

CATHEDRAL CITIES OF FRANCE

ship: castles and strongholds were built up for the great men who had taken possession of the chief cities, and the great civil or feudal power of the dukes and counts began to exercise its jurisdiction side by side with the old-established influence of the Church. Then, as was notably the case at Le Mans and Troyes, the growing commercial importance of a town would force a communal charter from the seigneur; a burgher quarter would rise, quite as important as the quarter of the nobles and the clergy, and thus the city would become trebly strengthened, except, indeed, when, as was sometimes the case, one power resented the fancied encroachments of the other and made war upon its neighbours.

This power within itself was undoubtedly all to the advantage of the city; but it was fatal to the unity of the kingdom, since it cut France up into a mass of separate states, any one of which could, on the occasion of a quarrel with the sovereign—and these quarrels were rather the rule than the exception—fortify itself by means of its count, its castle and its city walls, and defy the royal forces at its pleasure. While cathedral cities in England were drawing closer and closer to the king as their head, and thereby sinking their own strength in the unity of the Crown, those in France were