

FEUDAL. Pertaining to feuds or fees; relating to or growing out of the feudal system or feudal law; having the quality of a feud, as distinguished from "allodial."

—**Feudal actions.** An ancient name for real actions, or such as concern real property only. 3 Bl. Comm. 117.—**Feudal law.** The body of jurisprudence relating to feuds; the real-property law of the feudal system; the law anciently regulating the property relations of lord and vassal, and the creation, incidents, and transmission of feudal estates. The body of laws and usages constituting the "feudal law" was originally customary and unwritten, but a compilation was made in the twelfth century, called "Feodarum Consuetudines," which has formed the basis of later digests. The feudal law prevailed over Europe from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, and was introduced into England at the Norman Conquest, where it formed the entire basis of the law of real property until comparatively modern times. Survivals of the feudal law, to the present day, so affect and color that branch of jurisprudence as to require a certain knowledge of the feudal law in order to the perfect comprehension of modern tenures and rules of real-property law.—**Feudal possession.** The equivalent of "seisin" under the feudal system.—**Feudal system.** The system of feuds. A political and social system which prevailed throughout Europe during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, and is supposed to have grown out of the peculiar usages and policy of the Teutonic nations who overran the continent after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, as developed by the exigencies of their military domination, and possibly furthered by notions taken from the Roman jurisprudence. It was introduced into England,

in its completeness, by William I., A. D. 1085, though it may have existed in a rudimentary form among the Saxons before the Conquest. It formed the entire basis of the real-property law of England in medieval times; and survivals of the system, in modern days, so modify and color that branch of jurisprudence, both in England and America, that many of its principles require for their complete understanding a knowledge of the feudal system. The feudal system originated in the relations of a military chieftain and his followers, or king and nobles, or lord and vassals, and especially their relations as determined by the bond established by a grant of *land* from the former to the latter. From this it grew into a complete and intricate complex of rules for the tenure and transmission of real estate, and of correlated duties and services; while, by tying men to the land and to those holding above and below them, it created a close-knit hierarchy of persons, and developed an aggregate of social and political institutions. For an account of the feudal system in its juristic relations, see 2 Bl. Comm. 44; 1 Steph. Comm. 160; 3 Kent, Comm. 487; Spel. Feuds; Litt. Ten.; Sull. Lect.; Spence, Eq. Jur.; 1 Washb. Real Prop. 15; Dalr. Feu. Prop. For its political and social relations, see Hall. Middle Ages; Maine, Anc. Law; Rob. Car. V.; Montesq. Esprit des Lois, bk. 30; Guizot, Hist. Civilization.—**Feudal tenures.** The tenures of real estate under the feudal system, such as knight-service, socage, villenage, etc.

FEUDALISM. The feudal system; the aggregate of feudal principles and usages.