

of the Crusades. It was a sad day for France when Louis was persuaded that it was his duty to leave the realm which he was governing so admirably to lead his fatal expedition.¹

Philip III., the son and successor of St Louis, was an uninteresting king, whose policy was largely directed by his uncle Charles of Anjou. In his reign the royal domain was increased by the acquisition of Toulouse on the death of its Count who left no heirs.

Philip IV., or Philip the Fair, in his reign of thirty years profoundly influenced the development of the French state. And yet our knowledge of him is meagre. We are told little of his appearance and know little of his character. The most striking features of his foreign policy were his attempts to incorporate Aquitaine and Flanders, attempts which were unsuccessful.

His hostility to Edward I. over Aquitaine led to the formation of the alliance between France and Scotland which lasted for so long a time. The struggle over Flanders was chiefly memorable for the defeat which the French feudal army suffered at the hands of the Flemish townspeople at Courtrai in 1302. It was the first battle which showed the possibility of the defeat of a mounted army of heavily armed knights by a well-managed infantry force.

Foiled in his attempts to incorporate Flanders and Aquitaine with his territory, Philip tried to extend his possessions towards the Empire, and was successful in obtaining the town of Lyons.

In relation to the Church the reign is noteworthy for the long struggle between Philip and Pope Boniface

¹ See page 150.