CHAPTER I

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRIMITIVE CAPEIAN MONARCHY

I

THE EVENTS OF 987

To study the development of the French monarchy in the framework of Feudalism, we will take up our position at its traditional starting point, the accession of Hugh Capet in 987. This is not due to any inability to suggest good reasons for choosing some other. Ever since the end of the ninth century the transformation of political society by the system of homage, by infeudation, and the excessive weakening of the royal power had been an accomplished fact. Moreover, since that period the ancestors of Hugh Capet had held the throne alternately with the Carolingians: Hugh was the fourth of his family to assume the crown and the pretended change of dynasty in 987 is only a legal convention, an invention of historians to make classification more easy. It would be quite possible, therefore, to start at an earlier date. We could equally well select one more recent and ignore the reigns of Hugh Capet (987–996), Robert the Pious (996–1031), and Henry I (1031–1060) for during this three-quarters of a century the nature of the royal power, its instruments, and its sphere of authority, even its political exterior, did not differ from those of the later Carolingians. It was only in the time of Philip I (1060–1108) that the first outlines of a less nebulous French monarchy were drafted and that the conquest of England by the Duke of Normandy created a new problem.

But when we have taken all this into account, the year 987 is the best starting point we can find. After that date, as a matter of fact, the customary method of election did not give the throne to the Carolingian family and the Capetians succeeded from father to son. Finally, the survival of the
institutions of the period of Carolingian decline almost to the time of Philip I will provide a useful introduction to the study of the political advances achieved under the Capetians. It is not necessary, for the treatment of our subject, to analyse how Hugh Capet achieved the crown.¹ We shall confine ourselves, in these early pages, to a definition of what the kingdom of France and the monarchy were in the reigns of Hugh, Robert, and Henry I.

II

THE KINGDOM OF FRANCE

When the powerlessness of the early Capetians is fully realized one is apt to ask if, in reality, there was, at that time, “a kingdom of France.” Was the “kingdom of France” anything more than a myth fostered in the mind of the king, his ministers, and a few churchmen? To contemporary eyes, the only geographical reality contained in the word France was the region bounded by the Seine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt; France was being narrowed down more and more to a point where it signified only the northern part of the diocese of Paris. If a man said “I am going to France”, he meant that he was going into this area.²

In spite of the weakness of the kings, in spite of the ambiguity of the title France,³ we can admit that there was a kingdom of France not only in the formulas of chanceries but in the opinions and speech of the people.⁴ There was a kingdom of France in distinction to the Empire and the Christian and Moslem principalities of Spain.⁵

The Capets were Kings of France because they were

¹ Cf. the classical treatment of Lucrai ((CXX I, intro.) on the coup of 987 and the origins of the Capetian family: F. Lot (CXXI, bk. ii, and app. xi).

² Bibliography in CLXXVII, 308, n. 1. See particularly CXXXIX, 1-28; DXXI, chap. iii; CXXXII, 187, n. 4; CCLXI, i, 29-36.

³ This ambiguity was already in existence in the time of the Franks. See CCLXXXVIII, 377 ff.

⁴ The formula of royal charters is “Regnum Francorum”. As early as the texts of the tenth century we find “Regnum Franciae”; we should speak in the vernacular of the King of France and not the King of the Franks (CDXXVI, 320). As for the so-called Duchy of France, it did not exist in the Carolingian period; there was only a Duas Francorum, a sort of viceroy.

⁵ Cf. CCLX, 240.
The Kingdom of France in 987.
maintained by a strong popular tradition created by the Carolingians; a study of the final clauses of charters shows that they were recognized as such to the most distant southern frontiers at least de iure if not de facto.\(^1\)

There was, then, in the eyes of contemporaries, a King of France and a kingdom of France. What were the frontiers of that kingdom? The kingdom of the last Carolingians and the early Capetians had an eastern boundary very different from the frontiers of to-day: starting from the Scheldt and taking in the region of Waes and Ghent, it roughly followed the river giving Tournai and Valenciennes to France, Cambrai to the Empire. From the sources of the Scheldt, it ran from west to east as far as the Meuse on the near side of Hainault and Mauberge which were subject to the Empire. Then it veered south dividing Champagne from Lorraine and the Duchy of Burgundy from the County (Franche Comté) extending approximately along the course of the Saone. For the sake of simplicity we can say that henceforward it followed the Rhone though, in fact, the regions of Lyons, Forez, Vienne, and Viviers were outside France. To the south, on the other hand, the frontier of the kingdom went beyond the Pyrenees from the Diocese of Urgel to that of Barcelona and Borel, Count of Barcelona, called in the help of his distant overlord, Hugh Capet, against the Arabs.\(^2\)

So Capetian France was equivalent to neither Roman Gaul nor the France of to-day. The Treaty of Verdun had taken from the kings of “Western France” the traditional frontiers of Gaul, a numerous latinized population speaking a Roman dialect, and the most important of the great junctions on the Roman road system, Arles, Lyons, Treves, Metz, and a ready access to the Mediterranean.

A day would come when the recovery of the frontier of Gaul would appear to the kings of France a permanent objective in their policy. They would find in the uncertainties of the frontiers of the Middle Ages sometimes a check, sometimes an opportunity. There was no longer any distinct conception in men’s minds. The idea of lordship had displaced that of the State. Were there any visible signs of the limits of

1 CDXXXIX; CDXXXI, 262; CDXXXIII, 131.
2 CDXXXVI, pl. xi; CDXXXVII, 215 ff.; CDXXXVIII, 19–20, and the works quoted after that. On the Empire and the Middle Kingdom in the eleventh century, see p. 83.
the kingdom? We doubt it very much. The Celts had marked the division of their territories by religious monuments and the Romans recognized the borders of cities, cantons, and villages, by means of boundary stones, inscriptions, ditches, etc.\(^1\) It is only natural that in a period when the Roman Empire was co-extensive with the civilized world the only signs of external frontiers were the military defence works built against the Barbarians.\(^2\)

We have good reason to believe that things were different in the Middle Ages but the evidence is scanty. Slowly, it would seem, boundary stones were set up along the Meuse.\(^3\) In Argonne, near Luzy, the priest set up a stone cross in the fifteenth century to show that the territories of the Empire began there.\(^4\) But, during the period we are studying here, the only marks of frontiers, as far as we know, were those in the interior of France, for instance between Artois and the neighbouring areas or between the royal demesne and the Anglo-Norman territory.\(^5\) As a result, there were inevitably disputed strips\(^6\) and groups of people did not know whether they were subjects of the Empire or of France.\(^7\) When the matter came up for discussion, texts, Carolingian charters, chronicles, and compilations like that of Vincent of Beauvais were produced but their value as proof was often very small. When Philip the Bel demanded the overlordship of the Ostrevent, a region which was really a part of France but had been attached since the Treaty of Verdun to Hainault, a county of the Empire, both sides did everything possible to find proofs to support their respective contentions.\(^8\) The Count of Hainault, forced to render homage to the King of France, protested to the Pope. The Ostrevent, he wrote to him, belongs to the King of Germany, "and possibly that appears fully in the registers and chronicles of the Roman Curia by whose authority, we understand, the division between the two kingdoms was made."\(^9\) But this hope was vain.

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\(^1\) See the chapter of Albert Grenier in CCXXXVII, vol. v, chap. v.
\(^2\) See the article "Limes" in the Real Encyclopædia of Pauly and Wissowa.
\(^3\) DLXXXIII, 27, n. 2.
\(^4\) CCXXXVII, 9.
\(^5\) CCXI, vol. i, 52, 64, and Nachträge, 134–5; vol. iii, 120; vol. iv, i, 40. For the rest, the extent of the administrative boundaries of Medieval France was as vague as the frontiers: CCLXXVI, 18–20; CCLXXV, 50.
\(^6\) CCXCVII, 164–5; CDXXXIV, 5 ft.; DVI, 374; DUVI, 5–4; DLXXIV.
\(^7\) CCLXXXIV, 1, 8.
\(^8\) DLIV, 316 ff.; CCXLIII, 241 ft.; CCXLIV, pref. and passim.
\(^9\) XXXVI, 39.
In fact we should compare this quotation with a letter from Pope Clement V to Saint Louis where he states that no one in Rome had any exact information about the Franco-German frontier: "We do not find it determined in any document; although for a long time we have dared to say that, in certain places, it was fixed by rivers, by ecclesiastical provinces, or by dioceses, we cannot clearly demark it; we are in complete ignorance." ¹

The best way was to question the natives; but it was only possible to ask them to what jurisdictions they were subject, which was a question of justice and lordship, not of sovereignty, and the arguments were of a feudal not a national character. The feudal idea was comparatively clear but the idea of State, of state frontiers, or nationality was shrouded in haze. Are we justified in using the light shed by the former to dispel the obscurity which surrounds the latter? Clearly not, for lordship and sovereignty have never been the same thing. It was quite possible to be the vassal of the king without being his subject and everybody fully accepted this fact. We are not trying to make clear the significance of the term "subject". There were magnates with territories on both sides of the frontier ² such as the Count of Flanders, of Chalon, or of Maçon, the Lord of Beaujol, the Abbot of Beaulieu, the Count of Valentinois, and even the Count of Toulouse who did homage to the Emperor for the County of Provence; but, a feature that is even more significant, there were lords of the Empire who were vassals of other lords of the Empire for lands held within the kingdom of France which were not liberties; the Count of Bar held the fief of Hans near to Sainte Menehould of the Bishop of Verdun ³; and, conversely, there were lords of France, vassals of the Emperor for lands held in the kingdom of France; for a century the Counts of Champagne were vassals of the Hohenstaufen for three of their French territories. ⁴ From the time when Count Henry rendered homage for them to Frederick Barbarossa, the King of France had no feudal rights over them but he was still their king. Moreover he was lord in the fief of Bar le duc after 1301 but he was not king at that date and Joan of Arc was

¹ LXXII, iv, n. 5439. ² COOLXXXIV, i, Einleitung. ³ Ibid., 23. ⁴ Ibid., i, 15 ff.
born in the fief of Bar in a district of Domremy which, as a fief of Charles VII, was subject to a bailiwick of Champagne and, as Imperial territory, to a bailiwick of Bar.¹

In this particular case, the king’s party would work to confuse enfeoffment and sovereignty. At other times they would make every effort to distinguish them.

III

THE DIVERSITY OF FRANCE IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY
—THE GREAT LORDSHIPS

Within this frontier there was a complete lack of uniformity. It was not the feudal regime alone which gave an impression of anarchy in a survey of France, for this regime was incomplete and still in the throes of definition, its centrifugal force was not yet fully developed. The hereditary principle of enfeoffment was not generally recognized and the king maintained his right to resume lands which he had granted as a “beneficiary gift”. Everything tended to produce infinite variety—language, customs, and private law. Six centuries of great movements of peoples had destroyed, directly or indirectly, the unity of Roman Gaul.

In spite of the great powers of absorption and survival which the Latin language has shown ² a German dialect was spoken in Flanders and as far south as the district of Boulogne; in Bayeux Scandinavian was spoken, the Celts driven out of Great Britain by the Anglo-Saxons had reintroduced their language into the Armorican peninsula which was beginning to be called “Little Britain”; finally the Gascons in the sixth century had invaded the region between the Pyrenees and the Garonne and established, at least in the mountain country, the Basque language. On some of the frontiers of the kingdom, groups speaking foreign tongues had thus established themselves, peoples totally uncultured and barbarous, over whom the Church could only establish its civilizing influence after a long time.

As for the Romance speaking districts, even there many

¹ DL, first part. ² CCIII, 81-116.
dialects were spoken.¹ As the distance from the Alps and Mediterranean increased, so did the lapse from the original forms of the Latin language but the differences were more marked towards the North than towards the West. South of a somewhat sinuous line from near the mouths of the Gironde to near Annonay there existed a group of idioms marked by the preservation of the Latin tonic " a " which formed what the people of the south themselves called the lingua Romana and of which philologists to-day abusively speak as Provençal. It has been essential for us to insist on the transitions, the unnoticed graduations, the overlapping which existed, but, in fact, our divisions have not been contrary to historical reality.

In those regions where there was the most faithful adherence to low Latin, there was also a system of custom permeated with principles of Roman Law,² ways of life and dress, and a particular mentality which astonished and naturally scandalized the people of the North.³

Great as the diversity of France in the eleventh century undoubtedly was, it would be false to consider it as a simple mosaic of minute lordships. The great obstacle to the maintenance of the royal power was precisely that above the kaleidoscope of petty fiefs and allds there were, particularly in France, principalities, dynasties of dukes and counts frequently established by Carolingian ministers of old and often more powerful than the royal house.

In fact they showed such independence and were such a menace to the royal power that many authorities have found reason to question whether they were legally subject to it.

One of them has suggested that in the eleventh century the Capetian is merely the chief of an " ethnic grouping " with the same title as the other great lords of Gauls; that the " princes " were his " peers " and did not render homage to him; that he only enjoyed some form of pre-eminence among them.⁴ But our documents do not allow us to say

¹ See the résumé given in CCL, i, 296 ff.
² See the map of written law which corresponds in the main to the philological map in DCLXXIV, at the end of vol. ii, or in J. Brissaud, Cours d'histoire du droit français, vol. i, 1904, p. 122.
³ XCLIII, 90.
⁴ DCLXXXVIII, especially vols iii and iv, cf. CCCXLIV, 275–281. CDXXXIII ; CCLXXII, 159 ff., 347 ff.
that the region between Lorraine and the Loire formed a separate “ethnic grouping” while they justify the opinion that the great barons considered themselves as the kings’ “men”: the Count of Flanders, the Duke of Burgundy, the Duke of Aquitaine, the Count of Blois and Chartres, the Duke of Normandy himself performed host service on several occasions and frequently journeyed to Rheims to be present at the consecration.

It is important that we should exaggerate nothing and maintain the reserve which the scanty nature of the documents and considerations of probability demand. As a personal opinion, we do not believe that the oath of homage and fidelity was regularly renewed at each accession in the royal house or the princely dynasties. But when circumstance made it possible no one refused to render homage.

Who were these great princely dynasties? We must speak of them in detail for they were not all in the same relationship to the Capetians. This fact is easily deduced on first principles by a glance at the map and the mountains which separate the basin of the Loire and the Seine from Aquitaine and Languedoc, all but invincible obstacles in a period when the king had neither an administration nor an army of his own and when only at rare intervals did he embark on the adventure of making a long journey himself.

In the South and Centre, the lords of Catalonia and Roussillon, of Languedoc, of Toulouse, of Gascony, Poitou, and the Central Plateau grouped themselves fairly readily round the Counts of Barcelona, Rouergue, Toulouse, and Gascony and the Duke of Aquitaine. The last mentioned, with his capital at Poitiers, styled himself “Duke of all the monarchy of Aquitaine”.

This monarchy of Aquitaine comprised all the centre of Gaul from Berry, Bourbonnais, and Auvergne to the shore of Vendée and Saintonge. William the Great (V) held magnificent courts and exchanged embassies with the kings of the Iberian Peninsula, of England and with the Emperor. He had married the daughter of the Duke of Gascony and in 1080, shortly after his death, the two duchies became united into an immense principality. The people from the North who travelled in this area gained the impression that he was completely independent of the King of France. It was an
Aquitainian chronicler, Ademar of Chabannes, who invented about 1180 the famous dialogue between the associated kings, Hugh Capet and Robert the Pious and Audebert of Perigord: "Who made you a Count?" "Who made you Kings?" It is highly unlikely that the dialogue ever took place, but it is not, by any means, fantastic. The princes of the South had no connections with the early Capetians unless they had a personal sympathy for them or thought their friendship worth winning. Robert was a friend of William the Great who, like himself, was pious and an amateur collector of manuscripts and he travelled to Toulouse to hold a court but, after his reign, the bonds between the royal house and the southern principalities grew weaker and weaker: each tended to ignore the other.

North of the Loire in the area where they were themselves established, seeking to maintain and extend their influence, the early Capetians found dangerous rivals. The Counts of Flanders, Baldwin IV and V, the Dukes of Normandy Eudo I and II, Counts of Blois, Tours, and Chartres and the terrible Black Fulk, Count of Anjou, were insatiably seeking new conquests. If we were writing a history of France we could not avoid returning at this point to the annals of these four great houses, showing the Count of Flanders consistently seeking to carve out a Netherlands kingdom for himself, defying the Emperors; the Duke of Normandy and the Count of Anjou bickering over the possession of Maine and the overlordship of Brittany sought after quite as eagerly by the reigning Count of Blois; Eudo II of Blois grasping at Champagne and endeavouring for his own benefit to re-establish Lotharingia, and to reign over Lorraine, the kingdom of Arles and Italy. Their mutual rivalries saved the monarchy as surely as their unity could have destroyed it. The powerful house of Blois made an unsuccessful attempt to dethrone both Hugh Capet and Henry I. Their fickle and uncertain policy enabled the first three Capetians to keep their domains generally intact from their rapacious vassals and it was only rarely that they allowed themselves to be drawn into their quarrels. Moreover for sixty years the

1 CDXXXIII, 553-4.
2 DXXI, 271-299; CDXXXI, 199-215; CDXXXIII, chaps. iii-iv; CCLXXVIII, iv, 219 sqq.
Capetians were supported by the powerful dukes of Normandy. This tradition of alliance between the monarchy and the Duchy of Normandy was abruptly broken off by Henry I who was naturally combative and worked for ten years to build up a coalition against William the Bastard. At Varaville in 1058, he was decisively defeated and when he died two years later the royal power was weaker than ever in relation to the four princely dynasties of northern France.¹

In this way a ring of powerful principalities had been built up from the Pyrenees to Flanders encircling the region around Paris and Orleans to which the royal power was restricted. In addition the king had to make allowance for other neighbours who, though less powerful, menaced his security at certain periods. The Counts of Amiens, Vermandois, Soissons, Corbeil, Melun, Sens, and many others fall into this category. Their counties encroached further and further on the Capetians' domains and often formed enclaves within it. The advances in military architecture during the eleventh century made these petty counts and the lords of even less importance who swarmed in the country around Paris more and more dangerous. This was the period during which the strong halls with wooden keeps were giving way to well built stone castles from which they could ignore the King of France even in the centre of his own demesne.²

IV

The Royal Demesne

The royal demesne was the aggregate of territories in which the king exercised on his own behalf the privileges of baron, or independent lord, and of justice; this last was the most important for it offered him an opportunity for constant intervention and endowed him with a reality of power. This at least is the definition to which a study of the documents leads but they do not express in it any formula; the word "demesne" does not even appear in

¹ CDXXXII, chaps. v and vi; DXXI, 209–245; DClX, 48 ff.; CCCXXXIX, chaps. i and ii; CDXL, ii, 205 ff.; CDXVII.
² DXXI, 209; CDXXXII, 100; CDXVIII, 45–7.
them.\(^1\) Once this definition has been made it must be immediately corrected by a realization that the demesne was neither uniform, compact, nor even continuous. In one place he possessed personal property bringing in the revenues of land—villages or part villages with fields or else meadows, vineyards, woodland, fishponds, mills, or even the village church in the material implication of the term, with the lands and dues which pertained to it or else a town or even houses or a crenellated tower in the town.

For instance when Sens was annexed to the royal demesne part of it belonged to the king and part was left for the archbishop. In other cases, the king could not use the revenues to his own advantage but he had the "administration", that is to say he retained all, or almost all, the rights of lordship; possibly, he only retained the rights and profits of justice.

It is not possible to draft an accurate map of the royal demesne for there is no text which describes its extent under the early Capetians. The only royal property which the Carolingians had bequeathed to the new dynasty was a few palaces. Hugh Capet had endowed himself with the regions around Paris and Orleans, the districts of Étampes, Poissy, and Senlis, and, in addition to this fairly compact block, several scattered holdings and the port of Montreuil through which alone the monarchy had access by the sea.

His brother Henry held the Duchy of Burgundy and, when he died in 1002 leaving no heir, King Robert, who possessed both ambitions and the energy necessary to realize them, succeeded in gaining the inheritance for himself. The acquisition was not so much important because of the new resources it placed at the disposal of the crown, for the Duke of Burgundy was not a landowner of outstanding importance, as because on this side the royal demesne would have reached the frontiers of the kingdom breaking the circle of feudal principalities. But Henry I was forced to give up the Duchy and invest his rebel brother with it. The annexation of the district of Sénon to the demesne was a very inadequate compensation. The monarchy had been advancing consider-

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\(^1\) The Carolingian term *fide* soon fell into disuse. Later, in some documents, we find the word *potestas*. The use of the word *dominium* is still rare in the time of Philip Augustus.
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ably till the reign of Robert but it now seemed condemned to stagnation. ¹

There was one important legacy, of both material and moral value, which the Carolingians had bequeathed to the new dynasty. This was the royal power over the Gallican Church.

V

THE EARLY CAPETIANS AND THE CHURCH

The Church which had seen the disappearance from France of Roman and Imperial government and had been forced to exist on terms with lay lordships could not altogether isolate itself from the political and social order or the habits of life of the feudal aristocracy any more than it can to-day from the republican and democratic forms of government with which, in certain countries, it is essentially bound up. But, in the eleventh century, it was, much more than to-day, a world to itself. If, when we speak of the Church, we mean all the hierarchy of prelates and clerks, secular and regular, who were heart and soul devoted to the Christian ideal, if we can ignore the brutal pugnacity and the frequent dissolute excesses which were found within it at this time, it is true to say that it viewed with great regret the welter of anarchy and disorder and that it considered as dearly bought the independence which in some respects it gained from them. It preserved as its political ideal the memory of the Christian Roman Empire. This was not only because it needed peace for the salvation of souls; in spite of its violent internal disruptions the Church had a sense of unity and hierarchical authority. With the failure of Imperial Rome, the Gallican Church looked more and more towards Pontifical Rome.

The amazing success of the False Decretals ² for a hundred and fifty years showed quite clearly its desire to establish on an ancient tradition the government of Christendom by the Holy See. Nevertheless, it preserved also its enthusiasm

¹ CDXXXII, 187-9; DXXI, 86 ff., 206-7, 246 ff.; CCXIII, 123 ff.; CDLXXVI, chap. v.
² Summary bibliography in CDXXXII, 361 ff., and in CCCLXIX, 166, note 116.
for royalty and, throughout the Middle Ages, maintained the Carolingian doctrine of the two powers. The divine mission of the Holy See and the monarchy were the basis of all its political doctrine. Even at the time when their authority was weakest, that is to say during the period we are dealing with in this chapter, the Pope and the French king found champions in the clergy. The reform of the monasteries, which was initiated in the tenth century and vigorously carried through in the eleventh by the Abbots of Cluny and other churchmen, resulted in the triumph of this theory; for the monasteries could only regain their dignity, independence, and wealth and avoid the brutal domination of the nobles and the unreasonable demands of the bishop by gaining the support of the monarchy and the Holy See.

The kings of France had, for five centuries, been tying the bonds between themselves and the Church. The Merovingians and Carolingians had enriched and protected it almost consistently. In Hugh Capet and Robert the Pious it found zealous advocates of ecclesiastical reform. On the day of their coronation oath, the Capetians were ready to make a speech in which their duties to the Church were almost the sole issue. In return the Church granted money to the crown, sent its knights and tenants to serve in the royal army, and provided experienced counsellors for the court. This was not all. Within the royal demesne and in many dioceses outside, it was subjected by the right of regale to the will, almost the whim, of the king. In the South, in Brittany and Normandy, the nomination of bishops fell to the Capetians but in the ecclesiastical provinces of Rheims, Sens, Tours, and in the centre of France four archbishoprics and twenty bishoprics were at the disposal of the king.¹ What does this mean? On the death of the holder the king disposed of the temporalities of the see as their landlord, he nominated to the vacant benefices (right of regale), he enjoyed and abused the right of spoils which gave him the right to seize the moveable property of the dead man and, after a delay that was frequently excessively prolonged, he imposed his candidate—a personal friend, a relation, or a clerk of the Royal Court. The canons of the cathedral who actually elected the bishop by agreement with certain nobles of the

¹ CDXXXII, 216 ff.
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dioceese were rarely moved to protest and the bishops of the province were usually equally submissive in electing their metropolitan. Unless the Pope took up the cause of some defeated candidate the episcopal or archiepiscopal cross remained in the hands of the royal favourite. To a lesser degree the king possessed abbeys often important and wealthy which were counted as part of his “fise”, as part of his demesne. Some of these were royal houses founded by the Carolingians or Merovingians or else added to the fise by Hugh Capet in 987; others the Capetians had gained by granting them immunities, exempting them from the exactions of the counts who had encroached on them. We have mapped out the abbeys and collegiate foundations, whose existence in the time of Hugh Capet we may assume, from the extremely scanty evidence available. Of an approximate total of 527 he was patron of about thirty-two and he shared the patronage of sixteen with the bishop or some noble.

Twenty-six of them were situated in the province of Sens principally in the neighbourhood of Paris and Orleans, fifteen in the province of Rheims, four in the province and diocese of Tours, two (possibly four) in Lyons, one (possibly three) in Bourges. The king was himself abbot of Saint Martin de Tours, Saint Denis, Saint-Germain-des-Prés, and Saint Cornelle de Compiègne. In the other royal monasteries he imposed abbots of his own choice as far as the Cluniac reforms still allowed and in any case he was able to use the resources of the abbey very extensively.

Even his most powerful subject could not dispose of so many bishoprics and abbeys or command such observation points beyond his own demesne as the king could. In this respect the early Capetians had no challenge to their supremacy but, as we shall see, though the bishoprics and monasteries of the South, the West, and of Normandy fell to the king, he could not count confidently on the obedience

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1 These questions have been studied in detail in DXXII, 17 ff., and CCCCLXXIX.
2 CDXXII, app. xiv.
3 Hence the nickname Capet or Chapet (clad in ecclesiastical cloak). This name was given in the eleventh century to the father of Hugh the King. It was not applied to him until the twelfth century. The name “Capetian” seems to have been invented by the English Chronicler Raoul de Dîcel. CDXXXII, app. vi.
and the consistent fidelity even of those within the demesne. We must always remember, even while we show the extent of the relations between the early Capetians and the Church, that they could demand only a tardy obedience and a grudging respect. The Emperor presents a striking contrast for he maintained a rigid control over all the clergy of Germany. This is the reason why there was an investiture controversy in Germany but not in France.

The narrow limits of this book do not allow us to trace again the story of the relations between Hugh and Robert and the Church.\textsuperscript{1} It is, however, an exceedingly interesting story.

In the first place it shows clearly that the early Capetians had no conscious objective and provides us with many examples of their fickle passions, their childish versatility, their peasant like tricks, their complete inability to follow any political line, or even to be faithful to their allies. In opposition to them was only a divided clergy. At the famous Council of St. Bâsle summoned by Hugh to pass judgment on a traitor, the Archbishop Arnoul, who had handed Rheims over to his enemies, the king could count on the assent of several bishops. Later on Robert even found an archbishop to celebrate a marriage which, according to canon law, was an incestuous union. Nevertheless many prelates were not prepared to obey and the two incidents—the deposition of Arnoul and the marriage of Robert—ended in reverses for the King of France. Even those bishops who, at St. Bâsle, upheld the theory of the supremacy of the Council were not inspired by any spirit of nationalism. They demanded something very different—the right of the theologians of the district to direct its spiritual affairs, particularly when the Pope was worthless as was the case at the time that the Council met. The French monarchy was not yet able to use the clergy to achieve its own ends. In the time of Hugh and Robert it was still only a question of an alliance (and strained by frequent disagreements at that) comparable to that between two partners who have need of each other's assistance but whose interests are quite distinct and whose ultimate ambitions are almost diametrically opposed.

\textsuperscript{1} See its excellent treatment by F. Lot, \textit{CDXXXII}, chap. ii-iv; \textit{DXXI}, 41 ff.
VI

THE SACRED CHARACTER OF THE MONARCHY AND ITS POPULAR BACKING

It was to the Church, however, that the French monarchy owed its spiritual character, its religious basis which was one of the causes of its survival amongst principalities jealous of its success or indifferent to its failure. The traditions of the sacred character of the monarchy, derived from Biblical, Roman, and German sources alike which had almost died out in the Merovingian era, were revived for the benefit of Pepin and Charlemagne and since that date had grown stronger and more definite. When Charles the Bald was anointed by the Archbishop of Sens in 848 he had received from him the crown and sceptre and from that time the consecration ceremony was immutably determined. The unction, a ceremony of Biblical origin, was particularly important. The king was anointed on the head and various parts of his body and was entitled to the Chrism, a mixture of oil and balsam. By right of this he could claim all the privileges of a bishop. Further popular belief maintained that the Chrism in the coronation vial at Rheims had been brought to Saint Remy by a dove for the baptism of Clovis. This legend increased the prestige of the kings of France and of Rheims very greatly and in the eleventh century the latter became fixed as the place of coronation.¹

The document which has come down to us on the coronation of Philip I ² when he was associated with his father in the kingship in 1059 bears all the marks of authenticity and shows very clearly the predominantly religious and ecclesiastical character of the ceremony which bound the new king to the Church for ever. The Archbishop of Rheims called on him to repeat the following formula:—

"I Philip, by the grace of God soon to be King of France, on the day of my ordination promise, in the sight of God and his Saints, that I will maintain inviolate for everyone of you and for all the

¹ CLXIX, bk. i, chap. ii; bk. ii, chap. ii; app. iii.
² H. F., xi. 32. This document was drawn up at a later date during the first quarter of the twelfth century (Proo., ch. I, p. xxiv, and n. 2). Hans Schreuer has published again the Ordines ad consecrandum regem of the thirteenth century with a minute study DXXIX, DC, DCL. Cf. Lot, Derniers Carolingiens, 1891, pp. 212-13.
churches under your charge their canonical privileges, their legal rights and their security in Justice; that, with the help of God, I will defend you to the utmost as a king must defend every bishop and church in the kingdom committed to him. Further I promise to the people over whom I am given authority that I will use it solely in the execution of the laws which are their right."  

This constitutes an important treaty for both parties. The Church gains solemn guarantees and can claim the power of making kings: The king henceforward “rules other mortals by Divine Grace”. The unction places him outside the world of men, apart. Humble folk realizing the sacred character of the king can find no distinction between him and the bishop. When the Chancery of Louis VII declared that kings and priests are associated by the unction of the Holy Chrism it fell but little short of those clerical and lay subjects who regarded the king as a priest. The enlightened clergy grew angry at the loquacious ignorance which could believe that coronation conferred sacerdotal powers, but bishops and even popes spread the confusion, encouraging kings to consider themselves as “Holy”. Naturally no French noble apart from the king, not even the powerful Duke of Normandy, enjoyed this exultation resulting from the ritual formality of the coronation ceremony. The king alone was consecrated with the unction.

The further recognition of the miraculous powers of the kingship was only a short advance probably made in the reign of Robert the Pious. This brutal and sensuous monarch sought absolution for all his excesses in the fervour of his devotions; he gained a reputation as a scholar and a theologian and loved to pass his time in the company of clerks singing hymns with them or to “take his place in the episcopal synods directing and discussing ecclesiastical affairs”. He was merciless to heretics, an ardent patron of monastic reform and of the Gilds for Promoting the Peace of God, welcoming everything which the Church welcomed.

His panegyrist, the monk Helgaud, tells how he cured the sick with the sign of the cross and in this way, with the pious complicity of churchmen, the legend of the royal healing power became established. At the beginning of the

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1 That is to say the administration of custom.
2 Formula of a charter of Robert: DXXI, 146.
3 See the documents cited in CLXXIX, 73 ff., 120 ff., 186 ff.
next century the tradition assumed its particular and limited form—the king, by touching for the king’s evil, became the curer of the scrofula.  

Here we have reached the point where popular support for the monarchy was reinforced by the theoretical conception of the Church on the two powers, the secular arm, the responsibilities and rights of kingship. The Church presented the king to the congregation which acclaimed him in the cathedral of Rheims as sovereign by Divine Right, absolute, responsible to God alone, charged with the sacred duty of defending the Church, administering good justice, and defending customary rights, peace, and the frontiers of the kingdom; the clerks of the royal courts never drew up a charter without reminding all of the divine mission of the monarchy.

They advised the sick to come to him for alleviation and fostered around him an atmosphere of religiosity. But the bishops, chancellors, and councillor’s of the curia were not the only forces creating this mystery of kingship. There was also a strong popular tradition along all the main pilgrim routes and around the holy places where crowds gathered and a common tradition, a national life, was being built up; poets, inside the Church and without, were singing the praises of “Gentle France” and her former glories and of the time when Charlemagne had conquered all the West. If we turn again to the Chanson de Roland to understand how it had the strength to live on, we shall perhaps gain a true idea of the monarchy in the eleventh century.

The exact date and place of the “story which Turuold tells” is of little significance to us. The story, written in the reign of Philip I or Charles the Fat in “France” or Normandy, can safely be used as an index of the position of the monarchy in France in the reign of Henry and Robert. It reveals a state of mind among the people which none of the early Capetians was in a position to create for himself, which went beyond their weak and inadequate personalities and had roots embedded in the distant past.

1 CLXXIX, bk. i, chap. i; DXXI, 34 ff., 169 ff., bk. iii, chap. iv.
2 CDXL, 1, 40 ff.
3 XXI, 10, 12–14, 42, 184–6, 190, 216, 300 etc. Cf. CLXII, particularly the conclusions of vols. i and iv; iv, 437 ff.; iii, 185 ff.; CCXVI, 79 ff.; DIII, 345 ff. and the additional notes 544; CCCLXI.
It shows, above all, that the ideal of national unity had not been completely forgotten in the eleventh century and that when a poet spoke of the Empire, a unity stretching far beyond the narrow confines of the Capetian kingship, he was generally understood. Turol and his predecessors reminded their audiences that Charlemagne had conquered Italy, that his councillors had included Germans as well as Bretons and even attributed to him an expedition to England. Through all this the focus of national life remains "Gentle France", the country with kindly skies where the folk are sober and well advised. There Charlemagne loved best to live and, when he sought the advice of his barons, "he valued most the opinions of the French." It is easy to visualize him there and who can fail to recognize him? "In the shade of a pine, close beside a sweet briar, a throne of pure gold is arranged; upon it sits the man who rules our gentle France, his beard is snow white, his head wreathed in flowers, his body speaks of perfect fitness, his face of mighty pride."

Two hundred years have passed since his birth; with bent head he sits and ponders; his speech is never hasty and it is his custom to speak in a leisurely fashion; he knows how best to lead discussion in his assemblies and his reproof for the idle chatterer is sharp. This wise and sober monarch is respectful towards women and deals gently with them, for he has a tender heart; in the terrible moment when he finds Roland once more, to find him dead, he faints away. Before all else he was a servant of God; after capturing Saragossa he ordered all the pagans to be taken to be baptized and if any man refused to comply he ordered him away to be hung, burnt, or to execution. He passed his life in war on the Infidels and God gave him no time for rest; his life was one of trouble and difficulty, but he had the protection of God who sent angels to talk with him, to preserve him, and encourage him in the day of battle. On his behalf miracles could be achieved—the course of the sun was stayed; the Great Emperor himself had sacerdotal powers and authority for the remission of sins.

Such was the myth of kingship which was fostered and developed by churchmen and poets.
ELECTIVE MONARCHY—ASSOCIATION IN THE THRONE

Since the deposition of the Carolingian Charles the Fat in 887 the principle of elective monarchy had triumphed once or twice during the tenth century over the tradition of hereditary succession. Eudo, Robert, Raoul, and Hugh Capet had become kings by election. The men who chose Hugh Capet in 987 had no intention of establishing a new dynasty and the right by which the Capets ascended the throne was the right of election, a principle clearly enunciated by the clergy and welcomed by the baronage. The coronation ceremony in the eleventh century gave only the sanction of ritual to this doctrine. The Archbishop of Rheims "chose the king" in accordance with the agreement previously arrived at by the great men of the kingdom before anointing and crowning him, and the subjects who thronged the cathedral, greater and lesser nobility alike, gave their consent by acclamation. Theoretically the unanimous choice of the whole kingdom was necessary for the election but, in fact, once the will of those who were of decisive importance was made clear, the approbation of others was merely a matter of form. Nevertheless the conventions of the chancery attached considerable importance to it; the first year of the reign only began on the day of consecration and this rule, closely related to the theory of election, was to last for two centuries.

In fact, then, this Capetian kingship whose supernatural character we have been illustrating was, at the same time, elective. To the modern mind that may present a strange contradiction but contemporaries found no cause for surprise. The very fact that the kingship was so closely comparable to the priesthood justified its non-hereditary character. How could churchmen deny the divine nature of an institution because it was elective? Even bishops and popes were appointed by election. The monk Richer attributes to the Archbishop Adalbéron a speech to the nobles in 987 which

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1 On all this question, see UDXX, I, bk. i, chap. ii; DCLXIV, ii, 46 ff., and the works of Hans Schreuer, particularly DXXII.

2 It has been clearly shown (DXVII, intro., p. xii) that the transmission of the royal power from the death of the father only began in 1223.
does not exactly represent the ideas of Adalbéron but it is quite in accordance with the principles of the Church. "The kingdom," he says, "has never made its choice by hereditary right. No one should be advanced to the throne who is not outstanding for intelligence and sobriety as well as for a noble physique strengthened by the true faith and capable of great souled justice." 1 The best man must reign and, we may add, he must be chosen by the "best" men.

This was the theory of the Church without modification or limitation. 2 Once he had been elected by a universal acclamation, which, in fact, represented the assent of a few individuals, and consecrated, he became king by the Grace of God commanding the implicit obedience of all. 3

This doctrine of the Church was equally acceptable to the instinctive anarchy of the nobility. The election of the king seemed quite natural to a baronage which regarded it as no more than an individual contract.

And so the only means that the Capetians could use to ensure that the crown stayed within their family was to provide for the election and coronation of their heir during their own lifetime. For three hundred years they were fortunate enough to have sons and practiced a system of association in the monarchy until the period when Philip Augustus felt that he had good reason to believe that he was strong enough to neglect the precaution. In 987 there was a very recent precedent to hand. The Caroling Lothair distrusted the ambitions of his brother, and in 979 he had associated his son Louis V in the throne and had him consecrated. 4 When Hugh Capet was elected and enthroned he immediately demanded that the greater nobility should allow him to share his throne with his son Robert. This roused some opposition from Archbishop Adalbéron, and the expedition which Hugh was about to make against the Saracens in Spain was used as the main argument. In no other way could a peaceful succession to the throne be guaranteed in case of disaster. On Christmas Day of the same

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1 CXI, bk. iv, chap. xi, p. 192.
2 CCLXXX, 937 ff.; DCLXIII, 85 ff.
3 See the theories of Abbon de Fleury on the omnipotence of the elected king in his Collectio Canonum dedicated to the kings Hugh and Robert; i, 478-480.
year, Robert was crowned in the cathedral of Orleans, but we have no evidence to show whether he was anointed at the same time. Father and son reigned jointly without any division of territories or titles and without discord until Hugh expressed his opposition to the marriage of Robert and Bertha.\footnote{DXXI, 40, 49, 141, 142; CXXXI, 216, 241-2; CCLXI, 290 ff.}

After the death of his father Robert reigned as sole monarch for twenty years but after his repudiation of Bertha his private life was greatly disturbed by the evil intrigues of his wife Constance. In an age when manners were rude and passions strong, shrews were not infrequent and this one caused an amazing state of terror in the royal household. “When she promises evil there is certainly no reason to doubt her word,” writes Fulbert, Bishop of Chartres. In 1017 she demanded the consecration of her son Hugh and overrode all the objections of the nobles who said they could not see what useful purpose would be served.

Once he was king, Hugh fled from his mother’s ill treatment to live a life of plunder and die at the age of eighteen. Then Robert called together his bishops and barons to bestow the crown on his second son Henry but Constance pressed the claim of her own preference, the third. The principle of primogeniture had not yet been established in deciding the succession.\footnote{This was undisputed after the twelfth century.}

The suggestion made the bishops and barons very uneasy, for many reasons of widely differing character they would have preferred to avoid the issue. It was a strange and ominous thing “to make a man king while his father was still alive”. The powerful Duke of Aquitaine stayed away from Court in his anxiety not to estrange either king or queen. Bishop Fulbert came to Court to speak in favour of the elder son and a year later Henry was consecrated at Rheims. Nevertheless Fulbert did not dare to be present at the coronation for fear of Constance’s wrath. Her hatred of the young king was only intensified and, after the death of Robert the Pious, she used every means in her power to dethrone him. This was one occasion which showed how a premature coronation might guarantee an orderly succession. Not only was Henry I able to maintain his own position but
in 1059 he secured the consecration of his son Philip. In spite of the troubles which accompanied almost every accession, the system of association in the throne assured the continuance of the dynasty.

The young king was first "designated" and then solemnly crowned by the Church. The profession, read by Philip in the ritual of 1059, which has been transcribed above is followed by a declaration by the Archbishop of Rheims of the rights of his Church to chose the king and consecrate him in his office. His father gave his consent next and the Archbishop proclaimed his election by the acclamation of those present. Finally he proceeded to the consecration itself.2

When his father died the young king had himself crowned a second time and in fact he received the crown again every time he held a formal assembly, a Curia Coronata, but he was only consecrated once.

In this way the coronation of the young king designate brought about the return to the hereditary principle to the advantage of the house of Capet which was their only major political victory in the eleventh century. It was at one and the same time a victory for the family prestige and the principle of monarchy, for the bishops and barons who were not yet in antagonism to the king did not dare to neglect being present at the ceremony. For this one day there was a return to the time of which the poets spoke when the baronage of "Gentle France" all came together around the Emperor.

VIII

THE COURT

The early Capetians had neither the wish nor the ability to change the traditions of the Carolingian Court, either in theory or practice, in the routine of everyday life, or the pageantry of days of festival. Their court is a shrivelled and foreshortened reflection of the palace whose ideal form was

1 DXXI, 71-83; CDXL, i, 79-81; DCIX, 45 ff.
2 CXXII, 2-4.
sketched by Hincmar long ago. The life of the king continued to be nomadic because he had to take advantage of the resources of all his demesne in turn and his right to hospitality without overburdening any one district. He occupied the ancient palaces of the Carolingians in Francia and built several new ones. Robert, for example, rebuilt the palace of La Cité in Paris. Paris, however, is not yet the most important of the royal towns, Orleans is the “King’s principal residence”.

The Capetians journeyed from palace to palace, from abbey to abbey, with their household, their records, and their seal and, wherever they were, there was the “Court”, the centre of monarchy, the centre of monarchical administration we would have said if that had been anything but embryonic.

The queen consort and the queen mother whose political activities are frequently apparent, and the sons and brothers of the king, all take part in the work of government— a part that is frequently productive of dissatisfaction and disorder. Their services are all the more embarrassing because he has no force of officers carefully chosen and trained in the execution of the royal commands. We have very little knowledge of the “domestici”, that official nucleus which consisted of both ministers, secretaries, and councillors, who travelled with the king and those bishops and nobles who came to court and were retained there for some long time on account of a desire to avoid dangerous and tedious journeys as much as possible. Fulbert of Chartres must be numbered among these. Even from his episcopal see he sent advice to Robert the Pious. Among these “domestici” was an undefined group who at a later period would be called the chief officers of the crown and their position was very vague. Their names appear among the witnesses of charters together with those of barons or bishops. The complete lack of any unity among these signatures undoubtedly reflects the prevailing disorder and uncertainty. At court, as in the administration of the royal demesnes, the Carolingian order was crumbling and the Capetian system was not yet established.

At the important festivals, and from time to time as

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1 For all the next passage see CDXXXII, passim; DXXI, bk. ii, chap. iv; CDXL, vol. i; CDLXXXVI, chap. iii.

2 XLIV, 454, 457-460, 470, etc.
necessary, the king summoned a “full court” to meet, including the barons and bishops either of a certain region or possibly of the whole kingdom. Although we know very little of the placita and conventus of the tenth century we can easily believe that this was nothing new. As a result of the weakness of the monarchy, however, the full court of the Capetians was even farther from our idea of a representative political assembly than a similar gathering under the Carolingians, for the king invited whomever he pleased and the magnates, living a long way from court, did not inconvenience themselves to attend. Even on the occasion of a particularly solemn reunion such as a consecration there was never a full attendance of the nobility or even of the episcopacy.

The assembly did not meet to legislate, for there were no laws common to the whole kingdom; neither did it meet to raise finance for the crown, for there was no taxation and the king had to depend on the revenues of his demesnes and the regalian rights. Then surely, at least, it met to assist the king in maintaining peace and doing justice! That is the ambitious claim of the theorist Abbon. “Since it is the duty of the king to understand thoroughly what is going on all over the kingdom,” he writes, “it is surely essential for him to seek the advice and the agreement of the leading men of the realm both spiritual and temporal.” He can only attack evil with their “co-operation and advice”.¹ This celebrated text seems hardly less an expression of the ideal, or at least the obsolete, than the one in which Richer describes Hugh Capet as “making decrees and putting laws into execution in accordance with royal custom.” It is true that barons and bishops assisted the king in judging certain important cases but when a magnate such as the Count of Anjou or Chartres refused to appear to answer a charge the king could do nothing to punish his contumacy.

Even if the first summons was obeyed and condemnation followed it was always possible to withdraw from court and defend the rights to privileges by force of arms. The king can be in fact the fount of justice only when, through the strength of his army or the power of his baronage, he can execute the sentences of his court. At this period he was dependent on the services of the feudal host to conduct a

¹ I, 478.
campaign or to carry out a simple matter of police work. He was forced to bargain for that service with his vassals and its regular performance was by no means certain.

The general courts were summoned by the first three Capetians very largely to gain support for the ambitious foreign policy on which they had embarked. They sought to be recognized among the sovereigns of Europe. They exchanged embassies with the eastern Emperor and the kings of England and promised assistance to the Spanish Christians. Henry I married a Russian, the daughter of the Grand Duke of Kiev; his father, Robert the Pious, had met the Emperor Henry II, the Holy, at Ivois and Mouzon from 6th–11th August, 1028, at a highly ostentatious and ceremonious gathering of prelates and nobles where they had talked of ecclesiastical reform and the establishment of the Peace of God throughout Christianity.

A permanent alliance with the emperors of Germany remained however an idle dream. During the eleventh century the Capetians began to demand the return of Lorraine, but the emperors so far from receiving this suggestion sympathetically were seeking to add the rest of the Middle Kingdom established by the Treaty of Verdun to their domains. Robert the Pious and his son Henry I for their part envisaged, at certain periods, a policy of eastward expansion based on the dukes of Lorraine and other faithful vassals. Robert tried to prevent the extension of imperial suzerainty to the Rhone but the mad expansion policy of Eudo II, Count of Blois and Chartres, in rebellion against the King of France and at war with the Emperor resulted in the loss of the kingdom of Burgundy; from the district around Maçon to the Mediterranean, from the valley of the Aoste to Forez, the whole of south-eastern Gaul was reunited to the Empire though only by an extremely loose bond (1033–4). Conrad, who also succeeded in becoming King of Italy, founded the German hegemony in Europe, the anarchy of the French princes reduced the Capetians to impotence.2

The early kings of the new dynasty were, then, in every respect comparable to the Carolingians. They had exceedingly

1 DXXI, bk. iii, chap. v; CDXL, ii, 215–241; CLXXXII, 19 ff.; CCIV, 18 ff.; DXXXXII, 1st part, chaps. iii–v.

2 To avoid any exaggeration on this point, see DCLXXII, 21–2.

3 CDXL, vol. i, 87–9; vol. ii, 205–6, 252–3; CCXXXIV, iv, 103–7.
high ideas of the authority which they believed they held of
God. So far from devoting themselves to the modest policy
of newcomers, they developed all the pretensions of legitimate
sovereigns, the successors of Charlemagne in the kingdom of
the West. Nevertheless, the first of them, Hugh Capet,
had no easy task to maintain his position. With the passage
of time they became even more threatened within their own
demesnes by robber lords who began to build impregnable
castles; Robert and Henry I instead of devoting their
energies to the creation of an administration which met
their needs and a small reliable force which could make them
masters in their own house took up projects out of all
relation to their means of realizing them.

To gain an adequate idea of the monarchy at this period
we need only consider the fact that in spite of its weakness,
it excited only very rarely a spirit of irony among its contempo-
raries. They took advantage of its weakness but they did
not despise it. We have said what were the sources,
eclesiastical and popular, of its prestige. Even the barons
recognized that it constituted a superior power of a different
character to their own as long as it was prepared to be
exploited by them. This is revealed very clearly in a curious
document which has come down to us, the letter written
to King Robert by Eudo II, the Count of Chartres.¹ The king
was seeking to take some of his territories into his own hands
and Eudo in the midst of an armed defence of his rights wrote
a letter of protest to Robert. Why did the king, without
giving him a chance to state his case, seek to deprive him
of a fief of which he had previously recognized his legitimate
possession by hereditary right? Eudo had served him
"in his palace, in his wars, and on his journeys", and even
if he had displayed some impatience and committed some
imprudent acts when the king had sought to dispossess
him, that was only to be expected. Punning on the term
"honour" which applied to a group of fiefs at that period
Eudo declared that he cannot live "dishonoured". He asked
nothing better than to be reconciled with Robert whose
benevolent regard he craved, believing that the king had
been led astray by "false council". "This discord, my lord,

¹ CCCLXXII, 287 ff.; cf. DXXI, 239-243; CDXXXII, app. xi; CDXXXIII,
163-4.
will destroy your office root and branch, justice and peace alike, and I therefore beg and implore that clemency which is natural to you... permission to become reconciled with you either by the mediation of your ministers or of the princes."

This letter, in a tone that is at the same time humble and insolent, portrays exactly the attitude of the principes Galliae to the first Capetian monarch and their ideas of the nature of the Curia Regis. In a period when the thoughts of princes and their advisers were equally lacking in polish and boldness, when considerations of reason or ordinary common sense were outweighed by the violence of passions, or the memories of precedents of the routine of an obsolete past, it was by no means easy for the kings of France to find the appropriate direction for their policy. The very prestige which they enjoyed lessened still further their range of vision, while the dangers of their situation were growing more intense.

After the death of Henry I a new threat developed. In 1066 a great event took place which changed the course of the history of western Europe when the Duke of Normandy became King of England.
CHAPTER II

THE ANGLO-SAXON MONARCHY. THE DUCHY OF NORMANDY

I

THE PRIMITIVE SOCIAL ELEMENTS OF ENGLAND

About the end of the thirteenth century, there were some very striking resemblances between the institutions of monarchy and the theory and practice of royal power in the France of Philip the Bel and the England of Edward I. It was merely a point at which two systems met. They had not pursued a parallel development before and, subsequently, their histories were widely different. Only in a study of their sources can the explanation of these divergencies be found.

In the eleventh century and still, to a large extent, in the twelfth, the kingdom of France was only a mass of independent principalities surrounding the royal demesne united by little but theory. There was no reason, before the reign of Philip Augustus, to believe that the Capetian monarchy had the power to become oppressive. The relations between those who exercised the remains of public authority were focused in feudal homage and the administration was on the verge of anarchy.

There was no political society comparable to the one that was forming in England. We must realize clearly that there is no basis for the belief that the English nobility deliberately and consciously established parliamentary liberties for they were activated, throughout the Middle Ages, by the spirit of Feudalism; it would be equally untrue to suggest that there was anything approaching the modern parliament in the thirteenth century. Nevertheless there was a social structure with its skeleton in every district from a very early date, popular courts, and a tradition of paying central taxes which provided a vague national unity, the basis on which the Crown could build the state at a later date and also the nucleus of a resistance to the undue growth of its power.