort, and Gautama himself had obtained the wealth he had abandoned because he was born a prince. It became clear to Gautama that, although most people acted only in response to fear or to some selfish motive, this was not true of everybody. When he had fled from the palace, it was not through fear, and clearly he could gain nothing from his flight that could benefit himself. And what of the men who fasted ? What motive had driven them to give up their easier lives ? It was clearly not a selfish motive.

The conclusion which Gautama reached was that misery in life, suffering, and unhappiness were due to selfishness ; until men had ceased to live only for themselves, neither they nor anyone else could ever achieve happiness. This meant that Gautama recognised that there is another motive for human conduct, a greater motive than fear or reward, a motive that was inspired by the needs of others. It was a motive of service, for Gautama had no sympathy with a merely inactive belief.

Gautama immediately began to put his own belief into practice by teaching others whom he sent out to carry his instruction far and wide.

As is usual amongst unintelligent peoples, all sorts of wonderful, magical tales began to spread about Gautama, whom they called the Buddha, a spirit which was supposed to appear from time to time amongst the people of India. He was said to have descended from a sacred white elephant,

and even to have been an elephant with six tusks, all of which he had given away. Even in this legend occurs the idea of *giving* to help others. It was supposed that the earth and skies shook at his birth and that his body shone with a great light at his death. He himself had taught that truth is necessary for happiness and he had no patience with stupid

superstitions, yet his teaching was almost lost amidst the superstitions and magic which rapidly developed round it.

But more and more people professed to be followers of Gautama Buddha. The simple shelters which his early followers had built for protection during the rains brought by the monsoons gave place to elaborate monasteries and temples. Soon we find all the old habits which had grown round the old religions of fear developing round Buddhism.

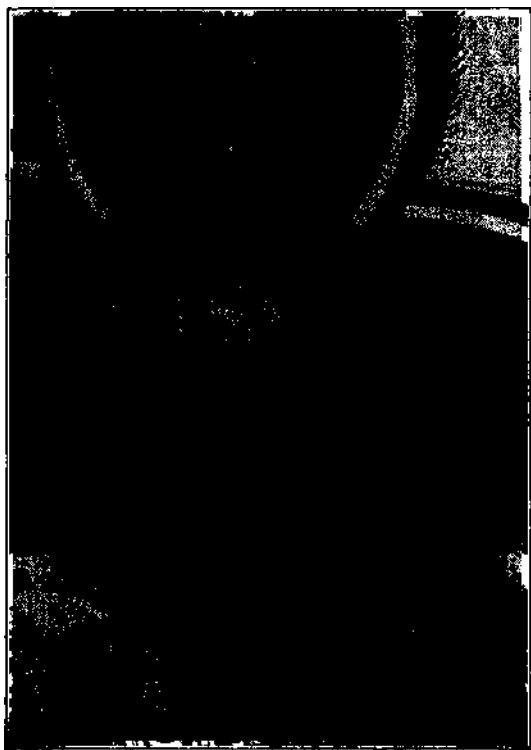


Fig. 57.—a huge Statue of Buddha. [Wide World

Great images, influenced by contact with the Western world of Egypt and Greece, at the time of Alexander the Great, began to appear. Elaborately clothed priests were solemnly performing equally elaborate ceremonies with swinging censers of burning incense, with psalms and choirs, processions, fasts, and holy water. During the ceremonies a bell was rung, a mirror raised, and the awed congregation bowed to the ground. What had begun as a wonderful

teaching based on a simple life of service was ultimately buried under what Mr. H. G. Wells calls "this gaudy glitter." Gautama Buddha himself would have recognised none of it, and would have had to start afresh if he could have returned to life.

At about the same time that Gautama had begun his teaching another great thinker named Confucius was doing similar work in China. A little later, philosophers were busy thinking in Greece. In their simpler cities, as we have seen, there was no room for pompous ceremony, and the intelligent Greeks had, for a short time at least, a healthy world in which sincerity, truth, and simplicity could exist. They did not take their old gods very seriously, but regarded them as a rather jovial crowd of very human persons who could be safely left to amuse themselves on Mount Olympus while the philosophers sought for ideals - of conduct, for knowledge, and for the truth about things.

It was very different in Rome. In the Roman world of heartless selfishness and cruelty, of fabulous wealth and wretched poverty, of hatred and passion, where the only goodness was obedience and the only service was service to the State, and where even service to the State was a cloak for self-glorification, self-advancement, and the selfish accumulation of wealth—in such a world all the old religious habits flourished. In Rome were all the old fears and rewards carried to an unbelievable excess. Emperors were made gods, and panic-stricken generals cut open the bodies of living, human victims, to search for signs as to whether the gods were pleased or angry, friendly or hostile. When emperors were divine, priests were but useful agents of the government, and superstition and fear were the tools with which they worked. The ignorant believed and feared; the wiser or more cunning merely scoffed. In such an age nothing mattered so long as the rules were obeyed. Religion was a convenient cloak to mask the greatest possible selfishness and depravity.

This sort of attitude had spread to many corners of the

Roman Empire. It had spread to the little land of Judæa and Syria, Roman provinces in the eastern Mediterranean.

The Romans had interfered as little as possible with the various beliefs and ways of living which existed amongst their different subjects, and from ancient times the Jews, in common with many of the Semitic peoples, had their own

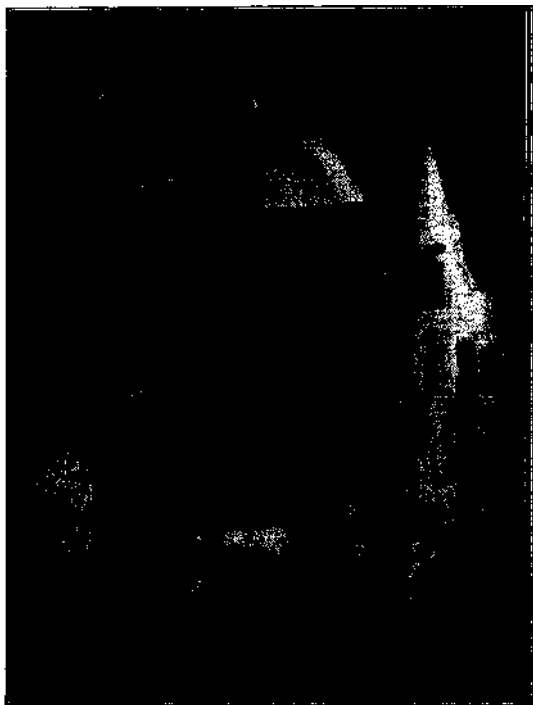


Fig. 58.- The kind of place where Christ was born.

[Shepstone

ideas about the mysterious power behind the world. Some of these went back to the time when the Jews were nomadic desert people, used to great open spaces, to the vast expanse of the sky, and to the mysterious, regular movements of the stars. To such people the great mind behind the world was not merely a destroyer, but a controlling force.. Though they, too, thought of him as capable of terrible anger, and as having pleasure in the sacrifice of an animal, there was

little chance in their days of wandering for an elaborate priesthood to develop. But when they settled in the land of Syria, or Canaan as it was then called, temples and priests soon developed in the usual way. For a long time the priests were an all-powerful body, but much of this power was lost when the Jews had established their position and become a wealthy kingdom.

Although the Jews fell from time to time under the

influence of foreign ideas, and strange gods intruded into their land, their original belief in the existence of an unseen, all-powerful god, whom they called Jehovah, still survived. It survived the conquest of ten of their twelve tribal divisions by the Assyrians, and the conquest and enslavement of the two southern tribes of Judah by the Babylonians. It survived the destruction of Jerusalem, which was rebuilt at the time of Cyrus, the Persian conqueror of Babylon, and it survived the Roman conquest.

In the Jewish belief there was one important difference which separated it from the other beliefs in a god which had to be feared and pleased by the presentation of gifts. The Jews had always believed that they were this god's chosen people. Jehovah was a protector who had fed their ancestors when wandering in the wilderness and guided them to the Promised Land. He had destroyed their enemies so long as they had remained faithful to him.

At the time of the Roman Empire, when a Roman governor was established in Judaea, this simple faith was almost lost, like Buddhism, under the cloak of the priests. Conduct was regulated by an elaborate code of rules, obedience to which could excuse any sort of selfishness. It was as though it were sufficient to pronounce a formula and that would put everything right. It was an age of hypocrisy and sham, an age when all sorts of evils and cruelties were tolerated so long as the rules were obeyed and the ceremonies were correctly performed.

This attitude to life is a very unintelligent one, but it is very easy to fall into it. It is as though an unintelligent person, having performed a ceremony, felt that afterwards he could do exactly as he pleased; the act of ritual had put everything all right.

When Octavian Augustus Cæsar had ruled in Rome for twenty-seven years a child was born in a stable in the little Jewish village of Bethlehem. At the age of twelve He was already of extraordinary intelligence, and was arguing with

the learned men in the temples. His name was Jesus, and His life, though short, was the greatest event in the history of the world.



Fig. 59.—Palestine.

As Gautama had done five hundred years before, Jesus gathered round Him a body of disciples, whom He taught, and who used to listen as He talked to the crowds who flocked to hear Him. Jesus also, like Gautama, taught that happiness could come only through unselfishness and service to others, but He went much farther than this. He did not teach men to be unselfish in order that they may achieve happiness, but in order that others may be happy as a consequence, which is a very different thing.

The new point in the teaching was that there was not a great punishing destroyer behind the world, but a God of Love, a Father who loved His children, who are a great family. Inside this great universal family there ought to be no hatred or jealousy, but love, in the sense of an infinite friendliness, a kindliness, a desire to help one another. There are many thousands of families in the world in which one can imagine a kind father and mother, happy children, and always an atmosphere of kind friendliness. That is the kind of family that Jesus wanted the world to be.

This ideal happiness was being prevented by all kinds of stupid and unnecessary evils. It could never exist when any member of the family was selfish, cruel, or even unkind; or when any member of the family was a hypocrite, which means someone who pretends, but who is really insincere and untruthful. Every member had really to *feel* kind towards the others. This meant that a man or a child had to learn to forgive someone who had injured him. A boy or girl who sulks or grows angry, or hates his brother or sister, is helping to spoil the whole family, and it is the same in the bigger family of the world.

In the whole story of the evolution of Man this is the greatest story of all, for Love was born into the world and was being taught as an ideal of conduct. How revolutionary this teaching really was it is difficult to realise unless you think of the older teaching of "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." This was the teaching in the Babylonian laws

of Hammurabi. If you think of a family which carried out this revengeful teaching, you can imagine how horrible such a family's home life would be ! But if it carried out in practice the teaching that happiness depends on the exercise of kindness' and forgiveness, you can imagine how different would be such a home. Such a happiness would be just as quickly destroyed if one member were greedy, thoughtless, conceited, or had, in fact, any of the qualities which are based on the love of self instead of love of others.

It was natural that the priests, whose hypocrisy and selfishness Jesus condemned, should have disliked His teaching, and, though the teaching is based on forgiveness, it is not a weak sort of teaching. Jesus had no hesitation in speaking fearlessly about the sham self-satisfaction which cloaked the evil of their lives, or in driving the money-changers from the temple. Hundreds of people followed Him, and as He cured many of their diseases, they called Him the Christ, or the Messiah, which means the Anointed.

But very few really understood the new teaching. They were so absorbed in the old habits and traditions of the priests that they could not understand a life that was not based on obedience to rules or on the old ideas of fear and reward. They still wanted signs and definite instructions which could be followed. Even one of the disciples who were continually with Jesus, a disciple named Peter, who afterwards died for his belief in the teaching of Christ, sometimes failed to understand that obedience to rules meant nothing. Once he said: " Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? Till seven times ? " Jesus answered : " I say not unto thee ' Until seven times,' but ' Until seventy times seven.' " This, of course, meant " Always,"

Jesus Christ Himself broke all the rules of the Jewish priests when He found that they interfered with His desire to help others. The priests condemned Him for mixing with sinners, for healing on the Sabbath day, and for many such things, and finally handed Him over to the Roman

governor, Pontius Pilate, on the charge of conspiring to be a king. Pilate tried to save Him, but the priests stirred up the people, and riots broke out in Jerusalem. At last, afraid for his own safety, Pilate handed Jesus over to the Jews to be crucified with two thieves.

As the mob jeered and spat at the hanging body, Jesus said : " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

CHAPTER X

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND THE FALLING ROMAN EMPIRE

THE CRUCIFIXION OF Jesus Christ was a great shock to those of His followers who had come with Him to Jerusalem. They had expected Him to overthrow the Roman governor and to set up a kingdom of the Jews. Instead, He was crucified with two thieves, and even Peter, one of His most devoted followers, had said : " I know not the man." Only a small group of mourners stood, half hidden, in the shadow of the hill. The rest had fled, and Jerusalem was carrying on its ordinary business of preparing for the annual Feast of the Passover.

During the next few weeks the rumour spread that Jesus Christ had on the third day risen from the dead. Many people claimed to have seen Him and to have talked to Him. Later was added the story that He had been seen disappearing into the skies. With renewed courage His disciples began to gather together in excited groups and to spread the teaching of Jesus Christ. Soon the Romans and the Jewish priests found that, instead of crushing this strange movement by crucifying its leader, they had strengthened it, for a risen Christ was a power beyond their reach.

The man most influential in spreading the teaching and in founding a definite and organised church was Saul of Tarsus, afterwards known as Paul.. He was an educated man, who spoke Greek, and who knew a great deal about the older religions. At first he had persecuted the Christians, but after he had accepted the teaching he devoted the rest of his life to the conversion of others.

Paul had many adventures and narrow escapes. Once he escaped from Damascus by being lowered over the wall when it was dark. He was stoned, thrown into prison, beaten, and once he was shipwrecked. The story of his four journeys and how he was taken to Rome itself is told in the Acts of the Apostles. Wherever he went he made many converts and soon there were groups of Christians in all the chief towns from Jerusalem to Rome.

Although the teaching of Christ was, as we have seen, really simple, it was a very revolutionary doctrine, and in three ways especially it drove people into violent opposition.

Firstly, Jesus Christ had opposed the accumulation of wealth. To the rich lawyer He had said : " Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor." On another occasion He had said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven. This teaching naturally set all the selfish wealthy against the Christians, and the Romans, whose Empire was built up on greed, could hardly have been expected to distribute their wealth amongst the people whose poverty they had helped to create.

Secondly, Jesus Christ had always fought against hypocrisy and sham. He had no patience with the mere observance of ceremonies or mere obedience to rules, for this kind of behaviour could so easily cloak deceit, cruelty, and selfishness. This teaching naturally brought all the priests and the followers of the older religions into opposition.

Many of the Jews were opposed also to the third teaching of Christ which denied that they were a specially chosen people. The universal brotherhood of Man, or the kingdom of Heaven, was to embrace all peoples.

So it is easy to understand why the early Christians were so harshly persecuted. Rome itself had not been in the habit of interfering with the various beliefs of its vast Empire, because it had never taken religion very seriously. But this

was different. Christianity would not be left alone ; it was always active, denouncing just the things that Rome loved, and when the Christians refused to worship the emperor, Rome began to join in their persecution.

Some were thrown to the lions in the Roman arena, as a change from the gladiatorial shows. Many were burned and some were slowly roasted. Others were crucified, many were tortured.

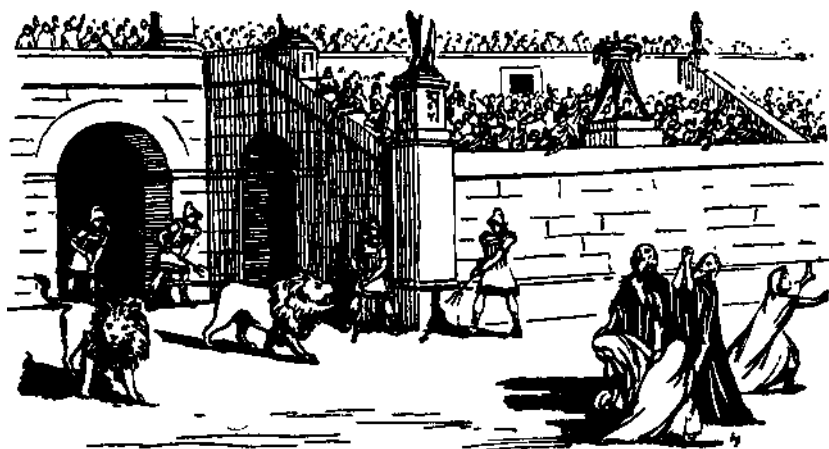


Fig. 60.—A Roman Arena.

But the Christians continued to increase in number, though they were often driven to live in underground hiding-places. Some of their missionaries spread westwards even as far as Britain, while others wandered beyond the frontiers of the Empire into the barbarian world beyond the Danube.

Three hundred years after the birth of Christ, persecution reached its highest point, in the reign of Diocletian. He commanded that the churches should be destroyed throughout the Empire, that any people found holding secret meetings should be put to death ; the property of Christians was to be confiscated, their manuscripts, when they could be seized, were to be destroyed, and no Christian was to be allowed protection by the law.

Such wholesale destruction of Christianity was impossible, for many of the governors of provinces were themselves Christians, and the Christians themselves were far too widespread throughout the Empire.

Moreover, during these three centuries the Roman Empire itself had been gradually weakening. Increasingly threatened from without by the barbarians, it was increasingly weakened from within by the greed, jealousy, and rivalries of its officials and generals. Rome had ceased even to be the regular residence of the emperors. With Diocletian, the Empire split into two sections, a western and an eastern Empire, but even Diocletian's clever and vigorous re-organisation failed to restore any real order in either section, and he confessed the hopelessness of the task by retiring, in 305, into private life. After a period of anarchy, the Empire fell to Constantine, who chose as his new capital the fortress of Byzantium, the real centre of the then known world. Almost impregnable, controlling all the great trade routes, it was an ideal capital, and he renamed it Constantinople.

This change had many important consequences in the history of Man. The eastern half of the Empire, centred round the new capital, was Greek. When the western half was destroyed the eastern part remained, a fragmentary continuation of the older Greek world rather than of the Roman.

A more immediate result was that the western half rapidly weakened and fell an easier prey to the barbarians who were hammering more vigorously at the frontiers.

Constantine recognised the uselessness of further persecutions against the Christian Church, and saw, further, that it was the only unifying force in the decaying Empire. Accordingly he ordered all persecution to cease, and in order to organise the Christians into a stronger unity, he called councils from which "official" beliefs were issued. Shortly before his death in 337 Constantine himself was baptised,

Christianity had become the adopted religion of the Roman Empire, but in the three centuries in which it **had**

struggled against ceaseless persecution, Christianity had changed almost as much as Buddhism had changed from the teaching of Gautama.

The change had begun as early as the teaching of Paul and was of two kinds. Firstly it had become an organisation—a Church. The local bodies of Christians were shepherded by "elders" or priests, who were under the authority of bishops responsible for the control and organisation of whole districts. Peter, who had followed Paul to Rome, became its first bishop. For many reasons the Roman bishop, who was called the Pope (which, like "Papa," means "Father"), became the most important of the bishops. Rome, deserted by its emperor, rapidly fell under the Pope's authority, and the eastern bishops, who were usually disputing some point or other, frequently turned to the Roman bishop for his opinion. The long authority which Rome had held had accustomed western Europe to look towards Rome, whose bishop soon became recognised as the head of the Church in western Europe. In the eastern fragment of the Empire there was no outstanding bishop, and there was an emperor. In the old days the emperors had been worshipped as gods, so it was certain to happen that the emperor at Constantinople should himself become regarded as the Patriarch or Ruling Father of the Church in eastern Europe.

The second kind of change was more important, for it was a change in the actual teaching. Gradually ideas borrowed from the older religions were added to the Christian doctrine or to the Church's ceremonies. Instead of teaching the doctrine of forgiveness, of kindness, of unselfishness and of brotherly love, the Church became increasingly interested in arguments about all sorts of meanings and interpretations, and belief in the Church's judgments on these matters became more important than behaviour. At last fierce quarrels broke out amongst the leaders of the Church, and one can hardly help feeling that if Jesus Christ had returned to earth at this time, He must have said again,

many times: " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

In the fourth century pressure from the barbarian tribes from over the Danube became greater, and the Roman armies were too weak to offer much resistance. In the reign of Theodosius, 379 to 395, some of the tribes known as the Western Goths were allowed to settle in the Empire. Barbarians were even drafted into the Roman armies, and some of them became generals.

On the death of Theodosius the Empire was again, and for the last time, divided into the eastern and western Empires, and barbarians were already spreading over the decaying western half, ready to complete its destruction, and to prey on its ruins.

One of the Gothic chieftains, Alaric, invaded the eastern sections and even attacked Constantinople. Finding this great fortified city too strong for him, he invaded Italy. He was opposed by another barbarian chieftain named Stilicho, who was in command of the troops of the western emperor, Honorius. Stilicho defeated Alaric, but the emperor, jealous of his power, had him murdered. This was not only a crime, it was a stupid blunder, too, for Stilicho's troops went over to the side of Alaric, who again invaded Italy.

The feeble Honorius had already fled from Rome to the little marshy coastal town of Ravenna in north-eastern Italy, Rome was at the mercy of Alaric, who in 410 sacked and plundered the city, though he prevented his men from mere wanton destruction. It was because of these attacks on Rome that Honorius had, three years before, recalled the Roman soldiers from Britain, which rapidly fell a prey to English barbarians from across the sea.

It was not only the weakness of Rome that was tempting the barbarian tribes to cross the frontiers of the tottering Empire; they were also being driven from behind by a

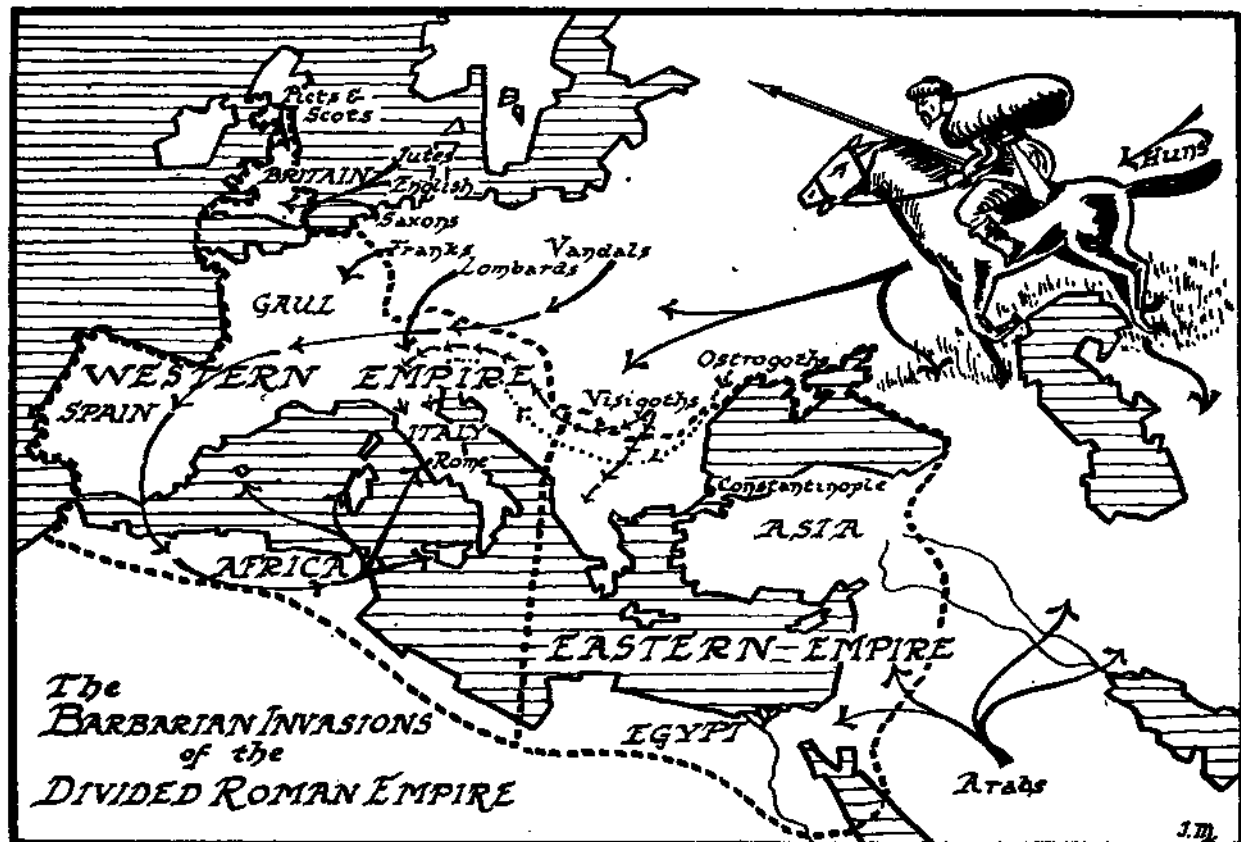


Fig. 61.—The Barbarian invasions of the Divided Roman Empire.

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much wilder people who had invaded Europe. Driven from their distant homes in the grass-lands of Asia by the Chinese, hordes of wild horsemen were riding into Europe through the gap between the Ural and Caucasian Mountains.

They tore across Europe, plundering and destroying, and penetrated even as far west as Gaul, where they were defeated in 451. Soon there were barbarians, conquering and settling, in every Roman province. Vandals, whose name is still given to any wanton destroyer, passed through Gaul and Spain, and entered the Roman province of northern Africa which had grown on the ruins of ancient Carthage. The Vandals left nothing but ruins, a destruction from which northern Africa never recovered. From there the Vandals invaded Italy, and Rome was ruthlessly plundered for a fortnight.

Even in this confusion the dream of Empire still lived; the reality had gone, but men clung to the shadow and fought to wear the purple and the crown and to command, though there were no subjects to obey.

In 476, when one barbarian chieftain named Odoacer had defeated and slain another whose son had claimed the title, the imperial crown and other royal emblems were sent to Constantinople. Odoacer turned Italy into a kingdom and survived the attacks of jealous enemies for thirteen years. Then an invasion by the Eastern Goths under Theodoric ended his career, and he was murdered at Ravenna, where Theodoric tried to establish something like a court. He was one of the most ambitious and most capable of the barbarian rulers, and genuinely tried to restore order in Italy. But to the Italians he was just a barbarian; to the emperor at Constantinople he was a mere adventurer; to the Pope he was a dangerous rival for power in Italy. Theodoric settled that part of the opposition by flinging the Pope into prison.

Meanwhile the barbarian Franks had invaded Gaul, which they were hammering into a kingdom after their own fashion, and the English were doing the same in Britain.

The great Empire was a weltering chaos of barbarians, who were preying like Vultures on its ruins. A last flickering effort to save the Empire came in the sixth century, when the Emperor Justinian, aided by a skilful general named Belisarius, drove the Vandals from Africa and the Goths from Italy. But when Justinian died in 565 there was no one strong enough to complete his work, and more invaders, the Longobardi or Long-Bearded tribe, entered Italy, ravaged it, and settled in the north.

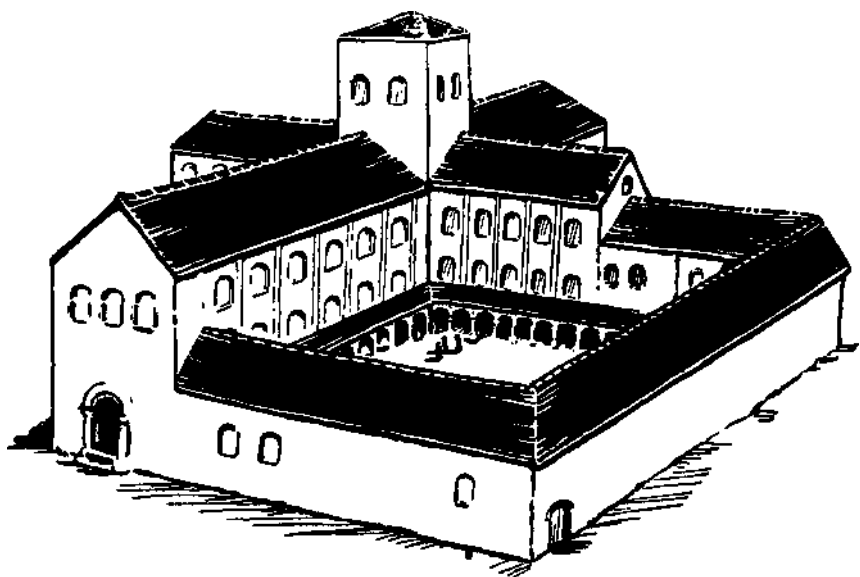


Fig. 62.—A Monastery.

In all this vast confusion two things happened to the Church. The first was that the Pope became increasingly powerful. Even Attila, the leader of the Huns, had turned back from his ravaging when the calm and dignified Pope Leo, clad in his robes of office, had faced him fearlessly. The Church was the one orderly thing left in western Europe, the one organisation which survived the barbarian destruction; and, by contrast, it became all the more powerful. The recognition of the Pope as its head gave to the Church

a real unity, while it gave to the Pope, now undisputed master of Rome, an ever-increasing authority.

The second thing that happened to the Church was that many of its members began to seek shelter from the disorder and confusion of the barbarian world by shutting themselves within the walls of monasteries. These monasteries were organised and given strict rules by St. Benedict (480-543), and henceforward monks were to live most rigorously disciplined lives, and lives of continuous hard work.



Fig. 63.—The Dawn of Feudal Christendom.

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An important fact about the development of the monasteries is that they all accepted the authority of the Pope. As, for a long time, all Christian life centred in and round the monasteries, the Pope's authority over the Church became more firmly established than ever.

Within the monasteries learning was kept alive, though it was a very rigid kind of learning, which asked few questions, made no experiments, confined itself to its manuscripts, and therefore made no progress.

Rome had created another sort of Empire, a Christian Empire ruled by the Pope, whose outposts were the walled abbeys scattered in increasing numbers in a confused world of warring barbarians.

CHAPTER XI

THE LAND AND PEOPLE OF GERMANIA

THE STORY OF the first ten chapters of this book, after showing how Man was gradually evolved, has tried to show how his further development was influenced, in the same way, both by his environment and by the things that had happened before. During all the centuries of this long story there were still Eskimos catching seal and fish in the distant north ; men were still hunting on the edge of the pine forests ; far over the southern horizon, beyond the deserts, men were still living in the same sort of way as before in the jungle and in the equatorial forests.

To the far east, in China, a civilisation had developed, and farmers were pushing out beyond the Great Wall of China and spreading their method of living farther into Asia. From India Buddhism was spreading, and was becoming organised, as was the Christian Church in Europe.

The story has told of great civilisations which had come and gone—in the valleys of the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Nile, in the AEgean, the Balkans, and, finally, round the Mediterranean.

Many thousands of years have been covered, and we are already within fifteen hundred years of our own time !

We left the story with a picture of Europe seen as a vast confusion of barbarian tribes preying on the dead body of the Roman Empire—a Europe of tiny worlds in which each group of barbarians depended once more on what the land on which it had settled could provide. To these lands the tribal settlers brought the customs and habits which they **had** developed in their original homes outside the Roman

Empire; so, to understand how they began to develop in their new environment, it is necessary to examine first the land of Central Europe from which most of them had come.

North of the Danube, in the wild region the Romans called Germania, were mountains which sloped on their northern side down to the deciduous forests and the lowlands near the coast. In the north-west they gave way to marshy

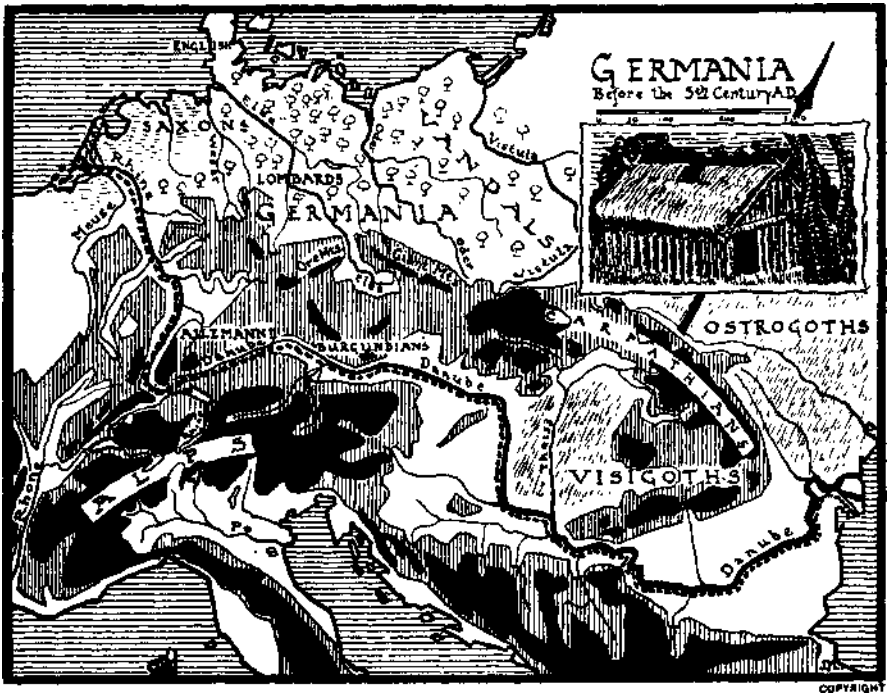


Fig. 64.—Germania.

plains, and in the east they merged into the grass-lands of eastern Europe and western Asia.

Scattered over these lands were tribes of people who had descended from the Aryan-speaking peoples whose original entry into Europe about 3000 B.C. we have already noticed. They had developed into a number of very similar tribal groups, including the Western Goths or Visigoths, the Eastern Goths or Ostrogoths, the Vandals, Franks, English,

and Saxons. There were many others, but their names are not so important as is the way they lived, and a wonderful picture of their lives and of their lands has been left for us by the Roman historian Tacitus in a little book called *Germania*.

Though the lives of these people were rather squalid and crude, there was something fine and grand about them, even when they lived in the simple timber huts in this land of wild scenery and harsh climate. As they have not yet lost some of their strange qualities, which they carried with them into the lands they conquered, it is worth while looking at the picture Tacitus has left us.

With fair skins, fierce blue eyes, light-coloured or reddish hair, the men and women were tall and strong. They wore little and sometimes nothing except a cloak which they fastened at the shoulder with a thorn, or, if they were near enough to the Roman traders, with a brooch. For a cloak the more northern tribes had to be content with the skin of an animal caught in the hunt.

Above all things they loved freedom and courage. Their love of freedom showed itself in many curious ways and underlay all their method of living. They could not have lived in cities shut in by walls, and, even when they built their little houses, these were always separate from each other with an open space all round them. The Romans found this curious habit difficult to understand, but it is an attitude that we have not yet lost.

Their houses were open to anyone, for to refuse shelter, food, or drink to a guest was a crime. It was not that there was ever much to offer, but these people thought little of possessions so long as their immediate needs were satisfied, and their needs went little beyond food and drink. They grew nothing but wheat and barley, or rye in the northern districts, and from these they made little cakes and a drink, rather like beer, called mead. They had cattle and sheep, and made a kind of cheese from curdled milk.

They were free to do much as they pleased and would begin the day when they felt inclined, which was not always early. There was little necessary work, and most could be done by the women and children; so, when there was no tribal raid, the men were free to hunt, to sleep, to eat, or to drink. It was therefore an easy life, for land was plentiful,



Fig. 65.—Typical German Scenery.

[*Mondiale*

crops grew sufficiently easily, cattle could be grazed on the common ground, and life's needs were satisfied.

Two things prevented these men from sinking into a passive idleness and a gluttonous or drunken self-indulgence. The first was the harsh climate; the other, which was prob-

ably derived from the first, was their love of courage. As soon as a boy was old enough he was given arms, and afterwards he was expected to take his share of whatever fighting the tribe indulged in.

These arms consisted of a short iron-headed spear, a shield, sometimes a short sword, and, though not always, a leather or metal-protected helmet.

Wars seem to have been fairly numerous, especially on the Roman frontiers, for the healthy barbarian preferred fighting to the duller occupation of farming and waiting for the annual crops.

In these fights, to have abandoned one's shield was the height of disgrace, and a man guilty of such an act was denied the right to attend religious ceremonies or the assembly of the freemen. They gave great honour to the chieftains who led them, and it was disgraceful to return from battle without the leader.

A curious custom which helped to develop this love of courage in battle was that the women and children went, too, to encourage husband or father, to tend the wounded, and in general to look after the comfort of their men. These barbarian peoples thought far more of their womenfolk than did many of the civilised peoples ; they both honoured and respected them, and scorned to appear cowardly in their presence. Moreover, if they were defeated, their wives and children would be captured and probably sold as slaves to the Romans, so they had to be protected until the last man dropped.

This wild spirit of adventurous, manly courage, and of free independence was typical of all their activities. Their spears and shields went everywhere with them, even into their assemblies, to which they usually went a day or two late, to show that they were not afraid of anyone and that they attended of their own free will. They regarded themselves as equal to their chieftains when they were not fighting, and

would accept no sort of discipline or punishment from any man. Any punishment had to be administered by the priests, as representatives of the gods, and even then it was not the priests' punishment, but the gods' punishment. They could, of course, agree amongst themselves to punish a member of a tribe who was breaking their traditions, making himself a nuisance, or bringing disgrace on the community. A man who was a nuisance, or who disobeyed the customs, was

hanged; but a man who disgraced the tribe by acts of cowardice or by evil living was buried in the mud of the marshes. To hang such a man would be to advertise the shameful fact that such men existed in the tribe. Angry quarrels between men and families which sometimes led to bloodshed were settled by some sort of payment to the injured family.

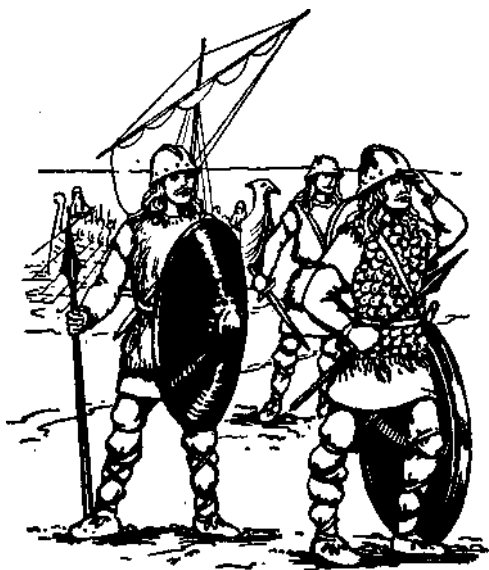


Fig. 66.—A group of armed Germanic Barbarians.

Sort of justice which worked better than imposed laws could have done, because it did not conflict with their feeling of freedom. The barbarians were free communities of men who knew what they wanted and who would not permit any member to destroy the carefree independence of their lives either by becoming a nuisance or by becoming supreme.

They had to have assemblies of some kind in order to run even such a simple organisation and such a simple system of justice, as well as to safeguard their freedom. When the tribes had been very small the heads of all families had gone

to some central spot in the village, where, fully armed, they had come to their decisions and their judgments. Later the families had organised themselves into "hundreds," and a hundred men attended the "moots" or meetings. They continued to take their weapons, which they raised to show assent; those who did not approve groaned to show their dissent.

These assemblies were taken very seriously; in fact, one feature of these people is their seriousness. They seem to have had no sense of humour except of the crudest kind, as they also lacked any sense of beauty; but this is again perhaps due to their environment, for there was little beauty in their homes, their land, or in their lives.

Their amusement seemed to be limited to sword and spear dancing, when a number of skilled youths danced and leaped between upturned swords or spears. This sort of dancing is still practised by some of the Scottish regiments.

In the marriage ceremony the bridegroom solemnly presented his bride with yoked oxen and a bridled horse, while they exchanged weapons of war. This was a solemn symbol to remind them that they were to share possessions, work, and the troubles of warfare.

Like all undeveloped peoples, and even civilised people are often mentally very backward, they had many superstitions; and, like the Romans, they sought for signs of divine pleasure or anger in strange places. The most curious way of seeking for such signs was their custom of listening to the neighing and the snorting of the sacred white horses which they kept for that purpose in the sacred groves. A special chariot was kept for the priest, who was alone allowed to use it, and he had to *give* a meaning to every kind of neighing or whinnying the horses made.

It is interesting to notice that the two chiefs who were supposed to have led the English into Britain were called Hengest, which means "Horse," and Horsa, which means

"Mare," and we may still see the white horses which were carved in the chalk downs by cutting away the turf.

A more typical characteristic of their religious ideas was their dislike of temples. This was just another example of their love of freedom, for the gods were not to be confined within walls. Nor were they to be reduced to the mere likeness of Man, so they built no images. Instead they consecrated groves and coppices which were set apart for their ceremonies.



Fig. 67.—A Barbarian raid on the British coast.

They liked to perform very special ceremonies when the moon was new or full, for then the groves seemed full of mystery, and in the dimly lit coppices with their strange shadows they could imagine the unseen presence of their gods. There are still many superstitious people who cling to strange ideas about the moon, and who hate to see a new moon unless they are in the open !

This picture of the tribes which dwelt across the Roman frontier is, in general, true of them all, though there were, of course, differences. Those nearest to the frontier had

learned many things from their civilised neighbours. They had learned to trade and to use money. They used chiefly the smaller Roman coins; gold ones were not of much use for their small purchases. Farther north they still exchanged goods by the process of simple barter. Nowhere did they prize the precious metals, and even the gold and silver vessels which some of the chieftains had acquired were not regarded as being more valuable than earthenware pots.

In the north-west, near the mouth of the Elbe, was the home of the English and Saxon tribes. The only difference between them and the other Germanic peoples was that which was due to the nearness of the sea. They had learned to make ships, to fish, and to make pirate raids on nearby coasts. They had ventured across the North Sea so often that the Romans in Britain had been compelled to station soldiers at different points along the coast to guard the province.

In the north-east of Germania the tribes were wilder and less organised. Life was harder there (there is less rain and it is colder), so man had to rely more on hunting than on cultivation of the soil.

But these differences are slight compared with the similarities. All the tribes were of strong, independent, freedom-loving men, priding themselves on their courage and strength, faithful to their womenfolk, fond of crude pleasures, heavy drinkers, quick to anger, but generous, faithful to each other and to tradition. On the earthen floor of their simple wooden houses, of which the timber was not even shaped, master could not be recognised from servant either by difference in clothing or by any difference in the mode of living. " They lived in the company of the same cattle, on the same mud floor, until years separated the freeborn, and character claimed her own." Tacitus could not help admiring them, and said that " Good habits have more force with them than good laws elsewhere,"

These good habits, and their bad ones, they carried into the conquered lands of the Roman Empire. The Franks carried them into Gaul, the English into Britain. It was never a sudden, dramatic military conquest, but a slow penetration by tribe after tribe, each under its chieftain, and often accompanied by wives and children.

The south-east of Britain was a land very similar to their own Germania, of rain and fog, with forests and marshes, rivers and streams, and stretches of moor and grass-land. The towns which the Romans had built meant nothing to the English, who preferred to build their separated houses in groups near a stream, and to continue the same kind of life they had lived before. There were cattle, sheep, and pigs ready to be seized, and there was land already under cultivation.

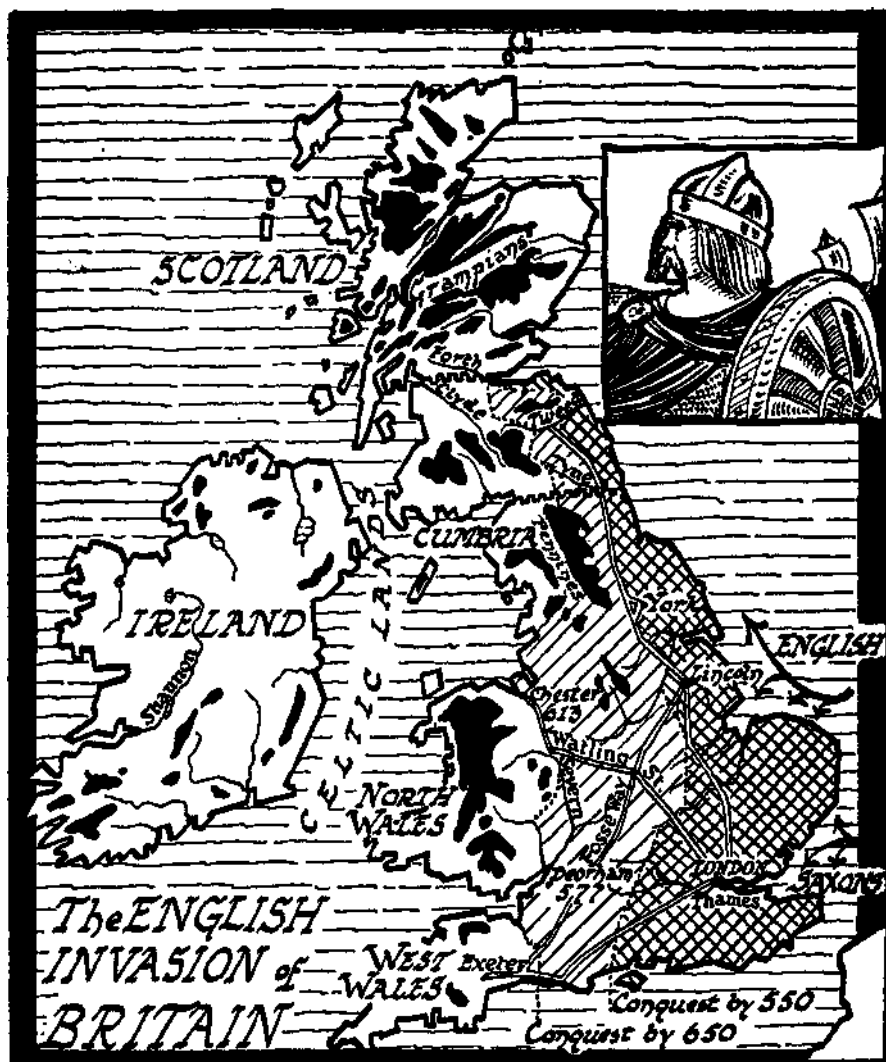
The coastal districts were settled first, and new invaders either had to drive the older ones farther inland or go inland themselves. Thus the penetration was slow, and actually continued for about two hundred years. In 577 the English reached the western sea at Deorham. In 613 they reached it again by defeating the British at Chester. This was the limit of their conquest, and the mountains of Cornwall, of Wales, and of the north-west, the Pennines and the Cumbrians, remained the last stronghold of the Britons.

There the Britons must have lived a very hard life, dependent on the sheep and goats which could find sufficient pasture on the mountain slopes or on the poor crops they could grow in the valleys.

In Gaul there was a much greater mingling of the Roman Celts and the barbarians. The Franks soon began to speak Latin, to adopt the Christian religion, and to copy many of the Roman customs. In England the invaders kept much more to their own ways. They kept their own language, formed themselves into tribal groups under their chieftains, and held their assemblies as they had done in Germania;

They built their timber houses from the forests which were still widespread over central and southern England, and settled down to their old carefree lives of farming when it was necessary and fighting when it was possible.

Roman buildings fell into ivy-wreathed ruins. The roads



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Fig. 68.—The English invasion of Britain.

were neglected, for there was no need to travel, and soon grass began to hide them. The village, the surrounding fields and woods, became Man's world and supplied his needs. So long as no one interfered the English settlers were content. If the nearby road were less noticeable than before it was so much the better, for there was less chance that they would be disturbed.

CHAPTER XII

THE CREATION OF THE MOHAMMEDAN EMPIRE

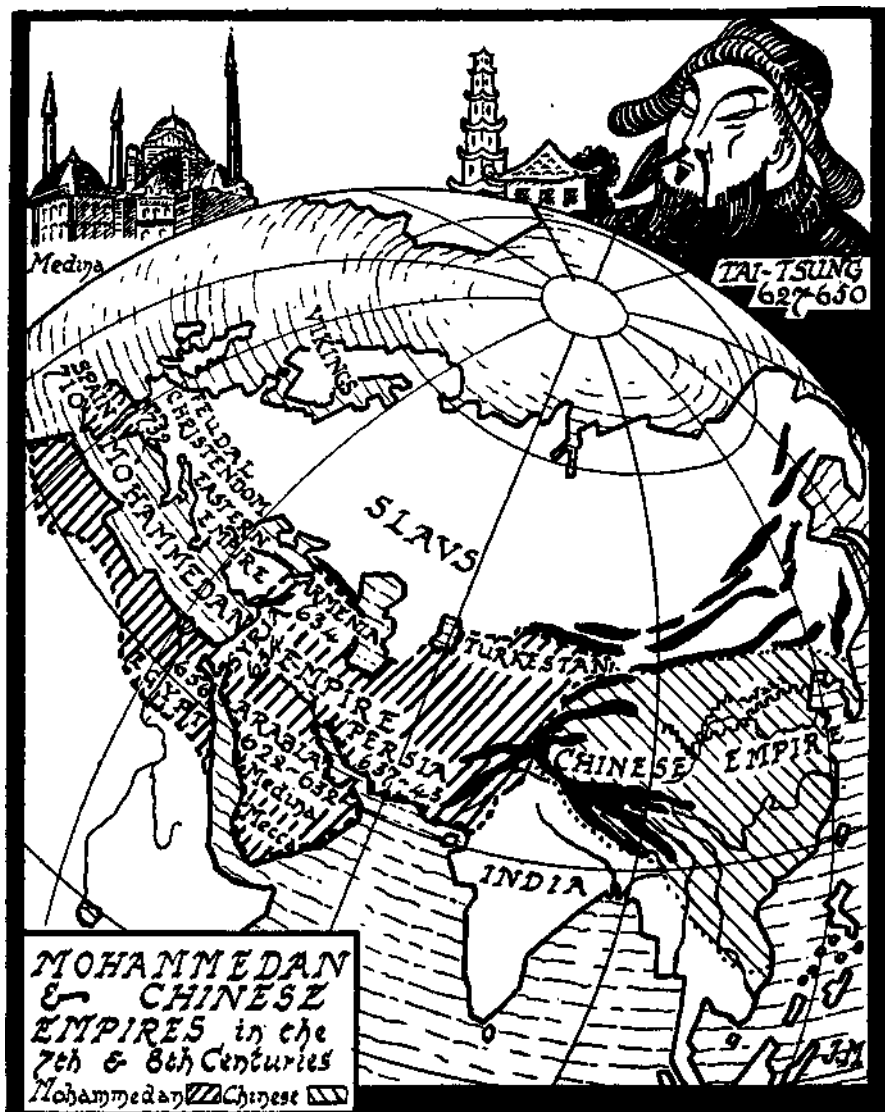
THE NEW EUROPE which the barbarian invaders were slowly forging out of scattered settlements on a ruined Empire was not to be allowed to develop without interference. It was to receive an unexpected shock from the southern desert lands and a later one from the wild cold regions of the north. This chapter tells the story of the strange threat from the south.

For the beginning of the story we must go south-east to the great deserts of Arabia, the ancient home of the nomadic Semitic peoples. From there, in the past, waves of shepherd tribes had gone to develop the civilisation of Egypt. Others had gone north to create the wonderful civilisations of the Tigris and Euphrates valleys, before the Aryan Persians had conquered them. They had, too, created the Syrian civilisation, built Jerusalem, and given Christianity to the world.

Now, as they had done for hundreds of years, men still travelled leisurely from oasis to oasis with their camels and their goods, their rolled tents, their turbans and flowing robes.

But things were not quite the same. Regular trade routes had been developing for centuries, linking the oases, and numbers of merchants had settled permanently where there was a sufficiently constant supply of water to make it possible. Such settlements had grown into towns and cities, strengthened to resist possible attacks from wandering Bedouin tribes which preyed on the merchants. In the sixth century A.D. the most important cities were Medina **and** Mecca,

Mecca, the larger city, was more than a trading station: it was a shrine—a holy place. Each year there was a truce from all fighting, so that pilgrims could come unharmed to Mecca. Dusty and weary after long desert journeys,



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Fig. 69.—Mohammedan and Chinese Empires of the Seventh and Eighth Centuries.

hundreds came to pray at the little grey temple. Inside was a small and specially sacred compartment which contained a black stone, probably a meteorite, which they worshipped. The small compartment and sometimes the temple itself were called the Kaaba. There were, in addition to the stone, many images in the temple, for at this time the Arabs or Saracens worshipped many gods.

This annual inrush of visitors was a source of great profit to the people of Mecca, and more people were encouraged to attend by the holding of competitions in poetry and music.

For many years, as the pilgrims arrived, one man named Ahmad, or Mohammed, sat in lazy comfort, pondering on the stupidity of idol worship. He was a strange man himself, and was already forty years of age.

Born in Mecca in A.D. 570, Mohammed began his life in poverty. For some years he was a shepherd's boy, and then he became a servant to a rich widow whose camels he led across the desert. But he was, then, an attractive youth, and when twenty-five years of age he married the widow, whose name was Kadija. For fifteen years he was content to live idly, a rather negligible member of the city, whose climate encouraged a leisured existence.

To Mecca came many Jews and Christian traders who talked to Mohammed of the Unseen God and of the life and teaching of Christ. Gradually three ideas seemed to have formed in his mind. Firstly he became convinced of the truth of the existence of an invisible God, and that the worship of idols, stones, and such material fragments was absurd. Secondly he believed that religion should be related to the behaviour of one man to another, and that it was not just a matter of pilgrimages and ceremonies. Lastly he began to think of himself as the chosen prophet of this teaching which he was destined to spread.

At first he confined the confession of his beliefs to the members of his family and to his intimate friends. One of

these, Abu Bekr, became his greatest supporter, and often encouraged Mohammed when he was inclined to waver. Gradually his teaching spread amongst the people of Mecca, but they were at first inclined to laugh at him, for they all knew who he was, and many remembered that he had driven Kadija's camels.

But when Mohammed began to make converts among the pilgrims and when his fame had begun to interest Medina,

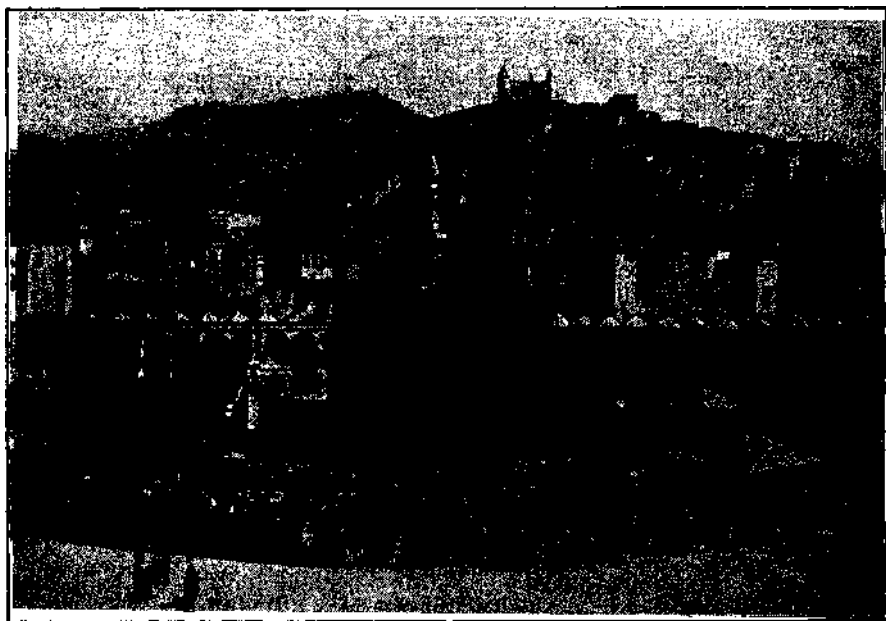


Fig. 70.—Mecca Today.

[Shepstone

Mecca became alarmed, for this teaching, if it spread, would ruin the profitable pilgrimages on which the city's prosperity depended.

When Mohammed was fifty years old the people of Medina invited him to come and rule their city and to teach them his beliefs. The request was probably inspired by Medina's jealousy of the greater prosperity of Mecca, and Mohammed seemed to doubt its sincerity. He lingered for

two years, sending on disciples to prepare the way for him. Then, in 622, the Meccans decided to murder the prophet. Mohammed knew of the plot, and at night he fled. With the faithful Abu Bekr he reached Medina by a circuitous route to avoid his pursuers. This flight is called the Hegira (pronounced Heej-ra), and from the date of it, September 20th, 622, Mohammedans reckon their years, as Christians do from the birth of Christ.

A series of battles, murders, massacres, and plots went on for some years between the two cities, but in 629 Mohammed came to an arrangement with Mecca. The city was to accept his teaching and his authority, and in return was to become the headquarters of the new religion. Pilgrimages would, therefore, still continue, but the images were to be destroyed. Accordingly Mohammed returned to Mecca, from where he began the conquest of Arabia, as the Prophet of Allah, the Unseen God.

The last sermon he preached at Mecca was full of magnificent ideals, yet simple, practicable, and very human. These, together with his earlier teachings, as recorded in the Koran, the Mohammedan Bible, formed the basis of the religion he founded. This religion is called Islam, a name given to it by Mohammed himself. The word means "complete submission to God,"

At the age of sixty-two, in 632, Mohammed died, and was succeeded as Caliph, which means "Successor," by Abu Bekr, who planned to conquer the world and to convert it to Islam. The astonishing thing is that he and his successors almost accomplished the dream. Abu Bekr died in 634, and most of the early conquests were the work of the next Caliph, Omar.

First Syria was overrun, and Islam was established in Damascus, Antioch, and Jerusalem. After a three days' battle a Persian army, complete with elephants, was defeated, and within five years of Mohammed's death the Moslem or Mohammedan conquests included Arabia, Syria, Armenia,

and Persia. The armies continued eastwards, crossed the Indus and reached the borders of China.

At the same time Egypt was conquered, and by the use of its fleet the Mohammedans threatened Constantinople itself. This great fortified city withstood the attack and prevented an entry into Europe by that route ; but the armies continued westwards along northern Africa, conquered Spain, and invaded France. There, in 732, their amazing progress was checked by the Franks under Charles Martel—Charles the Hammer—who defeated them at Poitiers. In exactly a hundred years from the death of Mohammed the Moslem Empire had spread from the Indus to Gibraltar; the word " Gibraltar " is Arabic.

There were four fine qualities in Islam which gave it its strength and helped it both to spread and to endure. First, the teaching on which it was based was of a simple appeal and sound. It taught, as Christ had taught, the brotherhood of Man. " Know that every Moslem is the brother of every other Moslem. All of you are of the same equality." It taught the principles of generosity and kindness, humility, frugality, and care of the sick and poor. This teaching, like the original teaching of Christ, made an immediate appeal to people used to oppression, to selfish governments, to a priesthood as cruel and as careless of suffering in others as were the governments and officials.

The second quality of Islam was its simple belief in one unseen God. The belief in one God, the Father of all, did not lend itself to endless discussions and long arguments, which ended only in fixing rigid and hard creeds whose acceptance by a bewildered people was of more consequence than kindly behaviour.

A third quality that strengthened Islam was that it had quite definite and simple rules which Mohammed had left for the guidance of his followers. Apart from the kind of behaviour they had to practise, and the belief in Allah, they had to pray five times each day. It was not necessary for them to attend any temple : they had to pray wherever they happened

to be at the appointed time. There were **no** sacrifices, **no** priests, **no** special ceremonies ; there was just the religion itself which every Moslem carried with him always, everywhere. Such a religion remained the same, century after century, instead of becoming rapidly submerged under a complicated organisation of priests and ceremonies. **It** remained a religion of behaviour. Even today, wherever he is, dusty in the desert, or in the bazaar of some city, centuries after the death of Mohammed, the faithful Moslem turns towards Mecca at the appointed time and prays.

The fourth quality of Islam, which gave it its fighting strength, was the absolute reliance of the faithful on the will **of** Allah. To die in battle, if Allah so willed, was to be sure of Paradise, for what greater service could man render to his God ?

An early incident in the spreading of Islam by the armies of the Caliph shows an unfortunate weakness, a weakness in human nature rather than in Islam, which spread amongst its rulers. When the armies of Omar, the conqueror of Syria, had captured Jerusalem, the conquered citizens demanded that they should deliver Jerusalem to the Caliph in person. Omar, simply clad, and carrying only the barest necessities, rode from Mecca on a camel, with only one attendant. His victorious generals came to meet him **at** the gates of the city, wearing silken robes, and with a splendid retinue. Omar, ashamed of their pride, threw dust **and** stones over their magnificent robes, and refused to allow them to accompany him into the city.

Mohammedan conquests and the growth of an empire necessarily brought great power and wealth to the Caliphate and made that office a goal for the ambitious. Selfish greed and desire for power continued after Omar's death, and rival claimants for the Caliphate began a long feud which has left a permanent mark on Islam. But the religion itself was strong enough to survive this unfortunate quarrel at its headquarters, for, in fact, the true headquarters of Islam were always with the invisible but ever present Allah, and in the hearts of the faithful themselves.

Within the Mohammedan lands a wonderful civilisation developed, and the Arabs are responsible, far more than the Romans, for continuing the work of the Greeks in the extension of Man's knowledge. The numerals we use for all mathematical calculations are still called Arabic numerals; and the word " algebra " is a combination of two Arabic words. The Arabs were the inventors of trigonometry, and they used their marvellous mathematical knowledge to turn the magical lore of the astrologers into the science of astronomy.

Alchemy, so called from two Arabic words meaning " the hidden," began as a search for a mysterious substance which was to turn all things to gold, and for the secret of perpetual youth. These early experiments were gradually replaced by the science of chemistry, and the Arabs discovered many compounds such as alcohol, which, like alkali, has an Arabic name.

This chemical knowledge was applied to many practical uses. It formed the basis of the scientific knowledge of medicine which far surpassed that in any other part of the world for many centuries. The Arabs discovered even the use of anæsthetics, so that operations could be performed on people rendered unconscious. Chemical knowledge was applied also to the manufacture of dyes, and the coloured silken fabrics of the Arabs became coveted objects of trade.

Most valuable of all, the Arabs learned from the Chinese how to make paper. This discovery made books and printing possible, and printing from wooden blocks had already begun in China.

In China had already developed a civilisation which was one of the most tolerant and cultured the world has ever known. Tai-Tsung, who began to reign in A.D. 627, received the message which Mohammed sent in 628 to all reigning monarchs. The Arabs who brought it were hospitably received, their teaching was approved, and they were permitted and helped to build a mosque in the seaport of Canton, Seven years later Christian missionaries arrived

from Persia. They were received with equal intelligence and tolerance. Tai-Tsung listened to their teaching, read a translation of the Gospels, and permitted them, too, to found a Church.

Under such a rule China developed a wonderful civilisation and culture, a delightful art, a beautiful style of poetry which expressed a love of leisure, a freedom from worldly ambitions, an infinite friendliness, and a love of Nature's inexhaustible storehouse of beauty.

Europe, behind the barred door of Constantinople, presented as yet a sorry contrast. In the surviving fragment of the Roman Empire which had been the Greek home of free thinking, of philosophy, and of beauty, there was instead only a rigid creed which demanded nothing but obedience. Farther west, on the ruined Empire, grim castles were appearing, to frown down from their hills on to the huts of the peasants who had to provide by their work the feasts for their lords.



Fig. 71.—Design based on Chinese Willow Pattern.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN EUROPE AND THE VIKING INVADERS

IT WAS HARDLY to have been expected that the chieftains who had led their tribes to victory when they had invaded new lands should have hung up their shields and settled peaceably to till the land. There was always the possibility of attack from the neighbouring natives or from other conquering tribes which preferred fighting to farming. So chieftains and their attendant warriors remained fighters, waging war on other tribes and claiming authority over ever-widening areas.

But the other kind of work had to be done and food had to be provided for everybody. Gradually, therefore, there developed two different kinds of men : the fierce warriors who never worked and the men who ploughed the fields, sowed the seed, and reaped the harvests, tended the sheep and cattle, and guarded the pigs which fed on the acorns in the forest.

Some portion of the things provided by the workers had to be given to the fighters, for they, too, had to be fed. These men, therefore, became a superior class which looked upon the workers as existing mainly to supply their needs.

Little change happened to the workers for centuries. At first they still carried their arms to the assembly and thought of themselves as the equals of their chieftain when not in battle. But gradually their arms rusted on the walls of their huts. They ceased to move, for there was no reason for moving, and they depended on what they produced. Thus **they became settled land workers, a peasant population**

bound to the soil and dependent for protection on the chieftain, who had become a lord. Their lives were little better than those of the Eskimos, for there seemed no possibility of progress, no hope of better things. There were, soon thousands of them in England, France, and Germany, a class of ignorant, listless plodders—swineherds, shepherds, cowherds—living in a tiny world of scattered cottages and fields.

But the chieftains and the fighting class were changing. As the land they conquered increased in size they became more powerful and more ambitious. Dukes, counts, princes, and kings began to appear, claiming authority over many tribes; and as they could demand produce from bigger and bigger areas, they increased in wealth and could reward their warrior followers.

Thus, out of the chaos of warring tribes, kingdoms began to emerge, with fighting rulers, a fighting nobility, and a working peasantry. The kingdoms were shaped by mountains and rivers, or by coastline, which formed their barrier frontiers.

Tucked away in the mountains of Cornwall, Wales, north-west England, and southern Scotland, there still remained the unconquered Roman Britons, and they were Christian. They sent out missionaries into England, France, and other parts of western Europe, and missionaries, too, came from Rome. The English conversion took place just at the time when Mohammed was beginning his teaching in Mecca.

In the south-east of England was a little kingdom called



Fig. 72.—A Saxon Swineherd.

Kent, whose king, Ethelbert, had married a Frankish Christian named Bertha. In 597 there arrived in Kent a group of forty monks, led by St. Augustine, whom Pope Gregory the Great had sent. He would have come himself if he had been able to fulfil his earlier wish, for before becoming Pope he had been attracted by a group of English children in the Roman slave market.

Over the northern border of Kent, which was soon converted, lived an exiled prince named Edwin, who had been driven from his northern kingdom by Aethelfrith, who had made himself king of Northumbria. Aethelfrith was a great warrior, and it was he who defeated the Britons at Chester in 613, but he was slain shortly afterwards, and Edwin was able to return to Northumbria. He took with him a Christian wife, Aethelburga, a member of Ethelbert's family, and Paulinus, a monk.

Under their influence Northumbria began to accept Christianity, and to become a settled and peaceful kingdom. But heathendom was not to die without a struggle, for in the Midlands, or Mercia, it found a great champion in King Penda. In 633, assisted by some Welsh, whose hatred of the English was greater than their zeal for Christianity, Penda defeated and slew Edwin.

When Edwin had returned to Northumbria, Aethelfrith's two sons, Oswald and Oswy, had fled. They were given shelter in a British monastery at Iona, where they were taught Christianity. On Edwin's death they returned and Oswald became king. He was an ardent Christian missionary, but he, too, was slain by Penda. Oswy made peace with the heathen king until such time as was needed for the strengthening of his devastated kingdom had gone. Then war broke out again with Penda, who was slain in 655.

The differences between the British converts and those converted by Roman missionaries were settled, and a scholarly organiser was sent from Rome to complete the work. He was Theodore of Tarsus, and as Archbishop of Canterbury he

created a united Church in England. The Papacy had extended its frontiers to the edge of the European world.

In France, too, the tribes were being hammered into duchies, and the duchies into a kingdom, but there was a difference, due to the greater influence exercised by the memory of the Roman Empire. There was more magnificence amongst the dukes, and a greater attempt to create a court life. The nobles were building castles and the king had a palace. The difference between warrior and workman was wider than in England; the warrior more quickly became a noble and the worker a peasant.

This Frankish development was suddenly interrupted by the dramatic invasion of the Mohammedans who had conquered Spain. The French monarchy had so far developed that it was not the king who led the Franks against the Moslems, but an officer, Charles Martel, who was called the " Mayor of the Palace."

In the eyes of the Pope and the Church the Frankish advance was a crusade, a war for the Cross ; in the eyes of Charles Martel it was an advance to clear the land they had conquered from a rival invader. Actually it was both, and marks the beginning of a union between the Church and the warrior whose sword was strong enough to protect it.

As we have already seen, the Mohammedans were defeated at Poitiers in 732 and driven back into Spain.

Charles Mattel's son, Pepin, seized the French monarchy for himself. The interesting point is that he did this on the advice of the Pope, who crowned him king " by the grace of God." A powerful king, who knew his own mind, would be a useful ally to the Pope, who was already ruling like a prince over central Italy. Pepin returned this favour of the Pope by twice defeating the Lombards, whose kingdom in northern Italy was threatening the Papal States. North-east Italy, with the city of Ravenna, was given by Pepin to the Pope.

Pepin was succeeded in 768 by Charles the Great or Charlemagne, the greatest and most ambitious of these early kings. Charlemagne conquered the Saxons of Germany and forced them to accept Christianity. Then the Pope, Leo III, appealed to him for help. He had been attacked and wounded in the streets of Rome and the Lombards were trying to regain the land they had lost in north-east Italy.

Charlemagne restored order and remained in Rome for a year. It was a strange friendship, that of the conquering Frank and the head of the Church, and each influenced the other and the office each represented. Originally the Papacy, the office of the Pope, had become powerful because there was no other authority in western Europe when the Roman Empire had fallen. Now a new power was emerging, the power of kings and princes, ruling over what were the beginnings of nations. Threatened by this new power, the Papacy strengthened itself by forming an alliance with the strongest of the existing monarchs. The alliance made the Papacy more of a worldly power; it increased the actual territory ruled over by the Pope and made him the equal of a reigning prince. On the other hand, monarchy became more dignified; it began to encourage what little art had survived, and especially to encourage the building of churches and monasteries. Kings and bishops began to share the work of ruling and of justice, as chieftains and priests had done in the old days.

On Christmas Day, 800, Charlemagne attended the service in St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, and the Pope, Leo III, placed the imperial crown on his head and hailed him as Augustus, emperor of the Romans.

The old dream still lingered, but the reality was of a very different substance. This empire of Charlemagne was the gift of the Pope as a reward to the man whose sword was strong enough to protect the Pope in return. Fourteen years later Charlemagne died, and very soon afterwards, in 843, his " empire " was split into three fragments by his

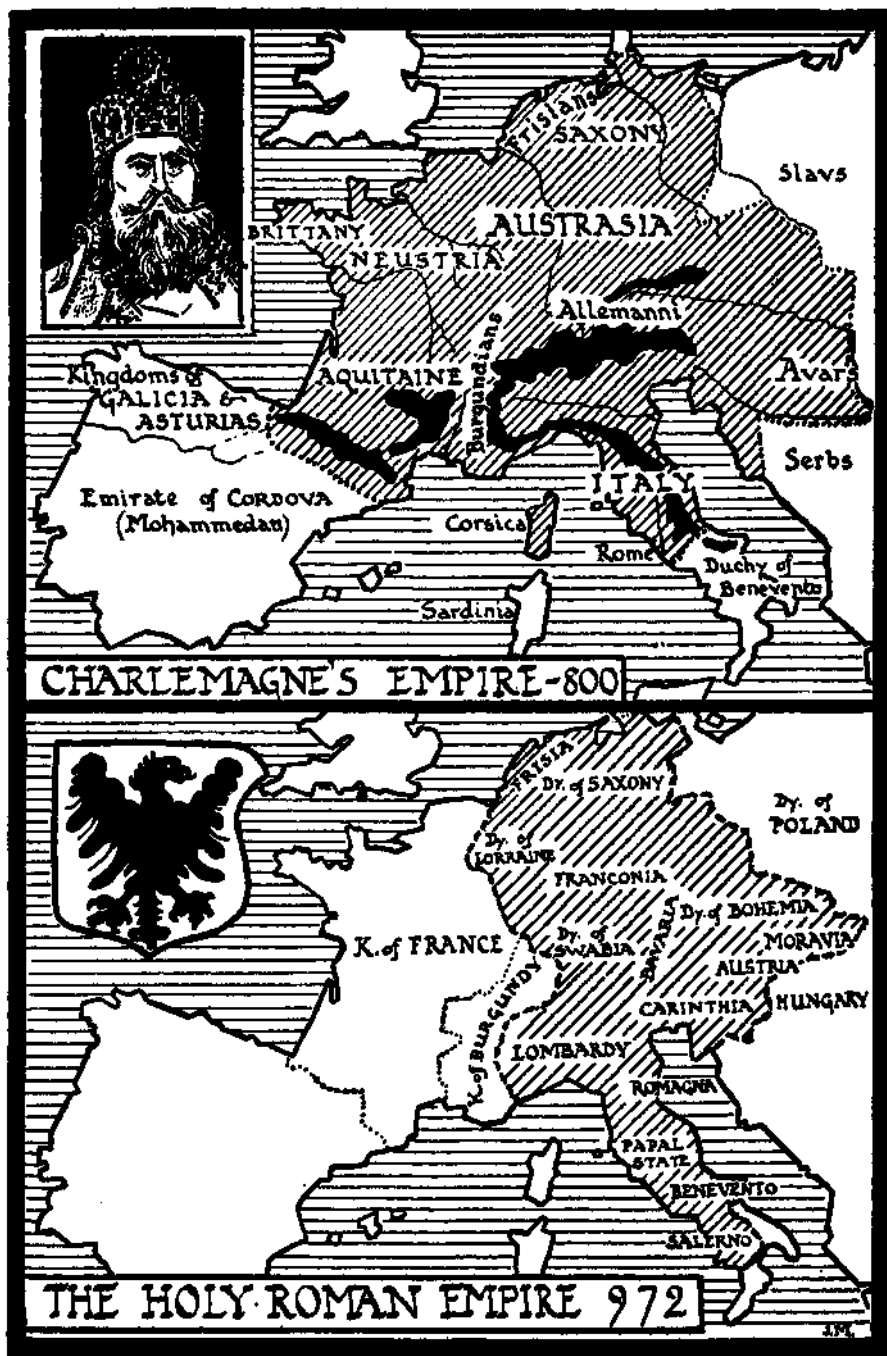


Fig. 73.—Charlemagne's Empire and the Holy Roman Empire,

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grandsons. The western section, in which the Franks spoke a form of Latin which developed into the French language, became the kingdom of France. The eastern section, where the Germanic tribes still spoke their own language, became Germany. The central section was to be claimed by first one and then the other for centuries. Part of it only recently changed hands again.

The German section was still broken into many tribes, none of whose dukes was sufficiently powerful to hammer the others into real unity. One of these princes, Otto, Duke of the Saxons, was in 924 offered the imperial crown by Pope Leo VIII. Since Charlemagne had worn it it had been the toy of anyone strong enough to hold it for a time. Otto accepted it, and Germany was henceforward known for nearly nine hundred years as the Holy Roman Empire.

Meanwhile, strange, fierce men had begun to ravage with surprising and dramatic swiftness different parts of the European coast. They came from over the horizon in long, narrow ships, sailed up the rivers, and with heartless thoroughness plundered town, village, or monastery before they sailed away again. All that was left of a raided village was a flaming or smouldering ruin. The men were slain; the women were usually taken back in the pirate ships, as was anything of value. Men on the coasts of England, France, and even Italy, began to fear these sudden visits from the pirate raiders, who usually followed a successful raid by coming again in greater numbers.

These plundering Sea-Rovers were the Northmen or Vikings, a word which means "Sons of the Fiords," and their home was the northern European land of Scandinavia. As some of them came from Denmark, the English called them Danes.

The great peninsula which is now Norway and Sweden is not very kind to Man. The northern region is within the

Arctic Circle, a land of snow and ice. Gradually this frozen waste merges into the forests of fir and pine. Most of the land is mountainous, and the soil has been scraped even from the mountain rocks by the glaciers of long ago. Only a very small proportion of the land, therefore, actually about 4 per cent in Norway, is of any use for cultivation. The western coast is cut by great ravines which are called fiords and which were probably dug out by the old glaciers. The men who lived in this barren region either had to live mainly on fish or to become pirates.

The Northmen built their narrow ships so that they could shelter in the fiords, and by the eighth century they were exploring the seas and neighbouring coasts. Though they were cruel, they were adventurous and courageous, and extended their voyages so far that their broken vessels, easily recognisable, have been found even in distant America. From the eighth to the tenth centuries the sight of their carved ships struck terror into the coastal- and river-dwellers of Europe.

They invaded France and twice plundered Paris ; they began to make settlements in Russia, in England, in northern France, and in Sicily, for life was easier in these countries. One of the Viking leaders named Rollo was offered land in northern France on condition that he ceased to disturb the rest of the kingdom. Thus began the Duchy of Normandy, the land of the Northmen.

The Vikings had a wonderful ability to adopt the habits, language, and customs of the peoples in whose lands they settled. Soon the Norman Duchy was indistinguishable from the rest of the French duchies and counties.

In England the struggle was hard and long. The northern part first fell to the invaders and was called the Danelaw. The south was saved for a time by Alfred the Great of Wessex and his immediate successors. But a century later all England fell to the Danes, who, under Canute, made

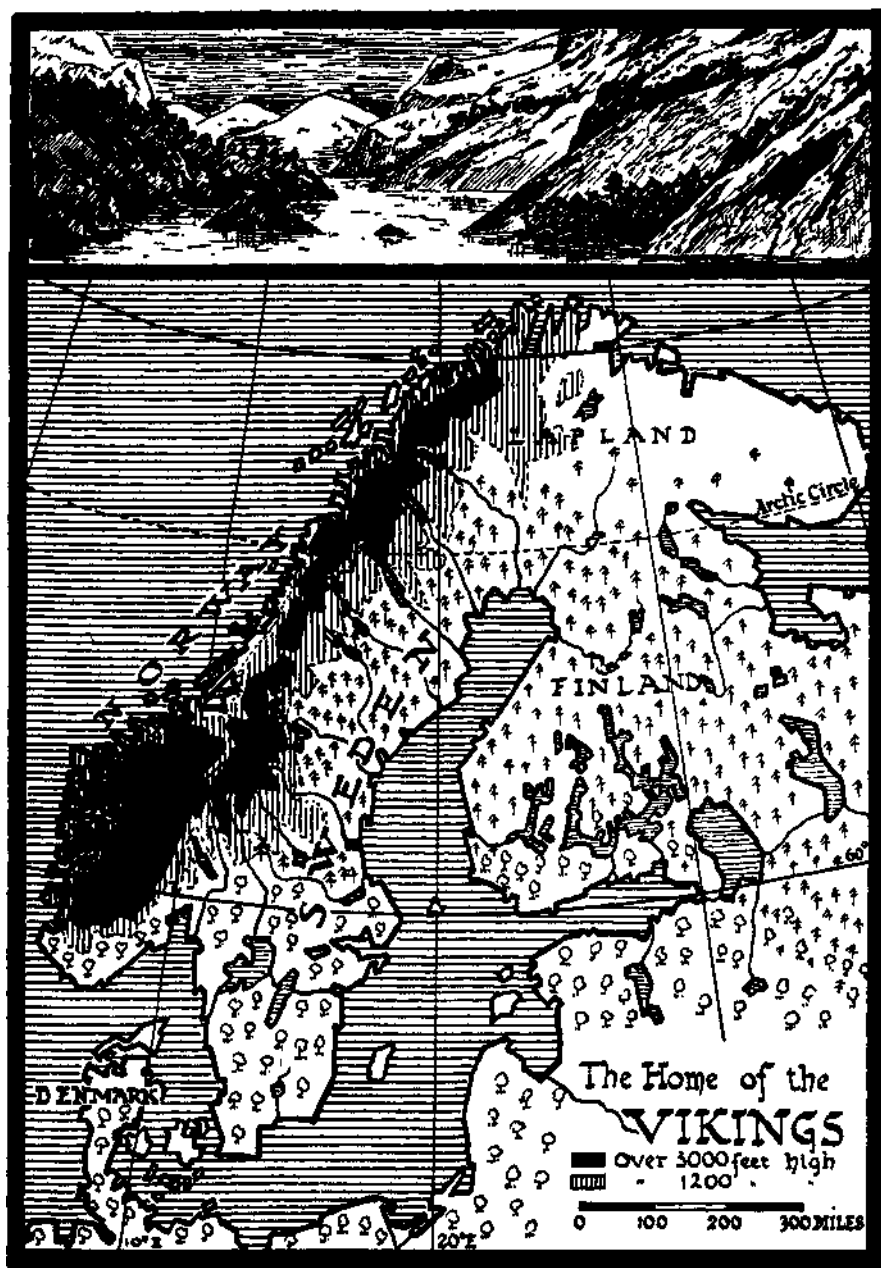


Fig. 74.—The Home of the Vikings.

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England into a single kingdom. By this time the Danes had become Christian, and Canute paid a visit to the Pope.

After Canute's death there was the usual confusion, and after a period of anarchy the English kings were restored, after an exile in Normandy. The English king Edward the Confessor was too weak for such wild times ; his introduction of Norman friends and relatives annoyed the English, and the way was easy for a Norman invasion. Under Duke William the Norman adventurers arrived in 1066 ; Harold, who had seized the throne on Edward's death earlier in the year, was slain at Hastings, and William was crowned king. With ruthless brutality he spent six years in crushing all surviving resistance.

The Norman soldiers were allowed to build castles in different parts of the kingdom from which they tyrannised the surrounding district and lived on what the English produced for them. The sheep which the English tended became the mutton of the Norman dinner-table ; similarly, a cow does not become beef until it is prepared for food. " Sheep " and " cow " are English words ; " mutton " and " beef " were originally French words.

The forests became the king's forests; the deer became the king's deer ; and the land became the king's land.

In northern England, where the English dared to defy the Norman authority by rebelling three times, and by murdering the Norman garrison at a feast, William devastated the land with such thoroughness that for generations it remained an almost unpopulated waste.

It is an interesting fact that of the two million people who at this time comprised the total population of England less than 2 per cent were Normans ; and though the stern nature of their rule and the fact that they were merciless overlords gave the Normans sufficient power to make great changes to English life, the country still remained

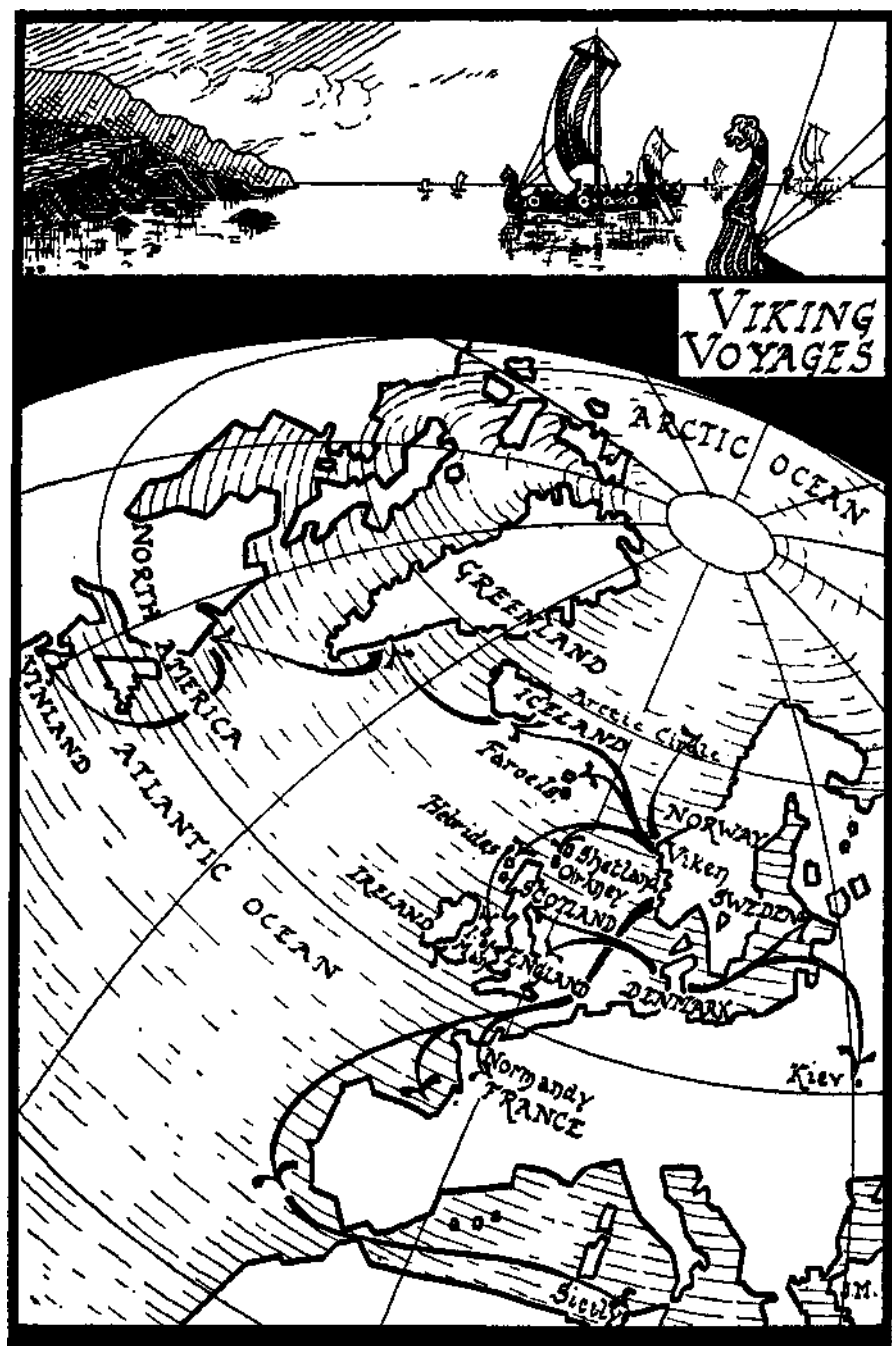


Fig. 75.—Viking voyages.

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England. It was the English language which survived, and England was to absorb her Norman conquerors.

The geographical isolation of England had made her development a much slower progress than that of France, where kings and dukes had adopted a much more luxurious way of living. Arts and crafts, especially those involved in architecture, had made great progress ; so, too, had trade and the power of organisation.

These things the Normans introduced into England. Merchants from France brought wines and spices, for the Norman feasts were much more elaborate than the crude meals of the English. Merchants from Flanders, on the north-east frontier of France, brought fine cloths, and bought raw wool from the English, who also began to find markets for tin, lead, and jet.

More and finer churches, monasteries, and castles began to appear ; there was a regular court life, with hunting, tournaments, and minstrels ; there was, too, a closer alliance between the king and the Church, similar to that which had developed in France.

Now that inter-tribal warfare had ceased, and there was a central authority in the kingdom, the king or the nobleman could settle down when he was strong enough to a life of comparative leisure. The difference which we have seen growing between warrior and worker now began to separate a leisured class from a working class. To the peasant class were now added all kinds of workers who had to assist in the building of the castles or monasteries, in the making of arms and armour, and in satisfying the growing needs of a developing people.

It is clear that Europe was changing, and that a special kind of society was developing, a society in which the Church and bishops, kings and nobles, peasants, free and unfree, were the chief members. How gradual this development was may be seen from the fact that six hundred years had gone

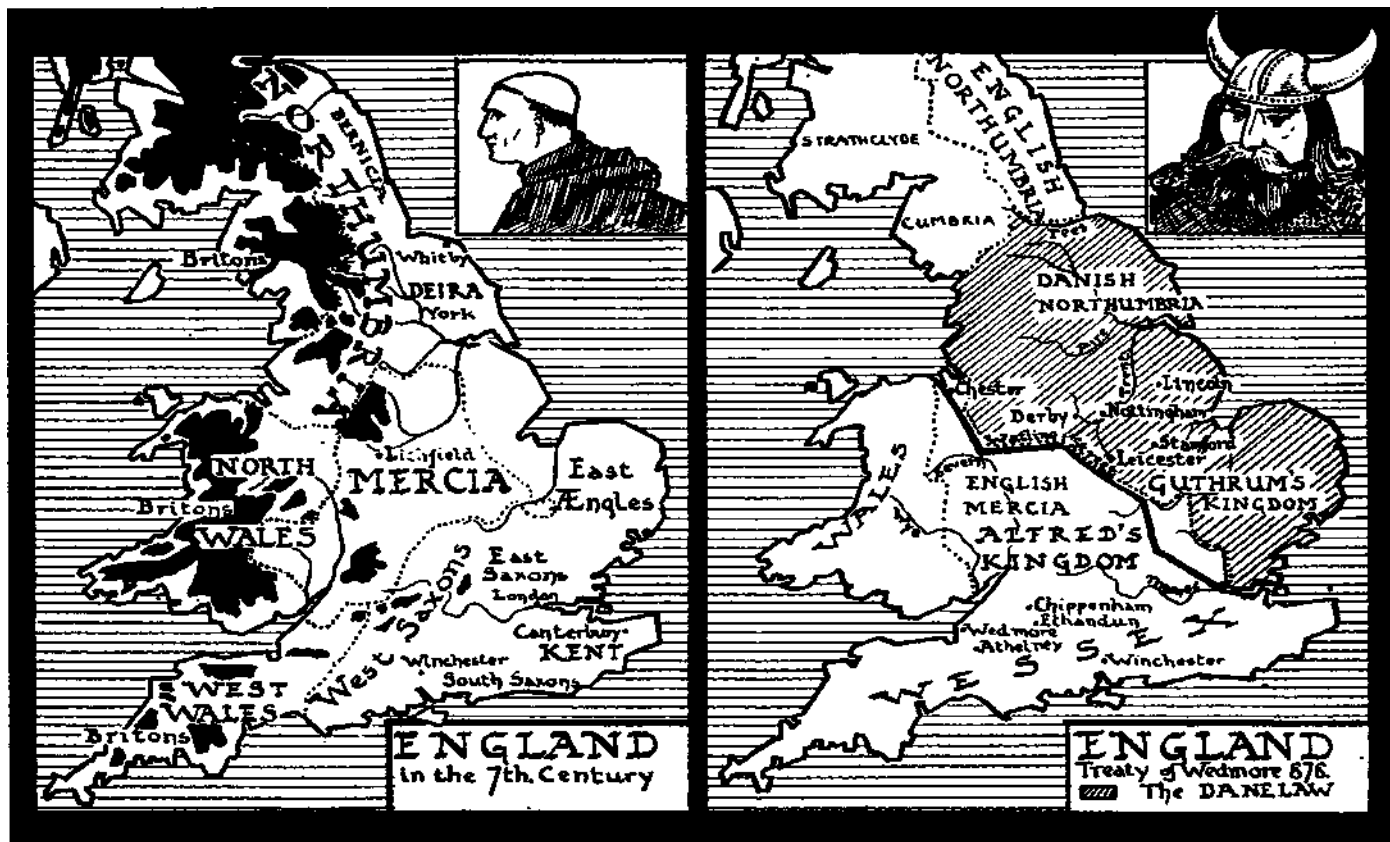


Fig. 76.—England in the Seventh Century and at the Treaty of Wedmore.

since the English, Franks, and other Germanic tribes from which it had grown, had begun their settlements. A thousand years had gone since Christ had lived and died in the little Roman province of Judæa.

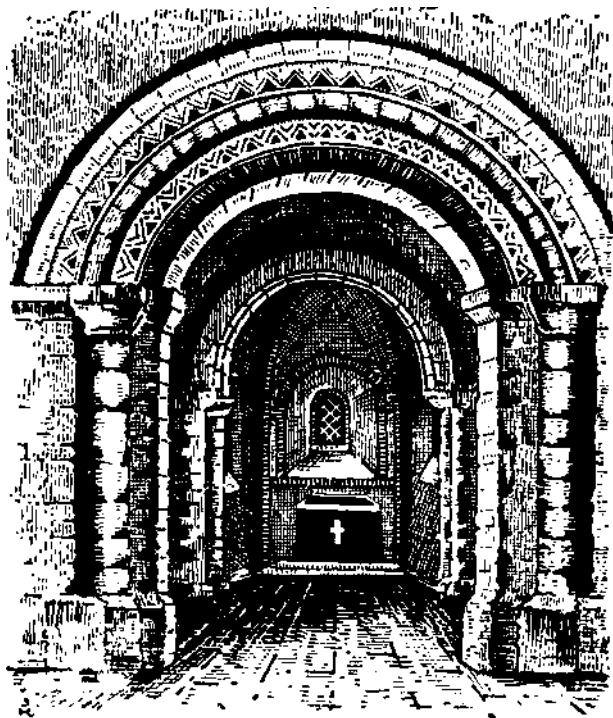


Fig. 77.—Interior of a Norman Church,

CHAPTER XIV

VILLAGE LIFE IN THE FEUDAL AGE

AFTER THE NORMAN WILLIAM had thoroughly subdued England and "cowed the hearts of rebels by terrible examples," he sent out some of his wisest men to every part of his new kingdom to find out exactly what the land he had conquered was like. They had to discover how the land was peopled and by what men; exactly how much land there was in each village; "how many ploughs and how many men," how much wood and how much meadow, how many pastures, mills, and fishponds, and even how many animals.

This was done so carefully "that there was not a single hide nor a yard of land, nor even an ox, a cow, or a swine left out, that was not set down in his rolls." These rolls were then bound together into two volumes, and the people called them the "Domesday Book," because what it said was final in any dispute.

As the same kind of life was going on in all those parts of Europe in which the Germanic tribes had settled, Domesday Book gives us an invaluable picture of life at that time, not only in 1085, when the survey was made, but for several centuries before and after. Let us try to imagine one such village.

To reach it we should have to travel along the neglected, grass-covered remains of an old Roman road, or along rough tracks through the woods or across the moorland. As we neared the clearing in which a village had grown we should probably find swine in the woods, rooting for food under the care of a swineherd.

The village itself would consist of a number of small scattered cottages made of unshaped timber and twigs daubed with clay. The framework of intertwined twigs and flexible branches was called wattle, from an old English word which meant a hurdle. The cottages would be thatched; there would be only one room in most of them, with a loft above, and instead of a chimney there would be a hole in the roof for the escape of at least some of the smoke.

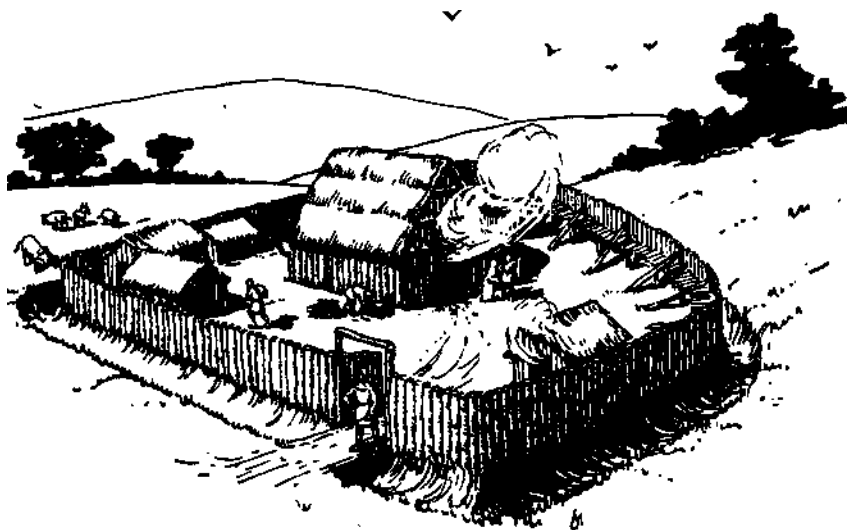


Fig. 78.—A Saxon Village.

If we went inside we should see very little. The floor would be of earth, covered with rushes or straw, and in the centre would be a smoky fire, burning peat or dried turf. A few wooden bowls and wooden spoons, some leather or skin utensils, such as a leather water-bottle, would be there; possibly a "side of bacon," salted and dried, would be hanging, and half hidden in the dark corner would probably be a pitcher of water filled from the stream or from a well. Children there would certainly be, a very busy and harassed mother, and a great amount of dirt.

In the centre of the village would be a bigger but similar kind of house in which lived the lord of the village, his family and servants. There we should find a trestle table at which they all would sit together for meals, and some crudely shaped chairs or benches. Arms and armour would hang on the walls, and there would be a separate bedroom or two for the lord's family. Everyone would sleep on the

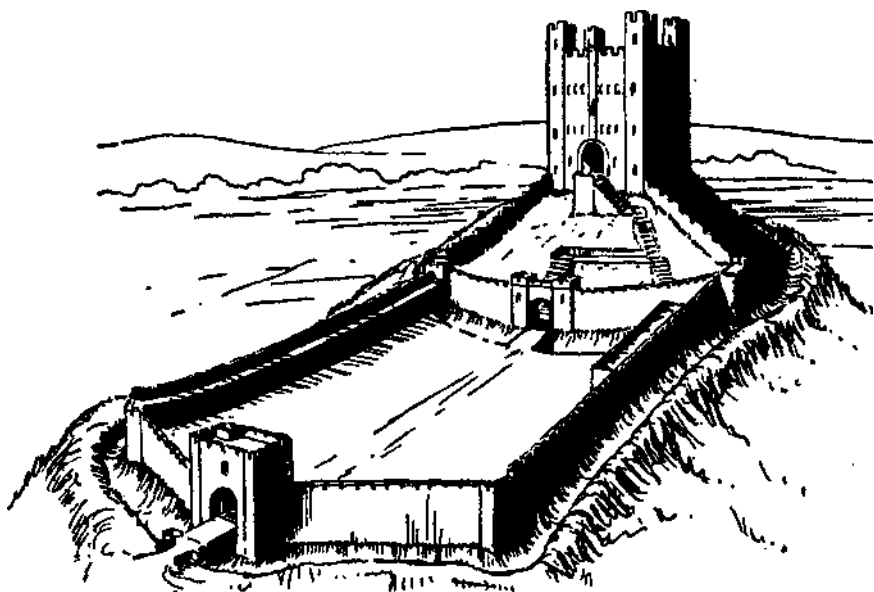


Fig. 79.—A diagrammatic representation of a Norman Castle.

rush-covered floor of earth, using the skins of animals for warmth.

The Domesday surveyors called these villages "manors," and the lord's house was the manor house. The new Norman lords began to build stone houses, and in some manors they had to protect themselves by building castles.

Round the manor house would be a specially fenced area of land called the lord's demesne, and nearby would be the lord's mill. In the eleventh century this would be a water-

mill, and one such mill, mentioned in Domesday Book, still exists at Red Marley in Worcestershire. Every part of the wheel, including the "nails," is made of wood.

As each village was practically self supporting, a complete little world of its own, the most interesting thing is to discover how, and on what, the villagers lived.

Before the Norman conquest most English villages had two fields. In one wheat or rye was grown, while the other was left empty, or "fallow," for a year. In the following year the fallow field would be planted with oats or barley while the other would have a rest. After the Norman conquest a three-field system was developed. Wheat or rye was grown in one field, barley or oats, and perhaps peas or beans, in the second, while the third was left fallow, so that there were two crops every year. From these crops the villagers made cakes, or bread, and beer.

The fields were huge, and to us would look rather like a vast collection of allotment gardens, for in each there would be a number of cultivated strips separated from each other by mounds of turf called balks. Each of the villagers had a number of strips and was responsible for their cultivation. Every year the strips were distributed by lot, to each man his correct number, and however many any man could claim they were never to be together. Sometimes a man might have some of his strips in the best part of the fields, and sometimes in a part that was badly drained or in a weedier part near the fence. By insisting that a man's strips should be scattered, and that they should be chosen by lot each year, the system worked out fairly for everyone in general.

The strips were about as much as eight oxen could plough. In practice this meant a strip an eighth of a mile in length, for our word "furlong" means "furrow long" or a furrow-length. In width they varied from one to four "rods" or "poles." When later chains were used for measuring, instead of long poles, a chain's length was equal to this width of four rods, or twenty-two yards, and the furrow-length

was ten chains. Such a strip, a furrow-length by a chain's width, was called an acre.

The most important villagers, called villeins by the Normans, had from fifteen to thirty strips ; a less important

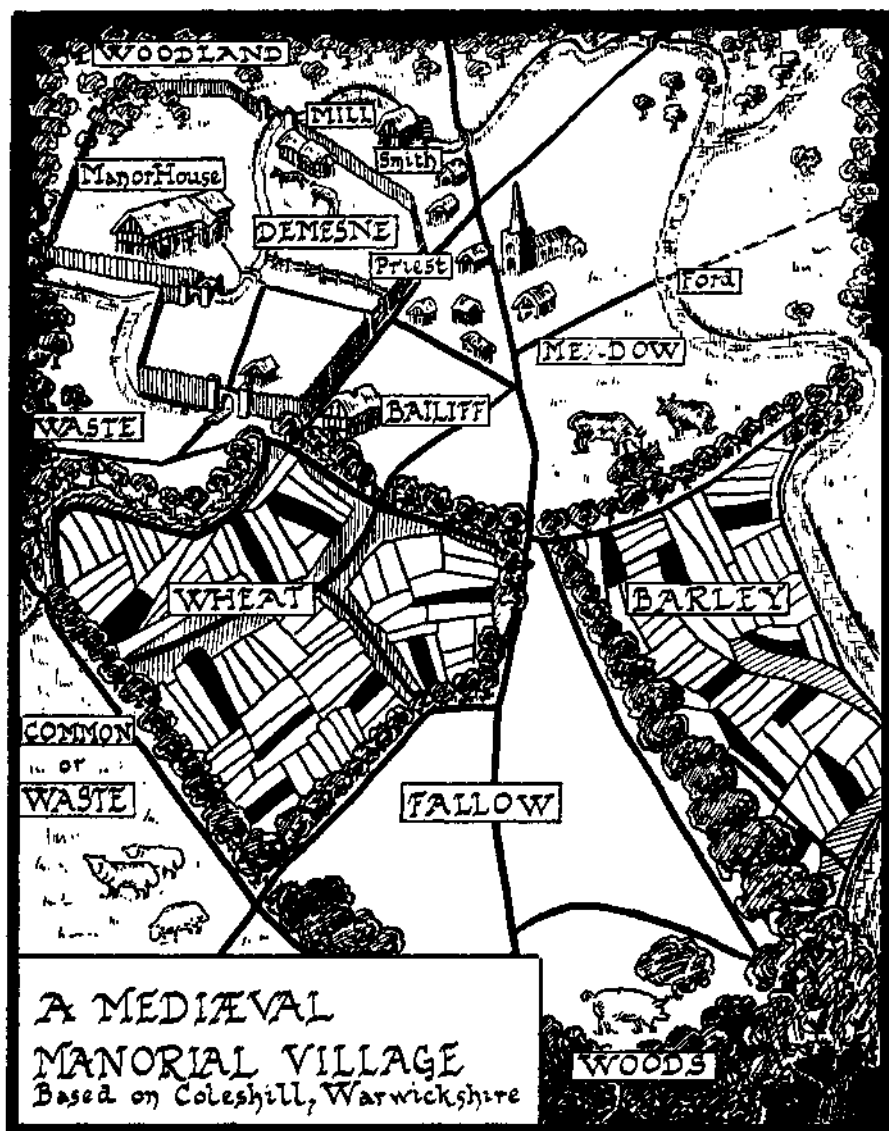


Fig. 80.—A Mediæval Manorial Village.

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kind of villager, called a cottager, a cottar, or a bordar, had only two or three. There were also a few serfs, more numerous in the west, where there were more descendants of the conquered Britons, and these had no strips.

Nearby was the common land, from which the villeins had the right to cut so much turf or peat for fuel, to take reeds, if it were marsh-land, for floors and thatch, to cut ferns or heather for litters, and a restricted quantity of timber. The exact nature of the "common rights" depended on the nature of the district and the kind of useful things it produced. The cottars had no common rights, not even that of pasturage.

All the animals of the manor were herded together under the joint care of the village swineherd, shepherd, and cowherd. After the harvests the fields were turned over to the cattle. Oxen were of more value than horses. They were useful as beasts of burden, especially in the ploughing season, they provided meat when they were too old to work, and the cows provided milk. A horse eats much more than an ox and is less useful or desirable as food. Two cows on good pasture, or three cows on poor pasture, were expected to provide sufficient milk to make sixteen stones of cheese and "half a gallon of butter." Sheep were kept chiefly for their wool and milk, and ten ewes were supposed to yield as much milk as one cow. There were geese, too, and the common fowl, though as yet there seem to have been none but wild ducks. Bees were of great value, for honey had to do the work of sugar, to serve as a medicine, and to help to make the beer or mead which was made from barley, and the wines which were made from berries, nettles, and the fragrant cowslip.

Everything possible was used, even the fibres of nettles, which were twisted to make a thread.

In such a life there was plenty of work. The fields had to be ploughed ready for the sowing. Wheat or rye was sown in the autumn, between Lammas Day (August 1st¹) and

¹ Lammas Day has been observed in Scotland on August 12th since 1752, when the Calendar (New Style) Act of 1750 came into effect.

Hallow Mass (November 1st). Peas and beans were planted in February or March, oats in March, barley between Easter and Whitsuntide. Weeding had to be done in June. There were two reapings—the harvest proper, when the grain was gathered, and the later gathering of the stalks, which were used for thatching, for stuffing saddles, or for the plaiting of horse collars.

The women made butter and cheese, chiefly from the milk of ewes and goats, looked after the geese and hens, made the cakes or bread and prepared the meals. They helped in the winnowing of the corn; that is the process of separating the chaff from the grain. They helped, too, in the gleaning of the fields, which was the boring task of collecting what the reapers had left behind. But this was not all. The clothing had to be made at home, and before this could be done the wool shorn from the sheep had to be cleaned and spun into yarn, which the men wove into cloth. The women had, in addition, to look after the children, who as soon as they were strong enough had to help in the life of the village. There was work, too, in the making of useful things from the hides and skins of slain animals.

In many ways this work was very similar to that of the primitive tribes who lived on the products of their immediate environment, for each man had to work with his family to turn what Nature produced into something which would satisfy his needs. But the village was an organised community in which every man's life was regulated by custom. Each man's share of the produce was controlled and fixed. The exact number of strips, their size, the proportion of the produce of the common land, were hereditary rights.

There were other traditions which fixed the relation between villagers and the lord of the manor. The villagers had to do the work on his strips as well as on their own, and to work for so many days on his enclosed demesne. They had to take all the grain to his mill and to give him a portion of the grain they had ground. He could insist on their going a day's journey for him, and they had to carry his goods.

There was a special piece of land set aside for the priest. This land, called the "glebe," had to be worked for him in return for his services as priest to the village.

At Christmas-time the villagers had to present their lord with poultry ; at Easter with butter and eggs ; on feast days in general they had to give him some portion of whatever goods were seasonable.

There are still many villages in England which some of the villagers have never left in their lives. In the days of which we are writing the villagers could not have left the manor even had they wished to do so. The lord's consent was necessary even for such things as the marriage of a villein's daughter, or for his son to enter a monastery or to learn a special craft, for any such change would have meant one less workman.

Often the same lord held many such villages, and would travel from one to another, to live for a time on what it produced. This meant that a lord was often absent from a manor, but there was always present a bailiff who saw that everything was being thoroughly done so that the correct proportion of the produce should be available for the lord.

At the time of the Domesday survey there were about three thousand such villages in England, scattered about the forests, marshes, and moorlands, nestled in valleys, and clustered about the rivers. There were similar ones in France and Germany.

An important point about this kind of life is that the villein did not *own* any land at all—he only *held* it from the lord, who in turn held it from some superior lord. The only man who actually owned the land was the king, and he owned it all. The lord was a "tenant," which means "one holding," and the chief tenants who held directly from the king were the wealthy nobles or barons whose castles were beginning to replace the old timbered dwellings of the English lords. Just as the villeins had to work for their lord and give him some of the produce of their labour, so the lords had to serve

the king and to provide him with some share of the produce of the lands they held. This service usually meant that they had to fight for him, to attend him at court, and in council. But there were all sorts of special services, too, just as there were in the manors.

Some villagers had to provide their lord with so much firewood, others had to catch so many rabbits for him. So certain of the nobles had special duties to perform in their attendance on the king, and these burdens, or privileges, were hereditary.

This kind of society is called feudal society. The word "feudal" is interesting: there is an old English word "feoh," which originally meant "cattle," and the words "feed," "food," "fodder," "fee" (a payment), and "fief," the land held for a payment of service, are all derived from it. The word "feudal" is also derived from it and is applied to that kind of society which is based on the holding of land in return for service. From the same old Aryan root the Latin words for cattle and money are derived, and all this reminds us that the origin of feudal society goes back into the past, when cattle, wealth, money, payment, all meant the same thing.

In a developed feudal society everything depended on the strength of the king. When he was weak the wealthy barons became tyrants, plundering from their castle strongholds the defenceless manors. Though there was a sort of justice in the manors, the baron himself presided over the court, so there was no one to protect the peasants when the king was weak. Thus it happened that the kings, when they began to fear their own nobles, became the protectors of the people and formed royal courts of justice in different districts. The king's representatives, called sheriffs or shire-reeves, would preside over these, together with a representative of the Church. This was useful to the king in another way, for he had whatever fines were inflicted.

But even this was not always successful, for when the

king was weak the sheriffs used the courts and their authority for the purpose of increasing their own power and wealth. At the mercy of brutish and selfish tyrants, dependent on the scanty produce of a tiny world and their own hard work, and liable to be robbed of that, the peasants of a feudal age had to endure a wretched existence from which there was no possible escape.

While each village, wherever it were situated, could produce most of its modest requirements, there were a few very important things, such as salt and iron, which could not be produced in every village.

Salt was produced on the coasts and in certain inland towns where there were salt springs, such as Droitwich in Worcestershire, and Nantwich in Cheshire. (Wich or wick or " vicus " means a village.) As there was no production of fodder in the old manors, many of the cattle had to be killed before the winter and salted. This salt was at first brought by pedlars.

Iron was necessary, too, for ploughshares, other smaller agricultural tools, for arms and armour, for shoes for the horses and the front hooves of oxen, for the arches of stone buildings, and for nails. Iron smelting had been developed in Britain by the Romans, especially in Kent and Sussex.

It is clear that if the village had to buy salt or iron it had to be able to produce itself something it could do without, but which would be valuable to someone else. Only in this way could trade have begun anywhere. The people of the salt districts would supply salt in return for wool, grain, hides, or other commodities which they would not have sufficient time to produce, because they were busy extracting salt and preparing it for use.

Such a life seems to have been as exact a balance between Man and Nature as that of the primitive tribes, with as little chance of progress and as little hope of improvement. Yet from these beginnings have developed the towns, cities, and nations of modern Europe.

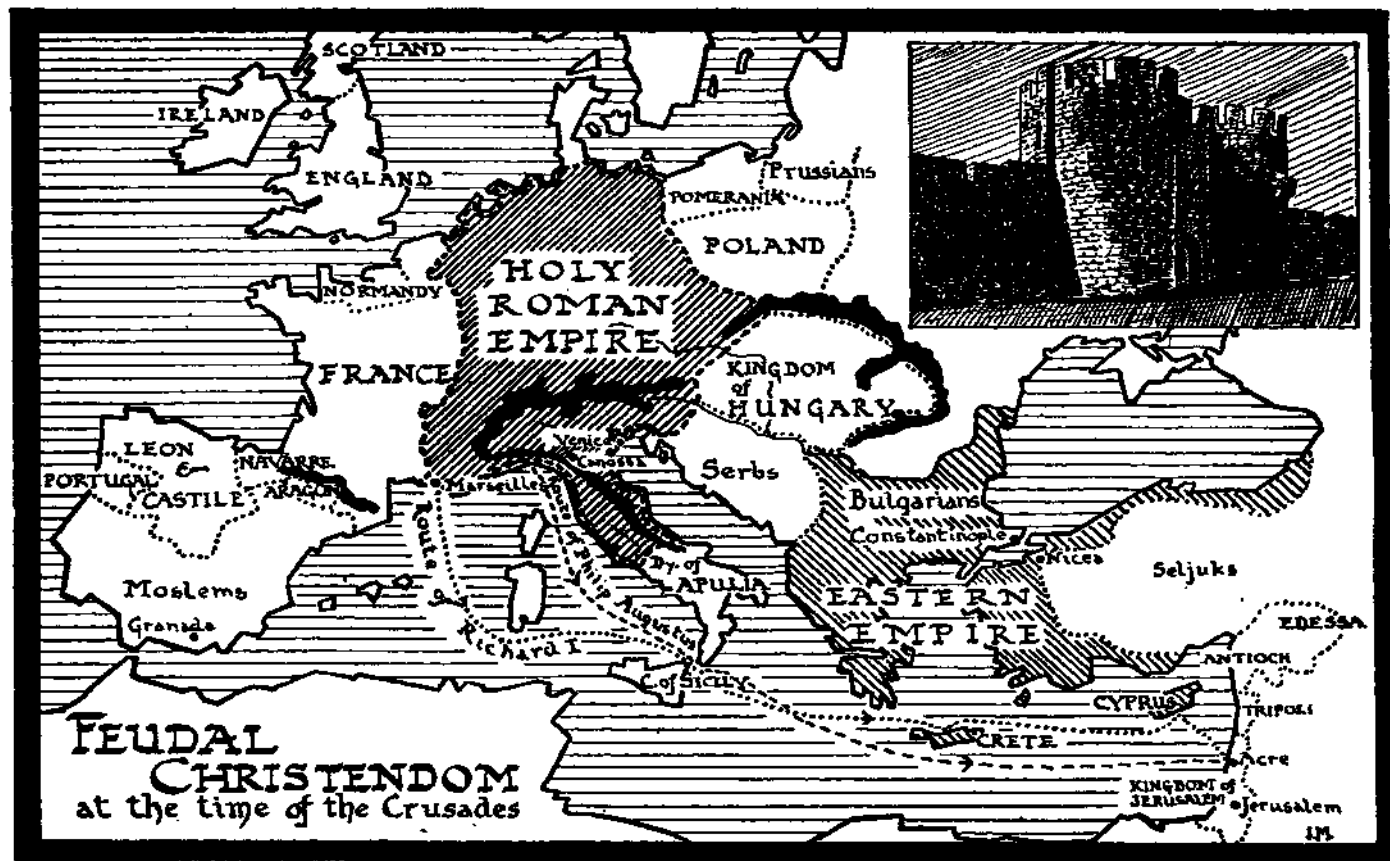


Fig. 81.—Feudal Christendom at the time of the Crusades.

CHAPTER XV

FEUDAL CHRISTENDOM

WHILE THE FEUDAL peasants continued to live the same kind of life, with little or no change, for hundreds of years, many changes were taking place in the lives of the feudal nobles. They were never safe, so they not only had to turn their houses into strongly fortified castles, with walls often nine feet thick, and with towers, moats, triple gateways, and dungeons, but they had also to protect themselves by wearing armour strong enough to resist sword or axe, lance or spear or arrow.

The nobles increasingly used horses for fighting, and these, too, had to be protected with armour. As armour was expensive, and available, therefore, only to the very wealthy, a small number of powerful, steel-clad horsemen, immensely rich, began to develop in all the feudal states of Europe.

Unassailable in their great castles, these men became **an** independent, hereditary class of uncontrollable tyrants. Their time was principally occupied in fighting to extend their own power, to force men to become their vassals, or to defy superior authority. Amongst them there was no refinement, but a fierce brutishness and a cruel indifference to the misery and suffering they caused. Europe was becoming a collection of feudal kingdoms and feudal duchies, and each of these was itself a collection of smaller feudal units, each under the absolute authority of some such uncontrollable baron.

Religion was the only redeeming feature **in** this **age**. Its influence was not continuous or universal, but in **all kinds** of ways this **influence grew**. At one **moment** a baron **would**

endow a monastery with his spoil, and shortly after he would plunder it.

A typical feudal baron was Fulk Nerra of Anjou. He was a great warrior, capable of the most passionate and revengeful outrages and of bursts of religious enthusiasm. Once he burnt his wife in the public market-place, and to make amends went on a long and dangerous pilgrimage. On his return he discovered that his wife had been falsely accused. After a second pilgrimage he allowed himself to be beaten before the Holy Sepulchre. On returning he found his son in revolt, and, having dealt with the rebellion with his customary ferocity, went on a third pilgrimage.

It is difficult to imagine the wretchedness of the lives of the peasants under such men. Bound to the soil, subject to the



Fig. 82.- The Drawbridge and Portcullis of a Feudal Castle.

pitiless judgment of the baron's court, they found in the Church their only protection and consolation. They found the safety of sanctuary at its altars, where all men were equal, and at the gates of the monastery they could find relief.

The Church made many efforts to reduce the horrors of feudal anarchy. The first important attempt began with an experiment made by a group of French bishops at Bordeaux

in 989. Over certain districts they tried to establish the "Peace of God." If any man broke the peace in any of these districts, he was to be excommunicated, which meant that such a man was to be expelled from the communion of the Church. Although this was regarded as a terrible punishment, the idea did not spread as the bishops had hoped, and had little result.

In 1027 a new experiment was made called the "Truce of God." This prohibited all warfare whatsoever on certain days of the year. At first it was applied to Sundays, then to Feast or Saints' days, and later to Easter and part of Lent.

A much more effective attempt was the development of the ideal of Chivalry. The word comes from another word which means a horse, and chivalry was an ideal form of behaviour which was to apply to the great class of steel-clad horsemen, and turn them from brutish barons into

"chivalrous" knights. There had always been some ceremony when the young knight was first given arms and armour. It was this "Investiture" which the Church turned into a religious ceremony.

The future young knight had to prepare himself by a twenty-four hours' fast. This included the "vigil," when the young lord spent a whole night in church, kneeling before the altar where his arms and armour had been placed. On the following morning he was the central figure in a special service in which his arms were blessed and consecrated for a special use. This use and his duties were explained to him



Fig. 83.—A Feudal Knight.

in a sermon. He was to lead a pure and holy life, and to use his weapons only in the defence of the Church, of women, of the aged, of orphans, the poor, and the defenceless. Finally, whoever was responsible for the introduction of the new knight drew his sword, and, striking with its flat side the shoulder of the young nobleman, declared him a knight.

Chivalry gradually helped to soften some of the brutality of the age and to develop ideals of honour and courtesy.



Fig. 85.—"The Vigil." [By John Pettie, R.A., Tate Gallery]

But in practice it did little more than create a code of meaningless behaviour which acted like a gloss over the selfishness and the cruelty which continued to characterise the lives of the feudal nobles. The English king, Richard the Lion-Heart, was regarded by the people of his time as the perfect model of knighthood, yet, when fighting against Philip Augustus of France, after returning from a Holy War, he sent the eyes of fifteen prisoners to the French king, who returned the eyes of fifteen English prisoners, "so that he

should not be thought inferior to Richard in strength and courage."

Although these efforts could not, therefore, be regarded as having been altogether successful, they illustrate the growing power of the Church. This power was due, in part, to the fear of eternal punishment, a threat which the Church preached against the unbelieving. Nobles and peasants alike were afraid to die unless the Church had pronounced their sins pardoned. Even kings and emperors were afraid of the Church's power of interdict and excommunication. By the power of interdict the Church could forbid the holding of Christian services in a land. The Church played so big a part in the lives of the people of those days that it is impossible for us to realise the terrible result of such a decree. The one refuge of the people had locked doors. They could not even bury their dead in consecrated ground, and the dread of everlasting punishment fell like a curse over such a people.

The Church had another source of power in that its leaders were learned men—at least, when contrasted with the ignorant nobles of the feudal age. Kings relied very largely on the advice of archbishops, bishops, and abbots, and for a long time the Church and kings supported one another.

The habit grew amongst the nobles of founding new monasteries, or of granting to existing monasteries vast portions of their estates. In this way the monasteries increased in number and in wealth. When such grants were made, a number of the manor Churches, "with all their liberties and appurtenances," passed over at the same time to the control of the monastery.

As the wealth of the monasteries increased many of them became rather worldly organisations, and in some cases an abbot was almost as harsh a landlord as a feudal noble. In the tenth century a great movement to reform the monasteries began at the Abbey of Cluny in Burgundy. The most important part of the Cluniac reform was that all the monasteries were to be united into a single organisation

under the absolute control of the Pope, for they had been tending, like feudal fiefs, to become independent.

A second feature of the Cluniac movement was that a great part of the manual toil which had been a daily occupation of the monks was to be changed for learning. Gradually there began an intellectual revival in Europe, and bands of scholars were to be seen on the roads, amongst the knights, pilgrims, traders, and peasants.

In 1073 a monk named Hildebrand became Pope Gregory VII. He was a man of inflexible will, of genius and courage. Full of enthusiasm for the Cluniac ideal of the unity of the Church under an absolute Pope, Gregory VII began to put this ideal into practice, and he has been called "The Architect of Papal Supremacy." He stated that there was no one superior to the Pope but God, and that the Pope was, therefore, higher than emperors, kings, or laws. He said : "Human pride has made princes ; God's mercy has made bishops." He began to use legates, or representatives, whom he sent to different lands to insist on the rights of the Church and of the Papacy. Secular princes, like the moon, were to shine only with a reflected light, the light of the Papacy. When William of Normandy conquered England he came with a banner which the Pope, on Hildebrand's advice, had sent to him with his blessing.

From this ideal grew the notion of Christendom, a united Europe under the control of the Papacy, a Europe in which kings and princes, nobles and barons were the protectors of the Church, accepting the authority of the Pope. Strengthening this ideal was the fact that the same language, Latin, was spoken by all the officials of the western Church, used for all services, for all letters, decrees, decisions, or judgments, and for all prayers. The Bible, hymns, psalms, were all in Latin, and any abbot, bishop, or Papal legate could travel anywhere throughout western or central Europe and know that he could be understood by any scholar or churchman.

In 1075 Gregory issued an edict that all bishops on
M

appointment must be invested by the Church. The powerful prince-bishops of the Holy Roman Empire, who were the emperor's chief supporters, were to be excommunicated if they had not presented themselves for Papal investiture within four months. There was great consternation and anger amongst the princes of western Europe, and the emperor, Henry IV, decided to take strong action. He refused to allow the bishops to go, and sent an insolent and defiant letter to Gregory.

Gregory replied by excommunicating Henry and releasing his subjects from allegiance to him. Henry's subjects were forbidden to obey their emperor on pain of the enmity of St. Peter and God.

The effect was almost magical! Everyone immediately fell away from the emperor in fear, and a great assembly decided that it was impossible to think of obeying him while the curse was on him.

Henry, beaten, in the dead of winter, went with a small band of faithful followers by secret routes through the mountains to apologise to the Pope. Gregory was the guest of the Countess of Tuscany, at the castle of Canossa, when Henry arrived. For three days he kept the humiliated emperor standing barefooted in the snow, awaiting the Pope's pardon.

Though this began a long struggle between the Empire and the Papacy, for the time being the Pope was supreme in Europe, the head of Christendom.

The development of this ideal of Christendom had two important results—the crusades, and the revival of knowledge and art called the twelfth-century Renaissance.

In 1095 Pope Urban II called on the chivalry of Europe to save the Holy City from the Turks. The response was one of the greatest achievements of the Papacy, though it was inspired by many motives other than the Christian one. The crusades, or the wars for the Cross, provided an outlet for the valour and an excuse for the ferocity which were being kept in check by the growing Christian idealism and

by the growth of trade and luxury. The crusades promised adventure to some, conquest to others, and new trade to many.

In 1071 Jerusalem had been captured by a group of tribes called Seljuk Turks. They had been converted to Islam and, unlike the Saracens whom they had conquered, they had begun to persecute the traders and the pilgrims. They were great warriors, and had rapidly conquered Arabia, Armenia, Asia Minor, and were beginning to threaten Constantinople. The Emperor, Michael VII, appealed to Pope Urban II for help.

While Urban was calling on the chivalry of Europe, Peter the Hermit was preaching to the people of the market-places and streets of the towns. Coarsely clad, carrying a huge cross, and riding an ass, he told of the horrors which Christians were enduring at the hands of the Turks.

The indescribable enthusiasm of the response illustrates the unity of Christendom and the genuine love which the poor men had for the Church. Bands of poor, ignorant peasants began to drift across Europe, to die of starvation or massacre.

The real crusade was the work of the Pope. The army he raised was a really feudal host, with no kings, but with dukes, counts and lesser barons from England, France, the Empire, and Southern Italy, a host of a hundred and fifty thousand excited men with no single leader.

At Constantinople they had to promise to restore all conquered lands to the eastern Empire before they were allowed to cross the straits, but instead they converted their conquests into feudal kingdoms under their own control.



Fig. 86.—A Pilgrim.

Antioch withstood an eight months' siege, and the crusaders were saved only by the arrival of supplies and help brought by a fleet from Genoa.

In 1099 Jerusalem was captured and its people were subjected to a frenzied, merciless slaughter, before it, too, became a feudal kingdom.

In 1144 the kingdom of Edessa was recaptured by the Mohammedans and a second crusade failed to regain it. Then there appeared a new leader amongst the Moslems, an adventurer named Saladin. He had preached a Holy War against the Christians, and in 1187 he recaptured Jerusalem.

The third and greatest crusade was organised, including kings amongst its leaders. There were Richard the Lion-Heart of England, Philip Augustus of France, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, and many lesser ones. Frederick was drowned on the way, and Richard tarried so long in the Mediterranean that Philip, who was besieging Acre, was in great peril. When Richard at last arrived and Acre had fallen, quarrels broke out amongst the leaders and Philip returned home to stir up trouble in Richard's lands. The English king arrived within sight of Jerusalem, but failed to recapture it. On his way home Richard was captured and imprisoned in the Empire, and had to be ransomed before he could return to England. In 1199 he was killed while fighting in France.

During the century that Jerusalem was the centre of a feudal kingdom, all kinds of intercourse developed between the Christians and the Moslems. The Genoese and the Venetians opened new trading centres and began to organise a regular system of trade. Christian enthusiasm began to waver, for crusades were an interruption of the growing trade, and though several more crusades were organised they were comparatively half-hearted.

Two great military orders, the Knights Templar and the Hospitallers or Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, were

founded for the protection of the city and of pilgrims. Half knight and half monk, a member of these orders combines the two characteristic features of the Middle Ages—the feudal and the Christian elements which made feudal Christendom. They became immensely wealthy and received grants of land in many European countries. Some of their round temples still stand to remind us of them.

Partly as a result of the development of the ideal of Christendom, and partly as a result of the crusades, there was in the twelfth century a newly awakened interest in knowledge and art. This has been called the twelfth-century Renaissance, a word which means "rebirth," because it seems that a love of beauty and of knowledge was born again into the world.

A new interest in poetry and in music was created by the ideal of chivalry, especially poetry which told of the love of a knight for a lady beyond his reach. In south France there were troubadours, in north France there were trouveres, like the minstrels of England and the minnesingers of Germany, singing songs based on this kind of theme.. All these singers sang in the language of the people instead of in Latin, and the spoken language became more beautiful because it was used for poetry. Most of these poems and songs were lost and forgotten, for as yet there was no printing in Europe, or even paper, but they formed the germ from which national literatures were to grow. Lords and barons, instead of



Fig. 87.—A Knight Templar.

thinking only of fighting, were becoming patrons of art. The knightly class was becoming more cultured and refined.

The greatest artistic achievements of the early Middle Ages were the works of the architects. Marvellous cathedrals began to appear in different parts of Europe, especially in France, Germany, and England. Instead of the heavy pillars of the earlier churches those of the new ones were slender and graceful, the arches were pointed, and beautiful intertwined patterns in stone replaced the severe simplicity of the older buildings.

In this the crusades had a great influence, for the Arabian buildings were characterised by their tall slender spires and gracefully curved lines and arches.

Later, this European style of mediaeval architecture was called Gothic, which means barbarian, because it was not founded on the classical style of Greece and Rome. For a long time many people despised it, but gradually the sheer beauty of some of the Gothic buildings broke down this prejudice. One of the finest examples of Gothic architecture is the cathedral at Cologne, but there are many others hardly less beautiful in Germany, France, and England.

Learning, too, stimulated by contact with the greater knowledge of the Saracens, began to spread outside the monasteries, and groups of scholars were organising themselves into societies or guilds round a common centre. Before the end of the twelfth century these were developing into universities.

In Italy, Salerno became a famous centre for the study of medicine, and Bologna for the study of law. A university at Paris attracted students from all over Europe, and in 1167 Henry II of England ordered all the English scholars to return from Paris to England. They settled at Oxford, where they founded the famous university.

There were, too, many wandering scholars, and one of them was a youth of noble family, too frail to become a



[Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd.]

Fig. 88.—Cologne Cathedral from the west. An example of perfect Gothic Architecture.

knight. This youth, named Bernard, entered the monastery of Citeaux in 1113, choosing it because of its exceptionally stern discipline. After two years he was chosen to found another monastery at Clairvaux, in a little deserted valley. Hundreds gathered to hear his sermons, and soon bishops and kings were seeking his advice. Each year his fame spread, and in 1130, when there were two rival Popes, St. Bernard's support of one of them so strengthened him that the other soon abandoned his claim., St. Bernard had become " The Spiritual Dictator of Europe."

The importance of this story is that St. Bernard represents both the highest ideal of Christendom and its defects. Christendom, to remain united, had to be very rigid. Heresy had to be condemned and heretics were burnt at the stake. St. Bernard had no sympathy with the spirit of free enquiry which was growing in the universities, where thinking men were beginning to question some of the Church's teachings. People had to believe what they were told to believe, to be content with a Bible written in a language which they could not read, and to accept whatever interpretation the Church approved.

In the last few years of St. Bernard's life there was a reaction against him and he withdrew from public life for a brief space of peace before he died in 1153. It was clear, by the twelfth century, that there were already forces at work in feudal Christendom which were ultimately destined to destroy it.

CHAPTER XVI

A PEEP AT ASIA

BEFORE CONTINUING THE story of the development of European Christendom we must turn aside for a glance at Asia, where great changes were taking place. But first we must make a brief survey of some of its geographical features, for they helped to mould its history.

Europe and Asia, the Old World, form a single great land mass, on which we have seen already in our story many civilisations develop and many decay. We have seen, too, many different peoples wandering through the ages, settling in lands where life would be easier than it was in their old environment.

It is easy to see from the map why these civilisations should have developed where they did, why some should have been so easily and so frequently disturbed, and why others, like that of China or India, should have remained so distinct.

Right across Europe and Asia, from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean, stretches the great plain which is so vast that it includes one-seventh of the land surface of the earth. It is unbroken except for the Ural Mountains, and these, though not an impassable barrier, are sufficient to have divided Europe from Asia. On its northern side the great plain looks out on to the frozen Arctic, and as no mountain ranges are there to shelter it from the icy winds which blow over the snow-covered Tundra, the plain has a cold climate. The Asiatic plain is too far from the Atlantic to benefit from the warmer sea or the warm sea breezes, and is cut off from any warm breezes from the south by the massive mountain

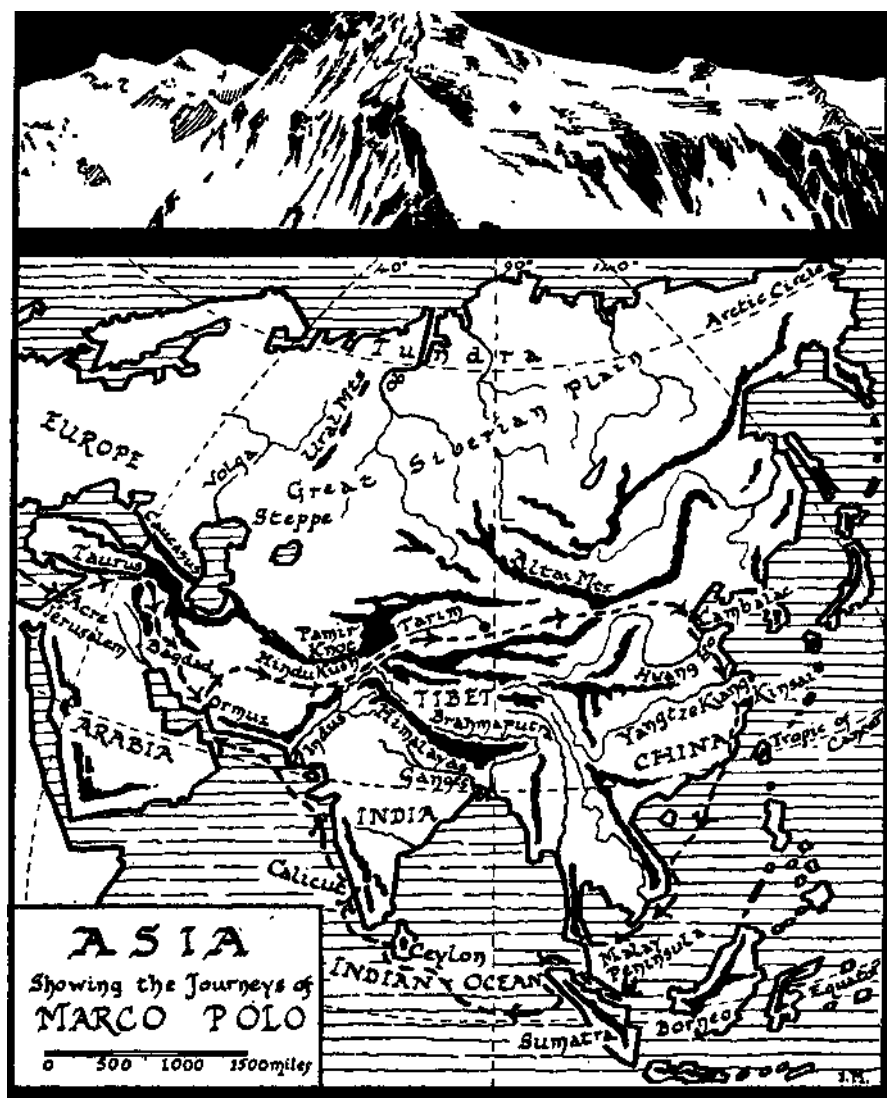


Fig. 89.—Asia, showing the Journeys of Marco Polo.

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ranges which curve round southern Asia. It is, therefore, a region of intense cold, and for centuries was but thinly populated, its hidden wealth unknown, and even in recent times prisoners from Russia have been sent into Siberia, the region of the Asiatic plain, to die of starvation or to freeze to death.

South of the wide belt of pine forests which fringe the Tundra are the great grass-lands or steppes, the home of the nomadic peoples. They lived a poor life, dependent on

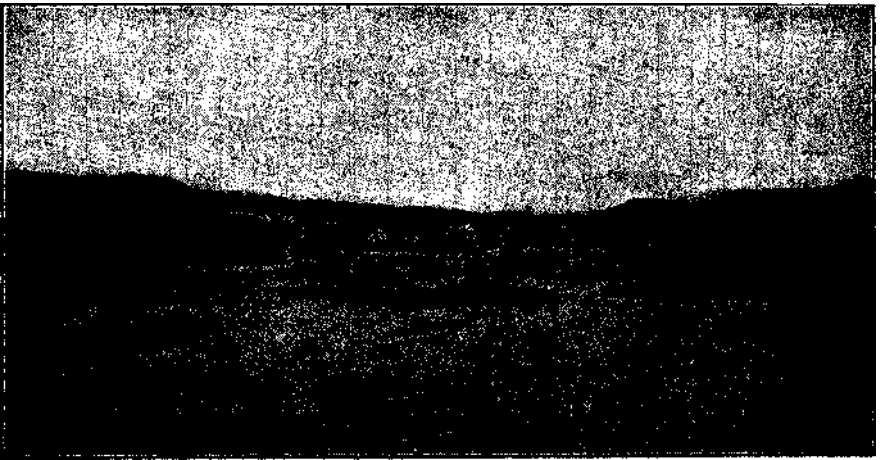


Fig. 90.—The Asiatic Plain.

[Topical

mares' milk, on oxen, and on their ability to pack up their tents and to move rapidly when danger threatened.

To the south and east are the lofty plateaux and mountain ranges spreading from Asia Minor, rising to the massive grandeur of the Himalayas, and widening through the high plateau of Tibet to the north-east.

The only regions likely to tempt settlers in Asia were obviously the fertile lands round the valleys of the Hwang-Ho and the Yang-tse Kiang in the Chinese peninsula, the fertile valley of the Ganges in north-east India, and the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates.

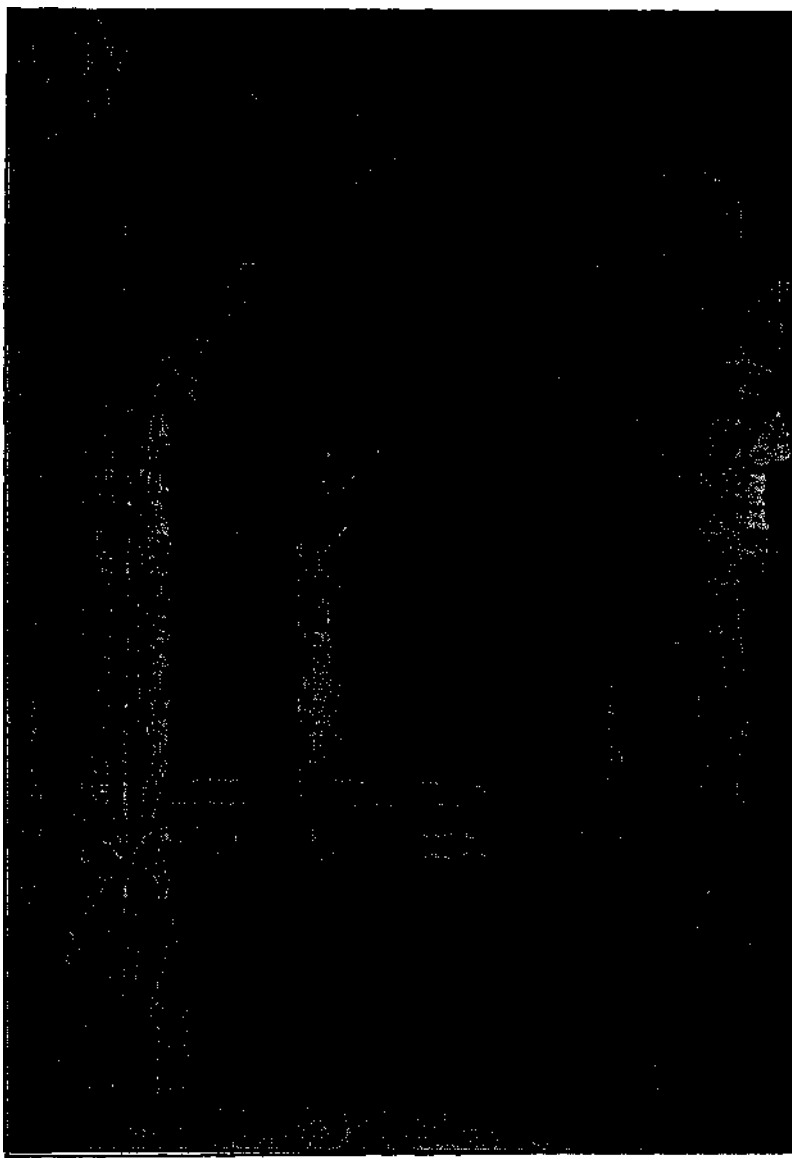


Fig. 91.—An Example of Ornate Indian Architecture.

[Mondiale

The civilisations of this last region were too much in the track of moving peoples to endure, and they were not naturally protected or isolated. We have seen how the ancient civilisations of Babylonia and Assyria were constantly subjected to invasions by Semitic and Aryan tribes, by Medes and Persians, by Greeks and by Romans, by Saracens and by Turks.

This was not so with India. Protected in the north-west by the Sulaiman Range, and in the north and north-east by the Himalayas, whose massive peaks dwarf all European mountains, India could be invaded only through the valley carved by the Indus.

Along the banks of the Holy Ganges the Hindoo civilisation developed, and there was concentrated an ever-growing population, living mainly on the rice which grows only in a region of hot mud. There, too, had grown the city of Benares, the home of Gautama Buddha, a city of palaces, with gardens where pools washed the petals of white, red, and blue lotus flowers.

China had no such mountain barrier to protect her from invasion, so in the third century B.c. a Chinese emperor named Shi Huang Ti built the Great Wall of China. It is one thousand, five hundred miles long, twenty feet wide, and in places thirty feet high. From time to time the Chinese had pushed beyond the wall to wage war on the Huns, Mongols, Tartars, and other wild horsemen of the steppes, nomads who often penetrated into the desert of Gobi and threatened China itself. But it was behind the protection of the wall that Chinese civilisation grew and flourished.

The rivers Hwang-Ho and Yang-tse Kiang divide China into three distinct sections. The northern section has cold winters, warm summers, and in general a climate more suitable for the production of grain like millet rather than of rice. The central part between the rivers has a warmer climate, and its natives live chiefly on rice. The southern section has warm winters and hot summers in which the

monsoons bring rain from the south-western seas. Here grows everything that tropical lands produce, and here, too, grew one of the world's wonder cities, the capital of the Sung emperors of southern China, the city of Kinsai or Hangchow.

The city was surrounded by a wall a hundred miles in length, and could be entered by any of twelve gates. Once within, a traveller must have thought the city a fairyland of



Fig. 92.—A street in a rich Chinese city.

colour and beauty. The lagoons and canals on which the city was built reflected the colours of the painted pleasure boats and the sails of the junks, laden with spices and sandalwood, silk and ebony, and all the wealth of the East. Over the canals were twelve thousand bridges, high enough for the ships to pass. A great street, two hundred feet wide, ran the whole length of the city, opening out, after every four miles, into squares lined with gardens of tropical flowers, houses and palaces, and shops, convents, and temples. Even the streets were full of colour, for men and women wore beautifully dyed silks, " and the most beautiful ladies

in the world swayed languidly past in embroidered litters,, with jade pins in their black hair and jewelled earrings swinging against their smooth cheeks."¹

North of Kinsai lay another similar though smaller city, the city of Sugui or Soochow. It had the same richness and beauty, the same colourfulness, for it produced enormous quantities of silk, the same vast population, in proportion to its size, and the same developed civilisation.

This civilisation, like all the civilisations which grew in ancient times in the river valleys, was a mixture of extremes. In China, as in Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, or Rome, wealth and luxury were to be found within the fortified cities of palaces and temples, while poverty spread over the land outside the cities, and crept into the corners of the cities themselves.

A curious feature of Chinese civilisation, due in part to its geographical isolation, was a tendency to look back, a tendency to worship the past and to deplore change. The exaggerated respect for their ancestors was carried to such an extent that the dead were buried on the southern slopes of the hills, while the colder, shaded northern slopes were forced to yield what produce they could to feed an enormous and increasing population.

Even so, the Chinese had discovered many things which were destined to astonish Christendom. They had long used coal, gunpowder, and, of greater importance, paper. They knew, too, the art of printing from wood blocks, and even used paper money.

They had flutes of jade and guitars of jasper and scented wood, to which they sang songs to poems which, even in translation, are beautiful and delightfully modern in thought.

In the twelfth century, when European Christendom was beginning to show signs of new life, and when China was

¹ Eileen Power: *Medieval People*, Methuen, 1924, p. 32.

enjoying her luxurious leisure, a ferocious youth was combining the scattered tribes of Mongols in central Asia into a great fighting force. He had red hair, fierce eyes, and was known to many as "The Raging Torrent." Soon he was to be known as Jenghis Khan, the Great Ruler. His followers were trained to fight in silence, except for the beating of drums to signal an attack, and they were trained to be pitiless.

Until his death in 1226 Jenghis Khan had an amazing career of conquest. Firstly he conquered northern China and learned from the Chinese the use of gunpowder. Then he turned westward, conquered northern India, and led his excited armies to victories in Persia, Armenia, and Turkestan.

After his death, his son, Ogdar Khan, continued the rapid empire-building by conquering nearly all Russia, ravaging Poland, and in 1241 invading Germany. He then returned to Asia.

On the death of Ogdar Khan, shortly after his "Golden Horde" had momentarily terrified Europe, the Mongol Empire was divided amongst his sons. The greatest of these was Kublai Khan, who founded a new dynasty in China, and who settled comfortably in Peking to enjoy all the luxury that Chinese civilisation could offer.

One day there returned to the palace of the great Khan an ambassador who had been absent for more than two years travelling to and from the distant city of Bokhara. This city was the capital of one of the fragments of the Mongol Empire, and there the ambassador had met two wealthy jewel merchants from the city of Venice in Europe. These adventurous merchants were persuaded to accompany the ambassador to China to visit the Khan Kublai. After a year's journey they were introduced into his presence.

Kublai Khan received them hospitably and, finding that they were unusually intelligent men who could speak his own language, he began to question them about Europe and Christianity. After a time he sent them back to Europe

with the request that they should return with a hundred learned men to teach his people. The Grand Khan differed from the Chinese whom he ruled, for every story of him illustrates his desire for knowledge.

With the aid of a golden tablet bearing the seal of Kublai Khan, the two adventurous merchants, Nicolo and Maffeo Polo, reached Venice again in 1269.

Instead of a hundred learned men only two Dominican friars and Nicolo's young son, Marco Polo, began the long and dangerous journey back to distant China. The friars were soon frightened, and putting themselves under the protection of the Knights Templar, returned home. The young Marco, his father, and uncle, continued alone.

The journey occupied them three and a half years, and if one follows it on a map one will learn a great deal about mediaeval Asia.

From Venice they sailed to Acre, whence they visited Jerusalem for some of the oil reserved for the sacred lamp which always burned in the Holy Sepulchre. Some of this oil they had promised to bring to the Khan. Returning to Acre, they sailed to the port of Lajazzo, and began to travel through the old land of Assyria, down the valley of the Tigris, to the Persian Gulf.

This land was now part of the Khanate of Persia, one of the four divisions of the Mongol Empire. As they journeyed along the Tigris, helped by the golden tablet, they called at Mosul and Bagdad, where merchants were usually to be found selling the wonderful Persian carpets and brocades, Indian spices, jewels, and ivory.

In company with some of these merchants they sailed through the Persian Gulf to the port of Ormuz, where ships were constantly arriving from or departing for India. At Ormuz the Polo adventurers were either warned not to continue the journey by sea, or they decided that the little nail-less ships of the Indian traders looked unsafe, for they

changed their plans and turned inland again. After passing through the unhealthy salt desert of Kirman, Marco fell ill, but he began to recover his health as they climbed the mountain slopes of the great Pamirs, where they lingered for a year.

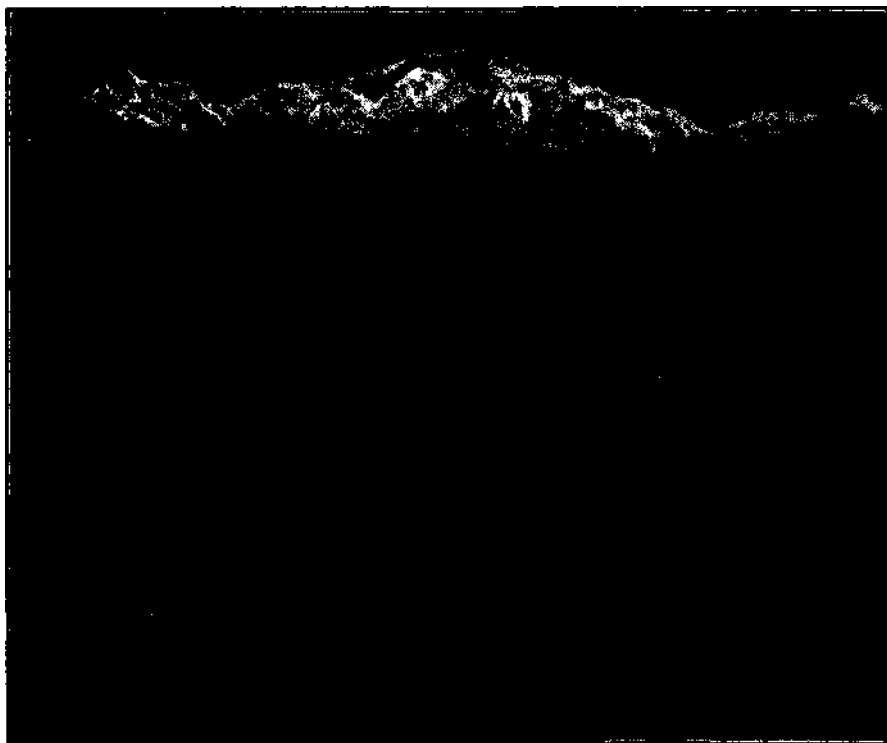


Fig. 93.—The Roof of the World.

Some of the mountains which form the rim of the plateau of Tibet, the "Roof of the World," are nearly thirty thousand feet high. The travellers had come from the heat of the deserts to a land of icily cold winds. At Kashgar they turned south and began to descend to Yarkand and Khotan, from where they followed the Tarim River, along the north of Tibet, as far as Lake Lob Nor.

Little more than half the journey from Ormuz to China had been accomplished, yet the worst part was to come.

They still had to cross the terrifying Desert of Gobi, where Nature played tricks with sound and sight, peopling the hot air with mocking voices, and deluding the sight with visions of refreshing water, which vanished as it was approached.

Beyond the desert they passed through the grass-lands which had been the Mongols' original home, and at last entered Peking or Cambaluc, their mission accomplished.

Kublai Khan was particularly pleased with Marco Polo, who had the same observant habits and the same inquisitive mind. For sixteen years the Polos remained with the Khan, and during this time Marco received many honours and much wealth, made many journeys for the Khan, and even governed for him the city of Yangchow. Everywhere he went Marco made careful notes of all he saw in order to be able to answer all the Khan's questions.

But the Khan was growing old, and the Polos were not so sure of favour under any other ruler, for many were jealous of the favours showered on the white strangers. So they pleaded to be allowed to return to Venice. For a long time Kublai refused to allow them to depart, but an opportunity at last came. A princess of the family of the Khan was destined to marry the Khan of Persia, but the journey was difficult and rendered more dangerous than usual by the threat of war. The offer of the Polos to take the princess by sea was accepted, and the return journey began in 1292.

With a fleet of fourteen Chinese junks and a retinue of attendants, they sailed from Zaiton, and, keeping as near as possible to the coasts, reached Ormu? in two years. After having safely deposited the lady, though her prospective bridegroom had died, they continued the journey overland to Trebizond. From there they sailed through the Black Sea to Constantinople, through the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora, and the Dardanelles into the Ægean, and thence through the Adriatic Sea to Venice. They arrived in 1295.

Shabby and dirty, stained with the travelling of three years, they were unrecognised as the wealthy merchants who

had left Venice twenty-three years before. At a feast which they had arranged for their doubting kinsmen and Venetian nobles, it is said that Marco cut open an old suit and emptied from its lining a dazzling array of precious stones, of rubies, sapphires, emeralds, carbuncles, and diamonds, and thus convinced his guests of the truth of his amazing story.

Two years later a Venetian fleet was captured by the rival fleet of Genoa, and Marco was taken prisoner. While in prison he told his story to a fellow prisoner who wrote it all down in a book called *The Travels of Marco Polo*.

Soon many men were talking of the wonders of the land which Marco Polo had described, and the wealth of China, or Cathay, as it was called, began to attract the merchants of Europe. Gradually, through the enterprise of many adventurers, merchants began to establish a connection between Europe and the Eastern lands of gardens and cities, where cloth was of silk and gold.

Many Chinese discoveries began to appear in Europe. Paper and printing were to revolutionise knowledge, and gunpowder used at the battle of Crecy was soon to revolutionise warfare, and to make the strongholds of feudal Christendom useless.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WORLD TRADE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

MEDIAEVAL EUROPE WAS not altogether a world of castles and barons, of peasants, oxen, and ploughshares, of bishops and monasteries, or of clanging steel-clad horsemen; there was also Venice.

To the people who knew Venice, but who had never seen Hangchow, Venice was the loveliest place in the world. Like Hangchow, it was a city of lagoons and canals, for it was built on a group of sandy islands. Like Hangchow, it was, too, a city of colour, where gaily-painted gondolas with coloured silken hangings drifted with Eastern-like leisure along the canals. The women of Venice, not less beautiful than Mongolian women, and with hair as red, were hardly more elaborately clothed than the men, and their coloured velvets and brocades gave a splash of vivid colour to the marble steps of the palaces and to their mirrored reflections in the water which lapped idly against the stone.

Over the wealthy city ruled the Doge (or duke), clad in scarlet, for he ruled a city which controlled the exchange of the greater part of the world's wealth. Along the rivers of Asia and along the Nile, on distant seas, across deserts, and over mountain passes, the surplus wealth of Asia and Africa was being brought to Mediterranean ports, where it was loaded on to Venetian ships. Along the rivers of Europe, on European seas, and over the passes of the Alps, these luxuries were being distributed in exchange for the surplus wealth of Europe.

Venice had an ideal geographical position. At the head of the Adriatic, the " Gulf of Venice," she had for her ships

an easy approach to any part of the Mediterranean, which was the connecting link between all the civilisations of the Old World. Mediterranean waters washed the coasts of feudal France and Moorish Spain and the shores of northern Africa. The Red Sea was within easy reach, the Highway to the Indian Ocean, and to the east lay Syria, the land of the Rising Sun. It is for this reason that merchants called it the Levant, a word which means "Rising." Beyond the eastern horizon were the newly discovered riches of Asia.

Venice was, too, conveniently central, not only in relation to the east and west of the Mediterranean, but in relation to the rest of Europe.

The islands on which Venice was built were an additional source of strength. Ages before, at the time of the Hunnish invasions, refugees had found the islands a safe refuge, and so they had remained, a natural stronghold, throughout the troublous feudal times. The barren sandy soil and the lagoons could not have looked very promising, but they yielded salt and fish, both of which were valuable products, easily exchangeable for other necessities. From the beginning, therefore, Venice had had to trade in order to live, and rapidly her ships had begun to carry European products about the Mediterranean.

Other towns had developed a similar coastal trade and had grown into wealthy independent cities like the ancient Greek republican cities. Amongst the earliest were Barcelona, Marseilles, and Naples. Amalfi, on the Gulf of Salerno, had outgrown its rivals, overthrown its duke, become a republic, founded a School of Law, and by the eleventh century was sending its merchant fleets to Egypt, Syria, and Greece. In the twelfth century it fell before the rivalry of Pisa, a town founded by Sardinian refugees who had been driven from the island by Saracens. Pisa, in turn, fell before the rivalry of Genoa, the last and greatest of Venice's rivals.

Feudalism was never very strong in Italy, and inland

towns such as Florence and Milan had developed into wealthy independent states by the specialised manufacture of products which the coastal towns distributed. The goldsmiths and weavers of Florence were renowned all over Europe, and its bankers and money-lenders were notorious. Like the ancient Greek cities it was developing a wonderful artistic life beyond anything mediæval Europe had known. Thirteenth-century Florence produced the immortal poet

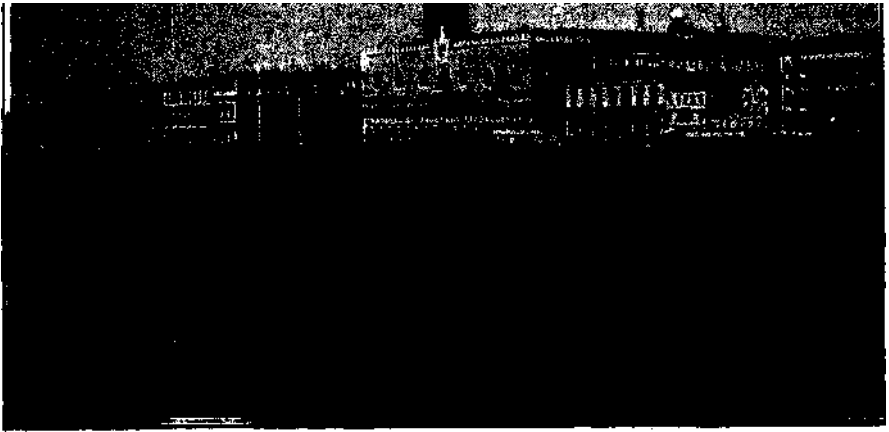


Fig. 95.—The Palace of the Doges, Venice.

[Will F. Taylor]

Dante, and the fourteenth century produced the poet Boccaccio and a school of painting and sculpture which was soon to revolutionise both arts.

Milan was flourishing on the profits made in her famous armouries, and her sword blades were prized all over Europe. Already in Italy a new Europe seemed to be dawning.

But Venice had outstripped all her rivals. The crusades had helped her, for in return for the use of her fleet and for

loans of money, crusaders had helped Venice to establish trading centres in Syria. Her early trade in salt had grown into a vast monopoly, and Venice controlled the output of the inland salt-mines of Germany, Hungary, Sicily, and Africa. To combat the danger from pirates a fleet of warships was added to her merchant fleet, which in the fourteenth century numbered three thousand vessels.

These ships sailed to and from five groups of ports, and each of these groups represented a different area of world produce.

One fleet traded with the ports of north-west Africa, the old Empire of Carthage. Here were six ports, all Venetian depots; they were Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers, Oran, Tangier, and Mogadon. To these ports came ivory, gold dust, dates from the desert oases, wool, grain, and even negro slaves.

A second fleet traded with the Black Sea ports, a third with the Syrian ports, a fourth with Alexandria, the port of Egypt. A canal, two hundred miles long, connected Alexandria with Cairo and the Nile. Another fleet sailed through the 'Straits of Gibraltar to meet the merchants of western and northern Europe.

In 1204 the members of the Fourth Crusade were unable to pay the transport fees charged by Venice for the use of her fleet, so the whole crusade was diverted from its original object and conquered Constantinople on behalf of Venice. For half a century Venice controlled the whole of the Black Sea trade, and opened up the port of Azov or Tana in the north-east, and that of Trebizond in the south-east.

. To these eastern ports came the luxurious products of the East. From China came silk, muslin, brocade, pottery, and paper; jade, gems, sandalwood, perfume, and ginger.

From India came the spices which were so valuable to Europe in an age when there was no fresh meat; cinnamon was extracted from the bark of a laurel tree which grew in Ceylon; cloves were the dried buds of a tree; nutmegs

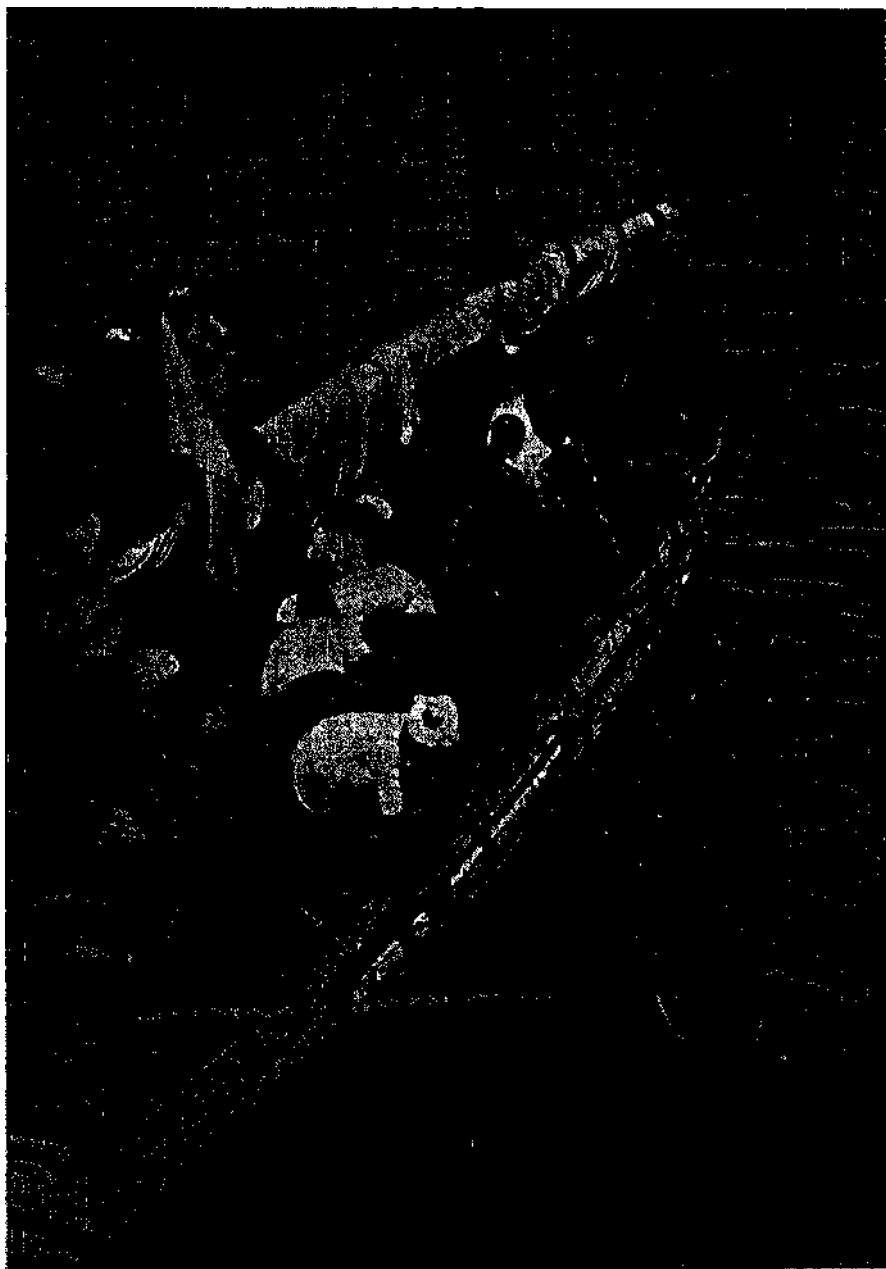


Fig. 96,—Pearl Fishers.

were the kernels of a nut which also produced mace, and pepper came from dried berries. From India, too, came enamelled metalwork, ivory, gold, and precious stones. The waters off Ceylon were famous for their pearl fisheries, as Golconda, in southern India, was for its diamonds.

Beyond the mountains east of the Tigris, mountains whose wooded slopes the ancient Assyrians had envied, lay the plateau of Persia, a land like a saucer in the centre of which lay a sediment of sand. There was pasture on the slopes of the mountains and there were scattered oases. Obviously the main product was wool, and from this the Persians made carpets, rugs, and beautifully designed mats and fabrics. Persia also produced gilded and marvellously wrought weapons.

From Persia the land route from Asia to Europe passed through Armenia into the plateau of Asia Minor, which produced a specially fine cloth woven from goats' hair. Syria made a beautiful kind of fine glass from her desert sands, and exported fresh and dried fruits, cane sugar, and a fine fabric in which the pattern was woven. This cloth is still known as Damask, from the name of the town which first produced it. Damascus also made famous ornamented swords.

These varied luxuries came to the Mediterranean and Black Sea ports by three main routes.

By one route ships came from India, carrying their own and Chinese goods, passing the Gulf of Persia, coasting round Arabia, and completing their voyage in the Red Sea. The goods were unshipped at some convenient spot, transferred to the backs of camels, and taken by caravans across the desert to the Nile. Once more they were placed on ships which carried them to Cairo, where Egyptian produce was added, and thence they were carried to Alexandria, where the Venetian ships were waiting. Whenever they could, in Asia, Africa, or Europe, merchants used rivers for transport. A leisurely and comparatively comfortable journey

in a ship or barge was obviously better than a difficult and dangerous journey through mountain passes or desert wastes. The goods were more easily packed into ships than on to the backs of packhorses or camels, which had to be fed, watered, attended, and given rest.

Instead of sailing to the Red Sea, many merchant vessels from China and India used the Persian Gulf, sailing right into the delta of the Tigris and Euphrates as far as the junction of the rivers at Basra. From Basra some continued along the Euphrates as far as Babylon, from where the merchandise was taken across the Syrian desert to Tadmor. Some caravans went directly from Tadmor to the port of Tripolis,



Fig. 97.—A Caravan crossing the Desert.

others went to the famed city of Damascus, which was served by the three ports, Beirut, Sidon, and Tyre.

Instead of following the Euphrates from Basra, some merchants continued to sail up the Tigris to Bagdad, in whose famous bazaars all the products of Persia, Syria, India, and China were exchanged. Bagdad herself produced cotton, silk, and linen goods, embroidered fabrics, leather, gold, and silver ware. It was possible to navigate the Tigris as far north as the rising ground on which Nineveh had once stood. There the merchants parted company. Some continued over the Highlands of Armenia to Trebizond, where the Venetian Black Sea fleet awaited them. Others went

westwards, across Mesopotamia to Thrapsacus on the Euphrates, on to the River Orontes, and north by boat through Antioch to the port of Seleucia-in-Syria.

Traders from Central Asia, crossing the mountains in long straggling caravans, came south of the Caspian, as did merchants from Bokhara and from "Golden Samarkand,"

Some of these world-produced luxuries remained in Venice, whose wealthy merchants and their ladies were alike scented with the perfumes of the East, clad in velvets or silks from Asiatic lands, living in palatial homes filled with the produce of the world, where feasts from the world's storehouse were enriched with spices and wines, and where quarrels were settled with embellished swords brought from distant armouries.

But most of this accumulated wealth had to be redistributed from Venice to the cities and towns of Europe. All trade is an exchange of goods, and Europe had to produce a surplus of her own special kind of wealth in return for the luxuries collected by the Venetian fleets.

Before examining the way in which European merchants organised the products of mediæval Europe, so that France, Spain, England, Flanders, Germany, and Scandinavia could take a part in the growing system of world trade, we can discover for ourselves what the chief European products must have been, by thinking of the geography of the regions concerned.

In the extreme north of Scandinavia were the icy regions of the Arctic, where whales and seals, if they could be caught, could supply blubber, skins, oil, and whalebone. Then came the coniferous forests, an almost inexhaustible storehouse of timber, especially valuable because of the long straight trunks of the pines, firs, and larches. In these forests, too, lived furry animals, especially wolves and bears, while the North Sea, the Baltic, and the Sound abounded in fish. Enormous quantities of herrings could be caught, and this was a most valuable diet in the Middle Ages, when there were

so many fast days and when the only winter meat was salted. In addition to these products of the North, blubber, oil, timber, furs, and fish, a beautiful yellowish mineral called amber was exported, and gum and pitch were extracted from some of the pines.

Sweden had, also, iron- and copper-mines; Denmark had a surplus of cattle, grain, and horses ; the eastern Baltic lands produced wax, tallow, hides, leather, and corn.

These northern countries had long developed a European trade, exchanging their products for English wool, leather, hides, and tin ; or for French oil, wine, or salt; or for similar products from Spain and Portugal. From Germany they had long imported wines and beer, dyes, woollen goods, corn, fruit, hemp, and leather.

In the twelfth century Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bremen formed a league, which they called a " Hansa," for the mutual protection of their ships from the pirates and Vikings of the North Sea and the Baltic. Other towns gradually joined, and under the control of Lubeck the famous Hanseatic League was developed. At first it was confined to coastal towns, but as the power of the Hansa grew it spread to inland centres of production and inland markets, some of which had developed from trading stations founded by the Hanseatic League.

At the height of its power the League included seventy-seven towns and cities and possessed an armed fleet. Capable of dictating terms even to monarchs, the League obtained all sorts of privileges, and opened offices and agencies in many cities. An important agency or factory was opened in London in buildings so strongly fortified that they were known as the Steelyard.

This powerful organisation controlled all the trade of north and central Europe for two centuries, reaching the height of its power in the fourteenth century.

Its most easterly depot was Novgorod, in Russia, where

the tallow, hides, and grain produced from Russian farms and cornfields were marketed.

The League was divided into four sections, all under the control of Lubeck. The section which controlled the eastern Baltic trade included the towns of Reval, Riga, Konigsberg, Elburg, Thorn, Wisby, and Danzig, which controlled the group, under the superior authority of Lubeck,

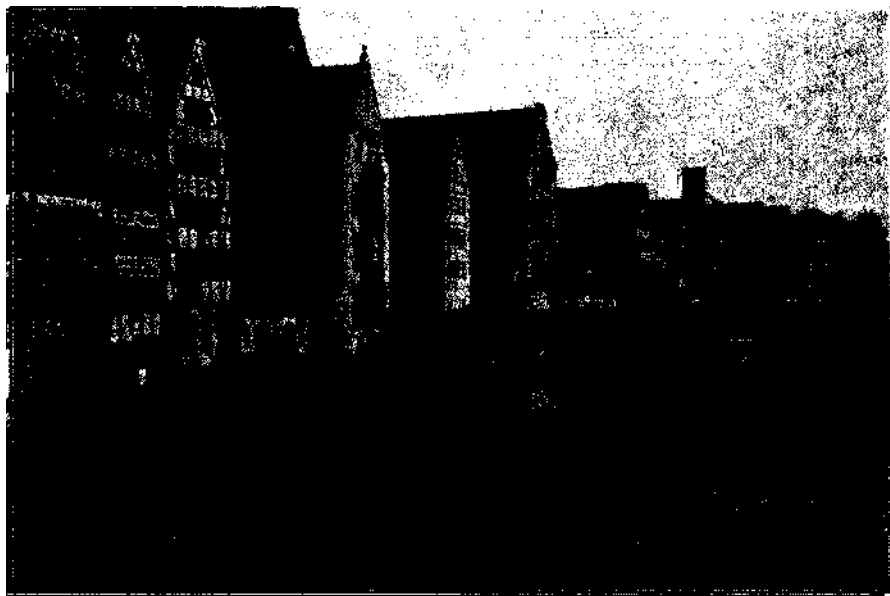


Fig. 98.—Danzig.

[Wide World

Cologne, a magnificent city of beautiful buildings, controlled a group of thirty towns on and around the Rhine and in Flanders, including the ports of Bruges and Dordrecht. This was the region of the Flemish woollen trade, of Rhenish wine, linen, yarn, metalwork, and needles.

The central German trade in wine, hops, dye, woollens, iron, timber, corn, hemp, and leather was controlled by Brunswick. The north-western trade was controlled by Lubeck itself. The four main factories were London,

Novgorod, Bruges, and Bergen, the central depot for most of the trade of the North.

A great deal of the European produce was exchanged amongst the people of the lands from which it came. Sweden, for example, imported corn, meal, metalwork, cloth, and wine in return for her unworked iron and copper, her timber,



Fig. 99.—Rothenburg.

[Mondiale

salted fish and meat. Denmark exchanged her herrings, horses, cattle, and corn for wool, wine, beer, and wax.

As the Mediterranean trade with the Far and Near East began to develop, however, this European produce began to be exchanged for the luxuries which were pouring into Venice, and Venetian ships carried back some of the European surplus.

European goods reached Venice, and the silks, spices, Asiatic textiles, fruits, and perfumes came from Venice in return, by three routes, which, as did the routes we have already noticed, followed the sea and rivers as closely as possible.

Once each year a Venetian fleet sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar, coasted along Spain and France, and anchored at Bruges, where the Hanseatic merchants were waiting.



Fig. 100.—The Brenner Pass.

[Planet

The two other routes from Venice were inland. Loaded on pack horses, the goods crossed the Alps either by the Julier or the Brenner Pass. The western route reached the Rhine at Basle, and continued along the river through the heart of the region controlled by Cologne. The chief towns of this group, known as the Rhine Confederacy, were Mainz, Frankfurt, and Coblenz. From here it was an easy journey to Bruges.

The eastern route, through the Brenner Pass, led to the upper valley of the Danube, where a group of great towns and cities had formed the Swabian Confederacy. Augsburg, a city of fine architecture, added linen to the merchandise. There were, too, Ulm, Regensburg, and Nuremburg, where toys and ornaments were made. Continuing north, through Erfurt, the traders reached the Elbe and followed it through Hamburg to the coast, or turned north again to Lubeck and the Baltic.

Some of the Black Sea trade, and some which came from Constantinople after crossing Asia Minor, avoided Venice after the quarrel between the two cities. This trade used the River Danube. Just before reaching Vienna, a distance of nearly a thousand miles, including the distance from Constantinople to the Danube Estuary, some of the goods were taken north along the River Waag. The rest continued along the Danube, into the heart of the Swabian towns, and joined the Venetian routes at Basle or Frankfurt-on-the-Rhine.

Mediaeval Europe had created a world trade. Towns were growing in luxury, wealth, and magnificence; life in a feudal world was being revolutionised by merchants and traders. We shall have to pause in the development of this story to see what has been happening to the peasants, to the steelclad horsemen, to the barons, secure in their castle fortresses, and to the bishops of Christendom.

CHAPTER XVIII

NEW FORCES IN CHRISTENDOM

BEFORE WE JOURNEYED across Asia to visit Kublai Khan in China and returned with the merchants, whom we followed round their ports, we left a Europe which we had called feudal Christendom. It was called Christendom because a single powerful Church, under the rule of ambitious Popes, was spreading its influence and authority into every part of northern, western, central, and southern Europe, which seemed to be developing into a single united Christian State.

This Europe was described as feudal because barons, dukes, counts, and kings, safe behind their castle walls, were carving out duchies and kingdoms over which they exercised a tyrannous authority.

For a long time these two developments had gone hand in hand. A Pope had crowned Charlemagne and another had laid the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire by crowning Otto of Saxony. Bishops and archbishops had sat side by side with kings and dukes in court and council. Popes had blessed the adventurous invasions of conquering princes and received territory from their hands. Abbots and bishops were royal tenants, exercising the same rights over the lands they held as did the barons.

On closer examination, however, it is clear that these two developments, the development of Christendom and that of feudal duchies and kingdoms, were really opposed to each other. The ideal of Christendom was the ideal of a unity, a Europe dominated by the Pope, with a single language in which to express its laws and decrees, its judgments, **and** its teaching. On the other hand, feudal **monarchies were**

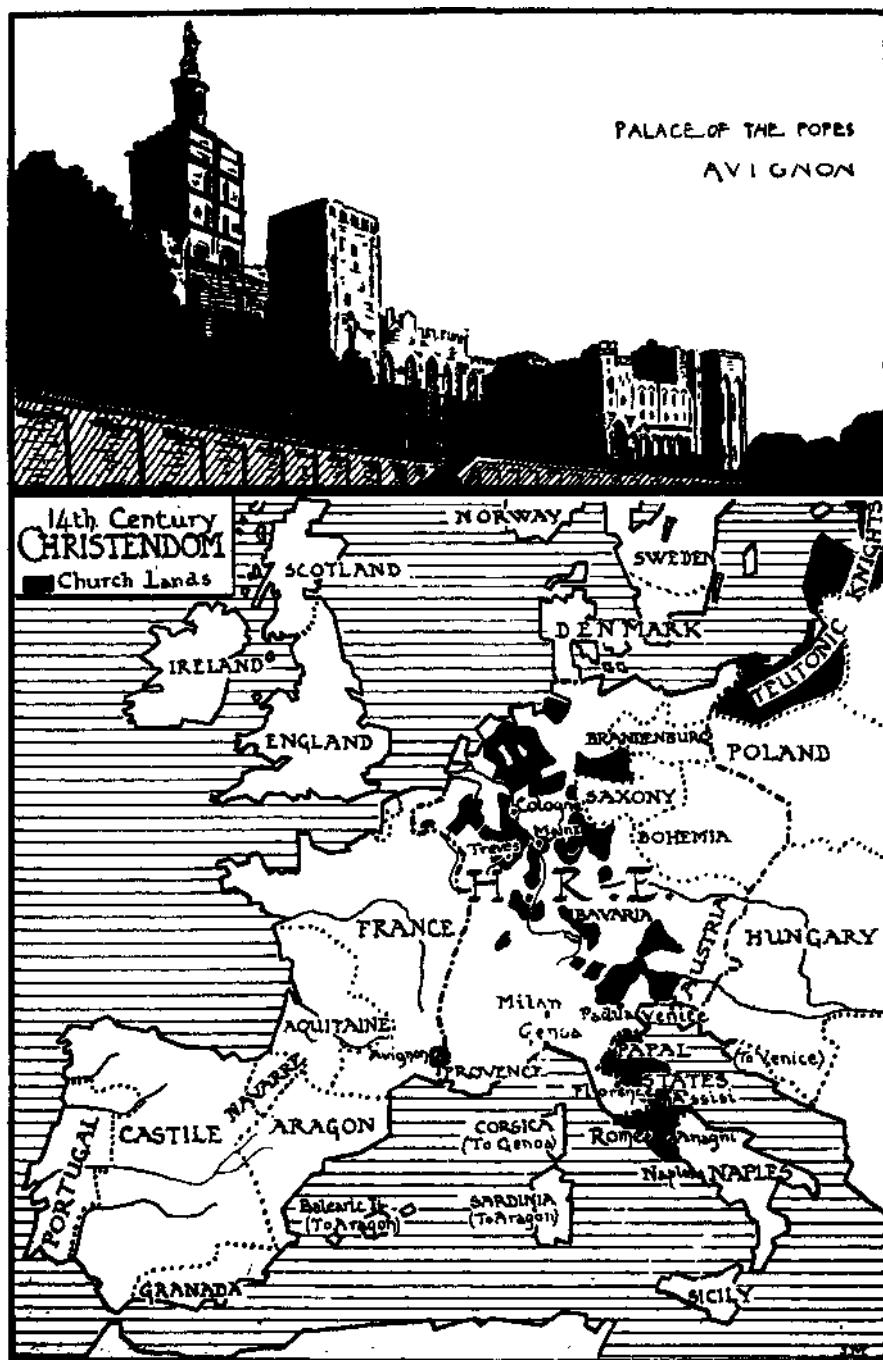


Fig. 101.—Fourteenth Century Christendom.

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splitting Europe into separate nations in each of which a national language was developing. Of greater importance was the growth in each of a national pride which looked with increasing distaste on any sort of outside interference, even from the Pope.

The struggle between national monarchy and Papacy had already begun when the emperor, Henry IV, defied the Pope, Gregory VII. The Pope had apparently won when he had forced the emperor to stand barefooted at Canossa, to await for three days the withdrawal of the ban of excommunication. But the struggle was to have a different result soon.

The two most rapidly developing nations in Europe were England and France. England had a natural and undisputed frontier, the sea. France had, in the south, the mountain barrier of the Pyrenees, and in the east the Alps and the Rhine.

After the Norman conquest of England, English kings possessed land *in* France, sometimes a little, sometimes many duchies, and were, in fact, little more than French dukes. There was, therefore, continual fighting between the two monarchies.

We have seen that Richard the Lion-Heart was killed in France in 1199 whilst fighting against his enemy Philip Augustus. Richard's father, Henry II of England, had acquired by inheritance, marriage and conquest, a great collection of feudal duchies in France, stretching from the English Channel to the Pyrenees, and though he paid homage to the French king for them, this meant very little in practice. The French monarchy, therefore, determined to conquer them and add them to the royal lands. It would be better for the French king to be Duke of Normandy, for example, than for the English king to have the title and the lands.

After Richard's death he was succeeded by his shameless brother John, who reigned from 1199 to 1216, and who lost almost all of his French duchies.

The importance of this is that England could no longer believe herself to be ruled by a French duke ; England was no longer a French conquest, but a nation whose king was an enemy of France. No longer, either, could the nobles regard themselves as Frenchmen, living in a conquered land whose language they had despised, the language of their serfs. They had to regard themselves as Englishmen or go back to France. It was in this reign, when John returned from France, that the barons and bishops, with a number of traders, forced him to grant them a charter promising good government and to respect their rights and privileges. This was the famous Magna Carta of 1215.

In the next reign, that of Henry III (1216-1272), there was no doubt that England had become thoroughly English. There was an outcry against "foreigners," and another against the payment of English revenues to the Pope ; armed barons forced the king to exile his French relatives and favourites, and demanded that a copy of Magna Carta, *translated into English*, should be sent to every shire court. The reign ended in a civil war between the supporters of the king and the reformers led by Simon de Montfort. From this war England emerged, in the next reign, as a nation, and her king, Edward I, has been called England's "First National King."

Meanwhile, in France, the conquest of the English king's duchies had helped to strengthen French national feeling. While Edward I was consolidating English unity, conquering Wales and hammering the Scots, Philip IV, called "The Fair," was doing the same kind of work in France. He, like Edward I, was a lawyer-king, and by means of statutes both were strengthening their own power at the expense of the barons and the Church.

The Papacy, weakened by its long struggle with the Empire, had lost much of the respect in which it had been held. The interest of the Popes in increasing their wealth and power, and in the amassing of fortunes for their families, showed a very different attitude towards their great office

from that which had created a united Christendom. Reverence for the Church was everywhere undermined, and supported by national sentiment, Edward I and Philip IV were unlikely to tolerate any revival of Papal interference in their kingdoms.

In 1294 a new and vigorous Pope, Boniface VIII, was elected, and he tried to enforce all the old Papal claims to supreme authority. At the time Edward and Philip were at war, and Boniface took the opportunity to issue his challenge. He forbade all clergy to pay any further taxes to any authority other than the Church without the Pope's consent.

Neither Edward I nor Philip IV thought for a moment of using this opportunity to curry favour with the Pope in order to weaken his enemy. Edward I promptly outlawed all clergy who accepted the Pope's order and forced them to pay more. Philip went further. He ordered that no more money should be paid to the Popes, raided the Pope's castle at Anagni, and so humiliated Boniface that he died shortly after.

There was no outburst of indignation against this outrage, and the next Pope, who dared to excommunicate Philip, died mysteriously from poison in a few weeks. A French bishop was then appointed Pope and was compelled to reside in a French town, Avignon on the Rhone. For seventy years, from 1309 to 1378, the Popes remained at Avignon, mere puppets of the French monarchy, forced even to extract money from the Church to fill French coffers. This disgraceful exile of the Papacy is known as "The Babylonish Captivity."

This was a national victory over Christendom, a victory of a strong feudal monarchy over a Papacy weakened by worldly ambition. But the victory could not have been won if the Church had not forfeited its one great source of strength, the support of the people. Nationalism could not have won its victory if it had not been accompanied by a Christian revolt against the worldliness of the Church.

Such a revolt had begun at least a century earlier. Quite spontaneously, humbly and unofficially, a number of men had formed themselves into a band of poor brothers or friars, intent on carrying out in their own way the teachings of Christ. The order was founded by St. Francis of Assisi.



Fig. 102.—Monk distributing food to poor people.

Born in 1182 of a wealthy family, he had been a gay, high-spirited youth, fond of revelry and fun. Suddenly he had begun to view life differently. Taking two texts from the teaching of Christ, "Take no thought of food or raiment," and "Leave all and follow Me," St. Francis made these the basis of his new life. Everything he had he gave away, and began to wander in poverty, solely in

the service of the sick, the suffering, and the wretched. He knew no fear and would go alone amongst robbers or lepers with no thought of his own safety. It was a perfect Christian life, based on love and service.

Other companions joined him and, with bare feet, wearing coarse grey gowns, and begging their food, they walked to Rome, calling themselves *Fratres Minores* or the Lesser Brothers. Pope Innocent III encouraged them, and soon there were hundreds of them, wandering in small groups, bringing life to the filthy corners of the towns and hope to the poor and the suffering. They were known as the Grey Friars.

At the same time a rather different group, called the Black Friars, was formed by a Spanish monk, St. Dominic. The Dominican or Black Friars, like the Franciscans, practised poverty and wandered, barefooted, from town to town. They were, however, different from the Grey Friars of St. Francis in that they were more interested in the doctrines of the Church. They supported a rigid form of belief and became the agents of the Church in its attempts to repress free thinking and heresy.

With the Babylonish Captivity free thinking and heresy were bound to increase. Chaucer, in England, was pouring contempt on the sleek, fat monks, who preferred the feast and the hunt to the more burdensome duties of their spiritual office.

A monk there was . . .
 A manly man to be an abbot able.
 Full many a dainty horse had he in stable:
 And when he rode men might his bridle hear
 Jingling in a whistling wind as clear
 And quite as loud as doth the chapel bell
 Whereat this lord was keeper of the cell . . .
 And I am told, this sound idea he had,
 Why should he study hard till driven mad,
 O'er a book in cloister e'er to pour,
 Or work at manual toil or labour sore ?
 He was not pale as some poor wasted ghost,
 A fat swan liked he best of any roast.

But of the " poor parson of the town " Chaucer said:

Rich he was of holy thought and work.
 He was also a learned man, a clerk ;
 The Christian gospel truly would he preach,
 And his parishioners devoutly teach. . . .
 Wide his parish was, its houses far asunder,
 But fail he never would for rain or thunder,
 For sickness or for sin to make a call
 However far away on great or small,
 And always did he walk, **and** in his hand **a stave**,
 This fine example to his sheep he gave,
That first he wrought and afterwards he taught.

Everywhere the Church was being denounced with increasing boldness, not merely by national monarchies, but by genuine Christian thinkers. One of the most vigorous of these was Marsiglio of Padua, who was a medical student at Paris in the early fourteenth century. He wrote a work called *Defensor Paris*, in which he denied the authority of the Pope and many of the doctrines of the Church; he stated that the only true source of law is the whole body of the people, a defiance of authority which was extraordinary in the Middle Ages, and he went so far as to say that the Church should be stripped of its vast wealth. What Marsiglio had the courage to write, many people were already thinking.

In England, at Oxford, John Wyclif was similarly attacking the claims of the Papacy, the wealth and corruption of the Church, and some of its doctrines. Using poor priests and wandering scholars to preach his teaching, Wyclif was soon represented in town and village by men in long brown gowns, carrying staves, and looking much like the friars. They were called Lollards, and preached openly against the use of images in churches, against superstition and belief in relics. Wyclif had translated the Bible into English, which was a direct challenge to the idea of Christendom, and the Lollards often quoted parts of it to the people. For the first time they heard, in a language they could understand, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image," and the more vital command "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor." This must have sounded astonishing to the feudal peasants who heard it. The Lollards preached also against pilgrimages and against the priests, monks, and others who pretended to forgive sins in return for a money payment. Wyclif died in 1384, but many of his followers were burned.

There were many other similar would-be reformers. In France, the learned Gerson, the "Most Christian Doctor," wrote: "The Court of Rome has invented a thousand offices for the acquisition of gold, but it would be hard to find a single one for the cultivation of virtue. There, from morning to night, they talk of nothing but armies, lands,

towns, and money; rarely, or rather never, do they talk of chastity, of giving to the poor, of justice, of fidelity, of good morals." In Bohemia, a backward Slavonic state in the east of the Empire, John Huss began to teach the doctrines of Wyclif. He was burnt in 1415.

It is clear, then, that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there was a growing revolt against the Church. National monarchies were defying its authority and, of greater importance, increasing numbers of men were crying out against its worldliness, its wealth, and its teaching.

The Holy Roman Empire, weakened by its long struggle with the Papacy, did not develop into a united nation, but remained a collection of states, small and great, under the fictitious rule of the emperor. The idea of Empire was as much opposed to the idea of nations, united under strong monarchies, as was the idea of a united Christendom. Nations were something new in the world. In Germany, as the power of the emperors dwindled, the power of the noble families grew proportionately greater, until at last they even claimed the right to elect the emperor. In 1356, by the Golden Bull (" *bull* " means a seal, and a Bull was a document sealed by the Pope), the disunion of Germany was frankly recognised. Seven of the German princes were given the right to choose the emperor, and henceforward were called Electors. It is interesting to note that three of the Electors were the princely archbishops who ruled over the great independent Rhineland cities of Cologne, Mainz, and Treves, cities grown famous through trade.

Italy was even less united than Germany, for when the Popes had moved to Avignon there was not even a pretence of central authority. Each wealthy town, fattened on commerce, regarded itself as independent, and there was no one to dispute its claim. Adventurers, who hired professional soldiers called *condottieri*, terrorised the countryside and made themselves temporary masters of towns and districts. Italy was a bundle of warring, independent states,

out of which five emerged with increased power and territory; these were Venice, Milan, Naples, Florence, and the Papal states. Between these states was a sort of balance of power, on a basis of mutual fear and jealousy.

After 1378, when the Babylonish Captivity ended, a worse evil befell the Church. The French and Italian cardinals each elected a Pope, and until 1471, for nearly a hundred years, there were two rival Popes in Europe—one at Avignon, one at Rome. During this period, known as the Great Schism (which means a "split"), a number of councils began to discuss Church doctrine. One of these, without the consent of the Pope, gave Bohemia the right to have a special kind of Communion Service. This meant that Bohemia had been allowed to form a national Church; the first rent had been made in the seamless garment of the Church.

In examining the forces which were destroying the unity of Christendom, it is impossible not to notice that other forces were busy destroying feudalism. Barons who could unite in order to demand good government from a king seem to have changed from the barons who would have preferred a weak king, so that they could have tyrannised the people of their lands without interference. It would be difficult to find a place for a man like Chaucer in the feudal society we have described. He was not a baron and he was not a peasant; he tilled no land and poked pleasant fun at the knight in armour. His pilgrims were a merry group, and so was the host of the Tabard Inn, where they drank and told their tales. "Tell us some merry tale," he said to the sombre-looking clerk:

" But preach do not as friars do in Lent,
To make us for our olden sins to weep,
And see thy tale send us not all to sleep."

Clearly Europe was not only ceasing to be Christendom, it was ceasing also to be feudal. Why this was so is a separate story.

CHAPTER XIX

NEW FORCES IN A FEUDAL WORLD

FEUDALISM, WHICH IS that kind of society in which everyone is either some kind of baronial landholder or some kind of peasant worker, never has existed anywhere in a perfectly complete form. It could have existed perfectly only in a place where the land provided everything the people who lived on it could possibly need. In such a case there would have been no need for any other sorts of men than peasants to do the work and barons to protect them or to wage war on other barons.

In England the geographical conditions were almost perfect for the development of feudal society. There was plenty of land for pasture and for cultivation, and manorial villages could produce corn, meat, honey, fruit, eggs, wool, skins, timber, and most of the things such a community needed. But the important point is that all the villages could not produce all the necessities. They could not, for example, all produce salt or iron.

From early times some districts had specialised in certain products, as Kent had in the manufacture of pottery or as Cornwall had in tin-mining, and these products had to be distributed to distant villages in return for their surplus wool, hides, or corn. This specialisation of production and the distribution of the goods, which is called trade or commerce, created four things which had no place in feudal society: they created wealthy towns, wealthy merchants, skilled craftsmen, and money, just as they had **created** them in the ancient non-feudal civilisations.

Only some of the villages grew into towns (many have not yet done so), for this development took place only when the village had a geographical position or some historical significance capable of enabling it to serve the community in some special kind of way. Rome grew into a city because it guarded the ford over the Tiber across which the men of northern and southern Italy exchanged their goods. The importance of rivers to the mediæval traders has already been noticed, and the names of many English towns, such as Oxford, Wallingford, Cambridge, or Stourbridge, suggest the reason for their development. We have already seen the



Fig. 103.—A street in a mediæval town.

growth of towns at places along the coasts where goods were transferred from caravans to ships and from ships to packhorses and wagons. Other towns grew because their position made it easy to defend them, as did Lincoln, Dudley, and Derby. Sometimes a road junction made a village a convenient resting-place for pilgrims, merchants, or other travellers, and such a village would develop into a town with inns, stone buildings, a wall, market, and shops. The presence of a shrine, a cathedral, or abbey—in fact, of anything which gave the place any special value or significance—was sufficient to start its growth from a village into a town or city.

Life in a town can never be the same as life in a feudal village, for the very growth of the town demands all kinds of specialised labour. The building of the stone wall, the castle, the church, and the houses meant that there had to be stone-masons and master builders called architects. The stone had to be quarried and brought from the quarries either by river or by being dragged along the roads in sledges. The designers needed chalk, which came from the Downs of Surrey, Sussex, or Kent, and they needed charcoal. There had, too, to be carpenters, woodcarvers, and metalworkers. Goldsmiths and silversmiths were needed to make shrines, chalices, plates, and other vessels or ornaments for the churches, or salt cellars for the monks or any who could afford to buy them. Better clothing was demanded than the crude garments of the peasants, and finer material was required for the vestments and for the altar cloths and chalice coverings used in the churches.

Another special craft, and one for which English craftsmen became particularly famous, was leatherwork. Hides and skins were brought into the towns by the butchers and sold to the leather-workers. The skins had to be soaked in lime, which burnt off the bristles and hair, washed, then soaked for a year in a dye made from the bark of oak trees. They were then made into saddles, purses, bottles, jerkins, or boots. From the finer skins of goats and sheep gloves were made.

In towns all over Europe specialised industries began to develop and craftsmen were producing goods which had to be distributed far and wide.

Thus, from the beginning, towns had to be able to buy and to sell. There had to be a frequent exchange of each other's surplus produce and an exchange with outlying districts. Into the town would come supplies of food and raw materials—grain, meat, butter, oil, eggs, cheese, honey, hides, wool, salt, pitch, metal, or wood—and some of these things would change hands in the town market. **But the members of the town who happened to produce none of**

these things must do some service or produce something valuable in exchange. A man may sell a number of hides and buy a saddle.

Rapidly the towns grew in wealth, in beauty, in population, and in importance, and most of the wealth was in the hands of the merchants who controlled the exchange of the goods. During the development of the vast network of world trade, which we have examined in a previous chapter, merchants began to accumulate enormous wealth, and this wealth gave them great power.

Now there was no place in feudal society for a merchant. He was neither baron nor peasant, and for a long time he was a fly in the feudal ointment. He was frequently oppressed and whenever possible he was robbed, on sea and land. Those towns which had grown from feudal villages were still regarded as part of the feudal organisation and had to pay to some lord, abbot, bishop, or the king all manner of dues. *Stallage* had to be paid by merchants who wished to erect stalls in a town; *passage* had to be paid on goods passing through a town, and *pontage* had to be paid on goods taken across a bridge. Some of these dues were very heavy and towns began to look for an opportunity to become independent.

This was fairly easy in those parts of Europe where there was no strong central authority, and many towns in Italy and Germany, for example, soon established their independence. It was more difficult in France and England, where there was in each country a strong national monarchy, but the opportunity came when the king or overlord wanted money, especially during the crusades. Towns then began to buy their independence, and in return for a money grant they obtained a charter of liberties.

When a town gained its charter all those who had contributed towards the cost became "freemen," with the right to take part in the weekly market and annual fair. Such a town was privileged to hold a law court, to keep the fines

for its own expenses, to collect its own taxes and to make town-laws or by-laws. (The word "by" means a town and forms part of many English town names, such as Grimsby and Whitby.) Some chartered towns were privileged to retain a private army and they were under the control of a mayor or master elected by the freemen.

There was a great difference between such a French or English town, which was still part of the nation though independent of the feudal organisation, and such a town as Cologne, Mainz, or Venice. Where there was no strong central authority it was the lord who became independent, and in such a case the town became an independent state. Cologne, Mainz, and Treves, the wealthy towns of the Rhineland, were city states under the rule of their archbishops. The independent towns of Italy were ruled by wealthy families as long as they were strong enough to hold them. The Hanseatic towns were controlled by the League from Lubeck. In all of these cases, however, both the independence of the town and the independence of the merchants led to the increasing decay of feudalism.

In the twelfth century English merchants began the practice, already begun in France, Germany, and Italy, of protecting themselves by forming merchant guilds, a privilege which was usually included in the charter granted to the town. Members of a merchant guild had many privileges, so entry was made difficult and members had to obey strict rules. Such a guild controlled all town trading, prevented unfair dealing, and inflicted heavy fines on any merchant who used false weights or measures. Even hours of trade were rigidly controlled. To balance these restrictions, which the members really imposed on themselves, members had the advantage of escaping the heavy dues which non-members had to pay, and during sickness they and their families were cared for by the guild as a whole.

Soon the guilds became very influential and were the actual rulers of the towns. They met regularly *in* the guild

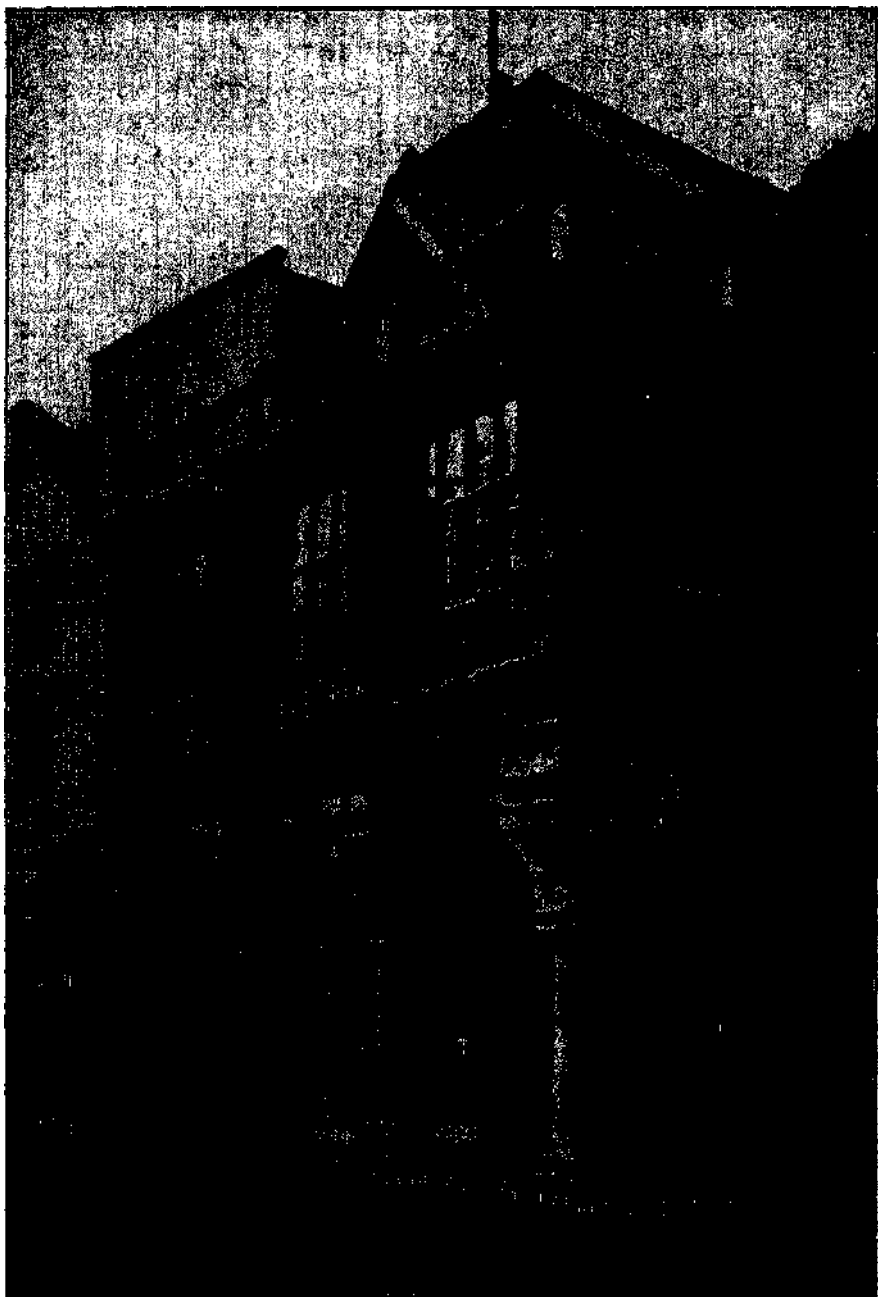


Fig. 104.—The Gild Hall at Exeter.

[Walter Scott, Bradford]

hall (there is a magnificent one still in existence in Exeter), and there the merchants solemnly passed their resolutions and their judgments.

At first the craftsmen, the artisans, had no recognised social importance; they were just the workers, and bore a similar relation to the wealthy merchants as did the peasants to the wealthy landowners. But, as specialisation increased, and as a higher degree of skill was demanded in the manufacture of better and of more beautiful goods, the value of skilled craftsmen increased. To protect themselves they followed the example of the merchants and began to form guilds of their own. There were three craft guilds in England in the twelfth century, at London, Lincoln, and Oxford, and soon there were hundreds of them. By the end of the thirteenth century every important trade had a craft guild in every town where that particular trade was represented.

Craft guilds looked after the interests of their members as the merchant guilds had done, but their chief importance lay in their insistence on sound workmanship, reasonable wages, and fair prices. There was no profiteering under the guild system, no mass production, no haste. Instead there was pride in the production of good and beautiful work, and the artisan grew into the artist.

Before a craftsman could become a master worker he had to work from five to seven years as an apprentice or learner. During this time he lived with the master, received a small wage, and was regarded as a member of the household. After the apprenticeship was over, the worthy learner became a "fellow craftsman," and on the presentation of an approved "master-piece" he was made a "master craftsman." There were all sorts of elaborate ceremonies to preserve the secrets of the craft and to exclude unworthy persons. In some crafts, as that of masonry, a mark was placed on finished work by the fellow craftsmen, so that their work could be recognised, and either approved or condemned. The word "holiday" reminds us of the influence of the mediaeval

Church, for it was on all Holy days that work ceased and that the apprentices were free.

These changes weakened feudal society not only because they created a wealthy and independent commercial class which was non-feudal, but also because they directly altered the lives of barons themselves. As the world trade increased, bringing greater luxury into European life, barons ceased to take such pleasure in fighting. The clothing brought from the East was more comfortable than armour, and to feast in comfort at tables on which there were Indian spices and choice wines from France or Spain was infinitely better than to snatch a hasty meal on the battlefield. Royal service became increasingly irksome, and barons began to offer money instead of service. This "commutation of service," as it was called, is really just what the merchants of the towns had done when they bought their independence.

All these luxuries could not be bought in the markets and shops of the towns. In the Middle Ages travel and transport were slow and dangerous, and it was usually only once a year that the great time came when the merchants from distant lands gathered together to sell what they had brought of the world's produce and of man's skilled production. They met at the great fairs, which were the outstanding events of the Middle Ages.

For days before there was great activity when stalls, booths, and tents were being erected on the fair-ground. From all directions people were coming along the dusty roads or the grass-grown tracks. There were pedlars carrying their packs, merchants with packhorses or great lumbering wagons. Not only were there sellers and buyers, but all who were going for the fun of the fair. There were minstrels, maypole and morris dancers, puppet shows like the Punch and Judy show which has survived, jugglers and tumblers, wrestlers, clowns and acrobats, and men with dancing bears. All the nearby villages and towns were strangely quiet, for no one was allowed to sell in the towns when the fair was in progress.

The saints' names attached to many of the old fairs, such as St. Giles's Fair at Winchester, or St. Bartholomew's Fair at Smithfield, London, remind us of the Church's control over them. Permission to hold a fair was usually given to a bishop, who made a great deal of money from the tolls, dues, and other charges exacted from the merchants. No selling could begin until the bishop's officer had tested the weights and measures and the Fig. 106.—Going to the Fair. quality of the goods. As soon as everything was ready and approved a trumpet was sounded and the noise began.



In some parts of the ground groups of merchants would be selling to bailiffs and seneschals large quantities of goods which would have to last for a year. There would be expensive luxuries from distant lands, damasks and tapestries, ivory and fine metalwork, spices and wines ; there would be, too, the bigger necessities, such as ploughs and horses. Herbs, powders, pills, and ointments would be on sale ; salted fish, timber, furs, and amber would be offered by Hanseatic merchants. Craftsmen would be buying raw material and selling the products of their skill and labour. Much local and cheaper produce would change hands: leather and skin goods, coarser cloths, honey, beer, and the cruder wines, rushes, fruit, eggs, and meat.



Disputes were bound to arise, and there were sure to be some merchants who would try to gain an unfair profit by some means or another. To avoid waste of time a special court was held on the fair-ground, called the Court of Pie

Fig. 107.—Going to the Fair. ground, called the Court of Pie

Powder. The name is a mispronunciation of *pieds poudres*, which is the French for "dusty feet." It is easy to guess why this curious phrase was applied to the travellers of those days.

Fairs like this were held all over Europe. The earliest to be opened in England was St. Giles's Fair at Winchester, begun in the reign of William the Conqueror and extended from one to sixteen days by Henry II. One of the best-known English fairs was that of Stourbridge, held in a corn-field on the banks of the Cam near Cambridge. It lasted throughout the month of September and was attended by merchants from all over Europe. Other well-known English fairs were St. Bartholomew's Fair at Smithfield, London, and those at Bristol, Exeter, Ipswich, Northampton, Nottingham, Devizes, Market Harborough, and Bromsgrove.

Novgorod, the depot for the Russian trade of the Hanseatic League, did not itself hold a fair until more recent times, but remained for hundreds of years a town of wooden sheds, warehouses, and offices where merchants bought and sold without the accompanying merriment of fair-land.

For the same reasons that controlled the trade routes, most of the European fairs were held at towns on rivers. There was one at Pesth, on the Danube. At Frankfurt-on-the-Oder three fairs were held annually, and two were held each year at Frankfurt-on-the-Main. Sixteen miles south-east from the Hanseatic city of Magdeburg, the River Elbe is joined by the Saale. Between the two rivers grew Leipzig, itself on the Saale's tributary called the Elster, and in the twelfth century two annual fairs were permitted there. Its central position made Leipzig a convenient meeting-place for all classes of merchants, and its fairs became amongst the most famous in Europe. There were many French fairs, but one of the greatest was that held at Beaucaire on the Rhone. As it was near the Gulf of Lyons, where another fair was held, Beaucaire was used chiefly for the exchange of products brought by Venetian and Genoese traders and French

produce. On the Seine the Archbishop of Rouen held a fair; the Archbishop of Bordeaux held one at the mouth of the Garonne. In Italy the port of Sinigaglia, at the mouth of the Misa, also had its fair.

Clearly feudal Europe was rapidly disappearing. Merchants, towns, and barons had bought or seized independence, and the castles of the feudal nobility were changing from fortresses into luxurious homes. The independence of the peasant workers was not to be won so easily.

An important point about the nature of the goods imported into Europe was that they were mainly luxuries. A merchant could buy these by using the profits he made from the service of exchanging the goods, but a feudal prince of any kind had only two main sources of revenue from which he could buy the luxuries he desired. One source was the money obtained from fines, feudal dues, duties levied on merchants or from loans. This was equally true whether the feudal prince was a king, duke, bishop, or ordinary baron, and these sources were rarely sufficient. The second source was from the sale of surplus produce from the baronial estates, and to develop this source a baron had to become a producer and a merchant. It meant, too, that the peasant no longer had to produce merely in order to supply the necessities of the little community in which he lived; he had, instead, to produce a surplus for sale. In England he had to produce a surplus especially of wool and hides.

As villages grew into towns a greater proportion of men became craftsmen, and therefore a smaller proportion was available for farming. Just as the barons had commuted their service for a money payment, and just as the towns had bought their independence, so a monetary value began to be placed on labour. A labourer who works for a wage is altogether different from a feudal peasant, bound to the soil, and toiling only for the community of which he is a member. At first sight it would seem that the peasant had purchased freedom and independence just as the baron had done, for

a paid servant is no longer bound to one place or one lord; he can move about, wherever he wishes, and sell his service. But this is not true in fact.

In the first place, such a worker had not *bought* anything; on the contrary, he had begun to *sell* his service and his work, and in future he had to keep on selling them in order to keep on living. A paid labourer had no longer the protection of a lord, nor could he rely again on a share of the produce of his labour. In future he had to buy all that he needed. He had, therefore, become dependent on his ability to keep on finding work. This was a far greater revolution than it appeared, for it meant that, in future, leisure was not necessarily something to be desired; it had turned to "unemployment," which was something that man has since tried to "cure" !

In the fourteenth century the usual state of warfare between England and France became more serious, mainly because the French wanted Flanders, which was the biggest market for English wool. Edward III of England (1327-1377) actually claimed the French throne and began a period of fighting called "The Hundred Years' War." It was not continuous warfare, but a series of invasions of France by English troops. Edward III's son, the Black Prince, won the famous battle of Crecy in 1346, and Edward III, in 1347, captured the valuable port of Calais, which remained an English possession and a depot for the sale of wool for over two hundred years. In the following year, 1348, a great plague known as the Black Death reached England.

The Black Death is supposed to have broken out in China, and it certainly swept over Europe from east to west. It is more than likely that many of the soldiers returning from France were infected, and it is certain that its rapid development was assisted by the filthy condition of the towns. There was, for hundreds of years, no effective sanitation in European towns and there was no regular supply of good clean water. Over a third of the population of England died from the Black Death.