CHAPTER XLVI

THE GROWTH OF THE PAPAL POWER AND OF THE FRANKISH POWER

To 814 A.D.

575. Saints and Images. — In an earlier chapter we have reviewed the organization of the Christian Church, the growth of differences in belief, and Constantine's attempt to establish a uniform creed.[1] After his time we find Christianity undergoing another change. One of its greatest merits, and a reason for its rapid growth, was its adaptability to the needs of mankind. In accepting the new faith many converted pagans felt that the infinite God was too great and too distant to pray to directly. There grew up accordingly the practice of praying for the intercession of the saints — certain great and good Christians, who, having lived especially pure lives, were now with God. It was through the help of the saints that men hoped to receive an answer to their prayers. Images or statues of the saints and of Christ and his mother were set up in the churches, to direct the mind in prayer. By the use of such simple means the Church was able to get and retain a hold on a people to whom some outward symbol seemed essential.

576. Monasteries. — In their effort to attain to a life of holiness some Christian men thought it necessary to separate themselves from the world. In the East such persons often lived as hermits alone in the desert. Sometimes, however, a number of them formed a community, living together in a large building, and possessing land and all other property in common. Men who passed their lives in this way were monks, and their community was a monastery. Women who adopted the same form of life were called nuns, and their institution was a nunnery or convent. The great organizer of monasteries in the West was St. Benedict, who

[1] §§ 543–545.

lived early in the sixth century. He laid down for the monks the rules of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Although the society to which they belonged might acquire great wealth, the individual members had to continue poor. The command of chastity required them to remain unmarried; that of obedience compelled them to submit unreservedly to the will of their abbot. The object of this rule was to uphold an ideal of purity, unselfishness, and pious devotion that should lift men above the prevalent sins of worldliness. Members of the order were expected not only to pray and read, but also to labor on the common estate. Many monasteries of the Benedictine rule were established throughout western Europe. While affording a refuge from the barbarism of the age, the institution preserved the little learning which remained in the West, taught by example the dignity of labor, and held up a standard of moral and religious life, which, though far from ideal, was superior to that of the outside world.

ST. PETER

(Bronze statue, sixth century A.D.; Basilica of St. Peter, Rome)

577. **Beginnings of the Papal Power.** — The difference in civilization between the East and the West exercised a profound influence on Christianity. In the East there continued to be much free thought and discussion in the Greek spirit, whereas Western theologians felt more deeply the influence of law, impressed upon them by Rome. Their doctrine, as it came to differ from that of the East, was less subtle, but more simple, systematic, and reasonable. They taught that God had aided the growth of the empire as a preparation

for Christianity, and that on this political basis should be founded a spiritual empire which in time should embrace the whole world. To them it seemed natural that Rome should be the centre of this universal Christian empire, (1) because it had so long been the political centre of the world, (2) because of the peculiar origin of the Christian church of that city. They believed that St. Paul and St. Peter had founded it, and that St. Peter was its first bishop. This idea brought the Roman bishop especial reverence; for it was understood that Christ had appointed St. Peter to be head of the Church, on one occasion declaring to him:

"And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock [1] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." — *Matt.* xvi. 18 f.

The idea was that as the successors of Peter the bishops, or popes, of Rome also held the headship, and that, receiving the truth by tradition in an unbroken line from the chief apostle, the popes were better able than any others to teach it in its purity. The growth of the papal power was also favored by (3) the general dissolution of the West, which left the people without governments competent to protect them. The causes which had brought about the decline of the empire did not injure the Church; and in the collapse of the civil power and the confusion and violence of the German invasions and settlements, the people looked to the Church officials as their only protectors. The papal office owed its greatness further (4) to its activity in sending out missionaries to convert pagans and heretics, and its willingness to accept the latter on recanting their errors, and (5) to the ability and wisdom of several earlier popes.

578. Pope Gregory the Great (590–604 A.D.). — Among those who helped most to increase the authority of the office was Gregory, known as the Great. This pope found his position beset with difficulties. A few years earlier the Lombards had invaded Italy,[2] and were still trying to conquer the country. Everywhere outside Rome were confusion and violence. There was no civil authority

[1] Reference here is to the circumstance that the word Peter means rock.

[2] § 573.

strong enough to establish unity and peace. The only power that made for order, law, and the protection of the weak was that of the pope. Gregory, accordingly, acted not simply as a spiritual leader, but as a governor, who aimed to give the Italians all the protection and justice possible under the unfortunate conditions. The office he held had already acquired many great estates throughout Italy and Sicily, the revenues from which enabled him to support considerable civil and military power. This power, which we call worldly or temporal, in contrast with spiritual, had for some time been growing, and was now greatly strengthened by Gregory in the way here described.

But Gregory did not limit his influence to Italy. The rulers and bishops of western Europe consulted him by letter on their own affairs, and his wise, helpful advice increased their reverence for the papal office. Himself a monk,[1] Gregory encouraged the growth of that class of the clergy. Many of them he employed as missionaries. Thus the conversion of Britain to Catholic Christianity was due chiefly to him.[2]

In addition to letters, Gregory wrote *Dialogues* and other works — all on religious and moral subjects. He believed that miracles were constantly being wrought by saints, that the souls of those who had died in sin could be saved by the saying of masses, and that the best kind of life was that of the monk. In his time, and partly through him, the Roman Catholic Church became a powerful, independent organization. Only by taking upon itself this character could it accomplish the work for which it was created. That work was to save for better times from the wreck of ancient civilization the Christian religion, some learning, some of the ideas and habits of industry and of order and obedience.

579. The Franks: Clovis (481–511 A.D.). — The papal power was further increased through the aid of the Franks. Toward the end of the fifth century A.D., when the Franks were about to begin their political career, they occupied both banks of the middle and lower Rhine. Not given to wandering, as were the other Germans, they had contented themselves with gradually extending their territory. We find them divided into a number of tribes, each under a chief.

[1] § 576. [2] § 574.

One of these petty sovereigns was Clo'vis. His life-work was the founding of a united Frankish kingdom, embracing most of Gaul, together with a part of western Germany.

Near him were the Romans, who still held a district in northern Gaul; to the southeast dwelt the Burgundians, and to the south the Visigoths, whose territory included not only a large portion of Gaul, but most of Spain. The Vandals held Africa; and Theodoric the Ostrogoth was soon to conquer Italy. Such was the condition of southwestern Europe at this time.

In a battle at Soissons (*Swäs-son'*) Clovis conquered his Roman neighbors (486 A.D.). He then defeated the Burgundians and made them tributary. In another war he brought under his rule most of the Visigoths who lived in Gaul. Many years he was engaged in these conquests. Meantime he was plotting against the chiefs of the other Frankish tribes. By having them murdered, one after another, he finally united in his own hands the authority of all. Thus through war and intrigue he did much to weld Celts, Romans, and Germans into the great Frankish nation.

In the beginning of his reign he and his subjects were pagan. But he married the Burgundian princess Clo-til'da, who chanced to belong to the Roman church; and when, somewhat later, he persuaded himself that her God had helped him win a battle, he and three thousand of his warriors were baptized into her faith. It was as an orthodox Catholic that he conquered the Bugundians and the Visigoths, who were heretical Arians. This close alliance between the Frankish throne and the orthodox church was to have an important effect upon future history.

Clovis was a barbarian; though nominally converted to Christianity, he remained treacherous and cruel to the end. Nevertheless, as the maker of a strong, influential nation, he did a priceless service to civilization.

580. The Merovingians to the Death of Dagobert (511–638 A.D.). — His descendants, who ruled for nearly two and a half centuries after him, carried on his work. They are called Mer-o-vin'gi-ans, from Mer'o-vig, grandfather of Clovis. For a time the members of the dynasty were able and energetic. The kingdom of the Franks prospered, and several German nations submitted to them. Then

their conquests ceased; instead of consolidating the great kingdom, rival heirs to the throne of Clovis began to murder one another and to waste the country in civil war. Their cruelty fills nearly a century of their country's history. Sometimes the heirs divided the provinces among themselves, and again a strong ruler would reunite the kingdom. The tendency was to a division into three loosely connected states, — Aus-tra'si-a, which was thoroughly German; Neus'tri-a, whose population contained an influential Roman element; and Burgundy. The last important Merovingian king was Dag'o-bert, whose reign ended in 638. Thereafter the rulers of this dynasty were so weak and worthless as to earn the title of do-nothing kings.

581. **Charles Martel.** — As these rulers grew more and more feeble, the steward of the royal household, termed Mayor of the Palace, gradually took the management of public affairs into his own hands and became prime minister. In Austrasia the office came to be hereditary in a powerful family known to history as Car-o-lin'-gi-an, from Charles the Great, its most illustrious member. The achievement of the early Carolingians was to reunite the Frankish nation. This work was completed by Mayor Charles, afterward surnamed Mar-tel'. It was an especially fortunate event, for the Franks needed their combined strength against the Mohammedans, who had recently conquered Spain and were now threatening all Europe.

582. **The Mohammedans; the Battle of Tours or Poitiers** (732 A.D.). — The Mohammedans were followers of Mo-ham'med, who was born in 571 A.D., in Mec'ca, the holy city of Arabia. Before his time the Arabs were idolaters, but he presented himself to them as the prophet of the one God. With a marvellous personality and a deep knowledge of the religious and moral needs of his people, he spoke and taught as one inspired. His sayings were written down by his followers, and after his death collected in a book called the *Ko'ran*. It was to his people what the Bible is to Christians. It taught the unity and almighty power of God, the torments of hell, and the pleasures of heaven; and it prescribed rules of life for the faithful. As his followers increased, he ordered that their religion should be forced upon unbelievers. Before his death he

had the satisfaction of seeing all Arabia free from idolatry and united in zeal for Is'lam, as the new faith was called.

Under his successors — the Caliphs — the army of believers soon spread their religion over Persia, and farther eastward and northeastward in Asia. But when they tried to conquer the Roman empire in the East, the walls of Constantinople withstood them. On the south shore of the Mediterranean, however, they met with little resistance. They conquered Egypt, and in the course of the seventh century the entire African coast to the Strait of Gi-bral'tar. Fierce religious enthusiasm swept them impatiently on. Early in the eighth century they crossed to Spain, and readily overran the decayed kingdom of the Visigoths.[1] Their empire now lay along the Mediterranean in a stupendous crescent, whose horns threatened Christian Europe east and west.

When they invaded France, at first with their usual success, Christianity seemed doomed; but a power existed with which the Saracens[2] had not reckoned, — the fresh, manly nation of Franks lately united under Mayor Charles. At his call, thousands of stalwart warriors gathered to repel the danger. The hosts met in battle near Poitiers (Pwä-te-ā') in 732.[3] All day the light cavalry of the invaders dashed in vain against the immovable ranks of Frankish infantry. The Mohammedans lost great numbers, including their able commander. They saw at once that they had met their superiors, and deserting their camp they retreated southward. The victory saved western Europe from conquest by the Mohammedans; though they were still able to annoy, they were no longer dangerous. To Charles, the victor, after ages gave the name Martel — the Hammer — in remembrance of his blows which crushed all enemies.

583. Pippin (741–768 A.D.). — Charles died in 741, and was succeeded by his son Pip'pin. Father and son pursued the same methods of building up the power of the Franks; and we need not separate their work here. Outlying provinces which had revolted they reduced to submission; they further strengthened the central authority by engaging the nobles in their service; they brought the

[1] § 561. [2] *I.e.* the Mohammedans.
[3] It is also called the battle of Tours, — another city in the vicinity.

churches of the realm into one religious system, which, however, they held subordinate to the State; and with the aid of religion they strove to uplift the morals of their people.

Charles remained simply mayor to his death; but Pippin deposed the royal Merovingian puppet, and himself became king by a double ceremony: the Franks elected him in their own fashion, and the Church anointed him with holy oil according to biblical usage. Thus he ascended the throne with the consent of the pope. In fact, the relations between the papal see and the Frankish throne had been friendly from the days of Clovis, and now ripened into a close alliance. Charles Martel had been asked for help against the Lombards who were besieging the pope in Rome. When another pope found himself threatened by the Lombards, he called on Pippin for aid. Thereupon the king of the Franks twice invaded Italy, took from the Lombards the country about Ravenna, — a territory they had wrested from the emperor, — and instead of restoring it to the rightful owner, he placed it under the rule of the pope. These lands, henceforth known as the "States of the Church," grew in extent by later acquisitions. It was as their ruler that the pope became a great temporal prince.[1]

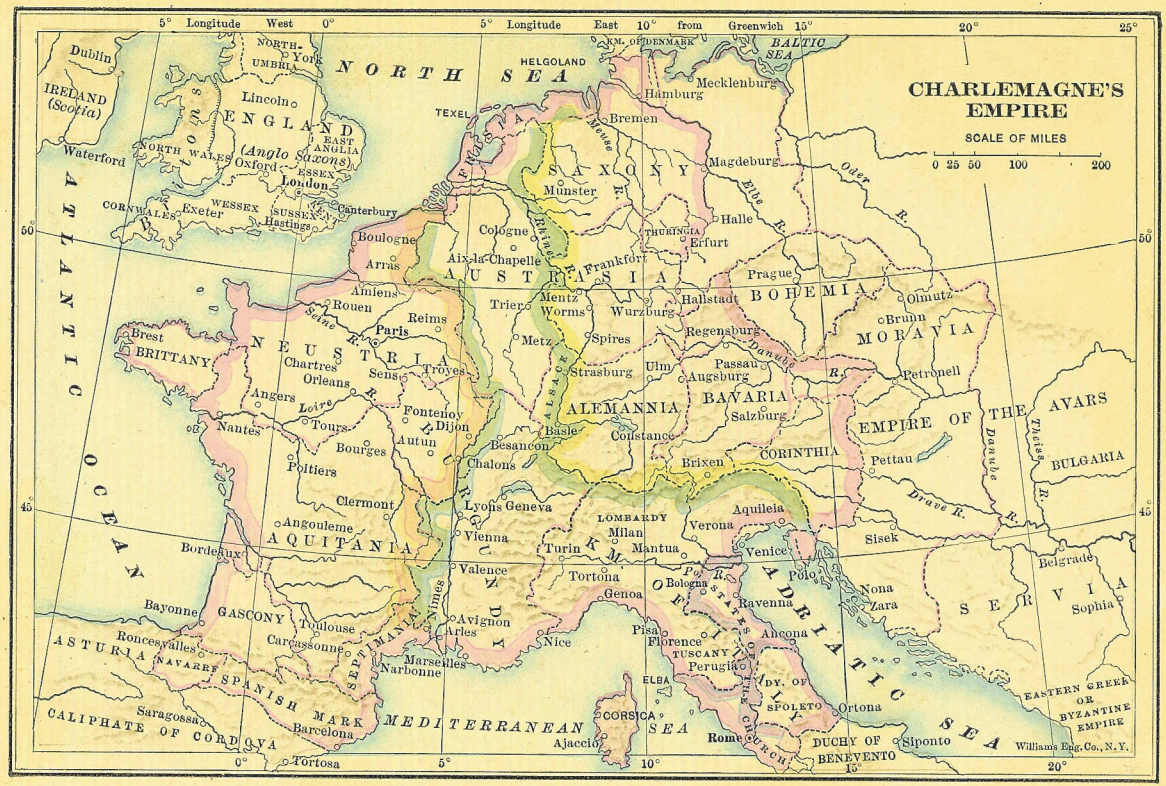
584. **Charlemagne** (768–814 A.D.). — The son and successor of Pippin was Charles the Great, or, as he is more commonly called, Charlemagne.[2] He is described by his secretary[3] as "Large and robust, of commanding stature and excellent proportions, for it appears that he measured seven times the length of his own foot. The top of his head was round, his eyes were large and animated, and his nose was somewhat long. He had a fine head of gray hair, and his face was bright and pleasant; so that whether standing or sitting, he showed great presence and dignity." Majestic in form and tireless in action, a great general and a beneficent statesman, he left an enduring impression of himself upon all western Europe.

Most of his long reign (768–814), he occupied in conquests and in putting down revolts. The kingdom of the Franks had grown

[1] For the beginning of this temporal power, see §§ 577, 583.

[2] Charlemagne is the French for Car'o-lus Mag'nus, the Latin equivalent for Charles the Great. It must be borne in mind, however, that he was not French, but German in speech.

[3] Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, quoted by Robinson, *Readings*, i. p. 126.


CHARLEMAGNE'S EMPIRE
SCALE OF MILES
0 25 50 100 200
5° Longitude West 0°
5° Longitude East 10° from Greenwich 15°
20°
25°
50°
45°
0°
5°
10°
15°
20°
NORTH SEA
BALTIC SEA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ADRIATIC SEA
HELGOLAND
KM. OF DENMARK
Dublin
IRELAND (Scotia)
NORTH-UMBRIA
York
Lincoln
ENGLAND
(Anglo Saxons)
EAST ANGLIA
ESSEX
Oxford
London
Canterbury
Waterford
NORTH WALES
CORNWALES
WESSEX
SUSSEX
Exeter
Hastings
TEXEL
Hamburg
Mecklenburg
Bremen
Magdeburg
SAXONY
Munster
Rhine R.
Weser R.
Elbe R.
Oder R.
Halle
THURINGIA
Erfurt
Cologne
Boulogne
Arras
Aix-la-Chapelle
Frankfort
AUSTRASIA
Prague
BOHEMIA
Amiens
Rouen
Trier
Mentz
Worms
Wurzburg
Hallstadt
Olmutz
Brunn
MORAVIA
Seine R.
Reims
Paris
Brest
BRITTANY
NEUSTRIA
Metz
Spires
Regensburg
Danube R.
Chartres
Troyes
Sens
Orleans
Strasburg
Ulm
Passau
Augsburg
Petronell
Angers
Loire R.
Fontenoy
Dijon
ALEMANNIA
BAVARIA
Salzburg
EMPIRE OF THE AVARS
Nantes
Tours
Basle
Constance
Autun
Besancon
Bourges
Chalons
Poitiers
CORINTHIA
Brixen
Pettau
Theiss R.
BULGARIA
Clermont
Lyons
Geneva
Aquileia
Drave R.
Sisek
Angouleme
AQUITANIA
LOMBARDY
Verona
Milan
Vienna
Turin
Mantua
Venice
Belgrade
Bordeaux
Valence
Tortona
Bologna
Po R.
Polo
Nona
Zara
SERVIA
Sophia
Bayonne
GASCONY
Toulouse
Nimes
Avignon
Arles
Genoa
Ravenna
Roncesvalles
ASTURIA
NAVARRE
Carcassonne
SEPTIMANIA
PROVENCE
Nice
Pisa
Florence
Ancona
TUSCANY
Perugia
Marseilles
Narbonne
ELBA
DY. OF SPOLETO
Ortona
EASTERN GREEK OR BYZANTINE EMPIRE
SPANISH MARK
Saragossa
Barcelona
CALIPHATE OF CORDOVA
CORSICA
Ajaccio
Rome
DUCHY OF BENEVENTO
Siponto
Tortosa
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greatly since the time of Clovis, and Charlemagne doubled the territory he received from his father. Most of his conquests were east of the Rhine and in northern Italy. Among his new subjects the most noteworthy were the Saxons and the Lombards. The boundaries of his realm may be traced on the accompanying map.

CHARLEMAGNE AS A HERO
(Mediaeval idea; from Kleinpaul, *Mittelalter*)

585. **The Pope crowns him Emperor** (800 A.D.). — He was simply king till 800. The title of emperor was still used by the ruler at Constantinople, who was now held in little esteem throughout the West. No subject of Charlemagne could doubt that their king was far more deserving of the title, and he himself seems to have desired it. On Christmas Day in the year 800, accordingly, while he was kneeling at prayer in St. Peter's, Rome, the pope approached, without his knowledge, we are told, and placed the imperial crown upon his head, whereupon "all the Roman populace cried aloud, 'Long life and victory to the mighty Charles, the great and pacific emperor of the Romans, crowned of God.' After he had been thus acclaimed, the pope did homage to him, as had been the custom with the earlier rulers, . . . and henceforth he was called emperor and Augustus."[1] By this act the pope further strengthened his claim to a share in the appointment of temporal rulers, though Charlemagne did not think of regarding him as a superior.

[1] Einhard, *Life*, in Robinson, *Readings*, i. 134.

From the third to the fifth century there had regularly been two emperors ruling simultaneously in the East and West — a condition now renewed. Charlemagne regarded himself accordingly as a successor of Augustus and Constantine. Like the emperors since Constantine, he was a Christian, head of the Church and defender of the faith. Unlike them, however, he was a German, and he ruled an empire which was more than half German. He completed the task, begun by earlier Frankish kings, of reconciling the Germans to the empire and its institutions and religion. Within the limits of the old Roman domain the two races had blended into one. Lastly it must be noticed that his empire once more presented to the world the idea of all Christendom united in one Church and State, and went far toward the realization of that idea.

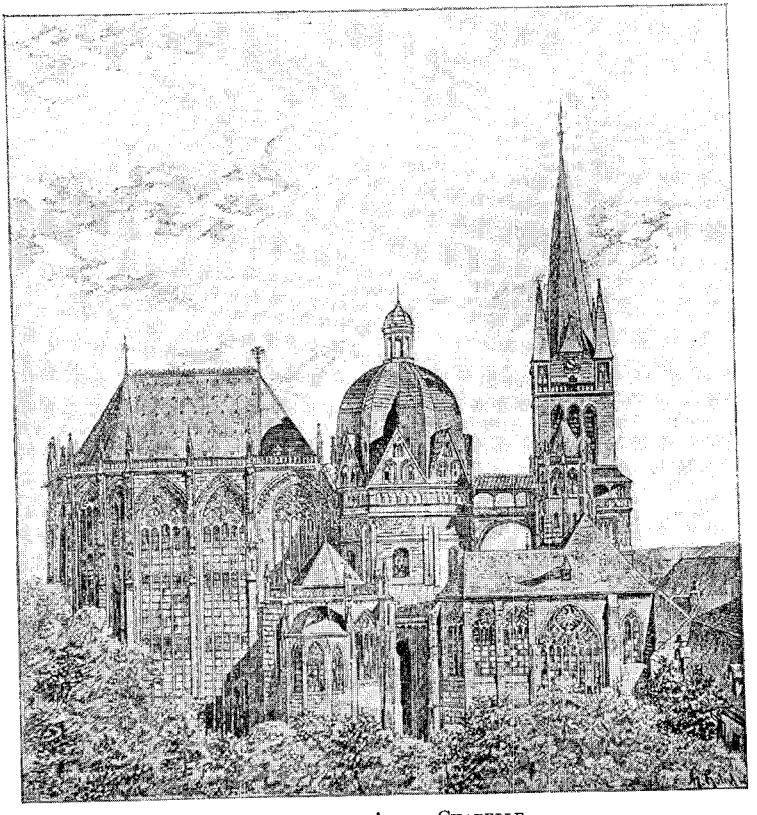
586. His Assemblies and Councils. — Once or twice each year he held a general assembly of his people. The gathering in the month of May was called Maifeld (Mayfield). Not only the counts, bishops, and abbots, but even the common freemen had the privilege of attending. It was a continuation of the old German assembly mentioned in an earlier chapter.[1] If the subject of a new war was to be brought up, the fighting men were required to come armed so as to begin the campaign immediately after the adjournment of the meeting. Such assemblies also discussed questions relating to religion and the Church. In that case they were composed mainly or wholy of clergymen, and may therefore be termed councils. But Charlemagne always presided. Several times their decisions of religious questions differed widely from the judgments of the popes. He also considered it a part of his work to appoint bishops, leaving their consecration to the pope. From these facts we may infer that he considered the pope inferior to himself in Church government and even in the interpretation of doctrine. It is clear, however, that the authorities of the Church did not approve of this interference, though they were at the time unable to resist it.

As many of the clergy had become too independent because of the looseness of the Church organization, Charlemagne saw that every parish priest should be subject to a neighboring bishop, and

[1] § 555.

every bishop to an archbishop. The abbots he left outside this organization, probably that he might use them as a check on the bishops.

587. Education. — We cannot appreciate his character as a man and ruler without understanding what he did for education.



CATHEDRAL OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE
(Only the part covered by the dome belongs to the time of Charlemagne)

Through the late centuries of the Roman empire learning had greatly declined, and in western Europe had almost ceased. None

but the clergy enjoyed any education, and even they as a class were ignorant. Many a priest understood not a word of the Latin services he had to repeat. Most of the Greek or Latin classics were destroyed or lost; scarcely any new books were written; and the few old ones in use were mainly religious rather than literary or scientific. Under the late Frankish kings, however, some improvement had been made; and now Charlemagne undertook to revive learning. He had what would then be called a good education, as he possessed some knowledge of Greek and could speak Latin. With great earnestness he devoted himself to astronomy and rhetoric. He not only set a good example to others, but founded schools and encouraged his bishops and abbots to do likewise, that the clergy might have a respectable education, and that the children of the common freemen and even of the serfs might learn to read. All the books were Latin, for Charlemagne dared not favor the growth of a native German literature. The issue was clearly before his mind: Germanism meant idolatry, barbarism, disunion, and chaos; Romanism meant Christianity, civilization, and good order under a strong central government. Other German statesmen had chosen the latter; and Charlemagne in spite of his native sympathy could not hesitate to follow the same course. In like manner his attention to the building and ornamentation of the churches encouraged architecture and the decorative arts. From these beginnings western Europe would doubtless at once have entered upon a new era of progress in the arts and sciences, had his empire remained intact.

588. General Summary. — We have seen the civilization of the world beginning in Egypt about 5000 B.C. A millennium later Babylon, Syria, and Crete, then Asia Minor and Greece, were drawn into the civilized area. The first great cultural period, which we may term Oriental, reached its height in Crete, 2200–1500 B.C. Afterward came stagnation, decay, and weakness, which exposed the civilized world to barbarian invasions. When we reach the year 1000 B.C., we find a great relapse in the direction of barbarism.

Then began the second or Greco-Roman period. Much of the old culture was saved, and the new development was exceedingly rapid, reaching its height in Athens in the Age of Pericles. There-

after improvements were made in certain directions, but in others civilization declined. The empire, an Oriental institution, was introduced into Europe by Alexander the Great, and was afterwards so extended by the Romans as to include nearly the whole civilized world. Though it brought important advantages, in the repression of freedom, in the destruction of competition, and in various other ways it acted as a potent cause of decline. The Christian religion, also introduced from the Orient, contained great energy, but it was hostile to society as then constituted, and hence proved an additional cause of decline. When we come to the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. — the border field between ancient and mediaeval history — we find completed the second relapse of nearly the whole civilized world into ignorance, superstition, and barbarism. From this condition humanity has slowly recovered, and is now in its third cultural period.

History proves that there is no law of progress which compels the human race to improve against its own will and effort. In our study thus far we have learned unmistakably that among the conditions which contribute most to the deterioration of mankind are the loss of freedom of the individual and of the local community, excessive government, the growth of cities to the injury of rural life, neglect of the cultivation of the nobler mental faculties by means of literature, art, pure science, patriotism, righteousness, and religion, and lastly the commercialization of the mind and the narrowing of the objects of life to the pursuit of wealth, comfort, and self-gratification. Upon the ceaseless effort of individuals and of communities in resistance to these destructive forces, and in cultivation of the physical, mental, and moral health of humanity depends the future progress of the world.

Suggestive Questions

1. Write a summary of this chapter like that on p. 444. 2. When do the Middle Ages begin? Is it possible to set an exact date? 3. Is it right to call Mohammed an impostor? 4. What benefits did Islam bring to the people of Arabia? 5. Why were the Mohammedans so successful in war? 6. What right had the emperor at Constantinople to territory in Italy? 7. Is there any reason why Charlemagne should not have wanted to be

crowned emperor by the pope? 8. Why was Charlemagne called "emperor of the Romans?" In what respects was his empire Roman? 9. Why had education declined before Charlemagne? When did the decline begin? 10. Why did the East retain its civilization, while the West sank into barbarism?

Note-book Topics

I. **Saracen Civilization.** — Gilman, *Saracens*, chs. xxxvi, xxxvii, xli; Poole, S. Lane, *Art of the Saracens in Egypt.*

II. **Charlemagne the Man.** — Robinson, *Readings*, i. 126–128; Ogg, *Source Book of Mediaeval History*, 108–114; Davis, *Charlemagne*, see Index under "Charles the Great."

III. **Education in Charlemagne's Time.** — Robinson, i. 144–146; Davis, 168 ff.

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