Saint Louis (Louis IX. of France) : the most Christian king

by
Perry, Frederick, 1873-

Originally published in 1901, c1900 by:
New York ; London : G. P. Putnam's

Setup for printing by PublicDomainReprints.org
from a scanned version obtained from an online digital archive

2009
This book was setup for printing by:

Public Domain Archive and Reprints Service (PublicDomainReprints.org)
Email: reprints@publicdomainreprints.org
Website: www.publicdomainreprints.org

This is an experimental project dedicated to archiving and reprinting public domain works. This service can take a book from any of the supported sites and reprint it. We are not affiliated with any digital archive unless otherwise noted.

Please be aware that some of the originating archives add restrictions to some books on commercial use, or any use other than personal or research use. Please contact us or the originating archive for further information if such use is contemplated. We would also appreciate if the watermarks or any other information placed within the book by the original archive are kept intact.

To the best of our knowledge, this book is in public domain. For more information, please see:

http://creativecommons.org/licenses/publicdomain/

More information about this book and a colophon is available at the end of the book.

List Price: $21.99 USA

Title ID: 1464 - Edition ID: 1459 - Request ID: 1630
This title was processed on: 2009-09-07T17:23:37-04:00
SAINT LOUIS
SAINT LOUIS.
FROM A PAINTING BY GIOVanni AT FLORENCE.
SAINT LOUIS

(LOUIS IX. OF FRANCE)

THE MOST CHRISTIAN KING

BY

FREDERICK PERRY, M.A.

FELLOW OF ALL SOULS' COLLEGE, OXFORD

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK LONDON
27 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET 24 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND

The Knickerbocker Press

1901
CONTENTS

CHAPTER I
THE KINGDOM OF FRANCE BEFORE THE ACCESSION
  OF LOUIS IX. ..... 1

CHAPTER II
THE MINORITY; AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE
  MAGNATES, 1226–1231 ..... 21

CHAPTER III
THE PERIOD OF PEACE, 1231–1236 ..... 55

CHAPTER IV
THE PERIOD OF PEACE (Continued), 1236–1241 ..... 81

CHAPTER V
THE ENGLISH WAR, 1241–1243 ..... 105

CHAPTER VI
PRELIMINARIES OF THE CRUSADE, 1243–1248 ..... 127

CHAPTER VII
THE CRUSADE IN EGYPT, 1248–1250 ..... 159

CHAPTER VIII
THE SOJOURN IN PALESTINE, 1250–1254 ..... 196

Digitized by Microsoft®
Contents

CHAPTER IX
FOREIGN POLICY, 1254–1270 . . . . 229

CHAPTER X
INTERNAL AFFAIRS, 1254–1270 . . . . 246

CHAPTER XI
PERSONAL LIFE, 1254–1270 . . . . 266

CHAPTER XII
SECOND CRUSADE AND DEATH OF LOUIS, 1270 . 284
ILLUSTRATIONS.

1 SAINT LOUIS . . . . Frontispiece 1
[From a painting by Giotto at Florence.]

MAP OF FRANCE . . . . . . . . . . 1
[From Lonyon's Atlas Historique de la France.]

2 SEAL OF ROBERT, COUNT OF DREUX . . . . 24

3 GREGORY IX. . . . . . . . . . . 30
[From a painting in the Basilica of St. Paul's, Rome.]

4 CASTLE OF COUCY, IN THE TIME OF SAINT LOUIS 44
[From a drawing by M. Viollet-le-Duc.]

5 FIGURE ON TOMB OF PETER MAUCLERC, COUNT OF BRITTANY . . . . . 50

6 SEAL OF THE MONASTERY OF SAINT LOUIS OF POISSY . . . . . . . . . . 56

7 SIGNET RING OF SAINT LOUIS . . . . . 56

8 GOLD FLORIN OF SAINT LOUIS . . . . . 56

1 From Wallon's Saint Louis, Alfred Mame et Fils.
2 From La Croix's Science and Literature of the Middle Ages, Virtue & Co.
3 From Le Moyne de la Borderie's Histoire de Bretagne.
4 From La Croix's Military and Religious Life, Virtue & Co.
5 From De Witt's Saint Louis et les Croisades, Hachette & Co.
6 From La Croix's Manners and Customs of the Middle Ages, Virtue & Co.
Illustrations.

THE LAST JUDGMENT . . . . . 58
[Miniature from the Psalter of Saint Louis.]

SEAL OF SAINT LOUIS . . . . . 82

CHRIST THE JUDGE OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD 90
[Miniature from the Psalter of Saint Louis.]

RELIQUARY OF THE TRUE CROSS . . . 102
[Known as the Reliquary of Baldwin.]

SEAL OF FERRAND, COUNT OF FLANDERS . . 124

SEAL OF SAINT LOUIS . . . . . 124

INNOCENT IV. . . . . . . . . . 130
[From a painting in the Basilica of St. Paul's, Rome.]

SAINT LOUIS PRAYING BEFORE A SHRINE . . 134
[From a bas-relief of the thirteenth century in the cathedral of Notre Dame.]

THE PALACE AND THE SAINTE CHAPELLE IN PARIS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY . . 150

GOLD CLASP OF SAINT LOUIS . . . . 156

DEPARTURE OF SAINT LOUIS FOR THE CRUSADE. 162

CAPTURE OF DAMIETTA . . . . . 168

PLAN OF MANSOURAH . . . . . 178

ENVOYS OF THE SULTAN DISCUSSING TERMS OF RANSOM WITH CHRISTIAN CAPTIVES . . 188
[From the Credo of Joinville.]

1 From Wallon's Saint Louis, Alfred Mame et Fils.
2 From La Croix's Science and Literature of the Middle Ages, Virtue & Co.
3 From La Croix's Military and Religious Life, Virtue & Co.
4 From De Witt's Saint Louis et les Croisades, Hachette & Co.
5 From La Croix's Manners and Customs of the Middle Ages, Virtue & Co.
Illustrations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Coffre de Saint Louis</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Femmes et enfants sarrazins sauvés par ordre de Saint Louis</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 La mort de la Vierge</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Chambre de Saint Louis</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Saint Louis et son confesseur</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Saint Louis recevant le sacrement</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Proches des garçons tués demandant justice au roi</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Saint Louis ministre des pauvres</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Saint Louis nourrissant un lépreux</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Saint Louis soumis à la flagellation</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Saint Louis lisant les Écritures</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Saint Louis en prière</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Mort de Saint Louis</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Malades et infirmes devant une image de Saint Louis, implorant sa médiation</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 From Wallon’s *Saint Louis, Alfred Mame et Fils*.

8 From De Witt’s *Saint Louis et les Croisades*, Hachette & Co.

9 From Joinville’s *Histoire de Saint Louis*, Firmin, Didot et Cie.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHIELDS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE KING OF FRANCE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE KING OF CASTILE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PETER, COUNT OF BRITTANY</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE COUNT OF TOULOUSE</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE COUNT OF CHAMPAGNE</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE COUNT OF PROVENCE</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HENRY, COUNT OF BAR</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMAURY DE MONTFORT</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE KING OF ENGLAND</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUGH, COUNT OF LA MARCHE</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE EMPEROR</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HENRY, LANDGRAVE OF THURINGIA</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBERT, COUNT OF ARTOIS</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILLIAM LONGSWORD</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE TEMPLE</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANFRED, KING OF SICILY</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUGH, DUKE OF BURGUNDY</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE COUNT OF FLANDERS</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGUERRAND OF COUCY</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEOBALD, KING OF NAVARRE</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN OF JOINVILLE</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHARLES, KING OF SICILY</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATTHEW OF MONTMORENCY</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and so gained over France the sole monarchy of Charlemagne. They were masters of their own immediate subjects by the middle of the twelfth century, chiefly owing to the vigorous and warlike rule of Louis VI. In the course of the next hundred and fifty years they vindicated their authority over the whole kingdom. Part of the vassal territories they took for their own, dispossessing the original rulers. Part remained under their native princes, who were no longer able, as formerly, to defy the King's pretensions and treat with him from an equal or better footing. He became their superior in strength as well as in title; his royal prerogative, which long had lain asleep and almost forgotten, was revived and enforced; and when they opposed him it was rather in the character of overgrown subjects than of independent sovereigns.

The period of expansion spreads through three successive reigns; not that it absolutely began, as it did not end with them. But the previous kings were too feebly seated in the dominions they had, to be very active in increasing them; and those that followed were already great and mighty monarchs, and the acquisitions they made were easy compared to the first; for they gathered up, by their own weight and force, the scattered fragments that lay round, as great bodies attract small. Earlier, however, the mass was still broken and dismembered, with no portion much preponderant over the other; and it was, as has been said, the policy and fortune of three reigns which drew the parts into a whole, and made France united and a nation.
Before proceeding with this subject it will be convenient to mention the chief of the vassal provinces which the realm contained. In the north was the county of Flanders, where the towns were already populous and rich with manufactures and commerce; and for that reason turbulent towards their rulers. The old dynasty of Counts, which had been closely allied with the French Kings, failed early in the twelfth century; and their successors inclined to lean upon the patronage and support of England. In the west the duchy of Brittany, of which the inhabitants, by the peculiar manners and institutions belonging to their Celtic race, and the savageness of their nature, which corresponded to the region, were, more than any other province, isolated and alien from their neighbours. To the north-east of Brittany lay the duchy of Normandy, occupied by an industrious people and a fierce and intelligent nobility. Below it the Counts of Anjou, who were constantly embroiled with the Norman princes, disputing against them possession of the province of Maine which separated their borders. South of the Loire the Dukes of Aquitaine ruled as far as the Pyrenees, and were raised to the station of great sovereigns by the extent of their dominions, the numbers and valour of their subjects, and the maritime commerce which flourished along their coasts. But the free and martial spirit of their vassals, especially in Gascony, while it secured them against subjugation from outside, was a frequent source of domestic disturbance.

South-east of Aquitaine was the rich country of
The Kingdom of France

Languedoc, where the Counts of Toulouse were supreme. In this province the Romans in their conquest and occupation of Gaul had taken deeper root. The traditions if not the institutions of their government had survived; and, at the period spoken of, the luxurious and comfortable life of the inhabitants, their manners, more civilised than in the north, and the greater freedom, activity, and self-esteem of the trading and industrial class of people, might recall the ages before the barbaric invasion, when Western Europe still rested in the shadow of a peaceful and well-ordered empire. On the farther bank of the Rhone, the country of Provence, resembling Languedoc in its conditions, customs, and the character of its inhabitants, Dauphiny, and the county of Burgundy, which to-day are an integral part of France, though occupied then by men of kindred race and language, were still in the thirteenth century dependencies of the Emperor.

The bounds of France, as it then was, included the duchy of Burgundy. The rulers of this territory were not formidable or important, being distracted by quarrels with their own subjects, especially the prelates, whose power and possessions were greater there than in any other part of the realm. Next came the domain of the family styling itself Counts of Champagne. They had inherited or acquired the five counties of Chartres, Blois, Sancerre, Champagne, and Brie, which lay like a chain round the east, south, and west of the royal patrimony. Touching Burgundy on the south and Vermandois

Digitized by Microsoft®
on the north, they completed the circle of principalities by which the King was surrounded.

In the latter half of the eleventh century the Duke of Normandy, whose ancestors had been since their settlement the strongest princes of the north, and had least regarded the authority of the Capetians, invaded and conquered England. This event changed the balance of power in France. The acquisition of a kingdom separated by the sea raised the Norman Dukes to a titular level with their suzerain, of whom they became wholly independent in respect of their new possessions. From this time their dealings began to be on a fresh footing, and the French Kings profited by the change. For although their adversary vastly increased his territories and military resources, the centre of his interests was removed from France, his aims and position were dissevered from those of the other great vassals; and Normandy, having become an outlying and in some sort dependent province of England, was by degrees less able or anxious to resist absorption than when it stood alone and maintained itself a separate and almost sovereign state. Ninety years after the conquest of England the Norman House was merged by marriage in that of Anjou; and acquired by a further marriage the inheritance of Aquitaine. The English King was then the greatest potentate in France both north and south of the Loire. But the very extent and diversity of his dominions made him too weak to overwhelm and swallow up his brother at Paris. The difference of customs and manners, language
The Kingdom of France

and interests which prevailed between England and Normandy and Anjou and Aquitaine; the distance which divided them; and their mutual jealousy, inflamed by desire of independence, fed a constant stream of troubles for their common master, who held them as several realms, not as one, on different conditions and by various titles.

Henry II. of England, who first united these territorics, was a man of conspicuous energy and prudence both in peace and war. He was able to keep together the provinces of his Crown; and even to add the county of Berry and the district of Vexin, and to establish his suzerainty over Brittany. But he never got the upper hand, decisively or for long, over the French King, who watched him like a jealous enemy, and did not fail to use the many opportunities of annoyance and attack which were opened by Henry’s dissensions with the Church, with his subjects, and with his own family. He was generally leagued with one or other of the English princes, who led the continental provinces in rebellion against their father, and accustomed them thus to look to France, not England, as their natural suzerain and ally. In this way Louis VII. harassed and kept at bay, though he could not seriously cripple, the power of the House of Plantagenet. His successor, Philip Augustus, achieved more. With his reign the tide of fortune turned to the flow, carrying the Capetian monarchy, which hitherto had only maintained itself in its original bounds, towards the destined limits of aggrandisement.

By marriage with the niece of the childless Count
of Flanders, and by a successful war against her uncle, Philip obtained the possession or reversion of Artois and Vermandois. The English King, at peace with France for the moment, kept himself benevolently neutral in this dispute, and helped to arrange the terms of settlement. But the quarrel of the two Houses was kept alive by conflicting interests and soon broke out again openly. It was suspended however for a time by the death of Henry and by the third crusade.

Philip entered upon that undertaking less from inclination than in obedience to the common sentiment of Christendom, which demanded imperiously that an effort should be made to stem the sudden flood of Infidel victory, and to restore the kingdom of Jerusalem from its recent ruin. Nor did he wait for its conclusion to resume his attacks upon the great enemy of the French Crown, in which he was assisted by the dissensions which continued to prevail in the family of his rivals. He opposed John Plantagenet to Richard; and after Richard’s death, upheld against John the legitimate claim of his nephew Arthur; but finding no prospect of immediate success, and exhausted by the war, he made peace in the year 1200, and cemented it by marrying his eldest son Louis with Blanche, John’s niece, daughter of the King of Castile.

His opportunity came two years later, when John, who perhaps more than any other prince indulged his private passions to the detriment of his Crown, enragèd the Count of La Marche, his greatest vassal in Poitou, whose betrothed wife he took
for himself; and earned the hatred of the Bretons and the reprobation of all men by the murder of Arthur. This time the fortune of arms was not doubtful. Normandy was overrun and submitted almost willingly; for the attachment of both people and barons to their ancient dynasty was much diminished by long absence of the sovereign in a foreign kingdom, and by the stricter rule and heavy exactions which lately had begun to be introduced. Philip confirmed his conquest by leniency of treatment and by preserving the privileges of the vanquished. The English King, detested by many of his subjects and sunk in long torpor of sloth and sensuality, not only failed to recover his losses, but endured in the following years the defection of other provinces, Maine and Anjou and Touraine and Poitou, which passed into the power of his enemy. He was deprived of his fiefs by a solemn judgment of the peers of France, and reduced to make a truce, under which he abandoned everything north of the Loire, and a great part of Poitou besides.

Philip was left with his dominions doubled in extent and seven years of peace in which to establish and strengthen his authority. By that time he was ready to take the offensive again. The occasion was offered by the policy of the Apostolic See, which divided Western Christendom into two factions. On the one side Pope Innocent III., pursuing his inevitable feud against the Emperor, set up as a rival to Otho of Brunswick the young Frederick of Sicily, heir of the Imperial House of Hohenstaufen. The French King supported this party. On the
other side the Emperor Otto was backed by John of England, who was his uncle. The Pope had his own quarrel with John, springing from ecclesiastical affairs in England; and, affecting to depose him from his kingdom, offered it to Philip, who welcomed the enterprise. It was not undertaken, for the Pope withdrew his sanction when John submitted at the threat; but Philip turned his arms against the Counts of Flanders and Boulogne, who having reason before to complain of his encroachment had revealed themselves in this juncture the allies of his enemies. Their friends did not desert them; a coalition was formed which hoped to destroy the French King and to split his swollen monarchy into fragments. But the fortune of battle was otherwise. The confederated army was beaten at Bouvines. Otho fled wounded and broken from the field; Ferrand of Flanders and Reginald of Boulogne were taken prisoners. Meanwhile Prince Louis drove the King of England shamefully from Poitou; Flanders became submissive: and the growing kingdom was strengthened and consolidated by the victorious war.

A year later the intolerable disorders of England and the failure of their rebellion led the barons of that country to offer its crown to Louis in right of his wife. His expedition, at first successful, was afterwards defeated and forced to return, as John's death removed the cause of English discord, and the temper of the nation revolted against invasion and conquest by a foreign prince. Philip had not assisted and barely refrained

Digitized by Microsoft®
The Kingdom of France 11

from forbidding his son's attempt; whether that from policy he was unwilling to be entangled in an undertaking beyond his strength, and dangerous, perhaps, if it failed, to the security of acquisitions already won, or that he feared the enmity of the Pope, who took John under his protection, forbade him to be attacked, and excommunicated Louis for persisting. But the Princess Blanche, who is said to have urged her husband to accept the offer, was allowed to raise men and money for his succour; in this work she showed herself active and able, and equipped a considerable convoy, which, however, was met and destroyed at sea by an English fleet.

While the King was extending his power in Northern France, Languedoc was afflicted with the most terrible disorder and calamity, which turned, not by design, but by the course of events, to the profit of the monarchy. The evil began by the growth in those parts of the Albigensian heresy. It is difficult and perhaps not necessary to define the exact tenets of the superstition, which indeed took various forms. It appears to have been, in the main, a revival of the Manichean belief which held that the universe was governed by two Powers—one good, one evil. The principles and dogmas of this creed, mixed with heathen philosophy and Eastern mysticism, were repugnant to the settled faith of the Christian world; and its practical results emphasised the difference and increased the hostility of the orthodox. Such error could have taken no root in other parts of Western Europe, where life was rude and simple, speculation confined, and

Digitized by Microsoft®
religion led men to observance of worship, pious works, and absolute faith in the doctrines of the Church, rather than to subtle questioning and extravagant ideas. But the people of South-eastern France, as has been remarked, were on a different level of civilisation: more rich, luxurious, and leisured, and they ran mad after a teaching which was not only odious but incomprehensible to their northern neighbours. Their intelligence was captivated by its ingenuity; their feeling touched by its mysticism; and the asceticism and purity enjoined on its votaries, though practised by few, attracted the more serious spirits among a population of easy and licentious livers, who had fallen away from primitive belief.

The spread of heresy soon roused notice and alarm in other countries, and especially at Rome; for the Church was both shocked in its convictions and attacked in its interests. The new sect was said to proclaim that Jehovah was Satan, and most of the Old Testament his work; that Moses and John the Baptist were devils. At the same time they pronounced the existing Church to be a creation of the Evil Power; and pointed at the vices of the clergy, who in Languedoc shared the prevailing looseness of manners. Bishops and abbots were driven from their sees and possessions, and the whole order fell into contempt and disrepute. The schism was strongest in the towns; but a great part of the nobility of the province became perverts, and took the occasion to seize ecclesiastical lands. The high magnates, the Count of Toulouse, the Viscount

*Digitized by Microsoft®*
of Béziers, and the Count of Foix, adhered openly to the heretics, or favoured them secretly.

The Pope thundered against the error, and sent missionaries to reclaim the strayed. They corrected in some degree the disorders of the clergy of the region; but preached for ten years without effect, though reinforced by the burning zeal of Saint Dominic. Their hearers were averse and scornful; while the enthusiasm which always lies hid in the heart of any people, however incredulous, was already possessed by the heretics. The only result of the mission was to embitter and enrage both sides, as the monks upbraided and threatened the sectaries, and were in turn scoffed at and ill-treated. At last Péter of Castelnau, one of the legates, who had denounced Count Raymond of Toulouse by name, was murdered at Saint Gilles by a knight of the Count's. The others fled; and Innocent, angry beyond measure, ordered a crusade to extirpate heresy and to dispossess Raymond. The summons carried with it indulgences and all the benefits which the Church could offer to the servants of the Faith; and was well answered by the barons of France. The King refused to take part, alleging that two great enemies—the Emperor and the King of England—lay in wait against him and required his whole strength. A vast army following the cross invaded Languedoc. The Count of Toulouse was terrified, submitted, and joined in destroying the Viscount of Béziers, his own nephew and ally. The papal Legate offered the territories of Béziers to the Duke of Burgundy, and then to other magnates

Digitized by Microsoft®
who were in the crusade; and when they declined, to Simon of Montfort the elder, who accepted the gift and the task of suppressing schism: the others returned home.

Raymond of Toulouse found himself subjected to conditions of peace too hard to bear; and became in his turn the mark of the crusade, which Simon of Montfort carried on, aided by the levies of the Church and by private adventurers. The war was bloody and devastating and pursued to extirpation with a cruelty beyond the custom of the age. The invaders fought as against infidels instead of fellow-Christians, and showed no mercy in battle or after it. Montfort's military skill and fierce enthusiasm sustained him against the greater numbers of the enemy; who, besides the multitude of his subjects, obtained the help of Gascony and Aragon. For the struggle had changed from a religious to a political one with Montfort's endeavour to establish himself in Languedoc; and neither the King of Aragon nor the King of England wished the Count of Toulouse to be crushed to the profit of France and the Pope.

But the combined forces were defeated at Muret; and the Councils of Montpellier * and of the Lateran † declared Raymond deprived of Toulouse and all his possessions west of the Rhone, which were assigned to Montfort and his heirs.

The crusaders had conquered but could not hold Languedoc. After a short time the whole country

---

* January, A.D. 1215.
† The fourth of the Lateran, November, A.D. 1215.
rose against them. Montfort was hard pressed in the field, but nevertheless maintained a siege of the city of Toulouse for nine months, when his head was split by a stone from a catapult. His eldest son, Amaury, inherited his claims but not his war-like genius. He was beaten and repulsed everywhere, his garrisons driven out, and the Counts of Toulouse regained their own. Amaury solicited help from the King, and his prayers were supported by the pressing mandate of Pope Honorius.*

Philip had hitherto declined to meddle in the affairs of Languedoc or actively to assist the crusaders. He had complied, however, with the papal injunction and his own interests so far as to be benevolent to their enterprise. After Muret he had sent his son to the south with an army, which finding no present need of its services returned quickly; and he had accepted the homage of Simon of Montfort for the conquered territories. Now he was less occupied with other dangers, and not unwilling to sustain his vassal and prove his obedience and devotion to the Church. Louis was despatched again and had some successes; but, failing to take Toulouse in face of the obstinate defence of the citizens, he retired, having accomplished the forty days of service which earned the indulgences promised to the crusade. Amaury got no more aid, and lost the whole province with the exception of a few strong places. It seems that the King, advanced in age and failing in health, shrank from a new and arduous task; or perhaps he considered the fruit not

* Honorius III., who succeeded Innocent III. in A.D. 1216.
yet ripe. At any rate he refused the cession, which Amaury offered in his straits, of all the territories which the two Councils had bestowed on the House of Montfort.

Philip Augustus died in 1223, leaving an immense treasure and a Crown marvellously increased in strength and reputation over that which he had received. His son Louis, eighth of the name, succeeded him without trouble or opposition, being the first prince of the Capetian House who had not been solemnly crowned and associated in the kingdom during his father's lifetime. He was already in the prime of his years, an approved soldier and zealous churchman, of a bold and upright character, ambitious of power, but inferior to Philip in prudence and politic genius. He was willing to suppress the southern heresy which had sprung into new vigour with the expulsion of the invaders; and accepted Amaury's cession, subject to the Pope's confirmation. But Honorius at this moment had changed his views, and was more anxious to promote the crusade of Palestine which the Emperor Frederick was undertaking. He discouraged therefore any renewal of the attack on Toulouse; and the King, though reluctant, obeyed.

The Pope's exhortations to peace with England were less favourably heard. Louis not only rejected the demand for the restoration of Normandy which Henry III. put forward, alleging a stipulation of the treaty which closed the late unfortunate invasion; but, the existing truce having expired, he
The Kingdom of France

prepared to complete the conquest of Poitou. With a great army, which was joined by many magnates of France, he entered that province, captured the strong town of Rochelle, and continued as far as the river Garonne a march which resembled a triumphal progress rather than a campaign. The Count of La Marche came over to his side, and the whole country yielded almost without resistance, having small affection for the English suzerain, who, distracted by quarrels with his baronage, seemed to have abandoned Aquitaine to its fate. An expedition which crossed in the following year recovered little of what had been lost.

Meanwhile the Emperor had deferred his crusade; and the Pope reverted to the affairs of Languedoc. He sent a Legate into France to procure a suspension of hostilities against the English, and to arrange for the destruction of the heretics. A council of French prelates convoked at Bourges refused to be satisfied with the assurances of Raymond of Toulouse, son of the Count whom Montfort had dispossessed. The final decision was referred to the Pope; who through the mouth of the Legate, in an assembly of barons and bishops at Paris, excommunicated Raymond and his adherents, and called on the King to take possession of the fiefs renounced by Amaury of Montfort. The papal mandate, the urgent entreaties of the prelates, who declared that he alone could accomplish the business, and his own inclination, led Louis to consent. The crusade was preached zealously throughout France, and was

Digitized by Microsoft®
undertaken by a vast multitude of all ranks. The clergy contributed a tenth of its revenues to the war. The King of England was threatened with excommunication if he troubled France; the King of Aragon forbidden, under the same penalty, to assist the Count of Toulouse.

The rendezvous of the crusaders was fixed at Bourges, a month after Easter, 1226. They amounted, it is said, to fifty thousand horse. The King, leaving Queen Blanche at Paris to govern in his absence, led them to Lyons and down the valley of the Rhone, finding no opposition till he came to Avignon. The heretics were strong in that rich and fortified city; and either through hostility or fear passage was denied to the royal army. Louis laid siege with all his forces. The defence was vigorous and prolonged, for the town was well furnished with men and machines of war. The besiegers lost great numbers in assaults and through sorties, and were distressed by the summer heats and the plague which followed, and by failure of food and forage, as the Count of Toulouse had wasted the surrounding country. At the end of forty days Count Theobald of Champagne, declaring that he had fulfilled the period of service to which he was bound by feudal law, withdrew from the camp. His defection was suspected to be arranged with other of the magnates, who saw their forces being exhausted for the aggrandisement of royal power. Nevertheless the King persisted in the siege; and after three months the town was brought to capitulate. It received easy terms: a fine, the delivery

*Digitized by Microsoft®*
of hostages, the breach of its walls, and filling up of the moat.

The army, much diminished by its losses and by the return of many of the crusaders, proceeded through Languedoc to within a few miles of Toulouse. There was no resistance anywhere, Count Raymond having gathered his forces within the walls of his capital and left the country unoccupied except by a peaceful population or those who favoured the invader. Louis did not attempt the siege of Toulouse, which he purposed to undertake the next spring, but, leaving his lieutenants behind and garrisons in the strong places, turned to march homewards. At Montpensier in Auvergne he fell sick of dysentery and fever brought on by the unhealthy climate and the hardships of campaigning; after a few days' illness he died on the 8th of November, 1226.

Before his death he called the bishops and barons who were in the army, and requested them to take an oath to be faithful and obedient to his heir, which they did with tears, afterwards confirming their promise by a written deed. He also named the Queen as guardian and regent during the minority.

His body was carried back home and buried in the Church of Saint Denis where the Kings of France have their sepulchre. Contemporary writers praise him as a brave and pious prince, generous of disposition and affable in his manners. He left an infant daughter Isabel, and six sons; of whom Louis, the eldest, the subject of this work, was in his thirteenth year, having been born on Saint Mark's day,
the 25th of April, 1214. The second was Robert, the third John, the fourth Alphonso, the fifth Philip, the sixth Charles. John and Philip died young; the others will be mentioned frequently in the following pages.
CHAPTER II

THE MINORITY; AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST
THE MAGNATES

1226–1231

QUEEN BLANCHE, coming from Paris with her children to join her husband, was met by Bishop Guerin of Senlis with the news of his death. It is said that she displayed the utmost violence of grief, and would have taken her own life had not the frenzy been restrained by her attendants. The tale is not incredible, for it is agreed that the King and Queen, since their marriage in childhood, had cherished a passionate affection for one another. But there was little time to indulge sorrow if the duties of a mother and a guardian were not to be forgotten. It appeared at once that the crown and fortunes of her son were in danger, from which only promptness and vigour and sagacity in counsel and action could save them.

The magnates of France had found their power depressed, as the royal power was exalted, by the policy of Philip Augustus. They nourished their discontent, and were anxious to take the first
occasion for recovering the ground they had lost and for vindicating their old independence. Signs of imminent trouble had appeared in the late reign; the desertion of the Count of Champagne from the army before Avignon, and the secret league which was said to exist between him, the Count of Brittany, and the townspeople. The storm which Louis VIII. did not live to meet gathered quickly round the throne of his successor, as the magnates saw their opportunity in the prospect of a long minority, a weak and troubled government, and a Regent whom they hated as a foreigner and despised as a woman.

Blanche, however, was a woman of masculine and kingly genius, as her enemies recognised afterwards when they called her the new Semiramis. She had the fierce and haughty temper of the blood of Plantagenet which she shared; the intolerance of opposition, the ruthless energy, the caution, prudence, and skill in affairs which marked so many princes of that famous race. She had also the support of a considerable party. The prelates, as a rule, were on her side. The Cardinal-Legate Romano was her firm friend; scandal, in which there appears to have been no truth, asserted that he was her lover. He was of the Frangipani, a noble Roman House, and claimed kinship with the royal family of France. He had been sent into the kingdom, as has been related, to contrive peace with the English and war against the heretics; and had shown himself deserving the reputation which he bore of wisdom, discretion, and ability. Another priest whose counsels
were valuable to the Queen was Guerin, Bishop of Senlis, Chancellor in the late reign and an old adviser of Philip Augustus, who had done good service at the battle of Bouvines. But the misfortune of his death, which happened in the spring of 1227, soon deprived her of his friendship and assistance.

The magnates expected to find a leader in Philip, Count of Boulogne, son of Philip Augustus by a morganatic marriage. He had been married to the daughter of that Count of Boulogne who was taken prisoner at Bouvines and was still in captivity, and had received the possessions of his father-in-law and other lordships in Normandy. This young prince was of a proud and brutal temper which got him the nickname of Hurepel, that is, Roughskin: he was not, however, without generous emotions or loyalty; and though resenting the regency of another, remained at this juncture faithful to the oath which he had sworn at his brother’s death-bed. The Queen encouraged his good disposition by a gift of castles and a pension.

But the chief spirit of the discontented party was Peter, commonly styled the Count of Brittany. He was a cadet of the family of Dreux, a younger branch of Capet; and acquired Brittany, which he now governed as Regent for his son, by a marriage with Alix, half-sister of the unfortunate Arthur. While he fought against the extension of royal authority he encroached unscrupulously upon the rights of his own vassals, and was called Mauclerc because he plagued the clergy. The writers of the
age, who were mostly monks, have given him the worst of characters. They describe him as a hatcher of sedition, full of treasons and stratagems, cruel, faithless, and a pirate. At the same time he was admitted to have an intelligence above the level of his time and to be a brave soldier and skilful commander both on land and sea. His principal ally was Hugh of Lusignan, Count of La Marche, once the lover and now the husband of Isabel, widow of King John of England. He had submitted to Louis VIII. when he overran Poitou, and had made an agreement with him against the English, but was not inclined to become an obedient vassal to France: his wife’s ambition rather than his own incited him to take advantage of the disturbances about to arise.

The last injunctions of Louis VIII. had bound his adherents to see that his son was crowned as soon as possible, that he might receive the homage of his great subjects and be fortified by their oaths of allegiance. No time was lost in carrying out his wishes. The Queen wrote letters to the archbishops, bishops, and magnates of the realm, summoning them to assemble at Rheims for the coronation on the first Sunday in Advent. The communes also of the neighbouring region were summoned to attend; and letters to the same effect were sent out by the prelates and barons who had given their promise to the late King. The replies received were not encouraging. Many of the barons declined to come. Some veiled their disaffection under pretext of the grief they professed to feel at the King’s death; aiming no doubt at the Queen,
whom her enemies already accused of having conspired with the Count of Champagne to poison him; that prince was well known to entertain a romantic attachment to her person, which gave a handle to the lie. A greater number demanded openly that the prisoners whom the King held should be released, especially Ferrand of Flanders and Reginald of Boulogne; that the lands which the last two Kings had taken unjustly, as they said, should be restored; and that the feudal privileges of the barons, which had been impaired, should be re-affirmed to the full.

These refusals did not make the Queen and her counsellors less anxious to hasten the coronation. She carried the King to Rheims, whither repaired a number of prelates and a few magnates; among them the Counts of Boulogne and of Dreux, the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Bar, and Enguerrand of Coucy; also the Countess of Flanders, who was in treaty for the release of her husband, and the Countess dowager of Champagne. The Legate was present; and John, King of Jerusalem, with his Patriarch. Theobald of Champagne was prepared to attend and approached within a few miles with his retinue, a part of which entered the town. But he was in much odium from his desertion at Avignon and the slander of poisoning which had been spread against him, and was moreover disliked by the barons, particularly by the Count of Boulogne, on account of the favour which he showed to the commons in his domain, and the liberal and learned studies which he pursued, preferring them
to the usual occupations of feudal nobility. The Queen, therefore, to avoid offence, sent and forbade him to enter Rheims, and ordered the provost to expel those of his following who were already in the place; and the barons added a message that he should not fortify his towns, or a general attack would be made on him. Receiving this discouragement he retired in great anger.

The young King was crowned on the day fixed, the first Sunday in Advent, by the Bishop of Soissons, the See of Rheims being at the time vacant. In his right hand was placed a royal sceptre, the emblem of protection and government; in his left a wand, signifying mercy, with a hand at the top to typify justice. His head was anointed with sacred oil from the vial kept in the abbey of Saint Remy. It was remarked that he had the blue eyes, the fair complexion, and yellow hair which belonged to the House of Charlemagne, from which he descended through his grandmother, Isabel of Hainault. When the coronation was over the prelates and barons swore fealty and did homage both to the King and to the Regent. The Countesses of Flanders and Champagne each claimed the right of bearing the sword of state in the ceremony; the one in right of her husband, the other of her son. To avoid a decision the office was deputed to the Count of Boulogne.

The next day Blanche returned to Paris with the King. In a few weeks she released Ferrand of Flanders from the prison in which he had lain for twelve years, on terms which, though favourable to

*Digitized by Microsoft®*
the kingdom, were lenient enough to bind the Count to a loyalty which he faithfully preserved. At the same time she set up a further claim on the gratitude of Philip of Boulogne by detaining his father-in-law in captivity, in which he died shortly afterwards. Meanwhile the enemies of the Crown were laying their plans. Even in the last reign Peter of Brittany had been negotiating with the English on his own behalf and that of the Count of La Marche, with the result that Henry III. had agreed to marry his daughter Yolande; to assist his pretensions; to send his brother Richard, who governed Gascony, to help him; and to cross the sea in person when a suitable opportunity occurred. Hugh of La Marche came into the alliance though Blanche made liberal offers; and the Count of Champagne, fresh from the repulse of Rheims, put himself into the hands of the confederates. Their treaties were made before the end of the year; they avowed openly their intention of refusing obedience to the King and began to fortify and provision their castles.

Blanche, acting promptly, gathered at once a considerable army which the Legate joined and the Counts of Boulogne and Dreux, and threatened to fall upon Champagne. Theobald, who had engaged himself in the rebellion from pique, had no stomach for the war and hastened to make overtures of peace which were accepted gladly, and to return to the Queen's presence. Strengthened by his accession, the royal army advanced towards Chinon, ready to turn against Brittany or La Marche or Richard of Cornwall, who having received from England a
reinforcement of Welshmen and a large sum of money had invaded Poitou. A summons was sent to the two Counts to appear before the King in his court of Parliament, or to be declared open traitors and attacked in force. Being thus brought to a point sooner than they expected, they found themselves unprepared to fight, and promised to meet the King at Chinon. That place was reached on the 21st of February, but the rebels neither appeared themselves on the day fixed nor sent their excuses. They received a second summons and again promised to come, and failed again. To preserve the strictest requirement of custom Blanche summoned them a third and last time in the King's name, and at the same time advanced to Loudun. Then, seeing that no further delay could be hoped for, they sent envoys to arrange terms.

The Queen having made a truce with the English returned to Vendôme, whither the Counts repaired on the 16th of March. Policy and necessity alike forbade harsh treatment; they were welcomed back to their allegiance, did homage to the King in the presence of the Legate, and received considerable advantages under a treaty which was cemented by three contracts of marriage: between John, the King's second brother, and Yolande of Brittany; between the Prince Alphonso and the daughter of the Count of La Marche; and between Hugh, the Count's eldest son, and Isabel, the King's sister. All the parties were children at the time, and not one of the marriages was consummated in the event. Meanwhile Peter obtained the enjoyment of Angers
and other towns of Anjou, which province was already marked out as the appanage of Prince John; and promised for his part to make no alliance with England and to give up his daughter to the Count of Boulogne and to his own brothers, Robert of Dreux and Henry, Archbishop of Rheims, to keep her in ward till the Prince should be of marriageable age. Hugh of La Marche got a pension of ten thousand pounds for ten years in satisfaction of his own and his wife’s claims; while the King undertook to make no peace with England without his consent.

The English King, hoping to recover a part at least of his former dominions, sent over the Archbishop of York and others early in the year, to aid the counsels of the rebels and to treat with the barons of Normandy, Anjou, and Poitou. But the envoys found the rebellion already composed, and that the Regent, as the English chronicler complains, “had made herself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.” When they applied to Peter of Brittany to proceed with the business of his daughter’s marriage to their master, he informed them of the agreement just concluded with the King of France, which he refused to break. They then returned, having accomplished nothing; and in July a truce of a year was made between France and England.

The malcontents had been checked by the Queen’s vigour but not reconciled. Indignant at the necessity of submission to a woman they fomented their own anger by spreading abroad calumnies against
her, of which hatred made them credulous. The design of open rebellion had scarcely failed and the treaties of Vendôme been concluded, when a plan was concocted of seizing the King's person as he travelled with his mother from Orleans to Paris. The Count of Champagne sent warning, and the Queen hurried her journey; but reaching Montl'héry, learned that the road was already beset. In these straits she sent messages to the chief citizens of Paris and to all the surrounding country. The neighbouring knights gathered to the city to assist the rescue of the young King; the levy of the Parisians was armed; and they marched together, with banners flying, straight towards Montl'héry. The force of the barons, posted in ambush, was afraid to attack so great a multitude; and Louis passed to his capital along a road lined the whole way with shouting crowds, armed and unarmed, crying on God to give the King long life and save him from his enemies. The sight and sound of a devoted people made so deep an impression on his youthful mind, that to the end of his life he was fond of recalling this scene to memory and of relating it to others.

The confederates, baffled in one plot, concerted another before they dispersed. It was agreed that the Count of Brittany should prepare revolt; and that the rest, being called to attend the royal army against him, should furnish so slender a force that the King would certainly be defeated or captured. They began to doubt, as it seemed, of succeeding except by the help of surprise or treachery. The

Digitized by Microsoft®