

MEDIEVAL AND MODERN TIMES

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF
WESTERN EUROPE FROM THE DISSO-
LUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE
TO THE OPENING OF THE
GREAT WAR OF 1914

BY

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PREFACE

This volume is a very careful and thoroughgoing revision of the author's *Introduction to the History of Western Europe*, which first appeared in 1902. The presentation has been simplified so as to adapt the book especially to use in high schools and preparatory schools, although it can readily be employed in colleges as the basis of an introductory course in general European history, when supplemented by outside reading. The treatment of medieval times, especially of the Church, has been considerably reduced with a view of permitting a more adequate discussion of recent times. This saving of space and other condensations and omissions have made it possible to devote a hundred pages more than in the original edition to the developments of the past hundred years.

The illustrations have been selected with great care from the standpoint of their educational value. The explanatory legend under each of them serves to add much information which it would have been awkward to include in the general narrative. These numerous cuts have inevitably added to the length of the volume, but it should be noted that the narrative itself is somewhat shorter than that in the original edition.

In the revision and expansion of the latter part of the book the author is under great obligations to his friends and colleagues, Professors Charles A. Beard and James T. Shotwell. A great deal of time and thought has been given to the selection of suitable illustrations, and in this Mr. Edward K. Robinson of Boston has given us constant aid and advice.

J. H. R.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. WESTERN EUROPE BEFORE THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS	
1. Prelude	I
2. The Roman Empire and its Government	4
3. The Weaknesses of the Roman Empire	10
4. The Rise of the Christian Church	17
5. The Eastern Empire	20
II. <u>THE GERMAN INVASIONS AND THE BREAK-UP OF THE</u>	
ROMAN EMPIRE	
6. Founding of Kingdoms by Barbarian Chiefs	23
7. Kingdom of the Franks	31
8. Results of the Barbarian Invasions	35
III. <u>THE RISE OF THE</u> PAPACY	
9. The Christian Church	40
10. Origin of the Power of the Popes	46
IV. THE MONKS AND THEIR MISSIONARY WORK; THE	
MOHAMMEDANS	
11. Monks and Monasteries	54
12. Missionary Work of the Monks	61
13. Mohammed and his Religion	64
14. Conquests of the Mohammedans; the Caliphate	70
V. <u>CHARLEMAGNE AND HIS EMPIRE</u>	
15. Conquests of Charlemagne	75
16. Establishment of a Line of Emperors in the West	82
17. How Charlemagne carried on his Government	83
VI. <u>THE AGE OF DISORDER; FEUDALISM</u>	
18. The Disruption of Charlemagne's Empire	87
19. The Medieval Castle	93
20. The Serfs and the Manor	100
21. Feudal System	103
22. Neighborhood Warfare in the Middle Ages	107
VII. ENGLAND IN THE MIDDLE AGES	
23. The Norman Conquest	111
24. Henry II and the Plantagenets	117

25.	The Great Charter and the Beginnings of Parliament	125
26.	Wales and Scotland	128
27.	The Hundred Years' War	132
VIII. POPES AND EMPERORS		
28.	Origin of the Holy Roman Empire	144
29.	The Church and its Property	146
30.	Powers claimed by the Popes	152
31.	Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV	153
32.	The Hohenstaufen Emperors and the Popes	158
IX. THE CRUSADES		
33.	Origin of the Crusades	166
34.	The First Crusade	170
35.	The Religious Orders of the Hospitalers and Templars	174
36.	The Second and Later Crusades	176
37.	Chief Results of the Crusades	178
X. <u>THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH AT ITS HEIGHT</u>		
38.	Organization and Powers of the Church	181
39.	The Heretics and the Inquisition	187
40.	The Franciscans and Dominicans	190
41.	Church and State	195
XI. MEDIEVAL TOWNS—THEIR BUSINESS AND BUILDINGS		
42.	The Towns and Guilds	203
43.	Business in the Later Middle Ages	208
44.	Gothic Architecture	215
45.	The Italian Cities of the Renaissance	222
46.	Early Geographical Discoveries	232
XII. BOOKS AND SCIENCE IN THE MIDDLE AGES		
47.	How the Modern Languages Originated	239
48.	The Troubadours and Chivalry	244
49.	Medieval Science	247
50.	Medieval Universities and Studies	250
51.	Beginnings of Modern Inventions	255
52.	The Art of the Renaissance	264
XIII. EMPEROR CHARLES V AND HIS VAST REALMS		
53.	Emperor Maximilian and the Hapsburg Marriages	268
54.	How Italy became the Battleground of the European Powers	274
55.	Condition of Germany when Charles V became Emperor	280

XIV. MARTIN LUTHER AND THE REVOLT OF GERMANY
AGAINST THE PAPACY

56. The Question of Reforming the Church: Erasmus	284
57. How Martin Luther revolted against the Papacy	288
58. The Diet at Worms, 1520-1521	299
59. The Revolt against the Papacy begins in Germany	302
60. Division of Germany into Catholic and Protestant Countries	306

XV. THE PROTESTANT REVOLT IN SWITZERLAND AND
ENGLAND

61. Zwingli and Calvin	311
62. How England fell away from the Papacy	314
63. England becomes Protestant	320

XVI. THE WARS OF RELIGION

64. The Council of Trent; the Jesuits	325
65. Philip II and the Revolt of the Netherlands	331
66. The Huguenot Wars in France	337
67. England under Queen Elizabeth	345
68. The Thirty Years' War	352
69. The Beginnings of our Scientific Age	358

XVII. STRUGGLE IN ENGLAND BETWEEN KING AND PAR-
LIAMENT

70. James I and the Divine Right of Kings	365
71. How Charles I got along without Parliament	368
72. How Charles I lost his Head	373
73. Oliver Cromwell: England a Commonwealth	376
74. The Restoration	382
75. The Revolution of 1688	384

XVIII. FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XIV

76. Position and Character of Louis XIV	387
77. How Louis encouraged Art and Literature	391
78. Louis XIV attacks his Neighbors	394
79. Louis XIV and his Protestant Subjects	396
80. War of the Spanish Succession	398

XIX. RISE OF RUSSIA AND PRUSSIA; AUSTRIA

81. Beginnings of Russia	402
82. Peter the Great	404

CHAPTER	PAGE
83. Origin of the Kingdom of Prussia	407
84. The Wars of Frederick the Great	411
85. Three Partitions of Poland, 1772, 1793, and 1795	415
86. The Austrian Realms: Maria Theresa and Joseph II	419
XX. HOW ENGLAND BECAME QUEEN OF THE OCEAN	
87. England after the Revolution of 1688	424
88. How Europe began to extend its Commerce over the Whole World	428
89. The Contest between France and England for Colo- nial Empire	431
90. Revolt of the American Colonies from England	437
XXI. GENERAL CONDITIONS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	
91. Life in the Country — Serfdom	442
92. The Towns and the Guilds	445
93. The Nobility and the Monarchy	449
94. The Catholic Church	454
95. The English Established Church and the Protestant Sects	456
XXII. MODERN SCIENCE AND THE SPIRIT OF REFORM	
96. The Development of Modern Science	461
97. How the Scientific Discoveries produced a Spirit of Reform: Voltaire	464
XXIII. THE EVE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION	
98. The Old Régime in France	473
99. How Louis XVI tried to play the Benevolent Despot	486
XXIV. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION	
100. How the Estates were summoned in 1789	492
101. First Reforms of the National Assembly, July to October, 1789	498
102. The National Assembly in Paris, October, 1789, to September, 1791	502
103. France becomes involved in a War with Other European Powers	506
104. Founding of the First French Republic	512
105. The Reign of Terror	516
XXV. EUROPE AND NAPOLEON	
106. General Bonaparte	526
107. How Bonaparte made himself Master of France	531

CHAPTER	PAGE
108. How Bonaparte secured Peace in 1801 and re-organized Germany	535
109. Bonaparte restorés Order and Prosperity in France	538
110. How Napoleon destroyed the Holy Roman Empire	541
111. Napoleon at the Zenith of his Power (1808-1812)	549
112. The Fall of Napoleon	554
XXVI. EUROPE AFTER THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA	
113. Reconstruction of Europe by the Congress of Vienna	564
114. France, 1814-1830	568
115. Germany and Metternich	570
116. Revolutionary Tendencies in Italy, 1820-1848	574
XXVII. THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION	
117. Invention of Machinery for Spinning and Weaving	580
118. The Steam-Engine	584
119. Capitalism and the Factory System	587
120. The Rise of Socialism	591
XXVIII. THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1848 AND THEIR RESULTS	
121. The Second Republic and Second Empire in France	595
122. The Revolution of 1848 in Austria, Germany, and Italy	599
123. Outcome of the Revolution of 1848	601
XXIX. THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY AND GERMANY	
124. Founding of the Kingdom of Italy	608
125. How Prussia defeated Austria and founded the North German Confederation	612
126. The Franco-German War of 1870 and the Establishment of the Present German Empire	619
127. The Final Unification of Italy	622
XXX. THE GERMAN EMPIRE AND THE THIRD FRENCH REPUBLIC	
128. The German Constitution	626
129. Bismarck and State Socialism	628
130. Reign of William II	631
131. Establishment of the Present French Republic	635
XXXI. GREAT BRITAIN AND HER EMPIRE	
132. The English Constitution	643
133. The Reform of the Suffrage	644

CHAPTER	PAGE
134. The Cabinet	648
135. General Reforms in England	650
136. The Irish Question	657
137. The British Empire: India	661
138. The British Empire: Canada and Australasia	665
139. The British Empire: South Africa	669
XXXII. THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	
140. The Reigns of Alexander I (1801-1825) and Nicholas I (1825-1855)	674
141. The Freeing of the Serfs and the Growth of the Spirit of Revolution	678
142. The Struggle for Liberty under Nicholas II	683
XXXIII. TURKEY AND THE EASTERN QUESTION	
143. The Emergence of Serbia and Greece	689
144. The Crimean War (1854-1856)	691
145. Revolts in the Balkan Peninsula	693
146. Extinction of Turkey in Europe	695
XXXIV. THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	
147. The Growth of International Trade and Competi- tion: Imperialism	703
148. Relations of Europe with China	710
149. Japan becomes a World Power; Intervention in China	712
150. Russia and Japan	716
151. Partition of Africa	720
152. The Disruption of the Spanish Empire	723
XXXV. ORIGIN OF THE WAR OF 1914	
153. The Armies and Navies of Europe	727
154. Movements for Peace: The Hague Conferences; Pacifism; Socialism	730
155. Matters of Dispute: National Rivalries	733
156. The Near-Eastern Question	737
157. The Outbreak of the War	739
BIBLIOGRAPHY	747
INDEX	765

MEDIEVAL AND MODERN TIMES

CHAPTER I

WESTERN EUROPE BEFORE THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS

PRELUDE

1. History, in the broadest sense of the word, is all that we know about everything that man has ever done, or thought, or hoped, or felt. It is the study of past human affairs. The present volume deals with only a small, but for us most important, part of the history of the world. Its object is to give a very brief, clear account of the great changes which have taken place in western Europe since the German barbarians, some fifteen hundred years ago, overcame the armies of the Roman Empire and set up kingdoms of their own, out of which the present countries of France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, and England have grown.

Object of this
volume

History used to be defined as "the record of past *events*." And most of the older textbooks tell about scarcely anything except events — how battles were fought, how kings came to the throne one after another, how treaties were concluded and the boundary lines between states were changed from time to time. But nowadays we are beginning to see that the history of past *conditions* and *institutions* is far more important than that of mere events. We want to know how people lived, what kind of buildings they built, what kind of books they read, how much they knew and what they thought about science and religion; how they were governed, what they manufactured and how they carried on their business.

History no
longer "a
record of
past events"

Illustrations
of what is
meant by past
conditions
and institu-
tions

It is important to understand clearly what is meant by events, conditions, and institutions, since history deals with all three. An event is an occurrence, such as the death of Queen Victoria or the battle of Gettysburg. A condition is a more or less permanent state of affairs, such as the scarcity of money in the early Middle Ages or the fact that a hundred years ago only a small part of the English people could read. By institution we usually mean such things as the English Parliament, public schools, or trial by jury. Both conditions and institutions often endure for hundreds of years. Events happen in a short time but often produce great results, as did the invention of printing and the discovery of America.

Value of the
newer kind of
history

The newer kind of history, which deals with past conditions as well as events, enables us really to understand the past and to compare it with the present, and in that way we come to understand the conditions in which we live much better than we should otherwise do. We see where our ideas and beliefs and inventions came from, how slowly most of them developed, and how men have changed their ways of living as they learned more.

Impossibility
of dividing
the past into
clearly de-
fined periods

It is impossible to divide the past into distinct, clearly defined periods and prove that one age ended and another began in a particular year, such as 476, or 1453, or 1789. Men do not and cannot change their habits and ways of doing things all at once, no matter what happens. It is true that a single event, such as an important battle which results in the loss of a nation's independence, may produce an abrupt change in the government. This in turn may either encourage or discourage trade and manufactures, and modify the language and alter the interests of a people. But these deeper changes take place only very gradually. After a battle or a revolution the farmer will sow and reap in his old way; the artisan will take up his familiar tasks, and the merchant his buying and selling. The scholar will study and write as he formerly did, and the household will go on under the new government just as it did under the old.

All general
changes take
place gradu-
ally

So a change in government affects the habits of a people but slowly in any case, and it may leave them quite unaltered.

This tendency of mankind to do, in general, this year what it did last, in spite of changes in some one department of life,— such as substituting a president for a king, traveling by rail instead of on horseback, or getting the news from a newspaper instead of from a neighbor, — results in what is called the *unity or continuity of history*. The truth that no sudden change has ever taken place in all the customs of a people, and that it cannot, in the nature of things, take place, is perhaps the most fundamental lesson that history teaches.

The unity o
continuity o
history

Historians sometimes seem to forget this principle, when they undertake to begin and end their books at precise dates. We find histories of Europe from 476 to 918, from 1270 to 1492, as if the accession of a capable German king in 918, or the death of a famous French king in 1270, or the discovery of America in 1492, marked a *general* change in European affairs. In reality, however, no general change took place at these dates or in any other single year. It would doubtless have proved a great convenience to the readers and writers of history if the world had agreed to carry out a definite program and alter its habits at precise dates, preferably at the opening of each century. But no such agreement has ever been adopted, and the historical student must take things as he finds them. He must recognize that nations retain their old customs while they adopt new ones, and that a small portion of a nation may advance while the greater part of it stays behind.

General
changes do
not occur on
fixed dates

We cannot, therefore, hope to fix any year or event which may properly be taken as the beginning of that long period which followed the break-up of the Roman Empire in western Europe and which is commonly called the Middle Ages. Beyond the northern and eastern boundaries of the Roman Empire, which embraced the whole civilized world from the Euphrates to Britain, mysterious peoples moved about whose history before they came into occasional contact with the Romans is practically unknown.

Meaning of
the term
" Middle
Ages "

These Germans, or "barbarians," as the Romans called them, were destined to put an end to the Roman Empire in western Europe. They had first begun to make trouble about a hundred years before Christ, when a great army of them was defeated by the Roman general Marius. Julius Cæsar narrates in polished Latin, familiar to all who begin the study of that language, how fifty years later he drove back other bands. Five hundred years elapsed, however, before German chieftains succeeded in founding kingdoms within the boundaries of the Empire. With their establishment the Roman government in western Europe may be said to have come to an end and the Middle Ages to have begun.

Most medieval notions to be found in the late Roman Empire

Yet it would be a great mistake to suppose that this means that the Roman civilization suddenly disappeared at this time. Long before the German conquest, art and literature had begun to decline toward the level that they reached in the Middle Ages. Many of the ideas and conditions which prevailed after the coming of the barbarians were common enough before. Even the ignorance and strange ideas which we associate particularly with the Middle Ages are to be found in the later Roman Empire.

The term "Middle Ages" will be used in this volume to mean, roughly speaking, the period of over a thousand years that elapsed between the fifth century, when the disorder of the barbarian invasions was becoming general, and the opening of the sixteenth century, when Europe was well on its way to recover all that had been lost since the break-up of the Roman Empire.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND ITS GOVERNMENT

2. Before we begin our study of the history of western Europe since the break-up of the Roman Empire we must stop to consider briefly the way in which people were living before the German leaders succeeded in establishing their kingdoms.

At the opening of the fifth century there were no separate, independent states in western Europe such as we find on the map to-day. The whole area now occupied by England, France, Spain,

Extent of the Roman Empire

and Italy formed at that time only a part of the vast realms ruled over by the Roman emperor and his host of officials. As for Germany, most of it was still familiar only to the half-savage tribes who inhabited it. The Romans had tried in vain to conquer this part of Europe, but finally had to content themselves with keeping the German hordes out of the Empire by means of fortifications and guards along the Rhine and Danube rivers.

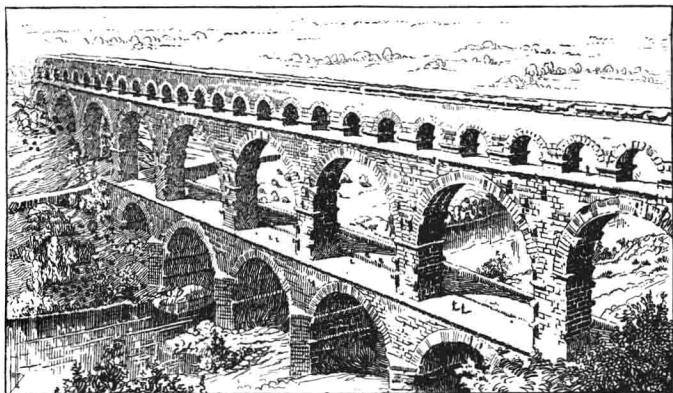


FIG. I. ROMAN AQUEDUCT NEAR NÎMES

This structure was built by the Romans about the year 20 A.D. to supply the Roman colony of Nemausus (now called Nîmes) in southern France with water from two excellent springs twenty-five miles distant. It is nearly 900 feet long and 160 feet high, and carried the water over the valley of the river Gard. The channel for the water is at the very top, and one can still walk through it. The miles of aqueduct on either side of this bridge have almost disappeared

The Roman Empire, which embraced southern and western Europe, western Asia, and even the northern portion of Africa (see map), included the most diverse peoples and races. Egyptians, Arabs, Jews, Greeks, Italians, Gauls, Britons, Iberians,—all alike were under the sovereign rule of Rome. One great state embraced the nomad shepherds who spread their tents on the borders of Sahara, the mountaineers in the fastnesses of

Great diversity of races included within the Empire

Wales, and the citizens of Athens, Alexandria, and Rome, heirs to all the luxury and learning of the ages. Whether one lived in York or Jerusalem, Memphis or Vienna, he paid his taxes into the same treasury, he was tried by the same law, and looked to the same armies for protection.

Bonds which
held the Em-
pire together

At first it seems incredible that this huge Empire, which included African and Asiatic peoples as well as the most various races of Europe in all stages of civilization, could have held together for five centuries instead of falling to pieces, as might have been expected, long before the barbarians came in sufficient strength to establish their own kingdoms in its midst.

When, however, we consider the bonds of union which held the state together, it is easy to understand why the Empire endured so long. These were (1) the wonderfully organized government with its officials in every part of the realm, watching everything and allowing nothing to escape them; (2) the worship of the head of the Empire, the emperor; (3) the hardy legions of soldiers who had made Rome's conquests and could be used to put down revolt and keep out the barbarians; (4) the Roman law in force everywhere; (5) the admirable roads, which enabled the soldiers to march quickly from place to place; and, lastly, (6) the Roman colonies and the teachers sent out by the government, for through them the same ideas and ways of doing things were carried to even the most distant parts of the Empire.

The Roman
government
attempted to
regulate
everything

Let us first glance at the government and the emperor. His decrees were dispatched throughout the length and breadth of the Roman dominions; whatsoever pleased him became law, according to the well-known principle of the Roman constitution. While the cities were permitted some freedom in the management of their own affairs, the emperor and his innumerable officials kept an eye upon even the humblest citizen. The Roman government, besides keeping order, settling law cases, and defending the boundaries, assumed many other responsibilities. It watched the grain dealers, butchers, and bakers, and saw to it that they properly supplied the public and never deserted their

occupation. In some cases it forced the son to follow the profession of his father. If it could have had its way, it would have had every one belong to a definite class of society, and his children after him. It kept the unruly poorer classes in the towns quiet by furnishing them with bread, and sometimes with wine, meat, and clothes. It provided amusement for them by expensive entertainments, such as races and gladiatorial combats (see Fig. 3). In a word, the Roman government was not only wonderfully organized, so that its power was felt throughout its whole extent, but it attempted to regulate almost every interest in life.

Every one was required to join in the worship of the emperor because he stood for the majesty and glory of the Roman dominion. The inhabitants of each province might revere their particular gods, undisturbed by the government, but all were obliged, as good citizens, to join in the official sacrifices to the head of the State, as if he were a god. The early Christians were persecuted, not only because their religion was different from that of their fellows, but because they refused to reverence the images of the emperor, and openly prophesied the downfall of the Roman State. Their religion seemed incompatible with good citizenship, since it forbade them to show the usual respect for the government.

The worship
of the em-
peror

As there was one government, so there was one law for all the civilized world. The same principles of reason, justice, and humanity were believed to hold whether the Roman citizen lived upon the Euphrates or the Thames. The law of the Roman Empire is its chief legacy to posterity. Its provisions are still in force in many of the states of Europe to-day, and it is one of the subjects of study in our American universities. Wives and children were protected from the cruelty of the head of the house, who, in earlier centuries, had been privileged to treat the members of his family as slaves. The law held that it was better that a guilty person should escape than that an innocent person should be condemned. It conceived mankind, not as a group of nations and tribes, each with its own laws, but as one

The Roman
law

people included in one great empire and subject to a single system of law based upon fairness and reason.

Roads

Magnificent roads were constructed, which enabled the messengers of the government and its armies to reach every part of the Empire with what at that time seemed incredible speed.



FIG. 2. ROMAN BRIDGE AT ST. CHAMAS

This Roman bridge with its handsome portals, at St. Chamas in southern France, was built in the time of the Emperor Augustus; that is, about the beginning of the Christian era

These highways made trade comparatively easy and encouraged merchants and travelers to visit the most distant portions of the realm. Everywhere they found the same coins and the same system of weights and measures.

Colonies,
public
buildings

Colonies were sent out to the confines of the Empire, and the remains of great public buildings, of theaters and bridges, of sumptuous villas and baths at places like Treves, Cologne, Bath, and Salzburg, indicate how thoroughly the influence and civilization of Rome penetrated to the utmost parts of the territory subject to her rule. The illustrations in this chapter will show what wonderfully fine towns the Roman colonies were.

The government encouraged education by supporting at least three teachers in every town of any considerable importance. They taught rhetoric and oratory and explained the works of the