

CHAPTER XVI

THE GROWTH OF THE NATIONS

1. *France and England*

WE have seen that the story of mediæval France is the story of the welding together of discordant elements into a nation, and of the establishment of a strong and absolute monarchy.

In England also a nation had been created out of many various elements. Here, too, at the end of the Middle Ages the power of the monarch was great, although limited in certain directions.

2. *Spain*

At the time of the Mohammedan conquest at the beginning of the eighth century, the Christians were driven into the mountains of the north, where they were able to hold their own against the invaders. Gradually several Christian principalities were formed, Leon, Castile, Navarre, Aragon, Catalonia, and Portugal, and the long struggle began by which the land was recovered bit by bit from the Moors. In 1212 a great Christian victory was won at Tolosa, and before the end of the century all Spain had been recovered except the south-east part, which formed the State of Granada.

The little principality of Navarre in the north was at first the most important of the Christian States, but

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