

wife's inheritance of the kingdom of Naples and Sicily, for on the death of the king the nobles chose Tancred, one of their own number, as his successor. The chief object of Henry's policy was to establish his power in South Italy, and all the rest of his policy was made subservient to this. He had to face great difficulties, for the Popes disliked the idea of the extension of the imperial power to Southern Italy by which their own possessions would be bounded on the south as well as on the north by imperial territory. In Germany the Guelfs were making a determined resistance, supported by their relation Richard I. of England, who also entered into an alliance with Tancred.

At first Henry was quite unsuccessful in Italy, but at the hour of his greatest difficulty fortune came to his aid. Richard I. of England on his way home from the Crusade fell into the hands of the Duke of Austria, and was by him handed over to the Emperor. He was only released after acknowledging the Emperor's overlordship and consenting to pay an enormous ransom. In another direction, too, fortune favoured Henry VI. The son of Henry the Lion fell in love with a Hohenstaufen princess, and through the marriage entered into friendly relations with the Emperor. With the money obtained by Richard's ransom Henry proceeded to carry out the conquest of Sicily, this time with complete success. He now tried to persuade the German magnates to make the Empire hereditary in the family, but only succeeded in getting them to acknowledge his infant son as his successor. His mind was filled with schemes for a conquest of the Eastern Empire, and with this object in view he made preparations for a great crusade. But in the midst of these dreams of far-