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Charlemagne and his reign

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CHARLEMAGNE^{2d} HIS REIGN.

J. N. Oliver. 95

Ralph Waldo Emerson in one of his beautiful poems has these lines: -----

I thought the sparrow note from heaven,

Dying at dawn on the alder bough; -----

I brought him home in his nest at even;

He sings the song but it pleases not now,

For I did not bring home the river^{and} sky;

He sang to my ear - they sang to my eye.

If we would perfectly understand men - their character, their deeds, their lives^{and} place a just estimate upon them, we must not ~~only~~ see the individual but "the river^{and} sky" also; know whether they launched their vessel at high or low tide,^{and} whether the sky was fair or cloudy^{and} stormy. The lakes of Scotland owe half their fame to the hills^{and} mountains that hug them in close embrace. To men who are fenced in with mountains of difficulty^{and} have to come in contact with chilling adversity - still through the very reverse of fortune - -----

2
" + + + Discern, unseen before.

A path to higher destinies;

Nor deem the irrevocable past,

As wholly wasted, wholly vain,

If rising on its wrecks at last

To something nobler they attain";

such men are worthy of greater praise^{and} honor
than those like Alexander^{and} Mendelssohn who from
their very birth know -

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power

And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,"

This greater honor we claim for

the subject of this thesis; not, indeed, that we
would create a character^{and} describe honors to it that
were not justly earned as was the custom in the
days of Homer, but because, in a dark period in
the world's history, surrounded upon every^{hand}
with barbarous tribes^{and} heathen nations, whose
wealth^{and} arms were often more formidable than
his - taking these discordant elements, with
a master hand, he resolved them into a harmo-
nious whole^{and} breathed into its nostrils the

the breath of life^{and} it became a living, active, powerful empire.

As has already been stated, to know men, their composition, character,^{and} worth, we must see^{and} know the crucible in which they were tested, what molds shaped their character,^{and} what influences decided their course^{and} destiny.

It is certain that we cannot see Charlemagne without our own eyes. But thanks to the Historian, his eyes, more skilled^{and} powerful than ours are at our service,^{and} looking down the avenue of his ancestry, his native land^{and} its people,^{and} his own achievements we may gain, not a perfect view of the man perhaps, but such a view as will give us at least the outlines of his age, his country, his character^{and} his achievements!

Trans-Alpine Gaul embraced what is now known as France, Belgium,^{and} parts of Germany, Switzerland,^{and} Holland. This territory was traversed^{and} the people subjugated by Caesar in his famous campaign in the year 58 B.C.

Caesar found towns, ^{and} villages, ^{and} a people rude ^{and} barbarous, given to warfare ^{and} the severest cruelty to those taken in times of wars ^{and} strife. The soil of Transalpine Gaul was remarkably fertile, ^{and} in time of peace, was cultivated by the natives. The people were also somewhat skilled in weaving, ^{and} kindred arts ^{and} were not entire strangers to the processes by which metals were wrought ^{and} utilized.

Indeed, the tribes occupying this portion of Europe were wealthier by far than any of the neighboring tribes.

But however much may be said in praise of their comparatively advanced civilization ^{and} wealth, when we come to speak concerning their religion, worship, the marriage relation, ^{and} the estimate ^{and} treatment of woman, darker lines must be drawn. -----

Their religion, if religion it can be called, was gross idolatry. In worship they not only sacrificed beasts, but human beings also. Polygamy was common ^{and} woman groaned under the curse. But notwithstanding the sombre hue their religion, worship, ^{and}

domestic life casts over their history they were, in many respects hospitable, generous, thrifty and prosperous. The introduction of Roman law and manners added greatly to their prosperity for more than three and a half centuries.

But as the Roman Power began to wane she sought to gather strength from distant tributaries by imposing heavy taxes. It was not only until Gaul was reduced to abject poverty and misery. Under Roman oppression their courage was broken, the vigor of their soldiery dissipated, and the once fair and favored territory became an easy prey to marauding tribes.

To the east of Gaul, and nearby, lay a large territory inhabited by a sturdy people, called, at the present day, Germans. The men were large, sturdy warlike, and fierce. Like the Saxons, they breathed the atmosphere of independence. Like the Northmen and the modern Esquimaux they dressed in the skins of wild beasts, and, in contrast with the effeminacy of Nineteenth Century Civilization, they lived out of doors and slept either on the ground or upon the rudest couches composed of straw or leaves. Not unlike their modern descendants they were fond of Beer and

often drank to excess. Passionately fond of the gaming table they would stake anything - life itself - on the chances of a game. Strict in worship, studious in their pursuits, somewhat familiar with Philosophy and kindred sciences, they greatly elevated the position of woman, and were severely virtuous - a thing not common at this period. Human sacrifices were only occasionally offered by them.

Germany became subject to Rome at the same time trans-Alpine Gaul was subjugated, but not so thoroughly & completely as was its more unfortunate neighbor. For more than four centuries, however, the pages of history are barren of any definite reference to Germany. From the palmyest days of Rome down to the accession of Clovis, the son of Childeric, only occasional echoes are heard from the long night of dissolution & death, and they from the unauthenticated utterances of tradition, and the songs of wandering poets & minstrels. Only two things are definitely known: First, the Germans became intoxicated, from their associations with the Romans, with the love of conquest; Second, Rome

having a weaker hold upon Germany than she had on Gaul was not able to oppress the Teutons so severely. The result was while Gaul staggered from the loss of her life blood, it being drained to its very drop by Rome, Germany, not being so vitally connected with the expiring Empire, greatly increased its strength, both in point of numbers and in internal resources.

In the year 486 A. D. the last vestige of Roman power and authority was destined to disappear from Gaul. The tribes of Germany - Burgundians, Alemanni, and Franks - formed a great and formidable army under the leadership of Clovis and marched against Syagrius, who kept up a shadow of the Roman name at Soissons. The Legions of Rome, unworthy of their heroic ancestors, fled before the hosts of Clovis, and Syagrius, their Commander, was compelled to escape for his life to Toulouse. There he claimed the protection of Alaric, the young Visigothic King; and he, not discerning the fast approaching storm-cloud, delivered him to Clovis, who slew him. Thus ended the last vestige of Roman

power and authority in Gaul.

Clovis, having engaged ^{at Tolbise} with the
 Allemans, a powerful tribe from the Upper Rhine,
 was on the eve of being overthrown when, remembering
 his pious Queen who had been converted to
 Christianity, probably by Remigius, Bishop of
 Rheims, vowed that if the God of Clotilde would
 grant him the victory he would become a Christian.
 The battle changed, the Franks rallied, the Allemans
 were routed and completely overthrown, and Clovis won
 for himself the honor of being the first of Frankish
 Captains. Soon after, accompanied by 3,000 of his war-
 riors, he was, along with them, baptized in the Cate-
 dral of Rheims, by Remigius. "With all possible
 splendor," says Kitchen, "the ceremony was performed.
 The barbarians believed they were entering heaven
 itself."

Thus did the Church take possession
 of her eldest son; and thus began that form of Christi-
 anity, was like, propagated often by force, and sometimes
 fierce, that mark these centuries. Historians date
 from this ^{period} ~~date~~ - 496 A. D. - the beginning of French History

Leaving this point we come now to another historical desert of almost two ^ada half centuries from 516 A.D. to 687 A.D. One grows weary of traversing the dreary waste. Toward the close of this nightmare of semi-anarchy, ^{and} Carnival of crime, disorder, ^{and} rapine, Pepin of Heristal, a descendant of the Leudes, or Lords of Austrasia, changed the system of government, ^{and} assumed the regal prerogative under the title of Duke of France. This occurred in 687 A.D.

This brings us to the horizon of Charlemagne. Charlemagne's ancestor reminds one of England's most prominent, though uncoronated King Cromwell. His great grandfather, Pepin of Heristal, at the battle of Testry in 687 A.D. gave the death blow to the Merovingian Dynasty. It was to France ^{and} the House of Pepin what the victory at Beth-horon was to the Israelites. Indeed Hallam declares "that the Battle of Testry is one of the turning points in French history." The battle was waged against the Neustrians ^{and} resulted in cementing the Neustrians ^{and} Austrasians, the East ^{and} West Franks. Kitchin says: "We are now at the

beginning of the power destined to cope with the growing strength of the Papacy, to beat back the onslaughts of Heathenism and Mahometanism in western Europe. The battle of Teutry, fought in 687 A. D. between Pepin of Herstal and the Neustrans closes the old, chaotic period and begins the new order of things. Law and justice emerge, Feudalism takes shape for good and evil, and the Church begins to re-assert itself and to shake the dust from her trailing garments. We hail the dawn of this day as the first sign of our release from the shadow of death in which we have been wandering.

Charles Martel, Pepin's son, succeeded his father in the Dukedom and between Tours and Poitiers immortalized himself in what is known ^{in history} as the Battle of Poitiers. Doctor William Smith classes this battle alongside that at Marathon, Arbela, Chalons and Leipzig. Doctor Smith also says: "The victory of Charles Martel has immortalized his name and may justly be reckoned among those few battles of which a contrary event would have essentially varied the

drama of the world in all of its subsequent scenes.

At Tours the horsemen of the East met the footmen of the West; the Semitic race made trial of strength with the Germanic; 300,000 Arabs corpses marked the point at which the flood-tide turned. The scimitar proved vain against the Frankish battle axe in the muscular grasp of the brave Germans. From this day Charles Martel became known by the name of "The Hammer"; so mightily had he smitten the Unbelievers.

Charles Le. Bref, or Pepin III as we prefer to call him, at his father's death received but half the Dukedom, his brother Karloman receiving the other half. Six years later, however, Karloman voluntarily entered a Monastery and gave over his sword, Ducal rights, and government to his brother. Shortly afterwards the nominal King, Childerik, was deposed by Pope Zacharias, and Pepin III. became Ruler of the entire Frankish Sovereignty, and thus the Merovingian Dynasty, of which Clovis was the greatest representative, passed into the Carolingian Dynasty which soon became famous

in history^{2d} in the history of which Charlemagne became the great^{2d} central figure.

The principal acts of the third Pepin was the overthrow of the Lombards; the wresting of the Exarchate of Ravenna from the Eastern Empire^{2d} and representation of it to the Pope^{2d} and Republic of Rome. We are persuaded as we look at these three men—Pepin of Herstal, Charles Martel,^{2d} and Pepin Le Bref—the three Pepins as we have termed them—that no King since the world began^{2d} could be more justly proud of the heroism^{2d} and success of his ancestors than could Charlemagne. But to say that to the three Pepins, rather than to Charlemagne, the honors ought to be ascribed is like ascribing the glory^{2d} and success of the Jewish Kingdom to Samuel rather than to David. These three Pepins were indeed Samuels in the work of preparation, but the work itself was done—the grand^{2d} and for a season mighty, structure reared, by none other than Charlemagne.

Charlemagne was born in the castle of Aulburg in 742 A. D.,^{2d} and probably on the 2nd of

April. His Mother was the daughter of a Count, and was as much a Queen in every respect as was the Father of Charlemagne a King. She was considered worthy of her position by her Husband and was, in every way, exalted by him even so far as having her participate in all the solemnities which dignified his Office.

Indeed it could not be said of Charlemagne's Father, as Emerson says of another:

"He builded better than he knew,"

for he left no stone unturned that was necessary to the elevation of his Family, the founding of a Dynasty

Of Charlemagne's early years Eginhard Charlemagne's Private Secretary, says: "It would be foolery, I think, to write a word in regard to Charles' birth and infancy, or even his boyhood, for nothing has ever been written on the subject, and there is no one alive now who can give information of it."

Charlemagne's first act of a public character dates back to his twelfth year. The political situation at Rome made it necessary for Pope Stephen to have assistance outside of his own Dominion. Being unable to get it either

of Astolphus, King of the Lombards, or of the Power at Constantinople, he determined to appeal to the Frankish King in person. Five years before this the same Pope had elevated the noble Frank from the position of a Duke to that of King, ^{and} Pepin, now anxious to show his gratitude, sends an Embassy to meet the Pope ^{and} to escort him in an appropriate manner to his Court. The youthful Charlemagne had the honor of being at the head of this Embassy, which fact speaks for him a manly appearance, culture, and sagacity.

During this Papal visit occurred the Coronation of Charlemagne in conjunction with his Father's ^{and} Brother's, Charlemagne's Coronation being emphasized by a repetition. By this remarkable act Charlemagne was made to feel, in a particular sense, the importance of his station—a station he was destined to cover with glory in after years.

Ten years now pass by in which the name of Charlemagne is unwritten. At the age of 22, however, he made his debut before the world

as a Warrior, in company with his Father, in the Aquitanian War. In this Campaign he learned many lessons that stood him in hand in after years.

At the conclusion of this Campaign, which lasted four years Pepin III. was seized with a fever from which he never recovered. Confident that his illness would prove fatal he convened the principal men of his realm with their aid and advice divided the Empire between his two sons. Charlemagne was crowned at Aoyon & received Neustria; on the same day Carloman was crowned at Soissons, & consequently received Austrasia.

Now that the elder Pepin was dead the Aquitanians, who had but lately become subject to the Frankish King dreamed of independence. Hunold, the Father of the conquered King, inspired with the hope that the territory might be regained from the hands of the brothers between whom business hands had already sown the seed of dissension, called his people to arms, & declared his country free.

Charlemagne, quick to comprehend the situation, took the lead in measures to quell the rev

lution, depending upon his brother Karloman for promised aid. But the aid was not forthcoming. Karloman taking umbrage at some fancied slight or insult let the burden of the entire campaign fall on the shoulders of Charlemagne.

But Charlemagne was equal to the emergency; he never for a moment faltered or wavered. An immediate & decisive stroke was absolutely necessary & he hastened to give it. So very young in this his first campaign alone he exhibited the genius & traits of character that were ever characteristic of him.

With inferior forces he swept forward into the heart of Aquitania with such rapidity & daring that his recreant subjects were struck with consternation. Hundreds of his forces were dispersed. Charlemagne became the Sovereign of Aquitania. Hunold sought an asylum with the Wascons, but they delivered him over to the Franks. Escaping, he fled to Desiderius, King of Lombardy, where, at last, he met Charlemagne again, dying in defense of Verona. The result of the Aquitanian war was the addition of Aquitania & Gascony to Charlemagne's Dominion. These two additions were united under the

title of Kingdom of Aquitania over which he placed his third son, Lodovig, in the year 778 A. D.

Astolphus, King of the Lombards, against whom the arms of the Franks, under Pepin, had been directed died soon after his submission. Desiderius, the Chief Commander of the Lombards was desirous of ascending the Throne. To accomplish this the favor of two men was necessary, namely Pepin & Pope Stephen. By flattery the favor of the Pope was won, by the Pope Pepin was won. Soon after Desiderius was crowned Pepin commenced his campaign in Aquitania, to which we have already referred. Desiderius, knowing the insecurity of the Pope, and that Pepin was closely engaged, broke his pledges of fidelity, & renewed the Lombard hostilities against the Papal Authority.

In the meantime Pope Stephen I. was succeeded by Pope Paul, & he, in turn, by Stephen II. No sooner had Stephen II. been seated in the Papal Chair than he sent a messenger to the Court of Pepin, asking for the sheep that had been so generously given in other times of peril. But when the messenger reached the Capital of the Franks, Pepin was

dead the Government was in the hands of his
Sons. The Father's example, however, was followed,
the Papal Cause was espoused, & troops were despatch-
ed against the unfaithful Lombard King . . .

But before the Frank^s & Lombards
met, Bertha, the Mother of Charlemagne & Karloman,
ever active in overtures of peace, conceived the idea
of uniting in a marriage, Charlemagne, & Desiderata,
the Daughter of the hostile Lombard King, as a
means of reconciliation. Bertha carried her point but the
Pope naturally looked with displeasur^e & alarm
upon this dangerous alliance, & soon after, Char-
lemagne, becoming dissatisfied with Desiderata
as his wife, easily gained the consent of the Pope to
put her away on the plea of sterility. Desiderius,
stung to the quick by the insult forced upon his
unhappy Daughter, determined on revenge. His
Court became a refuge for all, from any & every source,
who had, in any way, become disaffected toward
Charlemagne.

While this dark storm-cloud of war
was rising in the South, & its mutterings were

echoing throughout Europe, Karloman, Charle-
magne's Brother, breathed his last, A. D. 771.

Karloman's subjects foresaw that
a strong hand must take the helm or their Ship of
State would soon be dashed to pieces in the politi-
cal storm that was soon to break forth a rage so long.
Two years of public life had introduced Charle-
magne as a Ruler of extraordinary ability, and as a
General whose presence alone, in a campaign, was
equal to a 1000 men. The stars which the Wise
Men of Austrasia saw stood over the Frankish
Capital, and the anointing hands soon were laid
upon the head of the youthful Monarch.

The Empire now re-visited, under
the name of Carolingian Dynasty, had a Monarch
at its head that was calculated to adorn and
strengthen it until there would be no greater Empire under the
sun, or greater Emperor.

But the new honor added great respon-
sibility and peril. The times were pregnant with great
opportunities, but equally big with difficulties.
It was the Birth-night of a new era. Shakespeare

says:

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
 Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;
 Omitted, all the voyage of their life
 Is bound in shallows & in miseries. ...
 On such a fitful sea we are now afloat;
 And we must take the current when it serves,
 Or lose our venture."

Charlemagne was thrown at once into a crucible of testing that would require the greatest military genius & the most subtle wisdom, diplomacy & statesmanship. He could not count upon all of even his own subjects. The Saxons on the East continually pillaged throughout most of his Empire. On the West, Spain was overrun with Mohammedans, who were eager to avenge the slaughter of 300,000 of their kinsmen ten years before. On the South was the Eastern Empire that was exceedingly jealous of the Frankish Nation & ready to do anything to secure its ruin. On the North, the country now known as the British Dominion, was flooded with Saxons, who, even to this day, are hostile to the Franks. In such a sea, stormy & tempestuous, for without assistance,

striking before & behind, at home & abroad, in the darkness as well as in the light — in such a sea the Ship of State was launched. But there was a master hand at the helm.

His first military achievement after the uniting of the two Kingdoms was on Saxon soil. The Saxons continuing to pillage far into Charlemagne's Kingdom, Charlemagne called a Council of his Chief Men, in 772 A. D., at which it was decided that the wrongs should be redressed. Charlemagne plunged at once into the country of the Saxons with a mighty army, captured the Fort & Castle of Eresburg, went on to the Temple of Jmmensula, destroyed their god, made of gold & silver, profusely decorated & of fabulous value, took possession of the great wealth they had plundered from other nations, especially from his own, called upon them in the state terms of peace that would be satisfactory to them, accepted their terms, planted some Christian Missions, and returned to his own Country.

Taking advantage of his absence the Lombards formed a league with the Southern

Italians again revolted. Again Pope Adrian appealed to the Frankish Monarch for aid.

Charlemagne & Desiderius were already foes, owing to the unfortunate matrimonial alliance between Charlemagne & Desiderata. Charlemagne responded to the appeal of the Pope; but the war was short & simple. After a tedious march over the Alps, resembling in many respects Napoleon's famous passage, encountering many difficulties & perils, he beat the Lombards in open battle, shut them up in Pavia & Verona, & leaving a sufficient garrison at each place, he turned his face toward Rome.

Everywhere he was greeted with applause & demonstrations of joy. When within thirty miles of Rome he was met by a delegation of nobles bearing banners & ensigns, & when within one mile of the walls of the City came forth to meet him, singing psalms of praise, & bearing palms and olive branches. But few men ever received such a welcome. Indeed one is reminded of that famous reception accorded to Alexander the Great at Jerusalem, or that most wonderful of all receptions - the one accorded to our Saviour on that memorable last Sabbath when He came to Jerusalem to receive the crown of martyrdom.

Ordinarily, Charlemagne dressed in the plainest attire. Foreign dress, however rich it might be, he hated. He never wore it but twice in his long and eventful life. "At ordinary times," says one of his biographers, "he dressed almost like any of the common and low folk around him."

But on one occasion, that of his visit to Rome, concerning which we have just been speaking, he appeared "blazing in all the splendor of royalty; his robes wrought of purple and gold; his hood encircled with jewels, and his sandals glittering with precious stones."

On that occasion, entering the porch of the Church of St. Stephen he was met by Pope Adrian, attended by all the clergy, who shouted in concert: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Several days were spent in Easter Service in which Charlemagne participated with all the ardor of his nature during which time he received the Diamond Crown of Exarch in honor of the gift of the Exarch of Ravenna to the Pope from his father, Pepin, which gift Charlemagne most cheerfully confirmed. His authority as Patrician of Rome was from this entrance into the city taken for granted by all the clergy of the

Pope himself ever after recognized this relation. Charlemagne not only confirmed the donation of his Father, but made other important donations also.

The ever restless & spirited Saxons by this time had seemingly forgotten their treaty & were again in revolt, plundering & pillaging far into the Frankish Kingdom. Charlemagne hastened to Pavia & Verona to complete the siege, so that he might return to the defense of his own country. The blockade being pressed with all the vigor possible the Lombards soon yielded, delivering up Desiderius, their King & his Wife & Daughters to Charlemagne. Charlemagne at once assumed the crown of Lombardy, permitting the native Nobles to remain in office, & leaving it optional with them whether Roman or Frankish Law should be administered. Desiderius & his Wife & Daughters were imprisoned in a Frankish Monastery, & his fleet to Constantinople, & all Italy, except Beneventum & Calabria became a part of the Frankish Empire.

Having settled affairs in the South to his satisfaction he hastened home & despatched an army to check the bold Saxons. The army, however, was severely repulsed & Charlemagne was compelled to go himself at the head of a still greater army. He appeared suddenly in the

interior of the Saxon Kingdom, leaving a continuous line of fortifications behind him so that he could retreat without great loss in case of defeat again awaited his arms. The Saxons were on the alert, fell on one of these garrisons after Charlemagne had gone on, and would undoubtedly have captured it had it not been for the timely appearance of the great Conqueror, who avenged the assault with what, in its ^{awful} severity, can be termed nothing less than a frightful massacre.

Having secured matters here he turned his face homeward. But before he reached home he was met by another Embassy from Pope Adrian imploring him to come to Italy with all possible haste. The Church was profaned, the Lombards were again in revolt, and the Frisians under Radnold, ^{3rd} were to fall. The Emperor of the East was looking with greedy eyes upon the western fragments of his old Empire.

Charlemagne saw that a great emergency had to be met with decision and promptness. Should these discordant elements unite it might result in the death or overthrow of both himself and the Pope in the disintegration and confiscation of their Empires. Winter

prevented an immediate entrance upon the imperiled territory, but early in the Spring, before the malcontents were aware of his presence, he had crossed the Alps, swooped down upon them, and, like a bird of prey, held them as helpless victims in his talons.

But in the glow of triumph the news reached him that the Saxons had again violated their most sacred pledges, and were again in open rebellion. With a genius for the speedy despatch of business, and a celerity of movement that Napoleon himself did not possess, he deposed the Native Lombard Officials, and appointed faithful Franks in their places, re-crossed the Alps as though it were a molehill, and like a mountain tempest swept through his own country, and into the midst of Saxony. A large number of the Saxons were put to the sword in battle, and the remnants sued for peace.

With a clemency, characteristic of Charlemagne, their plea was heard, and taking hostages he returned home. That Autumn, however, Widikin incited another revolt, but Charlemagne soon quelled it. Widikin fled to Denmark, and the Saxons once more plead for mercy; once more it was granted.

but Charlemagne assured them that the next revolt would certainly cost them their liberty & country, and possibly their lives.

In the year 777 A.D., at the earnest call of the Emir of Saragosa, Charlemagne went to Spain to assist in the overthrow of the Mohammedan Power, on condition that Spain should become a part of the Frankish Empire. As usual success attended his arms, and with the exception of a division of his troops being surprised in a narrow defile & slain, the Mohammedans were overthrown, and Spain was secured with little cost & effort.

During his absence, however, Widikin, having returned from Denmark, he gathered an army among the Saxons larger than any of the preceding armies. He then crossed over into the Frankish Dominion and began a series of depredations so bold & successful, happily few parallels in history. Towns were burned, booty of every sort was seized, men, women & children were put to the sword, and Desolation & Noe, black with destruction & ruin, brooded over the land.

But the triumph of the Saxons was of short duration; their song of victory ended in a funeral dirge.

At the river of Besse Charlemagne fell upon the Saxon army and completely annihilated it. Pressing on into Saxony he thoroughly reorganized its Government & placed it in the hands of the Clergy. The next year it became a part of the Frankish Empire. It was several years, however, before the Saxons were entirely subjugated.

Three or four years were now spent in the southern part of his Empire. The Kingdom of Bavaria was absorbed, all Italy was divided between his two sons, and an alliance was formed with Irene, Queen of the Eastern Empire.

From 782 to 785 A. D. he was again perplexed with the Saxon question. After making every overture the Saxons were still dissatisfied & prepared for war. Two battles were fought, besides several skirmishes that were bloody & contested. At length, after a very solemn peace treaty in which the strongest pledges of fidelity were mutually given, the Saxons again assailed the Frankish Army, & gained a great victory. Charlemagne lost two Generals, four Counts, twenty of the most distinguished warriors, and nearly the whole of the rank & file of his army; in five, it was but

one removed from an atrocious massacre.

The blood of the Frankish King was now at fever heat. Seeing an army he determined to lay Saxony as waste as though no human had ever pressed the soil. He was met, however, by thousands of persistent Saxons, & Charlemagne in a measure relented. He spared the Country & the people, but demanded the Insurrectionists & put them to death.

Widukind, whose name not to have been deeply engaged in the Insurrection, was spared. A short time later Charlemagne invited him to visit him at his Court. The invitation was accepted. A second visit was paid by Widukind in company with other eminent Saxons. At this visit the Saxons were so greatly impressed with the splendor of Charlemagne's Court, & the magnificence of the Temple-worship, that they accepted Christianity. They returned home laden with gifts, & soon the Saxon Nation, as a whole, embraced Charlemagne's faith.

The joy of this great triumph was saddened, however, by the death, about this time, of Hildegard, his Wife, & of Bertha, his Mother.

The sixteen years from 784 A. D. to the end of the century were spent in incessant wars on every frontier. Lombards, Bavarians, Huns, Slavonians, Keltzes, Saxons, & Arabs, all felt the power of the mighty Frank. Dark conspiracies in different parts of the Empire were foiled & the conspirators either killed, or severely punished. The outcome of the stirring events of these years was a steady beating down of all opposition & a growing sense of security throughout the Realm. The most important war of the period was that against the Bretons, which broke out in 786 or 787 A. D., & was occasioned by the refusal of the Armorican to pay their tribute to Charlemagne. The war which ensued did not end until 811 A. D. & resulted in the subjugation & absorption of Britain, or Britanny.

About 794 A. D. Charlemagne undertook to unite the Rhine & the Danube, by means of a Canal, in the interests of Commerce, but the enterprise was interrupted by several storms for an unwonted period, & was finally abandoned.

Near the close of the century the Saxon

difficulty which had harassed the mind & energies of Charlemagne for thirty two years was ended by by transplanting the Saxons into every nook & corner of his Empire, & by peopling Saxony with faithful Franks.

The Huns, a nation of villains, were overcome by Charlemagne, & their vast treasures, pillaged from almost every nation, flowed into the Frankish Cozgers. From the days of Roman oppression France had been poor; now she was immensely rich.

Charlemagne now turned his attention to the internal improvement of his Empire. A great Palace was built at Aix-la-Chapelle. Of it James says: "Immense halls; magnificent galleries; a College Library; Baths where a hundred men could swim at large; ^aTheatre ^aCathedral; a profuse display of the finest marble gates ^{and doors,} & wrought ~~doors~~ brass Columns from Rome, & pavements from Ravenna. Such work would have been even of the many things which that great Palace displayed. Nor did the artery of improvement beat only at the Capitol, but its throbbing

were felt in every corner of the Empire.

In 799 A. D. Charlemagne again visited Rome, and on Christmas Day sat in the Chair of State in the Vatican hearing Mass, which the Pope himself was celebrating. The greatest Frank^s & Roman^s were present. Suddenly Leo III., the Pope, placed a golden crown upon Charlemagne's head, and at the same moment hailed him with the ancient imperial titles: "Long life & victory to Charles Augustus, Crowned of God, great & peace-giving Emperor of the Romans." Clergy & people echoed the acclamations, and the King of the Franks was acknowledged as the Successor of the Caesars.

All the world hastened to recognize his greatness. Saxons of England, & all sorts of Barbarians sought his protection. And even from the banks of the Tigris, Haroun Al Raschid sent, along with other gifts, the Keys of Jerusalem & the Holy Sepulchre, thus acknowledging the Western Emperor as the Official Head of Christendom.

During forty years of almost unexampled as King & Emperor, Charlemagne labored for the -

union & civilization of Europe. Germany at his accession was little more than a heathen wilderness, possessing no towns except those on the Rhine & Danube, which had been colonized by the Romans. Under his vigorous administration order & good Government produced their legitimate effects. "Many schools," says Thalheimer, "yet existing owe their origin to him; a town grew up as centres, not only of commerce, but of intelligence & Christianity." Diets, to which Bishops as well as Nobles were summoned, took the place of the ancient Ward & Mayfield of the Frankish warriors. The discussions were in Latin & this circumstance alone gave a commanding influence to the Clergy. The Capitularies of Charlemagne contained a great variety of general & special enactments showing his minute attention to the details of Government, & his sincere desire to guard the poor against the encroachments & oppressions of the rich.

His favorite Capitol Aix-la-Chapelle, was adorned with the fine marble & mosaics of Italy, the sculptures of Greece, & enriched it by an extensive library, a munificently endowed college, & a school of sacred music. The first organs were, by his

order, brought from Greece, into Northern Europe, & singers from Italy introduced the Gregorian Chant. Learned men from all countries were his favorite companions, & Alcuin being his most intimate friend. Wherever his camp was pitched, on the ancient battle fields of Italy & Spain, or amid the wilds of the Danube or Baltic, their conversation was his constant delight. This Empire - the Empire of the West - revived & built up, & solidified by Charlemagne lasted 1006 years, until it was subverted by Napoleon.

When sixty four years of age he divided his Empire among his three sons, Italy was given to Pepin, Aquitaine to Louis, & the Empire proper to Charles. His charge to them was heavy with wisdom, & burning with eloquence. They were not, however, to receive their respective Kingdoms until after his death.

Eight years yet remained for the review of his life. But his last years were saddened by the loss of three of his favorite children, whom he deeply mourned.

On the 28th of January A. D. 814, being seventy two years of age, he surrendered his great Commission.

having reigned forty nine years. He died of the Pleu-
 risy. At his death his Empire embraced France,
 Belgium, Spain between the Ebro^d & Pyrenees, Germany
 to the Elbe, Dalmatia, Croatia, Liburnia, Istria, Italy
 to the Lower Calabria^d & Eastern Europe as far as the
 conflux of the Danube & Dnieper.

Charlemagne has been accused of cruel-
 ty. Hallam, in speaking of Charlemagne, says:
 "unsparing of blood, though not constitutionally cru-
 el, & wholly indifferent to the means which his am-
 bition prescribed, he beheaded, in one day, 4000
 persons, an act of atrocious butchery." We think
 Hallam prejudiced, & unduly severe. Let us quote
 from the eminent & competent De Quincy. Says he:
 "In every case he tried the force of negotiation before
 he appealed to arms; yea, sometimes he descended
 so far in his love of peace as to attempt purchasing
 with gold, rights & concessions, justly his, which he
 knew himself abundantly able to extort by arms."

While it is true that Charlemagne beheaded
 4500 Saxons, several things are to be taken into consid-
 eration before passing unqualified condemnation:

1. It was the invariable rule of the Saxons to kill all of their captives, ^{and} thousands of Frankish men, women, ^{and} children had received the same kind of treatment as Kallam denounces "atrocious butchery;" 2, at Brunha, the Saxons had, but a short time before, broken the most solemn pledges, ^{and} massacred an entire division of Charlemagne's army; 3, Charlemagne knew that to spare the guilty Saxons was but to expose ^{and} imperil the innocent of his own people; 4, Charlemagne also knew that only by such firmness, ^{and} even severity, could he hope to check the barbarity of the Saxons ^{and} produce that peace ^{and} acquiescence to Law ^{and} Order which must always precede Christianization; 5, Already about 30 years had been consumed in mild ^{and} lenient measures ^{and} all to but little success - taking all these points into consideration, we must confess that while the act was severe it also seems that, so far as it is possible for bloodshed to be justified, it was justified in this case.

Charlemagne is also severely criticised for prosecuting so many wars. But the criticisms are largely robbed of their sting when we take into

consideration the wars themselves & the circumstances connected with them. Without an exception the wars of Charlemagne were either to uphold Law & Order, or else to drive back the hordes of Heathenism that continually menaced, not only Law & Order, but also sought the overthrow of the Church, & the extirpation of our holy religion. It is true his Empire was enlarged by war, but conquest was the result but not the cause of the wars he waged.

His Domestic life was sad & unfortunate & deserved tears as well as censure. He was married three times. His first & third marriages were unhappy, but the second was full of sunshine & felicity. James, in speaking of her death, says: "With that domestic tenderness which formed a fine & endearing point in the character of the great Monarch, Charlemagne accompanied the dying Queen to the tomb, knelt with her at the shrine of the Saint whose virtues she fancied might restore her to health, closed her eyes after skillful prayers had proved impotent to save her, & rendered the last sad offices to the clay of her whom he had loved."

While doubtless he sinned in his domestic

life when we consider how, unfortunately, he was wedded
 and especially the first time, and when we call to mind his
 almost countless virtues in every other direction,
 we cannot judge harshly, nor condemn bitterly and
 hastily as some of his critics have done. It may
 truly be said of Charlemagne: He

"Kath borne his faculties so meet, that hee
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 Will plead like angels."

Charlemagne was, what I call, a
 full ~~to~~ orb'd man, not great in one particular only,
 but in almost every particular. As a warrior, statesman,
 diplomatist, and legislator he surpassed the greatest
 men of his age. He was thoroughly versed in German,
 Arabic, and Greek. He was as familiar with the Rhetoric,
 Logic, Sciences, and Mathematics of his age as we are with
 the names of those we love. On the battle field, in the
 camp, on the march, wherever he was, his mind was
 active and engaged. And although, reading his life, it
 would seem that the affairs of State must have de-
 manded every moment of his attention, he found
 time to write text books on Grammar, Logic, and Astro-

my; seven books of Law; four books on Image-worship, and a Treatise on Rhetorics, besides many deeds and grants, requiring great legal acumen. Some of his prefaces are gems of composition. He was an indefatigable student and an unparalleled patron of learning. He was a devout Christian. His highest aim was to promote Christian trust. He was never known to desert a friend, or to fail to reward faithful service. Intellectually, he was broad, quick, comprehensive, and brilliant. In disposition he was ambitious, but just. Socially he was hospitable, and a Prince of Entertainers. He was temperate in his habits, and was, for his age, in every regard, a man without a peer, much less a rival. Like the mountain torrent in speed, and like the glacier, or avalanche, in might, he moved forward in every enterprise with unflinching wisdom, unwavering and unflinching determination, irresistible impulse, and unwavering success. Longfellow thus paints him:

+++ Charlemagne appeared, a Man of Iron!

His helmet was of iron, and his gloves

Of iron, ^{and} his breastplate ^{and} his greaves
 And tassets were of iron, ^{and} his shield.
 In his left hand he held an iron spear,
 In his right hand his sword invincible.
 The horse he rode on had the strength of iron,
 And color of iron. All who went before him,
 Beside him ^{and} behind him, his whole host,
 Were armed with iron, ^{and} their hearts within them
 Were stronger than the armor that they wore.
 The fields ^{and} all the roads were feled with iron,
 And points of iron glistened in the sun
 And shed a terror through the city streets."

Charlemagne built the beacon lights
 of civilization on the hill tops of Central Europe. Their
 light ^{and} warmth were seen ^{and} felt to the ends of the
 earth. When he died the lights flickered a while, ^{and} then,
 like the lightning flash, went out, ^{and} hill top ^{and} valley
 were again plunged into darkness, ^{and} superstition ^{and}
 despair. Kallan says: "He stands alone like a bea-
 con upon a waste, or a rock in a broad ocean."

Inasmuch as his life was restless ^{and}
 eager, ^{and} full of labor; never stopping to rest or recuperate;

never ceasing to fight the wrong & to uphold the right;
 sweet in sorrow, loving in adversity, hopeful in
 darkness, meek in greatness; his record well
 nigh untermished; his fame forever established;
 the love, admiration, & commendation of all ages
 assured; may we not, in all truthfulness say,
 with Shakespeare:

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well!"