

A GLANCE AT THE REIGN OF ST. LOUIS.

THE reign of the holy grandson of Philip Augustus has been rightly styled the keystone of the arch of French history. Certainly much had been effected for the consolidation of the French monarchy when Philip Augustus defeated, at Bouvines (July 27, 1214), the trebly larger forces of the German Otho IV. and the English John Lackland. By that victory the standard of the Lilies, which for some years had waved only over the space which is covered by five of the modern departments of France,¹ again threw its protecting folds over all the ancient provinces excepting Aquitaine. But it was in the reign of St. Louis that the lineaments of the later French society were drawn; and it was in the person of that everlasting glory of the French monarchy that the world beheld an incarnation of all that was most honorable, most redolent of justice, in fine, most Christian, in the royalty of the Middle Age. This reign demonstrated that the great theologians of the Church had not formulated the vagaries of a dream when they conceived the idea of a Christian royalty legitimatized, not only by sacerdotal consecration, but by justice in its exercise, and by a proper participation, on the part of the governed, in public affairs. The salient features of the career of St. Louis, the grandest of the nearly innumerable Christian heroes of France, are at the command of the student;² in these few pages we propose to treat of some points which, although essential to a proper appreciation of the character of the royal confessor, and to even a moderate understanding of the period in which he lived, are ignored by the authors whose works are consulted by the average reader. We shall touch upon the sanctity of Louis IX. only by implication; for nothing in the domain of history is more certain than the opinion of that sanctity, held by the contemporaries of the monarch, whether Frenchmen or foreigners, Christians or pagans. Neither shall we attempt to detail even the principal events of this charming and edifying life; but we may be permitted to preface the fulfilment of our main purpose by a brief summary of the results of a policy which, although less theatrically impressive

¹ Seine, Seine et Loire, Seine et Marne, Oise and Loiret; 120 by 90 miles in extent.

² Michelet: *Histoire de France*, ch. 8, Paris, 1830; Villeneuve: *Histoire de Saint Louis*, Paris, 1840; Mignet: *La Feudalité et les Institutions de Saint Louis*, Paris, 1850; Cantù: *San Luigi di Francia*, in the Collection of Biographies attached to that author's *Storia Universale*, 9th Turin edition, 1862; Lecoy de la Marche: *Saint Louis, Son Gouvernement, et Sa Politique*, Paris, 1891.

than that followed by certain of the crowned disposers of national destinies, was probably unique in an utter absence of reasons for blame. From the very beginning of his reign, Louis IX. resolved to restrain the abusive domination of the great vassals of the crown; but law and justice formed the invariable basis of his conduct. The same scrupulousness led him to doubt as to the entire legitimacy of certain conquests of some of his predecessors to the detriment of the kings of England, and he resolved to yield something for the sake of peace. By the treaty of Abbeville, in 1259, he voluntarily ceded to Henry III. of England part of the territories which that monarch reclaimed from the conquests of Philip Augustus; but in return he obtained the recognition, as inalienable from the French monarchy, of Anjou, Normandy, Maine, Touraine, Berri and Poitou. The English sovereign also engaged to do homage to the king of France, as to his liege and suzerain lord, for all his possessions in the kingdom of France. When the dissensions between Henry III. and his barons threatened to become interminable, the reputation of Louis for probity caused the contestants to appeal to him as arbitrator. In 1264 both parties argued their claims before the saint at Amiens, submitting to his judgment, although only for a time. In his conduct toward Frederick II. of Germany, that most virulent in a line of emperors, so many of whom were as so many running sores in the visible body of the Church, the saintly monarch demonstrated that if the Holy Roman Emperors of the German line had ignored the fact that their sole reason for existence was their obligation to be Defenders of the Holy See, that sublime privilege had devolved on the Eldest Sons of the Church. In his relations with the Orient the crowned hero showed himself a missionary, as well as an armed defender of the Christian faith; he spared no exertion, no expense, in aiding the missions which the sons of Sts. Dominic and Francis had established among the Photian and Nestorian schismatics, and among the Saracens and Tartars. In the administration of the internal affairs of his kingdom, St. Louis was an energetic and prudent reformer; there was not, in all France, a bailiff, a seneschal, or a provost who was not made to feel that his office was a solemn charge for the benefit of the people. The reign of St. Louis was pre-eminently one of justice. The royal tribunals became sure refuges for oppressed innocence; and the king himself heard whatever case a subject desired to be considered by him. From one end of the kingdom to the other, the proudest lord hastened to undo a wrong when he heard the peasant murmur: "If the king only knew of that!" Students of financial questions know that anything like a well-regulated system of governmental finance is of very modern origin; but St. Louis

so regulated the reception of revenue, so accurately was every account verified, that never, during his reign, was there ordered an extraordinary tax. And let the statesmen of our day note that to our times must not be credited the invention of that famous panacea: "No taxation without representation." In 1256 this "cowled king" decreed in favor of the *bonnes villes* of his dominions that no tax should be levied on them without their consent. If the reader is curious to know how much St. Louis effected for the amelioration of the lot of the serfs, and how he emancipated those of his own royal domain; if it would interest the social economist to learn all that this crowned saint of the Middle Age effected for the encouragement of art, for the improvement of agriculture, etc., we refer him to the eloquent but judicial narrative of Lecoy de la Marche. When the beautiful picture has been examined, it may occur to the observer that it is strange that one is not oppressed by the sight of some disagreeable shadows, behind which some possible miseries may lurk. Nearly every other biography furnishes some occasion for adverse criticism of its subject; but that of St. Louis refuses to a critic the exercise of his choicest prerogative, and for the simple reason that Louis IX. was more than a worthy husband and father, a consummate statesman, a successful general, and an excellent sovereign. He was also a saint. Such a phenomenal combination has been witnessed in only three or four instances in the history of the world; for while it is true that, at least in the Middle Age, there were many royal saints—considering the comparative fewness of royal personages, more than from any other condition of life—very seldom have other saintly royalties filled all the positions which St. Louis occupied.¹

I.

It is impossible to attain to a correct conception of the character and influence of St. Louis, or to any accurate knowledge of the period in which he lived, if one does not appreciate properly the theory concerning the nature and origin of the royal power which was then in vogue. And among moderns, especially among those whose ideas of history have been derived from Protestant

¹ Speaking of the Venerable Mary Christina of Savoy, mother of King Francis II. of the two Sicilies, a writer in the *Civiltà Cattolica* (1859) says: "In the Ages of Faith sanctity shone on the thrones of kings, and in royal halls; and perhaps more than in the homes of the lowly and in the cells of religious. Then Italy, France, Spain, Germany, England, Scotland, Hungary and Denmark gave to the Church so many saints who were either kings or queens, or royal princes or princesses, that, considering the fact that the number is small of those persons who occupy so elevated a position, it may be seen that reigning families furnished more saints than were produced by any other condition of life."

and rationalistic sources, how many are there who understand the meaning of that phrase, the "divine right of kings," which, with some show of reason, they regard as indicative of that *toto caelo* difference which subsists between mediæval days and our own? Very few; and, nevertheless, there are some who have read, to say nothing about many minor struggles between royal autocracy and the protectress of the peoples, much concerning that perennial and soul-sickening struggle between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperors of the German line—a contest the sole object of which was, on the part of the Pontiffs, to force the emperors to avow that between them and God there was a divinely appointed power. If these pages come to the notice of any persons who believe, with the immense majority of Protestants, that the "divine right of kings," as they understand the formula, was the theory held by jurists in the Middle Age, and then taught by the Church, they must learn that the Church has never made any definition concerning either a mediate or an immediate communication of ruling power. The Church has simply presented the dogma revealed in the Pauline declaration that all power comes from God. But the most reliable and most authoritative doctors and theologians of the Church have taught that power has its source in the nation; that power comes from the nation; and that the nation gives, in some manner and in unison with God, that power to princes or other rulers of the peoples. Hear St. Chrysostom, as he comments on the Pauline text: "Is every ruler established by God? I do not say that he is; for I am not speaking of any particular rulers, but of the thing in itself. I say that it is an institution of Divine Wisdom that some command, and others obey; and that thus human affairs do not go on in haphazard fashion, the peoples being agitated like the waves of the sea. The Apostle does not say that there is no prince who does not come from God; but speaking of the thing itself, he says that there is no power, unless from God."¹ But hearken to the Angel of the Schools, who, to put the matter very mildly, is the best accredited of all the Catholic theologians, and upon whose judgments all other theologians rely, when they approach this matter *ex professo*. St. Thomas, who was a contemporary of St. Louis, tells us that the legislative power resides in the nation, in the people, or in him who has received it from the people.² He says the same in regard to the coercive power.³ He insists that in certain conditions of society, the ruler has power to make laws, only because he represents the nation—in *quantum gerit personam multi-*

¹ *Homilia XXIII. in Epist. ad Romanos.*

² *Summa Theol.*, 1 a., 2 æ., q. 90, a. 3, *in corp.*

³ *Ibid.*, q. 90, a. 3, ad 2 um.

tudinis.¹ A little further on he says that in a well-ordered state the governing power belongs to all—*principatus ad omnes pertinet*, inasmuch as all can vote and be elected.² After St. Thomas of Aquino, probably Suarez would dispute with Bellarmine the honor of leading the schools. The opinion of Suarez concerning the divine right of kings can be gathered from his "Treatise on Laws," and from an apposite work written in reply to King James I. of England, who, an earnest champion of that doctrine which is falsely supposed to be Catholic teaching, had taken up the pen in an attempted refutation of Bellarmine's defense of the really Catholic position. Listen to Suarez: "It must be admitted that the power to rule is not given by nature to any one person in particular; being, rather, resident in the community. This is the *common opinion*, and it is *certain*. It is the teaching of St. Thomas."³ And can anything be clearer than the following? "Whenever the civil power resides in any man, in any prince, it has emanated, by legitimate and ordinary right, from the people and the community, either immediately or mediately; and in no other way can it be a legitimate."⁴ Again: "When the civil power is found in this man, it is the result of a gift of the nation, as I have proved; and in that respect, the power is of human right. And if the government of this or that nation or province is monarchical, it is such because of human institution; and therefore the power also is of human origin. And what proves the matter more strongly, the power of the ruler is more or less great, according to the agreement between him and the nation."⁵ Now listen to the reply of Suarez to his Protestant Majesty: "Here the most serene king not only upholds a *new and singular opinion* (that of the *immediate and direct divine right of kings*), but he violently attacks Cardinal Bellarmine because his Eminence affirmed that monarchs, unlike the Sovereign Pontiffs, do not receive their authority immediately from God. His Majesty holds that a prince does not receive his power from the people, but immediately from God; and he tries to support his assertion with arguments and facts which I shall examine in the following chapter. Now, although this controversy does not turn directly on matters of faith, since neither Scripture nor patristic tradition determines anything concerning the subject, nevertheless the matter ought to be treated carefully, firstly, because it may furnish an occasion of error in others; secondly, because the king's opinion, such as he establishes it, and because of its object, is *new and singular*, and seems to have been expressly invented in order to enhance the temporal, and to diminish the

¹ *Ibid.*, q. 97, ad 3, ad 3 um.

² *De Leg.*, lib. iii., cap. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, q. 105, a. 1, *in corp.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, lib. iii., cap. 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, cap. 4.

spiritual power; and, thirdly, because we contend that the opinion of the illustrious cardinal is *ancient, received, true, and necessarily to be admitted.*"¹ When such was the opinion of theologians like the Angelic Doctor, Bellarmine, and Suarez, we are not surprised on hearing Beaumanoir, in the thirteenth century, and Marsilio of Padua in the early fourteenth, asserting that the people were the first sovereign, and that from the people the king derived his right to make laws.

Nevertheless, the sovereigns of the Middle Age, especially in France, were popularly regarded as, in some sort, images of the Deity; in those days men respected authority. In France, the holy unction which the monarch received at Rheims gave to him, in the popular imagination, an almost sacerdotal character; hence in the *Chanson de Roland* we see Charlemagne giving a solemn blessing to his army. It is very probable, remarks a judicious critic of our day,² that this idea of the quasi-divinity of royalty came from the principle of Aristotle—a philosopher then almost worshipped in the schools—that the monarchical form of government is the most conformable to the order of nature, since all nature is ruled by one God. So thought Gerson, repeating the words of Homer, "Ὀυχ ἀγαθὸν πολυκίρανιᾶ εἰς χοίρανος ἔστω—It is not good to have many leaders; let us have but one." As to hereditary monarchy, the principle was by no means absolute in mediæval France. Louis VIII. was the first monarch whose father had not procured his coronation during his own life; all the Capetians, down to Philip Augustus, had found it necessary to take this measure in order to secure the succession to their eldest sons. At that time, not only in France, but also in Italy, Hungary and Germany, there was always a menace in the ears of a reigning prince; he knew that misconduct or tyranny might cause the royal dignity to be transferred to some other family. However, with the advent of St. Louis, the hereditary principle was definitely accepted by the French; the Christian prestige of this prince was so communicated to his race that to be the heir of St. Louis was equivalent to being the future wearer of his crown. And now a word as to the measure of the royal authority during the Middle Age. Elinand, a Cistercian monk of the diocese of Beauvais, in the time of St. Louis, whose knowledge and prudence is lauded by all his literary contemporaries, and whose political ideas are regarded as having helped to form the policy of the holy monarch, thus speaks of the power of a Christian sovereign in his day: "The ancient code (the pagan Roman) utters a tremendous lie, when it pronounces that the mere will of the prince has the force of law.

¹ *Defensio Fidei Adversus Anglicanæ Sectæ Errores*, lib. iii., cap. 2.

² M. Chas. Jourdain, in his *La Royauté Française et Le Droit Populaire*.

. . . . It is not at all strange that, among us, the king is not allowed to have a private treasury; for the king does not belong to himself, but to his subjects."¹ And lest the reader may think that this theory of Elinand is a mere isolated opinion, we subjoin a remark of the most celebrated publicist of that day, Cardinal James de Vitry, bishop of Tusculum and dean of the Sacred College: "There is no security for a monarch, from the very moment when men find that they are not secure from him."² Then we hear St. Thomas proclaiming that the good of the community is the sole end of a government; that a monarch is not enthroned for his own satisfaction, but for the public weal; that a king must be the good shepherd of his people; that, in fine, no law should be considered as such, unless it be "a reasonable regulation, promulgated by him who has the care of the community, and directed to the public good—*quædam rationis ordinatio ad bonum commune, ab eo qui curam communitatis habet promulgata.*"³ One of the most ardent partisans of hereditary monarchy was the great Gerson; but he wrote: "He errs who thinks that a king can use the persons and goods of his subjects as his pleasure dictates; or that he can load his people with taxes, when the public weal does not call for such burdens. Such conduct is that of a tyrant, not that of a king."⁴ It is true that in the time of Philip the Fair, the hero of the sad and disgraceful episode of Anagni, certain jurists tried to flatter their royal master with the notion that his authority was unbounded; that it was even independent of the tiara.⁵ But we must remember that between the reigns of St. Louis and Philip the Fair there had intervened the reign of Philip III. (the Rash); that then had really begun the end of the Middle Age, and the disintegration of its vital and most characteristic elements. During the reign of St. Louis, and during many previous centuries, no Christian publicist would have dared to utter such sentiments as began to be current when the *populus Christianus* began to give way to the divided Christian peoples, and when other elements than the Christian faith began to sway the nations. In the palmy days of the Middle Age the governmental ideal was an absence of both despotism and demagogy.

St. Louis was not twelve years of age when, by the premature death of his father, Louis VIII., he was called to the throne of France in 1226. The political condition of France was very dif-

¹ In a sermon by Elinand, recorded in the edition of the works of Vincent of Beauvais, published by the Dominicans of Douai, in 1624.

² Latin MS. No. 17,509, folio 103, in the National Library of France, cited by Lecoy de la Marche, *loc. cit.*

³ See Jourdain's *La Philosophie de Saint Thomas*, i., 407.

⁴ Jourdain, *Ibid.*

⁵ Goldast, *Monarchia Sancti Romani Imperii*, ii., 96.

ferent from that which the kingdom had presented in the time of Charlemagne. That king of the Franks, placed by Pope St. Leo III. at the head of a new empire which had nothing but the name in common with that of pagan Rome, had fulfilled his mission by combining the heterogeneous elements entrusted to his care, so that he left behind him neither Romans nor Franks, neither Gauls nor barbarians; but a *populus Christianus*, in a unity which required for its maintenance merely the moral leadership of the Roman Pontiff, and in that unity the political and social organization of the Middle Age was established.¹ In the year 962 Pope John XII. transferred the Holy Roman Empire from the French to the Germans; but thereafter the emperors were merely kings of the Germans and of whatever other peoples happened to be subject to the titular of the nonce, he enjoying over other sovereigns only the primacy of dignity. When the crown of France passed from the Carolingians to the Capetians, a radical change had been effected in the royal condition. Under both the Merovingians and the early Carolingians, the dukes and counts, in various parts of the kingdom, had been merely administrators for the king; but toward the end of the ninth century they bought up or appropriated the proprietorship of their territories. Thus arose feudalism in France, the new proprietors soon confounding, in good or in bad faith, the right of the land-owner with that of sovereignty. In this new state of affairs, in which the sovereignty was attached to the land instead of to the individual, the king was a person of small consideration; for even his residence, the Ile de France, belonged to the Count of Paris. Even when the will of the nation raised Hugh Capet, Count of Paris and Duke of France, to the royal throne in 986, his own services and those of his father, Hugh the Great, could not obtain for him better conditions than that he should be full sovereign in his own county of Paris, and have the commandment of all forces in war. Of course all the other princes swore homage to the new king as their "suzerain." From the date of Hugh Capet's accession down to the time of Louis XI., the main object of every king was to enlarge his own peculiar domain by purchase or alliance, and to augment the attributes of his suzerainty. The first successors of Hugh Capet, namely, Robert, Henry I., and Philip I., effected much in this really praiseworthy struggle; that great minister, the Benedictine abbot Suger, did still more in favor of Louis VI. and Louis VII.; but Philip Augustus struck two mortal blows against feudalism. The first was when he caused the king of England, his most redoubtable vassal, to answer, before the peers of France, for the crime of mur-

¹ Lecoy de la Marche, *loc. cit.*, p. 27.

dering his own nephew; confiscating thereafter to the benefit of the French crown, nearly all the fiefs which the English monarch had held in France, namely, Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou. The second blow was when, by the victory of Bouvines, he destroyed forever the arrogant pretensions of the German emperors in regard to France. It is true that Philip Augustus feared for the permanency of his work; but God had decreed that his daughter-in-law, the saintly Blanche of Castile, should carry it on during her regency, and should so train her son, St. Louis, that he would perfect it by the exercise of an ability and an honesty which exceeded those of his grandfather. In the fulfilment of his task St. Louis relied little on the lasting effects of conquest; nay, he was so unworldly that he would not regard as legitimate any gain accruing to his kingdom, which had not been sealed by a perfect concord between the parties concerned. The work of consolidating the Capetian monarchy on the ruins of feudalism was indeed consummated only by Louis XI., the very antipode of St. Louis; but the latter monarch had contributed more to that end than all of his predecessors united. And how different was the policy of St. Louis from that of his foxy successor! Certainly Louis XI. was not the character which most modern historians describe for the worshipers of the nineteenth century; nor was he at all the one who crawls along the modern stage as an incarnation of royal cruelty and deceit. But where Louis XI. was astute, St. Louis was frank; where Louis XI. was unjust, St. Louis observed an equity which would have excited the derisive laughter of a Cavour or a Palmerston, if the Middle Age could have tolerated those who are grandmasters of "diplomacy" in our day. Finally, the policy of St. Louis was less expensive than that of Louis XI.; and since it was incomparably less expensive than the policies now in vogue, our utilitarians should accord to it their heartfelt admiration.

II.

In the palmy days of Gallicanism, and of its contemptible sister-school, German courtier-theologism, one often heard the name of St. Louis cited as that of an opponent of the "encroachments of Rome." Even in our own time, when both of these schools were dead, and waiting for the Vatican Council to bury them, theists of celebrity *et id genus omne* were wont to utter the same absurdity with complacent solemnity. Poor Renan said: "The Church had commanded kings to obey; Philip Augustus *and St. Louis protested*, and Philip the Fair dared to resist."¹ That Philip Augustus protested against the order, issued by Pope Inno-

¹ *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, xxiv, 146.

cent III., to put away his concubine, and to restore Queen Ingelburga to her rights, is true; but he repented in time, and obeyed. That Philip the Fair resisted the just demands of Pope Boniface VIII. is also true; but he was obliged to acquiesce in the vindication of that Pontiff's conduct by the Fifteenth General Council. That St. Louis protested, in the sense in which Renan, Michelet, etc., use the term, is false. The principal, if not the sole, reason for supposing that St. Louis would have been a Gallican, if there had been such a thing in his day, is founded on an unauthentic document—that celebrated forgery which bears the pseudo-title of "Pragmatic Sanction."¹ Elsewhere we have done justice to this pretended edict of St. Louis,² and here we need only say that no true erudite of our day defends its authenticity. But there are some, for instance, Viollet and Wallon, who insist that even though St. Louis did not issue the supposed Sanction, he might have done so in all consistency; for, they contend, his principles were those defended in it. This curious theory was that of Bossuet, who did not fully credit the document. The great bishop of Meaux exclaimed to those who, even among his partisans, decried the authenticity of the Sanction: "Even though this Pragmatic were apocryphal, its doctrine ought not to be rejected."³ Let us see, therefore, what was the attitude of the grandest Christian of the thirteenth century toward the Holy See. This attitude will appear without distortion if we consult, not the prejudices of Henri Martin, Beugnot, Faure, or the rank and file of English authors, but those original sources, the neglect of which constitutes the capital sin of a historian. In this matter those sources are the official documents preserved in the *Tresor des Chartes*,⁴ and cited by Lecoy de la Marche; the pontifical letters collected by Rinaldi; many documents published by the Bollandists; and last, but by no means least, the "Registers of Pope Innocent IV.," comprising many hitherto unknown illustrations of the reign of that Pontiff, especially in the matter of his relations with St. Louis, which M. Elie Berger recently unearthed from the archives of the Vatican and of the National Library of France.⁵ In the year

¹ The title is absurd in the premises. The word "Pragmatic" is derived from the Greek *πράγμα* and the Latin *sancio*; and it would be appropriate if the edict sanctioned some previous ordinance. But this document sanctions nothing.

² In our *Studies in Church History*, Vol. iii., ch. 9.

³ *Defensio Declarationis Cleri Gallicani*, pt. ii., bk. 2, ch. 9.

⁴ In the National Archives of France.

⁵ *Les Registres d'Innocent IV.*, Paris, 1884-1887. This monumental work merited the "prix Gobert," from the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres. M. Berger's two introductions, one historical and the other diplomatical, form a mine for the polemic whose duties bring him to a study of this important period of European history; and the entire work is another proof of the sagacity which dictated the establishment of the École Française in Rome.

1235 St. Louis attained his majority, and from that time he governed his kingdom by his own sole authority, although he took frequent counsel from his wise and holy mother until the end of her life, in 1252. One of the first communications held with him by the then reigning Pontiff, Gregory IX., was of a nature to indicate that his Majesty of France was a personage not merely ordinarily *grata* to the Holy See; we find the Pontiff conceding the extraordinary privilege of exemption from any possible interdict to the private chapels of the royal family, and what was still more wonderful in that age, the king and his family were allowed to communicate with the excommunicated without consequence of censure.¹ At the renewal of the struggle between the Holy See and Frederick II., that German emperor who proclaimed that "the world had suffered from three impostors, Moses, Christ, and Mahomet," we hear Pope Gregory IX. asking for aid and counsel from his Most Christian Majesty, invoking the ancient friendship between the tiara and the lilies, and concluding: "Just as the tribe of Juda was called to a special blessing from among the other tribes, so the kingdom of France is illustrious above all others through a divine prerogative of honor and grace. Just as the tribe of Juda, a figure of France, defeated and subjugated all its enemies, so the kingdom of France, fighting the battles of the Lord, and combating for the liberty of the Church in both the East and the West, delivered the Holy Land from the pagans under the leadership of your predecessors, reduced the empire of Constantinople to the Roman obedience, saved Rome herself from a multitude of perils, and conquered the pest of Albigensian heresy. Just as the tribe of Juda never abandoned the worship of the true God, so in the kingdom of France the Christian faith has never vacillated, devotion to the Church has never weakened, ecclesiastical liberty has never been imperilled."² Certainly the recipient of this praise had not yet shown any tendency to interfere with the prerogatives of the Holy See. And in the subsequent years his conduct during the struggle between the Church and the Empire proved his intense devotion to the Papacy. Undoubtedly he tried to mediate between the contending parties, for a love of peace was the dominant feature of his character; but his active sympathies were with the Supreme Pontiff of Christendom. Immediately on the arrival of the special legate of Pope Gregory IX. in France, the holy monarch ordered the publication of the anathema against Frederick which the prelate had brought; and he facilitated the levy of the tax on ecclesiastical benefices which was to furnish the means of combating the imperial enemy of the

¹ *Tresor des Chartes*, Archives Nationales, J. 684, 686.

² *Tresor*, Arch. Nat., J. 352; *Inventaire*, Num. 2835.

Church. The English chronicler, Matthew of Paris, tells us that the Pope wished St. Louis to do more; that he desired France to declare war against Frederick; and that when St. Louis refused, he annulled the election of one of the king's uncles, Pierre Charlot, to the bishopric of Noyon. But the truth is, as we gather from Baronio, that the Pontiff did not desire immediate war on the emperor, for he was about to try the effect of a council on the recalcitrant. As to the affair of Charlot, the election to the See of Noyon was annulled for reasons unconnected with the matter of Frederick II. This Charlot was a bastard son of Philip Augustus, and the Holy See had dispensed with the impediment *publicæ honestatis*, in order that the royal wish for his admittance to the priesthood might be gratified; but it was not the intention of the Pontiff that the higher dignities of the Church should be open to one who was tainted by infamous origin. When the Thirteenth General Council (First of Lyons) was convoked, and Frederick opposed its meeting by every means in his power, St. Louis adopted every means to further it. In the height of his insanity, the German seized the Papal legate and some French bishops who were accompanying him to Italy, maltreated them, and imprisoned them. Immediate preparations for war, however, on the part of France, induced him to give full satisfaction for the insult. Before the Council of Lyons could meet, Pope Gregory IX. died; and when his successor, Celestine IV., also died, after a reign of a few days, the intrigues of Frederick, more than probable infidel though he was, to raise himself to the Chair of Peter led to an "interpontificium" of nearly two years. Then St. Louis voiced the sentiments of Christendom, when he wrote to the Sacred College this very un-Gallican message: "Since there is a question of defending the independence of the Church, you can rely on the aid of France. Be firm; throw off the yoke which has pressed your necks so long!"¹ And here we would take advantage of an opportunity to show the utter unreliability of Matthew of Paris (formerly styled Matthew Paris), whenever that English chronicler undertakes to write of French affairs. He asserts that St. Louis threatened, in his letter to the cardinals, to choose a Pope by his own authority, *by virtue of a privilege to that effect conferred on St. Denis by Pope St. Clement*. A Pontiff was soon chosen in the person of Innocent IV., and one of his first acts was to assure the king of France of his affectionate respect: "God has already made your name great among the greatest." The Pope also besought the aid of his Eldest Son against the

¹ Hულიard-Bréholles; *Histoire Diplomatique de Frederic II.*, in introduction, page cciii. Paris, 1860.

perjured emperor, who was then conspiring against the personal freedom of the head of the Church.

The Thirteenth General Council met at Lyons in 1245, and by a unanimous vote of the synodals the Emperor Frederick II. was deposed. But one resource was open to the disconcerted prince ; he might induce the temporal rulers of Christendom to unite against the "usurpations" of the arrogant churchman who presumed to dictate to the salt of the earth. To gain the king of France to his views would be equivalent to a conquest of all the other sovereigns of Europe ; therefore, besides the circular which he sent to every monarch, he sent to St. Louis his chancellor, who was empowered to make the most brilliant promises. Frederick knew well the spirit which actuated many of the vassals of the French crown ; therefore he cunningly suggested that Louis should arbitrate in his cause, "together with his peers and barons, as became so grand a monarch and so powerful a state." He promised to give to the Church whatever satisfaction this tribunal should deem proper ; he would accompany the French king in his projected Crusade, and he would not lay down his arms until the entire kingdom of Jerusalem was conquered. In return, besides the revocation of his deposition, he would ask for only one little concession ; he was to be allowed to glut his imperial vengeance on the Lombards.¹ Naturally such terms were unacceptable to both Innocent IV. and St. Louis. The latter could not sit as an equal with those vassals whose pretensions he was combating ; but for the love of peace, and in the interest of the Crusade, he consented to intercede with the Pontiff. Innocent granted the requested interview ; and in November, 1245, the Most Christian King prostrated himself before the Sovereign Pontiff in the cloisters of the abbey of Cluny. The conferences lasted for fifteen days, Queen Blanche alone assisting. The Pontiff finally announced that he could not accept the conditions formulated by the culprit ; but in order to show that he was not averse to an ultimate reconciliation, he agreed to allow Frederick to wait upon him at Lyons, there to try to clear himself of the charges, especially of heresy and heinous violence, which the Christian world had made against him. It is not probable that either the Pope or the king believed that Frederick would dare to attempt a formal justification of his notorious crimes ; at any rate, the perverse man affected to regard the pontifical offer as a refusal of justice, and ere long St. Louis learned that he had resolved to march on Lyons, not for the purpose of conferring with the Pontiff, but in order to seize his sacred person. Then the disgusted monarch broke off all negotiations ;

¹ Huillard-Breholles, *loc. cit.*, p. cccvi.

he announced to the Pope his resolve to attack the excommunicated traitor, and would have led his intending crusaders across the Alps, had he not learned that Frederick had decided to remain in Italy, and had not the Pontiff ordered him to sheathe his sword. Probably we have adduced a sufficiency of proofs in the matter of attachment of St. Louis to the See of Rome; but it will not be amiss to present a few more instances of an utter absence of any "Gallican" ideas of a false independence on the part of this Catholic hero. Firstly, then, it has been asserted that Innocent IV. condemned a league which certain French barons formed for the purpose of upholding their own judicial decisions when they differed from those of the episcopal tribunals. But we reply with Wallon,¹ that St. Louis was foreign to this league, as is fully proved by the absence of his seal in the original Act. Again, when the monarch returned from the Seventh Crusade, he received a letter from Innocent IV., in which the Pontiff lauded the zeal which he had ever displayed in defending the rights of French ecclesiastical establishments against the exactions of some of the royal bailiffs and certain barons. "The king," says the Pope, "does not know of these crimes (when they are committed), and he grieves when they are brought to his knowledge." The many favors which Alexander IV. showered on St. Louis also show that the king was a prince according to his pontifical heart. And that these concessions were granted simply because of the virtue of the applicant, and because Rome realized that he would never abuse them, is evinced by the fact that when the king begged that some of the favors might be extended to his heir, the request was refused. Rome is never blind. The relations of St. Louis with Pope Clement IV., the last of the potentates who were contemporary with him, indicate a perfect harmony of thought between the two powers—a thorough respect for the rights of each. As the Bollandists expressed the idea: "*Negabat alter alteri quod justis rationibus concedendum non putabat, nec inde amicitia lædebatur.*" During the vacancy of the episcopal see of Rheims, Pope Clement conferred several benefices which were of episcopal right; but he soon revoked the collation, lest he might appear indifferent to the "right of regalia" enjoyed by the kings of France. St. Louis showed an equal appreciation of the difference between pontifical and royal prerogatives when the Greek emperor, Michael Paleologus, having asked him to arbitrate between the Pontiff and himself, he replied that such a rôle was above the powers of even a king of France, since the Roman Pontiff was the supreme judge in Christendom. He would promise the emperor

¹ *Saint Louis et son Temps.* Paris, 1865.

merely the exercise of his "good offices" at the pontifical court. When many of his courtiers advised St. Louis to claim as a royal fief the county of Melgueil, near Montpellier, then in the possession of the bishop of Maguelonne, he followed the advice of Pope Clement, and respected the claims of the bishop. When St. Louis thought of taxing the merchandise which passed through the port of Aigues-Mortes, which had been constructed in the interests of pilgrims to the Holy Land, and wishing only to use the revenue for the maintenance of the port in good condition, he consulted with Pope Clement; and received permission to levy the desired imposts, "after consultation with the bishops of the province, the barons of the neighborhood, and the consuls of Montpellier, and on condition that the duties would be moderate and never afterward increased."¹ Here, then, we see St. Louis asking for the intervention of the Pope in a purely temporal matter; the Pontiff admits that the king can decide as he thinks best, and the monarch deems it advisable to follow the counsel of his Holiness. Certainly a more perfect harmony could not have been desired. Did our limits permit, we could multiply instances of this concord; but the reader will probably conclude that the course of St. Louis toward the Holy See was always such as one would have expected, *a priori*, so pious a monarch to follow.

III.

The best efforts of Pope Gregory IX. had been devoted to the preparation of a new Crusade; and in the next pontificate the urgency for such an expedition became extreme. Jerusalem, which for some years had been in Christian hands, was captured in 1244 by the Mussulmans of Egypt, who had become masters of Syria. Aid from the West was tearfully sought by the few Christians of the Holy Land whom the scimitar had spared. But the king of England and the German emperor ignored every appeal; the other princes, St. Louis excepted, were too feeble to do else than pray to heaven for the success of a holy cause. To France, therefore, then, as always, the reliance of Christendom in every dread emergency, the entreaties of Pope Innocent IV. were directed; and St. Louis arose from a bed of sickness, donned the cross, and having proceeded to Notre-Dame in the dress of a humble pilgrim, went to Lyons for the blessing of Christ's vicar upon his enterprise. It is not our purpose to describe this expedition. In 1248 St. Louis led his army out of France, not in royal array, but in a pilgrim's guise, and with bare feet, to impress his followers with the truth that they were about to engage in a holy task, and one which needed a special blessing for its success. In the same penitential

¹ *Acta Sanctorum*, Aug. V., 485.

dress he entered Damietta, chanting the *Te Deum*. When the final reverse overtook him, he was able to say with the Apostle, "Quum infirmor, tunc potens sum." How much of the responsibility for the failure of the Seventh Crusade must be cast upon the German emperor, Frederick II.? When St. Louis was about to depart, Frederick feared that a new French principality would soon be founded in the Orient, and he asked of the king a promise that all of his conquests should be annexed to the kingdom of Jerusalem. The saint replied that he would effect nothing to the prejudice of the emperor, but that he could only promise that all his actions would be for the good of the Church. Frederick appeared to be satisfied; he ordered his officers in Sicily not to overcharge the French for the provisions they would buy in that island. But the Arab historian, Makrizi, declares that Frederick sent a special messenger, disguised as a merchant, to warn the sultan, then sick at Damascus, of the French intention to attack Egypt.¹ Such a course was perfectly consistent with the entire career of Frederick II. He had already shown how little spirit he had for the Holy Wars, when, in 1227, after years of incitement by Rome, Italy, Germany, and Hungary, he had finally set sail from Brindisi, only to return three days afterward, alleging that he was sick—conduct which entailed upon him his first excommunication by Gregory IX.² And when finally he did appear in Palestine, it was only for the annoyance of the Christians, he having hastened to make an alliance with the persecuting Sultan of Egypt. We are justified, therefore, in believing the Arab historian, when he says that this false Christian (and probably renegade) betrayed the plans of St. Louis. Joinville, the companion of the holy monarch during the best years of his life, and his most reliable biographer, narrates that when Frederick heard of the captivity of the hero, he burst into a frenzy of joy, and gave a grand feast to his court. Then he sent, says the seneschal, a messenger to the sultan, ostensibly for the purpose of negotiating for the release of the king, but really in order to insure the prolongation of his duration. In order to rid ourselves of so unsavory a subject, we

¹ The work of Makrizi is translated in the *Bibliothèque des Croisades*, vol. iv.

² The Bull of excommunication recites that Frederick was thus punished because he had, five different times, violated his solemn vows, emitted with the clause that he would incur excommunication if he broke them: because he had not furnished the troops and money which he had promised to the eastern Christians; because he had despoiled their king of his title and his revenues; because he had prevented the Archbishop of Tarento from visiting his diocese; because he had robbed the Templars and Hospitalers of their Sicilian revenues; because he had not observed treaties for the keeping of which the Holy See had become his security; because he had robbed of his property Count Roger, a Crusader, and under the protection of the Pope; because he had imprisoned unjustly the son of that Count Roger, etc.—In Labbe, vol. xi.

hasten to add, that the later conduct of the German emperor was such as to confirm the recital of Makrizi. Not satisfied with allying himself with the Sarrasins in their own land, he invited to the Italian peninsula those of them who resided in Sicily, and gave them lands around Lucera, in a state which was a fief of the Holy See. He adopted the manners of the infidels, composed his body-guard of them, and chose their prettiest women for his hours of lasciviousness. Shame like this well befitted the closing years of the Hohenstaufen, a dynasty the most salient characteristic of which was a perennial attempt to destroy the Papacy, an institution which buried it, as it has buried, and ever will bury, others of the same stamp. The first use which the Saracens made of their royal captive was to endeavor to obtain from him an order on the Templars and the Hospitalers for the surrender of their fortresses in Palestine. When he refused, and the sultan threatened to put him to the most frightful tortures, the king replied that the infidel might work his pleasure. At length, liberty was offered to him in exchange for the surrender of Damietta, then held by the noble Margaret, the queen of St. Louis, with a small garrison of Frenchmen; and in addition, for the sum of a million golden bezants—about two and a half millions of dollars. “If the queen consents,” said the monarch, “I shall pay that amount for my soldiers, and shall deliver Damietta as my own ransom; you must know that such as I am are not exchanged for money.” One incident that occurred before the departure of St. Louis from Egypt deserves mention as indicative of the true spirit of Christian knighthood. The sultan had been murdered by his emirs, and the chief assassin rushed into the presence of the king, sword in hand, and demanded that Louis should dub him knight there and then. The wish was not preposterous in the mind of the Mussulman; for had not Frederick, the head of the Holy Roman Empire, knighted the emir Fakr-Eddin? But the French monarch could not prostitute an essentially Christian dignity, and calmly he awaited death from the horde of indignant miscreants. The majesty of his mien awed the Saracens; they drew back, and the disappointed candidate swore to observe the treaty.¹ If this incident does not give the reader some idea of the ascendancy which St. Louis exercised over the minds even of infidels, we would remind him that the emirs debated among themselves whether or not they should offer him the sceptre of the late sultan. Then Joinville, being asked by the monarch in an apparently serious tone whether he ought to accept, replied that none but an insane man would receive a diadem from those who had murdered the previous wearer.” “And nevertheless,” said St.

¹ *Mémoires de Joinville.* Edition de Wailly, p. 185.

Louis, "I would accept it."¹ Voltaire did not credit this episode; but we can understand how St. Louis may have conceived the sublime idea of availing himself of the infidel sceptre, or rather of its attendant influence, in order to convert his new subjects to the faith of Christ. History furnished him with many precedents for such a hope.

In 1270 St. Louis entered upon his second Holy War, that which is known as the Eighth Crusade. The commercial rivalry of the Venetians and Genoese, joined to the scandalous dissensions between the Templars and Hospitalers, had encouraged the Mussulmans to greater progress than they had ever dared to anticipate; and the condition of the Oriental Christians appealed again to the great heart of France. Tunis was chosen by the king for his base of operations; he had been persuaded that the Tunisian prince was disposed to become a Christian, and he therefore relied on that portion of the African coast as his main source of supplies. But the usually circumspect monarch had been deceived, perhaps unwittingly, by his brother, Charles of Anjou, who had an ulterior motive for landing in Tunis, he being desirous of preventing any Tunisian attack on his kingdom of Sicily—a worthy intention, but which hampered the main object of the Crusade. The reduction of the castle of Carthage and successive defeats of the Tunisians and other Mussulmans appeared to augur well for the expedition; but the delay of Charles of Anjou to join the Crusaders had already filled the army with dismay, when a malignant dysentery incapacitated all for action. Among the many leaders and nobles who succumbed was the count de Nevers, the youngest son of the king; and soon the holy monarch himself was stricken. To prepare himself for death was an easy task for one who had ever lived the life of a saint; but mindful to the last of the welfare of the nation committed by God to his care, the hero gave to his heir a written copy of those instructions which we read as "The Teachings of St. Louis." Since this document is not only a monument of the purest faith of the Middle Age, but an epitome of as wise a policy as statesman ever devised, as well as a faithful mirror of the testator's entire career, we subjoin some of its passages: "My dear son, the first thing I recommend to you is that you direct your whole heart to the love of God. Beware of anything displeasing to God; above all, beware of mortal sin.² If God sends adversity to you, receive it patiently, knowing that you have deserved it, and

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

² Through all the years of his manhood St. Louis had been accustomed, from time to time, to tell his familiars how his mother, the saintly Blanche of Castile, had often said that she would rather see him dead at her feet than know that he had committed one mortal sin.

that it will be profitable to you ; if He sends you prosperity, thank Him humbly, so that pride may not injure you.¹ Go frequently to confession. Attend all the services of the Church with great recollection.² Be gentle and charitable to the poor and the suffering. Maintain the good customs of your kingdom, and abolish the bad ones.³ Do not burthen your people with taxes. Always have around you worthy men, seculars as well as religious. Hear sermons willingly ; and eagerly seek for prayers and indulgences. Let no man be so audacious as to utter a word in your presence which might lead another into sin ; let no man speak ill of another behind his back ; and if any one blasphemes God or His saints, revenge the insult at once.⁴ Be rigid and loyal in the administration of justice. If you know that you possess what belongs to another, restore it immediately ; if the ownership is doubtful, let prudent and just men investigate the matter.⁵ Let your best endeavors be exerted for the furtherance of peace within and outside your kingdom. Maintain the franchises of your good cities and communes ; for by the strength and wealth of these cities and communes the peers and barons will be compelled to respect you. Honor and love most especially all religious and all ecclesiastical persons. It is narrated of my grandfather, King Philip (Augustus), that when one of his councillors remarked that it was strange that

¹ On the glorious field of Massourah he had prostrated himself, and cried : " I thank God for all, good or evil, which He sends to me."

² He had always heard two Masses every day ; and when he was reprovèd, he would say : " These gentlemen would find no fault were I to spend as much time in the chase or in other pleasures."

³ He had abolished private wars, judicial duels, etc.

⁴ From very ancient times it had been customary in France for any man to slap the face of one who had uttered a blasphemy, or even such a phrase as " Go to the devil ! " In the days of Justinian, and throughout the empire, death was inflicted on him who swore by the head or hair of God (*Novella* 67). Philip Augustus decreed against blasphemers a penalty of four golden livres (about \$80.00), and if the culprit was too poor to pay it, he was thrown into the nearest river, and pulled out only when he was nearly drowned. At the accession of St. Louis, men often took the law into their own hands, and great cruelties were sometimes practised. Pope Clement IV. remonstrated with St. Louis for allowing such treatment, and insisted that there should be no danger to " life or member " in the punishment. Consequently, in 1269 a royal ordinance mulcted blasphemers in amounts varying from five to forty livres ; those who could not pay, and were under forty years of age, were whipped ; the other impecunious culprits were pilloried and imprisoned. Jacques de Vitry and Etienne de Bourbon narrate how a certain knight, before the issue of this edict, gave a very heavy blow to a citizen who had blasphemed egregiously ; and when he was called to account by the king, he replied : " He outraged my heavenly Master, and I struck him even as I would have done had he insulted my earthly king." St. Louis told him to act similarly when occasion warranted him.

⁵ His subjects often upbraided St. Louis with excessive zeal in the matter of restitution ; for instance, they said that he had restored to the king of England far more than justice demanded.

he should allow certain clerics to interfere with his rights, he replied that he knew very well that certain clerics so acted, but that when he reflected how very good the Lord had been to him, he preferred to relinquish some of his rights rather than to raise difficulties with the Church.¹ Love and revere your father and mother, and obey all their commands.² As to ecclesiastical benefices, confer them on worthy persons, and after having consulted with prudent men. My son, I instruct you to be ever reverent toward the Church, and toward the Supreme Pontiff, our father. Honor the Pope, for he is your spiritual father. Destroy heresy as far as your power will permit you."³ When the dying

¹ This passage should be considered by those who think that St. Louis was the author of the Pragmatic Sanction; for this monarch was much more scrupulous in ecclesiastical matters than his grandfather dreamed of being.

² People of our day who read the life of St. Louis must think that he carried this filial deference to an extreme. Joinville, in all simplicity, gives some curious instances of the subjection of the king to his saintly, but rather imperious, mother, even in matters of his married life. And he insisted on his devoted spouse, the noble Margaret of Provence, being in all things an obedient daughter-in-law. The following passage is interesting: "So severe was Queen Blanche toward Queen Margaret that she would not permit, so far as she could have her way, her son to enjoy the company of his wife except at night, when they retired together. Their favorite palace was at Pontoise, and they preferred it because the king's apartment was immediately above the queen's, a winding stairway connecting them. On this stairway they used to converse, having arranged with the chamberlains on duty that when the queen-mother would appear in the corridor leading to the apartment of her son, they would strike their wands on the door of that apartment; and then the king would hurry at once to his quarters. In the same way, if the queen-mother was approaching the rooms of Queen Margaret, the officers would give the signal on her door; and then she would hasten to her domicile. On one occasion the king had gone to his wife's chamber, where she was lying at death's door, because of a recent difficult *accouchement*. Suddenly Queen Blanche appeared, and taking the king by the hand, she exclaimed: 'Come away; you have no business here!' When Queen Margaret saw her mother-in-law leading the king away, she cried: 'Alas! You will not allow me to have my lord, either in life or death.' Then she fainted, and they thought her dying. The king returned to her, and they had much difficulty in reviving her." Old chroniclers say that Margaret followed her husband in his first Crusade, principally that at last she might have him to herself. But it seems that the gentle queen really venerated Blanche, and loved her. When the news of the queen-mother's death reached Palestine, Margaret showed every token of deep sorrow; but we note that Joinville thought that she grieved because of her sympathy with the king.

³ The sole ordinance issued by St. Louis in reference to heresy is dated in 1250. Previously he had been unable to follow the dictates of his heart by modifying the rigor of his mother's ordinance of 1229, which was, however, strictly in accord with the common law of the time. The revolts excited by the remnants of the Albigenses in the south of France had forced St. Louis to apply the laws against heresy with rigor. But the submission of the count of Toulouse caused the barons of Languedoc to cease their struggles against the royal authority, and then the king was free to pursue his policy of reconciling the North with the South. The chief articles of the decree of 1250 are these: "The properties taken from heretics in virtue of the ordinance of 1229 shall be restored to them, unless they have fled from the kingdom, or unless they continue in their obstinacy. Wives shall not lose their properties on

saint had handed this document to his heir, the future Philip III., he had himself raised from his bed, and kneeling, he received his Sacramental Lord. Then he lay on the ground, which he had ordered to be strewn with ashes. Having received Extreme Unction, he calmly awaited his summons to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. At midnight of August 25, 1270, the everlasting glory of the French monarchy cried: "Now we go to Jerusalem," and he had gone indeed to the heavenly Jerusalem.

He who discerns in St. Louis, as he undertakes his crusades, merely the French warrior who is ambitious of conquest, will not realize the true significance of the monarch's efforts. Nor will that significance be grasped by him who regards St. Louis as possessed by the sole idea of restoring to Christendom the holy places which were sanctified by the tears and blood of the God-Man. With St. Louis, under the cuirass of the Christian warrior throbbed the heart of an apostle of the Christian faith. He had not designed merely to subjugate the Holy Land to European or probably French domination. He had intended to convert the heretical and Mussulman inhabitants of the Orient; and to effect that work his serried battalions were accompanied by a little army of Dominican and Franciscan friars. According to the chronicle of Primat, these missionaries converted five hundred Arabs during the saint's short sojourn in Saint-Jean-d'Acre; and hence we may judge of what they effected during the seventh and eighth Crusades. Godfrey de Beaulieu and Etienne de Bourbon, who saw the converts in France, speak of many Saracens who were baptized during the king's first expedition, and accompanied him on his return, afterward marrying French women, and raising families which for many years remained under the direct protection of the crown. About the time that Pope Innocent IV. sent the Franciscan, Piano Carpini, into Tartary, our saint sent many other friars on the same apostolic mission. The results of his enterprise were only partial and isolated; but they show what was the policy of St. Louis in that Eastern Question which was then far more vital than it is in our day. In a word, his design was to arrest the advance of pagan barbarism, by force when that was necessary, but constantly and principally by the Christianization of the orientals. And if we look for his successors in this order of ideas, where shall we find them? "In the camps, or on a throne?" asks Lecoy de la Marche; "among the partisans of Russia, or among the defenders of the Ottoman Empire? No; they will be found in the humble tunic of those heroic friars whose glorious path St. Louis opened. They will be found in the persons

account of the crime of their husbands. The goods of heretics who die in the faith shall be restored to their heirs.

of those persevering missionaries who are preaching the Gospel in the heart of the old oriental world, and who, like certain ambassadors of St. Louis, incur thousands of dangers in order to probably save a few souls. These men may truly be termed the heirs of the spirit of St. Louis. When they cross burning plains and arid mountains, they can sustain their courage by the thought that they are realizing the dream of the wisest and most perspicacious of French kings (for three-fourths of them are Frenchmen). And when they fall under the strokes of their executioners, when they shed their blood in the cause which St. Louis championed so vigorously, they may well be saluted with that exclamation which once greeted the departure of another martyr: 'Son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven!'

IV.

That the thirteenth century, the century of St. Louis, was the zenith, the *apogée*, of the Middle Age; that, together with the twelfth century, it "formed the most important, complete, and resplendent period in the history of Catholic society;"¹ is admitted by not only Catholic polemics, but by most of our modern adversaries, from Voltaire to Guizot. It remained, however, for the picturesque theist, Michelet, to discover that modern skepticism dates from the thirteenth century, and that the chief personification of the Christian idea in that period, St. Louis, was a victim of religious doubt. "Such was the aspect of the world in the thirteenth century. At the summit, the 'great dumb ox of Sicily,' ruminating his questions. Here, man and liberty; there God, grace, the divine foresight, fatality; at the right, observation proclaiming human liberty; at the left, logic impelling invincibly toward fatalism. . . . The ecclesiastical legislator drew back at the brink, fighting for good sense against his own logic, which would have precipitated him. This steadfast genius paused on the edge of a sword between two abysses, the depth of which he realized. A solemn figure of the church, he kept his balance, tried for an equilibrium, and perished in the attempt."² The eloquent historian flattered himself that he understood the philosophy of the Angelic Doctor; but he thought that none of the scholars of the thirteenth century appreciated the delicacy of that position "between two abysses." He continues: "From below, the world looked up to the elevated region in which he calculated

¹ Montalembert, in the Introduction to his beautiful *Histoire de Sainte Elisabeth d'Hongrie*.

² So the early fellow-students of St. Thomas termed him. He was born in Aquino, a town of Terra di Lavoro, in the kingdom of Naples; but that kingdom was then one of the Two Sicilies.

³ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, vol. ii., bk. 4, ch. 9.

and understood nothing of the combats which were fought in the depths of that abstract existence." Having invented this tremendous struggle, of course Michelet comprehended it. "Beneath that sublime region raged the winds and the tempest. Beneath the Angel was man, morality beneath metaphysics, St. Louis beneath St. Thomas. In St. Louis the thirteenth century had its Passion—an exquisite, intimate, profound Passion, of which previous ages had scarcely any presentiment. I speak of the first laceration which doubt effected in souls; when the entire harmony of the Middle Age was disturbed; when the grand edifice on which society had been built began to totter; when saints cried against saints, right waged war on right, and the most docile souls saw themselves obliged to examine and to judge. The pious king of France, who asked for nothing but to submit and to believe, was very soon forced to struggle, to doubt, and to choose. Humble though he was, and diffident of himself, he had to resist his mother; to act as arbitrator between the Pope and the emperor; to judge the spiritual judge of Christendom; and to recall to moderation him whom he would have preferred to regard as a model of sanctity. Afterward the Mendicant Orders attracted him by their mysticism; he entered the Third Order of St. Francis; and he took part against the University. But nevertheless, the book of John of Parma, received by very many Franciscans, filled him with strange doubts." Michelet wastes many pretty phrases in an attempt to convince his reader that St. Louis was a skeptic because he once resisted the will of his mother; but he did so in order to don the cross, she having feared, like many others and even himself, that the expedition might be futile. Michelet presents the saint as a skeptic because he combated the University and the pamphlet of William de Saint-Amour; but he did so in order to protect the Dominicans and Franciscans.¹ Michelet discerns skepticism in the relations which St. Louis had with Pope Gregory IX.; but it is absolutely false that the French king was called upon "to judge the supreme judge of Christendom." As to the book entitled "The Eternal Gospel," it is by no means certain that it was written by the Franciscan general, John of Parma; but when Michelet tells us that the faith of St. Louis must have vacillated when he saw some of his Franciscan friends defending a condemned book, we are asked to believe, not that the pious king was a skeptic, but that he was a ninny.

Michelet asserts that "the thirteenth century had its Passion"; he perceives in his sombre tableau the creakings of a social edifice which is about to tumble into chaos, and he judges that this social

¹ Fleury, *Histoire Ecclesiastique*, bk. lxxxiv., ch. 32.

disorder *must have* affected the faith of men, especially of him who was the foremost layman in Christendom. But the interesting historical writer (a great historian he is not) ignores the notorious fact that the eleventh century was far nearer to chaos than the thirteenth. Let the reader remember the state of Italy and Germany before and after the German emperor, Henry IV., "went to Canossa;" a state of affairs that wrung from the heart of St. Gregory VII. the exclamation, "I have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile." Certainly the eleventh century was not a period of skepticism. But Michelet thinks that "the man, St. Louis," must have plunged into the abyss of doubt, because, as he affects to believe, "the Angel, St. Thomas," knew not how to withdraw his faith from the clutches of his logic. It is true that St. Thomas was frequently the adviser of St. Louis in religious matters, as he probably was in things political;¹ but the logic of Michelet could not have "clutched" his mind very firmly when he arrived at this conclusion. But what authority is there for the supposition that the Angelic Doctor "fought for good sense against his own logic," and that fearful "combats were fought in the depths of that abstract existence"? Certainly neither St. Thomas nor his contemporaries even hint at such struggles; and who has found any indications of skepticism in the works of the Angel of the Schools? Take up the treatises on the liberty of man, grace, and predestination, which seem to have served as a foundation for the ravings of Michelet. Of course, we meet the usual *videtur quod*; but with what triumphant serenity the master always pronounces his *patet*, or his *manifestum est!* Very different from the judgment of Michelet and his school is the appreciation of St. Thomas by one who had studied all the scholastics with a profundity to which Michelet was always a stranger. In his admirable work on Abelard, M. Charles de R  nusat says: "St. Thomas of Aquino includes the whole of theology in his wonderful work. He lays down the *pro* and the *contra* of every question, and of every proposition in each question; and presenting every possible objection and the answer to it, he opposes authority to authority, reasoning to reasoning, giving, without ever weakening, *without ever doubting*, a work which is as dogmatic in its conclusions as it is skeptical in its examinations. The *Summa Theologica* presents the whole of religion as an immense dialectical controversy, in which dogma always ends by being in the right. It is the frankest and most developed negation of dogmatic absolutism." Now Michelet seems to hold that as the master is, so is the pupil. Therefore,

¹ Bollandists; *Ad Mensem Martii, Viti Sancti Thomae.*"

since "St. Louis realized on earth and in practical life that which preoccupied the genius of St. Thomas in the world of abstractions," we may conclude, with all due admiration for the most poetic pamphleteer (not historian) of modern times, that the faith of St. Louis was as unshakable as that of the Angelic Doctor. We have not thought it proper to waste any of our limited space in quoting any of the instances of fact which Michelet adduces as fanciful supports of his amusing theory. They are too puerile for serious attention; but the reader may be better satisfied, if we furnish one specimen which is a worthy exemplification of all. Michelet discerns skepticism in the mind of St. Louis, when that monarch asks Joinville: "What is God"? The seneschal thus naively records the incident: "He called me, one day, and said: 'On account of your subtle mind I do not like to ask you concerning the things of God; but since these friars are present, I shall put one question to you. It is this: What is God?'" That here the king was only playing the catechist, half jocularly and half seriously with his familiar companion, appears from the fact that he complimented Joinville because the seneschal's reply was identical with that contained in the book which he then held in his hand.¹ The fact is, and it serves as another indication of his character, that St. Louis was very fond of catechizing his friends, and even his private soldiers. He also, on occasion, preached sermons. During his voyage to Africa, the sailors wanted to go to confession; whereupon he preached to them a discourse on the nature and benefits of the Sacrament of Penance.² In his library at Paris, which was *open to the public*, he was wont to explain to the nearest student some passage of the works of the Fathers which generally formed his literary pabulum.³ Once he reminded a lady of the court that she had arrived at an age when a woman could not occupy her mind with other beauties than those of her soul, unless she was willing to incur ridicule.⁴ Once he asked Joinville what was his father's name; and when the seneschal replied that it was Simon, he asked the poor man how he knew that such was the case. Then, says Joinville, "I told him that I knew it, because my mother had so informed me. Then he said that we ought to believe most firmly all the articles of our faith, to which the Apostles had testified."⁵

¹ Gorini; *Defense de L'Église*, pt. I., ch. 20, Paris, 1853.

² Joinville, *loc. cit.*, p. 194.

³ Bellooloco, "Vita Sancti Ludovici," in the *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules*, vol. xx.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Gulielmus Carnotensis, "De Vita et Miraculis Sancti Ludovici," in the *Recueil*, etc., *ibid.*

⁶ *Loc. cit.*, p. 197.

Michelet says that St. Louis must have been affected by the spirit of skepticism which began to invade the Christian world in his time. "In St. Louis the thirteenth century had its Passion. . . . I speak of the first laceration which doubt effected in souls." He would be indeed an enterprising indagator into the recondite who could determine the date of the entrance of incredulism into the world; but when Michelet discovered that date in the thirteenth century, would he not have been more worthy of admiration, if he had found his champion skeptic, not in St. Louis, but in the German Frederick II., who regarded Christ as one of the three imposters who had deceived the world?¹ Skepticism had infected humanity long before the thirteenth century. There are three kinds of skeptics; those who do not believe in the Catholic Church, those who do not believe in any of the forms of emasculated Christianity, and the gross materialists who deny God and the immortality of the soul. The last form did not appear in Christendom until about the time of the full development of the Renaissance, toward the end of the fifteenth century. But the other forms of skepticism appeared in their full audacity, simultaneously with the intellectual movement of the eleventh century. In France and Northern Italy appeared the Manichæans; Leuthard destroyed the crucifixes and other religious images; Gondulphus preached the absurdity of Baptism, Penance, and the Eucharist; Turin and Milan heard many proclaiming that the Son of God is each soul illuminated by the Lord. And then the twelfth century beheld Tanchelm posing as the Son of God; Peter de Bruis abolishing churches; and the Cathari, Patarines, etc., attributing creation to the devil, and proclaiming fate as master of men. But the reader may ask, could Michelet have expected men to credit his presentation of St. Louis as an incredulist? Well, the attempt was not extraordinarily audacious at the hands of him who had not only declared that Pope St. Gregory VII. was a skeptic, but had so far blasphemed as to cast the same foul aspersion on the Divine Saviour of men. "There is a moment of fear and of doubt. Here is the tragic and the terrible of the drama; it is this which rends the veil of the temple, and covers the earth with darkness; it is this which troubles me when I read the Gospel, and causes my tears to flow. That God should have doubted of God! That the Holy Victim should have cried: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned me?' This trial has been experienced by all heroic souls who have dared great things for the human race; all of these have felt more or less of this ideal of grief. It was in such a moment that Brutus exclaimed: 'Virtue, thou art only a

¹ The authority for this accusation is Pope Gregory IX., in his Epist. 12 to the Archbishop of Canterbury. See Labbe's *Concilia*, Sæc. XIII.

name.' It was in such a moment that Gregory VII. cried: 'I have followed justice and hated iniquity: therefore I die in exile.'"¹ The veriest tyro in ascetical or even moderately spiritual matters knows that the expression of the holy victim of Henry IV. did not issue from a heart submerged in the despair of doubt; that the words of the dying Pontiff were rather a sublime indication of his invincible trust in God, of his confidence that a reward in heaven would be the recompense for an earthly suffering which had been entailed by his worthy fulfilment of his duties as vicar of Christ. As to the calumny against Christ, which Michelet dared to pronounce at the foot of the cross, let us say, with Gorini, that he only joined the crowd who passed in front of the sacred tree, blaspheming: "*prætereuntes autem blasphemabant.*" The sublime lessons of the cross were foolishness to Michelet, as they ever will be to all of his school; and therefore such as they cannot understand St. Louis of France. We who have spent much time in the study of the prince who, even according to Voltaire, was as pious as an anchorite and possessed of every royal virtue, must agree with the judgment of St. Francis de Sales, that "St. Louis was the beloved of God and of men, and one of the grandest sovereigns upon whom the sun has shone." We must say, with Chateaubriand: "Each epoch has a man who represents it. Louis IX. is the model man of the Middle Age; he is legislator, hero, and saint. Marcus Aurelius showed power, united with philosophy; Louis IX. power, united with sanctity; the advantage remains with the Christian."

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¹ *Loc. cit.*, vol. ii., bk. 4, ch. 9.