

CATHEDRAL CITIES OF FRANCE

charge and gave him Christian burial within her garden. So far is legend; at any rate, a chapel was erected over the shrine, and became, of course, an object of pilgrimage for many years. Then comes the story of Dagobert, the rebellious young prince who sought sanctuary in the chapel against the wrath of his father; and, inspired by a vision of the saint, promised to build a church on the same site. Accordingly, on his accession to his father's throne, the Abbey and Church of Saint Denis were founded in about 769. In the following century the Benedictine monks purchased their immunity from Norman invaders by large sums of money; but this contract seems to have availed them little, since the pirates, probably hoping for fresh plunder, despoiled the monastery as they had despoiled Saint-Germain-des-Prés. After this the foundation fell into a terrible state of neglect. Its abbots were fighting men—not necessarily ecclesiastics, for many nobles in those days held lay abbacies; Hugh Capet, for instance, was abbot of Saint Martin at Tours—and not until the day of the famous Suger did it recover anything like its ancient prestige. Suger was an old pupil of the Benedictines at Saint Denis, and a fellow-scholar there with the young prince Louis l'Eveillé, afterwards Louis VI., whose chief minister he became in later days. In the days of his prosperity the abbot