

him freely, and make known his request or complaint. These assemblies also made his laws, which were divided into sixty-five chapters, and called Cap'it-u-lar-ies.

Charlemagne attended to little things just as carefully as he did to more weighty matters, and even examined the books of his farmers, making them sell all the eggs he could not use, and keep strict account of every penny received or expended. He was always industrious, spending little time in pleasure, and thinking always of his people's welfare. He not only built a bridge across the Rhine, as we have seen, but also began a canal which was to join the Rhine and Danube, a piece of work which was finished only recently.

He built roads, established markets in various cities, made the people use the same measures and weights, and encouraged them to be industrious and thrifty. It is also said that Charlemagne's foot became the standard of length for the whole country, and that the width of his thumb—a space just one twelfth the length of his foot—was used as an inch. In France, the latter measure is therefore still called a thumb (*pouce*), and nearly everywhere people still measure by the foot, although many of those who use this measure daily have never heard that it is ascribed to this king.



### xxxix. Charlemagne, Emperor.

**A**FTER the wars in Saxony, in Lombardy, and in Spain were ended, Charlemagne went over into what is now called Austria, to fight the A'vars, from whom he also won much territory and spoil. Then, as he had become master of nearly all the land that had once formed the Western Empire, it was thought only right that he, too, should bear the title of emperor.

When he went to Rome, therefore, in 800, he received his name of Charles the Great, and on Christmas Day appeared in church clad in imperial purple. While he was kneeling before the altar, the pope took the imperial crown, and placing it upon Charlemagne's head, hailed him sixty-eighth emperor of Rome.

Thus the western Roman Empire, which had died out 324 years before, in 476, sprang to life again under Charlemagne; but from this time on it is generally known as

the Holy Roman Empire. During that visit, Charlemagne also confirmed the grant of land that had been made to the Church by his father.

The last years of Charlemagne's reign were far more peaceful than the first; still, he



The Coronation of Charlemagne.

foresaw that there would be trouble as soon as he died. According to one story, while he was gazing out at sea, he once suddenly beheld some ships of the Northmen—bold pirates who, sailing along the European coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, often landed, stole all they could lay hands upon, and then sailed away leaving nothing but ruins behind them.

Tears coursed down his aged cheeks, and when his followers asked the cause of his grief, he sadly answered, “Do you know, my faithful liegemen, why I weep? I do not fear that these men can hurt *us*, but it affronts me to think that while I live they have dared to insult my coasts, and I foresee with grief what evil they will do to my descendants and to their subjects!” You will soon see that Charlemagne had good cause to weep over the misfortunes which were to come, and that his descendants did suffer greatly at the hands of these Northmen.

Charlemagne was married five or six times. He had fourteen children whom he loved dearly, but some of them died before he did. While his sons were often called away to fight or attend to business, his daughters generally accompanied him wherever he went. It was even said that he was too fond of them to allow them to marry, for he feared their husbands might want to live away from court, and thus separate him from them. If you would like to know the story of the courtship and marriage of one of these daughters, you can read it in Longfel-low's charming poem, “Emma and Eginhard” (ayginhart), in the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, where you will also find other interesting things about this great monarch.

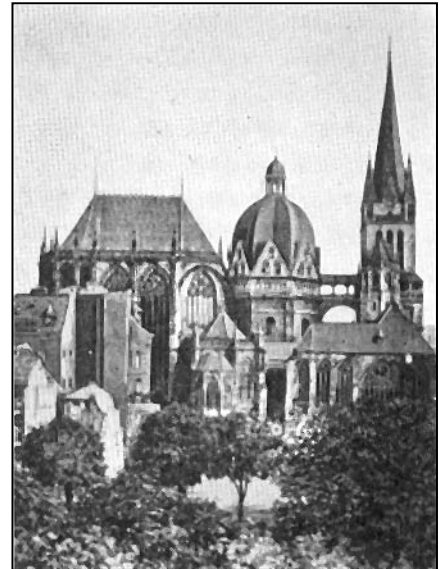
Charlemagne was so great, so rich, so brave, and so powerful, that his fame spread far beyond Europe, even into Asia. The Caliph of Bagh´dad, as a token of respect, sent him

ambassadors bringing wonderful presents. Many of these Eastern gifts were great curiosities to the French and Germans of that day, who make particular mention of a monkey, an elephant, an organ, and a mechanical clock; but all agree that most precious of all the gifts were the keys of the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem. This gift was so precious because the Holy Sepulcher was the tomb of Jesus our Lord, which had a lovely church built all around it, but which had fallen into the hands of the Saracens.

Charlemagne was tall and strong, had blue eyes, curly hair and beard, and handsome features. While he could occasionally dazzle people by the splendor of his imperial robes, he generally dressed like a soldier, carrying his great sword, named Joyeuse (zhoy-use'), which was so very heavy that few warriors could handle it at all.

Charlemagne never believed in doctoring. When he fell ill of fever, he refused to eat, and died at the end of a week, in January, 814, at the age of seventy-two, having made all his last arrangements with great care and calmness.

At his request, he was buried in the vault of the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle. His body was embalmed, clad in imperial purple, seated on a throne, and placed in a tomb all paved with gold coins. With a crown on his head, scepter in his hand, sword by his side, and an open Bible on his knees, the great emperor sat in state, and the vault was closed. Charlemagne had prescribed all this in his will, and had besides given strict orders that his tomb should never be opened, under penalty of his curse. But one of the German emperors, wishing to secure the regalia (crown, scepter, and other royal ornaments), had the tomb opened in 997. The body of Charlemagne was then found just as it had been left. The ornaments and gold were removed, the corpse laid in a tomb, and the throne brought up into the gallery of the cathedral, where it can still be seen. But, strange to relate, the emperor who braved Charlemagne's curse was never lucky again. As for the regalia, it was taken in time to Vi-en'na, where it is still exhibited in the imperial treasury.



Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle.

The hero of countless interesting French and German legends, Charlemagne, the most picturesque and powerful monarch in Europe for several centuries, was greatly re-

gretted when he died. We are told that a monk of his time wrote: “No one can tell the mourning and sorrow that his death caused everywhere; even pagans wept for him as for the father of the world!”



## xl. Feudalism.

**C**HARLEMAGNE had foreseen that the different nations over which he ruled were never likely to unite so as to form one single people. He therefore followed the old Frankish custom, and planned a division of his realm among his three sons; and several years before his death he set them up as kings, under himself, in what we now call France, Italy, and Germany. But two of these princes dying before him, the third, Louis (loo´is), became Charlemagne’s sole heir.

Louis was so gentle and devout that he early earned the surname of the Meek, or Pious (*le Débonnaire*), and had he been allowed to do as he pleased, he would doubtless have entered a monastery and spent all his life there in prayer and study. But the peace he so dearly loved was not to fall to his lot, for even when very young he was compelled to take part in his father’s many wars.

On coming to the throne at the age of thirty-six, Louis I was crowned by Pope Stephen as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, which, as you remember, included Germany, France, and Italy, the lands ruled by his famous father. He declared that he meant to have a quiet and orderly court, with none of the license or splendor which had distinguished that of Charlemagne. But the nobles, who were great fighters, did not appreciate a quiet life, and a court where religious services took the greater part of the day soon proved very irksome to pleasure-loving people. Besides, the emperor felt little sympathy for their tastes or pursuits, and in his horror for everything pagan, even ordered the destruction of all the old Frankish and Saxon poetry, which his father had so painstakingly collected.

Temperate both in meat and drink, the only pastime Louis ever permitted was the hunt, so it was no wonder that his dull court was soon deserted by the nobles, who preferred to live in their own way at home. They were further encouraged in their disregard