(993-1024), who was called the Lap-King because he was a child when his reign began. Olaf was baptized about the year 1000, and was the first Christian king of the Swedes. In the 9th century St Ansgar had laboured for some time as a missionary in Sweden, but without much success. Even Olaf, who was supported in his efforts by Siegfred, the devoted English missionary from whom he had received instruction in Christian doctrine, found that it was impossible to convert the majority of his subjects. He was allowed to build churches in West Gothland, but in the rest of his dominions the people clung obstinately to paganism. During his reign there was war between Sweden and Norway, and Olaf seems to have been in favour of carrying on the struggle with vigour. His people, however, desired peace, and it is related that at the Great Thing at Upsala they threatened to take his life if he did not give Olaf, the Norwegian king, his daughter in marriage. He consented to do as they wished, but broke his promise; and he would probably have been set aside had it not been for the mutual jealousy of the Swedes and the Goths.

The Lap-King was succeeded, one after the other, by his sons Anund aud Edmund the Elder ; and under their rule the church lost much of the ground which it had gained through the efforts of Olaf. After Edmund the Elder’s death the Goths resolved that Stenkil, the Christian jarl of West Gothland, should be made king. This decision was resisted by the Swedes, but the result of the civil war which broke out was that Stenkil was able to maintain his claim. He reigned from 1056 to 1066, and effectually protected the church without attempting to do violence to the convictions of the pagan population. His reign was followed by a period of much confusion, during which the Goths and the Swedes treated each other as enemies,— the latter upholding paganism, the former contending for Christianity. Under Inge the Elder, who reigned from 1080 to 1112, the temple at Upsala was burned, and from this time there could be no doubt as to the ultimate triumph of the church, which was served with heroic courage by many zealous foreign missionaries. So much progress was made that Swerker Karlsson, who reigned from about 1135 to 1155, begged the pope to give the Swedish people bishops and a primate. Nicholas Break­spear, the English cardinal who was afterwards raised to the papacy as Adrian IV., was sent to make the necessary arrangements. He found that the Swedes and the Goths could not agree as to a place for the see of a primate ; but at a synod which met at Linköping in 1152 it was decided that the Swedish clergy should accept the law of celibacy, and that Sweden should pay a yearly tax to the pope. For a long time many pagan ideas and customs survived, but Sweden was now, at least nominally, a Christian country.

When Swerker was murdered in 1155 the Goths wished to make his son king, but the Swedes chose Eric Edwards- son, and he reigned until 1160. Eric was so good a king that after his death he was canonized by the popular voice, as was then the way in the North. Upsala was made by him a primate’s see, and he began the series of efforts which led to the annexation of Finland to Sweden. Finnish pirates had often desolated the Swedish coasts, and it had become absolutely necessary that their country should be subdued. Eric not only overcame the Finns, but did what he could to compel them to accept Chris­tianity.

For about a century after Eric’s death the Goths and the Swedes were almost constantly at war with one another, each people choosing its own king. The Goths preferred the descendants of Swerker, while the Swedes were loyal to the descendants of Eric, who were known as

the yeomen-kings, because Eric had originally belonged to the class of bondar or yeomen. The Danish kings often aided one or other of the contending parties, and as a rule they seem to have done far more harm than good by their interference. To some extent the church main­tained among the people a sense of national unity, but it was not powerful enough to give much protection to the poorer members of the community against the despotism of local magnates. In the end, when the church itself became rich, the higher clergy were quite as tyrannical as the secular nobles.

John Swerkerson, the last king of the Swerker dynasty, died in 1222 ; Eric the Halt, the last of the yeomen-kings, in 1250. In the latter year the crown was given to Waldemar, whose mother was a sister of King Eric the Halt. Waldemar belonged to the Folkungar family, which had acquired great estates and risen to a position of high importance in the state. Under this dynasty the Goths and the Swedes gradually ceased to be jealous of one another, and became a thoroughly united people. From this time civil troubles in Sweden sprang, not from the antagonism of rival peoples, but chiefly from the increas­ing power of the great landowners, who strove incessantly to limit the rights of the free peasantry, and were often strong enough to defy the crown.

At the time of the death of Eric the Halt, Birger Brosa, Waldemar’s father, was in Finland, where he conquered Tavastland and strengthened the hold of the Swedish crown over those tribes which had been already subdued. On his return to Sweden he was indignant to find that he had not himself been elected to the throne. He accepted what had been done, however, and devoted his energies to the promotion of his son’s interests. Until his death Birger was the real ruler of Sweden, and the nation had never been governed by a man of stronger will or more upright character. If he did not actually found Stock­holm, it was he who made it the strongest fortress in the country,—a service for which the Swedish people had good reason to be grateful to him, for it enabled them to put an end to the depredations of Finnish pirates. After the death of Birger great evils were brought upon the country by the folly and incompetence of Waldemar, who was at last driven from the throne and imprisoned by his brother Magnus, who succeeded him. Magnus (1279-1290) was a lover of pomp and splendour, and formed a more brilliant court than the Swedes had ever seen. He granted immunity from taxation to those landowners who should give the crown *ross-djenst* or horse-service, that is, serve the king in war at the head of a body of horse­men. His intention in adopting this plan was to secure for the crown a powerful body of loyal and attached supporters, but, as the measure added to the wealth, dignity, and influence of the nobles, its ultimate effect was to weaken the royal authority. Although he increased the importance of the aristocracy, Magnus was not unmindful of the interests of the common freemen. He is known as Ladu-laas or Barn-Lock, because he issued a law requir­ing persons of noble birth to pay for the straw and corn with which, when travelling, they might be supplied by peasants. Magnus was also a munificent benefactor of the clergy. He endowed a large number of churches and built five monasteries.

Magnus was succeeded by his son Birger (1290-1319). Birger was only nine years old when his father died, and for a long time the power of the crown was wielded by his guardian, Torkel Knutsson, a wise and vigorous statesman. Knutsson drew up a code of laws which was accepted by the Great Thing in 1295 ; and in Finland he not only put down rebellion but annexed Savolax and Carelia. In 1306, misled by his brothers Eric and Waldemar, Birger