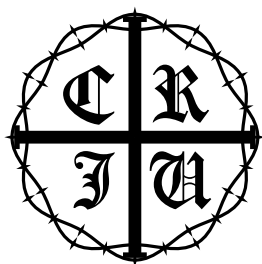


Three Lives of Charlemagne

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Einhard | Notker | Hodgkin



Confraternitas Christi Regis
2026

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Part I

Two Lives of Charlemagne

À lui finit la dissolution de l'ancien monde, à lui commence l'édification du monde moderne. ("By him was completed the end of the ancient world; by him was begun the building of the modern world." —Ed.)

Lavallée

Chapter I

Introduction

THE TWO "LIVES" CONTRASTED. This volume contains two lives of Charles the Great, or Charlemagne (for both forms of the name will be used indifferently in this introduction); both written within a century after his death; both full of admiration for the hero of whom they treat; both written by ecclesiastics; but resembling one another in hardly any other particular. It is not merely the value which each in its different way possesses, but also the great contrast between them, that makes it seem useful to present them together in a single volume. Professor Bury remarked in his inaugural lecture at Cambridge: "It would be a most fruitful investigation to trace from the earliest ages the history of public opinion in regard to the meaning of falsehood and the obligation of veracity"; and these two lives would form an interesting text for the illustration of such a treatise. The restrained, positive, well-arranged narrative of Einhard seems to belong to a different age from the garrulous, credulous, and hopelessly jumbled story of the Monk of Saint Gall. And yet the two narratives were divided from one another by no long interval of time. It is impossible to fix with any certainty the date of the composition of Einhard's life, but there are various indications which make 820 a not impossible date. An incident mentioned by the Monk of Saint Gall makes the task of dating his work within limits an easier one. The

work was suggested to him, he tells us, by Charles III when he stayed for three days at the Monastery of Saint Gall, and it is possible to fix this event, with precision, to the year 883. We may think, therefore, of the Monk's narrative as being separated from that of Einhard by more than sixty years, and by about seventy from the death of its hero. But in the ninth century the mist of legend and myth steamed up rapidly from the grave of a well-known figure; there were few documents ready to the hand of a monk writing in the cloister of Saint Gall to assist him in writing an accurate narrative; there was no publicity of publication and no critical public to detect the errors of his work; above all, there was not in his own conscience the slightest possibility of reproach even if, with full consciousness of what he was doing, he changed the facts of history or interpolated the dreams of fancy, provided it were done in such a manner as "to point a moral or adorn a tale."

And so it is that, whereas through Einhard's narrative we look at the life of the great Charles in a clear white light, through a medium which, despite a few inaccuracies, distorts the facts of history wonderfully little, when we take up the narrative of the Monk, on the other hand, we are at once among the clouds of dreamland; and only occasionally does the unsubstantial fabric fade, and allow us to get a glimpse of reality and actual occurrence. But now each of these narratives demands a somewhat more careful scrutiny.

Einhard's Life of Charlemagne is a document of the first importance for the study of the epoch-making reign of his hero. Short as it is, we have often to confess that in the chronicles of the same period by other hands we can feel confidence only in such parts as are corroborated or supported by Einhard. Its chief fault is that it is all too short—a fault which biographers rarely allow their readers to complain of. But when we consider how admirably fitted Einhard was for the task which he undertook—by his close proximity to Charlemagne, by his intimate acquaintance with him, by his literary studies and sober and well-balanced mind; when we remember that he lived in a brief period of literary activity between two long stretches of darkness—it is tantalizing to find him complaining of the multiplicity of books and restraining himself with a quotation from Cicero from writing at greater length.

The Career of Einhard A sketch of Einhard's career will show how well qualified he was to deal with his subject. He was born about 770, in

the eastern half of the territories belonging to the great Charles, in a village situated on the lower course of the river Main. His father Einhard and his mother Engilfrita were landowners of some importance, and endowed by will the monastery of Fulda with lands and gold. It was to this monastery that the young Einhard was sent for education. The monastery of Fulda was founded under the influence of Boniface, the great Englishman, whose zeal had driven him from Crediton, in Devonshire, to co-operate with the early Frankish kings in the conversion and conquest of Germany. The monastic movement was strong and vigorous in the eighth century, and nowhere more so than in the eastern half of the Frankish dominions. Einhard was trained under the abbot Baugulfus, and showed himself so apt and promising a pupil that the abbot recommended him for a post at the court of Charles (~791).

The imperial crown was still nearly ten years distant, but Charles was already the most glorious and powerful of European rulers. In spite of all his constant fighting and travelling, his extraordinary energy found place for interest in calmer subjects, and he gathered round him in his court at Aachen the best of what the age had to show in culture, knowledge, and eloquence. In this circle the most striking figure was Alcuin of York; but Einhard soon made for himself a position of importance. Charles lived familiarly and genially with the scholars and writers of his palace, calling them by pet names and nicknames, and receiving the like in return. The king himself was David; Alcuin, Flaccus; Einhard is called Bezaleel, after the man of whom we are told in Exodus, chapter 31, that he was "filled with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, and in carving of timber." As the allusion implies, Einhard was no mere book-learned scholar, but had brought from his monastery school much technical and artistic knowledge. He has been called an architect, and many great buildings have been ascribed to him, but with more than doubtful probability. The minor arts were rather Einhard's fort , though it seems impossible to define them. Contemporaries speak of his carefully-wrought works, of the many tasks in which he was useful to Charles, but without exact specification. A contemporary document speaks of him as supervising the palace works at Aachen; or rather, one Ansegisus is described

as “the executant of the royal works in the royal palace at Aachen, under the direction of the Abbot Einhard, a man possessed of every kind of learning.”

He was of small stature, and this is often made good-humored fun of by his fellow-scholars. He is called the dwarf, the midget, the mannikin. Theodulf describes him as running about with the activity of an ant, and his body is spoken of as a small house with a great tenant. He married Imma, a Frankish lady of good family. (It is merely a stupid legend that makes of her a daughter of Charlemagne.) He lived with her happily, and was inconsolable after her death. Before his wife’s death and without putting her away from him, he had embraced the monastic life—a proceeding which in no way scandalized the ideas of that century. He was the abbot of many monasteries, which he held, in spite of the canonical prohibition, at the same time. Saint Peter of Ghent and Saint Wandrille, near Rouen, are those with which he is specially associated. He was on several occasions employed by Charles on important embassies, but was for the most part rather his secretary and confidant than his minister.

His great master died in 814, and Einhard survived him for twenty-nine years, having lived long enough to see the mighty fabric of Charles’s empire show signs of the rapid ruin that was soon to overtake it. He received from Louis the Pious further ecclesiastical promotion, but still lived at the Court until 830. After that year his devotion to the Church mastered all other interests. He built a church at Mulinheim, and procured for it with great pains the relics of Saint Peter and Saint Marcellinus from Rome; and it was at Mulinheim, renamed Seligenstadt (the city of the saints), far from the intrigues of courts, that he passed most of the rest of his life. His wife Imma (“once my faithful wife, and later my dear sister and companion”) died in 836, and Einhard’s deep sorrow at her loss finds pathetic expression in letters still extant. The political confusion and the utter failure of Charlemagne’s plans must have increased Einhard’s distaste for public affairs. He died at Seligenstadt, probably in 844. His epitaph gave as his two titles to fame his services to Charlemagne and his acquisition of the precious relics.

The Writings of Einhard that have come down to us are: (1) the *Life of Charlemagne*; (2) the *Annals*; (3) letters; (4) the *History of the Translation of the Relics of Saint Peter and Saint Marcellinus*; (5) a short poem on

the martyrdom of these two saints. These writings are all, with the possible exception of the last mentioned, of high value and interest, but the *Life of Charlemagne* is by far the most celebrated and important.

The Life of Charlemagne is the most striking result of the classical renaissance so diligently fostered at the court of Charlemagne by the emperor himself. Its form is directly copied from the *Lives of the Cæsars* by Suetonius, and especially from the *Life of Augustus* in that series. Phrases are constantly borrowed, and in some cases whole sentences. This imitation of Suetonius has its good and its bad results. It necessarily removed Einhard's work from the category of mediæval chronicles, with their garrulity, their reckless inventions, their humor, their desire to please, to amuse, and to glorify their hero, their order, or their monastery. Einhard's *Life* is not without mistakes, some of which are pointed out in the notes; but it is an honest, direct record of facts, and for these characteristics we are, doubtless, largely indebted to Suetonius's influence. On the other hand, it was the example of his classical model that induced him to keep his work within such narrow limits. Compression was forced upon the Roman historian by the scope of his work, which embraced the lives of twelve emperors; and the life and reign of Augustus had already been fully handled by other historians. But Einhard knew so much, and so little of equal value is written about his hero elsewhere, that his brevity is, for once, a quality hardly pardonable. Along with Asser's *Alfred* and Boccaccio's *Dante*, it gives us an instance of a biographer who did not sufficiently magnify his office and his subject.

No other account of the life and reign of Charlemagne can find a place here. For some time English readers had reason to complain that there was no good and popular book dealing with the great Charles, for Gibbon's chapter is admittedly not among the best parts of his history. But of late this reproach has been taken away. The two concluding volumes of Dr Hodgkin's great work, entitled *Italy and her Invaders*, deal with Charles and his relations with Italy (vols. vii and viii, *The Frankish Invasions* and *The Frankish Empire*). Dr Hodgkin has also written a general sketch of the whole of Charles's career (*Charles the Great*, Foreign Statesmen Series, Macmillan). More recently, Mr Carless Davis has written a *Life of Charlemagne* for the Heroes of the Nations Series.

It is in works such as these (to mention no others), and not in Einhard, that the real historical significance of Charlemagne's life-work appears. Einhard stood too near to his hero, and had too little sense of historical perspective to realise the abiding greatness of what Charles accomplished. It is the lapse of 1100 years that has brought into increasing clearness the importance of those years which lie like a great watershed between the ancient and the mediæval world. Of him, as of most great rulers, it is true that he "builded better than he knew." His empire soon became a tradition, his intellectual revival was eclipsed by a further plunge into the "Dark Ages," but all that he did was not swept away. With him ends the ruin of the ancient world, and with him begins the building up of the mediæval and modern world.

He did not find in Einhard an entirely worthy biographer; but the "man-ikin's" work has received unstinted praise since the time when it was written. It was praised by a contemporary as recalling the elegance of the classical authors; its popularity during the Middle Ages is attested to by the existence of sixty manuscript copies; and a French editor has declared that we have to go on to the thirteenth century, and to Joinville's *Life of St Louis*, before we find a rival in importance to Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne*.

The Monk of Saint Gall, it seems, must remain anonymous, for the attempt to identify him with Notker rests on no better foundation than the fact, or supposition, that both stammered. And this seems to be supposition rather than fact. We are, indeed, told on good authority that Notker stammered; but the view that the Monk of Saint Gall suffered from the same defect rests only on a sentence in Chapter XVII, where he contrasts the swift, direct glance of others with his own slow and rambling narrative—"Which I have been trying to unfold, though a stammerer, and toothless" (*quæ ego balbus et edentalus explicare tentavi*). It seems impossible to think that the words here must be taken in their literal sense. As the author is writing, not speaking, any defect of voice or teeth would in no way hinder his narrative: it is clear that the words are a piece of conventional and metaphorical depreciation.

We know, then, nothing of the author beyond what he tells us in his narrative; and he tells us little, except that he was a German, and a monk in the monastery of Saint Gall when Grimald and Hartmuth were abbots; that he had never himself been in Western Frankland, but had seen the Emperor

Charles III during his three days' stay in the monastery, and at his bidding had written an account of Charles the Great, and his deeds and ways.

The monastery in which he wrote has a special interest for our islands; for Saint Gall was an Irishman of noble family, and an inmate of a monastery in County Down, which was at that time governed by Saint Comgel. He was one of the twelve monks who, in 585, followed Saint Columban into Frankland. Switzerland was the great scene of his evangelical labors. The Catholic Church celebrates his death on 16 October; and tells in the *Lectiones* of that day how he destroyed the idols of the heathen; how he turned many to Christianity, and, even to the monastic life; how he founded the monastery of Saint Gall in his eighty-fifth year, and died at the age of ninety-five, having previously been warned in a dream of the death of his master, Saint Columban; and how at once miracles declared that a saint had passed away. His monastery for a century followed the rule of Saint Columban, and then, in common with most monastic institutions of Western Europe, adopted the rule of Saint Benedict.

It was in the famous abbey, that owed its foundation to this Irish missionary, that this account of the deeds of Charlemagne—the *Gesta Karoli*—was written. The author is at more pains than we should expect to tell us from what sources he derived his information. The preface to the work is lost; but at the end of the first book he repeats some of the information that he had inserted in it. It was his intention, he informs us, to follow three authorities, and three authorities only; but of these three he seems to mention two only—Werinbert, a monk of Saint Gall, who died just as he was completing the first part; and Adalbert, the father of Werinbert, who followed Kerold, the brother of Queen Hildigard, in the wars that were fought under Charlemagne's banner against the Huns and the Saxons and Slavs. It is an amusing picture that he gives us, at the end of the first book, of Adalbert's anxiety to tell him of Charles's exploits and his own unwillingness to hear. It is to be presumed that the stories were often repeated, for not only facts but words seem to have remained in the mind of the unwilling listener. The third authority does not seem to be mentioned, unless he means to imply that Kerold himself (who was killed in an expedition against the Avars in 799) is one of his sources of information.

The whole of what the Monk of Saint Gall wrote is not left to us. The preface, as we have seen, is missing, and also, perhaps, a third book; for in the sixteenth chapter of the second book it seems that our author promises us an account of the habits of Charles, his *cotidiana conversatio*, when the story of his military exploits has been finished. But this may easily be a misunderstanding of his meaning; or, rather, it may be giving too great a precision to it. The good Monk is so little able to follow out any line of thought, or to maintain any arrangement, that it may well be that the “daily conversation” of Charles never received any separate treatment.

No attempt will be made here to estimate the historical value of the narrative, though it would be a matter of curious speculation to consider whether the critical historian can employ any method whereby a residuum of objective fact can be separated from the mass of legend, saga, invention, and reckless blundering of which the greater part of the book is made up. But, apart from any value which it may possess as a historical document, the Monk’s story is of great interest for the light which it throws on the methods and outlook of a monk of the early Middle Ages. Charles has been dead not much more than half-a-century; the author has talked familiarly with those who knew him and fought under him; and yet the Charlemagne legend has already begun. Charles is already, if not inspired, at least supernaturally wise; if he does not work miracles, miracles are wrought in his presence, and on his behalf; if he does not yet lead the armies of Christendom to Jerusalem, he is already the specially recognised protector of the Holy City. There are passages too, as, for instance, the account of the visit of the envoys of the Greek emperor, and Charles’s “iron-march to Pavia,” where we seem to detect the existence of a popular saga—a poem—underlying the prose narrative. With the help of M. Gaston Paris’s *Histoire Poétique de Charlemagne*, we can trace the further development of the legend. By the eleventh century Charles was already a martyr for the faith, and the Crusaders believed themselves to be passing along his route to Jerusalem. “Turpin”’s chronicle, in the eleventh century, shows the vast extension of the legend, which now loses all but the vaguest relation to the actual events of history and the real characteristics of Charles. In the twelfth century (1165) Charles was solemnly canonised; and thenceforward the story spread into all lands, and received its last stroke in the time

of the Renaissance at the hands of Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto. These poets chiefly concern themselves, however, with the paladins of Charles; and the king himself forms the dimly-conceived centre round whom the whole story revolves, deciding disputes, besieging the Turks in Paris, priest-like rather than royal in his main features, and by Ariosto treated with some irony and banter. These mediæval legends of Charlemagne may well be compared to those which deal with Virgil, whose transformation into a magician is not less remarkable than Charles's development into a saint. If the Charlemagne legend ends with Ariosto, Dante may be said to have given the last shape to the many transformations of Virgil, when, more than two centuries before Ariosto's "Orlando," Virgil acted as guide to Dante through the "lost folk" of the Inferno, and the toilsome ascent of Purgatory, until he handed him over at last into the keeping of Beatrice at the gate of the earthly Paradise.

Story and myth naturally attach themselves only to the greatest figures; and the Monk of Saint Gall's narrative becomes then, even by virtue of its inventions and unrealities, a testimony to the effect produced on the mind of his century by the career of Charles.

Both the life of Einhard and the Monk's narrative have been translated from Jaffe's *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum*; which, both in its reading and arrangement, differs at times considerably from the text given in Pertz's *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*.

Chapter III

The Life of Charlemagne

by Einhard

I The Prologue of Walafrid¹

THE following account of that most glorious Emperor Charles was written, as is well known, by Einhard, who amongst all the palace officials of

¹Walafridus Strabo was abbot of a Frankish monastery from 842 to 849.

that time had the highest praise not only for learning but also for his generally high character; and, as he was himself present at nearly all the events that he describes, his account has the further advantage of the strictest accuracy.

He was born in eastern Frankland, in the district that is called Moingewi, and it was in the monastery of Fulda, in the school of Saint Boniface the Martyr, that his boyhood received its first training. Thence he was sent by Baugolf, the abbot of the monastery, to the palace of Charles, rather on account of his remarkable talents and intelligence, which even then gave bright promise of his wisdom that was to be so famous in later days, than because of any advantage of birth. Now, Charles was beyond all kings most eager in making search for wise men and in giving them such entertainment that they might pursue philosophy in all comfort. Whereby, with the help of God, he rendered his kingdom, which, when God committed it to him, was dark and almost wholly blind (if I may use such an expression), radiant with the blaze of fresh learning, hitherto unknown to our barbarism. But now once more men's interests are turning in an opposite direction, and the light of wisdom is less loved, and in most men is dying out.

And so this little man—for he was mean of stature—gained so much glory at the court of the wisdom-loving Charles by reason of his knowledge and high character that among all the ministers of his royal majesty there was scarce anyone at that time with whom that most powerful and wise king discussed his private affairs more willingly. And, indeed, he deserved such favor, for not only in the time of Charles, but even more remarkably in the reign of the Emperor Louis,² when the commonwealth of the Franks was shaken with many and various troubles, and in some parts was falling into ruin, he so wonderfully and providentially balanced his conduct, and, with the protection of God, kept such a watch over himself, that his reputation for cleverness, which many had envied and many had mocked at, did not untimely desert him nor plunge him into irremediable dangers.

This I have said that all men may read his words without doubting, and may know that, while he has given great glory to his great leader, he has also provided the curious reader with the most unsullied truth.

²The Emperor Louis I (Louis the Pious, 814–840) was the son and successor of Charles the Great. His weakness and pietism did much to wreck the imperial structure of Charles.

I, Strabo, have inserted the headings and the decorations³ as seemed well to my own judgement that he who seeks for any point may the more easily find what he desires.

Here ends the Prologue.

III The Preface of Einhard

HAVING made up my mind to write an account of the life and conversation, and to a large extent of the actions, of my lord and patron King Charles, of great and deservedly glorious memory, I have compressed my task within the narrowest possible limits. My aim has been on the one hand to insert everything of which I have been able to find an account; and on the other to avoid offending the fastidious by telling each new incident at wearisome length. Above all, I have tried to avoid offending in this new book those who look down upon even the monuments of antiquity written by learned and eloquent men.

There are, I do not doubt, many men of learning and leisure who feel that the life of the present day must not be utterly neglected, and that the doings of our own time should not be devoted to silence and forgetfulness as wholly unworthy of record; who, therefore, have such love of fame that they would rather chronicle the great deeds of others in writings, however poor, than, by abstaining from writing, allow their name and reputation to perish from the memory of mankind.⁴ But, even so, I have felt that I ought not to hold my hand from the composition of this book, for I knew that no one could write of these events more truthfully than I could, since I was myself an actor in them, and, being present, knew them from the testimony of my own eyes;

³Neither the headings nor the decorations (*incisiones*) are given in the present translation. The decorations necessarily disappear, and the various headings to the paragraphs, not being the work of Einhard, are not usually printed with the text. But Walafridus Strabo was personally known to Einhard, and his Preface seems, therefore, to deserve reproduction.

⁴That is, though there are many who would be ready to write Charles's life, Einhard thinks that he has peculiar qualifications for the task which make it obligatory on him to do so.

while I could not certainly know whether anyone else would write them or no. I thought it better, therefore, to join with others in committing this story to writing for the benefit of posterity rather than to allow the shades of oblivion to blot out the life of this king, the noblest and greatest of his age, and his famous deeds, which the men of later times will scarcely be able to imitate.

Another reason, and not, I think, a foolish one, occurred to me, which even by itself would have been strong enough to persuade me to write—the care, I mean, that was taken with my upbringing, and the unbroken friendship which I enjoyed with the king himself and his children from the time when first I began to live at his court. For in this way he has so bound me to himself, and has made me his debtor both in life and death, that I should most justly be considered and condemned as ungrateful if I were to forget all the benefits that he conferred upon me and were to pass over in silence the great and glorious deeds of a man who was so kind to me; if I were to allow his life to remain as unchronicled and unpraised, as if he had never lived, when that life deserves not merely the efforts of my poor talents, which are insignificant, small, and almost non-existent, but all the eloquence of a Cicero.

So here you have a book containing the life of that great and glorious man. There is nothing for you to wonder at or admire except his deeds; unless, indeed, it be that I, a barbarian, and little versed in the Roman tongue,⁵ have imagined that I could write Latin inoffensively and usefully, and have become so swollen with impudence as to despise Cicero's words when, speaking about Latin writers in the first book of the *Tusculans*, he says: "If a man commits his thoughts to paper when he can neither arrange them well nor write them agreeably, nor furnish pleasure of any kind to the reader, he is recklessly misusing both his leisure and his paper." The great orator's opinion would, perhaps, have deterred me from writing if I had not fortified myself with the reflection that I ought to risk the condemnation of men, and bring my poor talents into peril by writing, rather than spare my reputation and neglect this great man's memory.

The Preface ends: the Book begins.

⁵The Latin of Einhard's *Life* is much superior to the general monkish Latin of his period. See Introduction.

III Background of the Life of the King

THE race of the Merovingians from which the Franks were accustomed to choose their kings is reckoned as lasting to King Hilderich,⁶ who, by the order of Stephen, the Roman Pontiff,⁷ was deposed, tonsured, and sent into a monastery. But this race, though it may be regarded as finishing with him, had long since lost all power, and no longer possessed anything of importance except the empty royal title. For the wealth and power of the kingdom was in the hands of the præfects of the court, who were called mayors of the palace, and exercised entire sovereignty. The king, contented with the mere royal title, with long hair and flowing beard, used to sit upon the throne and act the part of a ruler, listening to ambassadors whencesoever they came, and giving them at their departure, as though of his own power, answers which he had been instructed or commanded to give. But this was the only function that he performed, for besides the empty royal title and the precarious life income which the præfect of the court allowed him at his pleasure, he had nothing of his own except one estate with a very small revenue, on which he had his house, and from which he drew the few servants who performed such services as were necessary, and made him a show of deference. Wherever he had to go he travelled in a wagon, drawn in rustic style by a pair of oxen, and driven by a cowherd.⁸ In this fashion he used to go to the palace and to the general meetings of the people, which were held yearly for the affairs of the kingdom;

⁶This is King Childeric III, who was deposed in 751 by a national council, with the approval of the Pope. Pippin the Short was then elected king, and crowned by Boniface. With Childeric the Merovingian dynasty ends, and gives place to the curiously-named Carolingian, of which Charlemagne was the greatest representative.

⁷Einhart here makes a mistake. The Pope was not Stephen, who held the papal see from 752 to 757, but Zacharias, who was pope from 741 to 752. Einhart's mistake is, perhaps, due to the fact that the decision of Zacharias was confirmed by his successor.

⁸Mr Carless Davis remarks on this passage: "Einhart errs in representing this as an indignity. Religious usage demanded that the king of the race should make his progresses in this primitive vehicle. The Merovingians were a national priesthood. Here also we have the explanation of their flowing locks and beard. The touch of steel—a metal unknown to the Frankish nation in its infancy—would have profaned their persons. Similarly the priesthood of ancient Rome were forbidden to remove the hair from their faces except with bronze tweezers." (*Life of Charlemagne*, p. 28.)

in this fashion he returned home. But the præfect of the court looked after the administration of the kingdom and all that had to be done or arranged at home or abroad.

2. When Hilderich was deposed, Pippin, the father of King Charles, was performing the duties of mayor of the palace as if by hereditary right. For his father Charles,⁹ who put down the tyrants who were claiming dominion for themselves through all Frankland, and so crushed the Saracens, when they were attempting to conquer Gaul, in two great battles (the one in Aquitania, near the city of Poitiers, the other near Narbonne, on the river Birra), that he forced them to return into Spain—his father Charles had nobly administered the same office, and had inherited it from his father Pippin.¹⁰ For the people did not usually give this honor except to such as were distinguished for the renown of their family and the extent of their wealth.

This office, then, was handed down from his father and his grandfather to Pippin, the father of King Charles, and to his brother Carloman. He exercised it for some years conjointly with his brother Carloman on terms of the greatest harmony, still in nominal subordination to the above-mentioned King Hilderich. But then his brother Carloman, for some unknown cause, but probably fired with love of the contemplative life, abandoned the toilsome administration of a temporal kingdom and retired to Rome in search of peace. There he changed his dress, and, becoming a monk in the monastery upon Mount Soraçte, built near the church of the blessed Silvester, enjoyed for some years the quiet that he desired, with many brethren, who joined themselves to him for the same purpose. But as many of the nobles of Frankland came on pilgrimage to Rome to perform their vows, and, unwilling to pass by one who had once been their lord, interrupted the peace that he most desired by frequent visits, he was compelled to change his abode. For, seeing that the

⁹This is Charles Martel—Charles the Hammer—who “reigned” as mayor of the palace from 715 to 741. His great victory (variously known as the Battle of Poitiers, or the Battle of Tours, though the former is the more accurate title) was fought in 732, and is regarded as the “Salamis of Western Europe.” It was the first serious blow that the Mohammedan advance had received, and its effects were decisive. The second battle, fought near Narbonne, completed the work of the first.

¹⁰Pippin, father of Charles Martel, and grandfather of Pippin the Short, was mayor of the palace from 687 to 714.

number of his visitors interfered with his purpose, he left Mount Soracte and retired to the monastery of Saint Benedict, situated in the camp of Mount Cassino, in the province of Samnium. There he occupied what remained to him of this temporal life in religious exercises.

3. But Pippin, after he was made king instead of mayor of the palace by the authority of the Roman Pontiff, exercised sole rule over the Franks for fifteen years, or rather more.¹¹ Then, after finishing the Aquitanian war, which he had undertaken against Waifar, Duke of Aquitania, and had carried on for nine consecutive years, he died at Paris of the dropsy, and left behind him two sons, Charles and Carloman, to whom by divine will the succession of the kingdom came. For the Franks called a solemn public assembly, and elected both of them to be kings, on the understanding that they should equally divide the whole kingdom, but that Charles should receive for his special administration that part which his father Pippin had held, while Carloman received the territories ruled by their uncle Carloman.¹² The conditions were accepted, and each received the share of the kingdom that was allotted to him. Harmony was maintained between the two brothers, though not without difficulty; for many partisans of Carloman tried to break their alliance, and some even hoped to engage them in war. But the course of events proved that the danger to Charles was imaginary rather than real. For, upon the death of Carloman, his wife with her sons and some of the leading nobles fled to Italy, and, for no obvious reason, passed over her husband's brother, and placed herself and her children under the protection of Desiderius, King of the Lombards. Carloman, after ruling the kingdom for two years conjointly with Charles, died of disease, and Charles, upon the death of Carloman,¹³ was

¹¹Pippin's reign really lasted for rather more than sixteen years—from 751 to 768.

¹²This statement, as is clear from other sources, does not correspond with the facts. Charles took Austrasia, and the greater part of Neustria, with the lands lying between the Loire and the Garonne. Burgundy, Provence, Alsace, Alemannia, and the south-eastern part of Aquitaine fell to Carloman.

¹³Carloman died in December 771. His death removed from the path of Charles one of the most serious obstacles. The custom of the Frankish monarchy was equal inheritance of all the sons. It was this which contributed so much to the disruption of the Frankish power on the death of Charles; but for the death of Carloman the empire would never have been founded, or founded only after bitter civil war. Einhard again makes a mistake in dates. The

made sole king with the consent of all the Franks.

4. It would be foolish of me to say anything about his birth and infancy,¹⁴ or even about his boyhood, for I can find nothing about these matters in writing, nor does anyone survive who claims to have personal knowledge of them. I have decided, therefore, to pass on to describe and illustrate his acts and his habits and the other divisions of his life without lingering over the unknown. I shall describe first his exploits both at home and abroad, then his habits and interests, and lastly the administration of the kingdom and the end of his reign, omitting nothing that demands or deserves to be recorded.

IV His Exploits at Home and Abroad

5. Of all the wars that he waged, that in Aquitania, begun but not finished by his father, was the first that he undertook, because it seemed easy of accomplishment. His brother was still alive, and was called upon for assistance, and, though he failed to provide the help that he promised, Charles prosecuted the enterprise that he had undertaken with the utmost energy, and would not desist or slacken in his task before, by perseverance and continuous effort, he had completely reached the end after which he strove. For he forced Hunold,¹⁵ who after the death of Waifar had attempted to occupy Aquitania and renew the almost finished war, to abandon Aquitania and retire into Gascony. Even there he did not allow him to remain, but crossed the Garonne, and sent ambassadors to Lupus, Duke of the Gascons, ordering him to surrender the fugitive, and threatening him with war unless he did so at once. Lupus, more wisely, not only surrendered Hunold but also submitted himself and the province over which he presided to the power of Charles.

two brothers had administered the realm in common for more than three years.

¹⁴This reticence of Einhard's about his hero's early life, about which it would have been quite easy to procure information, has seemed to many to lend color to a report that Charles was born before the Church had sanctioned the marriage of his parents.

¹⁵Hunold was the father of Waifar, and had for twenty years lived as a monk in the Island of Rhe, but upon the death of his son he left his monastic retreat in the hope of re-establishing the fortunes of his family in Aquitaine.

6. When the Aquitanian trouble was settled and the war finished, when, too, his partner in the kingdom had withdrawn from the world's affairs, he undertook a war against the Lombards, being moved thereto by the entreaties and the prayers of Hadrian, Bishop of the City of Rome. Now, this war, too, had been undertaken by his father at the supplication of Pope Stephen, under circumstances of great difficulty, inasmuch as certain of the chiefs of the Franks, whose advice he was accustomed to ask, so strongly resisted his wishes that they openly declared that they would leave their king to return home. But now Charles undertook the war against King Haistulf, and most swiftly brought it to an end. For, though his reasons for undertaking the war were similar to, and, indeed, the same as those of his father, he plainly fought it out with a very different energy, and brought it to a different end. For Pippin, after a siege of a few days at Pavia, forced King Haistulf to give hostages, and restore to the Romans the towns and fortresses that he had taken from them, and to give a solemn promise that he would not attempt to regain what he had surrendered. But King Charles, when once he had begun the war, did not stop until he had received the surrender of King Desiderius, whom he had worn down after a long siege; until he had forced his son Adalgis, in whom the hopes of his people seemed to be centered, to fly not only from his kingdom but from Italy; until he had restored to the Romans all that had been taken from them; until he had crushed Hruodgausus, præfect of the duchy of Friuli, who was attempting a revolution; until, in fine, he had brought all Italy under his rule, and placed his son Pippin as king over the conquered country. I should describe here the difficulties of the passage of the Alps and the vast toil with which the Franks found their way through the pathless mountain ridges, the rocks that soared to heaven, and the sharply-pointed cliffs, if it were not that my purpose in the present work is rather to describe Charles's manner of life than to chronicle the events of the wars that he waged. The sum of this war was the conquest of Italy, the transportation and perpetual exile of King Desiderius, the expulsion of his son Adalgis from Italy, power taken from the kings of the Lombards and restored to Hadrian, the ruler of the Roman Church.

7. When this war was ended the Saxon war,¹⁶ which seemed dropped for

¹⁶The Saxon war—the greatest task of Charles's whole reign—lasted with some intermis-

a time, was taken up again. Never was there a war more prolonged nor more cruel than this, nor one that required greater efforts on the part of the Frankish peoples. For the Saxons, like most of the races that inhabit Germany, are by nature fierce, devoted to the worship of demons and hostile to our religion, and they think it no dishonor to confound and transgress the laws of God and man.¹⁷ There were reasons, too, which might at any time cause a disturbance of the peace. For our boundaries and theirs touch almost everywhere on the open plain, except where in a few places large forests or ranges of mountains are interposed to separate the territories of the two nations by a definite frontier; so that on both sides murder, robbery, and arson were of constant occurrence. The Franks were so irritated by these things that they thought it was time no longer to be satisfied with retaliation but to declare open war against them.

So war was declared, and was fought for thirty years continuously with the greatest fierceness on both sides, but with heavier loss to the Saxons than the Franks. The end might have been reached sooner had it not been for the perfidy of the Saxons. It is hard to say how often they admitted themselves beaten and surrendered as suppliants to King Charles; how often they promised to obey his orders, gave without delay the required hostages, and received the ambassadors that were sent to them. Sometimes they were so cowed and broken that they promised to abandon the worship of devils and willingly to submit themselves to the Christian religion. But though sometimes ready to bow to his commands they were always eager to break their promise, so that it is impossible to say which course seemed to come more natural to them, for from the beginning of the war there was scarcely a year in which they did not both promise and fail to perform.

But the high courage of the king and the constancy of his mind, which remained unshaken by prosperity and adversity, could not be conquered by their changes nor forced by weariness to desist from his undertakings. He never allowed those who offended in this way to go unpunished, but either

sions for more than thirty years (from 772 to 804). By his conquest and conversion of the fierce and heathen Saxons—who occupied the lands in the valleys of the Ems and the Weser and reached as far as the Elbe—he laid the foundations of mediæval and modern Germany.

¹⁷For an account of the religious beliefs and practices of the Saxons, see Davis's *Charlemagne*, p. 95.

led an army himself, or sent one under the command of his counts, to chastise their perfidy and inflict a suitable penalty. So that at last, when all who had resisted had been defeated and brought under his power, he took ten thousand of the inhabitants of both banks of the Elbe, with their wives and children, and planted them in many groups in various parts of Germany and Gaul. And at last the war, protracted through so many years, was finished on conditions proposed by the king and accepted by them; they were to abandon the worship of devils, to turn from their national ceremonies, to receive the sacraments of the Christian faith and religion, and then, joined to the Franks, to make one people with them.

8. In this war, despite its prolongation through so many years, he did not himself meet the enemy in battle more than twice—once near the mountain called Osning, in the district of Detmold, and again at the river Hasa¹⁸—and both these battles were fought in one month, with an interval of only a few days. In these two battles the enemy were so beaten and cowed that they never again ventured to challenge the king, nor to resist his attack unless they were protected by some advantage of ground.

In this war many men of noble birth and high office fell on the side both of the Franks and Saxons. But at last it came to an end in the thirty-third year, though in the meanwhile so many and such serious wars broke out against the Franks in all parts of the world, and were carried on with such skill by the king, that an observer may reasonably doubt whether his endurance of toil or his good fortune deserves the greater admiration. For the war in Italy began two years before the Saxon war, and though it was prosecuted without intermission no enterprise in any part of the world was dropped, nor was there anywhere a truce in any struggle, however difficult. For this king, the wisest and most high-minded of all who in that age ruled over the nations of the world, never refused to undertake or prosecute any enterprise because of the labor involved, nor withdrew from it through fear of its danger. He understood the true character of each task that he undertook or carried through, and thus was neither broken by adversity nor misled by the false flatteries of good fortune.

9. Whilst the war with the Saxons was being prosecuted constantly and

¹⁸The river Hasa is near Osnabrück.

almost continuously he placed garrisons at suitable places on the frontier, and attacked Spain with the largest military expedition that he could collect. He crossed the Pyrenees, received the surrender of all the towns and fortresses that he attacked, and returned with his army safe and sound, except for a reverse which he experienced through the treason of the Gascons on his return through the passes of the Pyrenees. For while his army was marching in a long line, suiting their formation to the character of the ground and the defiles, the Gascons placed an ambuscade on the top of the mountain—where the density and extent of the woods in the neighborhood rendered it highly suitable for such a purpose—and then rushing down into the valley beneath threw into disorder the last part of the baggage train and also the rearguard which acted as a protection to those in advance. In the battle which followed the Gascons slew their opponents to the last man. Then they seized upon the baggage, and under cover of the night, which was already falling, they scattered with the utmost rapidity in different directions. The Gascons were assisted in this feat by the lightness of their armor and the character of the ground where the affair took place. In this battle Eggihard, the surveyor of the royal table; Anselm, the count of the palace; and Roland, præfect of the Breton frontier, were killed along with very many others.¹⁹ Nor could this assault be punished at once, for when the deed had been done the enemy so completely disappeared that they left behind them not so much as a rumor of their whereabouts.

10. He conquered the Bretons, too, who dwelt in the extreme west of France by the shores of the ocean. They had been disobedient, and he, therefore, sent against them an expedition, by which they were compelled to give hostages and promise that they would henceforth obey his orders.

Then later he himself entered Italy with an army, and, passing through Rome, came to Capua, a city of Campania. There he pitched his camp, and

¹⁹This is the famous defeat of Roncesvalles, where later legends affirmed that "Charlemagne with all his peerage fell at Fontarabia," and where Roland wound his horn, whose sound is still heard in the verse of Milton. By a strange chance this incident becomes one of the most famous in the cycle of mediæval Charlemagne legends; and Roland, evermore transfigured from the historical warden of the Breton march, becomes, after long wanderings, the Orlando of the "Orlando Furioso" of Ariosto. But the historical Roland seems mentioned here, and here only.

threatened the men of Beneventum²⁰ with war unless they surrendered. But Aragis, duke of that people, prevented this war by sending his sons Rumold and Grimold to meet the king with a large sum of money. He asked the king to receive his children as hostages, and promised that he and his people would obey all the commands of the king, except only that he would not come himself into the king's presence. Charles, considering rather the advantage of the people than their duke's obstinacy, received the hostages who were offered him, and as a great favor consented to forego a personal interview. He kept the younger of the two children as a hostage and sent back the elder one to his father. Then he sent ambassadors to require and receive oaths of fidelity from the Beneventans and from Aragis, and so came back to Rome. There he spent some days in the veneration of the holy places, and then returned to Gaul.

II. Then the Bavarian war broke out suddenly, and was swiftly ended. It was caused by the pride and folly of Tassilo,²¹ duke of Bavaria; for upon the instigation of his wife, who thought that she might revenge through her husband the banishment of her father Desiderius, king of the Lombards, he made an alliance with the Huns, the eastern neighbors of the Bavarians, and not only refused obedience to King Charles but even dared to challenge him in war. The high courage of the king could not bear his overweening insolence, and he forthwith called a general levy for an attack on Bavaria, and came in person with a great army to the river Lech, which separates Bavaria from Germany. He pitched his camp upon the banks of the river, and determined to make trial of the mind of the duke before he entered the province. But Duke Tassilo saw no profit either for himself or his people in stubbornness,

²⁰The duchy of Beneventum embraced a large part of the Italian peninsula south of Rome. It had been for a long time connected, in loose feudal dependence, with the Lombard monarchy of North Italy, and, since that had been overwhelmed and annexed by Charles, was now regarded as a dependency of the Carolingian monarchy.

²¹Tassilo, duke of Bavaria, had offended Charles by claiming independent sovereignty and refusing to recognise Charles in any way as his overlord. From the beginning of Charles's reign there had been friction between them, but for some time a hollow truce had existed. War came in 787, in spite of the efforts of the papacy at mediation, and ended swiftly, as described in the text, owing to the overwhelming strength of the armies brought against Tassilo by Charles. But the past of Bavaria was too great to allow its duke to accept the position of inferiority, and in the next year Tassilo was deposed, tonsured, and imprisoned in a monastery.

and threw himself upon the king's mercy. He gave the hostages who were demanded, his own son Theodo among the number, and further promised upon oath that no one should ever persuade him again to fall away from his allegiance to the king. And thus a war which seemed likely to grow into a very great one came to a most swift ending. But Tassilo was subsequently summoned into the king's presence, and was not allowed to return, and the province that he ruled was for the future committed to the administration not of dukes but of counts.²²

12. When these troubles had been settled he waged war against the Slavs, whom we are accustomed to call Wilzi, but who properly—that is, in their own tongue—are called Welatabi. Here the Saxons fought along with the other allied nations who followed the king's standards, though their loyalty was feigned and far from sincere. The cause of the war was that the Wilzi²³ were constantly invading and attacking the Abodriti, the former allies of the Franks, and refused to obey the king's commands to desist from their attacks. There is a gulf²⁴ stretching from the western sea towards the East, of undiscovered length, but nowhere more than a hundred miles in breadth, and often much narrower. Many nations occupy the shores of this sea. The Danes and the Swedes, whom we call the Northmen, hold its northern shore and all the islands in it. The Slavs and the Aisti and various other nations inhabit the eastern shore, amongst whom the chief are these Welatabi against whom then the king waged war. He so broke and subdued them in a single campaign, conducted by himself, that they thought it no longer wise to refuse to obey his commands.

13. The greatest of all his wars, next to the Saxon war, followed this

²²It was part of Charles's general policy to displace the dukes of his realm, with their undefined and dangerous powers, and to administer his dominions by a large number of counts, who were to begin with quite dependent officials executing the orders of the King over a limited area. "Count" was not yet the great title of nobility which it became later.

²³The Wiltzes lived on the shores of the Baltic between the Elbe and the Oder.

²⁴This "gulf" of Einhard's presents geographical difficulties. The direction indicated and the approximate measurements suggested make it impossible to apply his words to the whole of the Baltic gulf. The south-eastern part of the Baltic will correspond fairly well to the description.

one—that, namely, which he undertook against the Huns and the Avars.²⁵ He prosecuted this with more vigor than the rest and with a far greater military preparation. However, he conducted in person only one expedition into Pannonia, the province then occupied by the Avars; the management of the rest he left to his son Pippin, and the governors of the provinces, and in some cases to his counts and lieutenants. These carried on the war with the greatest energy, and finished it after eight years of fighting. How many battles were fought there and how much blood was shed is still shown by the deserted and uninhabited condition of Pannonia, and the district in which stood the palace of the Kagan²⁶ is so desolate that there is not so much as a trace of human habitation. All the nobles of the Huns were killed in this war, all their glory passed away; their money and all the treasures that they had collected for so long were carried away. Nor can the memory of man recall any war waged against the Franks by which they were so much enriched and their wealth so increased.²⁷ Up to this time they were regarded almost as a poor people, but now so much gold and silver were found in the palace, such precious spoils were seized by them in their battles, that it might fairly be held that the Franks had righteously taken from the Huns what they unrighteously had taken from other nations. Only two of the nobles of the Franks were killed in this war. Eric, the duke of Friuli, was caught in an ambushade laid by the townsmen of Tharsatica,²⁸ a maritime town of Liburnia. And Gerold, the governor of Bavaria, when he was marshalling his army to fight with the Huns in Pannonia, was killed by an unknown hand, along with two others, who

²⁵The war against the Avars was due to the alliance which had existed between them and Tassilo, duke of Bavaria. The Avars, though allied in race to the ancient Huns and the modern Magyars, were, nevertheless, a distinct people. Charles's war entirely broke their power, and removed a great danger from western Europe.

²⁶"The Monk of St Gall" (II:i) gives an interesting description of the vast concentric earthworks by which the power of the Kagan was defended, and his account rests on better authority than much of his strange chronicle. See also Dr Hodgkin's *Life of Charles the Great*, p. 155.

²⁷The vast treasure of the Avars had an important influence on the course of Charles's career. This great influx of the precious metals into Germany depreciated the value of the coinage and raised the price of commodities.

²⁸This is Tersatz, a town of Istria.

accompanied him as he rode along the line encouraging the soldiers by name. For the rest, the war was almost bloodless so far as the Franks were concerned, and most fortunate in its result although so difficult and protracted.

14. After this the Saxon war ended in a settlement as lasting as the struggle had been protracted. The wars with Bohemia and Luneburg which followed were soon over; both of them were swiftly settled under the command of the younger Charles.

The last war of all that Charles undertook was against those Northmen,²⁹ who are called Danes, who first came as pirates, and then ravaged the coasts of Gaul and Germany with a greater naval force. Their king, Godofrid, was puffed up with the vain confidence that he would make himself master of all Germany. He looked upon Frisia and Saxony as his own provinces. He had already reduced his neighbors the Abodriti to obedience, and had forced them to pay him tribute. Now he boasted that he would soon come to Aachen, the seat of the king's court, with a mighty force. His boast, however idle, found some to believe it; it was thought that he would certainly have made some such attempt if he had not been prevented by a sudden death. For he was killed by one of his own followers, and so ended both his life and the war that he had begun.

15. These, then, are the wars which this mighty king waged during the course of forty-seven years—for his reign extended over that period—in different parts of the world with the utmost skill and success. By these wars he so nobly increased the kingdom of the Franks, which was great and strong when he inherited it from his father Pippin, that the additions he made almost doubled it.³⁰ For before his time the power of the Frankish kingdom extended only over that part of Gaul which is bounded by the Rhine, the Loire, and the

²⁹These Northmen (or Danes, as they are usually called when they appear in English history) proved themselves the most terrible enemies of civilisation during the next century. "The Monk of St Gall" makes Charles prophesy the ruin that would come eventually on his empire from these northern sea-rovers. The attacks of the Northmen were among the most direct causes of the subsequent disruption of the empire of Charles.

³⁰This is an exaggeration of Einhard's. Charles did, indeed, greatly extend the Frankish dominions; but he strengthened them still more decisively by the improvements which he introduced into the internal order and administration.

Balearic Sea³¹; and that part of Germany which is inhabited by the so-called eastern Franks, and which is bounded by Saxony, the Danube, the Rhine, and the river Saal, which stream separates the Thuringians and the Sorabs; and, further, over the Alamanni and the Bavarians. But Charles, by the wars that have been mentioned, conquered and made tributary the following countries: First, Aquitania and Gascony, and the whole Pyrenean range, and the country of Spain as far as the Ebro, which, rising in Navarre and passing through the most fertile territory of Spain, falls into the Balearic Sea, beneath the walls of the city of Tortosa; next, all Italy from Augusta Prætoria as far as lower Calabria, where are the frontiers of the Greeks and Beneventans, a thousand miles and more in length; next, Saxony, which is a considerable portion of Germany, and is reckoned to be twice as broad and about as long as that part of Germany which is inhabited by the Franks; then both provinces of Pannonia and Dacia, on one side of the river Danube, and Histria and Liburnia and Dalmatia, with the exception of the maritime cities which he left to the emperor of Constantinople on account of their friendship and the treaty made between them; lastly, all the barbarous and fierce nations lying between the Rhine, the Viſtula, the Ocean, and the Danube, who speak much the same language, but in character and dress are very unlike. The chief of these last are the Welatabi, the Sorabi, the Abodriti, and the Bohemians; against these he waged war, but the others, and by far the larger number, surrendered without a struggle.

16. The friendship, too, which he established with certain kings and peoples increased the glory of his reign.

Aldefonsus, king of Gallæcia and Asturica, was joined in so close an alliance with him that whenever he sent letters or ambassadors to Charles he gave instructions that he should be called "the man" of the Frankish King.³²

Further, his rich gifts had so attached the kings of the Scots to his favor that they always called him their lord and themselves his submissive servants. Letters are still in existence sent by them to Charles in which those feelings towards him are clearly shown.

³¹The Balearic Sea is the western Mediterranean.

³²*Non aliter quam proprium suum.* Feudalism in any strict sense of the word was not yet established; but Alfonso was, in effect, "commending" himself to a feudal superior.

With Aaron,³³ the king of the Persians, who ruled over all the East, with the exception of India, he entertained so harmonious a friendship that the Persian king valued his favor before the friendship of all the kings and princes in the world, and held that it alone deserved to be cultivated with presents and titles. When, therefore, the ambassadors of Charles, whom he had sent with offerings to the most holy sepulchre of Our Lord and Savior and to the place of His resurrection, came to the Persian king and proclaimed the kindly feelings of their master, he not only granted them all they asked but also allowed that sacred place of our salvation to be reckoned as part of the possessions of the Frankish King.³⁴ He further sent ambassadors of his own along with those of Charles upon the return journey, and forwarded immense presents to Charles—robes and spices, and the other rich products of the East—and a few years earlier he had sent him at his request an elephant,³⁵ which was then the only one he had.

The emperors of Constantinople, Nicephorus, Michael, and Leo, too, made overtures of friendship and alliance with him, and sent many ambassadors. At first Charles was regarded with much suspicion by them, because he had taken the imperial title, and thus seemed to aim at taking from them their empire; but in the end a very definite treaty was made between them, and every occasion of quarrel on either side thereby avoided. For the Romans and the Greeks always suspected the Frankish power; hence there is a well-known Greek proverb: “the Frank is a good friend but a bad neighbor.”

17. Though he was so successful in widening the boundaries of his kingdom and subduing the foreign nations he, nevertheless, put on foot many works for the decoration and convenience of his kingdom, and carried some to completion. The great church dedicated to Mary, the holy Mother of God,

³³The spelling of the original is retained; but the “Aaron” of Einhard is the great Caliph Harun-al-Raschid, the abassid caliph of Baghdad, whose actions play so large a part in fiction as well as in history.

³⁴It is strange, in view of the friendly relations of Charles with the Mohammedan ruler of the East, that later legend so persistently represented Charles as a crusader, driving the Paynim from the Holy City. The height of unreality is reached when, as in Ariosto, we find Charlemagne relieving the city of Paris, which is being besieged by the Mohammedans.

³⁵This elephant caused a great sensation in Europe. His arrival, life, and death are carefully noted by the chroniclers.

at Aachen, and the bridge, five hundred feet in length, over the great river Rhine near Mainz, may fairly be regarded as the chief of his works. But the bridge was burned down a year before his death, and though he had determined to rebuild it of stone instead of wood it was not restored, because his death so speedily followed. He began also to build palaces of splendid workmanship—one not far from the city of Mainz, near a town called Ingelheim; another at Nimeguen, on the river Waal, which flows along the south of the Batavian island. And he gave special orders to the bishops and priests who had charge of sacred buildings that any throughout his realm which had fallen into ruin through age should be restored, and he instructed his agents to see that his orders were carried out.

He built a fleet, too, for the war against the Northmen, constructing ships for this purpose near those rivers which flow out of Gaul and Germany into the northern ocean. And because the Northmen laid waste the coasts of Gaul and Germany by their constant attacks, he planted forts and garrisons in all harbors and at the mouths of all navigable rivers, and prevented in this way the passage of the enemy.³⁶ He took the same measures in the South, on the shore of Narbonne and Septimania, and also along all the coasts of Italy as far as Rome, to hold in check the Moors, who had lately begun to make piratical excursions. And by reason of these precautions Italy suffered no serious harm from the Moors, nor Gaul and Germany from the Northmen, in the days of Charles; except that Centumcellæ, a city of Etruria, was betrayed into the hands of the Moors and plundered, and in Frisia certain islands lying close to Germany were ravaged by the Northmen.

V Private Life and Character of Charlemagne

18. I have shown, then, how Charles protected and expanded his kingdom and also what splendor he gave to it. I shall now go on to speak of his mental

³⁶The exact meaning of the original is far from clear (*ne qua hostis exire potuisset*). The ingress rather than the egress is what Charles must have wished to prevent, but there seems no doubt about the reading.

endowments, of his steadiness of purpose under whatever circumstances of prosperity or adversity, and of all that concerns his private and domestic life.

As long as, after the death of his father, he shared the kingdom with his brother, he bore so patiently the quarrelling and restlessness of the latter as never even to be provoked to wrath by him. Then, having married at his mother's bidding the daughter of Desiderius, king of the Lombards, he rejected her, for some unknown reason,³⁷ a year later. He took in marriage Hildigard,³⁸ of the Suabian race, a woman of the highest nobility, and by her he had three sons—viz. Charles and Pippin and Ludovicus, and three daughters—Hrotrud and Bertha and Gisla. He had also three other daughters—Theoderada and Hiltrud and Hruodhaid. Two of these were the children of his wife Fastrada,³⁹ a woman of the eastern Franks or Germans; the third was the daughter of a concubine, whose name has escaped my memory. On the death of Fastrada he married Liutgard, of the Alemannic race, by whom he had no children. After her death he had four concubines—namely, Madelgarda, who bore him a daughter of the name of Ruothild; Gersuinda, of Saxon origin, by whom he had a daughter of the name of Adolthrud; Regina, who bore him Drogot and Hugo; and Adallinda, who was the mother of Theoderic.

His mother Bertrada lived with him to old age in great honor. He treated her with the utmost reverence, so that no quarrel of any kind ever arose between them—except in the matter of the separation⁴⁰ of the daughter

³⁷"The Monk of St Gall" says that the cause of this repudiation was the constant illness of his wife, and her incapacity to bear him children. —Ed.'s note: We have changed the original translation here from "divorced" to "rejected", since that is what Einhard's Latin text actually says (*post annum eam repudiavit*). This is different from divorce, which of course is not permitted in Catholic teaching. Perhaps an undisclosed condition rendering her infertile led to the rejection?

³⁸This Hildigard was only thirteen years of age at the time of her marriage with Charles. Besides the children mentioned by Einhard she bore to Charles three others—Lothaire, Adelais, and Hildigard.

³⁹Fastrada is regarded by Einhard elsewhere as the evil influence on Charles's life, urging him against the natural bent of his character to acts of cruelty and violence. Dr Hodgkin, however, points out that the most cruel act of his reign—the massacre of 4500 Saxons—took place before his marriage with Fastrada.

⁴⁰Here Einhard does use the word *divortium*; but that can mean simply "separation" as well as "divorce" specifically, so we have changed the translation here, as well.

of King Desiderius, whom he had married at her bidding. Bertrada died after the death of Hildigard, having lived to see three grandsons and as many granddaughters in her son's house. Charles had his mother buried with great honor in the same great church of St Denis in which his father lay.

He had only one sister, Gisla, who from childhood was dedicated to the religious life. He treated her with the same affectionate respect as his mother. She died a few years before Charles's own death in the monastery in which she had passed her life.

19. In educating his children he determined to train them, both sons and daughters, in those liberal studies to which he himself paid great attention. Further, he made his sons, as soon as their age permitted it, learn to ride like true Franks, and practice the use of arms and hunting. He ordered his daughters to learn wool work and devote attention to the spindle and distaff, for the avoidance of idleness and lethargy, and to be trained to the adoption of high principles.

He lost two sons and one daughter before his death—namely, Charles, his eldest; Pippin, whom he made king of Italy; and Hruotrud, his eldest daughter, who had been betrothed to Constantine, the emperor of the Greeks.⁴¹ Pippin left one son, Bernard, and five daughters—Adalheid, Atula, Gundrada, Berthaid, and Theoderada. In his treatment of them Charles gave the strongest proof of his family affection, for upon the death of his son he appointed his grandson Bernard to succeed him, and had his granddaughters brought up with his own daughters.

He bore the deaths of his two sons and of his daughters with less patience than might have been expected from his usual stoutness of heart, for his domestic affection, a quality for which he was as remarkable as for courage, forced him to shed tears. Moreover, when the death of Hadrian, the Roman Pontiff, whom he reckoned as the chief of his friends, was announced to him,

⁴¹The betrothal of Hruotrud to the Eastern Emperor, and the rupture of the marriage contract, is a somewhat obscure thread in the diplomacy of the reign of Charles. Note that the betrothal took place in 781, during the residence of Charles at Rome, but nineteen years before he had assumed the imperial title. Religious difference and political jealousies probably both played their part in the rupture. Both Frankish and Greek chroniclers are anxious to maintain that the repudiation came from their side.

he wept for him as though he had lost a brother or a very dear son. For he showed a very fine disposition in his friendships: he embraced them readily and maintained them faithfully, and he treated with the utmost respect all whom he had admitted into the circle of his friends.

He had such care of the upbringing of his sons and daughters that he never dined without them when he was at home, and never travelled without them. His sons rode along with him, and his daughters followed in the rear. Some of his guards, chosen for this very purpose, watched the end of the line of march where his daughters travelled. They were very beautiful, and much beloved by their father, and, therefore, it is strange that he would give them in marriage to no one, either among his own people or of a foreign state. But up to his death he kept them all at home, saying that he could not forego their society. And hence the good fortune that followed him in all other respects was here broken by the touch of scandal and failure.⁴² He shut his eyes, however, to everything, and acted as though no suspicion of anything amiss had reached him, or as if the rumor of it had been discredited.

20. He had by a concubine a son called Pippin—whom I purposely did not mention along with the others—handsome, indeed, but deformed. When Charles, after the beginning of the war against the Huns, was wintering in Bavaria, this Pippin pretended illness, and formed a conspiracy against his father with some of the leaders of the Franks, who had seduced him by a vain promise of the kingdom.⁴³ When the design had been detected and the conspirators punished, Pippin was tonsured and sent to the monastery of Prüm, there to practice the religious life, to which in the end he was of his own will inclined.

Another dangerous conspiracy had been formed against him in Germany at an earlier date. The plotters were some of them blinded and some of them maimed, and all subsequently transported into exile. Not more than three lost their lives, and these resisted capture with drawn swords, and in defending themselves killed some of their opponents. Hence, as they could not be

⁴²If scandal is to be believed, the court of Charles, in spite of his devotion to the Church and his anxiety to maintain a high standard of morals, was the scene of much licence and disorder.

⁴³This conspiracy of Pippin took place in the years 785 and 786.

restrained in any other way, they were cut down.

The cruelty of Queen Fastrada is believed to be the cause and origin of these conspiracies. Both were caused by the belief that, upon the persuasion of his cruel wife, he had swerved widely from his natural kindness and customary leniency. Otherwise his whole life long he so won the love and favor of all men both at home and abroad that never was the slightest charge of unjust severity brought against him by anyone.

21. He had a great love for foreigners, and took such pains to entertain them that their numbers were justly reckoned to be a burden not only to the palace but to the kingdom at large. But, with his usual loftiness of spirit, he took little note of such charges, for he found in the reputation of generosity and in the good fame that followed such actions a compensation even for grave inconveniences.

22. His body was large and strong; his stature tall but not ungainly, for the measure of his height was seven times the length of his own feet. The top of his head was round; his eyes were very large and piercing. His nose was rather larger than is usual; he had beautiful white hair; and his expression was brisk and cheerful; so that, whether sitting or standing, his appearance was dignified and impressive. Although his neck was rather thick and short and he was somewhat corpulent this was not noticed owing to the good proportions of the rest of his body. His step was firm and the whole carriage of his body manly; his voice was clear, but hardly so strong as you would have expected. He had good health, but for four years before his death was frequently attacked by fevers, and at last was lame of one foot. Even then he followed his own opinion rather than the advice of his doctors, whom he almost hated, because they advised him to give up the roast meat to which he was accustomed, and eat boiled instead. He constantly took exercise both by riding and hunting. This was a national habit; for there is hardly any race on the earth that can be placed on equality with the Franks in this respect. He took delight in the vapor of naturally hot waters, and constantly practiced swimming, in which he was so proficient that no one could be fairly regarded as his superior. Partly for this reason he built his palace at Aachen, and lived there continuously during the last years of his life up to the time of his death. He used to invite not only his sons to the bath but also his nobles and friends,

and at times even a great number of his followers and bodyguards.

23. He wore the national, that is to say the Frankish, dress. His shirts and drawers were of linen, then came a tunic with a silken fringe, and hose. His legs were cross-gartered and his feet enclosed in shoes. In winter-time he defended his shoulders and chest with a jerkin made of the skins of otters and ermine. He was clad in a blue cloak, and always wore a sword, with the hilt and belt of either gold or silver. Occasionally, too, he used a jewelled sword, but this was only on the great festivals or when he received ambassadors from foreign nations. He disliked foreign garments, however beautiful, and would never consent to wear them, except once at Rome on the request of Pope Hadrian, and once again upon the entreaty of his successor, Pope Leo, when he wore a long tunic and cloak, and put on shoes made after the Roman fashion. On festal days he walked in procession in a garment of gold cloth, with jewelled boots and a golden girdle to his cloak, and distinguished further by a diadem of gold and precious stones. But on other days his dress differed little from that of the common people.

24. He was temperate in eating and drinking, but especially so in drinking; for he had a fierce hatred of drunkenness in any man, and especially in himself or in his friends. He could not abstain so easily from food, and used often to complain that fasting was injurious to his health. He rarely gave large banquets, and only on the high festivals, but then he invited a large number of guests. His daily meal was served in four courses only, exclusive of the roast, which the hunters used to bring in on spits, and which he ate with more pleasure than any other food. During the meal there was either singing or a reader for him to listen to. Histories and the great deeds of men of old were read to him. He took delight also in the books of Saint Augustine, and especially in those which are entitled the *City of God*. He was so temperate in the use of wine and drink of any kind that he rarely drank oftener than thrice during dinner.

In summer, after his midday meal, he took some fruit and a single draught, and then, taking off his clothes and boots, just as he was accustomed to do at night, he would rest for two or three hours. At night he slept so lightly that he would wake, and even rise, four or five times during the night.

When he was putting on his boots and clothes he not only admitted his

friends, but if the count of the palace told him there was any dispute which could not be settled without his decision, he would have the litigants at once brought in, and hear the case, and pronounce on it just as if he were sitting on the tribunal. He would, moreover, at the same time transact any business that had to be done that day or give any orders to his servants.⁴⁴

25. In speech he was fluent and ready, and could express with the greatest clearness whatever he wished. He was not merely content with his native tongue but took the trouble to learn foreign languages. He learned Latin so well that he could speak it as well as his native tongue; but he could understand Greek better than he could speak it.⁴⁵

His fluency of speech was so great that he even seemed sometimes a little garrulous.

He paid the greatest attention to the liberal arts, and showed the greatest respect and bestowed high honors upon those who taught them. For his lessons in grammar he listened to the instruction of Deacon Peter of Pisa, an old man; but for all other subjects Albinus, called Alcuin,⁴⁶ also a deacon, was his teacher—a man from Britain, of the Saxon race, and the most learned man of his time. Charles spent much time and labor in learning rhetoric and dialectic, and especially astronomy, from Alcuin. He learned, too, the art of reckoning, and with close application scrutinized most carefully the course of the stars. He tried also to learn to write, and for this purpose used to carry with him and keep under the pillow of his couch tablets and writing-sheets that he might in his spare moments accustom himself to the formation of letters. But he made little advance in this strange task, which was begun too late in life.⁴⁷

⁴⁴We have here the natural and simple beginnings of the ceremony that afterwards reached such great proportions in the *lever* and *coucher* of the French kings.

⁴⁵This reference to Greek at the court of Charlemagne is interesting in view of the exaggerated views sometimes held on the disappearance of Greek in the Middle Ages.

⁴⁶This is Alcuin of York, one of the greatest of Englishmen; undoubtedly, as Einhard says, the most learned man of his time. His letters form a valuable source of information for the inner life of Charlemagne and his court.

⁴⁷This passage has been closely scrutinized and commented on. Do Einhard's words imply that Charlemagne could not write at all? This seems a very improbable interpretation of them. *Parum successit* would rather mean that "he made but little headway." It may well be that

26. He paid the most devout and pious regard to the Christian religion, in which he had been brought up from infancy. And, therefore, he built the great and most beautiful church at Aachen, and decorated it with gold and silver and candelabras and with wicket-gates and doors of solid brass. And, since he could not procure marble columns elsewhere for the building of it, he had them brought from Rome and Ravenna. As long as his health permitted it he used diligently to attend the church both in the morning and evening, and during the night, and at the time of the sacrifice. He took the greatest care to have all the services of the church performed with the utmost dignity, and constantly warned the keepers of the building not to allow anything improper or dirty either to be brought into or to remain in the building. He provided so great a quantity of gold and silver vessels, and so large a supply of priestly vestments, that at the religious services not even the doorkeepers, who form the lowest ecclesiastical order, had to officiate in their ordinary dress. He carefully reformed the manner of reading and singing; for he was thoroughly instructed in both, though he never read publicly himself, nor sang except in a low voice, and with the rest of the congregation.

27. He was most devout in relieving the poor and in those free gifts which the Greeks call alms. For he gave it his attention not only in his own country and in his own kingdom, but he also used to send money across the sea to Syria, to Egypt, to Africa—to Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Carthage—in compassion for the poverty of any Christians whose miserable condition in those countries came to his ears. It was for this reason chiefly that he cultivated the friendship of kings beyond the sea, hoping thereby to win for the Christians living beneath their sway some succor and relief.

Beyond all other sacred and venerable places he loved the church of the holy Apostle Peter at Rome, and he poured into its treasury great wealth in silver and gold and precious stones. He sent innumerable gifts to the pope; and during the whole course of his reign he strove with all his might (and, indeed, no object was nearer to his heart than this) to restore to the city of Rome her ancient authority, and not merely to defend the church of Saint Peter but to decorate and enrich it out of his resources above all other churches.

the king was able to write roughly and in an ordinary way but failed to acquire the elegant and delicate calligraphy that was aimed at by the scribes of the time.

But although he valued Rome so much, still, during all the forty-seven years that he reigned, he only went there four times to pay his vows and offer up his prayers.

28. But such were not the only objects of his last visit; for the Romans had grievously outraged Pope Leo, had torn out his eyes and cut off his tongue, and thus forced him to throw himself upon the protection of the king. He therefore came to Rome to restore the condition of the church, which was terribly disturbed, and spent the whole of the winter there. It was then that he received the title of Emperor and Augustus,⁴⁸ which he so disliked at first that he affirmed that he would not have entered the church on that day—though it was the chief festival of the church—if he could have foreseen the design of the pope. But when he had taken the title he bore very quietly the hostility that it caused and the indignation of the Roman emperors.⁴⁹ He conquered their ill-feeling by his magnanimity, in which, doubtless, he far excelled them, and sent frequent embassies to them, and called them his brothers.

29. When he had taken the imperial title, he noticed many defects in the legal systems of his people; for the Franks have two legal systems,⁵⁰ differing in many points very widely from one another; and he, therefore, determined

⁴⁸Einhard passes very lightly over these epoch-making events of Christmas Day in the year 800, when the imperial title was again assumed by a ruler of the West, and the mediæval empire was launched with all its vast consequences, both for the theory and practice of the Middle Ages. ¶ Charlemagne's expressed regret for what occurred (of which we hear from other sources) has been variously interpreted. It can hardly refer to the imperial title altogether; for this certainly was not unexpected, nor was it due merely to the decision of the pope. Charles had himself decided to adopt it: it was the coping-stone to all his policy and his whole career, for in power Charles was emperor before the consecration of that famous Christmas day. The regret expressed by Charles more probably refers to the method in which the title was bestowed: it came to him too much as a grant from the papacy, too little as the result of his own power and will. His heart may well have foreboded something of the long struggle between empire and papacy, which agitated the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, which caused so much bloodshed on both sides of the Alps, and which in the end ruined the power of both emperor and pope: for this struggle had its roots in the indefinite basis of the imperial title. The regrets of Charlemagne are probably in close relation to the wars of Henry IV, of Frederick Barbarossa, and of Frederick II. Had the papacy the right to give or to withhold the imperial title? That was the great underlying problem of the imperial position.

⁴⁹The Roman emperors are the emperors at Constantinople.

⁵⁰That is to say, the legal systems of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks.

to add what was lacking, to reconcile the differences, and to amend anything that was wrong or wrongly expressed. He completed nothing of all his designs beyond adding a few capitularies, and those unfinished. But he gave orders that the laws and rules of all nations comprised within his dominions which were not already written out should be collected and committed to writing.

He also wrote out the barbarous and ancient songs, in which the acts of the kings and their wars were sung, and committed them to memory. He also began a grammar of his native language.⁵¹

He gave the months names in his own tongue, for before his time they were called by the Franks partly by Latin and partly by barbarous names. He also gave names to the twelve winds, whereas before not more than four, and perhaps not so many, had names of their own. Of the months, he called January Winter-month, February Mud-month, March Spring-month, April Easter-month, May Joy-month, June Plough-month, July Hay-month, August Harvest-month, September Wind-month, October Vintage-month, November Autumn-month, December Holy-month.⁵² The following are the names which he gave to the winds: The Subsolanus (east) he called East Wind; the Eurus (east by south) East-South Wind; the Euroauster (south by east) South-East Wind; the Auster (south) South Wind; the Austro-Afric (south by west) South-West Wind; the Afric (west by south) West-South Wind; the Zephyr (west) West Wind; the Corus (west by north) West-North Wind; the Circius (north by west) North-West Wind; the Septentrion (north) North Wind; the Aquilon (north by east) North-East Wind; the Vulturnus (east by north) East-North Wind.

30. At the very end of his life, when already he was feeling the pressure

⁵¹Nothing in all the policy of Charles gives such an impression of enlightenment as the actions alluded to here. A collection of German sagas, and a grammar of the German language as it was in the year 800—what would not posterity give for these? The disappearance of the former is due to the policy of his son and successor Louis the Pious, whose piety had little in common with the robust and broad views of his father. The biographer of Louis tells us that Louis “rejected the national poems, which he had learned in his youth, and would not have them read or recited or taught.”

⁵²Their names (in the original) are as follows: *Wintarmanoth*, *Hornungmanoth*, *Lentzinmanoth*, *Ostarmanoth*, *Winnemanoth*, *Brachmanoth*, *Hewimanoth*, *Aranmanoth*, *Witumanoth*, *Windumemanoth*, *Herbistmanoth*, *Heiligmanoth*.

of old age and sickness, he summoned his own son Louis, king of Aquitania, the only surviving son of Hildigard, and then solemnly called together the Frankish nobles of his whole kingdom; and then, with the consent of all, made Louis partner in the whole kingdom and heir to the imperial title. After that, putting the diadem on his head, he ordered them to salute him *Imperator* and Augustus. This decision of his was received by all present with the greatest favor, for it seemed to them a divine inspiration for the welfare of the realm. It added to his dignity at home and increased the terror of his name abroad.

He then sent his son back to Aquitania, and himself, though broken with old age, proceeded to hunt, as his custom was, not far from the palace of Aachen, and after spending the rest of the autumn in this pursuit he came back to Aachen about the beginning of November. Whilst he was spending the winter there he was attacked by a sharp fever, and took to his bed. Then, following his usual habit, he determined to abstain from food, thinking that by such self-discipline he would be able either to cure or alleviate the disease. But the fever was complicated by a pain in the side which the Greeks call pleurisy; and, as Charles still persisted in fasting, and only very rarely drank something to sustain his strength, seven days after he had taken to his bed he received holy communion, and died, in the seventy-second year of his life and in the forty-seventh year of his reign, on the fifth day before the kalends of February, at the third hour of the day.

31. His body was washed and treated with the usual ceremonies, and then, amidst the greatest grief of the whole people, taken to the church and buried. At first there was some doubt as to where he should rest, since he had given no instructions during his lifetime. But at length all were agreed that he could be buried nowhere more honorably than in the great church which he had built at his own expense in the same town, for the love of Our Lord God Jesus Christ and the honor of His holy and ever-virgin Mother. There he was buried on the same day on which he died.⁵³ A gilded arch was raised above the tomb,

⁵³This curt and definite statement of Einhard disposes at once of the well-known story of Otto III's visit to Charlemagne's grave in the year 1000, and his remarkable discovery there. But the story is so famous that it may be given in the words of the chronicler of Novalesse, who is our chief authority for it. ¶ "After the passage of many years the Emperor Otto III came into the district where the body of Charles was lying duly buried. He descended into the place

with his statue, and an inscription. The inscription ran as follows:

Beneath this tomb lies the body of Charles, the great and orthodox emperor, who nobly expanded the kingdom of the Franks and reigned prosperously for forty-seven years. He departed this life, more than seventy years of age, in the eight hundred and fourteenth year of Our Lord, in the seventh indiction, on the fifth day before the kalends of February.

32. There were many prodigies to show that his end drew near, and he as well as others understood the meaning of their warnings. During all the three last years of his life there were constant eclipses of sun and moon, and a black-colored spot appeared in the sun for the space of seven days. The gallery which he had built, of great size and strength, between the palace and the church, suddenly, on Ascension day, fell in ruins down even to the foundations. Also, the wooden bridge over the Rhine near Mainz, which he had built with wonderful skill, and the labor of ten years, so that it seemed as though it would last for ever, was accidentally set on fire, and in three hours burned so far that not a plank remained except those that were covered by the water. Further, when he was making his last expedition in Saxony against Godofrid, king of the Danes, as he was moving out of camp and beginning his march before sunrise, he suddenly saw a meteor rush across the heavens with a great blaze and pass from right to left through the clear sky. Whilst all were wondering what this sign meant, suddenly the horse that he was riding

of burial with two bishops and Otto, count of Lomello; the Emperor himself completed the party of four. Now, the Count gave his version of what happened much as follows: 'We came then to Charles. He was not lying down, as is usual with the bodies of the dead, but sat on a sort of seat, as though he were alive. He was crowned with a golden crown; he held his sceptre in his hands, and his hands were covered with gloves, through which his nails had forced a passage. Round him there was a sort of vault built, strongly made of mortar and marble. When we came to the grave we broke a hole into it and entered, and entering, were aware of a very strong odor. At once we fell upon our knees and worshipped him, and the Emperor Otto clothed him with white garments, cut his nails, and restored whatever was lacking in him. But corruption had not yet taken anything away from his limbs; only a little was lacking to the very tip of his nose. Otto had this restored in gold; he then took a single tooth from his mouth, and so built up the vault, and departed.'"

fell head foremost, and threw him so violently to the ground that the girdle of his cloak was broken, and his sword belt slipped from it. When his attendants ran up to help him they found him disarmed and disrobed. His javelin, too, which he was holding in his hand at the time of his fall, fell twenty paces and more away from him. Moreover, the palace at Aachen was frequently shaken, and in houses where he lived there was a constant creaking in the fretted ceilings. The church in which he was afterwards buried was struck by lightning, and the golden apple that adorned the summit of the roof was thrown down by a thunder-stroke, and fell upon the bishop's house, which adjoined the church. In the same church an inscription was written on the edge of the circular space which ran round the inside of the church between the upper and lower arches, saying by whom the sacred edifice had been built. And in the last line occurred the words: "*Carolus Princeps*." Some noticed that in the very year in which Charles died, and a few months before his death, the letters of the word "*princeps*" were so destroyed as to be quite invisible. But he either refused to notice or despised all these omens as though they had no connection at all with anything that concerned him.

33. He had determined to draw out wills in order to make his daughters and the sons whom his concubines had borne to him heirs to some part of his property; but he took up this design too late, and could not carry it out. But some three years before he died he divided his treasures, his money, and his robes, and all his other moveable property, in presence of his friends and ministers, and appealed to them to ratify and maintain by their support this division after his death. He also stated in a document how he wished to have the property which he had divided disposed of. The text and purport of the document ran as follows:

"In the name of the Lord God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is the description and division which was made by the most glorious and pious lord Charles, the august emperor, in the eight hundred and eleventh year from the incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ; in the forty-third year of his reign in Frankland; in the thirty-sixth year of his reign in Italy; in the eleventh year of his empire and in the fourth indiction: which division he made for wise and religious reasons of his treasures and of the money which on that day was found in the treasury. Wherein his great aim was: in the first place to

ensure that the distribution of alms, which Christians religiously make from their possessions, should be duly and properly made on his account from his wealth; and also that his heirs may clearly know without any possibility of doubt what ought to belong to them, and may therefore (without contest or dissension) divide his goods among themselves in their proper proportion. Therefore with this intention and object he first divided into three parts all his property and moveable goods; which, whether consisting of gold, silver, jewels, or royal apparel, could be found on the afore-mentioned day in his treasury. Then, by a further distribution, he divided two of those three parts into twenty-one parts, and kept the third part undivided.

“The distribution of the two parts into twenty-one is to be carried out in the following way. As there are known to be twenty-one metropolitan cities in his realm, one of those twenty-one parts is to be handed over to each metropolitan city by his heirs and friends for the purpose of almsgiving. The archbishop who at the time of his death is ruling the metropolitan sees shall receive that part for his church and divide it among his suffragans; one-third going to his own church and two-thirds being divided among his suffragans.

“Each of these divisions—which, as already mentioned, are made out of the first two-thirds, and are twenty-one in number, according to the number of the metropolitan sees—is separated from the rest and put away by itself in a repository of its own with the title of the city attached to which it is to be given. The names of the metropolitan sees, to which this alms or largess is to be given, are Rome, Ravenna, Milan, Frejus, Grado, Cologne, Mainz, Juvavum which is also called Salsburg, Treves, Sens, Besancon, Lyons, Rouen, Rheims, Arles, Vienne, Darantasia, Embrun, Bordeaux, Tours, Bourges.

“The following disposition shall be made of the one part hitherto left undivided. When the first two parts have been distributed into the before-mentioned divisions, and have been put away under seal, this third part shall be employed for daily uses, as not being alienated by any bond or promise of the owner; and it shall be so used as long as he himself remains in the flesh or judges its employment to be necessary to him. But after his death or his voluntary retirement from the affairs of the world, that part shall be divided into four subdivisions. Of these subdivisions one shall be added to the before-mentioned twenty-one parts; the second shall be taken by his sons

and daughters, and by the sons and daughters of his sons, and shall be divided among them in just and reasonable proportion; the third shall be devoted to the use of the poor in the manner usual among Christians; the fourth part shall similarly be divided for alms and go to the support of the servants, both men and women, who attend to the needs of the palaces.

“He desired further that there should be added to this third part of the total sum, which like the other parts consists of gold and silver, all vessels and utensils of brass, iron, or other metals, with arms, clothes and all other moveable articles, whether of value or not, which are employed for various purposes; as for instance curtains, coverlets, tapestries, woollen-cloths, dressed-skins, harnesses, and whatever else is found at that date in his store chamber or wardrobe: so that in this way the subdivisions of that part may be larger, and the distribution of alms find its way to a larger number.

“He desired that the chapel—that is, the materials for the service of the church, both those which he himself gave and collected and those which came to him by inheritance from his father—should remain entire and suffer no division of any kind. But if any vessel or books or other ornaments are found, which have certainly not been given by him to the aforementioned chapel, these may be bought and possessed by anyone who wants them, at a price fixed by a reasonable valuation. He similarly determined that the books, of which he had collected a great quantity in his library, should be sold at a reasonable price to anyone who wanted them and the money handed over to the poor. Amongst his treasures there are three tables of silver and one of gold of remarkable size and weight. Concerning these he determined and decided as follows. One of them, square in shape, containing a map of the city of Constantinople, shall be sent to Rome for the cathedral of the holy Apostle Peter, along with the other gifts which are set aside for that purpose. The second, round in shape, inscribed with a picture of the city of Rome, shall be given to the bishopric of the church of Ravenna. The third, which is far superior to the others both in beauty of workmanship and in weight, which is made of three circles, and contains a map of the whole world, skillfully and minutely drawn, shall go to increase that third part which is to be divided among his heirs and given in alms.

“This disposition and arrangement he made and drew up in presence of

the bishops, abbots, and counts, who could then be present and whose names are here written out.

“Bishops: Hildibald, John, Richolf, Theodolf, Arno, Jesse, Wolphar, Heito, Bernoin, Waltgaud, Laidrad.

“Abbots: Fridugisius, Engilbert, Adalung, Irmin.

“Counts: Walatho, Rihwin, Meginher, Edo, Otolf, Ercangar, Stephen, Gerold, Unruoc, Bero, Barchard, Hildigern, Meginhard, Roccolf, Hatto.”

His son Louis, who by the designs of Providence succeeded him, inspected the aforesaid document, and carried out these arrangements with the greatest devotion immediately after his death.

Chapter III

The Life of Charlemagne

by the Monk of St Gall

I Concerning the Piety of Charles and his Care of the Church

AFTER the omnipotent ruler of the world, who orders alike the fate of kingdoms and the course of time, had broken the feet of iron and clay in one noble statue,¹ to wit, the Romans, he raised by the hands of the illustrious Charles the golden head of another, not less admirable, among the Franks. Now it happened, when he had begun to reign alone in the western parts of the world, and the pursuit of learning had been almost forgotten throughout all his realm, and the worship of the true Godhead was faint and weak, that two Scots came from Ireland to the coast of Gaul along with certain traders of Britain. These Scotchmen were unrivalled for their skill in sacred and secular learning: and day by day, when the crowd gathered round them for traffic, they exhibited no wares for sale, but cried out and said, “Ho, everyone that

¹The reference is to the Book of Daniel 2:33.

desires wisdom, let him draw near and take it at our hands; for it is wisdom that we have for sale.”

Now they declared that they had wisdom for sale because they said that the people cared not for what was given freely but only for what was sold, hoping that thus they might be incited to purchase wisdom along with other wares; and also perhaps hoping that by this announcement they themselves might become a wonder and a marvel to men: which indeed turned out to be the case. For so long did they make their proclamation that in the end those who wondered at these men, or perhaps thought them insane, brought the matter to the ears of King Charles, who always loved and sought after wisdom. Wherefore he ordered them to come with all speed into his presence and asked them whether it were true, as fame reported of them, that they had brought wisdom with them. They answered, “We both possess it and are ready to give it, in the name of God, to those who seek it worthily.” Again he asked them what price they asked for it; and they answered, “We ask no price, O king; but we ask only for a fit place for teaching and quick minds to teach; and besides food to eat and raiment to put on, for without these we cannot accomplish our pilgrimage.”²

This answer filled the king with a great joy, and first he kept both of them with him for a short time. But soon, when he must needs go to war, he made one of them, named Clement, reside in Gaul, and to him he sent many boys both of noble, middle, and humble birth, and he ordered as much food to be given them as they required, and he set aside for them buildings suitable for study. But he sent the second scholar into Italy and gave him the monastery of Saint Augustine near Pavia, that all who wished might gather there to learn from him.

2. But when Albinus (Alcuin), an Englishman, heard that that most religious Emperor Charles gladly entertained wise men, he entered into a ship and came to him.³ Now Albinus was skilled in all learning beyond all others of our times, for he was the disciple of that most learned priest Bede, who

²The pilgrimage is, of course, life.

³The visit of Albinus (or Alcuin) of York to the court of King Charles is alluded to in Einhard's *Life of Charles*, Ch. 15. His arrival in Frankland occurred in 781, and was of the utmost importance in stimulating and guiding the intellectual renaissance of Charles's reign.

next to Saint Gregory was the most skillful interpreter of the Scriptures. And Charles received Albinus kindly and kept him at his side to the end of his life, except when he marched with his armies to his vast wars: nay, Charles would even call himself Albinus's disciple; and Albinus he would call his master. He appointed him to rule over the abbey of Saint Martin, near to the city of Tours: so that, when he himself was absent, Albinus might rest there and teach those who had recourse to him. And his teaching bore such fruit among his pupils that the modern Gauls or Franks came to equal the ancient Romans or Athenians.

3. Then when Charles came back, after a long absence, crowned with victory, into Gaul, he ordered the boys whom he had entrusted to Clement to come before him and present to him letters and verses of their own composition. Now the boys of middle or low birth presented him with writings garnished with the sweet savors of wisdom beyond all that he could have hoped, while those of the children of noble parents were silly and tasteless. Then the most wise Charles, imitating the judgment of the eternal Judge, gathered together those who had done well upon his right hand and addressed them in these words: "My children, you have found much favor with me because you have tried with all your strength to carry out my orders and win advantage for yourselves. Wherefore now study to attain to perfection; and I will give you bishoprics and splendid monasteries, and you shall be always honorable in my eyes." Then he turned severely to those who were gathered on his left, and, smiting their consciences with the fire of his eyes, he flung at them in scorn these terrible words, which seemed thunder rather than human speech: "You nobles, you sons of my chiefs, you superfine dandies, you have trusted to your birth and your possessions and have set at naught my orders to your own advancement: you have neglected the pursuit of learning and you have given yourselves over to luxury and sport, to idleness and profitless pastimes." Then solemnly he raised his august head and his unconquered right hand to the heavens and thus thundered against them, "By the King of Heaven, I take no account of your noble birth and your fine looks, though others may admire you for them. Know this for certain, that unless you make up for your former sloth by vigorous study, you will never get any favor from Charles."

4. Charles used to pick out all the best writers and readers from among the poor boys that I have spoken of and transferred them to his chapel; for that was the name that the kings of the Franks gave to their private oratory, taking the word from the *cope* of St Martin, which they always took with them in war for a defence against their enemies. Now one day it was announced to this most wary King Charles that a certain bishop was dead; and, when the king asked whether the dead bishop had made any bequests for the good of his soul, the messenger replied, "Sire, he has bequeathed no more than two pounds of silver." Thereupon one of his chaplains, sighing, and no longer able to keep the thoughts of his mind within his breast, spoke in the hearing of the king these words: "That is a small provision for a long, a never-ending journey."

Then Charles, the mildest of men, deliberated a space, and said to the young man, "Do you think then, if you were to get the bishopric, you would care to make more provision for that same long journey?" These cautious words fell upon the chaplain as ripe grapes into the mouth of one who stands agape for them, and he threw himself at the feet of Charles and said, "Sire, the matter rests upon the will of God and your own power." Said the king, "Stand behind the curtain that hangs behind me, and mark what kind of help you would receive if you were raised to that honor."

Now, when the officers of the palace, who were always on the watch for deaths or accidents, heard that the bishop was dead, one and all of them, impatient of delay and jealous of each other, began to make suit for the bishopric through the friends of the emperor. But Charles still persisted unmoved in his design; he refused everyone, and said that he would not disappoint his young friend. At last Queen Hildigard sent some of the nobles of the realm, and at last came in person, to beg the bishopric for a certain clerk of her own. The emperor received her petition very graciously and said that he would not and could not deny her anything; but that he thought it shame to deceive his little chaplain. But still the queen, woman-like, thought that a woman's opinion and wish ought to outweigh the decrees of men; and so she concealed the passion that was rising in her heart; she sank her strong voice almost to a whisper; and with caressing gestures tried to soften the emperor's unspoken mind. "My sire and king," she said, "what does it matter if that boy does lose

the bishopric? Nay, I beseech you, sweet sire, my glory and my refuge, give it to your faithful servant, my clerk." Then that young man, who had heard the petitions from behind the curtain close to the king's chair where he had been placed, embraced the king through the curtain and cried, "Sir king, stand fast and do not let anyone take from you the power that has been given you by God."

Then that strict lover of truth bade him come out, and said, "I intend you to have the bishopric; but you must be very careful to spend more and make fuller provision for that same long and unreturning journey both for yourself and for me."

5. Now there was at the king's court a certain mean and humble clerk, very deficient also in a knowledge of letters. The most pious Charles pitied his poverty, and, though everyone hated him and tried to drive him from the court, he could never be persuaded to turn him away or dismiss him therefrom. Now it happened that, on the eve of Saint Martin, the death of a certain bishop was announced to the emperor. He summoned one of his clerks, a man of high birth and great learning, and gave him the bishopric. The new bishop, thereupon, bursting with joy, invited to his house many of the palace attendants, and also received with great pomp many who came from the diocese to greet him: and to all he gave a superb banquet.

It happened then that, loaded with food, drenched with liquor, and buried in wine, he failed to go to the evening service on that most solemn eve. Now it was the custom for the chief of the choir to assign the day before to everyone the responsory or responsories which they were to chant at night. The response: *Lord, if still I am useful to Thy people*,⁴ had fallen to the lot of this man, who had the bishopric, as it were, in his grasp. Well, he was absent; and after the lesson a long pause followed, and each man urged his neighbor to take up the responsory, and each man answered that he was

⁴"Lord, if I am still useful to thy people I will willingly take on myself this labor on their behalf. Thy will be done" is the full versicle, which comes on the 11th November (St Martin's day). The story in the text is made intelligible when we find that more than one of the responses that follow end with the words "Thy will be done." The poor clerk knew that, and started off, therefore, on the Lord's Prayer, which he knew would bring him to the right ending.

bound to chant only what had been assigned to him. At last the emperor said: "Come, one of you must chant it." Then this mean clerk, strengthened by some divine inspiration, and encouraged by the command, took upon himself the responsory. The kindly king, thinking that he would not be able to chant the whole of it, ordered the others to help him and all began at once to chant. But from none of them could the poor creature learn the words, and, when the response was finished, he began to chant the Lord's Prayer with the proper intonation. Then everyone wished to stop him; but the most wise Charles wanted to see where he would get to, and forbade anyone to interfere with him. He finished with *Thy Kingdom come* and the rest, willy-nilly, had to take it up and say *Thy will be done*.

When the early lauds were finished, the king went back to his palace, or rather to his bedroom, to warm himself and dress for the coming festival ceremony. He ordered that miserable servant and unpracticed chanter to come into his presence. "Who told you to chant that responsory?" he asked. "Sire, you ordered someone to sing," said the other. "Well," said the king (the emperor was called king at first), "who told you to begin in that particular responsory?" Then the poor creature, inspired as it is thought by God, spoke as follows, in the fashion which inferiors then used to superiors, whether for honor, appeal, or flattery: "Blessed lord, and blessing-bestowing king, as I could not find out the right verse from anyone, I said to myself that I should incur the anger of your majesty if I introduced anything strange. So I determined to intone something the latter part of which usually came at the end of the responsories."

The kindly emperor smiled gently upon him and thus spoke before all his nobles. "That proud man, who neither feared nor honored God or his king who had befriended him, enough to refrain one night from dissipation and be in his place to chant the response which I am told fell to his share, is by God's decree and mine deprived of his bishopric. You shall take it, for God gives it you, and I allow it; and be sure to administer it according to canonical and apostolic rules."

6. When another prince of the Church died, the emperor appointed a young man in his place. When the bishop designate came out of the palace to take his departure, his servants, with all the decorum that was due to a bishop,

brought forward a horse and steps to mount it: but he took it amiss that they should treat him as though he were decrepit; and leaped from the ground on to the horse's back with such violence that he nearly fell off on the other side. The king looked on from the steps of the palace and had him summoned and thus addressed him: "My good sir, you are nimble and quick, agile and headstrong. You know yourself that the calm of our empire is disturbed on all sides by the tempests of many wars. Wherefore I want a priest like you at my court. Remain therefore as an associate in my labors as long as you can mount your horse with such agility."

7. While I was speaking about the arrangement of the responses I forgot to speak about the rules for reading, and I must devote a few words to that subject here. In the palace of the most learned Charles there was no one to apportion to each reader the passages that were to be read; no one put a seal at the end of the passage or made ever such a little mark with his finger-nail. But all had to make themselves so well acquainted with the passage, which was set down for reading, that if they were suddenly called on to read they could perform their duty without incurring his censure. He indicated whom he wished to read by pointing his finger or his staff, or by sending some one of those who were sitting close by him to those at a distance. He marked the end of the reading by a guttural sound. And all watched so intently for this mark that whether it came at the end of a sentence or in the middle of a clause or a sub-clause, none dared go on for an instant, however strange the beginning or the end might seem. And thus it came to pass that all in the palace were excellent readers, even if they did not understand what they read. No foreigner and no celebrity dared enter his choir unless he could read and chant.

8. When Charles one day came in his journeyings to a certain palace, a certain clerk from among the wandering monks entered the choir, and being completely ignorant of these rules, was soon forced to remain stupid and silent among the singers. Thereupon the choirmaster raised his wand and threatened to strike him unless he went on singing. Then the poor clerk, not knowing what to do or where to turn, and not daring to go out, twisted his neck into the shape of a bow and with open mouth and distended cheeks did his utmost to imitate the appearance of a singer. All the rest could not restrain

their laughter, but the most valiant emperor, whose mind was never shaken from its firm base even by great events, seemed not to notice his mockery of singing and waited in due order until the end of the Mass. But then he called the poor wretch before him and pitying his struggles and his anxiety soothed his fears with these words:—"Many thanks, good clerk, for your singing and your efforts." Then he ordered a pound of silver to be given him to relieve his poverty.

9. But I must not seem to forget or to neglect Alcuin, and will therefore make this true statement about his energy and his deserts: all his pupils without exception distinguished themselves by becoming either holy abbots or bishops. My master Grimald⁵ studied the liberal arts under him, first in Gaul and then in Italy. But those who are learned in these matters may charge me with falsehood for saying "all his pupils without exception"; when the fact is that there were in his schools two young men, sons of a miller in the service of the monastery of Saint Columban, who did not seem fit and proper persons for promotion to the command of bishoprics or monasteries; but even these men were, by the influence probably of their teacher, advanced one after the other to the office of minister in the monastery of Bobbio, in which they displayed the greatest energy.

So the most glorious Charles saw the study of letters flourishing throughout his whole realm, but still he was grieved to find that it did not reach the ripeness of the earlier fathers; and so, after superhuman labors, he broke out one day with this expression of his sorrow: "Would that I had twelve clerks so learned in all wisdom and so perfectly trained as were Jerome and Augustine." Then the learned Alcuin, feeling himself ignorant indeed in comparison with these great names, rose to a height of daring, that no man else attained to in the presence of the terrible Charles, and said, with deep indignation in his mind but none in his countenance, "The Maker of heaven and earth has not many like to those men, and do you expect to have twelve?"

10. Here I must report something which the men of our time will find it difficult to believe; for I myself who write it could hardly believe it, so

⁵Grimald was abbot of St Gall from 841 to 872. It will be noticed all through the piece that the narrative becomes more full and definite, though not necessarily more truthful, when it touches on the writer's own monastery.

great is the difference between our method of chanting and the Roman, were it not that we must trust rather the accuracy of our fathers than the false suggestions of modern sloth. Well then, Charles, that never-weary lover of the service of God, when he could congratulate himself that all possible progress had been made in the knowledge of letters, was grieved to observe how widely the different provinces—nay, not the provinces only but districts and cities—differed in the praise of God, that is to say in their method of chanting. He therefore asked of Pope Stephen⁶ of blessed memory—the same who, after Hilderich, king of the Franks, had been deposed and tonsured, had anointed Charles to be ruler of the kingdom after the ancestral custom of the people—he asked of Pope Stephen, I say, that he should provide him with twelve clerks deeply learned in divine song. The Pope yielded assent to his virtuous wish and his divinely inspired design and sent to him in Frankland from the apostolic see clerks skilled in divine song, and twelve in number, according to the number of the twelve apostles.

Now, when I said Frankland just above, I meant all the provinces north of the Alps; for as it is written: “In those days ten men shall take hold out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew,” so at that time, by reason of the glory of Charles, Gauls, Aquitanians, Æduans, Spaniards, Germans, and Bavarians thought that no small honor was paid to them, if they were thought worthy to be called the servants of the Franks.

Now when the aforementioned clerks were departing from Rome, being, like all Greeks and Romans, torn with envy of the glory of the Franks, they took counsel among themselves, and determined so to vary their method of singing that his kingdom and dominion should never have cause to rejoice in unity and agreement. So when they came to Charles they were received

⁶The whole of this statement is a tissue of absurdities, which are, however, worth a moment's attention, as giving some indication of the value that is to be attached to the Monk of St Gall's testimony. The Pope Stephen here alluded to must be Stephen II, who occupied the Papal throne from 752 to 757. He it was who crowned Pippin King of the Franks in 754. He can have had nothing to do with Charlemagne, who did not reign until 768; but the words of the text (*se ad gubernacula regni perunxit*) can only refer to Charles. It must have been Pope Stephen III (768–772) to whom Charlemagne appealed if there is any truth in the story at all; and Pope Stephen III can, of course, have had nothing to do with Hilderich.

most honorably and despatched to the chief places. And thereupon each in his allotted place began to chant as differently as possible, and to teach others to sing in like fashion, and in as false a manner as they could invent. But as the most cunning Charles celebrated one year the feast of the birth and coming of Christ at Treves or Metz, and most carefully and cleverly grasped and understood the style of the singing; and then the next year passed the same solemn season at Paris or Tours, but found that the singing was wholly different from what he had heard in the preceding year; as moreover he found that those whom he had sent into different places were also at variance with one another; he reported the whole matter to Pope Leo, of holy memory, who had succeeded Stephen.⁷ The Pope summoned the clerks back to Rome and condemned them to exile or perpetual imprisonment, and then said to Charles: "If I send you others they will be blinded with the same malice as their predecessors and will not fail to cheat you. But I think I can satisfy your wishes in this way. Send me two of the cleverest clerks that you have by you, in such a way that those who are with me may not know that they belong to you, and, with God's help, they shall attain to as perfect a knowledge of those things as you desire." So said, so done. Soon the Pope sent them back excellently trained to Charles. One of them he kept at his own court: the other upon the petition of his son Drogo, Bishop of Metz,⁸ he sent to that cathedral. And not only did his energy show itself powerful in that city, but it soon spread so widely throughout all Frankland, that now all in these regions who use the Latin tongue call the ecclesiastical chant Metensian; or, if they use the Teutonic or Teuthiscan tongue, they call it Mette; or if the Greek form is used it is called Mettisc.⁹ The most pious emperor also ordered Peter, the singer who had come to reside with him, to reside for a while in the monastery of St Gall. There too Charles established the chanting as it is today, with an authentic song-book, and gave most careful instructions, being always a warm

⁷Pope Leo III did not succeed Pope Stephen until after an interval of twenty-three years. Pope Leo III's date is 795–816.

⁸For Drogo see Einhard's *Life*, Ch. 15. But again the unhistorical character of the narrative is shown by the fact that Drogo was made Bishop of Metz *after the death of Charles* and against his own will.

⁹A curious display of trivial learning! But it is interesting to note the mention of Greek as of a language not wholly unknown to a monk of the ninth century.

champion of Saint Gall, that the Roman method of singing should be both taught and learned. He gave to the monastery also much money and many lands: he gave too relics, contained in a reliquary made of solid gold and gems, which is called the Shrine of Charles.

11. It was the habit of the most religious and temperate Charles to take food during Lent¹⁰ at the seventh hour of the day after having been present at the celebration of Mass and evening lauds: and in so doing he was not violating the fast, for he was following the Lord's command in taking food at an earlier hour than usual. Now a certain bishop, who offended against the precept of Solomon in being just but foolish, took him unwisely to task for this. Whereupon the most wise Charles concealed his wrath, and received the bishop's admonition in all humility, saying, "Good sir bishop, your admonition is good; and now my advice to you is that you should take no food until the very humblest of my servants, who stand in my court, have been fed." Now while Charles was eating he was waited upon by dukes and rulers and kings of various peoples; and when his banquet was ended, then those who served him fed, and they were served by counts and præfects and nobles of different ranks. And when these last had made an end of eating, then came the military officers and the scholars of the palace: then the chiefs of the various departments of the palace; then their subordinates, then the servants of those servants. So that the last comers did not get a mouthful of food before the middle of the night. When therefore Lent was nearly ended, and the bishop in question had endured this punishment all the time, the most merciful Charles said to him: "Now, sir bishop, I think you have found out that it is not lack of self-restraint but care for others which makes me dine in Lent before the hour of evening."

12. Once he asked a bishop for his blessing and he thereupon, after blessing the bread, partook of it first himself and then wanted to give it to the most honorable Charles: who, however, said to him: "You may keep all the bread for yourself"; and much to the bishop's confusion he refused to receive his blessing.

13. The most careful Charles would never give more than one county to

¹⁰See Einhard's *Life*, Ch. 24, for the difficulties found by Charles in observing the fasts of Lent.

any of his counts unless they happened to live on the borders or marches of the barbarians; nor would he ever give a bishop any abbacy or church that was in the royal gift unless there were very special reasons for doing it. When his councillors or friends asked him the reason for this, he would answer: "With that revenue or that estate, with that little abbey or that church, I can secure the fidelity of some vassal, as good a man as any bishop or count, and perhaps better." But when there were special reasons he would give several benefices to one man; as he did for instance to Udalric, brother of the great Hildigard, the mother of kings and emperors. Now Udalric, after Hildigard's death, was deprived of his honors for a certain offence; and a buffoon thereupon said in the hearing of the most merciful Charles: "Now has Udalric, by the death of his sister, lost all his honors both in east and west." Charles was touched by these words and restored to him at once all his former honors. He opened his hands, most widely and liberally, when justice bade him, to certain holy places, as will appear in the sequel.

14. There was a certain bishopric which lay full in Charles's path when he journeyed, and which indeed he could hardly avoid: and the bishop of this place, always anxious to give satisfaction, put everything that he had at Charles's disposal. But once the emperor came quite unexpectedly, and the bishop in great anxiety had to fly hither and thither like a swallow, and had not only the palaces and houses but also the courts and squares swept and cleaned; and then, tired and irritated, came to meet him. The most pious Charles noticed this, and after examining all the various details, he said to the bishop: "My kind host, you always have everything splendidly cleaned for my arrival." Then the bishop, as if divinely inspired, bowed his head and grasped the king's never-conquered right hand, and hiding his irritation, kissed it and said: "It is but right, my lord, that, wherever you come, all things should be thoroughly cleansed." Then Charles, of all kings the wisest, understanding the state of affairs, said to him: "If I empty I can also fill." And he added: "You may have that estate which lies close to your bishopric, and all your successors may have it until the end of time."

15. In the same journey too he came to a bishop who lived in a place through which he must needs pass. Now on that day, being the sixth day of the week, he was not willing to eat the flesh of beast or bird; and the

bishop, being by reason of the nature of the place unable to procure fish upon the sudden, ordered some excellent cheese, rich and creamy, to be placed before him. And the most self-restrained Charles, with the readiness which he showed everywhere and on all occasions, spared the blushes of the bishop and required no better fare: but taking up his knife cut off the skin, which he thought unsavory, and fell to on the white of the cheese. Thereupon the bishop, who was standing near like a servant, drew closer and said, "Why do you do that, lord emperor? You are throwing away the very best part." Then Charles, who deceived no one, and did not believe that anyone would deceive him, on the persuasion of the bishop put a piece of the skin in his mouth, and slowly ate it and swallowed it like butter. Then approving of the advice of the bishop, he said: "Very true, my good host," and he added: "Be sure to send me every year to Aachen two cart-loads of just such cheeses." The bishop was alarmed at the impossibility of the task and, fearful of losing both his rank and his office, he rejoined: "My lord, I can procure the cheeses, but I cannot tell which are of this quality and which of another. Much I fear lest I fall under your censure." Then Charles, from whose penetration and skill nothing could escape, however new or strange it might be, spoke thus to the bishop, who from childhood had known such cheeses and yet could not test them. "Cut them in two," he said, "then fasten together with a skewer those that you find to be of the right quality and keep them in your cellar for a time and then send them to me. The rest you may keep for yourself and your clergy and your family." This was done for two years and the king ordered the present of cheeses to be taken in without remark: then in the third year the bishop brought in person his laboriously collected cheeses. But the most just Charles pitied his labor and anxiety and added to the bishopric an excellent estate whence he and his successors might provide themselves with corn and wine.

16. As we have shown how the most wise Charles exalted the humble, let us now show how he brought low the proud. There was a bishop who sought above measure vanities and the fame of men. The most cunning Charles heard of this and told a certain Jewish merchant, whose custom it was to go to the land of promise and bring from thence rare and wonderful things to the countries beyond the sea, to deceive or cheat this bishop in whatever way he

could. So the Jew caught an ordinary household mouse and stuffed it with various spices, and then offered it for sale to the bishop, saying that he had brought this most precious never-before-seen animal from Judea. The bishop was delighted with what he thought a stroke of luck, and offered the Jew three pounds of silver for the precious ware. Then said the Jew, "A fine price indeed for so precious an article! I had rather throw it into the sea than let any man have it at so cheap and shameful a price." So the bishop, who had much wealth and never gave anything to the poor, offered him ten pounds of silver for the incomparable treasure. But the cunning rascal, with pretended indignation, replied: "The God of Abraham forbid that I should thus lose the fruit of my labor and journeyings." Then our avaricious bishop, all eager for the prize, offered twenty pounds. But the Jew in high dudgeon wrapped up the mouse in the most costly silk and made as if he would depart. Then the bishop, as thoroughly taken in as he deserved to be, offered a full measure of silver for the priceless object. And so at last our trader yielded to his entreaties with much show of reluctance: and, taking the money, went to the emperor and told him everything. A few days later the king called together all the bishops and chief men of the province to hold discourse with him; and, after many other matters had been considered, he ordered all that measure of silver to be brought and placed in the middle of the palace. Then thus he spoke and said: "Fathers and guardians, bishops of our Church, you ought to minister to the poor, or rather to Christ in them, and not to seek after vanities. But now you act quite contrary to this; and are vainglorious and avaricious beyond all other men." Then he added: "One of you has given a Jew all this silver for a painted mouse." Then the bishop, who had been so wickedly deceived, threw himself at Charles's feet and begged pardon for his sin. Charles upbraided him in suitable words and then allowed him to depart in confusion.

17. This same bishop was left to take care of Hildigard,¹⁷ when the most warlike Charles was engaged in campaigns against the Huns. He was so puffed up by his intimacy with her that he had the audacity to ask her to allow him to use the golden sceptre of the incomparable Charles on festal days instead of his episcopal staff. She deceived him cleverly, and said that she dare not

¹⁷Here is another notorious error. Hildigard died in 783. Fastrada was queen when, in 791, Charles advanced to the war against the Avars.

give it to anyone, but that she would carry his request faithfully to the king. So, when Charles came back, she jestingly told him of the mad request of the bishop. He kindly promised to do what she wished and even more. So, when all Europe, so to speak, had come together to greet Charles after his victory over so mighty a people, he pronounced these words in the hearing of small and great: "Bishops should despise this world and inspire others by their example to seek after heavenly things. But now they are misled by ambition beyond all the rest of mankind; and one of them, not content with holding the first episcopal see in Germany, has dared without my approval to claim my golden sceptre, which I carry to signify my royal will, in order that he might use it as his pastoral staff." The guilty man acknowledged his sin, received pardon, and retired.

18. Now, my Lord Emperor Charles, I much fear that through my desire to obey your orders I may incur the enmity of all who have taken vows and especially of the highest clergy of all. But for all this I do not greatly care, if only I be not deprived of your protection.

Once that most religious Emperor Charles gave orders that all bishops throughout his wide domains should preach in the nave of their cathedral before a certain day, which he appointed, under penalty of being deprived of the episcopal dignity if they failed to comply with the order. But why do I say "dignity" when the apostle protests: "He that desires a bishopric desires a good work"? But in truth, most serene of kings, I must confess to you that there is great "dignity" in the office, but not the slightest "good work" is required. Well, the aforementioned bishop was at first alarmed at this command, because gluttony and pride were all his learning, and he feared that if he lost his bishopric he would lose at the same time his soft living. So he invited two of the chiefs of the palace on the festal day, and after the reading of the lesson mounted the pulpit as though he were going to address the people. All the people ran together in wonder at so unexpected an occurrence, except one poor red-headed fellow, who had his head covered with clouts, because he had no hat, and was foolishly ashamed of his red hair. Then the bishop—bishop in name but not in deed—called to his doorkeeper or rather his *scario* (whose dignity and duties went by the name of the *ædileship* among the ancient Romans) and said: "Bring me that man in the hat who is standing

there near the door of the church.” The doorkeeper made haste to obey, seized the poor man and began to drag him towards the bishop. But he feared some heavy penalty for daring to stand in the house of God with covered head, and struggled with all his might to avoid being brought before the tribunal of the terrible judge. But the bishop, looking from his perch, now addressing his vassals and now chiding the poor knave, bawled out and preached as follows: “Here with him! don’t let him slip! Willy-nilly you’ve got to come.” When at last force or fear brought him near, the bishop cried: “Come forward; nay, you must come quite close.” Then he snatched the head-covering from his captive and cried to the people: “Lo and behold, all ye people; the boor is red-headed.” Then he returned to the altar and performed the ceremony, or pretended to perform it.

When the Mass was thus scrambled through, his guests passed into his hall, which was decorated with many-colored carpets, and cloths of all kinds; and there a magnificent banquet, served in gold and silver and jewelled cups, was provided, calculated to tickle the appetite of the fastidious or the well-fed. The bishop himself sat on the softest of cushions, clad in precious silks and wearing the imperial purple, so that he seemed a king except for the sceptre and the title. He was surrounded by troops of rich knights, in comparison with whom the officers of the palace (nobles though they were) of the unconquered Charles seemed to themselves most mean. When they asked leave to depart after this wonderful and more than royal banquet, he, desiring to show still more plainly his magnificence and his glory, ordered skilled musicians to come forward, the sound of whose voices could soften the hardest hearts or turn to ice the swiftly flowing waters of the Rhine. And at the same time every kind of choice drink, subtly and variously compounded, was offered them in bowls of gold and gems, whose sheen was mixed with that of the flowers and leaves with which they were crowned: but their stomachs could contain no more so that the glasses lay idle in their hands. Meanwhile pastry cooks and sausage makers, servers and dressers, offered preparations of exquisite art to stimulate their appetite, though their stomachs could contain no more: it was a banquet such as was never offered even to the great Charles himself.

When morning came and the bishop returned some way towards soberness, he thought with fear of the luxury that he had paraded before the ser-

vants of the emperor. So he called them into his presence, loaded them with presents worthy of a king, and implored them to speak to the terrible Charles of the goodness and simplicity of his life; and above all to tell him how he had preached publicly before them in his cathedral.

Upon their return Charles asked them why the bishop had invited them. Thereupon they fell at his feet and said: "Master, it was that he might honor us as your representatives, far beyond our humble deserts." "He is," they went on, "in every way the best and the most faithful of bishops and most worthy of the highest rank in the Church. For, if you will trust our poor judgment, we profess to your sublime majesty that we heard him preach in his church in the most stirring fashion." Then the emperor, who knew the bishop's lack of skill, pressed them further as to the manner of his preaching; and they, perforce, revealed all. Then the emperor saw that he had made an effort to say something rather than disobey the imperial order; and he allowed him, in spite of his unworthiness, to retain the bishopric.

19. Shortly after a young man, a relation of the emperor's, sang, on the occasion of some festival, the *alleluja* admirably: and the emperor turned to this same bishop and said: "My clerk is singing very well." But the stupid man thought that he was jesting and did not know that the clerk was the emperor's relation; and so he answered: "Any clown in our countryside drones as well as that to his oxen at their ploughing." At this vulgar answer the emperor turned on him the lightning of his flashing eyes and dashed him terror-stricken to the very ground.¹²

26. But though the rest of mankind may be deceived by the wiles of the devil and his angels, it is pleasant to consider the word of Our Lord, who in recognition of the bold confession of Saint Peter said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Wherefore even in these times of great peril and wickedness he has

¹²The next six chapters are omitted, because in them the Monk of St Gall is led away, by his desire to tell a good and edifying story, into matter that has no connection of any kind with Charlemagne, and is sometimes offensive to modern taste. The stories are for the most part to the discredit of the episcopal order. A single phrase in Chapter 25 may be noted, as indicating the theocratic view of Charles which the writer takes throughout: "the most religious Charles" is called *episcopus episcoporum*, "the bishop of bishops."

allowed the Church to remain unshaken and unmoved.

Now since envy always rages among the envious, so it is customary and regular with the Romans to oppose or rather to fight against all strong popes, who are from time to time raised to the apostolic see. Whence it came to pass that certain of the Romans, themselves blinded with envy, charged the above-mentioned Pope Leo¹³ of holy memory with a deadly crime and tried to blind him. But they were frightened and held back by some divine impulse, and after trying in vain to gouge out his eyes, they slashed them across the middle with knives. The pope had news of this carried secretly by his servants to Michael, emperor of Constantinople; but he refused all assistance, saying: "The pope has an independent kingdom and one higher than mine; so he must act his own revenge upon his enemies." Thereupon the holy Leo invited the unconquered Charles to come to Rome; following in this the ordinance of God, that, as Charles was already in very deed ruler and emperor over many nations, so also by the authority of the apostolic see he might have now the name of emperor, Cæsar and Augustus. Now Charles, being always ready to march and in warlike array, though he knew nothing at all of the cause of the summons, came at once with his attendants and his vassals; himself, the head of the world, he came to the city that had once been the head of the world. And when the abandoned people heard of his sudden coming, at once, as sparrows hide themselves when they hear the voice of their master, so they fled and hid in various hiding-places, cellars, and dens. Nowhere, however, under heaven could they escape from his energy and penetration; and soon they were captured and brought in chains to the cathedral of St Peter. Then the undaunted Father Leo took the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ and held it over his head, and then in the presence of Charles and his knights, in presence also of his persecutors, he swore in the following words: "So on the day of the great judgment may I partake in the promises, as I am innocent of

¹³Our author here again handles events of the most general notoriety in a spirit completely independent of historical accuracy. Leo III was, it is true, the pope to whose assistance Charlemagne came; but no Michael was ruling at that time in Constantinople. Michael II reigned from 820–829, and Michael III from 842–867. Thus the name was associated, in the mind of the Monk of St Gall, with the imperial throne of the east—and that was more than enough. The sentiment attributed to the emperor is as impossible as his name is inaccurate.

the charge that is falsely laid against me." Then many of the prisoners asked to be allowed to swear upon the tomb of St Peter that they also were innocent of the charge laid against them. But the pope knew their falseness and said to Charles: "Do not, I pray you, unconquered servant of God, give assent to their cunning; for well they know that Saint Peter is always ready to forgive. But seek among the tombs of the martyrs the stone upon which is written the name of St Pancras,¹⁴ that boy of thirteen years; and if they will swear to you in his name you may know that you have them fast." It was done as the pope ordered. And when many people drew near to take the oath upon this tomb, straightway some fell back dead and some were seized by the devil and went mad. Then the terrible Charles said to his servants: "Take care that none of them escapes." Then he condemned all who had been taken prisoner either to some kind of death or to perpetual imprisonment.

As Charles stayed in Rome for a few days, the bishop of the apostolic see called together all who would come from the neighboring districts and then, in their presence and in the presence of all the knights of the unconquered Charles, he declared him to be emperor and defender of the Roman Church.¹⁵ Now Charles had no guess of what was coming; and, though he could not

¹⁴St Pancras is one of the saints given by the persecution of the Emperor Diocletian to the calendar of the Church. He is said to have been executed in his fourteenth year in the year 295. The following extract from the Golden Legend will explain the reference in the text: "Of him said Gregory of Tours, doctor: That if there be a man that will make a false oath in the place of his sepulchre, tofore or he came to the chancel of the quire he shall be travailed with an evil spirit and out of mind, or he shall fall on the pavement all dead. It happed on a time that there was a great altercation between two men, and the judge wist not who had wrong. And, for the jealousy of justice that he had, he brought them both unto the altar of Saint Peter for to swear, praying the apostle that he would declare who had right. And when he that had wrong had sworn and had none harm the judge who knew the malice of him said all on high: This old Peter here is either over-merciful, or he is propitious to this young man, but let us go to Pancrace and demand we of him the truth; and when they came to the sepulchre, he that was culpable swore and stretched forth his hand, but he might not withdraw his hand again to him, and anon after he died there, and therefore unto this day, of much people it is used that for great and notable causes men make their oaths upon the relics of S. Pancrace."

¹⁵This celebrated coronation took place on Christmas day of the year 800, and marks the foundation of the mediæval empire. Charles is known to have expressed regret either at the fact or the manner of the presentation of the imperial crown; and the Monk of St Gall is not so wide of the point as usual in the account he gives of the causes of his hesitation.

refuse what seemed to have been divinely preordained for him, nevertheless he received his new title with no show of thankfulness. For first he thought that the Greeks would be fired by greater envy than ever and would plan some harm against the kingdom of the Franks; or at least would take greater precautions against a possible sudden attack of Charles to subdue their kingdom, and add it to his own empire. And further the magnanimous Charles recalled how ambassadors from the king of Constantinople had come to him and had told him that their master wished to be his loyal friend; and that, if they became nearer neighbors, he had determined to treat him as his son and relieve the poverty of Charles from his resources: and how, upon hearing this, Charles was unable to contain any longer the fiery ardor of his heart and had exclaimed: "Oh, would that pool were not between us; for then we would either divide between us the wealth of the east, or we would hold it in common."

But the Lord, who is both the giver and the restorer of health, so showed his favor to the innocence of the blessed Leo that he restored his eyes to be brighter than they were before that wicked and cruel cutting; except only that, in token of his virtue, a bright scar (like a very fine thread) marked his eyelids.

27. The foolish may accuse me of folly because just now I made Charles say that the sea, which that mighty emperor called playfully a little pool, lay between us and the Greeks; but I must tell my critics that at that date the Bulgarians and the Huns and many other powerful races barred the way to Greece with forces yet unattacked and unbroken. Soon afterwards, it is true, the most warlike Charles either hurled them to the ground, as he did the Slavs and the Bulgars; or else utterly destroyed them, as was the case with the Huns, that race of iron and adamant. And I will go on to speak of these exploits as soon as I have given a very slight account of the wonderful buildings which Charles (emperor, Augustus and Cæsar), following the example of the all-wise Solomon, built at Aachen, either for God, or for himself, or for the bishops, abbots, counts, and all guests that came to him from all quarters of the world.

28. When the most energetic Emperor Charles could rest awhile he sought not sluggish ease, but labored in the service of God. He desired therefore to build upon his native soil a cathedral finer even than the works of the Romans, and soon his purpose was realised. For the building thereof he summoned architects and skilled workmen from all lands beyond the seas; and above

all he placed a certain knavish abbot whose competence for the execution of such tasks he knew, though he knew not his character. When the august emperor had gone on a certain journey, this abbot allowed anyone to depart home who would pay sufficient money: and those who could not purchase their discharge, or were not allowed to return by their masters, he burdened with unending labors, as the Egyptians once afflicted the people of God. By such knavish tricks he gathered together a great mass of gold and silver and silken robes; and, exhibiting in his chamber only the least precious articles, he concealed in boxes and chests all the richest treasures. Well, one day there was brought to him on a sudden the news that his house was on fire. He ran, in great excitement, and pushed his way through the bursting flames into the strong room where his boxes, stuffed with gold, were kept: he was not satisfied to take one away, but would only leave after he had loaded his servants with a box apiece. And as he was going out a huge beam, dislodged by the fire, fell on the top of him; and then his body was burned by temporal and his soul by eternal flames. Thus did the judgment of God keep watch for the most religious Emperor Charles, when his attention was withdrawn by the business of his kingdom.

29. There was another workman, the most skilled of all in the working of brass and glass. Now this man (his name was Tancho and he was at one time a monk of St Gall) made a fine bell, and the emperor was delighted with its tone. Then said that most distinguished but most unfortunate worker in brass: "Lord emperor, give orders that a great weight of copper be brought to me that I may refine it; and instead of tin give me as much silver as I shall need—a hundred pounds at least; and I will cast such a bell for you that this will seem dumb in comparison to it." Then Charles, the most liberal of monarchs, who "if riches abounded set not his heart upon them", readily gave the necessary orders, to the great delight of the knavish monk. He smelted and refined the brass; but he used, not silver, but the purest sort of tin, and soon he made a bell much better than the one that the emperor had formerly admired, and, when he had tested it, he took it to the emperor, who admired its exquisite shape and ordered the clapper to be inserted and the bell to be hung in the bell-tower. That was soon done; and then the warden of the church, the attendants, and even the boys of the place tried, one after the other, to make the bell sound.

But all was in vain; and so at last the knavish maker of the bell came up, seized the rope, and pulled at the bell. When, lo and behold! down from on high came the brazen mass; fell on the very head of the cheating brass-founder; killed him on the spot; and passed straight through his carcass and crashed to the ground carrying his bowels with it. When the aforementioned weight of silver was found, the most righteous Charles ordered it to be distributed among the poorest servants of the palace.

30. Now it was a rule at that time that if the imperial mandate had gone out that any task was to be accomplished, whether it was the making of bridges or ships or causeways, or the cleansing or paving or filling up of muddy roads, the counts might execute the less important work by the agency of their deputies or servants; but for the greater enterprises, and especially such as were of an original kind, no duke or count, no bishop or abbot could possibly get himself excused. The arches of the great bridge at Mainz bear witness to this; for all Europe, so to speak, labored at this work in orderly co-operation, and then the knavery of a few rascals, who wanted to steal merchandise from the ships that passed underneath, destroyed it.

If any churches within the royal domain wanted decorating with carved ceilings or wall paintings, the neighboring bishops and abbots had to take charge of the task; but if new churches had to be built, then all bishops, dukes, and counts, all abbots and heads of royal churches, and all who were in occupation of any public office had to work at it with never-ceasing labor from its foundations to its roof. You may see the proof of the emperor's skill in the cathedral at Aachen, which seems a work half human and half divine; you may see it in the mansions of the various dignitaries which, by Charles's device, were built round his own palace in such a way that from the windows of his chamber he could see all who went out or came in, and what they were doing, while they believed themselves free from observation; you may see it in all the houses of his nobles, which were lifted on high from the ground in such a fashion that beneath them the retainers of his nobles and the servants of those retainers and every class of man could be protected from rain or snow, from cold or heat, while at the same time they were not concealed from the eyes of the most vigilant Charles. But I am a prisoner within my monastery walls, and your ministers are free; and I will therefore leave to them the task

of describing the cathedral, while I return to speak of how the judgment of God was made manifest in the building of it.

31. The most careful Charles ordered certain nobles of the neighborhood to support with all their power the workmen whom he had set to their task, and to supply everything that they required for it. Those workmen who came from a distance he gave in charge to a certain Liutfrid, the steward of his palace, telling him to feed and clothe them and also most carefully to provide anything that was wanting for the building. The steward obeyed these commands for the short time that Charles remained in that place; but after his departure neglected them altogether, and by cruel tortures collected such a mass of money from the poor workmen that Dis and Pluto would require a camel to carry his ill-gotten gains to hell. Now this was found out in the following way.

The most glorious Charles used to go to lauds at night in a long and flowing cloak, which is now neither used nor known: then when the morning chant was over he would go back to his chamber and dress himself in his imperial robes. All the clerks used to come ready dressed to the nightly office, and then they would wait for the emperor's arrival, and for the celebration of Mass either in the church or in the porch which then was called the outer court. Sometimes they would remain awake, or if anyone had need of sleep he would lean his head on his companion's breast. Now one poor clerk, who used often to go to Liutfrid's house to get his clothes (rags I ought to call them) washed and mended, was sleeping with his head on a friend's knees, when he saw in a vision a giant, taller than the adversary of Saint Anthony,¹⁶ come from the king's court and hurry over the bridge, that spanned a little stream, to the house of the steward; and he led with him an enormous camel burdened with baggage of inestimable value. He was, in his dream, struck with amazement, and he asked the giant who he was and whither he wished to go. And the

¹⁶Giants figure largely in the stories which are told of St Antony's temptation. The Golden Legend says: "S. Anthony recordeth of himself that he had seen a man so great and so high that he vaunted himself to be the virtue and the providence of God and said to me: 'Demand of me what thou wilt, and I shall give it to thee.' And I spit in the midst of his visage, and anon I armed me with the sign of the cross, and ran upon him, and anon he vanished away. And after this the devil appeared to him in so great stature that he touched the heaven, etc." Gigantic appearances figure, too, elsewhere in the story of St Antony's trials.

giant made answer: "I come from the house of the king and I go to the house of Liutfrid; and I shall place Liutfrid on these packages and I shall take him and them down with me to hell."

Thereupon the clerk woke up, in a fright lest Charles should find him sleeping. He lifted up his head and urged the others to wakefulness and cried: "Hear, I pray you, my dream. I seemed to see another Polyphemus, who walked on the earth and yet touched the stars, and passed through the Ionian Sea without wetting his sides. I saw him hasten from the royal court to the house of Liutfrid with a laden camel. And when I asked the cause of his journey, he said: 'I am going to put Liutfrid on the top of the load, and then take him to hell.'"

The story was hardly finished when there came from that house, which they all knew so well, a girl who fell at their feet and asked them to remember her friend Liutfrid in their prayers. And, when they asked the reason for her words, she said: "My lord, he went out but now in good health, and, as he stayed a long time, we went in search of him, and found him dead."

When the emperor heard of his sudden death, and was informed by the workmen and his servants of his grasping avarice, he ordered his treasures to be examined. They were found to be of priceless worth, and when the emperor, after God the greatest of judges, found by what wickedness they had been collected, he gave this public judgment: "Nothing of that which was gained by fraud must go to the liberation of his soul from purgatory. Let his wealth be divided among the workmen of this our building, and the poorer servants of our palace."

32. Now I must speak of two things which happened in that same place.¹⁷ There was a deacon who followed the Italian custom and resisted the course of nature. For he went to the baths and had himself closely shaved, polished his skin, cleaned his nails, and had his hair cut as short as if it had been done by a lathe. Then he put on linen and a white robe, and then, because he must not miss his turn, or rather desiring to make a fine show, he proceeded to

¹⁷Two motives are to be detected in most of these stories beyond the general purpose of moral and religious edification. There is the jealousy of the bishops so usually felt by the monks, and there is the scorn felt by the northern peoples for the refinements of the Italian population.

read the Gospel before God and His holy angels, and in the presence of the most watchful king; his heart in the meantime being unclean, as events were to show. For while he was reading, a spider came down from the ceiling by a thread, hooked itself on to the deacon's head, and then ran up again. The most observant Charles saw this happen a second and a third time, but pretended not to notice it, and the clerk, because of the emperor's presence, dare not keep off the spider with his hand, and moreover did not know that it was a spider attacking him, but thought that it was merely the tickling of a fly. So he finished the reading of the Gospel, and also went through the rest of the office. But when he left the cathedral he soon began to swell up, and died within an hour. But the most scrupulous Charles, inasmuch as he had seen his danger and had not prevented it, thought himself guilty of manslaughter and did public penance.

33. Now the most glorious Charles had in his suite a certain clerk who was unsurpassed in every respect. And of him that was said which was never said of any other mortal man: for it was said that he excelled all mankind in knowledge of both sacred and profane literature; in song whether ecclesiastical or festive; in the composition and rendering of poems and in the sweet fullness of his voice and in the incredible pleasure which he gave. For Moses, the lawgiver filled with wisdom by the teaching of God, complains nevertheless that "he is not eloquent" but slow of speech, and "of a slow tongue," and sent therefore Joshua to take counsel with Eleasar, the high priest, who by the authority of the God Who dwelt within him, commanded even the heavenly bodies: and our Master Christ did not allow John the Baptist to work any miracle while in the body, though he bore witness that "among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater" than he: and He bade Peter revere the wisdom of Paul, though Peter by the revelation of the Father recognised Him and received from Him the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and He allowed John His best-loved disciple to fall into so great a terror that he did not dare to come to the place of His sepulchre, though weak women paid many visits to it.

But as the Scriptures say: "To him that hath shall be given"; and those, who know from whom they have the little which they possess, succeed; while he who knows not the giver of his possessions, or, if he knows it, gives not due

thanks to the Giver, loses all. For, while this wonderful clerk was standing in friendly fashion near the most glorious emperor, suddenly he disappeared. The unconquered Emperor Charles was dumbfounded at so unheard of and incredible an occurrence: but, after he had made the sign of the cross, he found in the place where the clerk had stood something that seemed to be a foul-smelling coal, which had just ceased to burn.

34. The mention of the trailing garment that the emperor wore at night has diverted us from his military array. Now the dress and equipment of the old Franks was as follows: Their boots were gilt on the outside and decorated with laces three cubits long. The thongs round the legs were red, and under them they wore upon their legs and thighs linen of the same color, artistically embroidered. The laces stretched above these linen garments and above the crossed thongs, sometimes under them and sometimes over them, now in front of the leg and now behind. Then came a rich linen shirt and then a buckled sword-belt. The great sword was surrounded first with a sheath, then with a covering of leather, and lastly with a linen wrap hardened with shining wax.

The last part of their dress was a white or blue cloak in the shape of a double square; so that when it was placed upon the shoulders it touched the feet in front and behind, but at the side hardly came down to the knees. In the right hand was carried a stick of apple-wood, with regular knots, strong and terrible; a handle of gold or silver decorated with figures was fastened to it. I myself am lazy and slower than a tortoise, and so never got into Frankland; but I saw the king of the Franks¹⁸ in the monastery of Saint Gall, glittering in the dress that I have described.

But the habits of man change; and when the Franks, in their wars with the Gauls, saw the latter proudly wearing little striped cloaks, they dropped their national customs and began to imitate the Gauls. At first the strictest of emperors did not forbid the new habit, because it seemed more suitable for war: but, when he found that the Frisians were abusing his permission, and were selling these little cloaks at the same price as the old large ones, he gave orders that no one should buy from them, at the usual price, anything but

¹⁸This king of the Franks is, of course, not Charlemagne, but Charles the Third, called the Fat, who in 883 spent three days in the Monastery of St Gall.

the old cloaks, broad, wide, and long: and he added: "What is the good of those little napkins? I cannot cover myself with them in bed and when I am on horseback I cannot shield myself with them against wind and rain."

In the preface to this little work I said I would follow three authorities only. But as the chief of these, Werinbert, died seven days ago, and today (the thirteenth of May) we, his bereaved sons and disciples, are going to pay solemn honor to his memory, here I will bring this book to an end, concerning the piety of Lord Charles and his care of the Church, which has been taken from the lips of this same clerk, Werinbert.

The next book which deals with the wars of the most fierce Charles is founded on the narrative of Werinbert's father, Adalbert. He followed his master Kerold in the Hunnish, Saxon, and Slavic wars, and when I was quite a child, and he a very old man, I lived in his house and he used often to tell me the story of these events. I was most unwilling to listen and would often run away; but in the end by sheer force he made me hear.

II Concerning the Wars and Military Exploits of Charles

As I am going to found this narrative on the story told by a man of the world, who had little skill in letters, I think it will be well that I should first recount something of earlier history on the credit of written books. When Julian,¹⁹ whom God hated, was slain in the Persian war by a blow from heaven, not only did the transmarine provinces fall away from the Roman Empire, but also the neighboring provinces of Pannonia, Noricum, Rhætia, or in other words the Germans and the Franks or Gauls. Then too the kings of the Franks (or Gauls) began to decay in power because they had slain Saint Didier, Bishop of Vienna, and had expelled those most holy visitors, Columban and Gall.

¹⁹Julian's death took place in 367. It need scarcely be pointed out that the Monk's historical narrative is here of the very wildest description.

Whereupon the race of the Huns,²⁰ who had already often ravaged Francia and Aquitania (that is to say the Gauls and the Spains), now poured out with all their forces, devastated the whole land like a wide-sweeping conflagration, and then carried off all their spoils to a very safe hiding-place. Now Adalbert, whom I have already mentioned, used to explain the nature of this hiding-place as follows: "The land of the Huns," he would say, "was surrounded by nine rings."²¹ I could not think of any rings except our ordinary wicker rings for sheepfolds; and so I asked: "What, in the name of wonder, do you mean, sire?" "Well," he said, "it was fortified by nine hedges." I could not think of any hedges except those that protect our cornfields, so again I asked and he answered: "One ring was as wide, that is, it contained as much within it, as all the country between Tours and Constance. It was fashioned with logs of oak and ash and yew and was twenty feet wide and the same in height. All the space within was filled with hard stones and binding clay; and the surface of these great ramparts was covered with sods and grass. Within the limits of the ring shrubs were planted of such a kind that, when lopped and bent down, they still threw out twigs and leaves. Then between these ramparts hamlets and houses were so arranged that a man's voice could be made to reach from one to the other. And opposite to the houses, at intervals in those unconquerable walls, were constructed doors of no great size; and through these doors the inhabitants from far and near would pour out on marauding expeditions. The second ring was like the first and was distant twenty Teutonic miles (or forty Italian) from the third ring: and so on to the ninth; though of course the successive rings were each much narrower than the preceding one. But in all the circles the estates and houses were everywhere so arranged that the peal of the trumpet would carry the news of any event from one to the other."

For two hundred years and more the Huns had swept the wealth of the western states within these fortifications, and as the Goths and Vandals were

²⁰It is unnecessary to disentangle the Monk's strange perversion of history; but it may be noted that he identifies the Avars, whom Charlemagne subdued, with the Huns who followed Attila. But the Huns and the Avars, though allied in race, were two quite distinct nationalities.

²¹It would be an interesting inquiry whether archaeological or historical research corroborates in any way this interesting account which Adalbert gives of the Hunnish fortifications.

disturbing the repose of the world at the same time, the western world was almost turned into a desert. But the most unconquerable Charles so subdued them in eight years that he allowed scarcely any traces of them to remain. He withdrew his hand from the Bulgarians, because after the destruction of the Huns they did not seem likely to do any harm to the kingdom of the Franks. All the booty of the Huns, which he found in Pannonia, he divided most liberally among the bishoprics and the monasteries.

2. In the Saxon war in which he was engaged in person for some considerable time, two private men (whose names I know, but modesty forbids me to give them) organised a storming party, and destroyed with great courage the walls of a very strong city and fortification. When the most just Charles saw this he made one of them, with the consent of his master Kerold, commander of the country between the Rhine and the Italian Alps and the other he enriched with gifts of land.

3. At the same time there were the sons of two nobles whose duty it was to watch at the door of the king's tent. But one night they lay as dead, soaked in liquor; while Charles, wakeful as usual, went the round of the camp, and came back to his tent without anyone having noticed him. When morning came he called to him the chiefs of his kingdom, and asked them what punishment seemed due to those who betrayed the king of the Franks into the hands of the enemy. Then these nobles, quite ignorant of what had occurred, declared that such a man was worthy of death. But Charles merely upbraided them bitterly and let them go unharmed.

4. There were also with him two bastards, the children of a concubine. As they had fought in battle most bravely, the emperor asked them whose children they were, and where they were born. When he was informed of the facts, he called them to his tent at midday and said: "My good fellows, I want you to serve me, and me only." They exclaimed that they were there for no other purpose than to take even the lowest place in his service. "Well then," said Charles, "you must serve in my chamber." They concealed their indignation and said they would be glad to do so; but soon they seized the moment when the emperor had begun to sleep soundly, and then rushed out to the camp of the enemy and, in the fray that followed, wiped out the taint of servitude in their own blood and that of the enemy.

5. But occupations such as these did not prevent the high-souled emperor from sending frequent messengers, carrying letters and presents, to the kings of the most distant regions; and they sent him in turn whatever honors their lands could bestow. From the theatre of the Saxon war he sent messengers to the king of Constantinople; who asked them whether the kingdom of "his son Charles" was at peace or was being invaded by the neighboring peoples. Then the leader of the embassy made answer that peace reigned everywhere, except only that a certain race called the Saxons were disturbing the territories of the Franks by frequent raids. Whereupon the sluggish and unwarlike Greek king answered: "Pooh! why should my son take so much trouble about a petty enemy that possesses neither fame nor valor? I will give you the Saxon race and all that belong to it." When the envoy on his return gave this message to the most warlike Charles, he smiled and said: "The king would have shown greater kindness to you if he had given you a leg-wrap for your long journey."

6. I must not conceal the wise answer which the same envoy gave during his embassy to Greece. He came with his companions to one of the royal towns in the autumn; the party was divided for entertainment, and the envoy of whom I speak was quartered on a certain bishop. This bishop was given up to fasting and prayer, and left the envoy to perish of almost continuous hunger: but, with the first smile of spring, he presented the envoy to the king. The king asked him his opinion of the bishop. Then the envoy sighed from the very bottom of his heart and said: "That bishop of yours reaches the highest point of holiness that can be attained to without God." The king was amazed, and said: "What! can a man be holy without God?" Then said the envoy: "It is written, 'God is love,' and in that grace he is entirely lacking."

Thereupon the king of Constantinople invited him to his banquet and placed him among his nobles. Now these had a law that no guest at the king's table, whether a native or a foreigner, should turn over any animal or part of an animal: he must eat only the upper part of whatever was placed before him. Now, a river fish, covered with spice, was brought and placed on the dish before him. He knew nothing of the custom and turned the fish over whereupon all the nobles rose up and cried: "Master, you are dishonored, as no king ever was before you." Then the king groaned and said to our envoy: "I cannot resist them; you must be put to death at once; but ask me any other

favor you like and I will grant it." He thought awhile and then in the hearing of all pronounced these words: "I pray you, lord emperor, that in accordance with your promise you will grant me one small petition." And the king said: "Ask what you will, and you shall have it; except only that I may not give you your life, for that is against the law of the Greeks." Then said the envoy: "With my dying breath I ask one favor: let everyone who saw me turn that fish over be deprived of his eyes." The king was amazed at the stipulation, and swore, by Christ, that he had seen nothing, but had only trusted the word of others. Then the queen began to excuse herself: "By the beneficent Mother of God, the Holy Mary, I noticed nothing." Then the other nobles, in their desire to escape from the danger, swore, one by the keeper of the keys of heaven, and another by the apostle of the Gentiles, and all the rest by the virtue of the angels and the companies of the saints, that they were beyond the reach of the stipulation. And so the clever Frank beat the empty-headed Greeks in their own land and came home safe and sound.

A few years later the unwearied Charles sent to Greece a certain bishop remarkable both for his physical and mental gifts, and with him the most noble duke Hugo. After a long delay they were at last brought into the presence of the king and then sent about to all manner of places. But at last they got their dismissal and returned, after paying heavily for their journey by sea and land.

Soon afterwards the Greek king sent his envoy to the most glorious Charles. It so happened that the bishop and the duke whom I have mentioned were just then with the emperor. When it was announced that the envoys were coming they advised the most wise Charles to have them led round through mountains and deserts, so that they should only come into the emperor's presence when their clothes had been worn and wasted, and their money was entirely spent.

This was done; and, when at last they arrived, the bishop and his comrade bade the count of the stables take his seat on a high throne in the midst of his underlings, so that it was impossible to believe him anyone lower than the emperor. When the envoys saw him they fell upon the ground and wanted to worship him. But they were prevented by the ministers and forced to go farther. Then they saw the count of the palace presiding over a gathering of the nobles and again they thought it was the emperor and flung themselves

to earth. But those who were present drove them forward with blows and said: "That is not the emperor." Next they saw the master of the royal table surrounded by his noble band of servants; and again they fell to the ground thinking that it was the emperor. Driven thence they found the chamberlains of the emperor and their chief in council together; and then they did not doubt but that they were in the presence of the first of living men. But this man too denied that he was what they took him for; and yet he promised that he would use his influence with the nobles of the palace, so that if possible the envoys might come into the presence of the most august emperor. Then there came servants from the imperial presence to introduce them with full honors. Now Charles, the most gracious of kings, was standing by an open window leaning upon Bishop Heitto, for that was the name of the bishop who had been sent to Constantinople. The emperor was clad in gems and gold and glittered like the sun at its rising; and round about him stood, as it were the chivalry of heaven, three young men, his sons,²² who have since been made partners in the kingdom; his daughters and their mother decorated with wisdom and beauty as well as with pearls; leaders of the Church, unsurpassed in dignity and virtue; abbots distinguished for their high birth and their sanctity; nobles, like Joshua when he appeared in the camp of Gilgal; and an army like that which drove back the Syrians and Assyrians out of Samaria. So that if David had been there he might well have sung: "Kings of the earth and all people; princes and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens; old men and children let them praise the name of the Lord." Then the envoys of the Greeks were astonished; their spirit left them and their courage failed; speechless and lifeless they fell upon the ground. But the most kindly emperor raised them, and tried to cheer them with encouraging words. At last life returned to them; but when they saw Heitto, whom they had once despised and rejected, now in so great honor, again they grovelled on the ground in terror; until the king swore to them by the King of Heaven that he would do them no harm. They took heart at this promise and began to act with a little more confidence; and so home they went and never came back again.

²²These three sons are Charles, who died in 811; Pippin, who died in 810; and Louis, who succeeded to the undivided dominions of Charlemagne, and is usually known as Louis the Pious.

7. And here I must repeat that the most illustrious Charles had men of the greatest cleverness in all offices. When the morning lauds had been celebrated before the emperor on the octave of the Epiphany, the Greeks proceeded privately to sing to God in their own language psalms with the same melody and the same subject matter as "*Veterem hominem*" and the following words in our missal. Thereupon the emperor ordered one of his chaplains, who understood the Greek tongue, to adopt that psalm in Latin to the same melody, and to take special care that a separate syllable corresponded to every separate note, so that the Latin and Greek should resemble one another as far as the nature of the two languages allowed. So it came to pass that all of them have been written in the same rhythm, and in one of them *conteruit* has been substituted for "*contrivit*."

These same Greek envoys brought with them every kind of organ, as well as other instruments of various kinds. All of these were covertly inspected by the workmen of the most wise Charles, and then exactly reproduced. The chief of these was that musicians' organ, wherein the great chests were made of brass: and bellows of ox-hide blew through pipes of brass, and the bass was like the roaring of the thunder, and in sweetness it equalled the tinkling of lyre or cymbal. But I must not, here and now, speak of where it was set up, and how long it lasted, and how it perished at the same time as other losses fell upon the state.

8. About the same time also envoys of the Persians were sent to him. They knew not where Frankland lay; but because of the fame of Rome, over which they knew that Charles had rule, they thought it a great thing when they were able to reach the coast of Italy. They explained the reason of their journey to the bishops of Campania and Tuscany, of Emilia and Liguria, of Burgundy and Gaul, and to the abbots and counts of those regions; but by all they were either deceitfully handled or else actually driven off; so that a whole year had gone round before, weary and footsore with their long journey, they reached Aachen at last and saw Charles, the most renowned of kings by reason of his virtues. They arrived in the last week of Lent, and, on their arrival being made known to the emperor, he postponed their presentation until Easter eve. Then when that incomparable monarch was dressed with incomparable magnificence for the chief of festivals, he ordered the introduction of the

envoys of that race that had once held the whole world in awe.²³ But they were so terrified at the sight of the most magnificent Charles that one might think they had never seen king or emperor before. He received them however most kindly, and granted them this privilege: that they might go wherever they had a mind to, even as one of his own children, and examine everything and ask what questions and make what inquiries they chose. They jumped with joy at this favor, and valued the privilege of clinging close to Charles, of gazing upon him, of admiring him, more than all the wealth of the east.

They went up into the ambulatory that runs round the nave of the cathedral and looked down upon the clergy and the nobles; then they returned to the emperor, and, by reason of the greatness of their joy, they could not refrain from laughing aloud; and they clapped their hands and said: "We have seen only men of clay before: here are men of gold." Then they went to the nobles, one by one, and gazed with wonder upon arms and clothes that were strange to them; and then came back to the emperor, whom they regarded with wonder still greater. They passed that night and the next Sunday continuously in church; and, upon the most holy day itself, they were invited by the most munificent Charles to a splendid banquet, along with the nobles of Frankland and Europe. There they were so struck with amazement at the strangeness of everything that they had hardly eaten anything at the end of the banquet.

But when the Morn, leaving Tithonus' bed,
Illumined all the land with Phoebus' torch

then Charles, who would never endure idleness and sloth, went out to the woods to hunt the bison and the aurochs; and made preparations to take the Persian envoys with him. But when they saw the immense animals they were stricken with a mighty fear and turned and fled. But the undaunted hero Charles, riding on a high-mettled charger, drew near to one of these animals, and drawing his sword, tried to cut through its neck. But he missed his aim, and the monstrous beast ripped the boot and leg-thongs of the emperor; and,

²³The Persians of the ninth century are by the Monk identified with the Persians of the period of Marathon and Salamis.

slightly wounding his calf with the tip of its horn, made him limp slightly: after that, furious at the failure of its stroke, it fled to the shelter of a valley, which was thickly covered with stones and trees. Nearly all his servants wanted to take off their own hose to give to Charles, but he forbade it, saying: "I mean to go in this fashion to Hildigard." Then Isambard, the son of Warin (the same Warin that persecuted your patron Saint Othmar),²⁴ ran after the beast, and not daring to approach him more closely, threw his lance and pierced him to the heart between the shoulder and the wind-pipe, and brought the beast yet warm to the emperor. He seemed to pay no attention to the incident; but gave the carcass to his companions and went home. But then he called the queen and showed her how his leg-coverings were torn, and said: "What does the man deserve who freed me from the enemy that did this to me?" She made answer: "He deserves the highest boon." Then the emperor told the whole story and produced the enormous horns of the beast in witness of his truth: so that the empress sighed and wept and beat her breast. But when she heard that it was Isambard who had saved him from this terrible enemy, Isambard who was in ill favor with the emperor and who had been deprived of all his offices, she threw herself at his feet and induced him to restore all that had been taken from him; and a largess was given to him besides.

These same Persian envoys brought the emperor an elephant, monkeys, balsam, nard, unguents of various kinds, spices, scents, and many kinds of drugs: in such profusion that it seemed as if the east had been left bare that the west might be filled. They came by-and-by to stand on very familiar terms with the emperor; and one day, when they were in a specially merry mood and a little heated with strong beer, they spoke in jest as follows: "Sir emperor, your power is indeed great; but much less than the report of it which is spread through all the kingdoms of the east." When he heard this he concealed his deep displeasure and asked jestingly of them: "Why do you say that, my children? How did that idea get into your heads?" Then they went back to the beginning and told him everything that had happened to them in the lands beyond the sea; and they said: "We Persians and the Medes, Armenians, Indians, Parthians, Elamites, and all the inhabitants of the east fear you much

²⁴It must be remembered that the whole of the Monk's narrative is nominally addressed to Charles the Fat, great-grandson of Charlemagne.

more than our own ruler Haroun.²⁵ And the Macedonians and all the Greeks (how shall we express it?) they are beginning to fear your overwhelming greatness more than the waves of the Ionian Sea. And the inhabitants of all the islands through which we passed were as ready to obey you, and as much devoted to your service, as if they had been reared in your palace and loaded with your favors. But the nobles of your own kingdom, it seems to us, care very little about you except in your presence: for when we came as strangers to them, and begged them to show us some kindness for the love of you, to whom we desired to make our way, they gave no heed to us and sent us away empty-handed.” Then the emperor deposed all counts and abbots, through whose territories those envoys had come, from all the offices that they held; and fined the bishops in a huge sum of money. Then he ordered the envoys to be taken back to their own country with all care and honor.

9. There came to him also envoys from the king of the Africans, bringing a Marmorian lion and a Numidian bear, with Spanish iron and Tyrian purple, and other noteworthy products of those regions. The most munificent Charles knew that the king and all the inhabitants of Africa were oppressed by constant poverty; and so, not only on this occasion but all through his life, he made them presents of the wealth of Europe, corn and wine and oil, and gave them liberal support; and thus he kept them constantly loyal and obedient to himself, and received from them a considerable tribute.

Soon after the unwearied emperor sent to the emperor of the Persians horses and mules from Spain; Frisian robes, white, grey, red, and blue; which in Persia, he was told, were rarely seen and highly prized. Dogs too he sent him of remarkable swiftness and fierceness, such as the king of Persia had desired, for the hunting and catching of lions and tigers. The king of Persia cast a careless eye over the other presents, but asked the envoys what wild beasts or animals these dogs were accustomed to fight with. He was told that they would pull down quickly anything they were set on to. “Well,” he said, “experience will test that.” Next day the shepherds were heard crying loudly as they fled from a lion. When the noise came to the palace of the king, he said to the envoys: “Now, my friends of Frankland, mount your horses and

²⁵This is the famous Haroun al Raschid already mentioned in Einhard’s *Life of Charlemagne*.

follow me." Then they eagerly followed after the king as though they had never known toil or weariness. When they came in sight of the lion, though he was yet at a distance, the satrap of the satraps said to them: "Now set your dogs on to the lion." They obeyed and eagerly galloped forward; the German dogs caught the Persian lion, and the envoys slew him with swords of northern metal, which had already been tempered in the blood of the Saxons.

At this sight Haroun, the bravest inheritor of that name, understood the superior might of Charles from very small indications, and thus broke out in his praise: "Now I know that what I heard of my brother Charles is true: how that by the frequent practice of hunting, and by the unwearied training of his body and mind, he has acquired the habit of subduing all that is beneath the heavens. How can I make worthy recompense for the honors which he has bestowed upon me? If I give him the land which was promised to Abraham and shown to Joshua, it is so far away that he could not defend it from the barbarians: or if, like the high-souled king that he is, he tried to defend it, I fear that the provinces which lie upon the frontiers of the Frankish kingdom would revolt from his empire. But in this way I will try to show my gratitude for his generosity. I will give that land into his power; and I will rule over it as his representative. Whenever he likes or whenever there is a good opportunity he shall send me envoys; and he will find me a faithful manager of the revenue of that province."

Thus was brought to pass what the poet spoke of as an impossibility:

The Parthian's eyes the Arar's stream shall greet
And Tigris' waves shall lave the German's feet:

for through the energy of the most vigorous Charles it was found not merely possible but quite easy for his envoys to go and return; and the messengers of Haroun, whether young or old, passed easily from Parthia into Germany and returned from Germany to Parthia. (And the poet's words are true, whatever interpretation the grammarians put on "the river Arar,"²⁶ whether they think it an affluent of the Rhone or the Rhine; for they have fallen into confusion

²⁶There is really no doubt about the identification of the Arar. It is the Saone, the most important of the tributaries of the Rhone.

on this point through their ignorance of the locality). I could call on Germany to bear witness to my words; for in the time of your glorious father Louis the land was compelled to pay a penny for every acre of land held under the law towards the redemption of Christian captives in the Holy Land; and they made their wretched appeal in the name of the dominion anciently held over that land by your great-grandfather Charles and your grandfather Louis.

10. Now as the occasion has arisen to make honorable mention of your never-sufficiently-praised father,²⁷ I should like to recall some prophetic words which the most wise Charles is known to have uttered about him. When he was six years old and had been most carefully reared in the house of his father, he was thought (and justly) to be wiser than men sixty years of age. His father, then, hardly thinking it possible that he could bring him to see his grandfather, nevertheless took him from his mother, who had reared him with the most tender care, and began to instruct him how to conduct himself with propriety and modesty in the presence of the emperor; and how if he were asked a question he was to make answer and show in all things deference to his father. Thereafter he took him to the palace; and, on the first or second day, the emperor noted him with interest standing among the rest of the courtiers. "Who is that little fellow?" he said to his son; and he had for answer: "He is mine, sire; and yours if you deign to have him." So he said: "Give him to me"; and, when that was done, he took the little fellow and kissed him and sent him back to the place where he had formerly stood. But now he knew his own rank; and thought it shame to stand lower than any one who was lower in rank than the emperor; so with perfect composure of mind and body he took his place on terms of equality with his father. The most prophetic Charles noticed this; and, calling his son Louis, told him to find out the name of the boy; and why he acted in this way; and what it was that made him bold enough to claim equality with his father. The answer that Louis got was founded on good reason: "When I was your vassal," he said, "I stood behind you and among soldiers of my own rank, as I was bound to do; but now I am your ally and comrade in arms, and so I rightly claim equality with you." When Louis reported this to the emperor, the latter gave utterance to words

²⁷This is Louis of Bavaria, who was king of Germany from 843–876, the son of Louis the Pious, and the father of Charles the Fat.

something like these: "If that little fellow lives, he will be something great." (I have borrowed these words from the *Life of Saint Ambrose*,²⁸ because the actual words that Charles used cannot be translated directly into Latin. And it seems fair to apply the prophecy which was made of Saint Ambrose to Louis; for Louis closely resembled the saint, except in such points as are necessary to an earthly commonwealth, as for instance marriage and the use of arms; and in the power of his kingdom and his zeal for religion, Louis was, if I may say so, superior to Saint Ambrose. He was a Catholic in faith, devoted to the worship of God, and the unwearied ally, protector, and defender of the servants of Christ.

Here is an instance of this. When our faithful abbot Hartmuth—who is now your hermit—reported to him that the little endowment of Saint Gall, which was due not to royal munificence but to the petty offerings of private people, was not defended by any special charter such as other monasteries have, nor even by the laws that are common to all people, and so was unable to procure any defender or advocate, King Louis himself resisted all our opponents, and was not ashamed to proclaim himself the champion of our weakness in the presence of all his nobles. At the same time, too, he wrote a letter to your genius directing that we should have licence to make petition, after taking a special vote, for whatever we would through your authority. But alas, what a stupid creature I am! I have been probably drawn aside by my personal gratitude for the special kindness he showed us, away from his general and indescribable goodness and greatness and nobleness.)

II. Now Louis, king and emperor of all Germany, of the provinces of Rhætia and of ancient Francia, of Saxony too and of Thuringia, of the provinces of Pannonia and of all northern nations, was of large build and handsome; his eyes sparkled like the stars, his voice was clear and manly. His wisdom was quite out of the common, and he added to it by constantly applying his singularly acute intellect to the study of the Scriptures. He showed wonderful quickness, too, in anticipating or overcoming the plots of his enemies, in bringing to an end the quarrels of his subjects, and in procuring every kind of

²⁸The Monk's method here is not difficult to understand. The words of St Ambrose and the parallel between the saint and Charles are clearly introduced to give evidence of the writer's wide learning.

advantage for those who were loyal to him. More even than his ancestors he came to be a terror to all the heathen that stood round about his kingdom. And he deserved his good fortune; for he never defiled his tongue by condemning, nor his hands by shedding, Christian blood; except once only, and then upon the most absolute necessity. But I dare not tell that story until I see a little Louis or a Charles standing by your side.²⁹ After that one slaughter, nothing could induce him to condemn anyone to death. But the measure of compulsion which he used against those who were accused of disloyalty or plots was merely this: he deprived them of office, and no new circumstance and no length of time could then soften his heart so as to restore them to the former rank. He surpassed all men in his zealous devotion to prayer, religious fasting, and the care of the service of God; and like Saint Martin, whatever he was doing, he prayed to God as though he were face to face with Him. On certain days he abstained from flesh and all pleasant food. At the time of litanies he used to follow the cross with unshod feet from his palace as far as the cathedral; or if he were at Regensburg as far as the church of Saint Hemmeramm.³⁰ In other places he followed the customs of those whom he was with. He built new oratories of wonderful workmanship at Frankfurt and Regensburg. In the latter place, as stones were wanting to complete the immense fabric, he ordered the walls of the city to be pulled down; and in certain holes in the wall they found bones of men long dead, wrapped in so much gold, that not only did it serve to decorate the cathedral, but also he was able to furnish certain books that were written on the subject with cases of the same material nearly a finger thick. No clerk could stay with him, or even come into his presence, unless he were able to read and chant. He despised monks who broke their vows, and loved those who kept them. He was so full of sweet-tempered mirth, that, if anyone came to him in a morose mood, merely to see him and exchange a few words with him sent the visitor away

²⁹Charles the Fat had no children; but he had a brother, Carloman, King of Bavaria, and another, Louis, King of Saxony.

³⁰St Hemmeramm (or Emmeran, as the name is now usually written) was first a bishop in some Frankish see (possibly Poitiers) who about 649 went as a missionary to the idolaters of Bavaria. He was assassinated in 652 near Munich, on his road to Rome. A church in Regensburg is still called by his name.

with raised spirits. If anything evil or foolish was done in his presence, or if it happened that he were told of it, then a single glance of his eyes was enough to check everything, so that what is written of the eternal Judge who sees the hearts of men (viz. "A King that sitteth on the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with His eyes") might be fairly said to have begun in him, beyond what is usually granted to mortals.

All this I have written by way of digression, hoping that, if life lasts and Heaven is propitious, I may in time to come write much more concerning him.

12. But I must return to my subject. While Charles was detained for a little at Aachen by the arrival of many visitors and the hostility of the unconquered Saxons and the robbery and piracy of the Northmen and Moors, and while the war against the Huns was being conducted by his son Pippin, the barbarous nations of the north attacked Noricum and eastern Frankland and ravaged a great part of it. When he heard of this he humiliated them in his own person; and he gave orders that all the boys and children of the invaders should be "measured with the sword"; and if anyone exceeded that measurement he should be shortened by a head.

This incident led to another much greater and more important. For, when your imperial majesty's most holy grandfather departed from life, certain giants (like to those who, Scripture tells us, were begotten by the sons of Seth from the daughters of Cain), blown up with the spirit of pride and doubtless like to those who said, "What part have we in David and what inheritance in the son of Esau?"—these mighty men, I say, despised the most worthy children of Charles, and each tried to seize for himself the command in the kingdom and themselves to wear the crown. Then some of the middle class were moved by the inspiration of God to declare that, as the renowned Emperor Charles had once measured the enemies of Christianity with the sword, so, as long as any of his progeny could be found of the length of a sword, he must rule over the Franks and over all Germany too: thereupon that devilish group of conspirators was as it were struck with a thunderbolt, and scattered in all directions.

But, after conquering the external foe, Charles was attacked at the hands

of his own people in a remarkable but unavailing plot.³¹ For on his return from the Slavs into his own kingdom he was nearly captured and put to death by his son, whom a concubine had borne to him and who had been called by his mother by the ill-omened name of the most glorious Pippin. The plot was found out in the following manner. This son of Charles had been plotting the death of the emperor with a gathering of nobles, in the church of Saint Peter; and when their debate was over, fearful of every shadow, he ordered search to be made, to see whether anyone was hidden in the corners or under the altar. And behold they found, as they feared, a clerk hidden under the altar. They seized him and made him swear that he would not reveal their conspiracy. To save his life, he dared not refuse to take the oath which they dictated: but, when they were gone, he held his wicked oath of small account and at once hurried to the palace. With the greatest difficulty he passed through the seven bolted gates, and coming at length to the emperor's chamber, knocked upon the door. The most vigilant Charles fell into a great astonishment, as to who it was that dared to disturb him at that time of night. He, however, ordered the women (who followed in his train to wait upon the queen and the princesses) to go out and see who was at the door and what he wanted. When they went out and found the wretched creature, they bolted the door in his face and then, bursting with laughter and stuffing their dresses into their mouths, they tried to hide themselves in the corners of the apartments. But that most wise emperor, whose notice nothing under heaven could escape, asked straitly of the women who it was and what he wanted. When he was told that it was a smooth-faced, silly, half-mad knave, dressed only in shirt and drawers, who demanded an audience without delay, Charles ordered him to be admitted. Then he fell at the emperor's feet and showed all that had happened. So all the conspirators, entirely unsuspecting of danger, were seized before the third hour of the day and most deservedly condemned to exile or some other form of punishment. Pippin himself, a dwarf and a hunchback, was cruelly scourged, tonsured, and sent for some time as a punishment to the monastery of Saint

³¹This conspiracy is given in Einhard's *Life*, Chap. 20, but without the Monk's picturesque details, and with the substitution of Prüm (in the Moselle country) for the Monastery of St Gall. Einhard's authority must, of course, be preferred, and we have, therefore, a striking instance of the monkish chronicler's desire to turn everything to the honor of his own cloister.

Gall; the poorest, it was judged, and the strictest in all the emperor's broad dominions.

A short time afterwards some of the Frankish nobles sought to do violence to their king. Charles was well aware of their intentions, and yet did not wish to destroy them; because, if only they were loyal, they might be a great protection to all Christian men. So he sent messengers to this Pippin and asked him his advice in the matter.

They found him in the monastery garden, in the company of the elder brothers, for the younger ones were detained by their work.³² He was digging up nettles and other weeds with a hoe, that the useful herbs might grow more vigorously. When they had explained to him the reason of their coming, he sighed deeply, from the very bottom of his heart, and said in reply: "If Charles thought my advice worth having he would not have treated me so harshly. I give him no advice. Go, tell him what you found me doing." They were afraid to go back to the dreaded emperor without a definite answer, and again and again asked him what message they should convey to their lord. Then at last he said in anger: "I will send him no message except what I am doing! I am digging up the useless growths in order that the valuable herbs may be able to develop more freely."

So they went away sorrowfully thinking that they were bringing back a foolish answer. When the emperor asked them upon their arrival what answer they were bringing, they answered sorrowfully that after all their labor and long journeying they could get no definite information at all. Then that most wise king asked them carefully where they had found Pippin, what he was doing, and what answer he had given them; and they said: "We found him sitting on a rustic seat turning over the vegetable garden with a hoe. When we told him the cause of our journey we could extract no other reply than this, even by the greatest entreaties: 'I give no message, except what I am doing! I am digging up the useless growths in order that the valuable herbs may be able to develop more freely.'" When he heard this, the emperor, not

³²This story has a long history. It is first told of Thrasybulus, tyrant of Miletus; it was then adapted by Livy (1-54) to Tarquin, King of Rome, with slight alterations. The same story, which is here told somewhat clumsily, and applied to Charlemagne, is given by Ekkehard as belonging to the reign of Charles III.

lacking in cunning and mighty in wisdom, rubbed his ears and blew out his nostrils and said: "My good vassals, you have brought back a very reasonable answer." So while the messengers were fearing that they might be in peril of their lives, Charles was able to divine the real meaning of the words. He took all those plotters away from the land of the living; and so gave to his loyal subjects room to grow and spread, which had previously been occupied by those unprofitable servants. One of his enemies, who had chosen as his part of the spoil of the empire the highest hill in France and all that could be seen from it, was, by Charles's orders, hanged upon a high gallows on that very hill. But he bade his bastard son Pippin choose the manner of life that most pleased him. Upon this permission being given him, he chose a post in a monastery then most noble but now destroyed.³³ (Who is there that does not know the manner of its destruction! But I will not tell the story of its fall until I see your little Bernard with a sword girt upon his thigh.)

The magnanimous Charles was often angry because he was urged to go out and fight against foreign nations, when one of his nobles might have accomplished the task. I can prove this from the action of one of my own neighbors. There was a man of Thurgau,³⁴ of the name of Eishere, who as his name implies was "a great part of a terrible army"³⁵ and so tall that you might have thought him sprung from the race of Anak, if they had not lived so long ago and so far away. Whenever he came to the river Dura and found it swollen and foaming with the torrents from the mountains, and could not force his huge charger to enter the stream (though stream I must not call it, but hardly melted ice), then he would seize the reins and force his horse to swim through behind him, saying: "Nay, by Saint Gall, you must come, whether you like it or not!"

Well, this man followed the emperor and mowed down the Bohemians and Wiltzes and Avars as a man might mow down hay; and spitted them on his spear like birds. When he came home the sluggards asked him how he had got on in the country of the Winides; and he, contemptuous of some and

³³The reference is to the Monastery of Prumia, which was destroyed by the Northmen in 882.

³⁴Thurgau is in Switzerland.

³⁵"*Eis*," meaning terrible; and "*here*," an army.

angry with others, replied: "Why should I have been bothered with those tadpoles? I used sometimes to spit seven or eight or nine of them on my spear and carry them about with me squealing in their gibberish. My lord king and I ought never to have been asked to weary ourselves in fighting against worms like those."

13. Now about the same time that the emperor was putting the finishing touch to the war with the Huns, and had received the surrender of the races that I have just mentioned, the Northmen left their homes and disquieted greatly the Gauls and the Franks. Then the unconquered Charles returned and tried to attack them by land in their own homes, by a march through difficult and unknown country. But, whether it was that the providence of God prevented it in order that, as the Scripture says, He might make trial of Israel, or whether it was that our sins stood in the way, all his efforts came to nothing. One night, to the serious discomfort of the whole army, it was calculated that fifty yoke of oxen belonging to one abbey had died of a sudden disease. Afterwards, when Charles was making a prolonged journey through his vast empire, Gotefrid, king of the Northmen, encouraged by his absence, invaded the territory of the Frankish kingdom and chose the district of the Moselle for his home.³⁶ But Gotefrid's own son (whose mother he had just put away and taken to himself a new wife) caught him, while he was pulling off his hawk from a heron, and cut him through the middle with his sword. Then, as happened of old when Holofernes was slain, none of the Northmen dare trust any longer in his courage or his arms; but all sought safety in flight. And thus the Franks were freed without their own effort, that they might not after the fashion of Israel boast themselves against God. Then Charles, the unconquered and the invincible, glorified God for His judgment; but complained bitterly that any of the Northmen had escaped because of his absence. "Ah, woe is me!" he said, "that I was not thought worthy to see my Christian hands dabbling in the blood of those dog-headed fiends."

14. It happened, too, that on his wanderings Charles once came unexpectedly to a certain maritime city of Narbonensian Gaul. When he was dining

³⁶No Northman made any permanent settlement on the Moselle either in the reign of Charles or at any other time. At most this can refer only to the boast, or design, of some such chief as Gotefrid.

quietly in the harbor of this town, it happened that some Norman scouts made a piratical raid. When the ships came in sight some thought them Jews, some African or British merchants, but the most wise Charles, by the build of the ships and their speed, knew them to be not merchants but enemies, and said to his companions: "These ships are not filled with merchandise, but crowded with our fiercest enemies." When they heard this, in eager rivalry, they hurried in haste to the ships. But all was in vain, for when the Northmen heard that Charles, the Hammer, as they used to call him, was there, fearing lest their fleet should be beaten back or even smashed in pieces, they withdrew themselves by a marvellously rapid flight, not only from the swords but even from the eyes of those who followed them. The most religious, just, and devout Charles had risen from the table and was standing at an eastern window. For a long time he poured down tears beyond price, and none dared speak a word to him; but at last he explained his actions and his tears to his nobles in these words: "Do you know why I weep so bitterly, my true servants? I have no fear of those worthless rascals doing any harm to me; but I am sad at heart to think that even during my lifetime they have dared to touch this shore; and I am torn by a great sorrow because I foresee what evil things they will do to my descendants and their subjects."

May the protection of our Master Christ prevent the accomplishment of this prophecy; may your sword, tempered already in the blood of the Nordostrani, resist it! The sword of your brother Carloman will help, which now lies idle and rusted, not for want of spirit, but for want of funds, and because of the narrowness of the lands of your most faithful servant Arnulf.³⁷ If your might wills it, if your might orders it, it will easily be made bright and sharp again. These and the little shoot of Bernard form the only branch that is left of the once prolific root of Louis, to flourish under the wonderful growth of your protection. Let me insert here therefore in the history of your namesake Charles an incident in the life of your great-great-grandfather Pippin, which perhaps some future little Charles or Louis may read and imitate.

15. When the Lombards and other enemies of the Romans were attacking

³⁷The allusion to the Nordostrani fixes this reference to the year 882, when the Northmen were a terrible and increasing danger to all Frankland. The Arnulf here mentioned was the son of Charles the Fat, and, later, emperor.

them, they sent ambassadors to this same Pippin, and asked him for the love of Saint Peter to condescend to come with all speed to their help. As soon as he had conquered his enemies he came victoriously to Rome,³⁸ and this was the song of praise with which the citizens received him. "The fellow-citizens of the apostles and the servants of God have come today bringing peace, and making their native land glorious, to give peace to the heathen and to set free the people of the Lord." (Many people, ignorant of the meaning and origin of this song, have been accustomed to sing it on the birthdays of the apostles.) Pippin feared the envy of the people of Rome (or, more truly, of Constantinople) and soon returned to Frankland.

When he found that the nobles of his army were accustomed in secret to speak contemptuously of him, he ordered one day a huge and ferocious bull to be brought out, and then a savage lion to be let loose upon him. The lion rushed with tremendous fury on the bull, seized him by the neck, and cast him on the ground. Then the king said to those who stood round him: "Now, drag off the lion from the bull, or kill the one on the top of the other." They looked on one another, with a chill at their hearts, and could hardly utter these words amidst their sobs: "Lord, what man is there under heaven, who dare attempt it?" Then Pippin rose confidently from his throne, drew his sword, and at one blow cut through the neck of the lion and severed the head of the bull from his shoulders. Then he put back his sword into its sheath and sat again upon his throne and said: "Well, do you think I am fit to be your lord? Have you not heard what the little David did to the giant Goliath, or what the child Alexander did to his nobles?" They fell to the ground, as though a thunderbolt had struck them, and cried: "Who but a madman would deny your right to rule over all mankind?"

Not only was his courage shown against beasts and men; but he also fought an incredible contest against evil spirits. The hot baths at Aachen had not yet been built; but hot and healing waters bubbled from the ground. He ordered his chamberlain to see that the water was clean and that no unknown person was allowed to enter into them. This was done, and the king took his sword and, dressed only in linen gown and slippers, hurried off to the bath;

³⁸This story of King Pippin's visit to Rome is entirely legendary. It is repeated by later chroniclers, but is certainly without basis of any kind.

when lo! the Old Enemy met him, and attacked him as though he would slay him. But the king, strengthened with the sign of the cross, made bare his sword; and, noticing a shape in human form, struck his unconquerable sword through it into the ground so far that he could only drag it out again after a long struggle. But the shape was so far material that it defiled all those waters with blood and gore and horrid slime. But even this did not upset the unconquerable Pippin. He said to his chamberlain: "Do not mind this little affair. Let the defiled water run for a while; and then, when it flows clear again, I will take my bath without delay."

16. I had intended, most noble emperor, to weave my little narrative only round your great-grandfather Charles, all of whose deeds you know well. But since the occasion arose which made it necessary to mention your most glorious father Louis, called the illustrious, and your most religious grandfather Louis, called the pious, and your most warlike great-great-grandfather Pippin the younger, I thought it would be wrong to pass over their deeds in silence, for the sloth of modern writers has left them almost untold. There is no need to speak of the elder Pippin, for the most learned Bede in his ecclesiastical history has devoted nearly a whole volume to him. But now that I have recounted all these things by way of digression I must swim swan-like back to your illustrious namesake Charles. But, if I do not curtail somewhat his feats in war, I shall never come to consider his daily habits of life. Now I will give with all possible brevity the incidents that occur to me.

17. When after the death of the ever-victorious Pippin the Lombards were again attacking Rome, the unconquered Charles, though he was fully occupied with business to the north of the Alps, marched swiftly into Italy. He received the Lombards into his service after they had been humbled in a war that was almost bloodless, or (one might say) after they had surrendered of their own free will; and to prevent them from ever again revolting from the Frankish kingdom or doing any injury to the territories of Saint Peter, he married the daughter of Desiderius, chief of the Lombards. But no long time afterwards, because she was an invalid and little likely to give issue to Charles, she was, by the counsel of the holiest of the clergy, put aside, even as though she were dead: whereupon her father in wrath bound his subjects to him by oath, and shutting himself up within the walls of Pavia, he prepared to give

battle to the invincible Charles, who, when he had received certain news of the revolt, hurried to Italy with all speed.

Now it happened that some years before one of the first nobles, called Otker, had incurred the wrath of the most terrible emperor and had fled for refuge to Desiderius. When the near approach of the dreaded Charles was known, these two went up into a very high tower, from which they could see anyone approaching at a very great distance. When therefore the baggage-wagons appeared, which moved more swiftly than those used by Darius or Julius, Desiderius said to Otker: "Is Charles in that vast army?" And Otker answered: "Not yet." Then when he saw the vast force of the nations gathered together from all parts of his empire, he said with confidence to Otker: "Surely Charles moves in pride among those forces." But Otker answered: "Not yet, not yet." Then Desiderius fell into great alarm and said, "What shall we do if a yet greater force comes with him?" And Otker said, "You will see what he is like when he comes. What will happen to us I cannot say." And, behold, while they were thus talking, there came in sight Charles's personal attendants, who never rested from their labors; and Desiderius saw them and cried in amazement, "There is Charles." And Otker answered: "Not yet, not yet." Then they saw the bishops and the abbots and the clerks of his chapel with their attendants. When he saw them he hated the light and longed for death, and sobbed and stammered, "Let us go down to hide ourselves in the earth from the face of an enemy so terrible." And Otker answered trembling, for once, in happier days, he had had thorough and constant knowledge of the policy and preparations of the unconquerable Charles: "When you see an iron harvest bristling in the fields; and the Po and the Ticino pouring against the walls of the city like the waves of the sea, gleaming black with glint of iron, then know that Charles is at hand." Hardly were these words finished when there came from the west a black cloud, which turned the bright day to horrid gloom. But as the emperor drew nearer the gleam of the arms turned the darkness into day, a day darker than any night to that beleaguered garrison. Then could be seen the iron Charles, helmeted with an iron helmet, his hands clad in iron gauntlets, his iron breast and broad shoulders protected with an iron breastplate: an iron spear was raised on high in his left hand; his right always rested on his unconquered iron falchion. The thighs, which with most

men are uncovered that they may the more easily ride on horseback, were in his case clad with plates of iron: I need make no special mention of his greaves, for the greaves of all the army were of iron. His shield was all of iron: his charger was iron-colored and iron-hearted. All who went before him, all who marched by his side, all who followed after him and the whole equipment of the army imitated him as closely as possible. The fields and open places were filled with iron; the rays of the sun were thrown back by the gleam of iron; a people harder than iron paid universal honor to the hardness of iron. The horror of the dungeon seemed less than the bright gleam of iron. "Oh the iron! Woe for the iron!" was the confused cry that rose from the citizens. The strong walls shook at the sight of the iron; the resolution of young and old fell before the iron. Now when the truthful Otker saw in one swift glance all this which I, with stammering tongue and the voice of a child, have been clumsily explaining with rambling words, he said to Desiderius: "There is the Charles that you so much desired to see", and when he had said this he fell to the ground half dead.

But as the inhabitants of the city, either through madness or because they entertained some hope of resistance, refused to let Charles enter on that day, the most inventive emperor said to his men: "Let us build to-day some memorial, so that we may not be charged with passing the day in idleness. Let us make haste to build for ourselves a little house of prayer, where we may give due attention to the service of God, if they do not soon throw open the city to us." No sooner had he said it than his men flew off in every direction, collected lime and stones, wood and paint, and brought them to the skilled workmen who always accompanied him. And between the fourth hour of the day and the twelfth they built, with the help of the young nobles and the soldiers, such a cathedral, so provided with walls and roofs, with fretted ceilings and frescoes, that none who saw it could believe that it had taken less than a year to build. But, how on the next day some of the citizens wanted to throw open the gate; and some wanted to fight against him, even without hope of victory, or rather to fortify themselves against him; and how easily he conquered, took, and occupied the city, without the shedding of blood, and merely by the exercise of skill: all this I must leave others to tell, who follow your highness not for love, but in the hope of gain.

Then the most religious Charles marched on and came to the city of Friuli, which the pedants call Forum Julii. Now it happened just at this time that the bishop of that city (or, to use a modern word, the patriarch) was drawing near to the end of his life. Charles made haste to visit him, in order that he might designate his successor by name. But the bishop, with remarkable piety, sighed from the bottom of his heart and said: "Sire, I have held this bishopric for a long time without any use or profit; and now I leave it to the judgment of God and your disposal. For I do not wish, at the point of death, to add anything to the mountain of sin that I have heaped together during my life, for which I shall have to make answer to the inevitable and incorruptible Judge." The most wise Charles was so pleased with these words, that he rightly thought him the equal in virtue of the ancient fathers.

After Charles, of all the energetic Franks the most energetic, had stayed in that country for a short time, while he was appointing a worthy successor to the deceased bishop, one festal day after the celebration of Mass he said to his retinue: "We must not let leisure lead us into slothful habits. Let us go hunting and kill something, and let us all go in the very clothes that we are wearing at this moment." Now the day was cold and rainy, and Charles was wearing a sheepskin, not much more costly than the cloak which Saint Martin wore when with bare arms he offered to God a sacrifice that received divine approval. But the others—for it was a holiday and they had just come from Pavia, whither the Venetians had carried all the wealth of the east from their territories beyond the sea—the others, I say, strutted in robes made of pheasant-skins and silk; or of the necks, backs, and tails of peacocks in their first plumage. Some were decorated with purple and lemon-colored ribbons; some were wrapped round with blankets and some in ermine robes. They scoured the thickets; they were torn by branches of trees, thorns, and briars; they were drenched with rain; they were defiled with the blood of wild beasts and the filth of the skins; and in this plight they returned home. Then the most crafty Charles said: "No one of us must take off his dress of skins before he goes to bed; they will dry better upon our bodies." Then everyone, more anxious about his body than his dress, made search for fire and tried to warm himself. Then they returned and remained in attendance upon Charles far into the night before they were dismissed to their apartments. Then when

they began to draw off their dresses of skins and their slender belts, the creased and shrunken garments could be heard even from a distance cracking like sticks broken when they are dry: and the courtiers sighed and groaned and lamented that they had lost so much money on a single day. They had received, however, a command from the emperor to appear before him next day in the same skin-garments. When they came it was no longer the splendid show of yesterday; for they looked dirty and squalid in their discolored and rent clothes. Then Charles, full of guile, said to his chamberlain: "Give my sheepskin a rub and bring it to me." It came quite white and perfectly sound and Charles took it and showed it to all those who were there and spoke as follows: "Most foolish of mortal men! which of these dresses is the most valuable and the most useful, this one of mine which was bought for a piece of silver, or those of yours which you bought for pounds, nay for many talents?" Their eyes sank to the ground, for they could not bear his most terrible censure.

Your most religious father imitated this example of the Great Charles all through his life, for he never allowed anyone, who seemed to him worthy of his notice or his teaching, to wear anything when on campaign against the enemy except the military accoutrements and garments of wool and linen. If any of his servants, ignorant of this rule, happened to meet him with silk or silver or gold upon his person, he would receive a reprimand of the following kind and would depart a better and a wiser man. "Here's a blaze of gold and silver and scarlet! Why, you wretched fellow, can't you be satisfied with perishing yourself in battle if Fate so decides? Must you also give your wealth into the hands of the enemy, which might have gone to ransom your soul, but now will decorate the temples of the heathen?"

But now, though you know it better than I do, I will tell again how, from early youth up to his seventieth year, the unconquered Louis delighted in iron; and what an exhibition of his fondness for iron he made in the presence of the legates of the Northmen!

18. When the kings of the Northmen sent gold and silver as witness of their loyalty and their swords as a mark of their perpetual subjection and surrender, the king gave orders that the precious metals should be thrown upon the floor, and should be looked upon by all with contempt, and be trampled upon by all as though they were dirt. But, as he sat upon his lofty

throne, he ordered the swords to be brought to him that he might make trial of them. Then the ambassadors, anxious to avoid the possibility of any suspicion of an evil design, took the swords by the very point (as servants hand knives to their masters) and thus gave them to the emperor at their own risk. He took one by the hilt and tried to bend the tip of the blade right back to the base; but the blade snapped between his hands, which were stronger than the iron itself. Then one of the envoys drew his own sword from its sheath and offered it, like a servant, to the emperor's service, saying: "I think you will find this sword as flexible and as strong as your all-conquering right hand could desire." Then the emperor (a true emperor he! As the Prophet Isaiah says in his prophecy, "Consider the rock whence ye were hewn": for he out of all the vast population of Germany, by the singular favor of God, rose to the level of the strength and courage of an earlier generation)—the emperor, I say, bent it like a vine-twig from the extreme point back to the hilt, and then let it gradually straighten itself again. Then the envoys gazed upon one another and said in amazement: "Would that our kings held gold and silver so cheap and iron so precious."

19. As I have mentioned, the Northmen I will show by an incident drawn from the reign of your grandfather in what slight estimation they hold faith and baptism. Just as after the death of the warrior King David, the neighboring peoples, whom his strong hand had subdued, for a long time paid their tribute to his peaceful son Solomon: even so the terrible race of the Northmen still loyally paid to Louis the tribute which through terror they had paid to his father, the most august Emperor Charles. Once the most religious Emperor Louis took pity on their envoys, and asked them if they would be willing to receive the Christian religion; and, when they answered that always and everywhere and in everything they were ready to obey him, he ordered them to be baptised in the name of Him, of whom the most learned Augustine says: "If there were no Trinity, the Truth would never have said: 'Go and teach all peoples, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.'" The nobles of the palace adopted them almost as children, and each received from the emperor's chamber a white robe and from their sponsors a full Frankish attire, of costly robes and arms and other decorations.

This was often done, and from year to year they came in increasing num-

bers, not for the sake of Christ but for earthly advantage. They made haste to come, not as envoys any longer but as loyal vassals, on Easter eve to put themselves at the disposal of the emperor; and it happened that on a certain occasion they came to the number of fifty. The emperor asked them whether they wished to be baptised, and when they had confessed he bade them forthwith be sprinkled with holy water. As linen garments were not ready in sufficient numbers, he ordered shirts to be cut up and sewn together into the fashion of wraps. One of these was forthwith clapped upon the shoulders of one of the elder men; and when he had looked all over it for a minute, he conceived fierce anger in his mind, and said to the emperor: "I have gone through this washing business here twenty times already, and I have been dressed in excellent clothes of perfect whiteness; but a sack like this is more fit for clodhoppers than for soldiers. If I were not afraid of my nakedness, for you have taken away my own clothes and have given me no new ones, I would soon leave your wrap and your Christ as well."

Ah! how little do the enemies of Christ value the words of the Apostle of Christ where he says: "All ye that are baptised in Christ, put on Christ"; and again: "Ye that are baptised in Christ are baptised in His death"; or that passage which is aimed especially at those who despise the faith and violate the sacraments: "Crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame!" Oh! would that this were the case only with the heathen; and not also among those who are called by the name of Christ!

20. Now I must tell a story about the goodness of the first Louis, and then I shall come back to Charles. That most peaceable Emperor Louis, being free from the incursions of the enemy, gave all his care to works of religion, as, for instance, to prayer, to works of charity, to the hearing and just determinations of trials at law. His talents and his experience had made him very skillful in this latter business; and when one day there came to him one, who was considered a very Achitophel by all, and trying to deceive him he gave him this answer following, with courteous mien and kindly voice, though with some little agitation of mind. "Most wise Anselm," he said, "if I may be allowed to say so, I would venture to observe that you are deviating from the path of rectitude." From that day the reputation of that legal luminary sank to nothing in the eyes of all the world.

21. Moreover, the most merciful Louis was so intent on works of charity that he liked not merely to have them done in his sight, but even to do them with his own hand. Even when he was away he made special arrangements for the trial of cases in which the poor were concerned. He chose one of their own number, a man of small bodily strength, but apparently more courageous than the rest, and gave orders that he should decide offences committed by them; and should see to the restoration of stolen property, the requital of injuries and wounds, and in cases of greater crimes to the infliction of mutilation, decapitation, and the exposure of the bodies on the gallows. This man established dukes, tribunes, centurions, and their representatives, and performed his task with energy.

Moreover, the most merciful emperor, worshipping Christ in the persons of all the poor, was never weary of giving them food and clothing: and he did so especially on the day when Christ, having put off His mortal body, was preparing to take to Himself an incorruptible one. On that day it was his practice to make presents to each and every one of those who served in the palace or did duty in the royal court. He would order belts, leg coverings, and precious garments brought from all parts of his vast empire to be given to some of his nobles; the lower orders would get Frisian cloaks of various colors; his grooms, cooks, and kitchen-attendants got clothes of linen and wool and knives according to their needs. Then, when according to the Acts of the Apostles there was no one that was in need of anything, there was a universal feeling of gratitude. The ragged poor, now decently clad, raised their voices to heaven with the cry of "Kyrie Eleison" to the blessed Louis" through all the wide courts and the smaller openings of Aachen (which the Latins usually call porches); and all the knights who could embraced the feet of the emperor; and those who could not get to him worshipped him afar off as he made his way to church. On one of these occasions one of the fools said in jest: "O happy Louis, who on one day hast been able to clothe so many people. By Christ, I think that no one in Europe has clothed more than you this day except Atto."³⁹ When the emperor asked him how it was possible that Atto should have clothed more, the jester, pleased to have secured the attention of the emperor, said with a grin: "He has distributed today a vast number of new

³⁹I confess myself unable to make anything out of the jester's references to Atto.

clothes.” The emperor, with the sweetest possible expression on his face, took this for the silly joke it was, and entered the church in humble devotion, and there behaved himself so reverently that he seemed to have Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself before his bodily eyes.

It was his habit to go to the baths every Saturday, not for any need there was of it, but because it gave him an opportunity of making presents; for he used to give everything that he took off, except his sword and belt, to his attendants. His liberality reached even to the lowest grades: insomuch that he once ordered all his attire to be given to one Stracholf, a glazier, and a servant of Saint Gall. When the servants of the barons heard of this, they laid an ambuscade for him on the road and tried to rob him. Then he cried out: “What are you doing? You are using violence to the glazier of the emperor!” They answered: “You can keep your office but...”

[Here the manuscript ends, and the further adventures of Stracholf are left to conjecture.]

Part II The Life of Charlemagne

by Thomas Hodgkin

Chapter I Preface

IN attempting to compress the history of the great Emperor Charles within the narrow limits of the present volume, I have undertaken a difficult task, and I trust that my fellow-historians will consider, not how much has been omitted, but how much, or rather how little, it was possible to insert.

It may be thought that I might have gained space by proceeding at once to the beginning of Charles's own reign instead of devoting more than eighty pages to his predecessors, but this did not seem to me possible. The great Emperor was the last term of an ascending series—nobles, mayors of the palace, kings; and in order to understand the law of the series it is absolutely necessary to study some of its earlier members.

A few words as to our authorities. For the period before the accession of Pippin¹ our chief authority is the chronicle which is known by the name of *Fredegarius*, very meager, and written in barbarous Latin, but honest; then a still more miserable continuation of this work by an unknown scribe; and lastly, a much better performance, from a literary point of view, *The Lives of the Bishops of Metz*, by Paulus Diaconus.

For the reigns of Pippin and of Charles the Great we have fairly satisfactory materials in the shape of the Annals, which now began to be kept at various monasteries; chief among them the *Annales Laurissenses maiores*, so-called from their connection, real or supposed, with the great monastery of Lorsch (in Hesse-Darmstadt, about ten miles east of Worms). So extensive, however,

¹Ed.'s Note: Often known by the French form of his name, "Pepin".

is the knowledge of state affairs possessed by this writer that it is the opinion of Professor Ranke, and of most modern inquirers, that he cannot have been a mere monk writing his chronicle in a convent, but that we have here in fact the chronicles of the Frankish kingdom. This view is to some extent confirmed by the fact that there is a fuller recension of them in a more literary form, which bears the name of *Annales Einhardi*, and thus professes to be the work of Charles's friend and secretary. The precious *Vita Caroli* ("Life of Charles"), from the pen of the same writer, is described in the following pages.

The writers who in modern times have treated of the life of Charles the Great number some hundreds, and I make no pretension to even a superficial acquaintance with the bibliography of so vast a subject, but I may mention that the books which I have found most helpful in the composition of the following pages are Waitz's *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte* ("German Constitutional History"), Guizot's *Lectures on the History of Civilization*, Dahn's *Urgeschichte der germanischen und romanischen Völker* ("Early History of the Germanic and Romance Peoples"), and pre-eminently the series of *Jahrbücher der deutschen Geschichte* ("Yearbooks of German History"), in which Bonnell has treated of *The Beginnings of the Carolingian House*; Oelsner, of *The Life of Pippin, King of the Franks*; and Abel and Simson, of *The Life of Charles the Great*. To the last work (in two volumes) I have been under great and continual obligation.

—Thos. Hodgkin

Chapter II To the Birth of Charlemagne

I Introduction

IN the gradual transformation of the old world of classical antiquity into the world with which the statesmen of today must deal, no man played

a greater part than Charles the Great,¹ King of the Franks and Emperor of Rome. The sharp lines of demarcation which we often draw between period and period, and which are useful as helps to memory, have not for the most part had any real existence in history, for in the world of men, as in the development of the material universe, it is true that uniformity rather than cataclysm is the rule: *Natura non vadit per saltum* ("Nature does not proceed by a leap"). Still there are some great landmarks,² such as the foundation of Constantinople, Alaric's capture of Rome, the Hegira of Mohammed, the discovery of America, the Reformation, and the French Revolution, which have no merely artificial existence. We can see that the thoughts of the great majority of civilized men were suddenly forced into a different channel by such events, that after they had occurred, men hoped for other benefits and feared other dangers than they had looked for before these events took place. And such a changeful moment in the history of the world was undoubtedly the life of the great ruler who is generally spoken of as Charlemagne, and pre-eminently the year 800,

¹In the headings of this book, the form of the name *Charlemagne* is used throughout, in preference to the English form *Charles the Great*, or *Charles I* (which suggests Charles Stuart), or the Latin form *Carolus Magnus*, or the grotesque combination of the Teutonic *Karl* with the Latin *Magnus*. The editor does not overlook the difficulties of the case. The word *Charlemagne* is conceded to be misleading because of its French form. It is natural to infer that the man so named was peculiarly connected with the French people or race. The fact is otherwise; for the illustrious leader of the Franks was much nearer akin to the Germanic and Teutonic peoples, than to the Gallic or French. The reader should therefore keep it in mind that Charlemagne was not a Frenchman, nor did he belong to the predecessors of the French, despite the form of his name. He was not king of the French, but "king of the *Franks*" as the author says above. And "with all his wide, far-reaching schemes, he remained, it would seem, at heart a... Frank... and we may conjecture that Neustria was to him as little of a homeland as Aquitaine or even Italy." (See below, p. 280.) For the extent of his kingdom, which centered about the Rhine, not the Seine, see below, pp. 11, 12. ¶ On the other hand, it may be said in favor of the form *Charlemagne* that it has not only obtained common usage, but it has the authority of Milton, Scott, and other English writers, while in the United States it is today the common, almost exclusive form. This seems to be sufficient reason for its adoption.

²The dates of these landmarks are as follows: Constantinople was founded 330, A. D.; Alaric captured Rome 410; the Hegira, or Flight, of Mohammed occurred 622; America was discovered 1492; the Reformation began with Luther's nailing his 95 theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg in 1517; and the great French Revolution occurred between 1789 and 1795, the dreadful climax being in 1793.

when he was crowned as Emperor at Rome.

When Charles appeared upon the scene, the Roman Empire—at least as far as Western Europe was concerned—had been for more than three centuries slowly dying. An event, to which allusion has just been made—the capture of Rome by Alaric in 410—had dealt the great world-empire a mortal blow, and yet so tough was its constitution, so deeply was the thought engraven even on the hearts of its most barbarous enemies, “Rome is the rightful mistress of the world,” that it seemed as if that world-empire could not die. The Visigoth, the Ostrogoth, the Vandal, the Burgundian, the Lombard, coming forth from the immemorial solitude of their forests, streamed over the cities and the vineyards of the Mediterranean lands, and erected therein their rude state-systems, their barbaric sovereignties; but even in framing their uncouth national codes they were forced to use the language of Rome; in government they could not dispense with the official machinery of the Empire; in religious affairs, above all, they found themselves always face to face with men to whom the city by the Tiber was still *Roma caput mundi* (“Rome, the head of the world”). Hence in all these new barbarian kingdoms that arose on the ruins of the Empire there was a certain feeling of precariousness and unrest, a secret fear that the power which had come into being so strangely and so unexpectedly would in a moment vanish away, and that the Roman Augustus would assert himself once more as supreme over the nations; to borrow a phrase from the controversies of a much later date, the Visigothic and Burgundian and Lombard kings were obviously kings *de facto*; but there was a latent consciousness in the minds of their subjects, perhaps in their own also, that they were not kings *de jure*.

Had the Italian peninsula been less easily accessible by way of the Julian Alps, or had Rome been situated in as strong a position as Constantinople, it is possible that this secret belief in her rightful predominance might have won back for a Roman emperor that dominion over Europe which was in fact wielded for a time by the Roman popes. But the virtual transference of the seat of empire from the Tiber to the Bosphorus, which was the result of the foundation of the new Rome,³ and the frequent successful sieges of the old Rome, prevented the Roman emperor from thus reasserting himself. There were jealousies between Rome and Constantinople already before the end of

³New Rome was Constantinople, the seat of the Eastern, or Byzantine empire.

the fourth century, and when under Justinian the Empire made its wonderful efforts to recover the ground which it had lost in Africa, in Italy, and in Spain,⁴ though these reconquests were effected in the name of a Roman Augustus, it was felt, and often loudly asserted, that the armies which fought under the imperial standards were Greek rather than Roman. Thus, through all the kingdoms of the west, even while the emperor enthroned at Constantinople was looked upon as in some sense the legitimate monarch of the world, the old deep-rooted hostility between East and West also made itself felt, and it was becoming every day more improbable that the western lands should ever be brought under the rule of a "Byzantine" Cæsar.

Ere the long, slow agony which I have called the death of Rome was completed, the world was startled by that outbreak of fierce Semitic monotheism which is associated with the name of Mohammed. In 622, rather more than two centuries after Alaric's capture of Rome, Mohammed escaped from Mecca to Medina, and in this retreat of his the followers of his faith in succeeding ages have rightly seen the beginning of his career of spiritual conquest, wherefore they date all their events from the midnight journey of a fugitive, even as the other great Oriental faith has taken for its landmark the birth of a little child in a stable. Before Mohammed's death in 632 the career of Saracen conquest had begun. Ere the close of the seventh century Syria, Persia, Egypt, North Africa, were torn from the empire of the Cæsars and obeyed the rule of the caliph. In 711 Europe saw the first breach made in its defences when the great Iberian peninsula (all save a few mountain glens in the remote north) was conquered by the Moors, and Mecca took the place of Jerusalem or Rome as the spiritual center of gravity for Spain. The turbaned invaders crossed the Pyrenees, in 725 they penetrated as far as Autun, only 150 miles from Paris. Though defeated by Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne, in the great battle of Poitiers,⁵ the Moors remained encamped on the soil of that

⁴Justinian, Byzantine emperor from 527 to 565, is chiefly known to fame by his important work, the codification of the Roman laws. It was his generals Belisareus and Narses who destroyed the Vandal kingdom in Africa and the Ostragothic kingdom in Italy, restoring those countries to the Byzantine sway. In 550 several Spanish cities, both on the Mediterranean and on the Atlantic, were ceded to Justinian, and they did not shake off the yoke until 620; so that for 70 years Rome had the empty honor of numbering Spain among her provinces.

⁵One of the fifteen decisive battles of the world was that fought in the year 732, the

which we now call France. Narbonne was in their possession at the time of the birth of Charlemagne, and remained so during the years of his boyhood, till won back for Christendom by his father in 759.

In the east of Europe the Avars⁶ still hung menacingly over the Italian and Illyrian lands. A people allied to the Huns, they occupied the mid-Danubian region which had been the seat of the barbarian empire of Attila, and though their power had declined somewhat from that which they wielded in the seventh century, it was still a serious danger to civilization. As we shall see, however, the barbarous and heathen Saxons in the lands between the Lower Rhine and the Elbe, representing the Teutonic spirit in its fiercest and most stubborn moods, represented an even more formidable obstacle to that remodelling of Europe in the likeness of the old Roman Empire which was the aim of the great statesman with whose life we have to deal.

Such, very briefly, was the aspect of affairs when Charles the Great, the descendant of many mayors of the palace and of one king, found himself, with the power of the Frankish nation collected in his sole right hand, controller of the destinies of Western Europe. Without going too far into the times preceding his accession, something in order to explain his position must be said, both as to the Frankish nation and the Arnulfing family.

In the north-east of Gaul dwelt, in the latter part of the fifth century after Christ, a confederacy of German tribes called the Salian Franks, occupying the districts known in later days as Flanders, Artois, and Picardy. Farther south was the strong and warlike tribe of the Ripuarian Franks, whose territory stretched along the banks of the Rhine from Mainz to Köln, and along the Moselle from Coblenz to Metz. Salians and Ripuarians recognized a loose tie of kinship between them, but there was no strong feeling of unity even in the subdivision of the two nations. Both Salians and Ripuarians had many petty

battlefield being between the cities of Tours and Poitiers, France. By English historians it is usually called the battle of Tours, while the French call it Poitiers. It was here that Charles Martel checked the tide of the Moorish invasion into Europe.

⁶The Avars were a Tartar tribe, one branch of which settled on the Danube about the year 555. They served in Justinian's army, helped the Lombards to overturn the Gepidæ, conquered Pannonia, subdued Dalmatia, and frequently devastated large tracts of Germany and Italy. They were subdued by Charlemagne and were well nigh destroyed by the Moravians and again by the Magyars. Early in the 9th century they disappeared from history.

kings, and there were frequent civil wars between them.

In this state of things one of these petty kings, Clovis,⁷ the Salian Frank,⁸ began to reign at Tournai in 481, being then fifteen years of age. When he died, in the years 511, after forty-five years of life and thirty of sovereignty, he had made himself sole master of all Frankish men, and had subdued to his dominion three-fourths of France and a great block of territory in south-western Germany. Let us briefly recapitulate these conquests, omitting the wars in which the other Frankish princes, whether Salian or Ripuarian, went down before him. In 486 he overthrew the Roman governor Syagrius, who had set up some sort of independent kingship at Soissons. This conquest gave Clovis the provinces afterwards known as Champagne and Lorraine. In 496 he defeated the Alamanni in a great battle, the ultimate result of which was the annexation of the wide district on the right bank of the Rhine known in the Middle Ages as Swabia, comprising in terms of modern geography Alsace, Baden, Würtemberg, the western part of Bavaria, and the northern part of Switzerland. The well-timed conversion to Christianity, and to the Catholic form of Christianity, which followed this victory facilitated the next great conquest of Clovis. In the year 507 he went forth to war against Alaric, King of the Visigoths, defeated and slew him, and thus added Aquitaine, that large and fertile region which lies between the Loire and the Pyrenees, to his dominions. Four years after this he died, but in the next generation, between 524 and 534, his sons conquered Burgundy, and thus added to their father's kingdom the whole valley of the Rhone from its source to its mouth, except the narrow but rich land of Provence, which was retained by the Ostrogothic kings of Italy for a few years longer, but in 536 this also became Frankish. Contemporaneously with the conquest of Burgundy proceeded the conquest of Thuringia, the fair region in the heart of Germany which still bears that name, and the establishment of the overlordship of the Franks over the nation of the Bavarians, whose country stretched from the Danube across the Alps,

⁷Clovis, like other names of early date, may be variously spelled. The common German form is Chlodwig, from whence comes the German name Ludwig. Clovis is allied to the Latin *Ludovicus*, and from it are derived the French Louis and the English Lewis.

⁸The Salian Franks took their name from the river Sala, now the Yssel. These inhabited the districts of the lower Rhine, Meuse, and Scheldt.

into the valley of the Adige and up to the very gates of Italy. The date of this last addition to the Frankish dominions cannot be precisely ascertained, but may be stated approximately at the year 535.

It will be seen from this brief summary how rapidly the tide of Frankish conquest rose almost to the same high-water mark which it maintained at the time of the birth of Charlemagne. In fifty years from the first appearance of Clovis as a warrior, the Franks have subdued the whole of modern France (except a little strip of Languedoc), the Low Countries, Switzerland, and all Germany as far as the Elbe and the mountains of Bohemia, except Hanover and a part of Westphalia which is occupied by the untamed and still heathen Saxons. Such a monarchy even now would be the greatest power in Europe. In the sixth century, with Spain weakened by the estrangement between Arians and Catholics, with Italy torn by strife between the Empire and its barbarian occupants, with Britain still in utter chaos, nibbled at but not devoured by her Anglo-Saxon invaders, the kingdom of the Franks, when united and at peace within itself, was the strongest power in Europe, with the two doubtful exceptions of the kingdom of the savage Avars and the tottering fabric of the Roman Empire.

But the years in which the Frankish kingdom was thus united and at peace with itself were few. It had been built up by the ferocious energy of one man and his sons; it was hardly in any true sense of the word national, and he and his descendants treated it as an estate rather than as a country, partitioned and repartitioned it in a way which wasted its strength and ruined its chances of attaining to political unity. The comparison may seem a strange one, but in the personal, non-national character of his policy the first Frankish king reminds one of the latest French conqueror; the career of Clovis may be illustrated by that of Napoleon. Both men emphatically "fought for their own hands"; both were more intent on massing great countries under their sway than on really assimilating the possessions which they had already acquired; both in different ways made, or tried to make, the Catholic Church an instrument of their ambition; and both seem to have looked upon Europe, or so much of it as they could acquire, as a big estate to be divided among their children or relations.

There is no need here to dwell upon the perplexing details of the division

of the kingdom of Clovis among his sons and grandsons. We perceive a tendency to regard the north-eastern portion of the realm, especially that conquered from Syagrius,⁹ as the true kernel of the kingdom; and therefore, widely as the dominions of the brothers stretch asunder, their capitals, Metz, Orleans, Soissons, Paris, all lie comparatively near to one another, all probably within the ring-fence of the Syagrian kingdom. But there is also a tendency to fall asunder into four great divisions. Burgundy and Aquitaine, though they do not formally resume their independence, are often seen as separate kingdoms under a Frankish king. But the more important division, the more fateful rivalry separates the two northern kingdoms, which eventually receive the names of Neustria¹⁰ and Austrasia. In Neustria, which contained the regions of Flanders, Normandy, Champagne, and Central France as far as the Loire, there was doubtless a very large Gallo-Roman population, though its numbers may not have so enormously preponderated over those of the Teutonic immigrants as in Aquitaine and Burgundy. The Roman language and some remains of Roman culture survived here in Neustria, and were preparing the ground for the formation of the mediæval kingdom of France. Austrasia, on the other hand, the territory of the Rhine and the Moselle, seems to have remained essentially German. The Latin speech in this country must have been confined to ecclesiastics and a few of the more cultivated courtiers; it can never have been the speech of the people. And though here we must speak rather by conjecture than by proof, it is probable that the old Germanic institutions of the hundred and the *gau*¹¹ survived here in greater vigor than on the alien soil of the Romanized Gaul. It was also through the rulers of Austrasia that the connection, frail and precarious as it often might be, was kept up between the Frankish monarchy and the great, semi-independent

⁹Syagrius, king of the Burgundians and Franks, was the last Roman governor of Gaul. He inherited the city and diocese of Soissons, while "Rheims and Troyes, Beauvais and Amiens, would naturally submit to" him. He was defeated by Clovis in 486.

¹⁰The origin of the word Neustria is uncertain. It was certainly an antonym of Austrasia, which means the eastern kingdom. The opposite of this would be Ouestrasia, or western kingdom; but owing to the similarity of pronunciation the first syllable was changed to its later form which may have been derived from *neuf*, or new.

¹¹The *gau* was a division of the old Germanic state. The word is preserved in such terminations as that of Oberammergau, Glogau, Bardengau, etc.

duchies of the Thuringians, the Alamanni, and the Bavarians.

Thus already in the fissure between the western and eastern portions of the Merovingian kingdom¹² we see the rift, premonitory of that mighty chasm which now separates the great states of France and Germany.

III Early Mapoers of the Palace

THE historical student who visits in thought the nursery of modern European states—the period from 500 to 800 of the Christian era—finds with amused surprise how many of the features familiar to him in their weather-beaten old age he can trace in the faces of those baby kingdoms. Gothic Spain, with its manifold councils, its ecclesiastical intolerance, and its bitter persecutions of the Jews, is the anticipation of the Spain of the Ferdinands and the Philips. Italy, cleft in sunder by the patrimony of St. Peter and with the undying hostility between the pope and the Lombard king, presages the very conflict which is now being waged between the Vatican and the Quirinal. England, notwithstanding all her early elements of confusion and mismanagement, clings desperately to her one great saving institution of the Witan,¹³ and thus travails in birth with the future parliament.

And even so, France under the Merovingian kings is the land of centralized government, which though strong and imposing in theory, repeatedly shows itself weak and insufficient in practice from the incapacity of the governing brain to perform the manifold functions assigned to it by destiny. As far as we can see, Clovis and his immediate successors wielded a power which was practically unlimited. The checks which the German nations from the time of Tacitus downwards had imposed on the authority of their kings had almost entirely disappeared before the overmastering power of the great Salian chief who had united the whole of Gaul under his sway, and who was

¹²The Merovingian kingdom took its name from the grandfather of Clovis: Merwig, or Merowig; the Latin form being *Merovæus*, and the French *Mérovée*.

¹³The Anglo-Saxon word *witan* means wise man. The council called the Witenagemot was the assembly of the king, nobles, and clergy, a precursor of the parliament of later years, but with greater powers than those ever exercised by parliament.

continually reminded by his friends, the Christian bishops, how high had been the throne and how heavy the scepter of the Roman Augustus in that very region. The well-known story of the vase of Soissons illustrates at once the German memories of freedom and the Merovingian mode of establishing a despotism. As a battle comrade the Frankish warrior protests against Clovis receiving an ounce beyond his due share of the spoils. As a battle leader Clovis rebukes his henchman for the dirtiness of his accoutrements, and cleaves his skull to punish him for his independence.

There can be little doubt that it was the influence of Roman and ecclesiastical ideas which tended to exalt the rude chiefs of the Salian tribe into their later position of practically despotic monarchs, surrounded by a crowd of fawning flatterers and servile courtiers. The effect of this exaltation on the royal house itself was disastrous. Merovingian royalty flowered too soon and faded early. Clovis himself was short-lived, dying, as we have seen, at the age of five-and-forty. But two or three generations later the career of the kings, his descendants, was of far more portentous brevity. Nothing is more common than to find a Merovingian king who is a father at fifteen, or even earlier, and who dies (not always by a violent death) under thirty. Let us take a few of the lives of the later kings as an illustration. Dagobert I, who is a sort of patriarch among them, dies at thirty-eight; his son, Clovis II, at twenty-four; of the sons of this latter king, Chlothair III dies at eighteen, Childeric II at twenty. Theodoric III actually lives to the age of thirty-eight, but of his sons one dies at thirteen and another at eighteen. And so on with many other names that might be quoted. It was evidently by their vices that these hapless "do-nothing" kings were hurried to such early graves. Every student of the pages of Gregory of Tours¹⁴ knows the dreary picture of morals and of social life which is there presented: the coarseness of the barbarian without his rough fidelity, the voluptuousness of the Gallo-Roman noble without his culture.

¹⁴Gregory was born in Auvergne, France, about 540, and became bishop of Tours in 573. He wrote a work in ten books entitled *Historia Francorum* ("History of the Franks") which was a history of the Franks from the establishment of Christianity down to about 591. This work is the principal history of the Merovingian dynasty. Gregory was persecuted for exposing the crimes of the Frankish sovereigns Chilperic and Fredegunde. He retired to Rome where he died in 595.

Even as we see at the present day in the contact of two civilizations or of two faiths, notably in the contact of Christianity and Mohammedanism, that the men whose position places them on the borders of the two are apt to display the vices of both and the virtues of neither, so was it with the Frankish nobles and bishops of Gaul in the sixth and seventh centuries, and so emphatically was it with their head, the Frankish king who reigned at Metz or Orleans or Paris. Immersed in his swinish pleasures, with his constitution ruined by his early excesses, what could the sickly youth, the Childebert or Chlothair of the day, do to overtake the mass of business which the administration of the realm, with its highly centralized mechanism, imposed upon him? He could not do it all, and in practice he did nothing, and sank easily, perhaps happily, into the condition of a *roi fainéant* ("do-nothing king"). Dagobert I, who died in 638, is the last Merovingian king who displays some royal energy and strength of purpose. After him for more than a century, a series of pageant kings pass before us, Clovises and Theodorics and Chilperics, whose names history refuses to remember, but whose pitiable condition is represented to us by a few vivid touches from the hand of Einhard, the biographer of Charlemagne. He describes to us how the Merovingian king, seated in his chair of state, received the ambassadors of foreign powers, and repeated, parrot-like, the answers which he had been taught to give; how he travelled through the land in a wagon drawn by a yoke of oxen, with a clownish herdsman for his charioteer, and thus made his appearance when his presence was required at the palace or at the yearly assemblies of the people; but how for the greater part of the year he abode at one small villa in the country, living on its produce, eked out by a scanty grant from his prime minister, and having in truth nothing that he could call his own save his royal title, his long flowing hair, and his pendulous beard, which were the marks of his kingly state.

Doubtless it is not only the constitutional sovereign who is obliged to content himself with only a small share of actual power. The despot also, if he wishes to have any enjoyment of life, must leave much to be done by his ministers, who, whatever show of deference they may yield to his judgment, will practically decide for themselves the great mass of administrative questions that come before them. Thus Louis XIII had his Richelieu; thus the sultan of Turkey has his grand vizier: thus, till our own day, the mikado of Japan

had his shogun, whom European travellers wrote about by his Chinese title of tycoon. The relation of these last regents to the royal dynasty in whose name they ruled for many centuries, while depriving them of every shred of actual power, seems to furnish the closest parallel in all history to the relation of the Frankish *major domus* ("mayor of the palace") to the Merovingian king.

The origin and early stages of the growth of the power of the "mayor of the palace" (our usual English translation of the title *major domus*) form one of the most difficult subjects in Frankish history. Perhaps the greatest difficulty is to understand why it is that no Teutonic name of an office which was certainly not Roman, but Teutonic, should have survived in history. An opinion which has found some powerful supporters is that the office was the same which was called by the Germans *seneschal*, "the oldest servant" in the palace, and that as the last part of this word denoted a servile condition, the more respectful Latin term *major domus* was adopted instead of it. This opinion is, however, as powerfully opposed, and certainly the fact that both *major domus* and *seniscalcus* are found in the same documents as titles of apparently different offices seems to throw a doubt upon its correctness.

But whatever the origin of the name, it is pretty clear that the mayor of the palace was originally but the chief domestic of the king, he to whom it appertained to order the ceremonies of the court, to rule the royal pages, probably to superintend the repairs of the royal dwelling. Hence not only reigning kings but queens dowager, and even princesses, had their *majores domus*, and it even seems probable that one king might have several mayors, each superintending one of his various palaces. This, however, is only true of the early days of the mayoralty. As chief man of business to an imperfectly educated, care-encumbered, pleasure-loving king, the mayor of the palace took one burden after another off the royal shoulders, and at the same time drew one source of power after another into his own hands. Especially, at a pretty early period of his career, he seems to have acquired the supreme control of the royal treasury, superintending the collection of the taxes, administering the royal domains, eventually acquiring the power of granting those *beneficia* or (as they would be called in the language of a later day) those fiefs, by which on the one hand the royal property was so seriously diminished, but on the other hand the friendship of an important nobleman might, at a crisis of the

mayor's fortunes, be so easily secured.

From the first appearance of the *major domus* in Frankish history till the year when the last *major domus* was crowned King of the Franks, thereby absorbing the lower office in the higher, a period of about 170 years intervened, and during that long space of time these anomalous functionaries assume very different shapes and exercise their powers in very different ways. Sometimes, especially in the earlier years of this period, they are the vigorous upholders of the rights of the crown against a turbulent aristocracy, and then the mayor of the palace seems to anticipate Richelieu. Sometimes they appear at the head of the aristocracy and force their way, almost in spite of the king, into the palace from which they take their title, and then they remind us of the Guises and the Condés of a later day. In Neustria and Burgundy no mayor of the palace who arises there succeeds in making his office hereditary. In Austrasia there is a very early tendency towards hereditary succession in the office, and five generations of able men wielding its growing powers become at last in name, as well as in fact, supreme.

It is out of the question to give here any detailed description of the development of the mayoralty of the palace during that space of nearly two centuries, but one or two illustrations drawn from the history of the times may show what manner of men the mayors were, and how they wielded their power.

"In the tenth year of the reign of Theodoric II, King of Burgundy," says the unlettered chronicler who goes by the name of Fredegarius,¹⁵ "at the instigation of Brunehildis, and by order of Theodoric, Protadius is appointed mayor of the palace, a man of great cleverness and energy in all that he undertook, but fierce was his injustice against private persons. Straining too far the rights of the treasury, he strove to fill it and to enrich himself by ingenious attacks on private property. Wherever he found a man of noble descent, all such he strove to humble, that more might be found who could assume the dignity which he had seized. By these and other exactions, the work of a man too clever for his office, he succeeded in making enemies of all the chief men in Burgundy." The

¹⁵Fredegarius, called Scholaſticus, was an obscure Burgundian monk of the 8th century, of whom nothing further is known than that he continued Gregory of Tours' history of the Franks down to the year 641.

chronicler then goes on to describe how Protadius stirred up strife between Theodoric and his brother Theudebert, King of Austrasia, whom he declared to be no true king's son, but son of a gardener by an adulterous intercourse with the queen. The Burgundian army marched forth and encamped at a place called Caratiacum, but there the king was advised by his *leudes* (retainers) to make peace with Theudebert. Protadius, however, exhorted them one by one to join battle. Theudebert was encamped not far off with his army. Then all the army of Theodoric, finding a suitable opportunity, rushed upon Protadius, saying that it was better that one man should die than that the whole army should be sent into danger. Now Protadius was sitting in the tent of King Theodoric playing at draughts with the arch-physician Peter. And when the army had surrounded him on every side, and Theodoric was held back by his *leudes* to prevent his going thither, he sent Uncilenus to announce to the army his word of command that they should desist from their plots against Protadius. Uncilenus straightway bore to the army this message: 'Thus orders our lord Theodoric, that Protadius be slain.' Rushing in, therefore, and entering the king's tent from all sides with drawn swords, they slay Protadius. Covered with confusion, Theodoric made an involuntary peace with his brother Theudebert, and both armies returned to their own homes.

"After the decease of Protadius in the eleventh year of Theodoric, Claudius is appointed to the office of *major domus*. He was a Roman by descent, a prudent man, a pleasant story-teller, energetic in all things, given to patience, abounding in counsel, learned in letters, full of faith, desiring friendship with all men. Taking warning by the example of those who had gone before him, he bore himself gently and patiently in his high office, but this only hindrance had he, that he was burdened with too great fatness of body.

"In the twelfth year of Theodoric, at the instigation of Brunecildis, Uncilenus, who had by his treacherous words brought about the death of Protadius, had one of his feet cut off, was despoiled of his possessions and reduced to poverty. At the instigation of the same queen Vulfos, the patrician who had been consenting to the death of Protadius was killed at the villa of Fauriniacum by order of Theodoric, and Ricomeris, a man of Roman descent, succeeded him in the patriciate."

These events may be taken as a sample of the working of the institution of the *major domus* in Neustria and Burgundy for the greater part of a century. We see a king becoming more and more helpless in the presence of the nobles and clergy whom he and his predecessors have enriched. Theodoric II is not personally a *fainéant* king, but he cannot prevent murder being committed in his name.

We see a *major domus* intent on refilling the royal treasury, and probably not scrupulous as to the means which he employs for that purpose, nor afraid of enriching himself at the same time as his master. We see a grasping and turbulent aristocracy, made up of courtiers and ecclesiastics, who are determined to keep what they have got from the crown, and to whom both the lawful and the lawless acts of the prime minister on behalf of his impoverished master render that minister equally odious. The aristocracy bide their time. When the army is assembled in the field they appeal to the old Teutonic spirit of almost democratic independence, and slay their enemy in defiance of the king's authority. A sleek and supple Gallo-Roman takes the place of the murdered mayor, and in his placid corpulence gives up the struggle, letting things drift as they will. But the vengeance of the palace slumbers not, and in time the aristocratic murderers of the prime minister are themselves cut off by hands as lawless as their own. Such is Merovingian France in the seventh century after Christ.

I have tried to indicate the general character of the *major-domat* ("mayoralty") in the two western kingdoms of Gaul. In Austrasia, though probably the chief functions of the office are the same, its holder seems to look in a different direction, and certainly arrives at a different end. The Neustrian and Burgundian mayors of the palace are generally striving for the rights of the crown against the aristocracy. In Austrasia they are more often found at the head of the aristocracy and opposed to the crown. In the western kingdoms we see indications that the *major domus* was often a man of humble origin, and that this was part of the grievance of the aristocracy against him. In Austrasia he is generally a man who, by his birth and possessions, takes a foremost place in the realm independently of his official rank. Hence, and, from the fact that the office was held in Austrasia by a long succession of able men in the same family, arises the distinction already alluded to, that in Austrasia the

major domat becomes hereditary, and that it never acquired that character in Neustria.

Lastly—and this difference is perhaps related to most of the others which I have named, as cause is related to effect—the western kingdoms seem at this time to have been always looked on as containing the heart and center of the Frankish dominion. Thus when a Frankish king had been ruling in Austrasia with Metz for his capital, if by the death of a father or brother he succeeded to the throne of Neustria, he generally migrated westwards to Paris or Soissons, sometimes sending a son or a younger brother to rule in Austrasia, sometimes seeking to rule it from Paris. Now it is clear that there was a strong and growing feeling in Austrasia (which was already beginning to be stirred by some of the same sentiments as the Germany of today) that it would not be ruled from Neustria (the ancestress of France). A Merovingian king, the descendant of the Salian Clovis, it would endure, but he must rule, not through Neustrian but through Austrasian instruments. This feeling of national German independence was represented and championed by the mayors of the palace of the line of Arnulf and Pippin, and to their history we now turn.

The ancestors of Charlemagne first emerge into the light of history at the time of the downfall of Queen Brunecildis. No student of Frankish history can ever forget the tragic figure of that queen or her life-long duel with her ignoble and treacherous sister-in-law Fredegundis. While Brunecildis was still in early womanhood (576) came reverses: the murder of her husband, imprisonment, a second marriage, separation from the young husband whom she had so strangely chosen, followed by his death at the bidding of Fredegundis. Meanwhile she returned to Austrasia and ruled there for a time, first in the name of a son, then of a grandson. Driven from thence (600) by the turbulent aristocracy whose power she had striven to quell, she escaped to Burgundy, and governed it for thirteen years in the name of her grandson Theodoric. We have just seen her “instigating” the appointment of Protadius as mayor of the palace and the punishment of his murderers. All through these later years of her life, the once fascinating and beautiful woman seems like a lioness at bay. If Mary, Queen of Scots, had escaped from Fotheringay, even so could we imagine her, grown gray and hard and cruel, confronting

John Knox and the Scottish lords. Her grandsons perished early. Theodoric renewed the war with Theudebert, defeated and slew him, but died himself at the Austrasian capital in the year 613. And now were left of the race of Clovis only the four infant sons of Theodoric II and their distant relation, Chlothair of Neustria, son of the hated Fredegundis. War was inevitable. Which would prevail, the old lioness fighting for her cubs or the whelp of Neustria? At this crisis the adhesion of two Austrasian nobles to the party of Chlothair decided the day in his favor. These two Austrasian nobles were Pippin “of Landen” and Arnulf, afterwards Bishop of Metz.

Pippin of Landen (so called)¹⁶ had large possessions in the country between the Meuse and the Moselle, stretching in an easterly direction toward the Rhine, including the forest of the Ardennes, and apparently including also the city of Aquisgranum,¹⁷ which was one day to be the home of Charlemagne. Pippin was born about 585, and was therefore somewhere about thirty years of age when war broke out between Brunichildis and Chlothair. His friend and contemporary, Arnulf, born of a noble and wealthy Frankish family, had received a better education, apparently, than fell to the lot of most of his class, and, on the recommendation of the “sub-king” Gundulf (possibly mayor of the palace), had been taken into the service of Theudebert, who had assigned to him the government of six provinces. He had married a girl of noble family, by whom he had two sons, Chlodulf and Ansigisel. The latter was the ancestor of Charlemagne.

It was, as we are told, by the secret advice of these two men and other nobles of Austrasia that Chlothair invaded the kingdom. However strong might be their disinclination to the rule of a Neustrian King, their determination not to submit again to “the hateful regimen of a woman,” and that woman their old foe Brunichildis, was even stronger. The folly of the old queen, who was at the same time secretly plotting against the life of her Burgundian mayor of the palace, Warnachar, aided their designs. When it came to the decision of

¹⁶It has been shown by Bonnell that neither Pippin of Landen nor Pippin of Heristal was so called by contemporary writers. But for the sake of distinction it seems better to retain these well-known surnames.

¹⁷Ed.’s Note: Known in French as Aix-la-Chapelle, and in English and other Germanic tongues as Aachen.

battle, the soldiers who should have defended the cause of the young king and his great-grandmother turned their backs without striking a blow. Chlothair had only to pursue and to capture the little princes and their ancestress. One of the princes escaped, and was never heard of more; another was spared as being the godson of Chlothair; two were put to death. The aged Brunchildis was, we are told, tortured for three days by the son of her old rival Fredegundis, led through the camp seated on a camel, then tied by her hair, by one foot and one arm, to a most vicious horse, and dashed to pieces by his furious career. Such were the tender mercies of a Merovingian king.

This first appearance of Pippin and Arnulf on the stage of history is not a noble one, yet of actual disloyalty or ingratitude they were probably not guilty, since to Theudebert, the victim of the resentment of Brunchildis, rather than to the family of Theodoric, his vanquisher and murderer, they owed allegiance and gratitude. The subsequent career of the two nobles, however, is more to their credit. In the year after the overthrow of Brunchildis, the see of Metz having fallen vacant, there was a general outcry among the people that none was so fitted to fill it as Arnulf, the *domesticus* and *consiliarius* of the king. There was on his part the usual tearful protestation of unfitness and unwillingness, but the curtain fell on his acceptance of the episcopal dignity. His biographer tells the story of his three-days' fastings, his hair shirt, his boundless hospitality to poor vagrants, to monks, and to other travellers. We perceive, however, that he had not wholly lost his interest in state affairs, for in the year 624 he, with his friend Pippin, the *major domus*, procured the disgrace of a certain nobleman named Chrodoald, who was charged with having abused the king's favor to his own enrichment and the spoliation of the estates of other Austrasians. In the next year, too, when Dagobert I, son of Chlothair, who had been sent to rule over a shorn and diminished Austrasia, met his father near Paris, and had a sharp contention with him over the narrow limits of his kingdom, it was Bishop Arnulf who, at the head of the other bishops and nobles, succeeded in reconciling father and son.

It seems that Arnulf had for years cherished a desire to withdraw from the world, but when he mentioned this project to Dagobert, the young king, who greatly valued his counsels, was so incensed that he swore that he would cut off the heads of his two sons if he dared to leave the court. "My sons' lives,"

said the intrepid prelate, "are in the hands of God. Your own life will not last long if you slay the innocent." On this the passionate young Merovingian drew his sword, and was about to attack Arnulf, who, not heeding the wrath of the king, said, "What are you doing, most miserable of men? Would you repay evil for good? Here am I ready for death in obedience to His commands who gave me life, and who died for me." The nobles besought the king not to give the bishop the crown of martyrdom. The queen appeared upon the scene, and in a few moments she and Dagobert were grovelling at Arnulf's feet, beseeching forgiveness for the king's offence, and declaring that he should go when and whither he would.

So after an episcopate of fifteen years, in 629 Arnulf retired into the recesses of the Vosges mountains, accompanied by one friend, Romaric, once a courtier like himself, who had gone before him into the hermit life, and who, like him, attained to the honors of saintship. The death of Arnulf is generally placed in 640, but we have, in truth, no exact information as to the date. We only know that Romaric survived him, and that the body of the now canonized prelate was brought with great pomp to the city of Metz by order of his successor in the see, and was there interred in the church of the Holy Apostles, which has ever since borne his name.

The *Vita Arnulfi* ("Life of Arnulf"), from which these facts have been taken, appears to have been the work of a contemporary (doubtless a much-admiring contemporary), and we need not therefore here suspect that tendency to flatter Charlemagne by magnifying the greatness of his ancestors which has undoubtedly colored the histories of some of the members of his family. It is certainly an interesting fact that a saint should have been the paternal ancestor, even in the fifth degree, of so great a statesman as Charlemagne. The standard of mediæval saintship in the centuries with which we are dealing was not a high one, but Arnulf's character seems to have been pure and lofty; his retirement from the world was due to a real longing after holiness, and on the whole we may recognize in him a man not unworthy to be the sainted progenitor of the Emperors of the West, even as Archbishop Philaret stands at the head of the proud pedigree of the Russian Romanoffs.

Compared with the life of St. Arnulf, that of his friend and kinsman Pippin is worldly and commonplace. In 622, when Chlothair II sent his son

Dagobert to reign over Austrasia, Pippin received the dignity of mayor of the palace under the young king. By his counsels and those of Arnulf the eastern realm was governed for seven years, and we are told that this was a sort of golden age for Austrasia, in which justice was impartially administered and prosperity prevailed. Possibly these results were not obtained without some sacrifice of Pippin's popularity with his brother nobles. When Dagobert, on his father's death (in 629), removed to Paris, his character, we are told, underwent a change. He fell into vice and dissipation, and lost the respect of his retainers. Pippin apparently tried to mediate between him and them, and shared the usual fate of mediators, earning the hatred of both parties. "The zeal of the Austrasians surged up so vehemently against him that they tried to make him odious in Dagobert's eyes, that he might even be slain, but the love of justice and the fear of God, which he had diligently embraced, freed him from all evils." However, it seems that he, together with other Austrasian nobles, was kept in a sort of honorable captivity in Neustria during the rest of the days of Dagobert (from 630 to 638), and that not till the latter date did he return to Austrasia. Evidently there was already an uneasy feeling on the part of the Frankish ruler dwelling at Paris that these great Austrasian potentates would one day give him or his descendants a sharp struggle for the crown.

For one year after his return Pippin swayed the affairs of the Austrasian palace, acting always in concert with Cunibert, Bishop of Cologne, who had succeeded to the same position of spiritual prime minister which had formerly been held by St. Arnulf. Together they presided over the division of the treasures of the late king, assigning one-third to his widow, Nantildis; one-third to his son, Clovis II, who succeeded him in Neustria; and one-third (which with jealous care was at once conveyed to Metz) to his other son, Sigibert III, who ruled in Austrasia. In 640 Pippin died, greatly regretted, we are told, by all the men of Austrasia, whose hearts he had won by his goodness and love of justice. Possibly during his enforced absence from the realm the Austrasian nobles had learned that the strong hand under which they had chafed was, after all, needed for the welfare of the state.

Some years apparently before the death of Pippin the alliance between the two great Austrasian chiefs had been cemented by a marriage between Adelsigis, son of St. Arnulf, and a daughter of Pippin, who was probably named

Becga. From this marriage sprang the second Pippin, the great-grandfather of Charlemagne.

Adelgisel himself was mayor of the palace for a few years before the return of his father-in-law, but he seems to have been a somewhat insignificant person, and is overshadowed in history by the sanctity of his father and the success of his son.

A much more important figure is his brother-in-law, Grimwald, son of Pippin of Landen, who three years after his father's death succeeded, by a deed of blood perpetrated by one of his adherents, in obtaining the coveted mayoralty. For thirteen years, or thereabouts, he acted as *major domus* to the weak but devout Sigibert III, the first of the absolutely *fainéant* kings. Then, in 656, on the death of Sigibert, Grimwald deemed that the time had come for ending the farce of Merovingian royalty, shaved off the long locks of Dagobert, his dead master's son, sent him, under the escort of the Bishop of Poitiers, to a monastery in Ireland, and proclaimed his own son, to whom he had given the Merovingian name of Childebert, King of the Eastern Franks. He was, however, a century too soon. The glamour which hung round the descendants of the great Clovis had as yet not utterly vanished, neither had the Pippins and the Arnulfs yet done such great deeds as to give them any title to claim the Frankish throne. "The Franks," says the chronicler, "being very indignant hereat, prepared snares for Grimwald, and, taking him prisoner, carried him for condemnation to Clovis II, King of the Franks. In the city of Paris he was confined in a dungeon and bound with torturing chains; and at length, as he was worthy of death for what he had done to his lord, death finished him with mighty torments."

This premature clutch at royalty seems to have damaged for a long time the fortunes of the Austrasian house. In fact, we hear no more of the descendants of Pippin in the male line; it is through the Arnulfings, the posterity of Grimwald's sister, that the fortunes of the family will one day revive.

The thirty-two years that follow (656–688) are perhaps the dreariest in all Frankish history. The kings, as has been said, were little better than idiots; Austrasia was probably a prey to anarchy and dissension; the strong and warlike races on the eastern frontier which had been harnessed to the car of the Frankish monarchy were rapidly breaking their bonds. The Wends,

beyond the Elbe, under a Frankish commercial traveller named Samo (who had made himself their king, and who had twelve wives and thirty-seven children), had inflicted a crushing defeat on Dagobert. Dagobert's son, Sigibert, had been defeated by Radulfus, Duke of the Thuringians, with such a fearful slaughter of the Franks as moved the youthful king to tears. The Alamanni were growing restless, the dukes of the Bavarians were making themselves practically independent. The situation of the Frankish realm in these later years of the seventh century was becoming like the situation of the Mogul Empire when Clive landed in India—an old monarchy founded on force, and long held together by fear, but now fast falling into decomposition and ruin through the utter loss of power in its heart.

It will be hardly necessary to waste another word on the nominal occupants of the Frankish throne. Here, from the pages of the slightly later years *Liber Historiæ Francorum* ("Book of the History of the Franks"), is a picture of the reign of Clovis II, son of Dagobert, who reigned over Neustria and Burgundy from 638 to 656.

"At that time Chlodoveus (Clovis), at the instigation of the devil, broke off an arm of the blessed martyr Dionysius. At that time the kingdom of the Franks fell under many pestilential disasters. But Clovis himself was given up to every kind of filthy conversation, a fornicator and a deceiver of womankind, happy in his gluttony and drunkenness. As to his death history records nothing worth repeating, for many writers speak in condemnatory language concerning his end, but not knowing exactly how his wickedness was terminated, they talk in an uncertain way, one saying one thing and another another."

For the next quarter of a century after the death of Clovis II the canvas is fully filled by the great figure of Ebroin, who was during many years mayor of the palace for Neustria and Burgundy, and during a short time for Austrasia also. Thus the same results, which in the next generation were secured by the ancestor of Charlemagne, seemed for a time to have been obtained by the Neustrian Ebroin. Originally raised to the dignity of mayor of the palace by something like a vote of the Frankish nobles, he used his power, when he felt himself settled in his seat, in a spirit of strenuous hostility to the aristocracy, both spiritual and temporal. That it was absolutely necessary in the inter-

est of the kingdom that some stand should be made against the increasing pretensions of the counts and bishops there can be little doubt, but how far Ebroin acted in the interests of king and kingdom, and how far in those of his own avarice and ambition, it is now hopeless to determine. He was evidently a hard and unscrupulous man, but we have always to remember in reading the vituperative adjectives which are attached to his name that his story is written by ecclesiastics, and that he showed himself their constant opponent. Especially was he brought into collision with the astute and able Leodegarius, Bishop of Autun, who in the year 670, successfully using the name of the puppet king of Austrasia, overthrew Ebroin and his puppet, and sent the fallen *major domus* with tonsured head into retirement at Luxeuil. For three years Bishop Leodegarius ruled as practically, if not nominally, *major domus* of Burgundy; then he too fell into disgrace, became involved in an ignoble squabble with another canonized bishop, Patricius of Clermont, fled from the court, was taken captive and sent to rejoin his former rival in the monastery of Luxeuil. The assassination of Childeric, the Austrasian king (a crime which Leodegarius was afterwards accused of having prompted), led to a turn in the wheel of fortune. Leodegarius and Ebroin escaped from the monastery and succeeded in getting hold of the person of the last surviving son of Clovis II. In his name Ebroin again ruled as *major domus* in Neustria and Burgundy (674) but the alliance between him and his late fellow-prisoner was of short duration. Leodegarius was seized and blinded, and four years afterwards put to death. This Bishop of Autun was evidently a mere politician, like his far more famous successor, Talleyrand. He had less than Talleyrand's luck, and it may perhaps be admitted that, if he were not really privy to the assassination of Childeric, his punishment was somewhat harder than that usually meted out even in those days to politicians who had failed. But it is not without a slight feeling of surprise that we find this turbulent bishop transformed into a saint and martyr, and discover that Leodegarius, Bishop of Autun, is none other than the St. Leger whose name, among all those of mediæval saints, is perhaps the most often heard from the lips of Englishmen.¹⁸

¹⁸It is not the saint, but the horse-race, that is often on the lips of Englishmen. The St. Leger, established in 1776, is an annual race for three-year-olds, run at Doncaster in September. It is second only to the Derby in importance. The race was named in honor of

Restored to power, Ebroin kept his *major-domat* in Neustria and Burgundy for seven years (674–681). The same monastic biographer who pours upon his memory the names “devil,” “viper,” “cruel lion,” and “son of damnation,” confesses at the close of his career that “he had acquired such sublime glory as fell to the lot of no other Frank.” About the year 679 there was civil war between the eastern and western kingdoms, and the leaders of the Austrasian army were Pippin and Martin. The former was the nobleman who is commonly called Pippin of Heristal, the grandson of St. Arnulf and Pippin of Landen; the latter was perhaps a kinsman of the Arnulfing line. Thus after more than twenty years of obscurity the great Austrasian house was once again coming to the front. Not yet, however, did victory shine upon their banners. Ebroin and his puppet king met them in battle near Laon: “An infinite crowd of people there rushed together to the fight; but the Austrasians, being conquered, turned their backs and fled. Ebroin pursued them with most cruel slaughter and laid waste the greater part of that region.” Pippin escaped to Austrasia; Martin sought a refuge in Laon, but was tempted forth by Ebroin, who swore, apparently on the relics of the saints, that his life should be safe if he surrendered. Unfortunately for the suppliant the coffers, which were thought to contain the sacred dust, were really empty, and Ebroin put his outwitted victim to death with all his associates.

At last about the year 681 private vengeance ended the career of the great Neustrian mayor. A certain nobleman named Ermenfrid, whose property Ebroin had confiscated, waited for him at his house door one Sunday morning as he was just setting out for Mass, drew his sword, struck him a mortal blow on the head, and escaped to Pippin in Austrasia. The death of Ebroin meant apparently the ascendancy of the eastern family. After some revolutions which it is not necessary to describe, a certain Berchar, “a man of little stature, of base education, useless in counsel,” was chosen by the misguided nobles of Neustria as mayor of the palace. Against this Berchar and his king, Theodoric III, Pippin of Heristal marched with a mighty host of Austrasians. Battle was joined at a place called Textricium, now Testri, not far from St. Quentin. Berchar and his king fled from the field. The former was slain (“by his flatterers,” says the chronicler), and Pippin became practically lord of the whole Frankish

dominion. This event, as to the details of which we know next to nothing, but which was of immense importance for the future destinies of Europe, happened in 687. About seventy years after their first appearance in history, the Arnulfings have won for themselves that high place which they will now hold in defiance of all foes till they have won a yet higher, the highest in Christendom.

III Pippin of Heristal and Charles Martel

THUS at last was supreme power in the Frankish kingdom concentrated in the hands of that family of statesmen who were to hold it for two centuries. I have been somewhat minute in tracing the history of the Neustrian mayoralty, but in the Austrasian kingdom it seems to have been rather as great nobles than as mayors of the palace that the Arnulfings rose to eminence. When Pippin won the battle of Testri he had no Austrasian king in whose name he could fight, and he seems to have been known simply as *Dux* or *Princeps Francorum*, not as *Major Domus* of Austrasia. From the scanty and imperfect indications of the chroniclers and the biographers of saints, it would seem that before 688 all the eastern portion of the Frankish kingdom was (as I have already said) in a state of disintegration, and that Pippin, if he had been so minded, might have followed the example of the chiefs of the Frisians, Thuringians, and Bavarians, by setting up for himself as a virtually independent duke of Austrasia.

What constitutes the peculiar world historical importance of this Arnulfing is that he was not satisfied with this easy solution of the problem before him, but using his great position in Austrasia as a lever, made himself supreme also in Neustria and Burgundy, and then as *major domus* of a legitimate though utterly effete Merovingian king, compelled the unruly chiefs on the Eastern frontier to return to their old allegiance, and thus became in fact the second founder of the Frankish monarchy. That monarchy seems indeed to us who labor through its barbarous annals about as miserable a political machine as the Aryan notions have ever invented; but, however bad it may have been, it was probably the best that could then be contrived for the united government

of the countries between the Bay of Biscay and the mountains of Bohemia; and for the time it was all important for Europe that these countries should still form part of one state.

For some years Pippin ruled the western realm by means of a royal adherent, Nordbert, to whom however he did not concede the fateful title of mayor. About fourteen years after the battle of Testri we find his son Grimwald recognized as *major domus* for Neustria and probably his eldest son Drogo held the same office in Burgundy. Meanwhile Pippin, returning to his own Austrasian lands, was warring down the German pretenders to independence. The Frisian Ratbod was defeated in a great battle, compelled to cede West Friesland to the Franks, and to acknowledge in fact as well as in name the supremacy of the Merovingian *fainéant*. Though himself a heathen, Ratbod was fain to give his daughter—who was no doubt converted to Christianity—in marriage to Pippin's son Grimwald; and the Anglo-Saxon preacher Willibrord had a clear course given him for his missionary operations among the Frisians. So too the Alamanni and the Bavarians appear to have been brought back into subjection by Pippin, though we hear less of his operations on the Danube than by the mouths of the Rhine.

For twenty-seven years this strong and statesmanlike man ruled with absolute sway the kingdom of the Franks, and then in his old age, by one act of supreme folly, went near to ruining the whole achievement of a lifetime. As it was said of old, "Let no man be called happy," so may we add, "Let no man be called wise, till his death." He had married in early life a lady named Plectrudis, nobly born and with a reputation for prudence and ability, by whom he had two sons, Drogo and Grimwald. Drogo had died in 708, leaving two sons who were now grown up to manhood. Grimwald, who had married, as before said, a Frisian princess, had no son by her, but was the father of an illegitimate son, a little child named Theudwald.

As for Pippin himself, like many other members of his house, though descended from the sainted Arnulf, and generally on very good terms with the Church, he seems to have been guilty of great laxity in his matrimonial relations. Assuredly the Arnulfings did not plunge into those excesses of profligacy which destroyed the vigor of the Merovingian line, yet there was a tendency in many of them to take a polygamous view of marriage, more

suited to an Arabian caliph than to a Christian nobleman. Thus we find that Pippin had another wife named Alphaida, who, though the relationship was an interlude in his married life with Plectrudis, is yet treated by the chroniclers not as a concubine, but as a lawfully wedded wife. To a son born of this marriage Pippin had given the name of Charles. According to an old Saga, when the child was born, the messenger came into the presence of the great mayor of the palace and, dismayed at seeing him sitting with Plectrudis by his side, shouted out "Long live the king. It is a Carl," the old German word for a man. "And a very good name, too," said Pippin. "Let him be called Carl." This Charles, son of Alphaida, was in the year 714 a strong and vigorous man of between twenty and thirty, already married and father of an eight-year-old son.

Now, when the aged Pippin was lying on that which was to prove his death-bed (at the villa of Jovius near Liège), his son Grimwald, a man "pitiful, moderate, and just," who was his universally recognized heir, was on his way to visit him and receive his last commands, when for some unknown reason he was assassinated in a church at Liège by a heathen named Rangar. This was a cruel blow for the dying chieftain, but as far as the future of his house was concerned not an irreparable one. His obvious policy was to declare that Charles, the son of Alphaida, was to be his heir in room of the murdered Grimwald. Instead of this, influenced no doubt by his wife's hatred of her step-son, he committed the inconceivable folly of passing over Charles, and naming, not even one of Drogo's adolescent sons, but the childish Theudwald, son of Grimwald, his heir, and designating him for the mayoralty under the regency of Plectrudis. This was an absolutely preposterous arrangement and one foredoomed to failure. The Merovingian king, *fainéant* of course, but a lad of fifteen years old, was to have a little child of eight thrust upon him as adviser, factotum, supreme prime minister, and the nominal advice of the baby was to be given through the lips of his grandmother, a harsh and domineering old woman. Such a scheme of administering the affairs of a great kingdom crumbled, as it was sure to crumble, at the first contact with actual fact.

"Plectrudis," we are told by the chronicler, "with her grandsons and the king governed all things by her discreet rule." One of the early acts of this

discreet rule was to shut up her step-son Charles in prison. But deliverance for the Arnulfing house came from an unexpected quarter. The nobles of Neustria, indignant, probably, at being calmly transferred to the dominion of a beldame and a child, proclaimed one of their own class, a certain Raginfrid, *major domus* and supported his pretensions with an army. Neustria and Austrasia met in battle at the Cotian Forest, not far from Compiègne, and Neustria won a decided victory, the baby mayor, who had been brought into the field at the head of the Austrasian *leudes* (retainers), being with difficulty carried off by his partisans. Raginfrid pressed on and formed an alliance with old Ratbod, the Frisian, and apparently with the Saxons also. Plectrudis, shut up in Cologne, saw her power slipping from her and the Austrasian state threatened with ruin. The disorganization which everywhere prevailed had at least this advantage, that in the confusion Charles escaped from his prison (715). He gathered round him some of his father's adherents: he fought Raginfrid, his puppet king, and the Frisians: fought them at first unsuccessfully, for they pushed on to Cologne where Plectrudis was fain to purchase peace for herself and her grandsons by the surrender of a large part of the royal hoard. After this she and Theudwald disappear from history. Charles, whose powers of recovery the Neustrians appear to have under-rated, follows them westwards in 716 and wins a great victory over them at Amblève and another next year at Vincy. Raginfrid sees no prospect of defending his puppet king (to whom Charles has set up a rival) except by seeking the help of Eudo, the great duke of Aquitaine, who as a practically independent sovereign, is ruling all the region south of the Loire. Eudo and Raginfrid join forces and advance as far as Soissons (719): then for some unexplained cause Eudo turns back and leaves Raginfrid to face the enemy alone. Charles wins a third great victory, and now Raginfrid's resistance is practically at an end. He submits on certain conditions to Charles, who becomes (in 720) unquestioned *major domus* of all three kingdoms, while Raginfrid subsides eventually into some such position as count of Angers, where he prolongs his resistance till 724.

The Arnulfing hero who out of such a chaos of opposing forces succeeded in evoking that order and stable government which the Frankish state so greatly needed, received, apparently from his contemporaries, the name of Martel or the Hammer. This epithet, which has been sometimes connected with

his great victory¹⁹ over the Saracens, seems to be more truly derived from his exploits in the earlier part of his career, destroying as he did with his smashing blows the petty tyrannies which had grown up in the anarchy that followed the death of his father.

It is worthy of note that Charles, unlike his father, did not delegate his mayoralty in Neustria and Burgundy to any one, even a son, and that he styled himself *major domus* for Austrasia as well as for the other kingdoms, a title which for some reason seems not to have been claimed by his father. It is also noteworthy that he finally got the needed Merovingian *fainéant* into his possession by a compromise with Eudo of Aquitaine who had carried him off from the unfought battlefield of Soissons. There are many indications that both Eudo and Charles felt the necessity of sparing one another's strength and not pushing any dispute between them to extremities, in view of the far more tremendous danger which threatened them and all Christendom from the turbaned followers of the Prophet who were now beginning to swarm over the passes of the Pyrenees.

It was in 711, three years before Pippin's death, that the Visigothic monarchy of Spain fell before the Moslem invader. In 716 the Moors seem to have first entered Gaul in detached squadrons. In 720, the year after the campaign of Soissons, they invaded Gaul in force, took Narbonne, and established themselves in the old Visigothic province of Septimania, from which they were not finally dislodged for nearly forty years. They besieged Toulouse with many great engines of war, and their retreat from this place, compelled by the appearance of Duke Eudo with an army, may be noted as the first sign of ebb in the tide of Moslem conquest in Western Europe.

It was, however, twelve years before the Mussulman's hope of adding Gaul to the empire of the caliph received its death-stroke. In 725 they penetrated as far as Autun, in the very heart of Burgundy, demolished the city, and carried off the treasures of the Church to Spain. The vigilance of Eudo of Aquitaine seems to have relaxed, and he was now no longer, as in 720, the great champion of Gaulish Christendom against the invader. On the contrary he entered into friendly relations with at least one Mussulman warrior, bestowing his daughter Lampegia on Munuza, a Berber chieftain, who seems to have been

¹⁹See p. 129 for description of the battle of Tours.

striving to establish a Moorish kingdom in Spain independent of the caliphs. It was perhaps owing to this new combination that Eudo broke through the treaty which he had made with Charles in 720. There were thus two princes, a Christian and a Moor, Eudo and Munuza, each rebelling against the state to which they nominally owed allegiance. However, neither attempt at independence was destined to succeed: Charles twice crossed the Loire in the year 731, defeated Eudo in battle, apparently near the city of Bourges, and returned home with great booty, having effectually checked the separatist designs of the Aquitanian chief. About the same time apparently, Abderrahman, the legitimate representative of the caliph of Damascus, overthrew the Berber chief Munuza and hunted him into the Pyrenees, where he was overtaken while resting by a fountain. Munuza fell pierced with many wounds, and his bride, Eudo's daughter, was sent to end her days in the caliph's harem.

Thus then were all the side issues disposed of, and the ground was cleared for the great, the real issue between the Mohammedan power reaching from Damascus to the Pyrenees, and the Christian power which was embodied in the Frankish monarchy, but whose central point was now to be found in the home of the great *major domus* by the Rhine. Abderrahman, a brave and capable warrior, the chief who alone had gotten glory out of the great expedition of 720 when he led the beaten host back from Toulouse, prepared a great armament for the conquest of Gaul, and in the spring of 732 started from Pamplona on an expedition as full of meaning for the future history of the human race as was that armament of Xerxes which found its doom at Salamis. The overflowing flood of the Islamites soon spread beyond the limits of Gascony. In Perigord Eudo met them, Eudo now cured of all desire to coalesce with the Mussulman and probably longing to revenge Lampegia's wrongs on her captor, Abderrahman. He was, however, utterly defeated by the banks of the river Vienne and lost the greater part of his army. The Moorish host pushed on towards the Loire; and now, had the Frankish monarchy been in the same condition as seventeen years before, with Neustria and Austrasia divided against one another and the Austrasian *major-domat* put in commission between an old woman and a child, the Moorish invasion must to all appearance have carried everything before it. But when Abderrahman had reached Poitiers and burned the Church of St. Hilary, the tide of his success

was stayed. Eudo, a fugitive and despairing, had sought the help of his late adversary Charles, and the great *major domus* with a host of stout-hearted Austrasians was posted between the rivers Clain and Vienne, blocking the old Roman road from Poitiers to Tours. For seven days the armies stood watching one another, while Abderrahman was probably trying to turn the Frankish position. Then at last, on a certain Saturday in October, finding that only the sword could open up the road, he sent the masses of his turbaned followers against the Frankish position. In vain they dashed against that moveless barrier. "The Northern nations," says the Spanish Chronicler Isidore,²⁰ "stood immovable as a wall, or as if frozen to their places by the rigorous breath of winter, but hewing down the Arabs with their swords. But when the Austrasian people, by the might of their massive limbs, and with iron hands striking straight from the chest their strenuous blows, had laid multitudes of the enemy low, at last they found the king Abderrahman and robbed him of life. Then night parted the combatants, the Franks brandishing their swords on high in scorn of the enemy. Next day, rising at earliest dawn and seeing the innumerable tents of the Arabs all ranged in order before them, the Europeans prepared for fight, deeming that within those tents were the phalanxes of the enemy; but sending forth their scouts they found that the hosts of the Ishmaelites had fled away silently under cover of the night, seeking their own country. Fearing, however, a feigned flight and a sudden return by hidden ways, they circled round and round with amazed caution, and thus the invaders escaped, but the Europeans, after dividing the spoils and the captives in orderly manner among themselves, returned with gladness to their homes."

So, in uncouth and not always intelligible words, does the Spanish ecclesiastic tell the story of that great day, which decided that not the Koran but the Gospel was to be the guide of the conscience of Europe. To Charles Martel and his stalwart Austrasians struggling through that terrible Saturday

²⁰Isidore was born about 560, became bishop of Seville in 600, and died in 636. He was a voluminous writer and his works were highly esteemed during the middle ages. His name is familiarly connected with the Isidorian, or Spanish, Decretals, of which, however, he was not the author.

in October,²¹ it is due that the muezzin is not at noon today calling the faithful to prayer from some high minaret by the Seine. It was said that the Franks on this day slew 375,000 Saracens, losing only 1500 of their own men. The numbers are evidently but a wild and baseless guess, but the strange thing is that they could be thus reported by a sober and cautious historian, and one not of the Frankish nation (Paulus Diaconus²²), writing barely sixty years after the date of the famous victory.

The Moslem invaders were weakened, but not absolutely crushed by this great encounter. They still kept their hold on the sea-coast of Languedoc, the region which having been for three centuries in the possession of the Visigoths was still known as Gothia. In 737 they crossed the Rhone, and forming a league with a certain Maurontus (who was perhaps Duke of Provence), they obtained possession of the strongly fortified city of Avignon. Charles, whose normal occupation was warfare with the Frisians and Saxons, was recalled from the Rhine-lands in order to do battle with the Islamite in the valley of the Rhone. Avignon was recaptured and Charles marched on to Narbonne, the citadel of the Saracen power in Gaul. But though he defeated the Mussulmans in a great battle by the sea-coast, he failed to take Narbonne. Nismes and several other towns in Languedoc were recovered from the misbelievers; their walls were demolished, and the great amphitheatre of Nismes was somehow dismantled so as to prevent its again affording cover to the enemy, but Narbonne was still Islamite at the death of Charles.

In the same year in which this encounter took place died Theodoric IV, the *fainéant* Merovingian who for seventeen years had been the figure-head at the prow of the vessel of the state. Charles did not covet the mere name of royalty, nor was he disposed to imitate the disastrous example of his great-uncle Grimwald; but, as the needful Childeric or Chilperic was not at the time forthcoming, he dispensed with the luxury of a *roi fainéant* ("do-nothing king"), and for the remaining four years of his life reigned alone, mayor of a palace in which no king was to be found.

The career of Charles Martel was now drawing to a close. He was again, in

²¹October 10th, 732.

²²An Italian ecclesiastic who died at Monte Casino about the year 800. He is called the first important historian of the middle ages.

738, recalled from his operations against the Saxons, by tidings of the invasion of Provence by the Saracens in league with the turbulent Maurontus. For that year the danger was averted by the help of the Lombard king Liutprand, the friend and brother-in-law of Charles. Next year Charles himself invaded Provence with a large army, brought the whole of that beautiful land into real instead of nominal subjection to the Frankish state, and broke the power of Maurontus, who, a hunted fugitive, escaped with difficulty over the craggy cliffs of the Riviera, which are now linked together by the great highway of the Cornice.

But this exploit performed, Charles began to sicken. He was still little more than fifty years of age, but his incessant wars, his rapid marches and counter-marches between the German Ocean²³ and the Pyrenees, had worn out his strenuous frame. The hammer would strike no more blows for the welding together of the Frankish state. The piteous appeals of Pope Gregory III, who implored his assistance against the Lombard assailants of Rome, fell on unwilling ears. Charles had something else now to do than to cross the Alps and wage war on his friend and kinsman Liutprand, who had been his helper against the Islamites, and to whom he had sent his son Pippin to be adopted as his *filius per arma* ("son by arms"), a ceremony similar to the bestowal of knighthood in a later day. In 740 the extraordinary fact is recorded, that no warlike expedition was undertaken by the Franks. The great *major domus* seems to have been chiefly occupied in arranging for the partition of his territories—they were now without hesitation called his—among his three sons. On the 22d of October, 741, he died at his villa of Quierzy on the Oise, and was buried in that great abbey of St. Denis, which was to receive the corpses of so many sovereigns of his own and other races.

Though the descendant of the sainted Arnulf, though the champion of Christendom against the Saracens and the strong protector of the "apostles" who, relying on the sharpness of the Frankish battle-axe, went forth to convert the heathen Frisians and Saxons, Charles Martel was looked upon with no favor by the ecclesiastics of his time. By the grants of *fainéant* kings and honorable women, the possessions of the Church in Gaul had grown so enormously as to weaken the resources of the kingdom, and Charles found

²³Ed.'s Note: This is an old name for the North Sea.

himself, or believed himself, compelled to lay his hand upon some of all this accumulated wealth for the defence of Gaul and Christendom. He did it in the most dangerous way for the Church, not by revoking grants or imposing taxes on ecclesiastical property, but by conferring prelacies and abbacies on trusty friends and followers of his own, men who were without any pretensions to the spiritual character, but upon whom he might rely to use the Church's wealth on the right side. Thus, we find already emerging the question which three or four centuries later, in the days of Hildebrand and the Franconian Emperors, took peace from the earth. It is easy to see how such a manner of disposing of ecclesiastical property would rouse the opposition of all that was highest as well as of all that was lowest in the Gaulish Church, of genuine zeal for holiness as well as of mere greed and worldly ambition. Thus it came to pass, that while the rest of the Arnulfing line were venerated as friends and patrons of the Church, Charles Martel fared more hardly at her hands, and the superstition of the times

“Doomed him to the Zealot's ready hell,
Which” pleads the Church's claims “so eloquently well.”

In the next century, a libellous vision was forged by a famous archbishop,²⁴ according to which a prelate saw Charles Martel suffering the torments of hell, and, on asking the cause, was told that it was his allotted penalty for seizing on the domains of the Church. The dreaming prelate, on awaking, went, so it was said, to the abbey of St. Denis and opened Charles's tomb, but found no corpse therein, only a blackened shell, out of which a winged dragon rushed and flew rapidly away.

IV Pippin, King of the Franks

THE unity of the Frankish state, so dearly purchased by the heroic labors of Charles Martel, was as usual placed in jeopardy by the dying ruler's

²⁴“This pastoral letter, addressed to Lewis the Germanic, the grandson of Charlemagne, and most probably composed by the pen of the artful Hincmar, is dated in the year 858, and signed by the bishops of the provinces of Rheims and Rouen.”—Gibbon, chap. lii. note 34.

arrangements for the succession to that which was now openly spoken of as his *principatus* ("princiate").

He left two sons, Carloman and Pippin, by his first wife Hrotrudis, and one, Grifo, by a Bavarian princess named Swanahild, whom he had married after an invasion of her country, and whose sister was the wife of the Lombard king Liutprand.

This was the manner in which Charles Martel divided his dominions among his sons. To the eldest, Carloman, he gave the greater part of Austrasia, Alamannia, and Thuringia; to Pippin, the younger, Neustria, Burgundy and Provence. Apparently both Aquitaine in the south-west, and Bavaria in the south-east were too nearly independent to be thus disposed of by a ruler who, after all, was still in theory only the chief adviser of a Merovingian king, though that king's royalty was for the present in abeyance.

To Grifo, whose turbulent attempts at insurrection aided by his mother Swanahild had troubled the last years of Charles, he assigned a small central state carved out of all the three realms, Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy, at their point of meeting. "As to this third portion," says the chronicler, "which the dying prince had assigned to the young man Grifo, the Franks were sorely displeased that by the advice of a wicked woman they should be cut up and separated from the lawful heirs. Taking counsel together and joining with them the princes Carloman and Pippin, they collected an army for the capture of Grifo, who, hearing of their intent, took to flight, together with his mother Swanahild and all who were willing to follow him, and all shut themselves up in Lugdunum Clavatum (Laon). But Grifo, seeing that he could not possibly escape, surrendered himself to the keeping of his brothers. Carloman, receiving the captive, sent him to be kept in safe custody at the New Castle (Neuf Château in the Ardennes); and they placed Swanahild in the monastery of Cala (Chelles near Paris)."

We shall rapidly pass in review the events which led to the concentration of the whole power of the state in the hands of Pippin alone, but first we must notice that for some unexplained reason, possibly in order to give them a better title to the obedience of Aquitaine and Bavaria, the princely brothers decided to bring the kingless period to an end. In 743 Childeric III was placed on the throne. He was probably about twenty years of age, but the date of his

birth, and even his place in the royal pedigree are doubtful. Of his character, of course, we know nothing. He is but the shadow of a shadow, this last Merovingian king.

Very different from shadows were the two Arnulfing brothers, as they warred with Hunald, Duke of Aquitaine (son of their father's old troubler Eudo), with Odilo, Duke of Bavaria, with the heathen Saxons, with the restless and disloyal Alamanni. Of the two brothers, Pippin seems to have been somewhat the gentler. It was Carloman, the strong and stern warrior, who, infuriated by the faithlessness of the Alamanni, entered their territory, called a muster of their warriors at Cannstadt (near Stuttgart), and then surrounding them by his Franks, disarmed them and slew many of their leaders. The accounts of this assembly at Cannstadt are dark and perplexing, but on comparing them it certainly seems probable that there was great severity on the part of Carloman, probably treachery and possibly widespread slaughter.

Was it remorse for this bloody deed which changed the character and career of Carloman? It is not expressly so said by any of the chroniclers, yet the statement seems a probable inference from their meager notices. For it was in the same year (746) in which the strange transaction with the Alamanni had taken place at Cannstadt that Carloman began to talk to his brother Pippin concerning his desire to relinquish the world and devote himself to the service of Almighty God: "Therefore both the brothers made their preparations, Carloman that he might go to the threshold of the apostles Peter and Paul, and Pippin that his brother might make the journey with all honor and splendid gifts."

Carloman's decision to embrace the monastic life was not an unexampled sacrifice for a ruler in that day. Sixty years before, Ceadwalla, King of the West Saxons, and twenty years before, his royal kinsman Ine had left their palaces and come to live and die as tonsured monks in Rome. Two years before Carloman's abdication, Hunald of Aquitaine, and three years after it, Ratchis the Lombard took the same step. Still, the splendid position which Carloman abandoned, and the lowliness of his demeanor after his abdication, touched and awed the hearts of his contemporaries.

In 747 Carloman formally renounced his share of power, and went with a long train of nobles and with costly presents in his hand to Rome, "to

the threshold of the apostle Peter." There he submitted to the tonsure and received the clerical habit from Pope Zacharias. After a time, by the pope's advice, he withdrew to the mountain solitude of Soraçte, twenty-eight miles from Rome, where he erected a monastery in honor of St. Sylvester. This saint was the Bishop of Rome who, according to an ecclesiastical fable which was just at this time obtaining wide currency, received from the Emperor Constantine the celebrated "Donation" of Rome and the larger part of Italy. The fable also related that Sylvester had previously sought a refuge in Mount Soraçte from the persecution ordained by Constantine while still a Pagan, and had afterwards cured that emperor of leprosy by directing him to a pool on the mountain in which he was to perform a three-fold immersion. It need hardly be said that all this is utterly valueless as history, but as it was in that uncritical age accepted as unquestioned truth, the fact that the enthusiast Carloman sought the solitudes of Soraçte for the place of his retirement and there dedicated his monastery to St. Sylvester is important as showing what was passing in the minds of men, and especially of devout Frankish princes in that age. Later on, he left his mountain home in Soraçte and sought the far-famed monastery of St. Benedict on Monte Cassino. Tradition said that he fled thither by night, with one faithful squire, his companion from infancy, and with no sign of his once high dignity. Knocking at the door of the convent, he desired speech with the abbot, and when that dignitary appeared, threw himself on the ground before him, confessing that he was a murderer and praying to be allowed to expiate his crime by repentance in the monastery. The abbot, seeing that he was a foreigner, asked him of his race and country. "I am a Frank," said Carloman, "and for my crime I have left my native land of Francia. I heed not exile if only I may not fail of the heavenly fatherland." He was received into the cell of the novices with his companion and was subjected to severe discipline, as became a man of barbarous race and unknown name, for the abbot was mindful of the apostolic precept, "Try the spirits whether they are of God." To all these hardships and humiliations Carloman submitted with exemplary patience. It chanced at last that it fell to his lot as a novice to take a week's turn in the kitchen of the convent. He did his work zealously but made many blunders, for which the head cook, heated with wine, rewarded him with a slap on the face. Meekly the princely scullion replied, "Is that how

you ought to serve the brethren? May God pardon you, my brother, and Carloman too." The last words were perhaps uttered under his breath, for he had not yet revealed his name to anyone. A second and a third time this incident was repeated, and on the last occasion the cook's blows were cruel and brutal. His faithful squire could then bear the sight no longer. He snatched up the pestle with which the bread was being pounded for the brethren's soup, and struck the head cook with all his might, saying, "Neither may God spare thee, vile slave, nor may Carloman forgive thee." Then followed uproar, indignation at the foreigner's presumption, arrest, imprisonment. Next day the squire was set in the midst of the assembled monks and asked why he had dared to stretch forth his hand against a serving brother. "Because," he answered, "I was indignant at seeing a slave, the meanest of mankind, not only flout and jeer, but actually strike a man, the best and noblest of all that I have ever met with on the earth." The angry monks demanded who was this man whom he, a foreigner, dared to rank before all others, not even excepting the abbot himself. Thus was the truth forced out of him, since it was the will of God that it should no longer be concealed. "That man is Carloman, formerly ruler of the Franks, who, for the love of Christ hath left his kingdom and the glory of the world: who from such high estate has so humbled himself as to be subject not only to the insults but even to the blows of the vilest of men." Then the monks rose from their seats in terror and prostrated themselves at the feet of Carloman, imploring his forgiveness for aught that they might have done to him in ignorance of his rank. Vainly did he in turn grovel on the earth before them and try to assure them that his comrade had lied and that he was not Carloman. He was recognized by all, held in the highest reverence, and as we shall afterwards see, was selected by the abbot for an important mission.

On the abdication of Carloman, Grifo was liberated by Pippin from his imprisonment which had lasted six years, received by him in his palace with every mark of honor and affection, and invested with several countships and large revenues. This was not enough, however, for Grifo, who probably aspired to an equal share of his father's late dominions. He allied himself with the Saxons and shared their defeat in battle (748); he sought refuge in Bavaria, and for a time made himself duke of that country (749); expelled from thence by Pippin, he betook himself first to Aquitaine and then to the

King of the Lombards, but was met at Maurienne by Count Theodowin, who was guarding the passes of the Alps in the Frankish interest. A skirmish followed, in which many Frankish nobles fell, Grifo himself and Theodowin among them (753). There was no further obstacle raised by any member of the Arnulfing family to the sole domination of Pippin.

Fateful for all the after-history of Europe were the middle years of the eighth century, upon which we have now entered. The time had at last come when Pippin, virtual sovereign of Gaul and Western Germany, could venture to take the step which had proved fatal to his kinsman Grimwald, and to bring names and facts into accord by proclaiming himself King of the Franks. But in taking this step it behoved him to be sure of two things: the consent of the nation and the sanction of the Church. By the advice and with the consent of all the Franks, expressed no doubt by some assembly of the chief men of the nation, two great ecclesiastics, Fulrad, Abbot of St. Denis representing Neustria, and Burchard, Bishop of Würzburg representing Austrasia, were sent to Rome to ask the opinion of the pope on the great problem. It will be well to state their commission in the words of a contemporary chronicler:

“In the year 750 [it should be 751] from the incarnation of our Lord, Pippin sends ambassadors to Rome to Zacharias the Pope to ask concerning the Kings of the Franks who were of the royal race and were called kings, but had no power in the kingdom except only that grants and charters were drawn up in their names, but they had absolutely no royal power; but what the *major domus* of the Franks willed, that they did. But on the [first] day of March in the *Campus Martis*] (“Field of March”) according to ancient custom gifts were offered to those kings by the people, and the king himself sat on the royal throne with the army standing round him and the *major domus* close by, and on that day he gave forth as his orders whatever had been decreed by the Franks, but on every other day thenceforward he sat quietly at home. Pope Zacharias thereupon answered their question according to his apostolic authority, that it seemed better and more expedient to him that *he* should be called and be king who had power in the kingdom rather than he who was falsely called king. Therefore the aforesaid pope commanded the king and people of the Franks that Pippin, who exercised the royal power, should be called king and be placed on the royal seat; which was accordingly done by the

anointing of the holy archbishop Boniface in the city of Soissons. Pippin is called king, and Childeric who falsely bore that title receives the tonsure and is sent into a monastery.”

So at length was the great change accomplished towards which Frankish history had been tending for more than a century. What happened was undoubtedly a revolution, though of a peaceful kind. The papal sanction, the archiepiscopal unction might impress the minds of the multitude; this new Christian consecration might partly compensate for the missing glamour of a descent from gods and heroes which had surrounded the dynasty of the Merovingis; but in strict right, of course, the Bishop of Rome had no title to command the change, no power to absolve the Salian and Ripuarian Franks from their plighted faith to the descendants of Clovis. It was well thought of to put the scene of the consecration of the new dynasty at Soissons, that place so memorable in the history of the older race. It was also important, if the pope himself could not be induced to cross the Alps to perform the ceremony of anointing, to have it performed by Boniface the Apostle of the Germans, and the most conspicuous ecclesiastical figure in Europe.

We may pause for a moment to notice the remarkable share taken by this man and others of our fellow countrymen in bringing about the conversion of large portions of the German nation to Christianity, and indirectly in founding the Teutonic “Holy Roman Empire” of the Middle Ages. Scarcely had the Anglo-Saxon peoples been won over to the Christian Church, when they began with missionary zeal to preach the faith among their still heathen kinsmen on the Continent. The mission of St. Augustine²⁵ to Britain took place in the year 596. In 634 was born the Northumbrian Wilfrid, and in 658 his countryman Willibrord, both of whom labored with zeal and success for the conversion of the heathens of Friesland. A generation later the young Devonian Winifried, born at Crediton, appeared on the banks of the Lower Rhine, to profit by the experience of the aged Willibrord and to catch his falling mantle. Three times he visited Rome to confer with those great popes, the second and the third Gregory, and to receive their orders for the conversion of fresh tribes in Germany, or for the consolidation of spiritual conquests

²⁵St. Augustine, the apostle to England, must not be confounded with the great theologian of the same name who was bishop of Hippo, in Africa.

already achieved. On one of these visits, probably, he received that name of Boniface by which he is best known in history, together with a sort of roving commission as archbishop, and authority to act as legate in the churches of Germany. Armed with this power, he set up bishoprics in Bavaria, revived the dying Christianity of Thuringia, and chastised heretics in Gaul. Wherever the armies of Charles Martel marched, in Friesland, in Saxony, in Hesse, Archbishop Boniface followed, smashing idols, felling sacred oaks, and baptizing half-unwilling converts. Towards the end of his life his roving commission was changed into the more stationary office of Archbishop of Mainz, and he sometimes retired for repose to the great monastery of Fulda which he had founded in the Hessian land near the source of the Weser. But the old war-horse was still stirred by the sound of the trumpet. Three years after his consecration of Pippin, Boniface went forth on a last expedition for the conversion of the Frisians. When he reached Dockum (in the north of the present province of Friesland) he found there, instead of the expected catechumens, a multitude of the heathen, zealous for the honor of their idols which Boniface had so often destroyed, and eager for the spoil of the ecclesiastical invader. From their hands he received the crown of martyrdom for which he longed.

The career of Boniface is of especial importance because of his absolute devotion to the see of Rome. It was observed that the recently converted nations, as is so often the case with new converts, surpassed their older brethren in the fervor of their faith. While the bishops of Gaul were lukewarm, sometimes almost insubordinate, the Anglo-Saxon bishops were the devoted adherents of the papacy. Boniface especially professed the most unbounded reverence for the chair of St. Peter, and took with alacrity an oath of implicit obedience, substantially the same which was exacted from the "suburbicarian" bishops of the sees in the immediate neighborhood of Rome. This was the spirit in which the infant churches were trained, and this no doubt was the tenor of the advice which the zealous Archbishop of Mainz gave to the new King of the Franks on the day of his coronation.

A traveller through the pleasant valleys of Devonshire when he comes to the little town, scarcely more than a village, of Crediton between its two overhanging hills, may reflect with interest that he beholds the birthplace of the man who, more than any other, brought about the entrance of the

German nation into the family of Christian Europe.²⁶

The coronation of Pippin took place probably about November 751. In four months from that time Pope Zacharias died, doubtless without any presentiment of the abiding importance of the event in which by his answer to the Frankish messengers he had borne a part, but which is not even mentioned by his biographer in the *Liber Pontificalis* ("Book of the Popes"). After a short interval, an ecclesiastic of Roman parentage, who figures in the annals of the papacy as Stephen II, was raised to the papal see. His pontificate was short; it lasted but five years, but they were years full of import for the destinies of Europe.

In order to concentrate our attention on the transformation of the Arnulfing mayors of the palace into Frankish kings, I have hitherto said as little as possible about the affairs of Italy, but this silence can be kept no longer, now that a Roman pope is about to cross the Alps and ask for Frankish aid to enable him to smite down his foes.

The Lombards had invaded Italy in the year 568, and for nearly two centuries from that time there had been waged a kind of triangular contest which, to compare great things with small, was like the litigation which might go on in an English parish between an absentee landlord, a big Nonconformist farmer, and a cultured but acquisitive parson.

The Emperor was the great absentee. Though still always spoken of as emperor of Rome, he had been in fact for some centuries an absolutely oriental sovereign. Since the deposition of Romulus Augustulus in 476, no Roman Emperor had touched the soil of Italy save for one brief and most unwelcome visit paid by Constance II in 663. The Imperial dominion in the peninsula was by this time limited to the Venetian islands, two provinces on the Adriatic coast called the Exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis, the city of Hydruntum (Otranto), the province of Bruttii at the very end of the peninsula, Paestum, Naples, and the duchy of Rome, which included the city of Rome, the present province of Latium, and a little bit of Etruria. This scattered and fragmentary dominion, which as will be seen was almost entirely confined to the sea-coast, and embraced only a part of that, was ruled by an imperial lieutenant who

²⁶St. Boniface was born at Crediton. The date of his birth is not known. He died in Friesland, June 5, 755, and was known as "the Apostle of Germany."

bore the title of Exarch, and whose seat of government was the strong, almost impregnable, city of Ravenna.

Far the largest part of Italy, including all the fertile valley of the Po, all the central chain of the Apennines and the valleys leading from them, the greater part of Tuscany and almost the whole of Apulia, was in the possession of the rough and masterful Lombards, who had been fierce savages when they entered Italy, but who had lost most of their savagery and some of their warlike vigor by long residence in the delightful land and by contact with the vestiges of Roman civilization. Arians for the most part, and even with some heathens among them at the time of their first invasion, they had now embraced the Catholic faith, were generous benefactors of the Church, and desired to be considered her dutiful sons. But still the remembrance of their old heresies continued, and whenever the political interests of the king of the Lombards clashed with those of the Pope of Rome—and they did clash as often and as irreconcilably as do those of pope and king at the present day—the old epithets “unspeakable,” “sacrilegious,” “diabolical,” flowed from the pens of the scribes in the papal chancery as freely as they had flowed when the Lombards were yet idolaters.

As for the pope, how to describe in few words his anomalous and fast-changing position? Undoubted Patriarch of the Western Church, he nevertheless had many a struggle with the Patriarch of Constantinople as to his claim to rule the Church Universal. The missionaries whom he had sent forth to convert the Teutonic tribes of England and Germany were, as has been said, zealous asserters of his spiritual pre-eminence, and, like the Jesuits of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the great champions of the rights of Rome. Herein also they were vigorously supported by the monks who had spread widely over all Christian lands, and who at this time were almost without exception followers of the rule of the Italian saint, Benedict. Some of the bishops, however, especially some of the Gaulish bishops, were, as has been said, by no means equally prompt in their obedience to the papal see. The pope's relation to the distant emperor at Constantinople during these centuries of transition is one of the hardest things to describe with accuracy. A subject, and yet in a certain sense a rival, often severely snubbed by the emperor's representative at Rome, almost adored on one or two occasions

when he set foot in Constantinople; elected by the clergy and people of Old Rome, yet for many generations not venturing to assume the title of pope till he received the imperial confirmation from New Rome; a mere ecclesiastic without as yet any pretension to temporal sovereignty, and yet under the stress of circumstances ordering campaigns against the Lombards, installing dukes, and displacing tribunes—such in the time of Gregory the Great²⁷ and for more than a century afterwards had been the anomalous relation of the *beatissimus Papa* (“most blessed Pope”) or *sanctissimus Pontifex* (“most holy Pontiff”), to his *serenissimus Dominus, Christianissimus principum* (“most serene Lord, most Christian of princes”), the man who at Constantinople wore the diadem of Diocletian.²⁸ The relation was strained and difficult, and one would have said that it could not long endure; and yet (as anomalies, especially in the relations of Church and State, are apt to do), it lasted long, for at least six generations of mankind. During this time the popes had certainly often to complain of harsh and overbearing treatment on the part of their imperial masters. One pope was dragged from the altar to a dungeon; another was banished to the Crimea, and died in that remote place of exile; the life

²⁷Gregory I, surnamed the Great, was born about the year 540, and reigned as pope from 590 to his death in 604. He was famous for his zeal in enforcing ecclesiastical discipline and promoting missionary activity, especially in sending Christian missionaries to England. He is also noted for his arrangement of church music into what are still known as “Gregorian modes” or chants. His claim to being the greatest of the sixteen Gregories can be disputed by Gregory VII (Hildebrand) alone. But there is a serious stain on his memory in a letter written to Phocas who had acquired the imperial throne at Constantinople by usurpation and murder. “The joyful applause with which” this successor of the apostles “salutes the fortunes of the assassin, has sullied, with indelible disgrace, the character of the saint.” Apart from this one fault, Gregory was meek, kind, sympathetic, and marvellously efficient. It is the more remarkable that such a man could so fawn upon even an emperor.

²⁸Diocletian became emperor of Rome in the year 284, and shortly after associated Maximian with himself in the imperial government. In the division of the empire, Diocletian received the eastern portion, including Thrace, Egypt, Syria, and Asia—the territory of which Constantinople was afterwards the capital, though he made his capital in Nicomedia. This emperor is infamous from his severe persecution of the Christians 303–305. In the latter year he abdicated, compelling Maximian to do the same, and spent the remainder of his life in the cultivation of his gardens in Dalmatia. To the successors of this man, the popes as head of the Church that had suffered so signally by the cruelty of the imperial persecution, did abject homage.

of another was conspired against by murderers in the pay of the emperor's Italian representative, and these were only the more striking passages in a long history of estrangement and mutual suspicion. Through all, the hold of the pope on the affections of the Roman people was steadily increasing, since he was looked upon as the representative of Roman nationality and Roman orthodoxy against the often schismatical Greek and the always domineering Lombard.

Of late—that is to say, during the greater part of the mayoralty of Charles Martel—the antagonism between pope and emperor had been increased by the dispute about the worship of images. In 726 Leo III, the great Isaurian emperor who had successfully repelled the Saracens from the walls of Constantinople, put forth his edicts for the destruction of the sacred images throughout the empire. These decrees, which roused some of the Greeks to actual insurrection, were met by sullen disobedience on the part of the Italians. The authority of the Exarch of Ravenna was set at naught; the local government was vested in dukes chosen by the enraged image-worshippers; it seemed as though the empire would utterly lose even the vestiges of its dominion in Italy. But at this crisis the pope (Gregory II), though he had been in strong opposition to the emperor, and had sharply denounced his iconoclastic edicts, restrained the Italians from actual revolt and from the election of a counter-emperor, “hoping for the conversion of the sovereign.” It is difficult to say how the matter ended. Apparently the decrees were not enforced in Italy, nor did the movement of insurrection gather head. The exarch still ruled in Ravenna; the pope still considered himself the subject of the eastern emperor; but there was no cordiality between them, and more and more the popes looked across the Alps to the new Austrasian potentate, rather than to the old Augustus by the Bosphorus, for defence, patronage, and endowment.

The question of the pope's position is somewhat complicated by the fact that he was probably the largest landowner in Italy. The “Patrimony of St. Peter,” as it was called, comprised great estates in the Campagna, in Samnium, on the Adriatic coast, besides a considerable portion of Sicily. Any estimate of their extent and value can be only guess-work, but it is conjectured that in the time of Gregory the Great they would, if all massed together, have formed

a district as large as Lancashire,²⁹ and that the yearly revenue derived from them amounted to £420,000. It is to be observed that we are here dealing not with sovereignty but with ownership, and that the wide domains thus actually owned by the bishop of Rome had probably been increased rather than diminished in the century and a half that had elapsed since the death of Gregory.

As to the purposes to which this vast wealth was applied, even a severe critic of the mediæval papacy must admit that they were, in the main, right and noble ones. We have no hint now of that nepotism which was the disgrace of the Roman see in much later ages. None of these early popes, as far as we know, ever "founded a family." The maintenance of the large and brilliant papal household was doubtless a first charge on the revenues of the see. The costly and somewhat ostentatious gifts of plate to St. Peter's Church, which are punctually recorded in the *Liber Pontificalis*, were perhaps a second charge upon them. But after all, a large proportion of these revenues must have gone towards the relief of poverty, sickness, and distress. The pope was now what the emperor had once been, the great relieving officer of Rome; not only in the Eternal City, but all over Italy, at any rate while such a pope as the first Gregory sat in St. Peter's chair, whenever a bishop brought a case of distress under his notice there was a strong probability that he would receive a grant in aid from the papal revenues.

It is needless to point out what enormous power the ownership of such vast estates and the distribution of such princely revenues must have placed in the hands of the elderly ecclesiastic who was acclaimed as pope by the assembled multitude in the basilica of St. Peter. In the year 751 he was not yet a sovereign, but he was that kind of territorial magnate out of whom a sovereign might easily be made.

The curious and difficult relation which had subsisted for so long between the three great powers in Italy was ended in 751, the year of Pippin's coronation, when Aistulf, King of the Lombards, captured the city of Ravenna and terminated the exarch's rule in Italy. Believing evidently that the time had come for the long postponed consolidation of Italy under the Lombard rule, he drew nigh to the city of Rome, and in some way or other threatened

²⁹Lancashire contains 1,887 square miles.

its independence. What he actually did it is difficult to discover from the verbose and passionate declamation of the papal biographer, but it seems clear that his soldiers committed some depredations on the "Patrimony of St. Peter," and it is probable that without laying formal siege to the city he threatened it with war unless the citizens would consent to pay him a poll-tax in acknowledgment of his sovereignty over them.

These depredations, or these schemes of conquest, were not needed to arouse the fierce and passionate hostility of the pope to the all-absorbing Lombard. So long as there had been three great powers in Italy there had been an equilibrium of a certain kind between them. In fact, the pope had more than once invoked the help of the Lombard, "unspeakable" as he called him, against his "most Christian" sovereign in Constantinople, when the latter pressed him too hard. But now the pope and the Lombard king stood face to face with no other rival to their greatness, and each of them probably felt, dimly but certainly, that it would be a duel to the death between them.

It was probably in the year 752, some months after the conquest of Ravenna, and when the hostile intentions of King Aistulf against Rome had been sufficiently indicated, that Pope Stephen II sent a secret message by a pilgrim who had visited Rome, imploring the king of the Franks to give him a formal invitation to his court. In the spring of 753 the envoys of Pippin brought the desired invitation, and a letter, in which there was probably some promise of protection against the Lombards. Just about the same time a messenger, the *silentarius*³⁰ John, arrived from the Emperor Constantine V, desiring the pope to repair to the court of Pavia and solicit King Aistulf to grant the restoration of Ravenna to the empire. The pope had sent more than one urgent message to the emperor imploring his protection, and this futile commission was the only reply. The form of the dispatch showed that the emperor still regarded the pope as his subject, but its substance was certainly some justification to Stephen for that transfer of his allegiance from Constantine to Pippin, which had now begun to present itself to his mind as a possible way of escape from his difficulties. In itself the imperial commission was not unwelcome, since it necessitated a safe conduct from Aistulf for the journey to Pavia.

³⁰Silentary is defined one who is sworn not to divulge the secrets of the state; hence, a privy councillor.

On the 13th of October, 753, Pope Stephen set forth from Rome. Many of the Romans followed him out of the gates, weeping and wailing, and striving in vain to prevent him from undertaking the journey. But, though weak in body, he had a stout heart, and was not to be turned from his purpose. When he reached Pavia he was met by the envoys of Aistulf, who brought him the king's command not to mention the word "restitution" in connection with Ravenna or the exarchate. He answered boldly that no intimidation should procure his silence on that subject. When admitted to the royal presence he exhibited the gifts which he had brought for the king, and, with many tears, implored him to restore the captured cities to the empire. The request was utterly vain; probably even the imperial *silentarius*, who was standing by, hardly expected that it would be anything else. But then came another request of much more serious import. Bishop Chrodegang and Duke Autchar, the high-born and powerful representatives of the king of the Franks, asked, in no obsequious tones, that the pope should be allowed to visit their master. The pope was summoned to the royal presence, and questioned as to his desire to cross the Alps. Several of the officers of the court had been sent to Stephen to warn him that he would incur the severe displeasure of the king if he persisted in his project; but when questioned by Aistulf himself, he boldly answered, "If it be your will to relax my bonds, it is altogether my will to undertake the journey." King Aistulf, we are told, "gnashed his teeth like a lion." He knew too well what danger this journey foreboded to himself and the whole Lombard state, but the request, so made and so supported, was one that he dared not refuse, and he most reluctantly gave his consent. On the 15th of November the pope started from Pavia, and travelled rapidly lest Aistulf should after all seek to detain him. When he reached Aosta he was already in Frankish territory, though on the Italian side of the Alps. The danger which after that point terrified the pope and his long train of trembling ecclesiastics were only the dangers of nature's contriving, the steep cliffs and impending avalanches of the Great St. Bernard³¹; henceforth they were safe from the fear of man. Having arrived at the great monastery of St. Maurice, in the valley of the Rhone, the pope and his followers rested there certain days. That had been the appointed place of meeting with the Frankish king, but apparently

³¹Ed.'s Note: An ancient pass through the western Alps.

the impetuous old pope had reached it before he was expected.

“But the king,” says the papal biographer, “hearing of the pope’s arrival, went with great speed to meet him, together with his wife, his sons, and his chief nobles. For which purpose also he directed his son, named Carolus, to meet that quasi-angelic pope, together with some of his nobles. Then he himself, starting from his palace at Ponticum [Ponthieu], dismounted from his horse, and going three miles to meet him, with great humility prostrated himself before him on the ground, and so, together with his wife, sons, and nobles, received that most holy pope, to whom also he served the office of a groom, running for some distance by his stirrup. Then the aforesaid health-bringing man, with all his train, in a loud voice giving glory and ceaseless praises to Almighty God, marched to the palace, together with the king, with hymns and spiritual songs. This befell on the 6th day of January (754), on the most holy festival of the Epiphany.”

This journey of the pope across the Alps is not only the first of a long and fateful series, but affords us our first glance at that young lad who was then only “the king’s son Carolus,” but who was one day to deal with popes on his own account, and was to be known, the world over, as *Carolus Magnus* (“Charles the Great”). The date, as well as the place of his birth, is uncertain, but it is probable that he was born in 742, the year after his father’s accession to the mayoralty, and was therefore under twelve years of age when he was sent by his father to accompany Pope Stephen II on his journey of not less than 200 miles from St. Maurice in Switzerland, to Ponthieu in Champagne.

At the entry of the pope, the Frankish king had humbled himself before him. On the next day the parts were reversed. “The pope appeared, together with his clerical companions, in the presence of Pippin. Clothed in sackcloth, and with ashes on his head, he cast himself on the ground, and besought the king, by the mercies of Almighty God, and by the merits of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, that he would free himself and the Roman people from the hand of the Lombards, and from slavery to the proud king Aistulf; nor would he arise until King Pippin, together with his sons and the nobles of the Franks, stretched forth their hands and lifted him from the ground as a sign of their future support and a pledge of his liberation.”

There are some indications that the nobles and warriors of the Frankish

court were averse to undertaking the risks and hardships of a transalpine campaign, and it was probably for the sake of winning their concurrence that this scene was enacted. The king, though not perhaps very eager in the cause, was sufficiently bound to the pope by the memory of past favors, and the hope of favors to come, in the shape of papal blessings on his newly-assumed royalty.

The winter months of 754 were passed in embassies between the two kings. Pippin called upon Aistulf to cease from his impious presumption, and to leave unmolested the city of St. Peter and St. Paul. His ambassadors brought back naught but words of pride and obstinacy from the Lombard. War was resolved on, but before it began, Pippin, mindful of the chances of war, and determined to secure the succession in his family, resolved to have another confirmation of his doubtful title from the hands of his venerable guest. Pope Stephen, who had passed the winter at the wealthy convent of St. Denis, "anointed the most pious Prince Pippin King of the Franks and Patrician of the Romans with the oil of holy anointing, according to the custom of the ancients, and at the same time crowned his two sons, who stood next him, in happy succession, namely, Charles and Carloman, with the same honor."

This passage is an important one, and we must pause upon it for a few minutes.

First, as to the rite of anointing. The writers who have most carefully inquired into the matter are clear that this rite, though it had been practised upon the later Visigothic kings of Spain, and upon some of the British kings in Wales, was new to the Frankish monarchy, when performed first by Boniface and then by Stephen on the head of Pippin. It really rested upon Old Testament precedents, such as the anointings of Saul and of David: and it was possibly intended, as already hinted, to replace in some degree the religious sanction which in old heathen days royal families, such as the Merovingians, had possessed in their fabled descent from gods and demi-gods.

Secondly, as to the bestowal on Pippin of the title "Patrician of the Romans." Long ago, before the series of Western emperors came to an end, the word "patrician" had ceased to denote an aristocratic class, and had been used of a single powerful individual, otherwise called "the Father of the Emperor," who in fact bore to the sovereign a relation not unlike that which the Frankish

mayor of the palace bore to the Merovingian king. Thus, in the fifth century, Aetius and Ricimer had successively borne the dignity of patrician, and in the sixth, the Ostrogothic king Theodoric, speaking by the mouth of his minister Cassiodorus, had said, "The great distinction of the patriciate is that it is a rank held for life, like that of the priesthood from which it sprang. The patrician takes precedence of all other dignities save one, the consulship, and that is one which we ourselves sometimes assume." Since then, the imperial lieutenant in Italy had apparently always assumed the title of patrician at Rome, in addition to that of exarch by which he was best known at Ravenna. Now that the exarchs were gone, the sonorous and imposing title might perhaps be said to be nobody's property. If anyone had a right to bestow it, the emperor at Constantinople was the man: but he was far off and unpopular. There was an obvious temptation to the Bishop of Rome to pick the shining bauble out of the dust and present it to his powerful friend on the other side of the Alps. It is not likely that it included any definite functions of government, but it probably carried with it, in a somewhat ill-defined and shadowy form, the right and the duty of defending from external attacks the people and city of Rome.

Thirdly: the pope included in his coronation service the two boyish sons of Pippin, Charles and Carloman, and at the same time (if we may trust a curious memorandum, the *Clausula de Pippino* ("Clause concerning Pippin"), which professes to have been written in 767 and which is now generally considered authentic) the pope "blessed the Queen Bertrada and the nobles of the Frankish nation, and while confirming them in the grace of the Holy Spirit, he bound them under penalty of interdict and excommunication never to presume to elect a king who should come forth from the loins of any other than these persons whom Divine Providence had raised to the throne, and who through the intercession of the holy Apostles had been consecrated and confirmed by the hands of their vicar, the pope." Even so: that which had been done in the case of the last Merovingian was never to be repeated in the case of any Arnulfing, however inefficient. The ruler who four years ago was only king *de facto* must now claim to the uttermost all the rights of a king *de jure* descended from a long line of regal ancestors.

This solemn coronation of Pippin took place, we are told, on the 28th of

July, 754. We naturally ask what had so long delayed the intended expedition into Italy. There had been a dangerous illness of the pope, the result of the hardships of his journey and of the unaccustomed rigors of a Gaulish winter. There had also been more embassies: apparently Pippin would exhaust all the resources of negotiation before he proceeded to war. And lastly there had appeared at the royal villa of Carisiacum an unexpected advocate to plead for the Lombard king. This was none other than Pippin's brother Carloman, lately ruler of Austrasia, and the senior partner in the semi-royal firm, now a tonsured monk, humbly though earnestly advocating the cause of peace. The papal biographer sees in him only a dupe tempted forth from his monastery by the "devilish persuasions of the unspeakable tyrant, Aistulf," and "striving vehemently with all his might to subvert the cause of God's Holy Church." Certainly this intervention of the newly-made monk against the great head and patron of all monks is one of the strangest incidents in his strange career: but it may be permitted us to conjecture that during his seven years' residence in Italy he had acquired somewhat of an Italian heart and had learnt to dread the ravages of

"the armed torrent poured
Down the steep Alps."

Possibly, too, in the silence of his convent he had learned to estimate at their true value the papal claims to wealth and wide dominion, and with prophetic soul foresaw that the armed interference of the Franks in the quarrels of pope and Lombard king would in the end bring good neither to the Church nor to his father's house.

But whatever Carloman's motives might be, his interposition on behalf of Aistulf was firmly, perhaps ungraciously, repelled. He was not allowed to return to Italy, but was confined in a monastery in France, "where after certain days," says the biographer, "at the call of God he migrated from the light of day." He died on the 17th of August, 754. There is no suggestion of foul play, and indeed Pippin's character, as far as we know it, is too noble to warrant any such suggestion. It seems probable that Carloman died broken-hearted at the discovery that he had renounced the honest worldliness of the palace for

the baser and more hypocritical worldliness of the cloister and the cathedral.³²

After this episode of the intervention of Carloman, his sons were shorn and sent to a convent. Grifo also, as we have seen, perished a little before this time. There now remained only Pippin and his sons visibly before the world as representatives of the great Arnulfing house.

At last all negotiations were ended, and in the late summer Pippin with his whole army marched against Aistulf. He had reached S. Jean de Maurienne: the pass of Mont Cenis rose before him, by which he must make his way into Italy. He was still, however, on Frankish ground, for, as the result of the wars between Lombards and Franks two centuries previously, both Mont Cenis and (as has been already said) the Great St. Bernard with their adjacent towns of Susa and Aosta formed part of the Frankish kingdom. The Lombard king had come as far as Susa and had there accumulated great store of warlike machines, "for the nefarious defence of his kingdom against the republic and the Roman Apostolic see." He had, however, neglected the obvious precaution of sending soldiers forward to secure the heights and harass the Frankish army in their passage over the mountain. Thus it came to pass that a small but brave body of men, the advance-guard of Pippin's army, emerged unhindered into the valley of Susa. Thinking to win an easy victory, Aistulf launched the Lombard host upon them. But the Franks, strong in their pious faith in God and St. Peter, and fighting also in a narrow valley, where the superior numbers of the enemy gave them no advantage, bravely repelled the Lombard onset. After Aistulf had seen many of his dukes and counts fall around him he turned to flee, and halted not till with few followers he had reached his capital of Pavia. Now was the path clear before the Frankish king, who without difficulty crossed the mountains, sacked the rich Lombard camp, laid waste the valley of the Po with fire and sword, and appeared with all his host under the walls of Pavia. After some days Aistulf sounded the trumpet for parley, and sought terms of peace. This was granted to him on condition of his paying 30,000 solidi (£18,000) to Pippin and promising to restore to the papacy all the estates which he had torn from the papal patrimony and to live henceforth at peace with the successor

³²Ed.'s Note: Or, of course, that he just died; Hodgkin's swipe at ecclesiastical politics here is unwarranted. Carloman's life in the cloister, and his embassy to his brother, were undoubtedly in good faith, and good repentance for his misdeeds in power.

of St. Peter, who had by this time returned to Rome. Possibly there was also included in the terms of this peace the far more important condition that he should surrender to the pope the Pentapolis and the cities of Ceccano and Narni in the neighborhood of Rome, as well as pay a yearly tribute of 5,000 solidi (£3000) to the Frankish king.

Though hostages had been given and solemn oaths sworn for the performance of these conditions, the Lombard king did not keep, perhaps had never intended to keep them. Narni indeed was handed over to the pope, but apparently none of the other cities or lands which Aistulf had promised to restore; and on New Year's day, 756, he appeared with a large army before the gates of Rome. The men of Tuscany blockaded the gate of St. Peter's; the Beneventans, the gates of St. Paul and St. John Lateran; while Aistulf himself, like another Alaric, appeared before the Salarian gate and called upon the citizens, as they valued their lives, to open the gate and hand over the pontiff to his tender mercies. For nearly two months had the siege lasted when Stephen II contrived, through the agency of the abbot Warnehar, to make audible to Pippin his piteous cries for help. In the last and most urgent of these letters the pope associates St. Peter with himself, represents the Apostle as praying Pippin to hasten his aid, "lest you should allow this city of Rome to perish in which the Lord has appointed that my body should rest, and which He has commended to my protection and made the foundation of the faith." This letter is certainly a very daring rhetorical artifice, but it is probable that it was understood to be that and nothing more, both by the sender and the receiver.

This time the Frankish king required but little persuasion. The flagrant breach of the treaty made with himself, as well as with the pope, was an insult which called for vengeance. In the spring of 756 he put his army in motion, and after a rapid march by way of Chalons and Geneva he was once more under the snows of Mont Cenis. The Lombard soldiers again failed to prevent his passage over the crest of the pass, and when he had descended into the higher valleys where they were stationed, the Franks, who had evidently among them many trained mountaineers (no doubt from the regions now known as Dauphiné, Savoy, and Switzerland) turned the position of the Lombards by mountain tracks which they had left unguarded, and descending upon them with that *furia Francese* ("French fury") of which in a later day Italy was to

have so many and such fatal examples, slew a multitude of the enemy and put the rest to flight. Again was all the upper valley of the Po devastated by the Frankish troops, and again did Pippin pitch his tents on either side of the Ticino under the walls of Pavia. At the sight thereof, Aistulf, abandoning all hope of successful resistance, obtained the mediation of the nobles and bishops in the invading army, and, imploring pardon for his broken promises, submitted to the conditions, hard as they were, imposed by the conqueror. These were, the surrender to Pippin of one third of the royal hoard stored up through many generations at Pavia, the bestowal of large presents on the nobles of the Frankish court, the payment of long arrears of tribute, and, now at length in very deed, the cession of the cities of the exarchate³³ and the Pentapolis.³⁴

But to whom were these cities, wrested as they had been by the Lombards from the representative of the eastern emperor, to be ceded? That was a question which, though it had probably been discussed and decided by the Pope and the king of the Franks, had not received a definite answer in the face of Europe till this summer of 756. It happened that at the very time when Pippin was opening his campaign, there arrived in Rome George and John, Chief Secretary and Captain of the Guard, from the Emperor Constantine V on a mission to the Frankish king. Journeying by sea to Marseilles, and then crossing the Alps, the secretary found Pippin under the walls of Pavia, and entreated him, with much earnestness and with the promise of many gifts from the emperor, to hand over the city of Ravenna and the other cities of the exarchate to the imperial rule. "But not thus," says the papal biographer, "did he avail to bend the strong will of that most Christian and most benign man, so loyal to God and such a lover of St. Peter, King Pippin, to hand over those cities to the imperial dominion; for that devout and most mild-mannered

³³The exarchate was the dominion of the vicegerent of the Byzantine emperor in Italy. Justinian originally conferred the title of exarch upon his commander-in-chief Narses, who reconquered Italy from the Goths and established his seat of government at Ravenna. The extent of the exarchate was gradually diminished by the varying fortunes of wars, until it comprised only a small district about Ravenna.

³⁴The word Pentapolis means "the five cities," and in different countries refers to various celebrated groups. In Italy the group included Rimini, Ancona, Fano, Pesaro, and Sinigaglia, with part of the exarchate of Ravenna.

king declared that never should those cities be alienated from the power of St. Peter, and the rights of the Roman Church and the pontiff of the Apostolic see; affirming with an oath that not to win the favor of any mortal man had he twice addressed himself to the fight, but solely for love of St. Peter and for the pardon of his sins; and vowing too that no amount of money should induce him to take away what he had once given to St. Peter. With this answer he gave the imperial messenger leave to return to his country by another way, and he having failed in his commission returned to Rome.”

This is apparently the critical point from which we must date the pope’s independence of the eastern, or as we ought still to call him, the Roman emperor. Up to this time, whatever divergencies there may have been in doctrine or in policy, the Bishop of Rome has always been in theory the subject of the emperor of Rome. Now he distinctly asserts, by the mouth of his powerful friend from over the Alps, that certain broad domains which have been conquered from the empire shall be handed over not to the emperor but to himself. He shakes himself loose from his old subjection and becomes by the same act a sovereign prince, not only—and this is an important point—in the newly-acquired territory of the exarchate, but also in his old home of the *Ducatus Romae* (“Duchy of Rome”).

The cities now handed over to the see of Rome were twenty-two in number, and stretched along the Adriatic coast from the mouths of the Po to within a few miles of Ancona and inland as far as the Apennines. The plenipotentiary of the Frankish king, Fulrad, Abbot of St. Denis, travelled through the Pentapolis and the exarchate together with Aistulf’s commissioner, entered each city, received its keys, and was introduced to the chief magistrates, who journeyed onward in his train. All these arrived at Rome. The local magistrates were doubtless presented to their new sovereign. The keys of Ravenna and all the other cities were laid on St. Peter’s tomb along with the donation by which King Pippin granted them forever to St. Peter and the pope. This done Abbot Fulrad returned to Paris having accomplished his world-historical mission. Stephen II, 94th Bishop of Rome, was now in fact not only pope but king, and a beginning was made of those “papal states”³⁵ which, with one

³⁵Ed.’s Note: Hodgkin calls these “States of the Church”; we have replaced this with the more common “papal states”.

brief interval, have down to our own day intersected the map of Italy.

I have dwelt at considerable length on Pippin's relations with the papacy, because they are inseparably connected with the most important event in the history of his son. His other achievements, though remarkable, and though they were evidently much nearer to his heart (for his intervention in Italian affairs was done grudgingly and almost against his will), must be dismissed in a few words.

In the first place, in the year 759 a Frankish army besieged Narbonne. A solemn oath was sworn to the Goths, that if they would surrender the city to Pippin they should be allowed to keep their own separate laws, and on this the Goths rose, slew the Saracens who held the city for the caliph of Cordova, and handed it over to the Frankish generals. With this capture ended the Moslem domination in southern Gaul, though it was not the last time that the turbans of the Moors were to be seen north of the Pyrenees.

The conditions upon which the Christian inhabitants of Narbonne consented to help the Frankish host against the Saracens, show how strong was still the spirit of separate Gothic nationality in that part of Gaul. Something of the same spirit, blended with other elements, tended to make all that great region south and west of the Loire, which went by the name of Aquitaine, seek for independence from the Franks whom she still looked upon as strangers and foreigners. We have seen how this spirit of independence was working when Eudo was duke of Aquitaine and Charles Martel *major domus* of Francia, and how it was only the pressure of a terrible danger which caused Eudo to seek the help of Charles before the battle of Poitiers. Eudo was succeeded (735) by his son Hunold, who seven years after, on the death of Charles Martel, strove to throw off the Frankish yoke, but soon found that what the father had won his two sons were well able to maintain. In 744 Hunold, by false oaths, enticed into his power his brother Hatto, who apparently aspired to share his dominion, put out his eyes and thrust him into prison. Then, apparently in penitence for this crime, he, like Carloman, retired into a monastery and was succeeded in his duchy by his son Waifar.

This Waifar, Duke of Aquitaine, is a man of whom we would gladly know more, but of whose deeds no song or saga has preserved the memory. Only a few dry sentences in chronicles, written by the flatterers of his foe, tell us

that for nine years (760–768) King Pippin carried on with him a war which, beginning with complaints about the withholding of the revenues of some Frankish churches, was more and more embittered as time went on, and in the end became nothing less than a struggle for the absolute subjugation of Aquitaine and the destruction of the dynasty of Eudo. In 768 the Frankish king took the mother, sister, and nieces of Waifar prisoners in the town of Saintes. Still the chief fugitive escaped him. In the forests of Perigord, among the mountain-caves of the Dordogne where, ages before, neolithic man had graven the likeness of the reindeer and the bear,³⁶ the grandson of Eudo made his ever-changing hiding-places. At length the warriors of Pippin dividing themselves into four bands ran him to earth somewhere in Saintonge. He was at once put to death, and the dream of an independent Aquitaine vanished.³⁷

While Pippin was laboring over the work, so necessary from his point of view, of the subjugation of Aquitaine, Bavaria, which held a somewhat similar position of semi-independence on the south-east of the kingdom, was escaping from his grasp. The work of the reconquest of this great duchy had to be left to his sons, and I must postpone to a future chapter the story of the changing fortunes of Tassilo, Duke of Bavaria.

It was while tarrying at Saintes and celebrating his triumph over Waifar that Pippin was attacked by his last and fatal sickness. In vain did he visit the shrines of St. Martin at Tours and St. Denis at Paris. The hand of death was upon him, and having convoked all the nobles, dukes, and counts of the Franks, and all the bishops and chief ecclesiastics of the kingdom to an assembly at Paris, he there solemnly, “with the consent of his chiefs,” divided his dominions between his two sons, Charles and Carloman. He then after a few days died (24th September 768) and was buried at St. Denis with great pomp. He had governed the people of the Franks either as *major domus* or as king for twenty-six years, and he had probably reached about the 54th year of

³⁶“One of the most interesting caves is that of Moustier (Perigord).... It has yielded remains of hyena, cave-bear, and mammoth, with flint implements.... From the caves of Périgord and some of those in the Pyrenees have come the most numerous and best finished examples of carved and engraved horns, and bones, and ivory.”—Geikie, *Prehistoric Europe*, p. III.

³⁷Ed.’s Note: Here again we see Hodgkin’s nationalism; the inability to distinguish between a ruler’s desire to rule and a people’s desire to rule themselves, the latter quite unknown in those times, is a consistent mark in this work.

his age. The princes of the Arnulfing line, though not like the debauched and short-lived Merovings, seldom saw the end of their sixth decade of life.

What Pippin did for the foundation of the monarchy which was to be the basis of the new settlement of Europe, was in its way quite as important and even more enduring than that which was done by his more illustrious son, upon whose reign we now enter.

Chapter III From the Birth of Charlemagne

V Fall of the Lombard Monarchy

THE situation of affairs after the death of Pippin seems at first sight almost the exact counterpart of that which existed at the death of Charles Martel. We have again two brothers ruling, one of them a Carloman, and the Frankish dominions are divided between them. There are however some important differences. In the first place the two young princes are now not mere *maiores domus* but acknowledged kings. Moreover, the division of the Frankish territories between the brothers proceeds on a different principle from that adopted in 741. The dividing line then ran north and south: now it is more nearly east and west. Thus Charles, the elder son, again has Austrasia and the North German lands dependent upon it, but probably also the larger part of Neustria; while Burgundy, Provence, and Alamannia (Swabia) fall to the lot of Carloman. Aquitaine, which Pippin looked upon as his own conquest, was probably included in Charles's portion. But the general tendency of this division, even more perhaps than of the division of 741, must have been to give the lands where the memories of Roman civilization were strong and where the Latin tongue was used, to the younger brother, and all the specially Teutonic, Frankish lands, the cradle of the Arnulfing race, to the elder.

Another, and what might have been a more important difference between the two partitions, lay in the relation between the brothers. So long as the

partnership lasted between the elder Carloman and Pippin, they appear to have lived in mutual loyalty and love; but the relation between Charles and the younger Carloman was one of scarcely veiled enmity. Their mother, the good and clever queen Bertrada, did her best to keep the peace between them, but some of Carloman's friends fanned the flame of discord. Dislike might have broken out into actual civil war but for the opportune death of Carloman, which occurred on the 4th of December 771, after a little more than three years of joint sovereignty. This Carloman is a much less strongly marked figure than his uncle and namesake, and in fact, the quarrel with his far more famous brother, and his marriage to a noble Frankish maiden named Gerberga, are almost the only events in his life that history records.

On hearing the tidings of his brother's death, Charles at once proceeded to the villa of Corbonacus near Soissons, which had probably been Carloman's chief residence, and there, with the consent of Archbishop Wiltchar, of Fulrad, Abbot of St. Denis and royal chaplain, and of some of the nobles of Carloman's court, he was solemnly proclaimed king of all the Franks. The claims of the two infant sons of Carloman were thus set aside, it would seem, rather by the influence of the great ecclesiastics of the realm than with the hearty consent of the nobles, some of whom shared the exile of the widowed Gerberga, who with her children crossed the Alps and sought shelter at the court of the king of the Lombards. We may probably discern in this action of Wiltchar and Fulrad somewhat of the same statesman-like spirit which caused the great Anglo-Saxon churchmen to work for the consolidation of the Heptarchy into one kingdom. None knew better than they the evils which a long minority and protracted dissensions between north and south would bring upon the kingdom, and for the safety of the state they were perhaps justified in encouraging Charles to seize the auspicious moment for reuniting the divided realm.

When Charles thus became sole ruler of the Frankish state he was probably a little under thirty years of age. He was a man of commanding presence, more than six feet high, with large and lustrous eyes, a rather long nose, a bright and cheerful countenance, and a fine head of hair, which we may suppose to have been now yellow like that of his Teutonic forefathers, though when his biographer Einhard knew him best it had the beautiful whiteness of age.

Already in the three years of the joint kingship he had had some experience of war. Though his father seemed to have thoroughly subdued Aquitaine, the embers of disaffection were still smouldering there, and on the appearance of a certain Hunold, probably of the family of the well-remembered Eudo, they broke out into a flame (769). Charles, having vainly called on his brother Carloman for aid, marched to Angoulême, where he concentrated his forces. On his appearance the insurrection collapsed, and Hunold had a narrow escape of capture. By his superior knowledge of the country he succeeded in baffling his pursuers and made his way into Gascony. Lupus, duke of that region, was minded to give him shelter, but on receiving a message from Charles that if the fugitive were not surrendered he would march his army into Gascony and not depart thence till he had thoroughly subdued it to his obedience, the Gascon duke lost heart and surrendered Hunold and his wife to their conqueror. We hear nothing more of their fate. Gascony, unlike Aquitaine, kept its duke, and though it must have vaguely recognized the overlordship of Charles, it was probably the least thoroughly subdued and assimilated of all the regions of that which we now call France.

But meanwhile the whole current of events—marriages, deaths, worldly ambition, and ghostly counsel—was sweeping Charles onward to the great exploit of his reign, the conquest of Italy. When we last glanced at Italian affairs we saw Abbot Fulrad, together with the commissioner of the Lombard king Aistulf, gathering up the keys of the cities of the exarchate and bringing them to lay at the feet of Pope Stephen II.¹ That important event, the beginning of the temporal dominion of the pope, occurred in 756, twelve years before the accession of Charles. In the interval many changes had occurred, and several new actors had appeared upon the scene.

In the first place, only a month or two after he had performed the long-delayed surrender of the exarchate, Aistulf died. His death was due to an accident in the hunting-field, but as he had been so often at war with the Church, of course the papal biographer sees in it “a blow from the divine hand.” Desiderius, Duke of Tuscany, now aimed at the Lombard crown; but Ratchis, the long-since dethroned king, emerged from his convent and succeeded in reigning once more for three months as king of the Lombards.

¹See p. 155.

Desiderius, however, sought the intervention of the pope—probably the return of the monk Ratchis to secular life was disapproved of on religious grounds—and by the promise of adding yet more cities to the new papal dominions succeeded in procuring his powerful interference on his behalf. Abbot Fulrad, too, that able *chargé d'affaires* (“agent”) of the Frankish king, exerted himself on the same side, probably threatening his master’s intervention. The result of the negotiations was that the matter was settled, apparently without bloodshed. Ratchis stepped back into his convent, Desiderius surrendered the cities for which the pope had bargained and became king—as it proved the last native king—of the Lombards (March 757). In the following month Pope Stephen II died, and was succeeded by his brother Paul I. The ten years of this prelate’s pontificate seem to have been a time of comparative peace between pope and Lombard king. Then came a stormy interregnum, the invasion of the papal see by an intrusive Tuscan nobleman, his expulsion after thirteen months, and the elevation to the papal chair of the Sicilian, Stephen III. We need not here enter into the history of these obscure revolutions in which two parties, a Lombard and a Frankish, are dimly seen struggling for the mastery. We note only that Stephen III’s elevation (7th August 768) happened but a few months before the death of Pippin. About two years after, we find him addressing an extraordinary letter full of passionate animosity against the Lombards to the two young Frankish kings. He has heard that Desiderius, King of the Lombards, is seeking to persuade one or other of the royal brothers to dismiss his lawfully wedded wife and marry a Lombard princess, his daughter. Perish the thought! To say nothing of the impiety of putting away a wedded wife to marry another woman, what folly, what madness it would be in the kings of so noble and illustrious a nation as the Franks to pollute themselves by marrying a woman of the stinking Lombard race, which is not counted in the number of the nations, and from which it is certain that the brood of lepers has sprung! “Remember and consider that ye have been anointed with holy oil with celestial benediction by the hands of the vicar of St. Peter, and take care that you do not become entangled in such crimes. Remember, too, that you have promised the blessed Peter, his vicar [Pope Stephen II.], and his successors that you would be friends to his friends and enemies to his enemies, as we have promised to you the like and

do firmly continue therein. How, then, can you escape the guilt of perjury if you ally yourselves with that perjured nation of the Lombards, who, forever attacking the Church of God and invading this our province of the Romans, are proved to be our deadliest foes?"

This passionate, almost insolent letter of dissuasion was of no avail. Carloman indeed kept his wedded wife Gerberga, but Charles, some time in the year 770, put away his wife,² a noble Frankish lady, named Himiltruda, and married the daughter of Desiderius, whom his mother Bertrada, a friend of the Lombard alliance, had brought back with her from Italy after a pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles.

The tie of kinship between Frank and Lombard, thus formed, was soon and rudely broken. After a year of wedlock the daughter of Desiderius was back again in her father's court a divorced³ and rejected wife (771). What were the motives of her husband for such insulting treatment of his young queen none of his contemporaries have told us. The monk of St. Gall,⁴ writing a century after the event, tells us that the lady was a delicate invalid, unlikely ever to become a mother, and that for this reason Charles, acting by the advice of his most saintly bishops, put her away as if she were dead. It is a plausible conjecture that the king, remembering the passionate endeavor of the pope to dissuade him from this marriage, may have recognized a divine judgment in its threatened sterility, and may for that reason have decided on ending it.

This harsh termination of an alliance on which Queen Bertrada had set her heart, and which she had been the chief agent in bringing to pass, caused, for the time, an estrangement between mother and son, the only one, we are

²Ed.'s Note: It is not at all clear historically that she was his lawfully wedded wife, though she did bear him a son. More likely she was a "concubine", with whom he maintained an admittedly sinful intimate relationship, but not a wife.

³Ed.'s Note: As above, the word "divorce" is not really fair for what happened here.

⁴The Monk of St. Gall (*Monachus Sangallensis*) is by some supposed to be Notker, surnamed Balbulus (the Stammerer), who lived about 840–912. He was famous as a hymn writer and the inventor of that peculiar kind of hymn called "sequence." The book, whether its author be Notker or a fellow monk, was written about the year 883, and is valuable not only for its anecdotes—some of which are doubtless legendary—but because it gives the popular opinion of Charlemagne that prevailed at the time the book was written, three quarters of a century after the king's death.

told, that ever took place between them.

The repudiation of the Lombard princess of course did not improve the relations between Desiderius and Charles. Still more strained did those relations become when, on the death of Carloman a few months later, his widow, with her infant children and some trusty adherents, crossed the Alps and placed herself under the protection of the Lombard king. Charles, we are told, considered this proceeding on the part of his sister-in-law to be "superfluous," but nevertheless bore it patiently. The year 772 was fully occupied with the first of those great campaigns against the Saxons which will form the subject of a later chapter, and Charles had no time or energy to spare for the complicated affairs of Italy.

But during that year (772) these Italian complications were rapidly increasing. At the end of January came the death of Pope Stephen III, the Sicilian, a weak and ineffectual man, who during all his short pontificate had been pulled this way and that by the two factions, the Lombard and the Frankish, which divided the nobility of Rome. When his insolent letter to Charles failed to divert him from the Lombard alliance, he had thrown himself into the arms of Desiderius, and allowed the Lombard faction, headed by a certain Paulus Afiarta, to work their lawless will in Rome, banishing, blinding, imprisoning, putting to death the chiefs of the opposite party.

Now, however, on the death of the Sicilian, a very different man was raised to the vacant papal chair.

This was Hadrian I, a man of Roman birth, of spotless if somewhat ambitious character, capable of forming and executing large and statesmanlike plans, a man not altogether unworthy in point of intellect to be compared to the great Emperor whose name he bore. His pontificate, one of the longest in the papal annals, lasted very nearly twenty-four years (772-795), so that he narrowly missed "seeing the years of St. Peter," and during this long space of time, common hopes, common dangers, common enterprises drew him and Charles sometimes very close together, and though there were also some sharp disputes between them, the king, we are told, "regarded the pope as his chief friend, and when he received the tidings of his death wept for him as for a much loved son or brother."

As soon as Hadrian assumed the pontifical robe, it was manifest to all men

that the unnatural friendship between pope and Lombard king had come to an end. The prison doors were opened for the anti-Lombard partisans, the civil and military officers who had been driven into exile were recalled. Paulus Afiarta himself was tried and put to death by the Archbishop of Ravenna. Hadrian indeed seems to have exerted himself that the sentence might be commuted to banishment, but there is no doubt that he thoroughly approved of criminal proceedings of some kind being taken against the great unscrupulous Lombard partisan.

The action of Desiderius at this eventful crisis of his nation's history is not easy to understand: it is only possible here to describe its general course without entering into details. He seems to have recognized that he had an enemy in the new pope, and one of a more determined kind than either Paul I or Stephen III, whose demands for a further cession of territory he had been for the last fifteen years successfully evading. Apparently, however, he cherished the hope that by a judicious mixture of threats and entreaties he might draw the pope over to his side and induce him to anoint the infant sons of Carloman as kings of the Franks. For to this desperate act of defiance to Charles was he now impelled both by the memory of his daughter's wrongs and by the conviction that, sooner or later, war must again break out between the Frank and the Lombard. In this frame of mind he dispatched alternately embassies to sue for the pope's friendship and armies to invade his territory. The rapid changes of his attitude probably irritated the pontiff then as much as they perplex the historian today. First Faenza, Ferrara, and Comacchio, the latest acquisitions of the papacy, were occupied; then Ravenna was closely pressed; Urbino and the greater part of the Pentapolis were invaded; Blera and Otriculum, not a day's journey from Rome, were entered by the Lombard troops, who in the former city are said to have perpetrated a cruel massacre of the unresisting inhabitants. But all these violent measures failed to shake the resolution of Hadrian or induce him to consent to an interview with Desiderius. His uniform answer to the Lombard ambassadors was, "First let your master restore the possessions of which he has unjustly despoiled St. Peter; and then, but not till then, will I grant him an interview."

At last, when the Lombard king was evidently preparing to tighten his grip on Rome itself, Pope Hadrian sent a messenger named Peter to beg for

the help of the great king of the Franks. At the same time he did what he could to put the city in a state of defence, gathering in soldiers from Tuscany, Campania, and the Pentapolis, removing the most precious adornments of the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul to safer custody within the walls of the city, and barring up all the doors of St. Peter's so that the Lombard king, without some violent act of sacrilege, should not be able to enter.

At last, in February or March 773, Peter the papal messenger (having travelled by sea to Marseilles, as all the land routes were beset by Lombard soldiers) arrived at Theodo's villa where Charles was holding his court. This is the place which the Neustrian citizens of the French Republic still call Thionville, while the Austrasian subjects of Kaiser Wilhelm, who have wrested it from the Neustrians, speak of it as Diedenhofen. It is now a strong border fortress on the Moselle, sixteen miles north of Metz. Hither, then, came the papal messenger to utter his master's piteous cry for help. Probably the ambassadors of Desiderius appeared there also to deny the charges brought against him, or to declare that whatever he had forcibly taken from the papal see he had already surrendered. Charles resolved on war if war was needful, but, even as his father Pippin had done, he tried diplomacy first. Three messengers, a bishop, an abbot, and a courtier, were sent to Italy to inquire into the rights of the quarrel, and on their return and report that the cities violently taken from St. Peter were not restored, Charles, still treading in his father's footsteps, sent one more embassy to Desiderius, offering the Lombard 14,000 golden solidi (£8000) if he would restore the conquered cities, and fully satisfy all the Papal demands. The offer was refused, and Charles, having summoned the Frankish host to his standard, set forward for Italy.

According to a plan which he frequently adopted, and one reason for which was probably the desire to lessen the difficulties of commissariat, Charles, after mustering his troops at Geneva, divided his host into two parts—one of which under his uncle Bernard was to cross by the Great St. Bernard and to descend upon Aosta, while the other, which he himself commanded, crossing the Mont Cenis, was to take the road to Susa. Both divisions, as in his father's time, traversed the highest points of their respective passes without hindrance, but when Charles descended into the long and narrow valley of the Dora Susa, he found his further progress barred by the fortifications and the army of

Desiderius. He renewed his offers of a money payment in return for the papal cities, he even expressed his willingness to be satisfied with a mere promise to surrender those cities, if three Lombard nobles were handed over to him as hostages; but all was in vain. Strong in the impregnability of his fortifications, Desiderius refused every offer of accommodation, until a sudden panic seized his host, the fortresses were abandoned, and again, as in Pippin's time, all the Lombard army retreated down the valley and shut itself up behind the walls of Pavia.

So sudden and scarce hoped for a termination to what looked like an evenly balanced game was naturally attributed by the papal biographer to a divinely inspired terror; but a Frankish chronicler tells us of a picked squadron of troops which Charles had sent over an unguarded pass, and later local tradition spoke of a certain Lombard minstrel who for a brilliant reward guided the Frankish troops by untrodden ways to the rear of his countrymen's position. We know from other evidence that there were Lombards who were disaffected to Desiderius and had opened negotiations with the Frankish king; but the story of treachery in this case is not well vouched for. It is possible that Bernard's successful transit over the pass which preserves the memory of his namesake saint, may have turned the rear of the Lombard position and compelled Desiderius to seek safety in flight.

The siege of Pavia, which was now formed by Charles, began probably about the end of September 773 and lasted for ten months. The other great focus of Lombard resistance was the city of Verona, where Adelchis, son of Desiderius, commanded the garrison, and where those important guests Gerberga, widow of Carloman, her children, and her trusty counsellor Autchar had taken refuge. Thither Charles proceeded at an early period of the siege of Pavia. The resistance seems to have been slight; perhaps the garrison was half-hearted. Very soon after Charles's arrival, Gerberga and her train came forth from the city and surrendered themselves to his will. The city itself was probably surrendered at the same time, and the young prince Adelchis made his escape to Constantinople. After this point the widow and children of Carloman vanish from the scene. We should certainly have been informed if any of them had been put to death, and we may therefore safely assume that Charles was merciful. There are faint and doubtful traces of one of the sons as

holding the bishopric of Nice.

Charles appears to have spent his Christmas under canvas before the walls of Pavia, or else in one of the numerous expeditions by which he brought the cities on the left bank of the Po into his obedience. But as the siege still dragged on, though there could be little doubt of its final event, when Easter approached, Charles, with a brilliant train of dukes and counts, of bishops and abbots, journeyed through Tuscany to Rome. Never had his father, King Pippin, though he had twice crossed the Alps, visited the Eternal City, and this was Charles's first visit to that Rome with which his name was to be inseparably linked in after ages. He went by forced marches, hastening to be in Rome on the eve of Easter Sunday. At thirty miles from the city, Pope Hadrian ordered that he should be met by the nobles of the *Ducatus Romae*, displaying the banner of St. Peter. At one mile from the city the various squadrons of the Roman militia with their officers and the boys out of the schools met him, all bearing palm-branches and olive-branches and crosses, and singing loud his praises, for Hadrian had ordered that in all things the reception of the king of the Franks should do him as great honor as ever had been done of old to the patrician and exarch arriving from Ravenna. When Charles saw the crosses and the banners, he dismounted from his horse and went on foot with all his nobles to the church of St. Peter. There on the top of the steps stood Pope Hadrian with all the clergy and people of Rome, who had arisen at dawn to be ready to welcome the victorious king. As he ascended each step, Charles knelt down and kissed the venerable stones; and so he reached the summit where, in the long *atrium* outside the doors of the church, the pope stood waiting to receive him. King and pontiff were clasped in mutual embrace (we hear nothing of the abject prostrations performed by later emperors before later popes), and then, holding Hadrian's right hand, Charles entered the great basilica, while all the clergy and all the monks shouted with loud voices, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Then the king and all the Frankish nobles and churchmen in his train knelt at the tomb of St. Peter, thanking God for the great victories already wrought through the intervention of the Prince of the Apostles. On the three following days, at Sta. Maria Maggiore, at St. Peter's and St. Paul's, the king, after humbly imploring the papal permission, offered up his prayers to God, and on Easter Sunday

there was a great banquet at the Lateran. Thus we come to the Wednesday on which an important piece of business was transacted between the two potentates. So much here turns on a few words that it will be well to give a literal translation of the passage in the *Liber Pontificalis* (our only authority), which describes this memorable interview.

“On the fourth day of the week, the pope, with his staff of officers, both civil and ecclesiastical, went forth to the church of St. Peter, and there meeting the king in conference, earnestly prayed him, and with paternal affection exhorted him, to fulfil in its entirety that promise which his father, the late King Pippin of blessed memory, had made, and which he himself with his brother Carloman and all the nobles of France had confirmed to St. Peter and his vicar Pope Stephen II, when he visited Frankland, that they would grant divers cities and territories in that province of Italy to St. Peter and his vicars for a perpetual possession. And when he (Charles) had caused that promise which was made in Frankland in a place called Carisiacum to be read over to him, all its contents were approved by himself and his nobles. And of his own accord, with good and willing mind, that most excellent and most Christian King Charles caused another promise of gift like the first to be drawn up by Etherius, his chaplain and notary, and in this he granted the same cities and territories to St. Peter and promised that they should be conveyed to the pope with their boundaries set forth as is contained in the aforesaid donation, to wit: From Luna with the island of Corsica, thence to Surianum, thence to Mons Bardonis (that is Vercetum), thence to Parma, thence to Rhegium, and from thence to Mantua and Mons Silicis, and moreover the whole exarchate of Ravenna such as it was of old time, and the provinces of Venetia and Istria: moreover the whole duchies of Spoletium and Beneventum.”

The papal biographer then goes on to describe the signing of this donation by Charles himself with all his bishops, abbots, dukes, and counts, its being laid upon the altar of St. Peter, and afterwards placed within his tomb, and the “terrible oath” which was sworn by all the signers, promising to St. Peter and Pope Hadrian that they would keep all the promises contained in the document.

Let us look at the extent of the territories which, according to the papal biographer, were thus conveyed to the Roman Pontiff. The island of Corsica:

that is clear, though introduced in a curious connection. Then the line starts from the coast of Italy, just at the point where the Genoese and Tuscan territory join: it crosses the Apennines and strikes the Po a little north of Parma. From Mantua it works round to the head of the Adriatic and includes the peninsula of Istria. The exarchate of Ravenna, "as it was of old time," reached inland to the Apennines and probably is here to be taken as including the Pentapolis. The extent of the two great Lombard duchies of Spoleto and Benevento is perfectly well known; they included the whole of Italy south of Ancona except the duchy of Rome, a little territory round Naples and the district which is now called Calabria in the extreme south, the toe of Italy.

Instead, therefore, of asking what this donation included, it is more to the purpose to inquire what it excluded. As the duchy of Rome is apparently treated as already an undoubted part of the papal dominions, we may say, using modern geographical terms, that if this donation had ever been carried into effect the popes would have become sovereigns of the whole of Italy except the Riviera, Piedmont, part of Lombardy north of the Po, the city of Naples, and Calabria.

It is almost impossible to believe that Charles, even in the fervor caused by his first visit to Rome, his meeting with St. Peter's vicar, and his prayers in the great Roman basilicas, can have meant to convey such vast territories as these to an ecclesiastic, however eminent, whose pretensions to rank as a civil ruler of any territory, however small, were only twenty years old. It is absolutely impossible to believe that his father can (as is here implied) have promised to endow the pope with territories such as those of Venetia and Istria, which were in no sense Lombard, and were still in close connection with the Eastern Empire. The whole subsequent course of history shows that Charles, with all his lavish generosity to the Holy See, never seriously contemplated making its occupant the virtual lord of Italy.

What solution of the enigma is possible? The idea of an absolute fabrication of the document naturally occurs to the mind, especially to the mind of a student who is constantly confronted with charters forged in the interests of some church or monastery. This is the view taken by many modern inquirers, amongst others by Malfatti (the careful author of "*Imperatori e Papi*"—"Emperors and Popes"), who inclines to assign the fabrication of the

document to the ninth century, "famous for so many other fictions of that kind."

On the other hand, Abbé Duchesne, the learned and impartial editor of the *Liber Pontificalis*, declares that he looks upon this passage as the work of an absolutely contemporary author, and that he cannot accept the theory of a later fabrication. At the same time he fully admits that this vast cession of territory to the pope never took practical effect, and he suggests that somewhere about 781 the pope, finding that there was no chance of realizing the splendid dream of sovereignty over the whole of Italy in which he had indulged at the interview of 774, liberated Charles from the promises then made, in consideration of some important addition to the duchy of Rome over which his rule was undisputed. In point of fact we find at that time the pope unable to maintain himself even in the territory of the exarchate, which was wrested from him by the ambitious Archbishop of Ravenna. Prudence may therefore have suggested to him the expediency of concentrating his attention on the duchy of Rome, and at least strengthening the frontiers of that possession.

Another theory for which some good arguments may be adduced is that in this promised gift we are still dealing not with a grant of sovereignty but with a restitution of property; that, for instance, when Spoleto and Benevento are mentioned, all that Charles undertook, or at least meant to undertake, was that any "patrimonies" in either of those duchies of which the see of St. Peter had been unjustly despoiled by the Lombards should be restored to it.

It is not for the present author to pretend to decide a question on which so many able scholars are at issue, and to which so many special treatises have been devoted; but the impression produced on his mind is that at least the hand of the interpolator, if not that of the wholesale fabricator, must have been at work in the passage which he has quoted from the *Liber Pontificalis*.

Having finished his conferences with the Pope, in which he discussed with him many matters ecclesiastical as well as civil, Charles returned to his camp under the walls of Pavia. It was now the tenth month of the siege; disease and probably famine were pressing the defenders hard, and Desiderius, who had never been a popular sovereign, heard on every side of the defection of his countrymen. At length, on a certain Tuesday in June (774) the city opened her gates to her conqueror. The great hoard was handed over, the nobles and

chief men from all the cities of northern Italy came to Charles, seated in the royal palace of Pavia, and acknowledged him as their lord: the dominion of the Lombards in Italy was at an end.⁵

To Desiderius and his family, Charles showed himself merciful in his triumph. The fallen king was carried across the Alps, accompanied by his wife and one daughter (whether this was the divorced⁶ wife of Charles we know not), and was invited to enter the seclusion of a monastery in Austrasia, where, if any faith is to be placed in the stories that were current a century or two after his death, he devoted himself with assiduity to the duties of the cloister, and even declared that he would not desire to resume his crown, having entered the service of the King of Kings.

Very soon after the capture of Pavia, Charles was back again on the Rhine, as the affairs of North Germany required his immediate attention. It was perhaps in part from the scantiness of his leisure, but it was surely in part also from his statesman-like insight into the conditions of the problem before him, that he made so little change in the internal constitution of his new kingdom. There was no attempt to amalgamate the regions north and south of the Alps: Italy did not become a part of "Francia," but Charles took his place as successor of the long line of kings from Alboin to Desiderius who had reigned over Lombard Italy. "*Rex Francorum et Langobardorum atque Patricius Romanorum*" ("King of the Franks and Lombards, and Patrician of the Romans"): that was now his full title. As king of the Franks he ruled the wide regions north of the Alps: as king of the Lombards he ruled all of Italy that the Lombards had once held: as patrician of the Romans he seems to have been recognized as supreme ruler of all the rest of Italy except the little fragments on the coast which still held by their allegiance to the eastern emperor.

⁵"Charlemagne swept down like a whirlwind from the Alps at the call of Pope Hadrian, seized the King Desidarius in his capital, himself assumed the Lombard crown, and made northern Italy thenceforward an integral part of the Frankish empire. Proceeding to Rome at the head of his victorious army, the first of a long line of Teutonic kings who were to find her love more deadly than her hate, he was received by Hadrian with distinguished honors, and welcomed by the people as their leader and deliverer."—Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*, chap. iv.

⁶Ed.'s Note: Again, "divorced" is not likely here; "annulled" is.

What, then, during the years of transition between 774 and 800, were his relations to that eastern emperor? Some answer to this question will be given in a subsequent chapter. And what were his relations to the pope, in those territories in which his or his father's donation had taken effect? A question almost impossible to answer. Never was there a more striking case of that phenomenon of the Middle Ages to which M. Guizot has drawn attention: the co-existence of two opposing theories of law without any apparent perception of their discord in the minds of the men who had to carry them into practice. But though both Charles and the pope are spoken of as sovereigns in these territories, it appears probable—we cannot say more—that Hadrian, had he been closely questioned on the subject, would have recognized that even in the duchy of Rome he was, in a manner difficult to define, subject to the overlordship of the Frankish king.

As has been said, the conduct of Charles in reference to the kingdom of Italy, if that of an ambitious man, was on the whole wise and statesmanlike. This praise can hardly be given to his relations to the papacy, in which there was a want of that clear and frank statement of what was granted and what was withheld, which is the only means of avoiding future misunderstandings between the giver and the receiver of a benefit. And the consequences of this omission weighed heavily on Europe for centuries, and often involved two really upright and honest men, a pope and an emperor, in hopeless quarrels.

If we may recur to the simile of a country parish which was used in a foregoing chapter, the old absentee squire and the big Nonconformist farmer have both vanished from the scene. In their stead we have a new squire, young, enthusiastic, and devoted to the Church, who, as all the rustics see, is “hand and glove with the parson.” But he has other large estates in a distant county which claim the greater portion of his time; and, partly in his haste to return to them, partly in the effusion of his ecclesiastical zeal, he makes or is understood to make to his clerical friend such promises of subscriptions, endowments, rebuildings, and upholdings as he finds in after days of calmer calculation would practically exhaust his whole rent-roll.

VJ The Conversion of the Saxons

THE year 772, which opened upon a reunited Frankish kingdom (Carloman having died at the close of the year preceding), and which was a blank as far as Frankish operations in Italy were concerned, was memorable as witnessing the beginning of that long struggle with Saxon independence and Saxon heathenism which was to occupy thirty-two central years in the life of Charles the Great.

Whether he entered upon this struggle with a light heart it is impossible for us to say. Many a time he thought it was ended, but found that he had only bent, not broken, the stubborn spirit of his foes, and assuredly it was with no light heart that he found himself, when past middle life and entering on his sixth decade, still obliged to resume his Sisyphean labor.⁷

The different tribes which made up the loosely bound confederation of the Saxons occupied those territories reaching to the Elbe on the east, and nearly to the Rhine on the west, which now bear the names of Hanover, Brunswick, Oldenburgh and Westphalia. This block of territory was divided in nearly equal parts between the three tribes of the Westphalians, the Angarians, and the Eastphalians, the first and the last, as we should expect from their names, occupying the western and eastern and the Angarians (or Engern) the central portion. Then, beyond the Elbe, between the German Ocean and the Baltic was seated a fourth section of the Saxon people who bore the name of the Nord-albingians, and whose territory must have pretty nearly corresponded with the modern duchy of Holstein.

Thus the Saxons had no connection with the present kingdom of Saxony, though part of Prussian Saxony was probably within their borders. As Professor Freeman says in his *Historical Geography of Europe* (p. 207), "After the breaking up of the great Saxon duchy (1191), from most of the old Saxon lands the Saxon name may be looked on as having altogether passed away. The name of Saxony as a geographical expression clave to the Eastphalian remnant

⁷According to ancient Greek mythology, Sisyphus was, for his great wickedness, condemned in Hades to roll a great stone from the bottom to the top of a hill; but before he reached the top, the stone broke away and rolled down again, so that his task had to be begun anew, and thus it resulted in endless and tantalizing monotony.

of the old duchy, and to Thuringia and the Slavonic conquests to the East.” One might add that, by a curious coincidence, Hanover, the home of the old continental Saxons, was for 123 years (1714–1837) ruled by descendants of Alfred the Great, who were kings of the Saxons over the sea.

These Saxon neighbors of the Franks are not to be thought of as mere savages. They had probably to some extent exchanged the nomad life of the shepherd for the more settled habits of the tiller of the ground. The old Germanic institution of the *Folksthing*, as described by Tacitus, still apparently flourished among them. They had already been brought into a sort of loose connection with the Frankish kingdom, having at intervals paid a yearly tribute of 500 cows to a Merovingian king and an Arnulfing mayor of the palace. There does not seem any reason to suppose that at the time of the accession of Charles they nourished any thought of deadly enmity to their Frankish neighbors, or would have dreamed of uniting their tribes in a well-organized invasion of the prosperous Rhine-lands—in fact, throughout the struggle which followed, the inability of the Saxons to combine for the mere purpose of defence against impending invasion is conspicuous and absurd. But no doubt they were lawless and disagreeable neighbors, often indulging in such raids as for centuries kept the Scottish border in turmoil, and above all the majority of them were still heathens. The missionaries who, like Boniface, had crossed the sea from England to convert their German kinsfolk had hitherto labored chiefly among the Frisians, but had also made some impression on the mass of Saxon heathenism. From the fierce wars which Penda, the heathen king of Mercia, waged with Christian Northumberland, we can imagine what suspicious rage the success of these English missionaries would arouse in the minds of the still heathen chiefs of the East and Westphalians.

But, after all, it is probable that on the religious as well as on the political question the attack came from the Frankish side. It was not so much because the Saxons resented the presence of Christian missionaries among them, as because Charles resented the fact of the Saxons continuing in heathenism, that the ‘Thirty Years’ War of the eighth century was resolved on. Throughout his kingly and imperial career, Charles took the religious part of his duties seriously. It was not for nothing that he bore the title of *Christianissimus Rex* (“Most Christian King”), not for nothing that St. Augustine’s famous

treatise *De Civitate Dei*⁸ was the favorite companion of his leisure. In his interviews with Pope Hadrian at Rome, the reform of the Church's discipline was apparently the chief subject of conversation; and in the thirty-three ecclesiastical councils which were held during his reign he zealously cooperated with the churchmen towards the same end. To such a ruler it was intolerable that tribes which were connected, however loosely, with his kingdom should still profess a belief in the absurdities of heathenism. They must be persuaded, or, if persuasion failed, they must be forced, to become Christians.⁹

At an assembly of the Frankish nation held at Worms (July? 772) Charles announced his purpose of carrying war into the country of the Saxons, and in the early summer he marched with a large army, accompanied by a multitude of bishops, abbots, and presbyters, into the territory of the Angarii, the central tribe. The frontier fortress of Eresburg was taken, and the invaders pressed on to the place where, in the midst of a sacred grove, stood the celebrated Irminsul, a column fashioned to imitate the great world-sustaining ash Yggdrasil, which

⁸Augustine—the theologian and bishop of Hippo—completed in the year 426 his book *De Civitate Dei* (The City of God), which is regarded the greatest monument of his genius and learning. The chief aim of this book is to vindicate the claims of the Christian Church against those who asserted that such calamities as the capture of Rome by Alaric resulted from the new religion. On the contrary Augustine conceives of the Church as a “new order rising on the ruins of the old Roman empire:” a claim that might easily be used to defend the transference of despotic authority from the empire to the Church.

⁹The conflict with the Saxons at Eresburg was precipitated by the ill-timed zeal of an Anglo-Saxon missionary named Lebuinus, who forced his way into their sacred assembly. “Arrayed in gorgeous robes and carrying a cross in his hand, the zealous missionary passed through the throng to an open enclosure, peculiarly sacred to the worshippers. The Saxons resented this intrusion as sacrilegious, but suppressed their indignation and for awhile listened to him.” He delivered a fiery and threatening address which so roused their wrath that they came near killing him. More moderate councils prevailed, and the missionary was allowed to depart, but the church that Lebuinus had built for the salvation of these heathen, but which they could not be persuaded to use for Christian worship, was burned to the ground. This act of sacrilege was readily used to work on the feelings of Charlemagne. “Idolatry must perish,” and Charlemagne was not reluctant to be the instrument of its punishment. In any view of the subject, however, it must be conceded that, human nature being what it is, the conflict between the two peoples, the Christian Franks and the heathen Saxons, was irrepressible, and one or the other was destined to prevail.—See Mombert, *Charles the Great*, book ii., chap. iii.

was the chief object of worship of the Saxon tribes. The idol was hewn down, the temple overthrown, the hoard of gold and silver ornaments deposited there by generations of devout Saxons carried off into Frank-land. The work of destruction lasted three days. It chanced that there was a great scarcity of water in the place where the Irminsul had stood. The army was parched with thirst, and perhaps began to be stirred by superstitious fears that the drought was a punishment for the destruction of the idol. Suddenly, at noonday, while all the army was resting, there was a rush of water along a dry river bed. All the army had enough to drink, and recognized with thanks the divine approval of their destructive labors. Charles after this marched to the banks of the Weser, held there with the Saxons a great palaver (to borrow a word from modern reports of similar conferences), and received their submission, for what it was worth, accompanied by the surrender of twelve hostages.

It would be tedious to copy the particulars, meager as they are, given by the chroniclers concerning the eighteen campaigns in which Charles slowly and remorselessly beat down the resistance of the Saxons. It will be sufficient to notice some of the chief moments of the struggle.

In 774 Charles, intent on his operations in Italy, had left the Saxon March comparatively unguarded. Seizing their opportunity, and apparently heedless of the fate of the twelve hostages who were in the hands of Charles, the heathen crossed the frontier in great force and entered Hesse, which they laid waste with fire and sword. The objective of their attack was the abbey and church of Fritzlar, which had been founded near half a century before by the great Englishman, St. Boniface. The saint had prophesied that his church should never be destroyed by fire, and the barbarians certainly seem to have been prevented—by supernatural means, says the legend—from wrapping it in flames, but there can be little doubt that they robbed it of all its treasures, thus taking speedy revenge for the destruction of their own Irminsul. Charles meanwhile returned from his triumphant campaign in Italy only to hear of the insult that had been offered to his crown and his creed by a barbarous foe. The season was far advanced, but, mustering his troops at Ingelheim (a little southwest of Mainz), he sent them in four squadrons into Saxon-land. Three of the squadrons found the Saxons and fought them; the fourth marched through their land unopposed. All returned laden with booty to the Rhine.

Charles spent the winter of 774–775 in his palace at Quierzy, on the Oise, and there came to the conclusion “that he would attack the perfidious and truce-breaking nation of the Saxons in war, and would persevere therein until they were either conquered and made subject to the Christian religion or were altogether swept off the face of the earth.” It was easier to form a ruthless resolution like this in the privacy of the palace than to carry it into actual execution. The campaign of 775, though planned on a large scale, does not differ greatly from previous campaigns in character. The king held a general assembly at Düren, at which apparently the program of “Christianity or death” for the Saxons was submitted and approved.¹⁰ Then, in August, Charles marched eastwards, took from the Westphalians their strong fortress of Sigiburg on the Ruhr; retook Eresburg, which had been taken by the Angarii; and then pressed on into the land of the Eastphalians, who do not appear to have offered any serious resistance to his arms. But both with the Angarii and the Eastphalians, the campaign ended with the usual formalities of oaths of fealty and surrender of hostages; we do not yet hear of that wholesale conversion or extirpation which Charles had vowed at his setting forth. Moreover, while he was thus penetrating into the recesses of the enemies’ country, part of his force, which he had left in Westphalia to guard his communications with the Rhine, suffered a serious loss from a Saxon surprise. Their camp was pitched at Lidbach, near Minden; it was three o’clock in the afternoon; some of the cavalry had gone forth to forage for their horses; the rest of the army was indulging in a siesta; a troop of Saxons mingled with the returning foragers, feigning themselves to be their comrades (of course the warriors of that day wore no uniform), and thus obtained admission to the camp, where they made great slaughter of the half-asleep and unarmed soldiers. It is said that the Franks succeeded at last in driving the invaders out of the camp, and that Charles, hurrying from the east, slew a multitude of the retreating Saxons,

¹⁰The words of Einhard, Charlemagne’s biographer, are, “*dum aut victi christianæ religioni subicerentur, aut omnino tollerentur*”, “until they were either subdued and converted to the Christian religion, or annihilated.” Ed’s Note: This is *not* actually in Einhard’s biography, but in his recension of the Royal Frankish Annals for 775, and leaves out some important context, as well as selecting the most damning possible meaning for the verb *tollere*, which here should probably mean (as it much more commonly does) “taken away” or “removed”.

but it is probable that we have here the story, only slightly veiled, of a serious Frankish reverse. Next year (776), Eresburg, taken and retaken, was again the prize of war. Sigiburg was attacked, but bravely and successfully defended. Charles came with impetuous rush to the sources of the Lippe and found there a multitude of Saxons, who had flocked thither from all quarters, and who, terrified by Charles's successes, declared their willingness to embrace Christianity, to become faithful subjects of Charles and of the Franks, and to perform the symbolical act by which they would give him corporal possession of the soil of their country. An innumerable multitude of Saxons, with their wives and children, were baptized in the Lippe stream that flowed past the Frankish camp; hostages, as many as Charles asked for, were given; Eresburg was rebuilt, many other castles were reared, detachments of Franks were posted throughout the country, and the king returned into Frank-land to keep his Christmas at Heristal and his Easter at Nimeguen, feeling probably that the program of Quierzy was now realized, and that the heathen and truce-breaking Saxons had at last become Christians and stable subjects of his realm.¹¹

But the subjugation was only apparent; there was one man ready, at least for a time, to play the part of Arminius, and to resist foreign domination to the death. The next nine years of the long contest (777–785) may be best characterized as the years of Widukind's strife for freedom.¹²

¹¹The most ferocious and warlike of all the barbarians with whom Charlemagne contended, not even excepting the Avars, were the Saxons. These people seemed to have an inextinguishable hatred of Christianity and of slavery. Almost their only redeeming trait was their respect for womanhood. They roamed the forests, and to some extent sailed the seas; they lived largely by hunting, but they preferred piracy and plunder. They could not be won by kindness. Even their word of honor was not binding upon them, for they continually violated the pledges of their treaties. The only way to deal with them was thoroughly to conquer them and to deal with them with a severity bordering on cruelty. This Charlemagne did. It took eighteen expeditions—though he never lost a battle with them—and thirty-three years to accomplish his purpose, but he was successful at the last. This people became civilized, christianized, and they developed into the best people of Europe, becoming the nucleus of the great German empire, and an important constituent of the English. Beyond almost all others, they have escaped the corruptions and vices attendant upon a luxurious life, and they are today among the leaders of industry and enterprise in both hemispheres.

¹²Ed.'s Note: This view is quintessentially nineteenth-century Teutonism. Widukind's

In the year 777 King Charles held a public synod at Paderborn in the heart of Saxon-land. It was attended, not only by all the Frankish nobles, but also by nearly all the chiefs of the Saxon tribes. "Perfidiously," says the chronicler, "did they promise to mould their manners to the king's mind, and to devote themselves to his service. They received pardon from the king on this condition, that if thereafter they violated his statutes, they should be deprived of fatherland and freedom. At the same place there were baptized a very great multitude who, although falsely, had declared that they wished to become Christians."

But at this great assembly there was not seen the face of Widukind, a Westphalian chief who had large possessions both in Westphalia and also in Mid Saxony, and who must have already taken a leading part in the resistance to the Frankish arms, since he was, says the chronicler, "conscious of having committed many crimes and feared to face the king, wherefore he had fled to Sigfrid, King of the Danes."

Next year Charles led his army into Spain on that memorable expedition which ended in the disaster of Roncesvalles.¹³ Hearing that he was engaged in so remote a region, and perhaps also having some tidings of his ill-success, the Saxons, headed by Widukind, rose in rebellion, crossed the hills which formed their Western boundary, and poured into the valley of the Rhine. The great river itself, not the Frankish armies, barred their further progress, but they rushed along the right bank from Deutz to Coblenz ravaging and burning. "Buildings sacred and profane were equally laid in ruins. No distinction of age or of sex was made by their hostile fury, so that it was plainly manifest that not for the sake of booty but in order to wreak vengeance they had crossed the frontier of the Franks." Incidentally we learn that so great was the terror caused by this inroad that the monks of Fulda took from the tomb their greatest treasure, the body of the holy Boniface, and journeyed with it two days into Frankish territory, but then hearing that the tide of invasion was turned, went back to redeposit their treasure at Fulda. For Charles, on learning the tidings of the Saxon invasion, had not thought it necessary with

"strife" was for many things, but freedom, and our modern ideas of it, is certainly not among them.

¹³See chap. VIII.

his war-wearied army to undertake a regular campaign, but had sent a flying squadron of Franks, who by forced marches came up with the Saxons at the river Eder, attacked them while crossing the stream, and inflicted upon them grievous loss.

In the next few years we hear the oft-repeated story of rapid marches right through Saxon-land even to the Elbe, no effectual stand made by the Saxons, but raids and insurrections headed by the restless Widukind. In 780 Charles begins to busy himself with the ecclesiastical organization of the conquered country. In 782 (apparently) he holds a *placitum* ("assembly") at the sources of the Lippe, and there promulgates his stern *Capitulatio de partibus Saxonie* ("Capitulary concerning the regions of Saxony"). On anyone who violently enters a church and robs it, shall be inflicted the punishment of death; on anyone who despises the Christian custom of Lent and eats flesh therein, death (but his life may be saved if the priest shall certify that flesh was necessary for his health); on anyone who slays bishop or presbyter, death; on anyone who in pagan fashion believes in witchcraft and burns the supposed witch, death; on anyone practising cremation instead of burial, death; on any Saxon hiding himself in order to escape baptism and remain in paganism, death; on anyone offering sacrifice to the demons of the pagans, death; on anyone who shall conspire with the pagans against the Christians, or seek to continue with them in hostility to the Christian faith, death. Yet if, after privily committing any of these crimes, the criminal shall flee to a priest, make confession, and do penance, on the priest's testimony the capital punishment shall be remitted. At the same time a strict tithe-law was passed. "We enact that according to the command of God, all men, whether nobles, freeborn men or *liti* (serfs), shall give the tenth part of their substance and labor to the churches and priests, so that as God shall have given to every Christian he shall restore a part to God."

This rigorous Act of Uniformity stirred the deep resentment of the Saxons. But perhaps discontent might not have burst into a flame but for the return of Widukind from his wonted Danish refuge, and for the harangues with which he stirred the vain hopes of the Saxons and roused them to revolt (782). At the same time tidings were brought to Charles of an incursion of a Slavonic tribe, the Sorabi, from beyond the Elbe. The Frankish king presumed too far on the apparent pacification of Saxon-land. Like his great imitator, Napoleon,

he would use the last-conquered people to subdue the enemy next beyond them, and he sent an army composed of Saxons as well as Austrasian Franks to repel the Slavonic incursion. Adalgisus the chamberlain, Geilo the count of the stables, and Worad the count of the palace, commanded the motley host; but when they entered Saxon-land they found the whole country already in a flame, and the Saxons, by the advice of Widukind, about to march into Francia. Wisely postponing the expedition against the Sorabi, they marched with their Frankish troops—the Saxon contingent had doubtless deserted¹⁴—to the place where they heard that the rebel host was gathered. In the heart of the enemies' country they met Count Theodoric, a relation of the king's, who had made a hasty levy of troops in Rhine-land on hearing of the Saxon revolt. Seeing the over-zeal of the three courtiers, Theodoric advised them to make careful reconnaissances of the enemy's position, and proposed that, if the ground proved favorable, a joint attack should be made on the Saxon camp at the hill Suntal, near Minden. In pursuance of the suggested plan, they crossed the Weser and pitched their camp on the north bank of the river. Then, fearing that the renown of the joint victory would accrue to the king's cousin Theodoric, they determined to attack the Saxons alone. Underrating the steadfastness of their foes, they dashed headlong and in loose order into the camp, more as if they were pursuing a flying foe than charging an enemy drawn up in order of battle. This time the Frankish fury failed before the stolid Saxon stubbornness. They were surrounded by the enemy, and terrible slaughter was made in their ranks. A few Franks escaped, not to their quarters of the morning, but to the camp of Theodoric; but Adalgisus and Geilo, four counts, twenty nobles of high rank, and a multitude of followers, who, in the true spirit of the old German *comitatus* ("war-band"), preferred to die rather than survive their lords, fell on the field of fight. The battle of Mount Suntal was certainly the greatest disaster that befell the Frankish arms in the whole course of the 'Thirty Years' War.

Terrible was the anger of Charles when he heard of the Saxon rising, of the murders of priests and monks with which it had been accompanied, and lastly

¹⁴Ed.'s Note: It's not clear why this is "doubtless", and absent historical sources to the contrary, it seems perfectly possible that some Saxons remained loyal to Charles and continued to fight for him.

of the deep humiliation inflicted on his race by the defeat of the three generals. He collected a large army and entered the land of the Saxons. When thus in earnest he seems to have been always able to crush their resistance. Widukind fled for the fourth or fifth time to Denmark, and the land lay prostrate at the feet of Charles. He summoned before him all the chiefs of the Saxons and made inquisition concerning the author of the revolt. With one voice all named Widukind, the absent Widukind. As he could not be arrested, the men who had listened to his persuasions must suffer. Four thousand five hundred men (including probably some of the chiefs of the nation) who had shown themselves foremost in the revolt were surrendered to Charles. It was expected probably that the ringleaders only out of this number would suffer; but Charles was evidently in a Berserk rage.¹⁵ All the 4500 Saxons were beheaded in one day at Verden on the banks of the Aller. "Having perpetrated this act of vengeance, the king went into winter quarters at the villa of Theodo, and there celebrated the birth of our Lord, and there also the festival of Easter, according to his wonted custom."

The year 783 was to Charles a year of domestic sorrow but of military triumph. His wife Hildegard (whom he had married immediately after the repudiation of the daughter of Desiderius) died on the 30th of April; his loved and honored mother, Bertrada, on the 12th of July; but immediately after his wife's funeral he entered Saxon-land with a powerful army, vanquished his enemies with great slaughter at Detmold, vanquished them again in the neighborhood of Osnabrück, where "there was slain of the Saxons an infinite multitude, great booty was taken, and a large number of captives was led away." He then swept with his victorious army from the Weser to the Elbe, ravaging wherever he went—for it was thus that this great preacher of Christianity

¹⁵Berserker was a hero of Norse legend who fought without coat of mail and overcame all foes. His descendants, called Berserkers, went into battle under the inspiration of a fury, or demoniacal possession, in which condition gnawing the rim of their shields, howling like wild beasts, and foaming at the mouth, they were supposed to be invulnerable. This fury was the Berserk, or Berserker's, rage. Ed.'s Note: Hodgkin's bias is coming out here. Undoubtedly Charlemagne was angry about what the Saxons had done, but the executions at Verden were not animated by rage, but seem to be a calculated punishment of those who had inflicted great harm on himself and his realm.

argued for the faith¹⁶—and then returning to Frankland married his fourth wife,¹⁷ Fastrada, the daughter of the Frankish count Radolf.

The next year (784) was somewhat less successful owing to widespread inundations, the result of sudden and heavy rains, which stopped the victor's progress northward; but his young son Charles, who had been left with a part of the army in Westphalia while Charles himself went southward towards Thuringia, won a great cavalry battle on the banks of the Lippe. And this year Charles made a new departure. After a short autumnal visit to Frankland, he returned into Saxon-land, spent his Christmas in the neighborhood of Pymont, and went into winter quarters at the now strongly fortified Eresburg.

"And when he had decided to winter there," says the chronicler, "having sent for wife and children to join him, and having left in the said camp a sufficiently staunch and strong garrison, he went forth himself with a flying squadron to lay waste the townships of the Saxons and to plunder their farms, and thus by himself and by the generals whom he sent in different directions, marching everywhere, and everywhere carrying fire and slaughter, he paid back the Saxons in their own coin and gave them a sufficiently uneasy winter." After holding a general assembly at Paderborn, Charles marched unopposed through Saxon-land as far as the Elbe. In the district of Bardengau, near the mouth of that river, Charles halted, looking across the river to the territory of the yet unsubdued Transalbian Saxons who dwelt in the land that is now called Holstein. While he was here news was brought to him that Widukind and a confederate, perhaps a kinsman, named Abbio were willing to surrender themselves and forswear further resistance if they could be assured of their personal safety. A Frankish courtier named Amalwin was sent across the Elbe with hostages for the safe-conduct which he bore to the two Saxon chiefs. They accompanied him on his return, and were brought into the presence of Charles, who was by this time back again across the Rhine and at his palace of Attigny on the Aisne, near the forest of Ardennes. Charles received his fallen foes graciously. They were both baptized, Charles himself acting as

¹⁶Ed.'s Note: Here, again, we see Hodgkins unfortunate insertion of his own opinions into the narrative.

¹⁷Ed.'s Note: Arguably his second, since neither Himiltruda nor the daughter of Desiderius were his lawful wives.

godfather to Widukind and presenting him with costly gifts. As far as we can see, both honestly accepted the duties which the pledge of fealty to the most Christian king involved. Authentic history after this point is silent as to the name of Widukind, but legends, for which there is very likely some foundation, represent him as not only a contented but even an ardent votary of his new faith, a founder of churches and convents, and an endower of the bishopric of Minden. It is probable that he was allowed to retain his large possessions in Westphalia, and he has been chosen as a favorite peg by German genealogists on which to hang the descent of their serene and princely patrons. The least doubtful of these pedigrees appears to be that which makes the great Emperor Otho a descendant, through his mother Matilda, of the Saxon hero.

The submission of Widukind ended for the time the resistance of the Saxons. "That obstinacy of the Saxon perfidy rested for some years, chiefly for this reason, that they could not find opportunities for revolting suitable to the matter in hand," is the quaint remark of the chronicler.

This peace lasted for six or seven years, in one of which (789) we are told that the king "arranged all matters pertaining to the Saxons, suitably to the time." That is to say, no doubt, the yoke of Church and State was being fitted to the stubborn Saxon neck. So confident was Charles of the subjugation of his foe that he employed both Saxons and Frisians in the campaigns in which he was now busily engaged on the Middle Danube against the kingdom of the Avars.

The fact, however, that the Frankish power was thus engaged in a tough struggle with an enemy in the south, at last emboldened the Saxons to make another stand for freedom. Again they allied themselves with the Frisians, and on the 6th of July 792, the first blow was struck. A portion of Charles's army which had, for some unexplained purpose, been sent in ships to the mouth of the Elbe was set upon by the insurgents of the two allied nations and cut to pieces. This evidence of unslumbering hostility does not seem to have effectually diverted Charles's attention from his Danubian campaign, but next year (793) tidings of a similar but more overwhelming disaster were brought to him at his quarters in Bavaria. Count Theodoric, the king's kinsman and a valiant and trusted general (the same who had saved the Frankish army from annihilation on the disastrous day of Suntal), had been leading

an army through the district of Rustringen, on the borders of Friesland and Saxon-land, and at some little distance to the west of the Weser. The reason for his presence in that region is not told us, but it was probably the desire to check the revolt which had burst forth in the preceding summer. What is certain is that he was set upon by the Saxons, his army destroyed, and apparently himself slain. Now, at any rate, if not already in the previous year, the rebellion assumed that character of ruthless vindictiveness, especially against churchmen, which showed how sorely the Saxons had been galled by Charles's ecclesiastical ordinances. "As a dog returneth to his vomit," says an annalist, "so did they return to the paganism which they had aforetime renounced, again deserting Christianity, lying not less to God than to their lord the king, who had conferred upon them so many benefits, and joining themselves to the pagan nations who dwelt round about them. Sending their emissaries to the Avars, they endeavored to rebel first against God, then against the king and the Christians. They laid waste all the churches which were within their borders with burning and destruction; they rejected the bishops and presbyters who were set over them; some they took prisoners and others they slew, and, in short, they turned themselves right round to the worship of idols."

When the news of Theodoric's defeat reached the king it found him, as before stated, in camp in the center of Bavaria. The war with the Avars was prospering, but it was still a long way from completion. To deal with two enemies in such widely separated regions as Hanover and Hungary was a hard problem for a commander-in-chief in the eighth century. Charles sought to solve it by a characteristic stroke of his truly imperial genius, and though he failed, even the failure attests the grandeur of his conceptions. Near the Bavarian town of Weissenburg a little stream called the Schwäbische Rezat takes its rise, within a few miles of a larger river, the Altmühl. The Rezat flows northward into the Main, and so eventually into the Rhine and the German Ocean. The Altmühl, on the other hand, soon reaches the Danube, and so sends its waters at last into the Black Sea. Charles's idea (suggested to him by some professed experts, but eagerly embraced) was to make a navigable canal between the Rezat and the Altmühl, and thus transport his troops and their provisions at will by river navigation either northward against the Saxons or eastward against the Avars. During the whole autumn of 793 a vast multitude

of men labored at the great enterprise. They dug a fosse two miles long and three hundred feet wide, but it was all in vain. Nature was too strong for them. The marshy quality of the soil, made worse by autumnal rains, thwarted the operations of the diggers, and however much they dug out by day, by night the heaps had all sunk back into the swampy level. There is still, however, a trench about five miles south-west of Weissenburg called the Fossa Carolina, which remains as a monument of the great king's project. "What a change" (as has been truly said by Pastor Meier, a Bavarian priest who traced the course of the Roman *Limes Imperii* through these regions), "what stir, and what activity would have filled all those quiet plains if the grand scheme of Kaiser Karl (not yet kaiser) had been realized, and this tiny streamlet, the Rezat, had seen the interchange of the products of the east and west." The scheme itself, or something like it, was carried into execution by King Louis I of Bavaria, but owing to the introduction of the railway system König-Ludwigs-Kanal, like so many other artificial waterways, has lost much of its importance.

Foiled in this endeavor, King Charles allowed the year 793 to pass without an attempt to punish the Saxon rebellion. The next six years (794–799) each had its Saxon campaign. The general features of the war are very similar to those which we have already noticed: rapid marches of the Frankish king, devastation of the Saxon country, oaths of submission and Saxon hostages. It is noteworthy that Charles now carries back into Frank-land large numbers of these hostages—all apparently young lads—has them educated as Christians, generally as ecclesiastics, and when peace is restored installs them in the various churches and convents wherewith, as the Roman *imperator* ("emperor") of old with his *coloniae* ("colonies"), he fastens down the conquered country. It is also to be observed that the struggle is now chiefly confined to the northern part of Saxon-land, to the great *gau* of Wigmodia, which stretched between Bremen and Hamburg, and to the Nordalbingi who, as has been said, occupied what is now the duchy of Holstein. Further, that Charles, Teuton as he was, did not object to avail himself of the help of a Slavonic people, the Abodrites, who were the eastern neighbors of the Saxons, and that he bitterly avenged the death of their king Witzin on "the perfidious Saxon nation," into whose snares he had fallen (795).¹⁸

¹⁸Ed.'s Note: Note Hodgkin's nineteenth-century bias coming in here; Charlemagne was

In several of these campaigns the Frankish king was effectually seconded by his son Charles, now a young man of between twenty and thirty, to whom it was the father's custom to entrust a portion of his army, that a combined attack might be made from different points of the compass. The plan of operations seems to have been generally well laid, for we never hear of these concerted invasions failing to meet at the point agreed upon.

One of the fiercest campaigns was that of 798 against the Nordalbingi, who had grievously enraged Charles by the murder of his *missi* ("envoys") or plenipotentiaries, one of whom was clothed with the sacred character of an ambassador to the king of Denmark. In his vengeance for this murder Charles was powerfully seconded by Thrasco, Duke of the Abodrites.

During the next four eventful years (800–803), Charles had abundant occupation south of the Alps. In 804 he led his army into Saxon-land, "transferred all the Saxons who dwelt beyond the Elbe and in Wigmodia with their wives and children into Frankland, and gave the shires beyond the Elbe to the Abodrites." As these Sclavonian allies of Charles were heathens, this handing over to them of the duchy of Holstein was so far a confession of failure in the attempt to win the whole of the Saxon territory for Christianity. The number of the Saxons on both banks of the Elbe thus transported is given by Einhard at 10,000. When the inhabitants of whole districts were thus forcibly removed, much injustice, even from the point of view of Frankish "law and order," must often have been committed. In the next generation complaints reached the ears of Charles's successor from the sons of loyal and peaceable dwellers by the Weser who had been swept off into exile together with the rebel Wigmodians, and had never recovered the property of which they were then despoiled.

The resistance of the Saxons was powerfully aided by their Danish neighbor on the north. "Godofrid, King of Denmark," says the chronicler, "with his fleet and all the cavalry of his kingdom came to a place which is called Sliethorp, on the borders of his kingdom and Saxon-land, for a conference with Charles, but would not venture further. Charles remained close to the

perfectly happy to ally with the Abodrites, a Western Slavic people, despite being a Germanic because this was not a racial conflict. To the nineteenth-century mind, this is a very difficult concept.

river Elbe in a place which is called Holdunſteti, from whence he sent an embassy to Godofrid to treat about the surrender of deserters." As "the place called Sliēsthorp" is Schleswig, and "the place called Holdunſteti" is Holſtein, the student of contemporary history will recognize in this passage the germs of that controversy on "the Schleswig-Holſtein question" which was settled in our day by the Dano-German war and led eventually to the supremacy of Prussia in the Germanic Confederation.¹⁹

At laſt the Saxon war was ended. The wholesale transportation of inhabitants to which Charles had at length reſorted, and which was balanced by the invitation to Franks to ſettle in the evacuated lands—aſts which remind us of the proceedings of Shalmaneſer and Nebuchadnezzar towards the people of Iſrael—had the deſired effect.

"Freedom's battle once begun
Bequeathed from bleeding ſire to ſon"

in this inſtance was not "ever won." Chriſtianity, or a religion which believed itſelf to be Chriſtianity, was triumphant from the Rhine to the Elbe, and three fat biſhoprics, Bremen, MÜNSTER, and Paderborn, divided between themſelves the conquered land. "Saxonia" was henceforth an inſeparable part of the newly-founded Frankiſh Empire.

VII Revolts and Conſpiracies

IN tracing the hiſtory of Charles's long ſtruggle with the Saxons we have come down to a very late point in the ſtory of his reign. We muſt now retrace our ſteps and notice ſome of the more important events that happened

¹⁹The Schleswig-Holſtein queſtion is proverbially complicated, being made ſo by the relations of the two provinces to each other, by the further relations of each ſeparately and both combined to Denmark, and by the relations of all three to Auſtria, Prussia, etc. There was an almoſt ceaſeſſ ſucceſſion of wars over the queſtion, or queſtions, from 1848 to 1866, when Schleswig-Holſtein became a province of Prussia. For a full ſtatement of the ſubject, ſee Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, note B.

during that struggle of thirty years. And first it will be well to deal with some of the unsuccessful attempts that were made in various parts of his dominions, other than Saxon-land, to throw off the yoke of this strong and masterful ruler.

Less than two years after the downfall of the Lombard monarchy, at the end of 775, when Charles was fully committed to his life-and-death contest with Saxon heathenism, he received tidings of an attempt on the part of at least one Lombard duchy to recover its independence. Before leaving Italy he had either appointed a Lombard noble named Hrodgaud duke of Friuli, or had confirmed him in the possession of that duchy. Forum Julii, which we now know by the name of Friuli and whose chief city is now called Cividale, included the fertile lands north of the Venetian Gulf, and was of primary importance to the Frankish king, as it touched on the one side the provinces of Venetia and Istria (wavering at this time between allegiance to him and their old allegiance to Constantinople) and on the other side the lands of the duke of Bavaria, who, as we shall soon see, was one of the most untrustworthy of subject princes.

Hrodgaud appears to have been engaged in some obscure negotiations with the Lombard dukes of Chiusi and Benevento for cutting short the new papal territories, perhaps also for bringing in the exiled son of Desiderius and raising once more the standard of Lombard independence. But the combination failed, owing perhaps in part to the death of the Emperor Constantine V, which happened in the autumn of 775. The young Lombard prince Adelchis failed to make his appearance in Italy; the dukes of Chiusi and Benevento hung back from the dangerous enterprise, and Hrodgaud of Friuli was left alone to meet the Frankish avenger. His courage did not fail; he seems to have proclaimed himself king, doubtless "King of the Lombards," and persuaded many cities in Northern Italy to join his standard. But Charles, warned of his revolt before the end of 775, crossed the Alps in the early months of 776. The passes cannot yet have been open, and it must have been with a small but select body of troops that he made his rapid descent upon Friuli. Hrodgaud seems to have fallen in battle. Cividale surrendered. Treviso, where Hrodgaud's father-in-law, Stabilinus, sought to prolong the struggle, was also captured and was the scene of Charles's Easter festivities. All the other revolted cities

were taken, and in June Charles recrossed the Alps to march swiftly northward to recapture the oft-taken Eresburg, and to baptize some thousands of Saxons in the Lippe.

Considering the difficulties of locomotion at that time, this short Italian campaign against Hrodgaud seems to have been one of the most rapid and brilliant of all the military operations of King Charles. The suppression of the revolt was followed, not indeed by bloodshed, but by severe confiscations of the property of the insurgents. We have a piteous account by the great Lombard historian, Paulus Diaconus,²⁰ of the seven years' captivity of his brother, who is generally believed to have been punished for his share in this insurrection. "My brother languishes a captive in your land, broken-hearted, in nakedness and want. His unhappy wife, with quivering lips, begs for bread from street to street. Four children must she support in this humiliating manner, whom she is scarce able to cover even with rags."

The next threatening of internal disaffection came from a quarter in which the sky had long looked lowering. Tassilo III, Duke of Bavaria, was the most independent and high-spirited of all the subject nobles in the Frankish kingdom. Sprung from the old Agilolfing line, which for more than two centuries had ruled the Bavarian people, he had some pretensions to a descent from Merovingian royalty, and was the undoubted grandson of Charles Martel, and therefore first cousin of King Charles, with whom he was strictly contemporary, having been born in the year 742. The dependence of Bavaria upon the Frankish crown had always been of the slightest kind, consisting of little more than a verbal recognition of the supremacy of the Frankish king and the sending of a contingent to serve in the Frankish army, while, in all the details of ordinary administration, the will of the Agilolfing duke seems to have been practically supreme. Moreover, close ties of affinity and common interests had long united the ducal house of Bavaria and the regal house of Lombard Italy. Together they had resisted the incursions of their turbulent neighbors on the east, the Avars and the Slaves; together they had sought, rather by diplomacy than by war, to keep at a distance from them the domineering Frank.

In the later years of Pippin, as has been already stated, this tendency of Bavaria to independence was openly displayed. It is true that in the year 757,

²⁰See p. 131, note 22.

when Pippin was holding his *placitum* at Compiègne, thither came the young Tassilo with the chiefs of his nation, and, "after the Frankish manner placing his hands in the hands of the king, commended himself unto him in vassalage, and promised fidelity both to King Pippin himself and to his sons Charles and Carloman by an oath on the body of St. Dionysius, and not only there, but also over the bodies of St. Martin and St. Germanus with a similar oath promised that he would keep faith towards his aforesaid lords all the days of his life. And similarly all the chiefs and seniors of the Bavarians who had come with him into the presence of the king promised at the said holy places that they would keep faith towards the king and his sons." But the very insistence on this ceremony probably showed that the loyalty of the Bavarians was deemed precarious. It is certain that six years later (763), in the very crisis of the war with Aquitaine, "Tassilo, Duke of Bavaria, neglected his oaths and all his promises, forgot all the benefits which he had received from his uncle, King Pippin, and, making a fraudulent excuse of sickness, withdrew himself from the campaign. Then, strengthening his resolution to revolt, he stoutly declared that he would come no more into the king's presence." This was nothing less than to commit the crime of *harisliz* ("military desertion"), which, according to Frankish law, was punishable by death. But as we saw, King Pippin wisely determined to fight with one enemy at a time, and devoted all his energies to the long war with Waifar of Aquitaine, a war which practically occupied him till the end of his days. Thus the *harisliz* of Tassilo III went for the time unpunished.

Then came Charles's accession to the throne, and his marriage with the daughter of Desiderius. By this marriage a tie of affinity was formed between the two cousins,—the lord and the contumacious vassal,—for Tassilo also about the same time married another daughter of Desiderius, named Liutberga. It seemed for a short time as if Frank, Bavarian, and Lombard might dwell together in amity; but only for a short time. Soon followed the repudiation of the Lombard princess, Pope Hadrian's cry for help, the invasion of Italy, the fall of the Lombard kingdom. During all these stirring events Tassilo seems to have remained quiescent, yet assuredly then, if ever, would have been his chance to assert the independence after which he yearned.

So too during the rebellion of Hrodgaud of Friuli, when doubtless he

might have intercepted Charles's passage and made the suppression of that rebellion a much more tedious affair than it actually was, Tassilo made no sign. He seems to have thought his sulky attitude of isolation and *de facto* independence of his lord would maintain itself without any trouble on his part, but he was greatly mistaken. His Frankish overlord was no *roi fainéant* to let his rights thus quietly glide into desuetude.

Charles tried first spiritual means, which were perhaps suggested by the fact of his finding himself in the presence of the pope. Towards the end of 780, in one of those short lulls in the storm which made him deem the work of the subjugation of the Saxons complete, Charles visited Italy, kept his Christmas in the old Lombard palace at Pavia, held a *placitum*²¹ at Mantua, and at Easter visited Rome. He was accompanied by his wife and his sons, Carloman and Louis, children of four and three years old. Carloman, who had not yet been baptized, was raised from the baptismal font by Pope Hadrian, who gave him the ancestral name of Pippin, and being anointed by the pope was declared by his father to be King of Italy. At the same time his yet more infantile brother, Louis, was anointed King of Aquitaine. Of course in both cases all kingly power remained in the hands of the great warlord; but apparently the object of the ceremony was something like that which caused our Edward I to name the baby Edward of Caernarvon Prince of Wales. National pride was soothed, and national patriotism in some degree reassured, by the presence of a court and the assurance of a separate administration, even though the nominal head of the court was a little child in the nursery.

While Charles was at Rome there was converse between him and the pope concerning the duke of Bavaria. Tassilo had been a liberal friend to the Church, and had successfully prosecuted the enterprise of the conversion of the Slaves on his eastern frontier. Hadrian well knew how strained were the relations between duke and king, and was, we may believe, sincerely anxious to reconcile Tassilo to his mighty cousin. A joint embassy was dispatched to the Bavarian court, the pope being represented by the bishops Damasus and Formosus, the king by the deacon Richulf and Eberhard the arch-cupbearer.

"And when," says the chronicler, "these emissaries, obedient to their in-

²¹The *placitum* of the Middle Ages was a sort of convention for the consideration of public questions, over which the sovereign presided.

struction, had conversed with the aforesaid duke and reminded him of his old oaths to King Pippin, King Charles, and the Franks, his heart was so much softened that he declared his willingness to hasten at once to the king's presence, if such hostages were given him as to remove all doubt of his personal safety. These having been given, he came without delay to the king at Worms, swore the oath which was dictated to him, and gave twelve chosen hostages for the fulfilment of his promise that he would keep as towards King Charles and his loyal subjects all the oaths which he had sworn aforetime to King Pippin. These hostages were promptly brought to the king in his villa of Quierzy by Sindbert, Bishop of Ratisbon. But the said duke returning home did not long remain in the faith which he had promised."

Notwithstanding the ominous words with which the chronicler concludes, a great moral victory had certainly been gained by Charles, and the attitude of sullen semi-independence which Tassilo had maintained for nearly twenty years was now abandoned.

For six years (781-787) the name of Tassilo disappears from the chronicles, and we may conclude that he was for so long a fairly loyal subject of the Frankish kingdom, or rather perhaps that he committed no such open act of rebellion as to compel Charles, engrossed as he was during these years by the war with Widukind, to send any of his sorely needed Frankish warriors for the chastisement of his Bavarian vassal.

Moreover, the open enmity of the Saxons was not the only danger that at this time menaced the security of the Frankish throne. In the year 785, immediately after the baptism of Widukind, we have the following mysterious entry in the chronicles: "There was made in that same year on the other side of the Rhine a vast conspiracy of the eastern Franks against the king, of which it was proved that Count Hardrad was the author. But information thereof was speedily brought to the king, and by his shrewdness so mighty a conspiracy shortly collapsed without any great danger, the authors thereof being condemned, some to death, some to privation of sight, and some to deportation and exile." Even the king's life was aimed at by the conspirators, yet Einhard assures us that none of the conspirators were actually killed save three who drew their swords upon the officers who were sent to arrest them. The cause of this sudden outbreak of Austrasian jealousy and rage against

the great Austrasian hero must remain a mystery. Some of the authorities seem to speak of it as a specially Thuringian conspiracy, and one attributes it to the refusal of a Thuringian chief to hand over his daughter to a Frankish suitor to whom she was betrothed. An attempt has been made to account for it as the last struggle of Thuringian independence, dismayed at seeing the Saxons on the north and the Bavarians on the south subjected to the all-mastering Frankish king. It seems, however, more probable that it was a personal, palace conspiracy. Possibly Einhard gives us the requisite clue when he attributes both this and a subsequent conspiracy to the cruelty of Charles's queen Fastrada, who "diverted her husband from the kindness and accustomed gentleness of his nature."

Towards the end of 786 Charles again marched into Italy, where the not only independent but even hostile attitude of Arichis, Prince of Benevento, called for his attention. Having spent his Christmas at Florence and paid his devotions at the tombs of the Apostles in Rome, he proceeded southward (787), and on the confines of the Beneventan territory was met by Romwald, son of Arichis, with gifts and promises and entreaties that he would not enter his father's territory. But Charles, says the chronicler, "thinking that he must deal very differently with an enterprise once begun, kept Romwald with him and marched with all his army to Capua, where he pitched his camp, and would have carried on the war from thence, unless the aforesaid duke had anticipated his intention by wholesome counsel. For leaving his capital, Benevento, he betook himself with all his followers to the seaport of Salerno as being a more fortified city, and, sending an embassy, he offered both his sons to the king, promising that he would willingly obey all his commands. Listening to these prayers, and moved also by the fear of God, the king abstained from war; and keeping the younger son Grimwald as a hostage, sent the elder son back to his father. He, moreover, received eleven hostages from the rest of the nation, and sent ambassadors to strengthen the covenant of the prince and all the people of Benevento by oaths." Thus had the Frankish king, without striking a blow, extended his dominion to the southernmost corner of Italy. It was, however, a precarious conquest; and the princes of Benevento were almost to the end of Charles's reign either doubtful vassals or open enemies of the Frankish ruler.

Easter of 787 was spent by King Charles in Rome, and this visit, like that of five years before, was followed by a further development of the contest between him and Duke Tassilo. Doubtless the hollow reconciliation of 782 had been followed by mutual suspicion and estrangement, and the Bavarian duke must have felt that, with the Saxon rebellion now apparently quelled, his turn for subjugation would come next. While the king was still in Rome, there appeared in that city two Bavarian envoys, Arno, Bishop of Salzburg, and Huneric, Abbot of Mond See, who besought the pope to mediate between Charles and their master. The pope, as before, expressed his hearty goodwill towards Tassilo, and an interview between king and envoys followed in his presence. But when Charles called upon the bishop and the abbot to state what guarantee their master had empowered them to give for the fulfilment, this time, of his often violated promises, they could only answer that they had no instructions on this head, being not plenipotentiaries on Tassilo's behalf, only messengers whose duty it was to carry back to their master the propositions of the king and pontiff. Apparently, then, the duke had reverted to that old position of all but equality with the Frankish king which he took up twenty-four years before at the time of the great *harisliz*, and the solemnly plighted oaths sworn at Worms were to go for nothing. Hadrian was not less indignant than Charles at this exhibition of fickleness and bad faith, and appears to have visited his displeasure on the two churchmen-ambassadors themselves, telling them that they and their master were all liars together, and that they should all be visited by the papal anathema unless Tassilo kept the oaths which he had sworn to Charles and to Pippin. We have here one of the earliest instances of that use of ecclesiastical censures to enforce political claims which was so characteristic a feature of the Middle Ages.

The ambassadors returned to Bavaria empty-handed, and the king, re-crossing the Alps, went to rejoin his wife, the hard and haughty Fastrada, at Worms. Probably her influence was not used to soften his temper towards the rebellious duke. A general assembly was called, to which the king rehearsed all the events of his Italian journey, concluding with the story of the abortive negotiations with Tassilo. By the advice probably of his nobles, one more embassy was sent to claim from the Bavarian the fulfilment of his promises and to summon him to the royal presence. On his refusal, Frankish invaders

from three different points entered the devoted duchy. Italian Pippin from the South marched from Trient up the valley of the Adige and over the water-shed of the Inn; Charles himself crossed the Lech and entered Bavaria from the west by way of Augsburg. A little further to the north, near Ingoldstadt, came an army of Austrasian Franks, including not only Thuringians but even Saxons, so great was Charles's confidence in that pacification of the country which, as after events showed, was then but half completed. Seeing himself thus surrounded, and also knowing that many of his own subjects would side with the invaders—for apparently to the ordinary Bavarian landowner the prospect of a distant lord paramount at Aachen or Quierzy was more acceptable than the reality of a present and stringent master on the banks of the Danube—Tassilo gave up the game, presented himself at Charles's headquarters, handed over to him a stick, carved into some resemblance of a man, as a symbol of the land for which he did homage, and gave as a hostage his son Theodo, who for the last ten years had been associated with him as ruler of the duchy. Hostages, as usual twelve in number, were given for Tassilo's adherence to his freshly made promises, and at the same time the people of the land were in some way, the details of which are not disclosed, made parties to his oath of fidelity to Charles.

It is not easy to account for the harsh proceedings of the next year (788) after this apparent reconciliation of the vassal to his lord. Possibly something had come to light which justified Charles in the belief that Tassilo would never honestly accept the position of vassal from which he had so often endeavored to escape. An assembly was convened at Ingelheim, probably in the month of June. Tassilo, now helpless and unarmed, was summoned to appear before it, and was there accused, on the evidence of some of his own subjects who were loyal to Charles, of having opened negotiations with the barbarous Avars on the east after his last submission to the Frankish king. Liutberga, his Lombard queen, mindful of the old feud and of her father's wrongs, was said to have been the ceaseless preacher of revenge. Even against the life of Charles, Tassilo was accused of having conspired, and when men spoke to him of the danger in which he thus placed his hostage-son, he is said to have answered: "Had I ten sons I would lose them all in this cause, since it were better for me to die than to live a vassal on such ignominious terms as I have sworn to." Then

the old accusation of the *harisliz* of 763 was brought up against him, and on this and other charges he was found guilty by the assembled nobles, Franks and Bavarians, Lombards and Saxons, assembled from all parts of Charles's realm, and by their united voice was adjudged worthy of death. This sentence, however, was commuted by "the most pious Charles, moved by compassion and the love of God and because he was his kinsman; and he obtained from his own servants and the servants of God [the nobles secular and religious] this favor, that he should not die. Then Tassilo, being asked by the most clement king what he wished, begged that he might have leave to assume the tonsure and enter a monastery, there to do penance for so many sins, that he might save his soul. Similarly his son Theodo was sentenced, tonsured, and sent into a monastery, and the few Bavarians who chose to remain in opposition to King Charles were banished."

According to one authority, Tassilo, while accepting tranquilly the decree which consigned him for the rest of his days to the monotonous seclusion of a convent, begged that his long hair, the symbol of his Frankish or even Merovingian descent, might not be shorn off in public, in the sight of his Frankish compeers, his Bavarian followers and companions in arms, and this favor was granted him by the clemency of the king. He was sent at once to the monastery of St. Goar on the Rhine, and afterwards to the safer seclusion of Jumièges in Normandy. His sons and his daughters were also persuaded or compelled to enter various convents: his wife, scion of that unhappy race which seemed doomed to disaster in all its members, was either banished or like the rest of her family accepted the sentence of seclusion in the cloister. Once more does Tassilo appear upon the stage of history, when in the year 794 he was brought to the assembly at Frankfort (an assembly convened ostensibly for a purely theological purpose) and there "made his peace with the lord the king, renouncing all the power which he had once held in Bavaria and handing it over to the king." It is suggested that the law had been somewhat strained by Tassilo's condemnation in the assembly at Ingelheim, and that this formal and professedly voluntary surrender of his rights was deemed necessary to perfect Charles's title as ruler of Bavaria. After this event Tassilo vanishes from the scene, the year and place of his death being alike unrecorded by authentic history.

For the later history of Europe and especially of Germany, the deposition of Tassilo and the vindication of the imperilled Frankish supremacy over Bavaria were perhaps even more important than the perpetually recurring Saxon campaigns which fill so large a space in Charles's annals. Sooner or later Saxon-land was almost certain to become Christian and civilized, and so to enter the Frankish orbit; but at Charles's accession there seemed to be a great probability that Bavaria would turn her *de facto* independence into separation *de jure* from the Frankish realm. This would have caused a separation of the Germany of the future into two independent states, a kingdom of the North and a kingdom of the South, which, as we know, never actually took place in the Middle Ages.

With one more conspiracy, this time of a domestic character, the tale of treason is ended. In the year 792 (the year in which Charles had an Avar war and a Saxon rebellion on his hands at once, and made his abortive attempt to join the Danube and the Rhine by a canal),²² there was added to all his other cares a rebellion headed by one of his own flesh and blood. His eldest son Pippin was apparently not born in wedlock, though his mother Himiltrud, after her son's birth, probably became Charles's lawfully wedded wife.²³ This defect of legitimacy would not have been an insuperable bar to succession in a house which derived its chief glories from the illegitimate Charles Martel; but there was another and more fatal circumstance in the case of Charles's firstborn. Though beautiful in face, he was deformed, probably dwarfish in figure, an unsuitable person therefore to be presented to the assembled Frankish warriors as heir to his father's kingdom. Thus Pippin, though to a certain extent maintaining his princely rank and named next to his father in the litanies of the Church, seems to have been silently edged out from all hope of succeeding to any portion of that father's power. Charles, the eldest son of Hildegard, was apparently recognized as principal heir. Carloman and Louis were taken to Rome in their infancy and anointed Kings of Italy and Aquitaine, while Pippin was left unnoticed. Perhaps even the imposition of

²²See p. 185.

²³Ed.'s Note: Why "probably"? It rather seems certain that she did *not*, given Charlemagne's later relationships, and especially noting that it is his son through Hildegard, unquestionably a lawful wife, who becomes the heir.

the ancestral name of Pippin on the child Carloman was meant as a hint to his elder namesake that he would never be saluted as Pippin, King of the Franks.

This exclusion doubtless galled the firstborn; and to these wrongs of his, real or imaginary, appear to have been added some inflicted on him and on his friends and followers by the unloved Fastrada. Thus, while most of the other chroniclers can see in the conspiracy of Pippin only the unholy attempt of a bastard, like another Abimelech, to seize the royal power at the cost of the lives of all his legitimate brethren, the honest Einhard in the following passage of his annals puts a different color on the enterprise.

“When the king was spending his summer at Ratisbon, a conspiracy was made against him by his eldest son, named Pippin, and certain Franks who declared that they could not bear the cruelty of the queen Fastrada, and therefore conspired for the death of the king. And when this was detected by means of Fardulf the Lombard, he, to reward him for his loyalty, was presented with the monastery of St. Dionysius [St. Denis], but the authors of the conspiracy, as being guilty of treason, were partly slain by the sword and partly hung from gallows, and so with their lives paid forfeit for the meditation of such a crime.”²⁴

²⁴“The details of the plot are said to have embraced the assassination of the king and his three royal sons, and the subsequent proclamation of Pippin as king. This was the bait which the conspirators held out to him. ¶ “The secret was well kept. Pippin shammed sickness and for a while stayed away from court; the plot was fairly under way and dangerously near a successful termination, when by the inexplicable carelessness of the conspirators the whole of their impious scheme became known. ¶ “They met in the church of St. Peter at Ratisbon and discussed all the details of the plot in the hearing of a cleric who, from some cause or other, had found his way into the church. Perhaps he came to sleep there; the conspirators found him hiding under the altar, and, strange to tell, contented themselves with his solemn promise on oath that he would not divulge the ominous secret. But the oath sat lightly on his conscience, and the moment after the conspirators had left he ran half-dressed at the dead of night to the royal palace and gave the alarm. ¶ “No one could stay his progress on his way to the royal bed-chamber; he passed through seven doors and at last stood before it and so frightened the ladies in attendance upon the queen that they shut it in his face; they tried to stifle their laughter at his appearance with their dresses [*sic*]. But the king had heard the noise and asked what it meant. They said that a half-clad, scraped, silly, and raving scamp demanded to see the king, and made an unmannerly noise. Charles sent for him and made him tell all he knew. ‘Before the third hour of the day,’ writes the Monk, ‘all the chief conspirators, not expecting anything of the kind, were either on the way to exile or punishment. The dwarfish,

Pippin's own life was spared, but his head was shorn, and he was sent "to serve God in a monastery." The place of his confinement was Prum in the Moselle country, and there apparently he remained till his death, which happened in 811. So ended the last and probably the most dangerous of the conspiracies against King Charles's life and government.

VIII Roncesvalles

THOUGH the greater part of his life was passed in war, and though he was undoubtedly a man of great personal courage, Charlemagne cannot be considered a great military commander. We have the testimony of Einhard that in the whole long Saxon war he himself was personally engaged in only two pitched battles, and most of his campaigns seem to have consisted rather of military promenades against brave but ill-armed foes, than of hard-fought battles in which the genius and courage of the king at a critical moment secured victory to his troops. But if not a great captain, he was a great and successful planner of campaigns; not so much a Hannibal or a Napoleon as an "organizer of victory" like Carnot.²⁵

It is remarkable that in the most famous battle which he fought, neither his strategy nor his tactics were successful. The Spanish campaign of 778 was a failure, and ended with an event of no great importance in itself, but of imperishable memory in song, the disastrous day of Roncesvalles.

To understand the cause of this expedition, so remote from the usual orbit of the Frankish king, we must glance for a moment at the condition of the Mohammedan world, and must leave the marshes and forests of Saxonland for the desert-girdled gardens of the oldest of cities, Damascus. For a hundred years the Ommayad caliphs in a long line, consisting of Moawiyah and thirteen successors, had governed the vast regions which owned the faith

hunchbacked Pippin received a good beating, was shaved, and sent *for a little while* to the monastery of St. Gall to do penance."—Mombert, p. 219.

²⁵Lazare Nicolas Marguerite Carnot (1753–1823) served as minister of war for nearly three years during the French revolution. His success as a strategist won for him the popular title of "organizer of victory."

of Mohammed with absolute sway. The caliph, as the successor of the Prophet, wielded a power religious as well as military; he was at once the pope and the emperor of the Saracen world. It was in the name of the Ommayad caliph and by his lieutenants that Spain was conquered; in his name that Gaul was invaded by those swarming myriads whom Charles Martel with difficulty repulsed on the great day of Poitiers. But now at last in the year 750, eighteen years before the accession of Charlemagne, there had come a change; the unity of Islamism was broken, and the divisions that thus crept in, even more than the sword of Charles Martel, saved Europe from Moslem domination. The Ommayad caliphs in the luxurious delights of Damascus had forgotten some of the stern simplicity of their earlier predecessors. A new and more austere claimant to their religious throne presented himself in the person of Abul Abbas, who was descended from an uncle of the Prophet; and the old feud between the two tribes of the Koreish²⁶ and the Haschimites flared up into fierce civil war, the reigning Ommayads belonging to the former, and the revolting Abbasides to the latter class. In the great battle of Mosul (750), the Abbasides gained the upper hand; Merwan, the last Ommayad caliph, fled to Egypt, where he was slain, and a bloody massacre of eighty Ommayads at a banquet completed the ruin of the family.

From this ruin of a princely race one only escaped. The young Abderahman, son of Merwan, fled from Syria, and after many adventures and many narrow escapes, ever journeying westward, reached the tents of a tribe of Bedouins in Morocco with whom he claimed kinship through his mother, and who gladly granted him the asylum which he needed. While he was sharing their hospitality, there came an embassy from some of the chief Mus-

²⁶The Koreish is the most influential tribe of the Arabs. Their prominence is due to the fact that, early in the 5th century, they obtained and became the masters and guardians of the Kaabeh, in Mecca, which was a sacred shrine long before the days of Mohammed. Having once obtained the temple keys, they have succeeded in holding them against every effort to capture them. "Their possession of the temple-keys not only gave the tribe of Koreysh a semi-religious pre-eminence over all the other clans of Arabia, but also placed at their disposal the treasures of gold, silver, jewels, and other offerings accumulated by the pagan piety of ages in the temple of Mecca."—*Encyc. Brit.* ¶ The Abbasides, who were descended from Mohammed's uncle Abbas, became a powerful tribe and were caliphs of Bagdad for five centuries, from 750 to 1258.

sulmans of Spain to offer him supreme power in that country. The various *emirs* and *walis* who had been misgoverning that unhappy land for forty years since the Moorish conquest had given it neither prosperity nor peace; probably also there was a feeling that they had failed as champions of Islamism against Christianity. At any rate, there was a strong desire to try what unity and concentration under a resident and independent sovereign would accomplish, and for this purpose to take advantage of the presence of a high-spirited and courageous youth, the descendant of a long line of sovereigns. The invitation was gladly accepted. Abderrahman crossed over into Spain (755), won victory after victory over the representatives of his Abbaside foe, the chief of whom was named Yussuf-el-Fekri, and (though he did not himself assume the title of caliph), virtually founded the Caliphate of Cordova which, for nearly three centuries, often with brilliant success, guided the destinies of Mohammedan Spain.

But Abderrahman, though deservedly one of the favorite heroes of Saracen literature, did not win supreme power in Spain without a hard struggle, and even after he had conquered there was many a fresh outbreak of opposition to his rule. Though Yussuf-el-Fekri fell in battle (759), his sons, continually rebelling and continually pardoned by the magnanimous Abderrahman, filled the next twenty years with turmoil. It was one of these sons and a son-in-law of Yussuf who, together with a certain Ibn-el-Arabi (perhaps the governor of Barcelona), sought out Charles while he was holding his *placitum* at distant Paderborn, and begged his assistance against Abderrahman, promising that they would procure the surrender of several cities in Spain if he appeared in arms at their gates.

The offer came during one of those deceptive lulls in the Saxon war, when Charles was flattered with the hope that his work was completed. It was from this very assembly that Widukind was conspicuously absent, but Charles knew not as yet how much that absence imported. The offer was a tempting one and harmonized with Charles's general policy. Abderrahman was the enemy of the Abbaside caliph, and the Abbasides were Charles's friends. There was, too, a prospect of continuing the work which his father had so prosperously begun when he won back Narbonne from the infidels. As he listened, the three Mussulmans enlarged on the brilliant prospect before him, and very probably

held out hopes of the conquest of the whole peninsula. The question of the rival faiths, though of course it must have been present to Charles's mind, does not seem to have been the determining motive to this expedition as it was to the Saxon war. There is no foundation for the suggestion of some later chroniclers that he was moved to this enterprise by pity for the groans of the Spanish Christians under Saracen oppression. In fact, the situation of the Christians under Abderrahman seems to have been a very tolerable one²⁷; we shall see, the valiant little kingdom of the Asturias, which from its mountain stronghold was so gallantly maintaining the cause of Christian freedom against the Moors, got small help at this time from its mighty co-religionist.

Whatever the cause, Charles determined to accept the invitation to interfere in the affairs of the Spanish peninsula. At Easter (778) he was at Chaseneuil, in Aquitaine, about forty miles south of his grandfather's battlefield at Poitiers. He opened his campaign early; of course the warmer climate of Spain justified much earlier operations than were possible in the late spring of undrained Saxon-land. Having spent the winter in preparations, he had a large army at his disposal, and dividing it according to his usual custom, he ordered the Austrasian part of it to cross the Eastern Pyrenees. In this division of the army there were not only, as we might naturally expect, men of Septimania, of Provence and Burgundy, but some of Charles's new Lombard subjects from Italy, and even a contingent sent by the Bavarian Tassilo. Charles himself, with the western portion of his army, marched probably by the old Roman road, passing from St. Jean de la Port over a crest of the Pyrenees 5000 feet high, into that which has since become the kingdom of Navarre. The highest point of this road, the "*Summus Pyreneus*" of the Roman road books, looked down on the wild and narrow defile of Roncesvalles.

It had been ordered that the two sections of the army should meet at Cæsar-Augusta, now Saragossa, on the Ebro. Both sections appear to have crossed the Pyrenees without difficulty, and Charles, descending into Navarre, laid siege to Pamplona and took it apparently with little difficulty. The reader learns with some surprise that Pamplona had previously belonged to the little

²⁷Ed.'s Note: One must ask, tolerable compared to what? At best, Christians had to pay the *jizya*, and in fact there was great pressure to abandon Christianity and become Muslim; one may argue about more direct and violent persecution.

Christian kingdom of the Aſturias, againſt whom Charles muſt therefore have now been waging war.

And this was really the only warlike deed in the whole campaign: for all the reſt of the operations recorded by the chroniclers (who evidently have ſomething to conceal in this part of their ſtory) cannot be dignified by the name of war. Charles is ſaid to have crossed the Ebro by a ford, to have approached, perhaps entered, Saragoſſa, to have received the hoſtages whom Ibn-el-Arabi and another Saracen chief whom the chronicler calls Abuthaur (probably Abu Taker) brought to him. No doubt the hoſtages represented the ſurrender of a certain number of cities in the corner of Spain between the Ebro and the Pyrenees, but how many we have no means of deciding. In the month of Auguſt Charles ſet out on his return march, taking Ibn-el-Arabi with him in chains. Evidently the expedition had been a comparative failure; the large promiſes of Ibn-el-Arabi had not been fulfilled, and Charles, reſentful, perhaps ſuſpecting treachery, determined not to ſuffer the evil counſellor to be at large.

The cauſe of the failure was probably in part to be found in the premature riſing of Abderrahman-ibn-Habib, ſon-in-law of Yuſſuf, who, before Charles entered Spain, had landed in Murcia with an army of Berbers, and had raiſed the ſtandard of the Abbaſide caliphs againſt his namesake Abderrahman-ben-Merwan. The utter failure of this expedition probably made it hopeleſs for Charles to proceed beyond the Ebro.

Returning to Pamplona, Charles levelled the walls of that city to the ground, to prevent its rebelling againſt him, and then began his march across the Pyrenees. On the higheſt point of the paſs, an ambuſh had been planted by the Waſcones,²⁸ whoſe operations were concealed by the dense foreſts growing there. When the baggage-train and rear-guard came in ſight they daſhed down upon them. The ſurpriſe and the poſſeſſion of the higher ground fully compensated for the mountaineers' inferiority in arms and diſcipline; in fact, in ſuch an encounter the heavier armor of the Franks was a poſitive diſadvantage. By the confeſſion of the biographer of Charlemagne, at leaſt the whole of the rear-guard were cut to pieces, and with them fell many of the nobles of Charles's court, notably Eggihard, the ſeneſchal; Anſelm, the

²⁸Ed.'s Note: Baſques.

count of the palace; and Hruodland, the governor of the Breton March. As night soon fell and the nimble invaders dispersed rapidly to their homes and hiding-places, revenge was impossible, and Charles returned to Chasseneuil with clouded brow, all his satisfaction at his successes in Spain—such as they were—being marred by this dishonor to his arms and by the loss of so many of his friends.

The date of this disaster is fixed by the epitaph of the seneschal Eggihard to the 18th of August 778. The place, by undeviating tradition, has been identified with the wild gorge of Roncesvalles. It is indeed somewhat difficult to understand how even the main body of the Frankish army could have escaped, if the foes were on the very summit of the pass, and if the skirmish took place at Roncesvalles on the Spanish side of the mountain; but this may be accounted for by the distance at which the baggage-train and the rear-guard lagged behind the van.

It was at this same point of the Pyrenean ridge and through this same defile of Roncesvalles that Soult's gallant soldiers forced their way in 1813, when the French marshal made his brilliant, but unsuccessful, attempt to turn Wellington's position and raise the siege of Pamplona.

But who were these Wascones, and what was their quarrel with Charles? Certainly they were not Saracens or Mussulmans as the minstrels of later centuries supposed. A part of the mysterious Basque race, which has throughout the historic period occupied the high upland valleys on either side of the Western Pyrenees, and has given its name to Biscay in Spain and to Gascony in France, these mountaineers represent probably the oldest population of Europe of which any traces now remain. Their language, bearing no relation to any Aryan or Semitic tongue, is to this day one of the great unsolved enigmas of philology. As has been said, they were certainly not Mussulmans, and they may have professed and called themselves Christians, but it is not necessary to seek for any deep political combination, Christian or Mohammedan, to account for their attack on Charles's baggage-train. The men whose ancestors had been driven, perhaps two thousand years before, into those mountains by the Celts were determined, and had been determined ever since, to keep their last asylum free from the foot of the invader. Roman and Goth had vainly tried to subdue them, and now this Frankish interloper should have a

lesson that should prevent his paying too frequent visits to their mountains. Theirs was a savage love, not merely of independence but of absolute isolation; that, and the attractions of the Frankish baggage-train, seem quite sufficient to account for the disaster of Roncesvalles.

Among the nobles who fell was, as has been said, Hruodland, governor of the Breton March. This is none other than the far-famed Roland of mediæval romance. The minstrels and *trouveurs* of much later centuries have invented for him a relationship to Charlemagne, have mated him with Oliver, and have said a thousand beautiful things concerning his life and his heroic death; but, of all this, authentic history knows nothing. And yet authentic history cannot afford altogether to ignore even the Roland of romance, since it was

*De L'Allemaigne et de Rollant
Et d'Olivier et de Vassaux
Qui morurent en Rainschevaux,*

that Norman Taillefer sang as he spurred his horse and tossed his sword aloft before the battle of Hastings.²⁹ Even the mythical Roland had become, three centuries after the rout of Roncesvalles, a great name to conjure with.

As for Charles's attempt to annex territory to his kingdom south of the Pyrenees, it had to be abandoned for a time. The Saxon revolt under Widukind broke out, more stubborn and difficult to quell than ever. For the next eight

²⁹The Normans had crossed the English fosse, and were now at the foot of the hill, with the palisades and the axes right before them. The trumpet sounded, and a flight of arrows from the archers in all the three divisions of William's army was the prelude to the onslaught of the heavy-armed foot. But before the two armies met hand to hand, a juggler or minstrel, known as *Taillefer*, the Cleaver of Iron, rode forth from the Norman ranks as if to defy the whole force of England in his single person. He craved and obtained the duke's leave to strike the first blow; he rode forth, singing songs of Roland and of Charlemagne—so soon had the name and exploits of the great German become the spoil of the enemy. He threw his sword into the air and caught it again; but he presently showed that he could use warlike weapons for other purposes than for jugglers' tricks of this kind; he pierced one Englishman with his lance, he struck down another with his sword, and then himself fell beneath the blows of their comrades. A bravado of this kind might serve as an omen, it might stir up the spirits of the men on either side; but it could in no other way affect the fate of the battle."—Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, iii. 319.

years (778–785) Charles was too much occupied with the hard reality of strife in the marshes and forests of Saxon-land to have leisure for pursuing a visionary sovereignty on the banks of the Ebro. Then came the trouble with Tassilo, and, immediately following upon it, those wars with the Avars which will be described in the next chapter. But though during this period most or all of the cities in Spain which had accepted Charles as their lord were probably won back by Abderrahman, the hope of reconquering a Spanish kingdom was never abandoned, and the execution of the scheme was committed to the King of Aquitaine, or rather to his counsellors. For this King of Aquitaine was Charles's fourth son Louis, who with a twin brother had been born in 778, while Charles himself was prosecuting the war in Spain. Born in Aquitaine, this child—one day to be the gentle and much worried Emperor Louis the Pious—was, as we have seen, when only three years old, anointed in Rome by the pope as king of his native land; and in that land his boyhood and early manhood appear to have been spent. During those years of immaturity, the government was of course in the hands of counsellors, who seem to have executed the commands of the real ruler Charles with vigor and prudence.

In 788 Abderrahman died, and was succeeded by his youngest son Hescham, a Mussulman pietist. The fierce, and for the time successful, invasion of the Narbonese province which was made by Hescham's general Abd-el-Melec was perhaps the cause which stirred Louis's council to commence a war of reprisals. In 796 the country of the Saracens was ravaged by a Frankish army. In 797 Huesca was besieged, but in vain. In 801 Barcelona, which had changed hands two or three times between Christian and Mussulman, was subjected to a rigorous siege, which lasted according to one account seven months, and according to another two years. The city was at last forced to surrender, and Zaid, its governor, who had in former years played fast and loose with the Frankish alliance, was sent in chains to Charles's court. Between 809 and 811 there were three attempts, the last a successful attempt, to capture Tortosa, the strong city which commanded the mouth of the Ebro. All these conquests seem to have been retained during the lifetime of Charles. What was perhaps more important, a firm alliance was formed with the young Alfonso the Chaste, who, during his fifty years' reign (791–842) extended the frontiers and consolidated the strength of the Christian kingdom of the Asturias. This

alliance, so obviously for the interest of both parties, cannot have existed in the year of Roncesvalles; but now we are told that “there came to the court of Charles an ambassador of Hadebonsus, King of Galicia and the Asturias, presenting a tent of wonderful beauty,” and that “Charles so bound Hadebonsus to him as an ally that the latter, whenever he sent him letters or ambassadors, would never allow himself to be called anything else than ‘King Charles’s own man.’”

At first sight, the result of these wars beyond the Pyrenees and the consequent foundation of the Spanish March, which stretched from those mountains to the Ebro, may seem unimportant, as we know that the Frankish kings made no permanent acquisition of territory in Spain. But on the other hand, by the diversion which they caused, they perhaps prevented the Saracen rulers of Spain from crushing the infant kingdom of the Asturias, and the counts of Barcelona, whom they settled in the Spanish March, after having gradually relinquished the position of vassals to the French kings, became independent Christian sovereigns, and eventually acquired by marriage the rich heritage of the kingdom of Aragon.³⁰

II Wars with Avars and Slaves

IT is a remarkable ethnological fact, and one for which there does not seem any obvious explanation, that, almost ever since the great barbarian

³⁰After Charlemagne had delivered France and Germany from external enemies, he turned his arms against the Saracens of Spain. “This was the great mistake of his life... In seeking to invade Spain, Charlemagne warred against a race from whom Europe had nothing more to fear. His grandfather, Charles Martel, had arrested the conquests of the Saracens; and they were quiet in their settlements in Spain, and had made considerable attainments in science and literature. Their schools of medicine and their arts were in advance of the rest of Europe. They were the translators of Aristotle, who reigned in the rising universities during the middle ages. As this war was unnecessary, Providence seemed to rebuke Charlemagne. His defeat at Roncesvalles was one of the most memorable events in his military history.... The Frankish forces were signally defeated amid the passes of the Pyrenees; and it was not until after several centuries that the Gothic princes of Spain shook off the yoke of their Saracenic conquerors, and drove them from Europe.”—John Lord, *Beacon Lights of History*. Ed.’s Note: To say this war was unnecessary is plainly, historically false; that it was practically a mistake is a different matter.

migrations of the fourth century, the country between the Danube and the Carpathian mountains has been occupied by a people belonging to that which, for want of a better word, we call the Turanian stock; and yet that this Turanian deposit should not have been one and the same throughout, but was the result of three distinct migrations. In the fourth century the great non-Aryan nation on the Middle Danube was the Huns; from the tenth century to the present day it has been that noble nation whom their Slavonic neighbors have named Hungarians, but who call themselves Magyars; between 567 and 800, it was the savage and somewhat uninteresting people of the Avars.³¹ The power of the Avars was at its height in the reign of the Emperor Heraclius (626), when they formed the siege of Constantinople, and, joining hands with the Persians, had well-nigh accomplished the ruin of the eastern Empire. Soon after this came the revolt of the Bulgarians from the Avar sway, and from that time onward, the power of the Avars steadily declined, but though no longer formidable to Constantinople, they were still securely quartered in the vast plains of Hungary, and were most unwelcome neighbors to their old allies the Lombards of Italy. Twice in the course of the seventh century had they descended upon the duchy of Friuli, and each time their invasions had been marked by that character of destruction and purposeless brutality which has ever been the especial note of the Tartar conqueror.

If the Avars were at all like their Hunnish kinsmen, which is not improbable, they were small of stature and swarthy in color. Their long locks hanging down behind in a kind of woven pigtails are specially noticed by the Frankish poets. They were essentially a predatory nation, and (again arguing from the analogy of the Huns) we may presume that they were a nation of horsemen, dashing hither and thither on their nimble and hardy ponies, and vanishing ere the heavy squadrons of the Greeks or the Lombards could come up with them. They had one chief ruler, who was called the *chagan* of the Avars—the same title with which we are familiar as the Tartar khan—and under him, in a degree of subordination which it would be hopeless now to determine, were lieutenants or sub-kings, who bore the title of *tudun*. We hear also of the *jugur*, apparently not a proper name, but the title of a chief who contests the supremacy with the *chagan*. *Tarchan* seems to be a collective word for

³¹See p. 104, note 6.

the Avar nobility.

The capital of the Avars consisted of a series of earthworks, which were known (probably to their German neighbors, not to themselves) by the collective name of the *Hring*. Of this Hring an interesting description is given by the monk of St. Gall,³² who wrote some ninety years after its destruction, but who professes to tell the story as he heard it in his boyhood from an old soldier named Adalbert, who had served in the Avar campaigns. With a charming touch of nature, the old monk describes how the veteran used to prose on about his warlike experiences, and how he as a boy resisted, and often escaped from the tedious tale, but yet was in the end forced to listen and to learn.

He says: "The land of the Huns or [Avars] as Adalbert used to tell me was girdled with nine circles. Then said I, who had never seen any circles [circular fences] except those made of osiers, 'What sort of marvel was that, sir?' and he answered, 'It was fortified with nine *hegin*.' I, who had never seen any hedges except those with which the crops are guarded, asked him some more questions, and he said, 'One circle was as wide as the distance from Zurich to Constance [thirty miles]; it was made of stems of oak, beech, or fir, twenty feet high and twenty feet broad. All the hollow part [between the walls] was filled either with very hard stones, or with most tenacious chalk, and then the top of the structure was covered with strong turfs. In between the turfs were planted shrubs which were pruned and lopped, so as to make them shoot forth boughs and leaves. Between one mound and another the villages and farms were placed, always within earshot of one another; and opposite to them the walls (in themselves impregnable) were pierced by narrow gateways, through which the inhabitants, both those who lived in the inner circle and those who were in the outer ring, used to sally forth for the sake of plunder. From the second circle, which was constructed like the first, there was a distance of twenty Teutonic or forty Italian miles to the third, and so on to the ninth, though [of course], each successive circle was smaller than the one before it. And from circle to circle the farms and dwellings were so arranged on all sides, that an alarm could be given by sound of the trumpet from each circle to its neighbor.'"

It is easy to see that this description cannot be scientifically accurate (the

³²See p. 162, note 4.

distance between the “rings” especially must be greatly over-stated): but still, this sketch of the camp-city of a robber horde, entrenched in the plains of Hungary in order to make war on the growing civilization of the west, is surely worthy of our attention, and helps us to understand what were the difficulties of Charles and his subject princes in breaking the power of this barbarous race.

It will be remembered that one of the grounds of accusation against the insubordinate duke of Bavaria was that he had been intriguing with the Avars against his lord. It is probable that, sooner or later, when he found Charles bent on his destruction, Tassilo did make overtures of some kind for a league of mutual defence with his formidable eastern neighbors. Certain it is that they came, though too late to help him, with two armies against the Franks (788). One army went southward against the duchy of Friuli, the other westward against Bavaria. Both were defeated, the latter at Ips on the Danube (about forty miles south of Linz), having only just touched the frontier of Bavaria. Enraged at meeting such a hostile reception from the Bavarians whom, as they said, they came to help, they made another invasion later in the same year; but the two brave *missi* of Charles, Grahamann and Audacer, who had repelled the previous invasion, now again won a signal victory. Great was the slaughter on the field, and multitudes of the flying Avars were whelmed in the waters of the Danube.

It is probable that Charles was already revolving in his mind plans for the entire subjugation of the barbarous Avar nationality, but he knew that such an enterprise would require long preparations, and meanwhile events were again occurring on the Elbe which required his immediate attention. The Saxons, it is true, were still apparently submissive to the yoke—we are now in that seven years’ peace (785–792) which followed the submission of Widukind—but there was a fierce and warlike Slavonic tribe called by themselves Welatabi, but by the Franks Wiltzi, who dwelt beyond the Elbe in the country which has since been named Pomerania, and these people, having by the subjugation of the Saxons become next-door neighbors to the Frankish state, was displaying those qualities which generally bring the less civilized race into collision with the more civilized, when a narrow boundary divides them. As the chronicler puts it: “This people was ever hostile to the Franks,

and was wont to pursue with their hatred, to oppress and harass in war all their neighbors who were either subject to the Franks or in league with them. Whose insolence the king thought he ought no longer to put up with, and he therefore determined to attack them in war, and, having collected a large army, he crossed the Danube³³ at Cologne" (789). He marched through Saxon-land, crossed the Elbe by two bridges, led his army (in whose ranks fought many of the lately subdued Saxons) into the hostile territory, and, according to the usual formula, laid everything waste with fire and sword. The Wiltzi, though a warlike people, lost heart, and when the oldest and most powerful of their chiefs, a man named Dragawit, came in and made his submission to Charles, all the others followed his example. There were the usual oaths of vassalage, surrender of hostages, perhaps a promise of tribute: but although from the way in which it is mentioned by Charles's biographer it is evident that this campaign against the Wiltzi was an arduous one, it cannot be said to have produced any enduring results. Speaking generally, the Elbe remained the boundary of the Frankish kingdom. The various Slavonic tribes on the other side of it were, to borrow a term from modern diplomacy, "in the Frankish sphere of influence," but they were not obedient citizens of the Frankish state.

We return to the affairs of the Avars. The year 790 was a quiet one, so much so that Charles, now verging on his fiftieth year, and "fearing to grow torpid through lack of exercise," sailed up the Main and the Franconian Saale to his palace of Königshofen by the banks of the latter river, and returned in like manner to Worms. But even in this year there were discussions and altercations concerning boundaries with the ambassadors of the Avars. Charles was evidently making his preparations and accumulating materials for his case against the doomed nationality.

Next year, 791, the storm burst, and Charles made his great, his only personally commanded, expedition into Avar-land. At a council of Franks, Saxons, and Frisians held at Ratisbon, it was decided that "on account of the great and intolerable malice which the Avars had shown towards the Holy Church and the Christian people, and the impossibility of obtaining justice at their hands by means of the royal messengers, a hostile expedition should march against them." The whole army marched to the river Enns, the

³³Rhine?

boundary of Avar-land, and there for three days sang litanies and witnessed solemn masses imploring God "for the safety of the army, the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, and victory and vengeance against the Avars." Charles then, according to his usual custom, divided his army, marching himself along the south bank of the Danube, and sending the Saxon and Frisian auxiliaries with some Franks along the northern bank. The Avars had erected two strongholds, one on each side of the river, at a little distance above the modern city of Vienna: but they were struck with panic fear when they saw the two columns marching on either side of the river, and the ships (laden probably with provisions) sailing majestically between them. They abandoned their strongholds without striking a blow, "and so, Christ leading on his own people, both armies entered the country without sustaining any loss." It was, in fact, a military promenade. Charles marched through the country, ravaging as he went, as far as the river Raab, and then, "after traversing and laying waste a great part of Pannonia, carried back his army safe and sound into Bavaria. This expedition was made without inconvenience of any kind, save that in that part of the army which the king commanded, so great a pestilence arose among the horses that scarcely the tenth part out of so many thousands of horses is said to have remained alive." The king returned to Ratisbon, which he evidently intended now to make his headquarters till the end of the Avar war, and kept his Christmas there.

Next year, however (792), broke out the conspiracy of Pippin the Hunchback, and this probably occupied so much of Charles's attention as to make it impossible to undertake an expedition into Avar-land. He remained, however, during the whole year in Bavaria, and ordered the construction of a bridge of boats which he might in the next campaign throw across the Danube, and so at any moment unite the two armies marching along the opposite banks of the river.

In 793 came the terrible tidings of the destruction of Theodoric's army by the banks of the Weser and the rekindling of the Saxon war, deadlier and fiercer than ever. The abortive attempt to canalize the feeders of the Danube and the Rhine, and so unite those two great arteries of his kingdom, occupied Charles all the summer of that year. On its failure he recognized that the war against the Avars must be suspended for a season, at any rate as far as his personal

share in it was concerned. He set his face northward and made Frankfurt, Aachen, and the towns of Saxon-land itself his abiding places during the six years that followed.

But it seems that the great campaign of 791 had been even more successful than it was thought to be at the time. There appear to have been jealousies and rivalries in the Avar kingdom which, as soon as the restraint of fear was removed, as soon as it was seen that the *chagan* was not invincible, broke forth into open dissension and completed the wreck of the barbarous state. In the summer of 795, while Charles, keenly intent on the Saxon war, was encamped by the Elbe in a place near to the present site of Lüneburg, there came to him messengers from a *tudun* of the Avars announcing his willingness to be baptized and to hand over his people and land to the Frankish king. And in fact next year this *tudun* came according to his promise to Aachen, and there made his formal submission to Charles. He and his followers were baptized and returned home enriched by royal gifts.

But meanwhile there had been more evident tokens of the utter collapse of the Avar kingdom. The conduct of the war after Charles's departure had apparently been left to the duke of Friuli, who inherited the hatred of two centuries of border wars between his duchy and the Avars. The duke now ruling was a Frank named Eric, a man distinguished in the wars, and who might truly be called a paladin of Charles's court, but also a generous benefactor of the poor, a friend of the Church, a man to whom Paulinus, Bishop of Aquileia, addressed a treatise on practical religion (perhaps something like Jeremy Taylor's treatise on *Holy Living*), evidently with the assurance that it would meet with a hearty welcome from his friend. This devout and valiant warrior, in the late autumn of 795, invaded Avar-land, penetrated to the far-famed *Hring*, pierced through all its seven circles, and made himself master of the immense hoard which the *chagans* had been piling up there for two centuries. It was no wonder that he found an enormous accumulation of treasure, for, besides the results of the mere robber raids which the predatory Avars had made on all the surrounding peoples, during a great part of the seventh century the eastern emperors had been forced to pay 80,000 or 100,000 golden *solidi*³⁴ as a yearly tribute to

³⁴ The *solidus* was a Byzantine coin worth about \$5.12 of United States money. Ed.'s Note: This was true in 1897, when Hodgkin's work was published. According to the U.S. Bureau of

these terrible neighbors; nay, on one occasion the Emperor Heraclius had to purchase peace from them at the price of 200,000 *solidi*. The locking up of such a vast quantity of the only considerable European currency in this barbarian stronghold must have sensibly affected the economic condition of Europe, and it would not be surprising if future inquirers should discover that there was a great rise of prices as the consequence of its dispersion. Besides the hoarded *solidi* there were gorgeous arms, silken tissues, and many other precious things; and all these, according to one annalist, were sent piled on fifteen great wagons, each drawn by four oxen, to Charles at Aachen. The courtiers and nobles received generous presents from the king out of the great hoard; the pope and his chief ecclesiastical friends were not forgotten, but much also was laid up in the royal treasury and not distributed till the king's death.

In the next year (796) Charles's son Pippin, King of Italy, followed up Eric's success; again visited the mysterious *Hring* to complete the work of spoliation, drove the Avars across the Theiss, and visited his father at Aachen, bringing with him the plunder of the conquered people.

There were indeed some upflickerings of the apparently extinguished fire. The baptized *tudun* failed to keep his oath of fealty to Charles, and had to be punished for his perfidy. In 799 Gerold, the Frankish governor of Bavaria, brother of Charles's late queen Hildegard, fell in battle with the insurgent Avars. But this Turanian people made not near so obstinate or long continued a resistance as the Teutonic Saxons. In the year 805 we find the *capchan*, who was a Christian and bore the Greek name Theodore, humbly petitioning the Emperor Charles that on account of the needs of his people a place of habitation might be assigned to them between Sabaria and Carnuntum (the country round the Neusiedler See). His request was granted, and he returned to his people enriched by presents from the emperor, but soon after died. The new *chagan* soon after "sent one of his nobles praying that he might have the ancient honor which the *chagan* used to have among the Avars. To which prayer the emperor gave his assent, and ordered that the *chagan* should have the supremacy over the whole kingdom according to the old custom of the Avars."

Labor Statistics, \$5.12 in 1913 (as far back as their system will go) is \$175.01 in August of 2026.

After this we practically hear no more of the Avars during the lifetime of Charles. The power of the great Turanian kingdom was utterly broken, and possibly, but for the invasion of the Hungarians, who appeared upon the scene about seventy years after the death of Charlemagne, there would have been a complete reconquest of the lands of the Middle Danube by the Teutonic race. It must not be forgotten, however, that here, as well as further north, Sclavonic tribes were hovering round the eastern border of the Frankish kingdom, and, in fact, it was in a war with one of these tribes, the Croatian inhabitants of Tarsatica on the Adriatic, that the valiant Eric of Friuli lost his life (799). The news was brought to King Charles at Paderborn at the same time as the tidings of the death of his brother-in-law, Gerold, and saddened him in the midst of his Saxon victories. Bishop Paulinus wrote a Latin elegy on the death of his friend, in which, like David in his lament over Saul, he prayed that neither dew nor rain might fall on the Liburnian shore, nor corn nor wine might gladden the hills on which the noble Eric met his doom.

£ Relations with the East

NOW that we are approaching the most important event in the life of Charlemagne, his assumption of the imperial title, it will be necessary to glance at his relations with the line of sovereigns who alone up to the year 800 wore the title of emperor, the Cæsars of Constantinople.

It will be hardly needful here to repeat the warning given by many recent historians against considering the state which was governed from Constantinople, between 476 and 800, as anything else than the *Roman* empire. As its center of gravity was now on the Bosphorus instead of being on the Tiber, and as its chief possessions were situated on the east of the Gulf of Venice, or even on the east of the Archipelago, it is difficult to avoid speaking of it as the eastern empire; but for all the centuries between the fifth and the ninth we must remember that this is not a strictly accurate expression. It was during all that period "*the empire*," "the dominion of the world," nay, it was still the "Roman republic," though the man who sat in Julius Cæsar's seat was practically the uncontrolled despot of the Roman world.

And during all these intermediate centuries, though the empire might be cut very short, by Frank and Goth and Saxon in the west or by the Saracen in the east, it would be safe to say that it never acquiesced in its limitations. Pre-eminently the wonderful reconquests of Italy, of Africa, of part of Spain, which were wrought in the sixth century by the generals of Justinian, might well keep alive the hope that, after the "little systems" of barbarian and infidel had "had their day," the true divinely-appointed world-ruler would emerge from his temporary eclipse and be again supreme all round the shores of the Mediterranean.

Doubtless, though the name "Roman" was still kept and still gloried in, the empire was, with each succeeding century, becoming more thoroughly Greek, or rather Graeco-Asiatic, in its character. From this point of view it has been observed by a modern historian that the great pestilence which raged in 747 (five years after the birth of Charles) was an important factor in the transformation of the empire. "A vast portion of the inhabitants of Byzantium, who maintained Roman character and many Roman traditions amid all their half-Hellenic, half-Oriental ways, had been carried off by the plague, and were replaced by pure Greeks who had not inherited the effect of Roman influence. This was an important step in the direction of becoming a Greek nationality, to which goal the Roman empire was steadily tending" (Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, ii. 456).

But, notwithstanding this, the emperor at Byzantium never forgot that he was Roman, but always looked upon Italy as his lawful, his almost inalienable, possession. Gaul, Spain, Britain—it might be necessary to abandon these to the barbarians—but Italy, but Rome, were rightfully his, and all the shades of all the buried Cæsars would pass in angry procession before the eyes of the degenerate successor who should be so base as formally to abandon his right to hold them. This, or something like this, we may believe to have been the secret underlying thought of the Leos and the Constantines when they heard what the Frank was doing in Italy.

Through the greater part of the eighth century the Iconoclastic controversy was the dominating element in the politics of the empire. We have already seen something of the career of the first great image-breaker, Leo III. On his death, which happened in 740 (two years before the birth of Charlemagne), he was

succeeded by his son Constantine V, as able a general, as strong a statesman, and as determined an image-breaker as his father. He was a great enemy also of the monks, and both they and the image-worshippers suffered at his hands a persecution which (at any rate according to their account of it) might seem to recall the days of Decius and Diocletian.

To the court of Constantine V fled the young Adelchis, son of Desiderius, on the downfall of the Lombard kingdom (774).³⁵ He was well received by the emperor, who bestowed upon him the high-sounding title of Patrician, thus making him, as far as rank in the empire went, at least the equal of his conqueror, Charles. We have seen how the combination of rebellious Italian dukes, independent princes, and Byzantine generals, which was formed to restore Adelchis to the Lombard throne, failed, owing to the death of Constantine V (September 775), and how Hrodgaud of Friuli was left alone to bear and to sink under the vengeful might of the Frankish king.³⁶

The Emperor Constantine V was succeeded by his son Leo IV, surnamed the Khazar, his mother having been a princess of that barbarous Tartar tribe, who dwelt by the Sea of Azof and under the Caucasus. The strain of barbarian blood did not bring strength to the character of the young emperor. Leo IV, though an earnest image-breaker, was distinctly a weaker man than his father, and during his short reign the cause of Iconoclasm probably retrograded rather than advanced.

The five years during which Leo the Khazar was on the throne (775–780) were years during which Charles gave little attention to the affairs of Italy, having much to occupy him elsewhere, for these were the years of Roncesvalles and of the fresh outbreak of the Saxon revolt. His friend and clamorous dependant, however, Pope Hadrian, sent him frequent cries for help. “The Greeks hateful to God” (that is the generals and ministers of Leo the Khazar) were conspiring with the “most unutterable” Lombards of Benevento to seduce the towns in Campania from their allegiance to Charles and Hadrian. The island of Sicily, the one secure stronghold of the Byzantine power during all these centuries, was the focus of this strife, but in order to prosecute it more successfully the patrician of Sicily took up his headquarters at Gaeta,

³⁵See p. 167 et seq.

³⁶See pp. 189 et seq.

and from thence, in concert with the duke of Naples, was pressing hard upon those Campanian and Latian cities which kept their loyalty to the pope. Moreover, when Hadrian wrote one of his most urgent letters, in 779, it was daily expected that “the son of the most unutterable and long ago absolutely unmentionable king Desiderius” would land in Italy with soldiers lent him by his imperial ally and head the anti-Papal, anti-Frankish coalition.

Still, however, Adelchis lingered in Constantinople, and once again a vacancy in the palace of the Cæsars saved Italy from a war. On the 8th of September 780, Leo the Khazar died and was succeeded by his son Constantine VI, a boy of nine years old, ruling not under the regency of, but jointly with, his mother Irene. This woman was a daughter of Athens and a secret worshipper of images, though in her father-in-law’s lifetime she had solemnly sworn always to adhere to the party of the Iconoclasts. Like Queen Athaliah of old, she was passionately fond of power, both for its own sake and as helping her to maintain the cause of idolatry against the religious reformers, and she was ready, in defence of her darling schemes of ambition, to violate not only the oath which she had given to her father-in-law—that was a light and pardonable offence—but the deepest and holiest instincts of a woman’s heart, the love of a mother for her only son.

For the first ten years of the joint reign (780–790) the lad, Constantine VI, quietly submitted to his mother’s ascendancy, and only her will and her projects require the historian’s attention. The Iconoclastic spirit was strong among the soldiers of her late husband’s family, and she had to wait four years before she could openly take steps towards the restoration of the worship of images; but she seems at once to have ceased the attacks on Hadrian’s subject cities, and to have assumed a more friendly attitude towards Charles, who was not himself at this time interested in the Iconoclastic controversy, but whose friendship was important if the patriarchate of Constantinople was to be reconciled with that of Rome. Thus it came to pass that in 781, during Charles’s second visit to Rome, there appeared in that city two high nobles of the Byzantine court, the *sacellarius* Constans and the *primicerius* Mamalus, who brought proposals for a marriage between the young emperor and Charles’s daughter Hrotrud, whom the Greeks called Eruthro. It was only an alliance at some future day that was talked of, for the prospective bridegroom was

but ten years old, and the Frankish princess was probably about eight. But the match was a splendid one, there having been no previous instance of a matrimonial alliance between the Roman Cæsars and the Frankish kings, and Charles gladly accepted the offer.

A tutor named Elissæus was sent to the Frankish court to instruct the future empress in the Greek tongue, and there was peace in Italy between the Franks and the generals of the empire.

During these years of peace Irene was maturing her plans for the restoration of image-worship. In 784, Paul, the Patriarch of Constantinople, resigned his great office and became a monk, acknowledging to all the world that his conscience was troubled by the isolation of Constantinople from all the other Patriarchates on the ground of Iconoclasm. Nothing could have suited Irene's plans better than this resignation. Her secretary Tarasius, though a layman, was made patriarch in the room of Paul, evidently on the understanding that images were to be restored. In August 785, an imperial letter from Constantine and Irene was addressed to Pope Hadrian, begging him to fix a time for the convocation of a general council at Constantinople to settle the question of Iconoclasm. The pope of course gladly consented, though he took advantage of the reopened intercourse with Constantinople to demand the restoration of the "patrimony" (probably in Sicily) which had been taken away from St. Peter's see by the first Iconoclastic emperor: and though he also held up to the Byzantine rulers the admirable example of Charles, "King of the Franks and Lombards, and patrician of Rome, who had in all things obeyed the admonitions of the pope his spiritual father, had subdued to himself the barbarous nations of the west, and had given back to the church of St. Peter many estates, provinces, and towns, of which it had been despoiled by the faithless Lombards."

The general council was opened at Constantinople in August 786, but failed of its purpose. The Iconoclastic spirit was still too strong among the soldiers who were quartered in Constantinople, old comrades of Leo III and his son. The church was invaded by them, and the image-worshipping bishops departed in fear. Next year, however, care having been taken to dispose of the Iconoclastic troops elsewhere, a general council was held at Nicæa (24th September to 23d October 787), and there the *cultus* of images

was re-established in full glory, only with one of those distinctions dear to theologians which defined "that it was right to salute and grovel in adoration before the holy images, but not to give them that peculiar worship which is due to God alone."

Thus, then, the great cause of ecclesiastical contention was removed, and we might expect that the joyful event would be celebrated by the marriage of the young affianced pair, Constantine and Hrotrud, now aged sixteen and fourteen respectively. On the contrary, this was the very year in which, after mysterious embassies backwards and forwards between the two courts, the marriage treaty was broken off and the relations became more openly hostile than ever; but curiously enough (as is not unfrequently the case in such affairs) there is a conflict of testimony as to which side had the credit or discredit of breaking off the match. The Frankish annalists say or hint that Charles refused his daughter to the young Emperor, who was much angered by the refusal. A Byzantine historian says that "Irene broke off the treaty with the Franks and sent the Captain of the Guard to fetch a damsel from Armenia named Mary whom she married to her son the Emperor Constantine, he being much grieved thereat, and not liking his bride because his inclination was towards the daughter of Charles, King of the Franks, to whom he had been precontracted."

It is hopeless with our scanty materials to discover the reason of this mysterious rupture between the courts. One of the most careful of the German writers who have treated of this period attributes it entirely to Charles's invasion of Benevento and reduction of its prince Arichis to vassalage, which, as has been already related, occurred in the year 786. This, he considers, was a breach of the tacit agreement to maintain the Italian *status quo ante* entered into in 781, and was resented accordingly. Others have seen in it a stroke of policy on the part of Irene, who was already becoming jealous of her son's share in the Imperial authority, and feared to see him provided with a too powerful father-in-law. If it be permitted to hazard yet another conjecture, where all is conjectural, I would point out that in the interval between 781 and 787, Hildegard, the mother of Hrotrud, had died, and Charles had married another wife, the haughty and unpopular Fastrada. Possibly that proud and jealous woman resented the idea of seeing her little step-daughter raised higher

than herself by her exaltation to the throne of the Cæsars, and may have used her influence with her husband to entangle still further the already ravelled hank of the negotiations with Constantinople, and at last in disgust to break off the match altogether? The whole story is a remarkable illustration of the fact, so clearly shown in the negotiations for the Spanish marriage of Charles I when Prince of Wales, that a marriage treaty, if not very carefully conducted, is quite as likely to embroil two sovereigns as to unite them.³⁷

One curious, though not immediate, result of the rapidly increasing estrangement between Franks and Greeks was that in the great synod which Charles held at Frankfurt in 794 for the condemnation of the "Adoptian heresy."³⁸ Charles induced his bishops to pass a severe condemnation of "the synod held a few years before under Irene and her son which called itself the Seventh Ecumenical Council, but which was neither the seventh nor ecumenical, but was rejected by all present at Frankfurt as absolutely superfluous." At the same time it was declared by the assembled bishops that neither worship nor adoration was to be paid to the images of the saints. Thus was Charles, the great patron and defender of the papacy, actually brought into controversy with the pope on an important point of Christian practice.

The immediate effect of the rupture of the marriage treaty was seen in an invasion of Italy by the Greeks, in which at last the long-lingering Adelchis took part. The intention was to make an attack on Charles's dominions in combination with the prince of Benevento (on whom the dignity of patrician was conferred), perhaps also with Tassilo the Bavarian; but before the imperial troops landed in Italy, Arichis of Benevento was no more. He died on the 26th of August 787, a man still in the flower of his age. It is striking to observe how much Charles's upward course to empire was facilitated by the opportune deaths of his competitors. Carloman, Constantine V, Leo IV, and now Arichis

³⁷The wrangling between James I of England and Philip II of Spain over the terms of the marriage treaty between the Prince of Wales and the Infanta came near to involving the two countries in war.

³⁸Adoptionism, the heresy that Jesus was the Son of God by adoption only, caused much disturbance in the Spanish and Frankish churches in the latter part of the 8th century. It was promulgated chiefly by Felix, bishop of Urgel, and by Elipandus, archbishop of Toledo: it was resisted by Alcuin and by Charlemagne. It was condemned by the council at Ratisbon in 792, at Frankfort in 794, and at Aix-la-Chapelle in 799, and soon disappeared.

of Benevento, all died at the most seasonable time for the success of Charles's projects. At the time of the death of Arichis, his son and heir Grimwald III was in Charles's keeping as a hostage. Pope Hadrian earnestly besought the king never to permit one of the God-hated dynasty to ascend the Beneventan throne, but Charles, after some delay, allowed Grimwald to return and take his place in the palace of Benevento. He was, however, compelled to promise to pay a yearly tribute of 7000 *solidi*, to coin money with Charles's effigy, to date his charters by the years of the Frankish king, and in all things to acknowledge him as his overlord. For the present these conditions were kept, and at the crisis of the Byzantine invasion Grimwald III comported himself as a loyal vassal of Charles. So it came to pass that when at last the Byzantine troops landed in Calabria, they were met by the united forces of the Frankish king under his general Winighis, and the Lombard dukes of Spoleto and Benevento. The defeat of the Greeks was crushing (788). Four thousand of their warriors were slain, among them the *sacellarius* John, commander of the expedition; and one thousand were taken prisoners. Adelchis appears to have made his escape. He reappeared no more on the soil of Italy, but died many years after, an elderly, probably a wealthy, patrician at Constantinople. This last scion of the Lombard kings is not an interesting figure in history.

Charles's reply to this direct attack on his dominions in the south of Italy was to lay hands on the imperial province of Istria in the north, a conquest desirable in itself, for the cities of Istria were numerous and wealthy, and also one that facilitated the operations which he was planning against the Avars. The court of Constantinople, probably dispirited by the defeat of the great armament under the *sacellarius* John, seems to have accepted the rebuff. For several years after this we hear nothing more of Greek expeditions to Italy, though there may have been intrigues with the young prince of Benevento, who married a Greek wife named Wantia, a relative of the Emperor, and in various ways showed that he fretted under his galling vassalage to the Frankish king.

But in Constantinople itself during these years of truce with the West, strange and terrible events were happening. The young Emperor Constantine VI found as he grew up to manhood that he was an absolute cipher in his empire and in his palace. All power was kept by Irene in her own hands, all

orders went through her confidential minister, the eunuch Stauracius. To these two all suppliants addressed their petitions. Constantine himself was treated as of no account to any man. Brooding over the daily slights which he had to endure, and resenting also, it is said, the manoeuvre which had deprived him of his fair young Frankish bride and tied him to the unloved and childless Armenian, he began in 790 to look around for partisans who would enable him to effect a revolution and become a real instead of a puppet emperor. The plan of the conspirators (among whom were two patricians and the great minister called *magister officiorum*), was to arrest the empress, send her off to banishment in Sicily, and proclaim Constantine sole emperor. The ever watchful Stauracius, however, obtained intelligence of the plot, arrested the conspirators, ordered some of them to be flogged, tonsured, and sent into the Sicilian exile which they had planned for Irene; the *magister officiorum* received some degrading punishment and was imprisoned in his own house; and lastly this same punishment of seclusion was inflicted on Constantine, after his mother had herself struck him and attacked him with an angry woman's invective. Then a new and strange oath was administered to all the soldiers in the capital and its neighborhood. "So long as thou livest, O Empress! we will not suffer thy son to reign." These events took place in the spring or summer of 791. In September of that year there came a change. The soldiers who were stationed in Armenia, when they were required to take the new oath, refused. "We will not put the name of Irene before that of Constantine," said they, "but will swear obedience as of old to Constantine and Irene." The disaffection spread; the regiments which had sworn the new oath to Irene forgot their vows and joined the soldiers from Armenia. By the end of October the revolution was complete. Irene was compelled by the clamor of the soldiers to liberate her son from confinement; she was deprived of all power, and Constantine was hailed as sole emperor. Stauracius was beaten, tonsured, and sent into exile in Armenia. Aetius, another eunuch and confidant of Irene, was also banished, and a clean sweep was made of all the menial eunuch train, through whom apparently for ten years the empire had been governed.

But, unfortunately, the character of the young emperor, weakened by the subjection in which his mother had kept him, was utterly inadequate to the duties of his new position. With extraordinary folly, after a few months he

drew Irene forth from the seclusion of her palace, and allowed the people to shout once more, "Long life to Constantine and Irene." He went forth to war with the Bulgarians and was badly beaten. This humiliation of the imperial arms caused the soldiers in the city to plot for the elevation of Nicephorus, a half-brother of Leo IV and uncle of Constantine VI. The young emperor arrested Nicephorus and ordered him to be blinded; and at the same time the tongues of four other of his uncles were cut out (792). These barbarous punishments, blinding and mutilation, were characteristic of the Constantinople of that day, but the resort to them on so large a scale proved the alarm as well as the cruelty of the young emperor, and must have helped to lose him the hearts of his subjects. His mother and Stauracius (who was now back again in the palace) were thought to have counselled these cruel deeds; and they certainly succeeded in embroiling him with his old supporters, the Armenian soldiers, whose revolts plunged the empire in civil war.

The climax of the emperor's unpopularity seems to have been reached when (in January 795) he put away his Armenian wife, compelling her to enter a convent, and in September of the same year publicly celebrated his union with a lady of her bedchamber named Theodote. He had now lost the favor of the multitude, while his mother was ever at work forming a party among the officers by promises and bribes, suggesting that they should depose her son and proclaim her sole empress. On the 14th of June 797 Constantine went, after witnessing an equestrian performance in the circus, to worship in the church of St. Mamas in the environs of Constantinople. The conspirators, whose movements were directed by Stauracius, endeavored to seize him there, but he seems to have been warned, and escaped in the imperial boat to the Bithynian shore. Unhappily, his mother's friends and his own bitterest foes accompanied his flight. There was hesitation and delay, and there seemed a possibility that the soldiers would rally round him and his cause might yet triumph. The ruthless Irene sent a secret message to his adherents: "Unless in some way or other you effect his capture I will inform the emperor of all the plot which you and I have formed against him." Fear made the conspirators bold; they seized the emperor while at his prayers, forced him to re-embark, and hurried him back across the Sea of Marmora to Constantinople. There, after the lapse of some weeks, in the Purple Chamber of the palace, they put

out his eyes, purposely performing the cruel operation with such brutality as to endanger his life. It was, in fact, supposed by many that he was dead, but he appears to have lingered on through many revolutions, an obscure and forgotten sufferer, for more than twenty years after his mutilation.

The deed was done on Saturday the 15th of August 797, at the ninth hour of the day. On the same day of the week and at the same hour, five years before, had his uncle suffered the same punishment. Men observed the coincidence and traced a divine retribution therein. But with greater horror did they learn that the emperor had suffered this brutal punishment in the Purple Chamber, which was always reserved for the birth of an emperor's children. Here, in the very same room of the palace where he first saw the light, did he with the connivance, if not by the express command, of his mother lose the light of day and all that makes life worth living. "For seventeen days," says the historian, himself an image-worshipper and adherent of Irene, "the sun was darkened and did not give forth his rays, so that vessels lost their course and drifted helplessly, and all men said and confessed that because of the blinding of the emperor the sun did not show his beams. Thus did Irene his mother obtain supreme power."

The character of the Empress Irene receives unbounded praise from the writers of the image-worshipping party. She is for them "the most pious Irene," "that strong-minded and God-guided woman, if, indeed, it be right to call her a woman, who was armed against all foes and all calamities with truly masculine temper." "Irene, that strong-minded and God-beloved woman, if we ought to call 'woman' one who surpassed even man in her pious disposition, one through whom God mercifully expelled the crooked heresy which had crept snakelike into the Church and brought back orthodoxy."

But neither these flatteries of the monkish image-worshippers, nor her outward show of magnificence when, on Easter Monday (799), the proud Athenian rode forth from the Church of the Apostles in a golden car drawn by four white horses, which were driven by four patricians, and showered money among the multitude after the fashion of the ancient consuls of Rome, represented the real place of the empress in the hearts of her subjects. The rule of Irene meant, as every one knew, the rule and the bickerings of the eunuchs who advised her. Moreover, there was really no precedent for a woman sitting

alone in the seat of empire. When Pulcheria, sister of Theodosius II, was hailed as Augusta, it was on condition of her giving her hand to the soldier Marcian. Theodora and Sophia were Augustæ, but ruled only during the lifetime of their husbands. When Martina, widow of Heraclius, tried to pose as joint-ruler with her son and stepson (641), the multitude shouted an indignant denial of her claims. "How can you sit upon the throne and answer foreign envoys when they come to the royal city. God forbid that the polity of the Romans should come into such a plight as that." It was a hundred and fifty-six years since the Byzantine populace had hurled these words at Martina and compelled her to descend from the throne, but we may be sure that the spirit which prompted them still dwelt in the hearts of the mass of the people who yet called themselves Romans. To be ruled by a woman, and such a woman, the despoiler and all but murderer of her own son, was felt to be an unendurable humiliation. The insecurity of Irene's position was shown by the shortness of her reign, but that short reign of five years (797-802) was long enough to include, in a certain sense to necessitate, the great event which will be the subject of the following chapter.

¶ Carolus Augustus

THE events described at the end of the last chapter happened in August 797. In the autumn of the following year, when Charles was resting at Aachen from the fatigues of a Saxon campaign on the banks of the Elbe, there appeared before him two Byzantine ambassadors, Michael, aforetime patrician of Phrygia, and Theophilus, a priest of Blachernæ, who, on behalf of the Empress Irene, sought for and obtained the restoration of friendly relations between the empire and the kingdom. The covenant of peace was ratified by the return of an illustrious Greek captive, Sisinnius, brother of the Patriarch Tarasius, who had been taken prisoner probably in the Apulian war of 788.

But a far more distinguished visitor than either Michael or Theophilus was to visit Charles's court in the following year, and to plead in lowlier fashion for his help. To understand the nature of this visit we must go back for a few

years and glance at the events which had been happening not in the New but in the Old Rome.

On the day after Christmas Day, 795, died Pope Hadrian I after a long and eventful pontificate. The relations between him and Charles had not been always friendly, for Hadrian had found that no more than the Lombard king would the Frank grant the exorbitant demands for towns and lordships which were unceasingly urged in the name of St. Peter. Still there had been a certain similarity of spirit and temper which had drawn these two strong men together, and, as we have already seen, Charles mourned for the death of Hadrian as if he had been the dearest of his sons.

On the death of Hadrian, Leo III was immediately elected to the papal throne. He was a Roman by birth, an inmate from his childhood of the Lateran palace, and had gone through the regular gradation of ecclesiastical offices till he had reached the high position of papal *vestararius*. It would seem probable that he was the candidate most acceptable to the clerics of the Roman church, though the result showed that there was a large party among the great lay-officers of the papal court to whom his elevation was by no means welcome. He was, at a crisis of his fortunes, accused by bitter enemies of adultery and forgery, but no proof was offered of these charges, and there seems no reason to believe that his moral character was not stainless. There are some indications, however, that he was not loved by the people of Rome. Possibly his temper may have been harsh: possibly too they were beginning to chafe under the yoke of the dignitary who but lately was their spiritual pastor, sometimes their champion, but who now asserted himself as their sovereign.

Immediately on his elevation, Pope Leo sent messengers to Charles announcing his election and carrying to him the keys of St. Peter's tomb and the banner of the city of Rome. This act of submission to the great patrician of Rome, to whom the pope looked for confirmation of his rights and protection from his enemies, was represented in the celebrated mosaic in the Triclinium of the Lateran palace, of which a tolerably accurate seventeenth-century copy still exists on the outside wall of the oratory called the *Sancta Sanctorum*, immediately in front of the Lateran. In it the Apostle Peter, of colossal size, is represented sitting with the keys on his lap. Before him, on his right, kneels

Pope Leo, to whom he is giving the *pallium*; on his left “our lord Carulus,” to whom he gives a banner; and underneath is an inscription in barbarous Latin stating that the blessed Peter gives life to Pope Leo and victory to King Charles. Charles is represented as wearing a moustache, but no beard. He has a broad pleasant face and is crowned with a conical diadem.

The Frankish king replied to the new pope by sending to him his friend and chaplain Angilbert, bearing a letter in which he dilated on the various duties which Providence had assigned to its sender and its receiver. “It is ours with the help of the divine piety externally to defend the Holy Church of Christ by our arms from all pagan inroads and infidel devastation, and internally to fortify it by the recognition of the Catholic faith. It is yours, most holy father, with hands raised to God like Moses, to help our warfare; that by your intercession the Christian people may everywhere have the victory over its enemies, and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be magnified throughout the whole world.” At the same time Angilbert brought the share of the Avar booty which Charles had set aside for Hadrian, but which came too late to gladden the heart of the aged pontiff.

This exchange of embassies took place in 796. Two years later the Christian world was horrified by the news of a brutal outrage enacted in the streets of Rome. On the 25th of April 798, the pope was mounted and preparing to ride forth from Rome along the Flaminian Way, in order to celebrate what was called the Greater Litany, a religious function which had taken the place of the heathen *Robigalia*³⁹ and in which the divine protection was implored for the springing corn against the perils of blasting and mildew. Suddenly, ere he had emerged from the city, he was set upon by a band of ruffians who had been lying in wait at the church of St. Silvestro in Capite, on the right hand of the Corso. They tore him from his horse, they belabored him with cudgels; according to one account they tried to practice upon him the Byzantine atrocities of pulling out the eyes and cutting out the tongue; at any

³⁹The festival of the *Robigalia* was said to be instituted by Numa for the purpose of worshipping Robigus, or Robigo—for it is uncertain whether the divinity was masculine or feminine—in order to avert the blight of too great heat from the springing grain. With the ancient Romans the cereal festivals were held at the time of planting, and not, like our thanksgiving, after the harvest.

rate they left him speechless and helpless in the solitary street, for all his long train of attendants, as well as the crowd which had gathered after him to go forth in bright procession along the Flaminian Way, forsook him and fled.

There is some reason to suppose that this attack was an outburst of civic fury, exasperated by some acts of the unpopular pontiff; but there is no doubt that the movement was directed by two men, Paschalis and Campulus, who were high in office in the papal household, and one or both of whom were nephews of the pope's predecessor Hadrian. A lurid light is shed by this fact on the heart-burnings and angry disappointments which were often caused among the clients of a deceased pope by the election of his successor.

After suffering many indignities, the unhappy Leo was dragged at night to the monastery of St. Erasmus on the Cœlian hill. Here he was closely confined for some days, but he recovered somewhat from his bruises, and sight returned—miraculously the next generation said—to his injured eyes. By the help of a faithful servant, his chamberlain Albinus, he succeeded in escaping—probably by a rope—down the wall of the convent, and was taken by his friends to St. Peter's. Here he was soon in perfect safety, for the Frankish duke of Spoleto, Winighis, who had heard of the murderous assault, came with an army to his rescue and escorted him to his own city, a safe stronghold among the mountains of Umbria. The foiled conspirators, who had heard with terror of their victim's flight, vented their rage on the house of Albinus, which they gave to the flames. Probably for many subsequent months anarchy ruled in Rome.

In the disturbed state of Italy, and with Rome given over to his unscrupulous foes, the only resource left for the pope was in the protection of Charles; and to his court, or rather to his camp, for he was immersed in the Saxon war, Leo III repaired in the summer of 799. It was now more than forty-five years since a pope (Stephen II) had crossed the Alps on a similar errand. Much had happened in the interval. The monarchy of the "most unspeakable" Lombards had been overthrown; the successor of St. Peter had become one of the great princes of the earth; and yet, as Leo must with sadness have reflected, not even sovereignty had brought safety. "Wounded in the house of his friends," the bishop of Rome had received from the hands of his own courtiers and subjects treatment infinitely more cruel and contumelious than any that the much

vituperated Lombard had ever inflicted on his predecessors. Musing on these things, Pope Leo doubtless saw that the day-dream of a papal sovereignty extending over all Italy could not be realized. Rather must he make his Frankish friend and protector stronger in Italy. The patrician of Rome must take some higher and more imposing title, and must be induced to give more assiduous attention to the affairs of the Italian peninsula.

As in that earlier papal visit Charles, then a lad of twelve, had been sent to meet Stephen II, so now did Charles send his son Pippin (a young man of twenty-two and the crowned king of Italy) to meet Pope Leo. Pippin escorted the venerable guest into his father's presence. Pope and king embraced and kissed with tears. The clergy in the papal train intoned the *Gloria in Excelsis*, and the nobles and courtiers round added their joyful acclamations. This meeting took place at Paderborn, where Charles had built a new and splendid church in the place of the edifice often destroyed by the Saxons. In this church Pope Leo hallowed an altar, which he enriched with relics of the protomartyr Stephen brought by him from Rome, and assured the king that by the powerful intercession of that saint the church would be preserved from future devastation.

Leo remained probably for about two months, from July to September, at Paderborn, in constant intercourse with Charles. Much would doubtless be said in the conferences between the two potentates concerning the condition of the Church, the heresy of the Adoptians,⁴⁰ the Iconoclastic controversy, and above all concerning the charges brought against the pope's character by his relentless enemies in Rome. Was there also something said about that great event towards which, as we know, the course of history was tending, the bestowal of the imperial title on Charles? Here we have only conjectures to guide us, but in these conjectures we must take account of one most powerful influence upon which I have hitherto been silent, the influence of the absent but continually consulted Northumbrian, Alcuin.

Alcuin, born of a noble Anglian family about the year 735, and therefore some seven years older than Charles, was brought up from childhood in the monastic seminary of York, and there drank in with eager lips the learning, deepest and best of its day in all Europe, which that celebrated school imparted

⁴⁰See p. 222, note 38.

to its pupils. Bede, it is true, had died about the time of Alcuin's birth, but from Bede's pupil Ecgbert, Archbishop of York (732–766), and from his successor Ælbert (767–778), he acquired a knowledge, not only of theology, but also of many secular arts and sciences. To astronomy he was led by the intricate calculations and endless discussions concerning the true date of Easter. But in the archiepiscopal library, as Alcuin himself tells us, there was also a respectable collection of the Latin classics; Pliny, Cicero, Virgil, Lucan, Statius are all enumerated by him, as well as Aristotle, who was probably represented only by a Latin translation. To the study of these authors the young Northumbrian gave many industrious years; Virgil especially was long the master of his soul, and the legends of a later generation told how the visit of an evil spirit to his cell was necessary to frighten him away from the nocturnal study of the Mantuan bard into the repetition of the Psalms appointed for the midnight service. Certain it is, however, that he did not forsake the study of the profane authors, until they had thoroughly permeated his style. Although an ecclesiastic, he wrote Latin, both prose and verse, of which no Roman in the first century need have been ashamed. To pass from the continual barbarisms, obscurities, puerilities of Gregory of Tours, of Fredegarius, or even of the authors of the *Liber Pontificalis*, to the easily flowing prose or hexameter verse of Alcuin is like going from the ill-spelled productions of a half-educated ploughman to the letters of Cowper or the poetry of Goldsmith.⁴¹

Alcuin has been called the Erasmus of the eighth century, and though in one respect the comparison is too flattering, since the Northumbrian did but little for critical science, it gives on the whole not an incorrect impression of the literary position of this man, the “child and champion” of the Carolingian Renaissance. It is evident that he and the men with whom he associated, Angles, Saxons, or Franks, were tired of the barbarism which had pervaded Europe for three centuries, and looked back with longing, perhaps sometimes with unwise longing, to the great days of Roman supremacy and peace. Even their Teutonic names were to them somewhat of a humiliation. In the literary circle or academy which formed itself in Charles's court, chiefly under Alcuin's

⁴¹Ed.'s Note: Hodgkin's disdain for post-Augustan Latin is very typical of his time, and unfortunately of many classicists even today. We need not agree with that disdain to acknowledge that Alcuin was unquestionably a brilliant man.

influence, the members assumed classical names (like the Melancthon and Ecolampadius⁴² of a later Renaissance), and corresponded with one another under these disguises. Thus Alcuin himself was Flaccus Albinus, Riculf (afterwards Archbishop of Mainz) was Damœtas; Angilbert, Charles's chaplain, was Homer; Arno, Archbishop of Salzburg, was Aquila. The name of the great king himself was David, a name admirably chosen to express his piety, his success in war, and his love of women.

The event which brought "Albinus" and his "dearest David" together was a journey which Alcuin undertook to Rome in 781, in order to obtain the *pallium* for his friend and superior, Eanbald II, Archbishop of York. Alcuin himself was at this time, and in fact throughout middle life and old age, only a deacon, though from his learning and piety he wielded more influence than many bishops. Returning from Rome, he met Charles at Parma, and was entreated by him to return to Frankland on the accomplishment of his mission. He protested that he could only do this with the consent of his king and his archbishop, and these consents having been obtained, he returned to Charles's court and resided there, a sort of literary prime minister, from 782 to 796, with the exception of a visit to his own country between 790 and 792. Though apparently he never entered the monastic state, he received from Charles, as a piece of preferment, the headship of two abbeys, that of Bethlehem at Ferrières and that of St. Lupus at Troyes. In 796, feeling the need of repose, he obtained his master's reluctant permission to retire to the great monastery of St. Martin at Tours, which was placed under his rule, and where he spent the remainder of his days. This absence from the court is a fortunate thing for us, for to it we owe the letters between Charles and Alcuin, of which a considerable number are still preserved, and which show both king and deacon in no unpleasing light. Sometimes Alcuin advises the king to treat the conquered Saxons and Avars tenderly, and not to gall them with the yoke of tithes. Sometimes he explains to his royal friend the meaning of the terms Septuagesima and Sexagesima. Then he enters into long discussions about the calendar, the date of Easter, the intercalations necessary to bring the solar

⁴²Melan-Chthon is merely the Greek translation of the German Schwarz-Erd, or Black-Earth; and Eco-Lampadius is the Greek equivalent of the German Hans-Schein, which in turn was substituted for Hussgen or Heussgen.

and the lunar years into harmony. The king half mischievously refers these calculations to the well-taught pages of his palace, who discover in them some errors, which, after much mutual banter, the elder scholar is compelled to acknowledge. Always, however, the intercourse is friendly, sincere, elevating. The king does not patronize, and the deacon does not cringe. One cannot but feel in reading these letters that both men were made to be loved.

Such was the man who, as there is every reason to believe, had whispered to many of his friends the fateful word "*Imperator*" before Pope Leo III arrived, a hunted and half-blinded fugitive, at Charles's court.

In the month of May (799) Alcuin had written to his royal master a remarkable letter, commenting on the tidings which Charles had sent him of the assault on Pope Leo. From this letter it will be well to extract some sentences.

To his peace-making lord King David, Albinus wishes health. I thank your goodness, sweetest David, for remembering my littleness and making me acquainted with the facts which your faithful servant has brought to my ears. Were I present with you I should have many counsels to offer to your dignity, if you had opportunity to listen or I eloquence to speak. For I love to write concerning your prosperity, the stability of the kingdom given you by God and the advancement of the Holy Church of Christ. All which are much troubled and stained by the daring deeds of wicked men which have been perpetrated, not on obscure and ignoble persons, but on the greatest and the highest.

For there have been hitherto three persons higher than all others in this world. One is the Apostolic Sublimity who rules by vicarious power from the seat of St. Peter, prince of the apostles. And what has been done to him, who was the ruler of the aforesaid see, you have in your goodness informed me.

The second is the imperial dignity and power of the second Rome. How impiously the governor of that empire [Constantine VI] has been deposed, not by aliens, but by his own people and fellow citizens, universal rumor tells us.

The third is the royal dignity in which the decree of our Lord Jesus Christ has placed you as ruler of the Christian people, more excellent in power than the other aforesaid dignities, more illustrious in wisdom, more sublime in the dignity of your kingdom. Lo! now on you alone the salvation of the churches of Christ falls and rests. You are the avenger of crimes, the guide of the wanderers, the comforter of the mourners, the exalter of the good.

Have not the most frightful examples of wickedness now made themselves manifest in the Roman see where of old there was the brightest religion and piety? These men, blinded in their own hearts, have blinded him who was their true head. There is in that place no fear of God, no wisdom, no charity. What good thing can you look for where these are absent? These are the perilous times long since foretold by Him who was Himself the Truth, and therefore the love of many waxes cold.

Alcuin then advises his royal friend to make peace if possible with the “unutterable” people (the Saxons), to forbear threats in dealing with them, and to intermit, at any rate for a time, the exaction of tithes. Evidently this prudent counsellor felt that the affairs of Italy had now the most pressing claim on his master’s attention, and that it would be wise to concentrate all his forces for the solution of the problem which there awaited him.

It was then to a monarch thus prepossessed in his favor by the representations of one of his nearest friends that Leo III appealed in the interview at Paderborn. The pope’s accusers sent their representatives to the Saxon towns, repeating the charges of adultery and perjury, and claiming that the pope should be called upon to deny the truth of these charges on oath. Privily they gave him the advice of professed well-wishers that he should give up the contest, lay down his papal dignity, and retire in peace to some convent. But the king, while reserving the investigation into these charges for some future assembly to be held in Rome, showed by his conduct that he attached to them but little importance. After several weeks’ sojourn at Paderborn, Leo was dismissed with all honor from the camp and was escorted by royal

missi ("envoys") reverently back to Rome, where he received an enthusiastic welcome from his penitent subjects (30th November 799).

The close of this year was saddened by the tidings of the death of those two brave champions of Frankish civilization, Gerold and Eric. In the spring of 800, Charles set forth on an expedition into Neustria, a part of his dominions which he had apparently not visited for two-and-twenty years. Piratical raids of the Northmen seem to have been the determining cause of this expedition, the object of which was to put the coast of the Channel in a proper state of defence. He also, however, received the submission of some Breton chiefs who had long been in a chronic condition of revolt; he made the round of his villas and country palaces in Neustria; and above all he visited the tomb of St. Martin at Tours, and had a long spell of close and confidential intercourse with his friend Alcuin. Here at Tours his fifth and last wife Liutgard died (4th June 800), and her illness probably lengthened his stay in that city. At length, after revisiting Rhine-land and holding a *placitum* ("assembly") at Mainz (August 800) he began his last and most celebrated journey into Italy.

Having rested for seven days at Ravenna, where he probably inhabited the palace built by Theodoric wherein the Byzantine exarch had dwelt, he marched down the coast of the Adriatic to Ancona. From thence he dispatched his son Pippin to lay waste the territories of that unruly vassal, Grimwald of Benevento. Charles himself proceeded through the Picene and Sabine districts by the old *Via Salaria* ("Salt Road") and arrived at Nomentum, fourteen miles from Rome. Here he was met by the pope, who accosted him with every show of humility and deference. Pope and king supped together at Nomentum, and then Leo returned to arrange for the triumphal entry into Rome. Next day (24th November 800), this great pageant was enacted. The banners of the city of Rome borne by citizens, the gilt crosses borne by ecclesiastics, came in long procession to meet the great patrician. Groups of citizens and of the foreigners resident in Rome, Franks, Frisians, Saxons (among the latter doubtless many of our own countrymen), stationed at intervals along the Salarian Way, thundered forth their *laudes* ("praises," acclamations) as the king rode by. St. Peter's Church, now as before, was the goal of his pilgrimage, and on the broad marble stairs stood the pope, with all his train of bishops and clergy, to welcome him. He sprang from his horse, mounted the steps

(not now apparently on his knees), and after receiving the papal blessing went in and paid his devotions at the tomb of St. Peter.

The chief business which had brought King Charles to Rome was, of course, the inquiry into the brutal assault on the pope and the clearing of his character from the charges brought against him. Already the Frankish *missi* ("ambassadors") who accompanied Leo to Rome had held a preliminary inquiry, the result of which was that Paschalis and Campulus had been sent across the Alps to Charles for judgment. Now apparently they returned in his train, not so much to defend themselves on the score of the outrage (for their guilt was too clear) as to prove, if they could, their often-repeated accusations. A great synod was assembled at St. Peter's on the 1st of December, and was opened by a speech from the king. According to the papal biographer, the ecclesiastics composing the synod all with one accord declared: "We do not dare to judge the Apostolic see, which is the head of all the Church of God; for by it and by the Apostle's vicar we all are judged, but the see itself is judged of no man, and this has been the custom from old time." Whether this high papal doctrine was proclaimed and accepted or not, it certainly seems as if Paschalis and Campulus entirely failed to make good their charges; but the pope offered, if his conduct were not drawn into a precedent against his successors, to accept the challenge to clear himself by oath from the charges brought against him. It is possible that the pope was only slowly brought to make this concession, for it was not till more than three weeks after the assembling of the synod that the next step was taken. On the 23d of December, in the presence of the Roman clergy as well as of the Frankish followers of the king, Pope Leo appeared in the *ambo*⁴³ of St. Peter's, bearing a copy of the four gospels, which he clasped to his breast, and then he swore with a loud and clear voice: "Of all those charges which the Romans, my unjust persecutors, have brought against me, I declare in the presence of God and St. Peter, in whose church I stand, that I am innocent, since I have neither done those things whereof I am accused nor procured the doing of them."

The result of the whole investigation was that Paschalis and Campulus and their accomplices were found guilty of high treason and condemned to

⁴³The ambo was an elaborate pulpit or reading desk placed in the choir of the church and having two ascents, one from the east and the other from the west.

death, a sentence which, on the intercession of the pope, was commuted to perpetual banishment into Frank-land.

During the weeks that the papal trial was proceeding, Charles, of course, abode in Rome, whether in one of the old imperial dwellings on the Palatine, or as an honored guest of the pope at the Lateran, we are not informed. It was observed that now, as on the occasion of a previous visit to Rome, out of courtesy to the pope he laid aside his Frankish dress—a tunic with silver border, a vest of otter-skins and sable, and a blue cloak—and wore instead, after the Roman fashion, a long tunic and a *chlamys*⁴⁴ over it, [and] shoes also made like those of the Romans, instead of his Frankish boots with stockings and garters.

It was precisely during this month of December that, by a fortunate coincidence, the priest Zacharias, whom more than a year before Charles had sent on a mission to the holy places, returned from the East. Two monks came with him, from Olivet and St. Saba, sent by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and bringing by way of blessing from that ecclesiastic the keys of the Holy Sepulchre and of Calvary, of Jerusalem and Mount Zion, together with a consecrated banner. A more striking testimony to the worldwide fame of the Frankish conqueror could hardly have been rendered than this, which must have been meant to invest Charles with a kind of protectorate over the most sacred sites in Christendom.

The pope's solemn oath of self-exculpation was sworn on the 23d of December. Two days later was transacted that yet more solemn ceremony by which the Patriarch of the Western Church, thus purged from the stains which his assailants had sought to cast upon his character, bestowed upon his royal champion that title which set him highest among the rulers of the Christian world. The scene was again laid in the great basilica of St. Peter, a building, of course, utterly unlike to the vast Renaissance temple of Bramante and Michael Angelo. There, on Christmas morning, Charles the Frank was worshipping before the *Confessio* or tomb of St. Peter. The stately Roman *chlamys* hung around his shoulders; the crowd that filled the basilica could see with satisfaction the dainty Roman buskins of the kneeling monarch. When he rose from prayer Pope Leo approached him, placed upon his head a costly golden

⁴⁴In this case the purple cope, a vestment of the pope.

crown, and clothed him in the purple mantle of empire. "Then," says the papal biographer, "all the faithful Romans, beholding so great a champion given them, and knowing the love which he bore to the Holy Roman Church and its vicar, in obedience to the will of God and of St. Peter, the key-bearer of the kingdom of heaven, cried out with deep accordant voices: 'To Charles, most pious and august, crowned by God, the great and peace-bringing emperor, be life and victory!'" Thereupon the people sang their jubilant *laudes*, and the pope performed that lowly adoration wherewith his predecessors had been wont to greet a Valentinian or a Theodosius.⁴⁵

The deed was done, and the Holy Roman Empire, which lasted a thousand years, and only in the days of our fathers was shattered by the fist of Napoleon, was established, or (as Alcuin and Leo would have said) was re-established in Europe. It was a revolution, no doubt, that was enacted on that morning

⁴⁵The description of the coronation by Bryce is added for its picturesqueness: "On the spot where now the gigantic dome of Bramante and Michael Angelo towers over the buildings of the modern city, the spot which tradition had hallowed as that of the apostle's martyrdom, Constantine the Great had erected the oldest and stateliest temple of Christian Rome. Nothing could be less like than was this basilica to those northern cathedrals, shadowy, fantastic, irregular, crowded with pillars, fringed all round by clustering shrines and chapels, which are to most of us the mediæval types of architecture. In its plan and decorations, in the spacious sunny hall, the roof plain as that of a Greek temple, the long row of Corinthian columns, the vivid mosaics on its walls, in its brightness, its sternness, its simplicity, it had preserved every feature of Roman art, and had remained a perfect expression of Roman character. Out of the transept, a flight of steps led up to the high altar underneath and just beyond the great arch, the arch of triumph, as it was called: behind in the semicircular apse sat the clergy, rising tier above tier around its walls; in the midst, high above the rest, and looking down past the altar and over the multitude, was placed a bishop's throne, itself the curule chair of some forgotten magistrate. From that chair the Pope now rose, as the reading of the gospel ended, advanced to where Charles — who had exchanged his simple Frankish dress for the sandals and the chlamys of a Roman patrician — knelt in prayer by the high altar, and as in the sight of all he placed upon the brow of the barbarian chieftain the diadem of the Cæsars, then bent in obeisance before him, the church rang to the shout of the multitude, again free, again the lords and center of the world. '*Karolo Augusto a Deo coronato magno et pacifico imperatori vita et victoria*' ("Long life and victory to Charles the August, crowned by God as the great and peaceful emperor"). In that shout, echoed by the Franks without, was pronounced the union, so long in preparation, of the Roman and the Teuton, of the memories and the civilization of the South with the fresh energy of the North, and from that moment modern history begins." — *The Holy Roman Empire*, chap. vi.

of the 25th of December 800. It could not have been justified out of the Digest or the Code. According to all the maxims of legitimacy which had prevailed for many preceding centuries, Charles was an usurper and Leo an intermeddling traitor. And yet, if one could go back still earlier to the first days of the empire, the bestowal of the imperial title on Charles was not so utterly lawless a proceeding. The Roman emperor in those early centuries was not by any elaborate process elected, but was always acclaimed. Acclaimed by the army, it is true, but also by the people, and there were doubtless many soldiers of the *militia cohortalis* ("the imperial guard") of Rome present among the crowd who shouted for life and victory to the peace-bringing emperor. When acclaimed by army and people, the Cæsar was, or ought to be, accepted by the senate; and there are some indications that after centuries of suspended animation a body calling itself the senate was at this time existing in Rome and consenting to the elevation of Charles. And these bodies—senate, people, army—however insignificant in themselves, were at any rate Roman: they belonged to the true old Rome; they trod the forum of the republic and looked up to the Palatine of the emperors; they were not like the bastard Romans of the Bosphorus, who chattered in Greek and wore the robes of Asia, but who had usurped for many centuries the profitable trademark of the senate and people of Rome. So, though there was but one precedent—and that the bad one of Maximin the Thracian—for conferring the dignity of emperor on a man of purely Teutonic descent, and though it is quite impossible to find a place for the chief actor, the bishop of Rome, in the drama as played by all the earlier Cæsars, we may on the whole conclude that Charles became Roman emperor by as good a title as any who had worn the purple since the days of Theodosius.⁴⁶

What were the chief causes which led to this great change in the political constitution of Europe? They have been already hinted at, and we shall probably not be wrong in enumerating them as follows:

First. — The great revival of classical learning, due chiefly to the labors

⁴⁶Theodosius the Great was born in Spain about 346 and died in 395. Though he was under the influence of Ambrose, bishop of Milan; and though the bishops humiliated him and once compelled him to do penance for the period of eight months, his reign was one of great splendor, and the last year of his life he was sole emperor.

of Anglo-Saxon scholars; a movement of which men like Bede and Alcuin were the standard-bearers. The minds which were influenced by this revival perceived plainly that the interests of civilization, and to a certain extent of Christianity, had been in past centuries identical with those of the great Roman Empire; and from a genuine revival of that Empire (not from a mere ephemeral reconquest of certain cities or provinces by a *spatharius* or *cubicularius* ("sword-bearer" or "chamberlain") setting sail from Constantinople), they anticipated, not altogether erroneously, great gains for the civilization and the Christianity of the future.

Second. — The anomalous position of that which called itself the empire, which for the first time in its history found itself under what John Knox called "the monstrous regiment of a woman," and that woman the murderess of her child.

Third. — The brutal attack on Pope Leo made by the disappointed kinsmen of his predecessor. This event may well have produced an important change in the attitude of the pope towards the question of reviving the empire in the west. Before that day of April when he was assaulted by his own courtiers and left half dead in the streets of Rome, he may (as has been already hinted) have looked forward to a time when he should reign over the best part of Italy, subject to no king or governor; and when whispers reached him of the use of the words "emperor" and "imperial" by the learned ecclesiastics of Charles's court he may in that mood of mind have shown that their proposals were little to his taste. After that fatal day, his reluctance, if he had any, to see one man in the Italian peninsula holding an indisputably higher position than his own, was changed into eager acquiescence in the scheme. He was willing, nay anxious, to see the purple robe encircling the stalwart limbs of the Frankish conqueror, if only he himself might take shelter under that robe from the dagger of the assassin.

In all this it may be truly said that we have failed to consider one important factor in the problem: the desires and ambitions of Charles himself. Unfortunately a mystery which we cannot penetrate hangs over that very subject. One of his most intimate friends, his secretary Einhard, expressly says that Charles "at first so greatly disliked the title of emperor and augustus that he declared that if he could have known beforehand the intention of the pope he would

never have entered the church on that day, though it was one of the holiest festivals of the year."

It used to be assumed that this reluctance on the part of Charles to receive the new dignity was only a bit of well-played comedy between him and Leo, that the Frankish king had been long aspiring to the imperial dignity and had even put constraint upon the pope to force him to take part in the coronation. More recent discussion has shaken our confidence in this easy solution of the problem; and probably the greater number of writers on the history of this period now hold that Charles was speaking the truth when he expressed his dissatisfaction with the pope's proceedings. The cause of that dissatisfaction can only be conjectured. Einhard seems to hint that it was fear of the resentment of the Byzantine Cæsars, but this hardly seems a sufficient cause to one who remembers the low estate of the eastern monarchy under Irene.

With much more probability Professor Dahn argues that what Charles disliked was not the bestowal of the title in itself, but the bestowal by the pope. He thinks that Charles and his counsellors had already, in 799, virtually resolved on the revival of the empire, that the pope penetrated their design, and determined that if that step were taken he at least would be chief actor in the drama; that by his adroit tactics he, so to speak, forced Charles's hand, and that the latter, foreseeing the evil consequences which would result from the precedent thus established, of a pope-crowned emperor, expressed his genuine feelings of vexation to his friend Einhard when he said, "Would that I had never entered St. Peter's on Christmas Day." Certainly the remembrance of all the miserable complications caused during the Middle Ages by the pope's claim to set the crown on the head of the emperor would do much to justify the unwillingness of a statesman such as the Frankish king to bind this chain round the limbs of his successors.

But even beyond this, it seems possible that Charles's own mind was not fully made up as to the expediency of accepting the imperial diadem, by whomsoever bestowed. That the plan had been discussed (perhaps often discussed, through many years, by his more highly educated courtiers) cannot be denied. He may have been dazzled by the brilliancy of the position which was thus offered him; and yet the calmer judgment of that foreseeing mind of his may not have been satisfied that it was altogether wise for him to accept it. The

Frankish kingdom, as it had been built up by the valor and patience of Charles and his forefathers, was a splendid and solid reality. This restored empire of Rome that they talked of would be even more splendid, but would it be equally substantial? After all, the whole Roman *Orbis Terrarum* ("circle of the lands") was not subject to his sway. Was it wise to assume a title which seemed to assert a shadowy claim to vast unsubdued territories? Was it wise to claim for a Teuton king that all-embracing authority wherewith the legists had invested the Roman emperor? The controversies of Guelphs and Ghibellines, which distracted Italy for centuries, show that these questions, if they presented themselves to the mind of Charles, were questions which greatly needed an answer. And there was also a difficulty, which has perhaps not been sufficiently dwelt upon, arising from Charles's prospective division of his dominions among his sons. Charles, the eldest, was to succeed him in that Austrasian region which was the heart and stronghold of his kingdom. If any son were to inherit the Imperial dignity, sitting on a higher throne than his brethren and holding a certain pre-eminence over them, that son must be Charles. Yet Pippin, the second son, was the actual king and destined heir of Italy, and would rule over Rome, the city from which the Roman emperor was to take his title. Here was the germ of probable future embroilments between his sons, such as the prudent Charles may well have feared to foster.

Upon the whole, therefore, it appears a probable conclusion that Charles, though he accepted the imperial crown, accepted it with genuine reluctance, and that he was the passive approver rather than the active and ambitious contriver of the great revolution of 800.

In the summer of 801 Charles recrossed the Alps to his home in Rhineland. In the thirteen years of life which remained to him, he never again entered Italy, but he was, during the greater part of that time, well represented there by his son, the able and courageous Pippin.

A question which doubtless excited much interest in all the Frankish world was how Charles's assumption of the imperial title would be viewed at Constantinople. There must have been many among the Byzantine statesmen who bitterly resented it, but Irene's position was too insecure to permit of her giving utterance to their indignation. It is indeed stated by a Greek chronicler that Charles sent an embassy to Constantinople proposing to unite the two

empires by his own marriage with Irene, and that the project was only foiled by the opposition of the eunuch Aetius, who was scheming to secure the succession for his brother. Whether this be true or not (and the entire silence of the Frankish authorities on the subject is somewhat suspicious), there is no doubt that a friendly embassy from Irene appeared at Charles's court in 802, and was replied to by a return embassy, consisting of Bishop Jesse and Count Helmgaut, who were dispatched from Aachen in the same year, and that this embassy may have carried a declaration of love from the elderly Frank to the middle-aged Athenian. But not in such romantic fashion was the reconciliation of the two empires to be effected. While the bishop and the count were tarrying at Constantinople, they were the unwilling spectators of a palace revolution, which possibly may have been hastened by their presence and by the fear of a treaty, wounding to the national pride. On the 31st October 802, Irene was deposed and the Grand Treasurer of the Empire, Nicephorus, was raised to the throne. Irene's life was spared, but she was banished to an island in the Sea of Marmora, and afterwards to the isle of Lesbos, where according to one account she was so meanly supplied with the necessaries of life by her penurious successor that this proud and brilliant lady had to support herself by spinning. She died on the 9th August 803.

Again the precariousness of the new ruler's position compelled him to assume a courteous tone towards the Frankish sovereign. Charles's ambassadors were accompanied on their return journey by three envoys from Nicephorus, a bishop, an abbot, and a life-guardsmen, who were charged with many professions of amity and good-will to the Frankish king. In all this, however, there was no sign of recognition of Charles as emperor, and for any such recognition Charles apparently waited for eight years in vain.

In 806 there was actual war between the two states, the bone of contention being the little island-state of Venice, which was now rising into commercial importance and in whose obscure and entangled history two parties, a Frankish and a Byzantine, are dimly discernible. After a long time a fleet from Constantinople appeared for a second time in Venetian waters, but was not able to prevent the victory of Pippin, who made a grand attack by land and sea, and subdued apparently the cities of the lagunes, whose capital was at this time shifted to the Rialto. This occurred in 810, but in the same year there

appeared at Aachen an ambassador from Nicephorus who probably, amid the usual unmeaning professions of friendship, conveyed a hint that his master might be willing, for a suitable compensation, to recognize Charles as Roman emperor. On this hint, for which he had waited with statesmanlike patience, the Frankish monarch acted. He expressed his willingness to surrender the Adriatic territories, Venetia, Istria, Liburnia, and Dalmatia, to "his brother Nicephorus", and sent Heito, Bishop of Basel, with two colleagues to settle the terms of the new treaty.

Unhappily, when Heito and his colleagues arrived in Constantinople they found a change in the occupant of the palace. Nicephorus had fallen in battle, a most disastrous battle, with Krum, the king of the Bulgarians (25th July 811); but his brother-in-law and successor, Michael Rhangabé, was abundantly willing to confirm the proposed accommodation with the most powerful sovereign of the west. In truth the suggestion must have come at a most welcome season, for Constantinople was just then as hard pressed by the Bulgarian as she had ever been by the Avar or the Saracen. So it came to pass that yet another embassy from the Byzantine court appeared at Aachen in January 812. A formal document containing the terms of the treaty of peace was handed to them by Charles in the church of the Virgin, and possibly the counterpart was received from the ambassadors. But the essential point was, that they sang a litany in the Greek tongue in which they hailed the Frankish sovereign as *imperator* and *basileus*⁴⁷. That was a formal recognition of Charles's equality, and thenceforth no one could doubt that there was an Emperor by the Rhine as well as by the Bosphorus.

£££ Old Age

THE somewhat tedious tale of the wars of the august and pacific emperor is happily almost at an end.

We hear of repeated ravages by Scandinavian pirates along the shores of the German and Atlantic oceans; by Moorish pirates along the shore of the

⁴⁷Ed.'s Note: The Greek word for "king".

Mediterranean; and with neither class of freebooters does Charles appear to have grappled very successfully, for the good reason that he never devoted a sufficient portion of his energies to the establishment of a navy. The well-known story that Charles saw from the windows of his palace at Narbonne the Danish sea-rovers scudding over the waters of the Gulf of Lyons, and foretold with tears the miseries which these freebooters should bring upon his posterity and their realm, comes to us on the late and doubtful authority of the Monk of St. Gall and need not be accepted as authentic history; but that was one of the thunderclouds looming up on the horizon of the ninth century whether Charles was aware of it or no. While the pirate barks of the Scandinavians were spreading terror over the islands of the west, the land forces of the king of Denmark were threatening the northeastern boundary of Charles's kingdom. Here the Saxons, at last subdued into loyalty, were, as we have seen, bounded on the east by the Slavonic nations, the Abodrites and the Wiltzi, and on the north, in Sleswik, by the Danes. The usual arrangement of parties in the perpetually recurring frontier wars was this: the Saxons (that is the Frankish kingdom) in alliance with the Abodrites on one side, and the Danes with the Wiltzi on the other. The king of the Abodrites was named Drasko; the king of the Danes was Godofrid, a proud, high-soaring king of pirates, who ventured to put himself on an equality with the mighty Frankish emperor, declaring that Friesland and Saxonland were of right his territories, and that he would appear one day with all his warriors round him at Aachen and would try conclusions with Charles.

It was in the years from 808 to 810 that this menace to the tranquillity of the Frankish kingdom showed itself in its most alarming shape. In the first of those years Godofrid invaded the territory of the Abodrites and ravaged their lands. Drasko fled before him, but another chieftain, Godelaib, was treacherously taken and hung. The Wiltzi joined forces with the Danes, and after much slaughter on both sides (for the flower of the Danish nobility fell in this campaign), the Abodrites were made subject to tribute to the Danish king. In retaliation for this onslaught on a friendly tribe, the younger Charles was sent across the Elbe with an army, but though he ravaged the lands of some Slavonic allies of the Danes, he seems to have returned home without achieving any decisive victory. Then both the two chief powers, knowing that

a war of reprisals was imminent, took to fortifying their frontier. Godofrid drew across Holstein that line of forts which has since become famous as the Dannewerk, and Charles erected fortresses on his side of the border, especially restoring the stronghold of Hohbuoki which had been destroyed by the Wiltzi.

Next year (809) Godofrid sought and obtained an interview with Charles at Badenflot (in Holstein), desiring to exculpate himself from the charge of having provoked the previous war. But the interview came to nothing. The Danish king did not sincerely desire peace, and probably showed too plainly the arrogance of his ignorant soul and his foolish pretensions to equality with Charles. He succeeded, however, in patching up a temporary peace with the Abodrite chief Drasko, who returned to his own land, but only to fall a victim some months later to the treacherous attack of a vassal of Godofrid's, who was believed to have been incited to the deed by the Danish king. In 810 the contest seemed to be growing desperate, and the wild hopes of Godofrid to be approaching fulfilment. A fleet of two hundred Danish ships sailed to Friesland, laid waste all the multitudinous islands on the Frisian shore, and landed an army on the mainland, which defeated the Frisians in three pitched battles and laid upon them a tribute, of which 100 lbs. of silver had been already paid when tidings of the disaster reached the emperor in his palace at Aachen. He at once set about the too-long-delayed construction of a fleet, and at the mouths of all the rivers which poured into the German Ocean, the Channel, and the Atlantic, the sound of the shipbuilder's hammer was heard. Then, in the midst of his anxieties, he received two welcome pieces of intelligence. The first was that the Danish fleet had returned home; the second that Godofrid was dead, murdered by one of his vassals, a fitting retribution for the assassination of Drasko, which he himself had instigated.

After this there was peace for the rest of Charles's life between him and the Danes. Hemming, the nephew and successor of Godofrid, was not strong enough to continue the aggressive policy of his uncle, and on Hemming's death (812) there was a bloody civil war between his family and the rival dynasty of Harald. However, Charles wisely did not relax his naval preparations, but in the year 811 repaired to Boulogne in order to review the fleet which he had commanded to be assembled there from the various estuaries of his kingdom. Was it partly in remembrance of this event that nearly a thousand years later

Napoleon, that great imitator of Charlemagne, caused his flotilla to assemble at Boulogne⁴⁸ for the long meditated, never accomplished, invasion of Britain?

The last years of the great emperor's life were saddened by a succession of domestic afflictions: but before describing them it will be well to give a glance at his family life in his happier middle age before these troubles fell upon him. As we have seen, Charles was five times married.⁴⁹ Of his first wife Himiltrud, mother of the hunchback Pippin, we know nothing, save that, according to Pope Stephen's account, she was "sprung from the very noble race of the Franks," and that she must have either died or been divorced before 770, when he married the daughter of the Lombard king, who is by one writer called Desiderata, and by another Bertrada. She bore him no children, and on her divorce⁵⁰ after something less than a year of matrimony, Charles married Hildegard, a noble Swabian lady, the best beloved of all his wives. Her life, though splendid, was not an easy one. She was only thirteen years old when she married the Frankish hero, who was verging on thirty; she accompanied him on his campaigns and pilgrimages, she bore him nine children, and after twelve or thirteen years of wedlock she died on the 30th of April 783, and was buried at Metz in the chapel of St. Arnulf, her husband's revered ancestor. From this marriage sprang all the three sons, Charles, Pippin, [and] Louis, among whom Charlemagne hoped to divide his kingdom; also another son who died in infancy, and five daughters. The eldest of these daughters was that princess Hrotrud who learned Greek of Elissæus, and who so narrowly missed sharing the Byzantine throne.

A few months after the death of Hildegard, Charles married (about October 783) Fastrada, daughter of the Austrasian count Radolf, with whom he shared eleven years of married life, and whose baneful influence on his character and conduct is described to us by Einhard. She bore him two daughters (both of whom eventually became abbesses) but no son, and died on the 10th of August 794, shortly after the great council of Frankfurt.

⁴⁸It was in the winter of 1804-5 that the fiasco of Boulogne occurred.

⁴⁹Ed.'s Note: As we have seen, actually three times, or possibly four, depending on whether he had ever actually married Himiltrud, which is not clear.

⁵⁰Ed.'s Note: Rather say "separation".

Not many years after Fastrada's death, Charles married his fifth⁵¹ wife, the Alamannian Liutgard, who had previously lived with him as his concubine, and who died on the 4th of June 800, a few months too soon to wear the title of empress. We are not told of any issue of this marriage, the last legal union which Charles contracted—the magnificent scheme of a marriage alliance with Irene having never been realized. We hear, however, of four additional concubines and several illegitimate children, some of whom rose to high honors in the church.

The home which the great emperor favored above all others was that city which his love alone made eminent, though he did not absolutely found it, the city which the Romans called Aquisgranum, which the Germans now call Aachen, and the French Aix-la-Chapelle. Here, on the southern slope of the Lousberg hills, in the pleasant land between Rhine and Meuse, Charles made the dwelling-place of his old age. With all his wide, far-reaching schemes he remained, it would seem, at heart a Ripuarian Frank—Ripuarian, not Salian—and we may conjecture that Neustria was to him as little of a homeland as Aquitaine or even Italy. The river Rhine with its great bordering bishoprics, Mainz, Köln, Trier, and its grand Romanesque churches bore for centuries the character which it had received from the greatest of its sons, the friend alike of Hadrian the Pope and of Alcuin the scholar; and, if not on the actual banks of the Rhine, at least in the near neighborhood of Rhine-land, it was fitting that Charles should die. Doubtless the nature-heated baths which had been known since the time of Severus Alexander, and which are said to have been named from Apollo Granus, were the chief determining causes which led Charles to visit the place, at which indeed his father Pippin had kept Christmas and Easter as long ago as 765. But having visited it, and probably derived benefit from the waters, he evidently became more and more attached to the place. We first hear of Charles keeping his Christmas there in 788: but after that the name is of frequent recurrence in the Annals till at last Worms and Frankfurt, which had before been his favorite abiding-places, are almost entirely superseded, and "*Imperator celebravit natalem Domini Aquisgrani*"⁵² becomes the regular formula of the chronicles.

⁵¹Ed.'s Note: Third or fourth.

⁵²"The emperor celebrated the birth of our Lord at Aachen."

Here, then, at Aachen, Charles built himself a lordly palace and a church, joined together by a colonnade. For both these structures he or his architect, Master Odo, borrowed the plan from Ravenna; the palace being built after the pattern of Theodoric's palace, and the church, which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, being a copy of that dedicated to San Vitale. Nor was the plan the only thing which was borrowed. Columns and marble tablets were brought from Rome as well as from Ravenna. The mosaics from Theodoric's palace and the equestrian statue in gilded bronze of the great Ostrogoth—a work apparently of more artistic merit than most of the productions of the sixth century—were all carried off from the city on the Ronco⁵³ to adorn the Belgic palace of the new emperor. Near the palace was a wide-stretching forest surrounded with walls, full of game, resounding with the song of birds, and watered by the little stream of the Worm.

Of all these memorials of the great emperor probably nothing now remains but the church. The deer-park has doubtless long since disappeared; of the palace all that can be said is that the Rathhaus is built upon its site; but the *Capella in Palatio* ("Palace Chapel") still stands, and is included in the much later building which is known as the Münster. It is about 100 feet high and 50 feet in diameter, surmounted by an octagonal cupola and surrounded by a sixteen-sided cloister. The resemblance to San Vitale at once strikes the visitor who is acquainted with the churches of Ravenna.

It was certainly a triumphant era for the Frankish nation—still *one*, not yet fallen asunder into diverse and hostile nationalities—when the embassies of mighty kings from east and west trod the streets of the little city in Rhine-land which their ruler, sprung not from a long line of kings but from a family of Austrasian nobles, had made the seat of his empire. Thither came swarthy Saracens from Bagdad, ambassadors from the court

Of Haroun, for whose name by blood defiled,
Genius hath wrought salvation.

Common enmities (for they both were hostile to the Ommayad caliphs and the eastern emperors) drew together these two men whose names for so long

⁵³The city of Ravenna; which is situated between the Ronco and the Lamone rivers.

were dear to the story-tellers of east and west, Charlemagne and Haroun-al-Raschid. Haroun sent to Charles in 807 some sort of message or letter confirming the act of the patriarch of Jerusalem which by the surrender of the keys constituted him guardian of the Holy Places. Some years before he had sent, besides other rich and costly presents, one which especially impressed the minds of the Franks, an enormous elephant named Abu-l-Abbas. Under the guidance of its keeper, Isaac the Jew, the elephant safely reached Aachen, where it abode for eight years. In the year 810 it was taken across the Rhine, apparently that its great strength might be made use of in the expected campaign against Godofrid the Dane; and its sudden death at Lippeham in Westphalia is solemnly recorded by the chroniclers among the memorable events of that melancholy year.

It was in this same year, in the month of October, that the emperor saw with pride two embassies, from east and west, meet at his court. The long delayed overtures for reconciliation from the Emperor Nicephorus were brought by the one, and proposals for a treaty of peace with El Hakem the Cruel, Emir of Cordova, were brought by the other embassy and graciously accepted by Charles.

Nor was our own island unrepresented among the embassies which visited the Frankish court. With Offa of Mercia, most powerful of English kings before the rise of Ecgbert, the relations were not altogether friendly. A treaty for the marriage of the younger Charles with the daughter of Offa broke down (789), it is said, because of Offa's counter-proposal on behalf of his son for the hand of Charles's daughter Bertha. Some passages in this abortive "double marriage negotiation" so annoyed the Frankish king that English merchants were forbidden to land on the shores of Gaul. However, though no marriage was brought to pass, friendly relations between the two kings were restored, perhaps through the mediation of Offa's subject, Alcuin; and in 796, when the great *Hring* ("ring," the circular stronghold) of the Avars had been despoiled by Eric of Friuli, an Avar sword was graciously sent by Charles as a present to the King of Mercia.

It was not at Aachen but at Nimguen on the Rhine that another English king, driven from his realm by revolution, Eardulf of Northumberland, visited Charles's court in 808 and besought his aid to restore him to his throne. Charles

seems to have embraced his cause and sent him on to Rome with a letter of recommendation to Pope Leo, whose help was needed, as the Archbishop of York had taken an active part in Eardulf's deposition. With the help of emperor and pope, Eardulf was restored (809) to a throne which he seems to have justly forfeited by various acts of tyranny; but the reign of the restored king was of short duration.

It may be permitted to conjecture that the happiest period of the life of Charles consisted of the fifteen years which he spent mainly at Aachen between 795 and 810. The Saxon and Avar wars were drawing to a close; his labors for the reform of the Church and for the spread of learning were bearing manifest fruit; the haughty and difficult-tempered Fastrada was dead, and his children, whom he loved with fondness not often found in palaces, were growing up around him. The few words in which Einhard sketches his family life give one an impression of joyous magnificence not unlike that which the poets have feigned concerning the purely imaginary court of King Arthur:

He determined so to bring up his children that all, both sons and daughters, should be well grounded in liberal studies, to which he himself also gave earnest attention. Moreover, he caused his sons as soon as they were of the proper age to learn to ride after the manner of the Franks, to be trained to war and the chase; but his daughters he ordered to learn the spinning of wool, to give heed to the spindle and distaff, that they might not grow slothful through ease, but be trained to all kinds of honest industry...

So great was the attention which he paid to the education of his sons and daughters that when he was at home he would never sup without them; when he journeyed they must accompany him, the sons riding by his side and the daughters following a little behind, while a band of servants appointed for this purpose brought up the rear. As for these daughters, though they were of great beauty and were dearly loved by him, strange to say he never gave one of them in marriage either to a man of his own nation or to a foreigner, but he kept them all with him in his own house till his death, saying that he could not dispense with

their company. On this account, prosperous as he was in other ways, he experienced the unkindness of adverse fortune, as to which, however, he so skillfully dissembled that no one would suppose that any suspicion of a stain on their fair fame had ever reached his ears.

This last sentence of Charles's usually enthusiastic biographer hints at court scandals which could not be always concealed, and the results of some of which appear in the Carolingian pedigrees. But the previous statement concerning his unwillingness to have his merry family circle broken in upon by the unwelcome claims of a son-in-law, may possibly help to explain what has perplexed us in the rupture of the matrimonial treaty with Byzantium or even with the king of Mercia. Instead of seeking for deep state-reasons of policy for these failures, we ought, perhaps, simply to see in them the pardonable weakness of a father who, when the crisis came, gave more heed to the voice of family affection than to the maxims of statecraft.

A notice of Charles's home life would be incomplete without some allusion to the circle of friends by whom he was surrounded, and whom he seems to have inspired with a genuine love for himself as a man, apart from their loyalty to him as sovereign.

The great ecclesiastics who, under the name of archchaplains, held a place similar to that of a modern prime minister, Fulrad, Abbot of St. Denis, who had been chaplain to his father and who died in 784; his successor Angilram, Bishop of Metz, who died while accompanying Charles on his Avar campaign in 791; Hildibald, Archbishop of Cologne, who stood by the emperor's death-bed; all these men, though highly trusted and able servants, have not left many evidences by which we can judge of their individual characters. Much more interesting is Charles's relation to the men of letters whom he delighted to gather around him. Chief among these were Alcuin, Peter of Pisa, Paul the Lombard, and Einhard.

Of Alcuin, who might truly be called Charles's literary prime minister, no more need be said, save that he died at Tours in 804, full of years and in unclouded friendship with the emperor.

It was apparently about the year 780 that Peter of Pisa, a deacon who had once taught in the Lombard capital, Pavia, and had there held a celebrated

disputation with a Jew named Lullus, came to Charles's court. He was then an old man. Grammar was his main subject, and Charles regularly attended his lectures. The date of his death is uncertain, but it was before the year 799.

Paul the Lombard, generally known as Paulus Diaconus, probably made Charles's acquaintance during his second visit to Italy (780-781). At any rate, somewhere about the year 782 he followed Charles across the Alps, and was for some two or three years in pretty close attendance at the Frankish court. The main object of his journey was to obtain pardon and the restitution of confiscated property for his brother Arichis who, as has been already stated, seems to have been involved in the rebellion of Duke Hrodgaud, and was carried captive into Frankland, leaving his wife and children destitute. There can be little doubt that the pardon of Arichis was granted to the intercession of his brother, for whom Charles seems to have conceived an especial affection. An amusing but fearfully perplexing series of poems exists, in which enigmas, compliments, and good-natured banter are exchanged between the king, Paulus Diaconus, and Petrus Pisanus. At dawn of day a trim young courtier with a hopeful little beard brings to Peter the grammarian a riddle which the king has thought of in the night and desires him to guess it. In despair Peter turns to Paul, begging for his aid. In a hexameter poem of forty-seven lines (all the correspondence is in verse) Paul gives his version of the answer, which, if correct, certainly proves the riddle to have been a very foolish one. At another time the king poetically asks Paul which of three penalties he would prefer—to be crushed under an immense weight of iron, to be doomed to lie in a gloomy dungeon-cave, or to be sent to convert and baptize Sigfrid who "wields the impious scepter of pestilential Denmark." Paul replies in a strain of enthusiastic devotion that he will do anything which the king desires him to do, but that as he knows no Danish he will seem like a brute beast when he stands in the presence of the barbarian king. Yet would he have no fear for his own safety if he undertook the journey; for if Sigfrid knew that he was one of Charles's subjects, so great is his dread of the Frankish king that he would not dare to touch him with his little finger. And so on through many hexameter and pentameter verses. A harsh critic might describe the whole correspondence as "gracious fooling," but in view of the hard and toilsome life of the slayer and converter of so many Saxons, it is a consolation to find

that he had leisure and spare brain-power even for occasional nonsense.

Paulus Diaconus, after a few years' sojourn at the Frankish court, returned to Italy to the shelter of his beloved convent of Monte Cassino, where he died, probably in one of the closing years of the eighth century. We are indebted to him, not only for his well-known *Historia Langobardorum* ("History of the Lombards") — almost the only record of the history of Italy from 568 to 744 — but also for a book on the *Gesta Episcoporum Mettensium* ("Deeds of the Bishops of Metz") which gives us valuable information as to the lives of the early Arnulfings.

The last of Charles's literary courtiers who can be noticed here is Einhard or (as his name is commonly but less correctly written) Eginhard. This man, who was born near the time of Charles's accession to the kingdom, and who survived him about thirty years, was the son of Einhard and Engilfrita, persons of good birth and station who dwelt in Franconia near the Odenwald. He was educated in the monastery of Fulda, and came as a young man to the Frankish court, where his nimbleness of mind, his learning, and his skill in the administration of affairs so recommended him to Charles that for the remaining twenty years or more of his reign the little Franconian—he was a man of conspicuously short stature—was the great king's inseparable companion. His skill in all manner of metalwork earned for him in that name-giving circle of friends the name of Bezaleel, by which he is pleasantly alluded to in one of Alcuin's letters. He was employed to superintend some of Charles's great architectural works, notably the palace and basilica at Aachen, the palace at Ingelheim, and the great bridge over the Rhine at Mainz. A twelfth-century chronicler connected his name unpleasantly with that of one of the daughters of Charles: but for this scandal there does not seem to be the slightest foundation. None of Charles's daughters was named Emma, the name attributed to the alleged mistress, afterwards wife, of Einhard. His real wife appears to have been Emma, sister of Bernhard, Bishop of Worms. About the year 826 he and his wife parted by mutual consent and "gave themselves to religion." He was ordained priest and retired to the monastery of Seligenstadt on the Main, where he died about the year 840.

Einhard had a share (how large is a subject of constant discussion) in the composition of the official Annals which are our most trustworthy authority

for the history of his master's reign. But we are far more indebted to him for his short tract *De Vita Caroli Magni* ("On the Life of Charles the Great") from which several extracts have already been made. In this life there is an evident ambition on the part of the writer, who calls himself "a barbarian little skilled in Roman speech," to follow the example of the great classical authors. His imitation, especially, of the *Life of Augustus* by Suetonius is almost servile, and provokes much laughter on the part of modern scholars; but however he may be derided, the fact remains that almost all our real, vivifying knowledge of Charles the Great is derived from Einhard, and that the *Vita Caroli* is one of the most precious literary bequests of the early Middle Ages.

Here are some features of the picture of his master by Einhard which have not been copied in the preceding pages:

"This king, whose prudence and magnanimity surpassed that of all contemporary princes, never shunned on account of toil, nor declined on account of danger, any enterprise which had to be begun or carried through to its end; but having learned to bear every burden as it came, according to its true weight, he would neither yield under adversity, nor in prosperity trust the flattering smiles of fortune."

"He loved foreigners and took the greatest pains to entertain them, so that their number often seemed a real burden, not only to the palace but even to the realm. But he, on account of his greatness of soul, refused to worry himself over this burden, thinking that even great inconveniences were amply compensated by the praise of his liberality and the reward of his renown."

"His gait was firm, all the habit of his body manly; his voice clear, but scarce corresponding to his stature; his health good, except that during the last four years of his life he was often attacked by fever, and at the last he limped with one foot. Moreover, he guided himself much more by his own fancy than by the counsel of his physicians, whom he almost hated because they tried to persuade him to give up roast meats, to which he was

accustomed, and to take to boiled.⁵⁴ He kept up diligently his exercises of riding and hunting, wherein he followed the usage of his nation, for scarcely any other race equals the Franks herein. He delighted, too, in the steam of nature-heated baths, being a frequent and skillful swimmer, so that hardly anyone excelled him in this exercise. This was his reason for building his palace at Aquisgranum, where he spent the latter years of his life up to his death. And not only did he invite his sons to the bath, but also his friends and the nobles, sometimes even a crowd of henchmen and bodyguards, so that at times as many as a hundred men or more would be bathing there together.”

“He was temperate in food and drink, especially the latter, since he held drunkenness in any man, but most of all in himself and his friends, in the highest abhorrence. He was not so well able to abstain from food, and used often to complain that the fasts [of the Church] were hurtful to his body. He very seldom gave banquets, and those only on the chief festivals, but then he invited a very large number of guests. His daily supper was served with four courses only, except the roast, which the huntsmen used to bring in on spits, and which he partook of more willingly than of any other food. During supper he listened either to music or to the reading of some book, generally histories and accounts of the things done by the ancients. He delighted also in the writings of St. Augustine, especially that one which is entitled *De Civitate Dei* (“The City of God”). He was so chary of drinking wine or liquor of any kind, that he seldom drank more than three times at supper. In summer, after his midday meal, he would take some fruit and would drink once, and then laying aside his raiment and his shoes, just as he was wont to do at night, he would rest for two or three hours. At night his sleep used to be interrupted, not only by awaking but by rising from

⁵⁴He absolutely refused to take medicines, and when ill his only treatment was abstaining from food. See also p. 304: — “According to his usual custom he thought to *subdue the fever by fasting*.”

his bed four or five times in one night. When he was having his shoes or his clothes put on he used not only to admit his friends, but even if the Count of the Palace informed him of some law suit which could not be settled without his order, he would direct the litigants to be at once introduced into his presence, and would hear the cause and pronounce sentence exactly as if he were sitting on the judgment seat. And not only so but he would also at the same time tell each official or servant of the palace what duty he had to perform that day."

He was full even to overflowing in his eloquence and could express all his ideas with very great clearness. And not being satisfied with his native language alone, he also gave much attention to the learning of foreign tongues, among which was Latin, which he learned so perfectly that he was accustomed to pray indifferently in that language or in his own. Greek, however, he learned to understand better than to pronounce. He was in truth so eloquent, that he seemed like a professional rhetorician. In learning grammar he attended the lectures of Peter of Pisa, an old man and a deacon; in other studies he had for his teacher another deacon, Albinus, surnamed Alcuin, from Britain, a man of Saxon race and extremely learned in all subjects, with whom he gave a great deal of time and toil to the study of rhetoric and dialectic, and pre-eminently to that of astronomy. He learned the art of computation, and with wise earnestness most carefully investigated the courses of the stars. He tried also to write, and for this purpose used to carry about with him tablets and manuscripts [to copy] which were placed under the pillows of his bed in order that he might at odd times accustom his fingers to the shaping of the letters; but the attempt was made too late in life and was not successful.

"He was a devout and zealous upholder of the Christian religion, with which he had been imbued from infancy. He regularly attended the church which he had built at Aquisgranum morn-

ing and evening, and also in the hours of the night and at the time of sacrifice, as far as his health permitted; and he took great pains that all the rites celebrated therein should be performed with the greatest decorum, constantly admonishing the ministers of the church that they should not allow anything dirty or unbecoming to be brought thither or to remain within it. He provided so large a supply of holy vessels of gold and silver and of priestly vestments, that in celebrating the sacrifices there was no necessity even for the doorkeepers, who were of the lowest grade of ecclesiastics, to minister in their private dress. He took great pains to reform the style of reading and singing, in both of which he was highly accomplished, though he did not himself read in public nor sing, save in a low voice and with the rest of the congregation."

"He was very earnest in the maintenance of the poor and in almsgiving, so that not only in his own country and kingdom did he thus labor, but also beyond sea. To Syria, to Egypt, to Africa, to Jerusalem, to Carthage, wherever he heard that there were Christians living in poverty, he was wont to send money as a proof of his sympathy, and for this reason especially did he seek the friendship of transmarine kings, in order that some refreshment and relief might come to the Christians under their rule. But before all other sacred and venerable places he revered the church of St. Peter at Rome, and in its treasure chamber great store of wealth, in gold, silver, and precious stones was piled up by him. Many gifts, past counting, were sent by him to the popes, and through the whole of his reign no object was dearer to his heart than that the city of Rome by his care and toil should enjoy its old pre-eminence, and that the church of St. Peter should not only by his aid be safely guarded, but also by his resources should be adorned and enriched beyond all other churches. Yet though he esteemed that city so highly, in all the forty-seven years of his reign he went but four times thither to pay his vows and offer up his supplications."

Amid such interests and such friendships, the later years of Charles's life glided away, comparatively little disturbed by the clash of arms, since his two elder sons, Charles and Pippin, brave and capable men both of them, now relieved him of most of the drudgery of war. It is hinted that there were some occasions of variance between the two brothers, but it is not certain that Pippin the Hunchback is not the person here alluded to as at enmity with the younger Charles; and the difference, whatever it may have been, is said to have been removed by the mediation of St. Goar, whose cell on the banks of the Rhine was visited by the two princes.

In 806, at the Villa Theodonis, Charles, in the presence of a great assembly of his nobles, made a formal division of his dominions between his three sons. Pippin was to have Italy, or as it was called, Langobardia, with Bavaria and Germany south of the Danube, also the subject realms of the Avars and southern Slaves. Louis was to have Aquitaine, Provence, and the greater part of Burgundy. All the rest, that is Neustria, Austrasia, the remainder of Burgundy, and Germany north of the Danube was to go to Charles, who was probably to have some sort of pre-eminence over his brothers, though nothing was expressly said as to the imperial title. The division was so ordered that each brother had access to the dominions of the other two, and both Charles and Louis were earnestly enjoined to go to the help of Pippin—then apparently the most exposed to hostile attack—if he should require their help in Italy. Elaborate arrangements were also made as to the succession, in case of the death of any of the brothers.

Unhappily all these dispositions proved futile. The year 810, in which Godofrid of Denmark died, and also Haroun's elephant Abu-l-Abbas, was in other ways a sore year for Charles. On 6th June his eldest daughter Hrotrud, once the affianced bride of the Eastern Cæsar, died, unmarried but leaving an illegitimate son, Louis, who afterwards became Abbot of St. Denis. Ere Charles had time to recover from this blow came the tidings that Pippin, the young King of Italy, had died on 8th July, possibly (but this is only a conjecture) of some malady contracted during his campaign of many months among the lagunes of Venice.

So, though Pippin left a son, the lad Bernhard, who, if things went well with him, might hope to inherit his father's kingdom, already a breach was

made in Charles's arrangements for the succession to his dominions. But a yet heavier blow fell upon him next year (4th December 811), when his eldest son Charles, that one of all his children who most resembled him in aptitude for war and government, in strength of body and manly beauty, was torn from him by death. Now, of all his sons, there was only left that pathetically devout and incapable figure who is known to posterity as Louis the Pious or Louis the Debonnair, but whose piety and whose good nature were alike to prove disastrous when he should be called upon to guide with his nerveless hands the fiery steeds which had drawn his father's car of empire.⁵⁵

However, there was no other heir available. In September, 813, a *generalis conventus* ("general assembly") was held at Aachen, at which, after taking the advice of his nobles, Charles placed the imperial crown on the head of Louis, and ordered him to be called Emperor and Augustus, thereby designating him as his successor, but not, as it should seem, admitting him to a present participation in his power. With that keen insight into character which Charles undoubtedly possessed, he must have perceived the weakness of his son's disposition, and fears for the future of the empire which he had built up with so much toil and difficulty probably saddened his last days.

The great emperor had now entered on the eighth decade of his life. His health was apparently failing, and there were also signs and portents betokening the approaching end, which, with proper regard to classical precedent, are duly recorded by Einhard. For the last three years of his life there was an unusually large number of eclipses of the sun and moon. A big spot on

⁵⁵Louis deserved the surname "Pious" so far as his care for the morals of his people was concerned. At the beginning of his reign he earnestly attacked the abuses that prevailed. At court he suppressed licentiousness and punished the nobility who had abused their authority. He also tried to reform the clergy. Seeking to establish the order of succession, he associated his oldest son, Lothair, with himself in the government, and gave to his two younger sons, Pippin and Louis, portions of the empire. His wife, however, died, and he marrying again became the father of a fourth son. Upon this he revised his plans of the partition of the empire. The three older sons rebelled, and took their father prisoner in the year 833, but in the following year he was reinstated by his son Louis. Again in 838 Louis was involved in a dispute with his sons, but he died (840) while the question was in process of arbitration. "He had capacities which might have made him a great churchman, but as a secular ruler he lacked prudence and vigor, and his management prepared the way for the destruction of the empire established by his father."

the sun was observed for seven days. The colonnade between the church and palace at Aachen, constructed with great labor, fell in sudden ruin on Ascension-day. The great bridge over the Rhine at Mainz, which had been ten years in building, and for which Einhard himself had acted as clerk of the works, was burned to the water's edge in three hours. Then, in his last expedition against Danish Godofrid (but that was as far back as 810), a fiery torch had been seen to fall from heaven, in a clear sky, on the sinister side, and Charles's horse at the same moment falling heavily had thrown his master to the ground with such violence that the clasp of his cloak was broken, his sword-belt burst, and the spear which he held in his hand was hurled forwards twenty feet or more. Moreover there were crackings of the palace-ceilings; the golden apple which was on the roof of the church was struck by lightning and thrown onto the roof of the archbishop's palace hard by. In the inscription which ran round the interior of the dome, and which contained the words *karolvs princeps* ("Charles the Prince"), the letters of the second word, only a few months before Charles's death, faded and became invisible. All these signs convinced thoughtful persons that an old man of more than seventy, who had led a hard and strenuous life, and who was bowed by many recent sorrows, had not long to live.

In the year 811, the emperor, feeling that the end was not far off, had given elaborate orders as to the disposal of his personal property, consisting of gold, silver, and precious stones. The details, though curious, need not be quoted here. It is sufficient to say that only one-twelfth of the whole was to be divided among his children and grand-children. About two-thirds were to be divided among the ecclesiastics of twenty-one chief cities in his dominions. The remainder was for his servants and the poor. It is interesting to observe that the division of the property was to be completed "after his death or voluntary renunciation of the things of this world." There was therefore a possibility that the first Emperor Charles might have anticipated the fifth in retiring from a palace into a convent. Also we note with interest a square silver table containing a plan of the city of Constantinople, which was to be sent as a gift to St. Peter's at Rome; a round one containing a similar plan of Rome, which was to be sent to the Archbishop of Ravenna; and a third, "far surpassing the others in weight of metal and beauty of workmanship, which

consisted of three spheres linked together, and which embraced a plan of the whole world with delicate and minute delineation," and which was to be sold for the benefit of the residuary legatees and the poor.

At last the time came for all these dispositions to take effect. After the great assembly in which the imperial diadem was placed on the head of Louis of Aquitaine (Sept. 813), Charles, though in feeble health, went on one of his usual hunting expeditions in the neighborhood of Aachen. The autumn was thus passed, and at the beginning of November he returned to the palace to winter there. In January (814) he was attacked by a severe fever and took to his bed. According to his usual custom he thought to *subdue the fever by fasting*, but pleurisy was added to the fever, and in his reduced state he had no power to grapple with the disease. After partaking of the Communion, he departed this life at nine in the morning of the 28th of January 814. He was then in the seventy-second year of his age, and the forty-seventh of his reign. On the day of his death he was buried in his own church of St. Mary's amidst the lamentations of his people. On a gilded arch above his tomb was inscribed this epitaph: "Under this tombstone is laid the body of Charles, the great and orthodox Emperor, who gloriously enlarged the kingdom of the Franks and reigned prosperously for 47 years (*sic*). He died, a septuagenarian, in the year of our Lord 814, in the 7th Indiction on the 5th day before the Kalends of February."⁶

⁶A curious and somewhat difficult question arises as to the disposal of the remains of the great emperor. This account rests on the authority of Einhard, and is fully confirmed by Thegan, the biographer of Louis the Pious. But in the year 1000 the Emperor Otho III opened the tomb in the presence of two bishops and a knight named Otho of Lomello, and according to the statement of that knight communicated to the author of the chronicle of Novales, they found the emperor sitting on a throne, with a golden crown on his head, and holding a golden scepter in his hands. The hands were covered with gloves, through which the nails protruding had worked their way. A little chapel (*tuguriolum*) of marble and lime was erected over him, through the roof of which the excavators made their way. None of the emperor's limbs had rotted away, but a little piece had fallen from the end of the nose, which Otho caused to be replaced in gold. The four discoverers fell on their knees before the majestic figure. Then they clothed him with white robes, cut the finger nails, took away one tooth as a relic, closed the roof of the chapel and departed. ¶ The account is a very circumstantial one, and is given by a contemporary chronicler on the authority of one of the actors of the scene, who is a fairly well-known historical personage. Yet most modern inquirers accept the conclusion

Before many years had passed, the adjective *Magnus* was universally affixed by popular usage to the name *Carolus*, and 351 years after his death he received the honor of canonization from the Roman Church.

III Results

NO ruler for many centuries so powerfully impressed the imagination of western Europe as the first Frankish Emperor of Rome. The vast cycle of romantic epic poetry which gathered round the name of Charlemagne, the stories of his wars with the Infidels, his expeditions to Constantinople and Jerusalem, his Twelve Peers of France, the friendship of Roland and Oliver and the treachery of Ganelon—all this is of matchless interest in the history of the development of mediæval literature, but of course adds nothing to our knowledge of the real Charles of history, since these romances were confessedly the work of wandering minstrels and took no definite shape till at least three centuries after the death of Charlemagne.

advocated by Theodor Lindner (*Die Fabel von der Bestattung Karls des Grossen*—"The Fable of the Burial of Charles the Great"), that the story must be rejected as untrue; in other words, that Otho of Lomello in relating it was playing on the credulity of his hearers. The chief reasons for this conclusion are that the story is hopelessly at variance with the statements of Einhard and Thegan. If the body was buried on the very day of death, there would be no time for the elaborate process of embalming which this story requires. The words of the epitaph "*humatum*," "*sub hoc conditorio situm est*" ("he is laid in the earth," "he is placed under this tomb") would not be applicable to such a mode of interment. Moreover, such a very unusual mode of dealing with the great emperor's body would surely have attracted some notice from the ninth-century authors who in prose and verse celebrate the deeds of Charles, not one of whom makes the slightest allusion to it. Lastly, though an industrious search has been often made, no one has ever been able to find a trace of the *tuguriolum* (necessarily a room of a certain size) in which the corpse was said to have been seated. ¶ In 1165, at the time of the canonization of Charles, his body was taken up by the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, removed from the marble sarcophagus, in which it had lain for nearly 352 years, and placed in a wooden coffer in the middle of the church. For this wooden coffer was substituted fifty years later, at the order of Frederick II, a costly shrine, adorned with gold and jewels, in which at the present day, every six years, the relics of "St. Charles the Great" are exhibited to the people. The head is separated from the body and enclosed in a silver portrait-bust of fourteenth-century workmanship.

In this concluding chapter I propose very briefly to enumerate some of the chief traces of the great emperor's forming hand on the western church, on literature, on laws, and on the state-system of Europe.

I. Theologically, Charles's chief performances were the condemnation of the Adoptianist heresy⁵⁷ of Felix of Urgel by the Council of Frankfurt (794); the condemnation of the adoration of images by the same council; and the addition to the Nicene Creed of the celebrated words "Filioque," which asserted that the Holy Spirit "proceedeth from the Father *and the Son*." In these two last performances Charles acted more or less in opposition to the advice and judgment of the pope, and the addition to the Creed was one of the causes which led to the schism between the eastern and western churches, and which have hitherto frustrated all schemes for their reunion.

In the government of the church Charles all through his reign took the keenest interest, and a large—as most modern readers would think a disproportionate—part of his capitularies is dedicated to this subject. Speaking generally, it may be said that he strove, as his father before him had striven, to subdue the anarchy that had disgraced the churches of Gaul under the Merovingian kings. He insisted on the monks and the canonical priests living according to the rules which they professed; he discouraged the manufacture of new saints, the erection of new oratories, the worship of new archangels other than the well-known three, Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael. He earnestly exhorted the bishops to work in harmony with the counts for the maintenance of the public peace. While not slow to condemn the faults of the episcopacy, he supported their authority against mutinous priests; and pre-eminently by the example which he set to Gaul in the powerful and well-compacted hierarchy which he established in Germany, he strengthened the aristocratic constitution of the church under the rule of its bishops. At the same time there can be no doubt that by his close relations with the Roman Pontiff and by the temporal sovereignty which he bestowed upon him, he contributed, consciously or unconsciously, to the ultimate transformation of the western church into an absolute monarchy under the headship of the pope. That Charles, with all his zeal for the welfare of the church, was not blind to the faults of the churchmen of his day is shown by the remarkable series of questions—possibly drawn

⁵⁷See p. 222, note 38.

up from his dictation by Einhard—which are contained in a capitulary of 811 written three years before his death:

“We wish to ask the ecclesiastics themselves, and those who have not only to learn but to teach out of the Holy Scriptures, who are they to whom the Apostle says, ‘Be ye imitators of me’; or who is that about whom the same Apostle says, ‘No man that warreth entangleth himself with the business of this world’: in other words, how the Apostle is to be imitated, or how he (the ecclesiastic) wars for God?”

“Further, we must beg of them that they will truly show us what is this ‘renouncing of the world’, which is spoken of by them: or how we can distinguish those who renounce the world from those who still follow it, whether it consists in anything more than this, that they do not bear arms and are not publicly married?”

“We must also inquire if that man has relinquished the world who is daily laboring to increase his possessions in every manner and by every artifice, by sweet persuasions about the blessedness of heaven and by terrible threats about the punishments of hell; who uses the name of God or of some saint to despoil simpler and less learned folk, whether rich or poor, of their property, to deprive the lawful heirs of their inheritance, and thus to drive many through sheer destitution to a life of robbery and crime, which they would otherwise never have embraced?”

Several more questions of an equally searching character are contained in this remarkable capitulary.

II. If doubts may arise in some minds how far Charles’s ecclesiastical policy was of permanent benefit to the human race, no such doubts can be felt as to his patronage of literature and science. Herein he takes a foremost place among the benefactors of humanity, as a man who, himself imperfectly educated, knew how to value education in others; as one who, amid the manifold harassing cares of government and of war, could find leisure for

that friendly intercourse with learned men which far more than his generous material gifts cheered them on in their arduous and difficult work; and as the ruler to whom more perhaps than to any other single individual we owe the fact that the precious literary inheritance of Greece and Rome has not been altogether lost to the human race. Every student of the history of the texts of the classical authors knows how many of our best manuscripts date from the ninth century, the result unquestionably of the impulse given by Charles and his learned courtiers to classical studies. It is noticeable also that this reign constitutes an important era in paleography, the clear and beautiful “minuscule”⁵⁸ of the Irish scribes being generally substituted for the sprawling and uncouth characters which had gone by the name of Langobardic. In one of his capitularies Charles calls the attention of his clergy to the necessity for careful editing of the prayer-books; otherwise those who desire to pray rightly will pray amiss. He enjoins them not to suffer boys to corrupt the sacred text either in writing or reading. If they require a new gospel, missal, or psalter, let it be copied with the utmost care by men of full age. In another capitulary, he expresses his displeasure that some priests, who were poor when they were ordained, have grown rich out of the church’s treasures, acquiring for themselves lands and slaves, but not purchasing books or sacred vessels for the church’s use.

Something has already been said as to the academy in Charles’s palace, which was apparently founded on the basis of a court-school established in his father’s lifetime but became a much more important institution in his own. Probably it was then transformed from a school for children into an academy for learned men, in the sense in which the word has been used at Athens, Florence, and Paris. Alcuin, after his departure from court, founded a school at Tours, which acquired great fame; and we hear of schools also at Utrecht, Fulda, Würzburg, and elsewhere. Doubtless, most of these schools were primarily theological seminaries; but as we have seen in the case of Alcuin, a good deal of classical literature and mathematical science was, at any rate in some schools, taught alongside of the correct rendering of the church service.

⁵⁸The minuscule was a small letter that displaced the awkward uncials used by the monastic scribes of the early centuries. It was the basis of the small letters of the modern Greek and Roman alphabets.

The Monk of St. Gall (who wrote, as we have seen, two generations after Charlemagne, and whose stories we therefore accept with some reserve) gives us an interesting and amusing picture of one of the schools under Charles's patronage. After giving a legendary and inaccurate account of the arrival of two Irish scholars in Gaul, named Alcuin and Clement, he goes on to say that Charles persuaded Clement to settle in Gaul and sent him a number of boys, sons of nobles, of middle-class men, and of peasants, to be taught by him, while they were lodged and boarded at the king's charges. After a long time he returned to Gaul, and ordered these lads to be brought into his presence, and to bring before him letters and poems of their own composition. The boys sprung from the middle and lower classes offered compositions which were "beyond all expectation sweetened with the seasoning of wisdom," but the productions of the young nobility were "tepid, and absolutely idiotic." Here-upon the king, as it were anticipating the Last Judgment, set the industrious lads on his right hand and the idlers on his left. He addressed the former with words of encouragement: "I thank you, my sons, for the zeal with which you have attended to my commands. Only go on as you have begun, and I will give you splendid bishoprics and abbacies, and you shall be ever honorable in my eyes." But to those on his left hand he turned with angry eyes and frowning brow, and addressed them in a voice of thunder: "You young nobles, you dainty and beautiful youths, who have presumed upon your birth and your possessions to despise mine orders, and have taken no care for my renown; you have neglected the study of literature, while you have given yourselves over to luxury and idleness, or to games and foolish athletics." Then, raising his august head and unconquered right hand towards heaven, he swore a solemn oath, "By the King of Heaven, I care nothing for your noble birth and your handsome faces, let others prize them as they may. Know this for certain, that unless ye give earnest heed to your studies, and recover the ground lost by your negligence, ye shall never receive any favor at the hand of King Charles."

There was one branch of learning in which Charles was evidently not enough helped by his friends of the classical revival, and in which one cannot help wishing that his judgment had prevailed over theirs. Einhard tells us that he reduced to writing and committed to memory "those most ancient songs of the barbarians in which the actions of the kings of old and their wars were

chanted." Would that these precious relics of the dim Teutonic fore-world had been thought worthy of preservation by Alcuin and his disciples!

He also began to compose a grammar of his native speech; he gave names to the winds blowing from twelve different quarters, whereas previously men had named but four; and he gave Teutonic instead of Latin names to the twelve months of the year. They were — for January, *Wintarmanoth*; February, *Hornung*; March, *Lentzinmanoth*; April, *Ostarmanoth*; May, *Winnemanoth*; June, *Brachmanoth*; July, *Hewimanoth*; August, *Aranmanoth*; September, *Witumanoth*; October, *Windumemanoth*; November, *Herbistmanoth*; December, *Heilagmanoth*.

III. It is of course impossible to deal with more than one or two of the most important products of Charles's legislative and administrative activity.

I. In the first place, we have to remark that Charles was not in any sense like Justinian or Napoleon, a codifier of laws. On the contrary, the title chosen by him after his capture of Pavia, "*Rex Langobardorum*," indicates the general character of his policy, which was to leave the Lombards under Lombard law, the Romans under Roman law; even the Saxons, if they would only accept Christianity, to some extent under Saxon institutions. To turn all the various nationalities over which he ruled into Ripuarian Franks was by no means the object of the conqueror; on the contrary, so long as they loyally obeyed the great central government, they might keep their own laws, customs, and language unaltered. As this principle applied not only to tribes and races of men, but also to individuals, we find ourselves in presence of that most peculiar phenomenon of the early Middle Ages, which is known as the system of "personal law." In our modern society, if the citizen of one country goes to reside in the territory of another civilized and well-ordered country, he is bound to conform to the laws of that country. Where this rule does not prevail (as in the case of the rights secured by the "capitulations" to Europeans dwelling in Turkey or Morocco) it is a distinct sign that we are in the presence of a barbarous law to which the more civilized nations will not submit. But quite different from this was the conception of law in the ninth century under Charles the Great and his successors. Then, every man, according to his nationality, or even his profession—according as he was Frank or Lombard, Alaman or Bavarian, Goth or Roman, layman or ecclesiastic—carried, so to

speak, his own legal atmosphere about with him, and might always claim to be judged *secundum legem patriæ suæ*.⁵⁹ Thus, according to an often-quoted passage, “so great was the diversity of laws that you would often meet with it, not only in countries or cities, but even in single houses. For it would often happen that five men would be sitting or walking together, not one of whom would have the same law with any other.”

But though Charles made no attempt, and apparently had no desire, to reduce all the laws of his subjects to one common denominator, he had schemes for improving, and even to some extent harmonizing, the several national codes which he found in existence. But these schemes were only imperfectly realized. As Einhard says, “After his assumption of the imperial title, as he perceived that many things were lacking in the laws of his people (for the Franks have two systems of law, in many places very diverse from one another), he thought to add those things which were wanting, to reconcile discrepancies, and to correct what was bad and ill expressed. But of all this naught was accomplished by him, save that he added a few chapters, and those imperfect ones, to the laws [of the Salians, Ripuarians, and Bavarians]. All the legal customs, however, that were not already written, of the various nations under his dominion, he caused to be taken down and committed to writing.”

While Charles’s new legislation was in general of an enlightened and civilized character, a modern reader is surprised and pained by the prominence which he gives, or allows, to those barbarous and superstitious modes of determining doubtful causes—wager of battle, ordeal by the cross, and ordeal by the hot ploughshares. As to the first of these especially, the language of the capitularies seems to show a retrogression from the wise distrust of that manner of arriving at truth expressed half a century earlier by the Lombard king, Liutprand.

2. A question which we cannot help asking, though it hardly admits of an answer, is “What was Charles’s relation to that feudal system which, so soon after his death, prevailed throughout his empire, and which so quickly destroyed its unity?” The growth of that system was so gradual, and it was due to such various causes, that no one man can be regarded as its author, hardly even to any great extent as its modifier. It was not known to early

⁵⁹After the law of his own country.

Merovingian times; its origin appears to be nearly contemporaneous with that of the power of the Arnulfing mayors of the palace; it must certainly have been spreading more widely and striking deeper roots all through the reign of Charlemagne, and yet we can hardly attribute either to him or to his ancestors any distinct share in its establishment. It was, so to speak, "in the air," even as democracy, trades' unions, socialism, and similar ideas are in the air of the nineteenth century. Feudalism apparently had to be, and it "sprang and grew up, one knoweth not how."

One of the clearest allusions to the growing feudalism of society is contained in a capitulary of Charles issued the year before his death, in which it is ordained that no man shall be allowed to renounce his dependence on a feudal superior after he has received any benefit from him, except in one of four cases—if the lord have sought to slay his vassal, or have struck him with a stick, or have endeavored to dishonor his wife or daughter, or to take away his inheritance. In an expanded version of the same decree a fifth cause of renunciation is admitted—if the lord have failed to give to the vassal that protection which he promised when the vassal put his hands in the lord's, and "commended" himself to his guardianship. Other allusions to the same system are to be found in the numerous capitularies in which Charles urges the repeated complaint that the vassals of the Crown are either endeavoring to turn their *beneficia* into *allodia* or, if possessing property of both kinds—a *beneficium* under the Crown and an *allodium* by purchase or inheritance from their fathers—are starving and despoiling the royal *beneficium* for the benefit of their own *allodium*.

3. An institution which was intended to check these and similar irregularities, and generally to uphold the imperial authority and the rights of the humbler classes against the encroachments of the territorial aristocracy, was the peculiarly Carolingian institution of *missi dominici*, or (as we may translate the words) "imperial commissioners." These men may be likened to the emperor's staff-officers, bearing his orders to distant regions, and everywhere, as his representatives, carrying on his ceaseless campaign against oppression and anarchy. The pivot of provincial government was still, as it had been in Merovingian times, the Frankish *comes* or count, who had his headquarters generally in one of the old Roman cities, and governed from thence a district

which was of varying extent, but which may be fairly taken as equivalent to an English county. Under him were the *centenarii*, who, originally rulers of that little tract of country known as the hundred, now had a somewhat wider scope, and acted probably as *vicarii* or representatives of the count throughout the district subject to his jurisdiction. These governors, especially the count, were doubtless generally men of wealth and great local influence. They had not yet succeeded in making their offices hereditary and transmitting the countship, as a title of nobility is now transmitted, from father to son. The strong hand of the central government prevented this change from taking place in Charles's day, but it, too, like so much else that had a feudal tendency, was "in the air"; and it may have been partly in order to guard against this tendency and to keep his counts merely life-governors that Charles devised his institution of *missi*.

But a nobler and more beneficial object aimed at was to ensure that justice should be "truly and indifferently administered" to both rich and poor, to the strong and to the defenceless. It is interesting in this connection to observe what was the so-called "eight-fold ban" proclaimed by the Frankish legislator. Anyone who (1) dishonored Holy Church; (2) or acted unjustly against widows; (3) or against orphans; (4) or against poor men who were unable to defend themselves; (5) or carried off a free-born woman against the will of her parents; (6) or set on fire another man's house or stable; (7) or who committed *harizhut*—that is to say, who broke open by violence another man's house, door, or enclosure; (8) or who when summoned did not go forth against the enemy, came under the king's *ban*, and was liable to pay for each offence sixty solidi (£36).⁶⁰ Here we see that three of the specified offences were precisely those which a powerful local count or *centenarius* would be tempted to commit against the humbler suitors in his court, and which it would be the business of a *missus dominicus* to discover and report to his lord.

The *missi* had, however, a wide range of duties beyond the mere control and correction of unjust judges. It was theirs to enforce the rights of the royal treasury, to administer the oath of allegiance to the inhabitants of a district, to inquire into any cases of wrongful appropriation of church property, to

⁶⁰Sixty golden solidi = \$307.20. Ed.'s Note: Again, in 1897. This same amount in 1913 money would be \$10,500.60 in August 2026.

hunt down robbers, to report upon the morals of bishops, to see that monks lived according to the rule of their order. Sometimes they had to command armies (the brave Gerold of Bavaria was such a *missus*) and to hold *placita* in the name of the king. Of course the choice of a person to act as *missus* would largely depend on the nature of the duties that he had to perform: a soldier for the command of armies or an ecclesiastic for the inspection of monasteries. As Charles, in his embassies to foreign courts, was fond of combining the two vocations, and sending a stout layman and a subtle ecclesiastic together to represent him at Cordova or Constantinople, so he may often have duplicated these internal embassies, these roving commissions, to inquire into the abuses of authority in his own domains.

We have, in one of Charles's later capitularies, an admirable exhortation which, though put forth in the name of the *missi*, surely came from the emperor's own robust intellect: "Take care," the *missi* say to the count whose district they are about to visit, "that neither you nor any of your officers are so evil disposed as to say 'Hush! hush! say nothing about that matter till those *missi* have passed by, and afterwards we will settle it quietly among ourselves.' Do not so deny or even postpone the administration of justice; but rather give diligence that justice may be done in the case before we arrive."

The institution of *missi dominici* served its purpose for a time, but proved to be only a temporary expedient. There was an increasing difficulty in finding suitable men for this delicate charge, which required in those who had to execute it both strength and sympathy, an independent position, and willingness to listen to the cry of the humble. Even already in the lifetime of Charles there was a visible danger that the *missus* might become another oppressor as burdensome to the common people as any of the counts whom he was appointed to superintend. And after all, the *missus* could only transmit to the distant regions of the empire as much power as he received from its center. Under the feeble Louis the Pious, his wrangling sons, and his inept grandsons, the institution grew ever weaker and weaker. Admirable instructions for the guidance of the *missi* were drawn up at headquarters, but there was no power to enforce them. With the collapse of the Carolingian dynasty towards the close of the ninth century, the *missi dominici* disappear from view.

4. Another institution was perhaps due to Charles's own personal initia-

tive; at any rate it was introduced at the outset of his reign, and soon spread widely through his dominions. It was that of the *scabini*, whose functions recall to us sometimes those of our justices of the peace, sometimes those of our grand-jurors, and sometimes those of our ordinary jurors. Chosen for life, out of the free but not probably out of the powerful classes, men of respectable character and unstained by crime, they had, besides other functions, pre-eminently that of acting as assessors to the *comes* or to the *centenarius* in his court of justice. Seven was the regular number that should be present at a trial, though sometimes fewer were allowed to decide. As in all the earlier stages of the development of the jury system, they were at least as much witnesses as judges — their own knowledge or common report forming the chief ground of their decision. It is not clear whether their verdict was necessarily unanimous, but it seems certain that the decision was considered to be theirs, and not that of the presiding functionary, whether *comes*, *vicarius*, or *centenarius*. It was, moreover, final; for, as one of the capitularies distinctly says, "After the *scabini* have condemned a man as a robber, it is not lawful for either the *comes* or the *vicarius* to grant him life."

The *scabini* were expected to be present at the meetings of the county—probably also, to some extent, at those of the nation, and they joined in the assent which was there given to any new capitularies that were promulgated by the emperor. It is easy to see how, both in their judicial and in their legislative capacity, the *scabini* may have acted as a useful check on the lawless encroachments of the counts. There was probably in this institution a germ which, had the emperors remained mighty, would have limited the power of the aristocracy, and have formed in time a democratic basis upon which a strong and stable monarchy might have been erected.

IV. Lastly, a few words must be said as to the permanent results of Charles's life and work on the state-system of Europe. In endeavoring to appraise them let us keep our minds open to the consideration not only of that which actually was, but also of that which might have been, had the descendants of Charles been as able men as himself and his progenitors.

The three great political events of Charles's reign were his conquest of Italy, his consolidation of the Frankish kingdom, and his assumption of the imperial title.

1. His conduct towards the vanquished Lombards was, on the whole, generous and statesmanlike. By assuming the title of King of the Lombards, he showed that it was not his object to destroy the nationality of the countrymen of Alboin, nor to fuse them into one people with the Franks. Had his son Pippin lived and transmitted his scepter to his descendants, there might possibly have been founded a kingdom of Italy, strong, patriotic, and enduring. In that event some of the glorious fruits of art and literature which were ripened in the independent Italian republics of the Middle Ages might never have been brought forth, but the Italians, though a less artistic people, would have been spared much bloodshed and many despairs.

But we can only say that this was a possible contingency. By the policy (inherited from his father) which he pursued towards the papal see, Charles called into existence a power which would probably always have been fatal to the unity and freedom of Italy. That wedge of Church-Dominions thrust in between the north and south would always tend to keep Lombardy and Tuscany apart from Spoleto and Benevento; and the endless wrangle between Pope and king would perhaps have been renewed even as in the days of the Lombards. The descendants of the pacific and God-crowned king would then have become “unutterable” and the “not-to-be-mentioned” Franks, and peace and unity would have been as far from the fated land as they have been in very deed for a thousand years.

2. Charles’s greatest work, as has been once or twice hinted in the course of the preceding narrative, was his extension and consolidation of the Frankish kingdom. One cannot see that he did much for what we now call France, but his work east of the Rhine was splendidly successful. Converting the Saxons—a triumph of civilization, however barbarous were the methods employed—subduing the rebellious Bavarians, keeping the Danes and the Slavonic tribes on his eastern border in check, and utterly crushing the Avars, he gave to the Teutonic race that position of supremacy in Central Europe which, whatever may have been the ebb and flow of Teutonism in later centuries, it has never been forced to surrender, and which, with all its faults, has been a blessing to Europe.

3. As to the assumption of the imperial title, it is much more difficult to speak with confidence. We have seen reason to think that Charles himself was

only half persuaded of its expediency. It was a noble idea, this revival of the old worldwide empire and its conversion into a *Civitas Dei* ("City of God"), the realized dream of St. Augustine. But none knew better than the monarch himself how far his empire came short of these grand prophetic visions; and profounder scholars than Alcuin could have told him how little it had really in common with the state which was ruled by Augustus or by Trajan. That empire had sprung out of a democratic republic, and retained for centuries something of that resistless energy which the consciousness of self-government gives to a brave and patient people. Charles's empire was cradled not in the city but in the forest; its essential principle was the loyalty of henchmen to their chief; it was already permeated by the spirit of feudalism, and between feudalism and any true reproduction of the *Imperium Romanum* ("Roman Empire") there could be no abiding union.⁶¹

I need not here allude to the divergence in language, customs and modes of thought between the various nationalities which composed the emperor's dominions. The mutual antagonism of nations and languages was not so strong in the Middle Ages as it has been in our own day, and possibly a succession of able rulers might have kept the two peoples, who in their utterly different languages swore in 842 the great oath of Strasburg,⁶² still one. But the spirit of feudalism was more fatal to the unity of the empire than these differences of race and language. The mediæval emperor was perpetually finding himself overtopped by one or other of his nominal vassals, and history has few more pitiable spectacles than some that were presented by the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire—men bearing the great names of Cæsar and

⁶¹Ed.'s Note: Needless to say, a Christian looking back with have a very different assessment.

⁶²Of "the famous oath of Strassburg," by which a dispute between Louis the German and his brother Charles the Bald was adjusted, Professor Freeman says: "That precious document... shows that in 841 the distinctions of race and language were beginning to make themselves felt. The Austrasian soldiers of King Louis swear in the Old-German tongue, of which the oath is an early monument;" while the Neustrian soldiers of King Charles swear "in the *lingua Romana*... a tongue essentially of Roman origin, and yet a tongue which has departed too far from the Roman model to be any longer called Latin. It has ceased to be Latin, but we cannot yet call it French, even Old French... In the course of the next century it became nationalized as *lingua Gallica*." See *Historical Essays*, I., 184.

Augustus—tossed helplessly to and fro on the waves of European politics, the laughing-stock of their own barons and marquises, and often unable to provide for the ordinary expenses of their households.

But all this belongs to the story of the Middle Ages, not to the life of the founder of the empire. It would be absurd to say that he could have foreseen all the weak points of the great, and on the whole beneficent, institution which he bestowed on Western Europe. And whatever estimate we may form of the good or the evil which resulted from the great event of the eight hundredth Christmas day, none will deny that the whole history of Europe for at least seven hundred years was profoundly modified by the life and mighty deeds of Charles the Great.

Appendix A

Notes on the Texts

THROUGHOUT the texts, proper names have generally been modified to correspond to their more usual modern equivalents. E.g., “Eginhard” was modified to “Einhard”; the French “Aix” has been altered to the Germanic “Aachen”; the Anglified spelling “Lewis” has been changed to the more usual “Louis”. These spellings correspond more to the normal usage in medieval history, and thus should make the text more accessible to contemporary readers.

On the other hand, in the interests of authenticity, the “æ” has been restored to its more historical place, while the original text routinely used “ae”. This has been done even where such spelling is not usual, most commonly in the words “mediæval” and “præfect”. In one instance, the old spelling “uroch” was replaced with “auroch” (the ancestor of our domestic cattle), and where British spelling conflicts with American, the American variant has been selected.

Where it was missing, the Oxford comma was added. Punctuation has also generally been modernized; for example, the once-common combination “:—” to lead into a direct quotation has been altered to the simple “:”. Capitalization has likewise been modernized; e.g., titles are not routinely capitalized unless they are attached to a proper name. Some archaic grammar was also updated; for example, no one “bare witness” anymore, but rather “bore” it, and people are now “dumbfounded” rather than “dumfounded”.

The original text included a bracketed expression along with note 71, as the transcriber claimed he was not able to otherwise make sense of the passage. This interpolated text, and its accompanying note, have been removed. Also the note on the conversion of the Saxons on page 18, being in your editor’s view an unfair exaggeration even at best, was removed.

Hodgkin’s biography requires a few more notes. We have, as elsewhere,

uniformly Americanized spelling and modernized punctuation, and paragraph breaks in footnotes, to which Hodgkin is abnormally inclined, have been replaced for space purposes with “¶”. Typographical errors, mercifully few, have been silently corrected (your editor’s edition, for example, refers to the *Annales Finhardi*; this is clearly enough wrong that it seemed pointless to note its correction, at least in place).

The notes in the 1902 edition, which edition we used for this text, came from Henry Ketcham. We have also updated or modified some of these notes, prefacing our changes with “Ed.’s Note”, or words to that effect. This was deemed necessary not because Hodgkin’s history, or Ketcham’s notes, are *wrong*; indeed, they mostly aren’t. Rather, Hodgkin’s *interpretation* of that history is frequently wrong. He is, unsurprisingly, a product of his time, and his gratuitous comments on a few of the events of Charlemagne’s life and empire really, at least occasionally, needed to be corrected.

Hodgkin’s older uses, such as “Pampelona” for the city of Pamplona, have also been updated.

With that, these texts are offered to help understand the monumental figure of Charles the Great, the king whose reign more than any other, after Constantine and Theodosius, formed the Christendom that we came to know.

Christus vincit! Christus regnat! Christus imperat!

Colophon

This document was typeset in EB Garamond 12/15, with Yannis Haralambous's Gothic font for the headings, from text OCRed and carefully proofread for correctness, and pulled together with a variety of traditional Unix programs and scripts, then processed by the L^AT_EX document preparation system (LuaL^AT_EX specifically). It is in the public domain and is proudly published by the Confraternity of Christ the King.