

supervising their election by the lower clergy. The king thus had the power of preventing the election of an enemy, while the Pope could exclude an incompetent or immoral man by refusing to install him in office.

42. The death of Henry.—Henry's only son, William, was drowned while crossing from Normandy to England. The ship put off at midnight with a gay company on board, among whom were Prince William and his sister. The sailors had drunk too much wine, and ran the ship on a rock. She sank almost immediately, and all were drowned except a poor butcher of Rouen, who lived to tell the story of the wreck. It is said that Henry never smiled after hearing of his son's death.

Robert of Normandy had died in prison, where Henry had placed him; Prince William was dead, and the disappointed old king planned to leave his crown to his daughter, Matilda, who had married Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, one of the most important provinces of France. The barons swore a solemn oath to support her claims, but they did it unwillingly, because it seemed strange to have a sovereign who could not lead them in war. In the midst of his plans for the succession to the throne, Henry died. His death was followed by anarchy.

SUMMARY

Henry's prompt action in seizing the crown forestalled the opposition which might have arisen from the barons on behalf of his brother. He was English by birth, and his wife was of English descent. Except for his severe taxation, he ruled so as to please his subjects. He issued a charter of liberties, punished dishonest coiners, and regulated the payment of taxes. By the battle of Tenchebrai, Normandy fell into his hands. Shortly before his death, he secured a promise from the barons that they would support the claims of his daughter Matilda to the throne.

4. STEPHEN. 1135—1154

43. Accession of Stephen.—Matilda had two sons, but they were not old enough to reign. Others who might