society that created the new literary tradition, and it is well to remember that its founders, Saemund the Historian and Ari the Wise, were both of them priests and scholars, the former having even made his studies at Paris. It is to Ari that we owe not only our knowledge of the beginnings of Iceland and its institutions, but the creation of the literary style which made possible the work of Snorri Sturlason and the great Saga writers. But this Christian Icelandic culture, like that of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria four hundred years before, is essentially transitory. It is the point at which the dying world of the barbaric North comes into momentary contact with the new consciousness of Christian Europe. It is followed by a sudden decline in which the anarchic element in northern society, which could no longer find an outlet in external aggression, turns inwards and destroys itself. Here, as in Norway, the aristocratic class that was the heir and guardian of the old traditions was swept away by civil wars and confiscations, and with the thirteenth century the Viking world sinks into the peaceful stagnation of an impoverished peasant society.
THE RISE OF THE MEDIAEVAL UNITY

The storm of barbarian invasion that fell upon Europe in the ninth century seems sufficient of itself to explain the premature decline of the Carolingian Empire and the dissolution of the newly-acquired Western unity. Nevertheless, it is easy to exaggerate its importance. It was far from being the only influence at work; indeed, it is almost certain that the fortunes of the Carolingian Empire would have followed a similar course, even if it had not had to undergo the attacks of the Vikings and the Saracens.

The germs of decay were inherent in the Carolingian state from its origins. For in spite of its imposing appearance, it was a heterogeneous structure without an internal and organic principle of unity. It claimed to be the Roman Empire, but it was in fact the Frankish monarchy, and so it embodied two contradictory principles, the universalism of the Roman and Christian traditions on the one hand, and the tribal particularism of barbaric Europe on the other. Consequently, in spite of its name, it bore little resemblance to the Roman Empire or the civilised states of the old Mediterranean world, it had much more in common with those barbaric Empires of the Huns and the Avars and the West Turks which were the ephemeral products of military conquest and which succeeded one another so rapidly during these centuries on the outskirts of the civilised world.

The Roman Empire of the Carolingians was a Roman Empire without the Roman law and without the Roman le-
gions, without the City and without the Senate. It was a shapeless and unorganised mass with no urban nerve centres and no circulation of economic life. Its officials were neither civic magistrates nor trained civil servants, but merely territorial magnates and semi-tribal war leaders. And yet it was also the embodiment and representative of an ideal, and this ideal, in spite of its apparent failure, proved more durable and persistent than any of the military or political achievements of the period. It outlined the state to which it had given birth and survived through the anarchy that followed, to become the principle of the new order which arose in the West in the eleventh century.

The champions of this ideal were the great Carolingian churchmen, who played so large a part in the administration of the Empire and the determination of the imperial policy from the time of Charles the Great to that of his grandson Charles the Bald.

While the counts and secular magnates for the most part represented local and territorial interests, the leaders of the ecclesiastical party stood for the ideal of a universal Empire as the embodiment of the unity of Christendom and the defender of the Christian faith. Agobard of Lyons even ventured to attack the traditional Frankish principle of personal law and to demand the establishment of a universal Christian law for the universal Christian commonwealth. In Christ, he says, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Barbarian nor Scythian, nor Aequitaniens, nor Lombards, nor Burgundians, nor Allemanni. "If God has suffered in order that the wall of separation and enmity should be done away and that all should be reconciled in His Body, is not the incredible diversity of laws that reigns not only in every region or city, but in the same household and almost at the same table, in opposition to this divine work of unity?"

Thus the Emperor was no longer the hereditary chieftain and war leader of the Frankish people; he was an almost sacralized figure who had been anointed by the grace of God to rule over the Christian people and to guide and protect the Church. This involves, as we have seen, a strictly theocratic conception of kingship, so that the Carolingian Emperor was regarded, no less than the Byzantine Basileus, as the vicar of God and the head of the Church as well as of the state. Thus Sedulius Scotus (c. 850) speaks of the Emperor as being ordained by God as His vicar in the government of
the Church and as having received power over both orders of rulers and subjects, while Cathuilf goes so far as to say that the king stands in the place of God over all his people, for whom he has to account at the Last Day, while the bishop stands in the second place as the representative of Christ only. ⑧

But the Carolingian theocracy differed from the Byzantine in that it was a theocracy inspired and controlled by the Church. There was no lay bureaucracy such as existed in the Eastern Empire; its place was taken by the episcopate, from whose ranks the majority of the Emperor’s advisers and ministers were drawn. Consequently, as soon as the strong hand of Charles the Great was removed, the theocratic ideal led to the exaltation of the spiritual power and the clericalization of the Empire rather than to the subordination of the Church to the secular power.

The leaders of the clerical party were men who had played an important part in the inauguration of the new Empire, above all, Charles the Great’s nephews, Adalhard and Wala of Corbie, and Agobard of Lyons. During the early years of Lewis the Pious, in spite of the temporary disgrace of Adalhard in 814, their ideals were in the ascendant. In 816 the sacred character of the Empire was solemnly reaffirmed by the coronation of Lewis by Pope Stephen at Rheims, and in the following year the unity of the Empire was secured by the Constitution of Aix, which set aside the old Frankish rules of succession in favour of the Roman principle of undivided sovereignty. Lothair was to succeed his father as sole Emperor, and though his brothers Pepin and Lewis received in appanage kingdoms in Aquitaine and Bavaria, they were strictly subordinated to the imperial supremacy.

This settlement represented the triumph of the religious ideal of unity over the centrifugal forces in the national life; and consequently when Lewis, under the influence of his second wife, the Empress Judith, attempted to set it aside, so as to provide a third kingdom for their child, Charles, he met with the determined resistance not only of Lothair and the other interested parties, but also of the leaders of the ecclesiastical party. For the first time the Church intervened decisively in European politics by the part that it played in the dramatic events which culminated in the temporary deposition of Lewis the Pions in 833. The importance of this episode has been obscured by the natural sympathy that his-
torians have felt for the unfortunate Lewis, deserted by his followers and humiliated by his children after the manner of King Lear, and they have consequently seen in the events at Colmar, "the field of Lics," nothing but a shameful act of treachery dictated by selfishness and greed. Nevertheless, the movement of opposition to Lewis was not simply the work of time-serving prelates and courtiers; it was due to the action of idealists and reformers who stood for all that was highest in the Carolingian tradition; men such as Agobard, and Wala, Paschasius Radbertus, the theologian, Bernard of Vienne, and Ebbo of Rheims, the apostle of the North. The disinterestedness and sincerity of these men is evident from the writings of St. Agobard himself and of Paschasius Radbertus, who was also a personal witness of the events and whose life of Wala—the Epitaphium Arsenii—is regarded by Manilius as one of the most remarkable works of the Carolingian age.  

Agobard was the representative of the Western tradition of Tertullian and St. Augustine in its most uncompromising form, and he is remarkable for the vigour with which he denounced popular superstitions, such as the belief in wizards and the practice of the ordeal, and maintained the rights of the Church and the supremacy of the spiritual power. Wala equally stood for the same principles, but in a less uncompromising fashion. He regarded the misfortunes of the Empire as due above all to the growing movement of secularisation that caused the Emperor to usurp the rights of the Church, while the bishops devoted themselves to affairs of state. This, however, did not prevent him from intervening in the question of the imperial succession, for the unity and peace of the Empire was in his eyes no mere question of secular policy. It was a moral issue, and therefore one on which it was the right and the duty of the Church to pronounce, even if this involved passing judgment on the Emperor himself. Consequently, when Pope Gregory IV, who had accompanied Lothair to Colmar, hesitated to infringe the traditional Byzantine conception of the imperial prerogative, it was Wala and Radbertus who reassured him by reminding him of his right as Vicar of God and St. Peter to judge all men and be judged by none, and eventually persuaded him to take the leading part in the proceedings which culminated in the deposition of the Emperor.  

This episode marks the emergence of a new claim to the
supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal power; and to the Church's right of intervention in the affairs of the state, which foreshadows the later mediaeval development. And it is significant that it originated not with the Papacy itself, but with the Frankish clergy, and was closely connected with the new theocratic conception of the state that was implicit in the Carolingian Empire. The state was no longer regarded as something distinct from the Church with independent rights and powers. It was itself a part, or rather an aspect, of the Church, which was, in the words of the letter of the bishops to Lewis the Pious in 829, "a single body divided under two supreme figures—that of the king and that of the priest." Thus the state could no longer be identified with the world and regarded as essentially unspiritual; it becomes itself an organ of the spiritual power in the world. Nevertheless, the older conception had entered so deeply into Christian thought, above all through the writings of St. Augustine, that it could not be entirely superseded, and thus throughout the Middle Ages, while the state insisted on its divine right as the representative of God in temporal affairs, it was always apt to be regarded by religious minds as a profane and worldly power that had no part in the sacred inheritance of the spiritual society.

In the Carolingian age, no doubt, so long as the Empire remained united, the Emperor was actually regarded as the representative of the principle of unity and the leader of the whole society. But with the division of the Carolingian inheritance among the sons of Lewis this ceased to be the case, and henceforward it was the episcopate that became the guardian of the imperial unity and the arbiter and judge between the rival princes. The chief representative of this tendency in the second half of the ninth century was the great metropolitan of the West Frankish kingdom, Hincmar of Rheims, who was a redoubtable champion alike of the rights of the Church against the secular powers and of the cause of peace and unity in the Empire. But the same principles were admitted by the rulers themselves, notably by Charles the Bald, who recognises his dependence on the ecclesiastical power in the most unequivocal terms in the manifesto that he issued in 859, when an attempt was being made to depose him. He appeals to the sacred character of the authority that he had received as anointed king, and adds, "From this consecration I ought to be deposed by none, at least not
without the hearing and judgment of the bishops by whose ministry I have been consecrated king, for they are the Thrones of God on whom God sits and by whom He passes judgment. To their paternal correction and chastising judgment I have always been ready to submit and do at present submit myself."

Here we see the coronation ceremony which had previously been of very secondary importance elevated into a new position as the ultimate basis of the royal power. In fact it is on this that Hincmar himself bases his argument for the supremacy of the spiritual power, for since it is the bishops that create the king, they are superior to him, and his power is an instrument in the hands of the Church, to be guided and directed by it towards its true end. But Hincmar’s ideal of a theocratic Empire controlled by an oligarchy of metropolitans involved a conflict on the one hand with the universal authority of the Holy See, and on the other with the independent claims of the local episcopate. It was in the interests of the latter that the False Decretals, issued under the name of Isidore Mercator, were compiled, probably at Le Mans or elsewhere in the province of Tours between the years 847 and 852. These are the most important of all the forgeries of the Carolingian period, but they are by no means an exceptional phenomenon, for the scholars of that age devoted themselves to the forgery of ecclesiastical and hagiographical documents with no less enthusiasm and no more moral scruple than the Renaissance scholars showed in imitating the works of classical antiquity. Their attitude to history was indeed so radically different from our own that it is equally difficult for us to condemn or to excuse them. In the case of the False Decretals, however, the motive is clear enough. The author wished to establish by detailed and unequivocal evidence the rights of the local episcopate to appeal directly to Rome against their metropolitans, and to safeguard the independence of the Church against the secular power. But great as was their importance for the subsequent development of canon law and for the progress of ecclesiastical centralisation in the Middle Ages, it is impossible to regard them as directly responsible for the increased prestige of the Papacy in Western Europe in the ninth century. They were a result rather than a cause of that development, which had its roots in the conditions that we have just described.
And still less can we attribute any real influence on Papal policy to the other great forgery of the period—the Donation of Constantine—for it seems to have been unknown to the Popes of the ninth century, and it was not until the middle of the eleventh century that it was first used at Rome in support of the wider papal claims. It is indeed still very uncertain when or where it was composed and for what object. The old view that it was concocted at Rome in the eighth century (c. 775) in order to secure the independence of the states of the Church, is now sometimes questioned, and it seems possible that it dates from the same period as the False Decretals. Perhaps the most plausible view is that it was the work of that able and sinister man, Anastasius the Librarian, during the period after 848, when he was in exile from Rome and was intriguing with Lewis II for the papal chair. Such an act agrees well enough with the measureless ambition and the historical interests of that unscrupulous scholar, though at first sight it seems inconsistent with his connection with Lewis II. Nevertheless, the latter was ready enough to exalt the Papacy when it served his purpose, especially against the rival claims of the Byzantine Empire, and it was actually he who first asserted the view, adopted by the later mediaeval canonists, that the Emperor owes his dignity to his coronation and consecration by the Pope.

Thus the new position of social hegemony in Western Europe that the Papacy acquired at this period was thrust upon it from without rather than assumed by its own initiative. As Dr Carlyle writes with regard to the rise of the Temporal Power, "Any one who studies the Papal correspondence and the Liber Pontificalis in the eighth century will, we think, feel that the leadership of the Roman república in the West was forced upon them (the Popes) rather than deliberately sought. It was only slowly and reluctantly that they drew away from the Byzantine authority, for after all, as civilised members of the Roman state, they preferred the Byzantine to the barbarian." In the same way in the ninth century the Papacy submitted to the control of the Carolingian Empire and even accepted the Constitution of 824, which made the Emperor the master of the Roman state and gave him practical control over the appointment of the Pope. Nevertheless, the bond of association with the Carolingian Empire of itself increased the political importance of the Papacy, and as the Empire grew weaker and more divided, the Papacy
came to be regarded as the supreme representative of Western unity. Thus there was a brief period between the political effacement of the Papacy under Charlemagne and Lothair and its enslavement to local factions in the tenth century, when it seemed prepared to take the place of the Carolingian dynasty as the leader of Western Christendom. The pontificate of Nicholas I (858-867) foreshadows the future achievements of the mediæval Papacy. He withstood the greatest men of his time, the emperors of the East and West, Henemar, the leader of the Frankish episcopate, and Photius, the greatest of Byzantine patriarchs, and he successfully asserted the spiritual authority and independence of the Holy See even when the Emperor Lewis II attempted to impose his will by the use of armed force.

His successors were incapable of maintaining so lofty a position. Nevertheless, under John VIII (872-882), the Papacy was the one remaining bulwark of the Carolingian Empire, and it was due to the personal initiative of the Pope that Charles the Bald was crowned Emperor in the year 874, and Charles the Fat in 881. This final restoration of the Empire was, however, little more than an empty gesture. It was as different from the Empire of Charlemagne as the feeble and epileptic Charles the Fat was unlike his magnificent ancestor. In fact, the Empire no longer represented political realities and was in no position to act as the guardian of the Church and of civilisation. "We have looked for light," wrote the Pope, "and behold darkness! We seek succour, and we dare not emerge from the walls of the city in which there reigns an intolerable storm of persecution, because neither our spiritual son, the Emperor, nor any man of any nation brings us help." In 882 John VIII fell a victim to his enemies and Rome became the scene of a carnival of murder and intrigue which reached its climax in the ghoulish farce of 896, when the corpse of Pope Formosus was dragged from its tomb and submitted to a mock trial by his successor Stephen VI, who was himself to be murdered a few months later. Thus Papacy and Empire alike slid down into the abyss of anarchy and barbarism which threatened to engulf the whole of Western civilisation.

It is difficult to exaggerate the horror and confusion of the dark age that followed the collapse of the Carolingian experiment. The acts of the synod of Trošić in 909 give us some idea of the despair of the leaders of the Frankish
church at the prospect of the universal ruin of Christian society. "The cities," they wrote, "are depopulated, the monasteries ruined and burned, the country reduced to solitude."

"As the first men lived without law or fear of God, abandoned to their passions, so now every man does what seems good in his own eyes, despising laws human and divine and the commands of the Church. The strong oppress the weak; the world is full of violence against the poor and of the plunder of ecclesiastical goods." "Men devour one another like the fishes in the sea."

In fact the fall of the Empire involved not only the disappearance of the scarcely achieved unity of Western Europe, but the dissolution of political society and the breaking up of the Carolingian states into a disorganised mass of regional units. Power fell into the hands of anyone who was strong enough to defend himself and his dependents from external attack. This was the origin of the new local and semi-national dynasties that make their appearance in the latter part of the ninth century owing to the work of men like Robert the Strong, the founder of the Capetian house, who fought strenuously against the Vikings of the Loire and the Seine; like Bruno, Duke of Saxony, who defended his land against the Danes and the Wends; or Bosco of Provence, who was crowned king by the bishops and nobles of Burgundy in 879, because they needed a protector against both the Vikings of the North and the Saracens of the Mediterranean. But these kingdoms were no less weak and insecure than the Carolingian states, since they were exposed to the same centrifugal forces that destroyed the Empire. During the second half of the ninth century the local officials had emancipated themselves from the control of the central government, and the offices of count and duke had become hereditary benefices and usurped all the privileges of royalty. In fact the count was for all practical purposes the king of his pagus, or canton. The one principle of the new society was the law of force and its correlative—the need for protection. Personal freedom was no longer a privilege, for the man without a lord became a man without a protector. Thus fealty and homage became the universal social relations, and the ownership of land became bound up with a complex of rights and obligations, both personal, military and juridical. In the same way the churches and monasteries were forced to find protectors, and these "advocates"—Vögte, avoués—acquired practical
control over the lands and tenants of their clients. In short, the state and its public authority had become absorbed in the local territorial power. Political authority and private property were merged together in the new feudal relation, and the rights of jurisdiction and the duty of military service ceased to be universal public obligations and became annexed to the land as privileges or burdens of a particular tenure.

But though this evolution towards feudalism was the characteristic feature of the age, the feudalism of the tenth century was far from being the elaborately organised and symmetrical system that we find in Domesday Book or in the Assizes of Jerusalem. It was a much looser and more primitive organisation, a kind of compromise between the forms of an organised territorial state and the conditions of tribal society. The artificial administrative centralisation of the Carolingian period had disappeared, and there remained only the bare elements of barbaric society—the bonds of land and kinship and that which united the chief and his warriors. Thus the social bond that held feudal society together was the loyalty of warriors to their tribal chieftain rather than the public authority of the state; indeed, the society of the tenth century was in some respects more anarchic and barbarous than the old tribal society, for except in Germany, where the ancient tribal organisation still preserved its vitality, the traditional law and social spirit of the tribal society had disappeared, while the culture and political order of the Christian kingdom was too weak to take their place.

Nevertheless, the Church remained and continued to keep alive the traditions of higher civilisation. In so far as intellectual culture and civic life still survived, they existed in close dependence on the ecclesiastical society. For the state had lost all contact with the urban tradition and had become completely agrarian. The kings and nobles lived a semi-nomadic existence, subsisting on the resources of their lands and passing on from one estate to another in turn. Such a society had no use for towns, save for purely military purposes, and the so-called towns that came into existence at this period, like the burgh of Flanders and Germany and the burhs of Anglo-Saxon England, were in fact primarily fortresses and places of refuge, like the tribal strongholds of an earlier period. The old cities, on the other hand, were now almost wholly ecclesiastical in character. In the words of Professor Pirenne, "a theocratic government had completely replaced
the municipal regimen of antiquity." They were ruled by the bishop and owed their importance to his cathedral and court and to the monasteries that lay within the city walls, or like St. Germain-des-Prés at Paris, and Westminster in London, in their immediate vicinity. They were the centre of administration of the diocese and of the episcopal and monastic estates, and their population consisted almost entirely of the clergy and their dependents. It was to provide for their needs that the market existed, and the great feasts of the ecclesiastical year attracted a large influx of population from outside. It was in fact a sacred city rather than a political or commercial organism.31

In the same way, it was the Church, not the feudal state, that was the true organ of culture. Learning, literature, music and art all existed primarily in and for the Church, which was the representative of the Latin tradition of culture and order as well as of the moral and spiritual ideals of Christianity.

Moreover, all the social services which we regard as natural functions of the state, such as education and poor relief and the care of the sick, were fulfilled, in so far as they were fulfilled at all, by the action of the Church. In the Church every man had his place and could claim the rights of spiritual citizenship, whereas in the feudal state the peasantry had neither rights nor liberty and was regarded mainly as property, as part of the livestock that was necessary for the equipment of an estate.

It is impossible to understand early mediaeval culture on the analogy of modern conditions, which are based on the conception of the single all-inclusive society of the sovereign state. There were in fact two societies and two cultures in early mediaeval Europe. On the one hand, there was the peace-society of the Church, which was centred in the monasteries and episcopal cities and inherited the tradition of later Roman culture. And, on the other hand, there was the war-society of the feudal nobility and their following, whose life was spent in incessant wars and private feuds. Although the latter might be affected personally by the influence of the religious society, whose leaders were often their own kinmen, they belonged socially to a more primitive order. They were the successors of the old tribal aristocracies of barbarian Europe, and their ethos was that of the tribal warrior. At the best they preserved a certain rude measure of social order and protected their subjects from external aggres-
sion. But in many cases they were purely barbarous and predatory, living in their strongholds, as a mediaeval chronicler writes, "like beasts of prey in their dens," and issuing forth to burn their neighbours' villages and to hold the passing traveller to ransom.

The vital problem of the tenth century was whether this feudal barbarism was to capture and absorb the peace-society of the Church, or whether the latter could succeed in imposing its ideals and its higher culture on the feudal nobility, as it had formerly done with the barbarian monarchies of the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks.

At first sight the prospects seemed even more unfavourable than they had been in the age that followed the barbarian invasions, for now the Church itself was in danger of being engulfed in the flood of barbarism and feudal anarchy. Princes and nobles took advantage of the fall of the Empire to despoil the churches and monasteries of the wealth that they had accumulated during the previous period. In Bavaria, Arnulf carried out a wholesale secularisation of church lands, as Charles Martel had done in the Frankish kingdom at the close of the Merovingian period, and the Bavarian monasteries lost the greater part of their possessions. In the West things were even worse, since the monasteries had been almost ruined by the ravages of the Northmen; and the feudalisation of the West Frankish kingdom left the Church at the mercy of the new military aristocracy, who used its resources to create new fiefs for their followers. Hugh Capet was lay abbot of most of the richest abbeys in his dominions, and the same policy was followed on a smaller scale by every local potentate.

Thus the development of feudalism had reduced the Church to a state of weakness and disorder even greater than that which had existed in the decadent Merovingian state before the coming of St. Boniface. Bishops and abbots received investiture from the prince like other feudatories and held their benefices as "spiritual fiefs" in return for military service. The higher offices had become the prerogative of the members of the feudal aristocracy, many of whom, like Archimbald, the tenth-century Archbishop of Sens, wasted the revenues of their sees on their mistresses and boon companions. Even in the monasteries the rule of chastity was no longer strictly observed, while the secular clergy lived openly as married men and often handed on their curés to their sons.
Worst of all, the Church could no longer look to Rome for moral guidance and spiritual leadership, for the Papacy itself had fallen a victim to the same disease that was attacking the local churches. The Holy See had become the puppet of a demoralised and truculent oligarchy, and under the rule of Theophylact and the women of his house, above all, the great Matronia the Senatrix, mistress, mother and murderess of Popes, it reached the lowest depths of degradation.

Nevertheless, the state of affairs was not so hopeless as one might conclude from the spectacle of all these scandals and abuses. They were the birth-pangs of a new society, and out of the darkness and confusion of the tenth century the new peoples of Christian Europe were born. The achievements of the Carolingian culture were not altogether lost. Their tradition remained and was capable of being applied anew to the circumstances of the regional and national societies wherever there was any constructive force that could make use of them. Above all, the forces of order found a rallying-point and a principle of leadership in the Carolingian ideal of Christian royalty. The kingship was the one institution that was common to the two societies and embodied the traditions of both cultures. For while the king was the lineal successor of the tribal chieftain and the war leader of the feudal society, he also inherited the Carolingian tradition of theocratic monarchy and possessed a quasi-sacerdotal character owing to the sacred rites of coronation and anointment. He was the natural ally of the Church, and found in the bishops and the monasteries the chief foundations of his power. And this dual character of medianeval kingship is represented by two sharply contrasted types of ruler. These are the war-kings, like Swyn of Denmark, or Harold Hadrada, whose nominal profession of Christianity does not prevent them from following in all things the traditions of the barbarian warrior; and there are the peace-kings and royal saints, like Wenceslas of Bohemia, and Edward the Confessor, and Robert II of France, who are entirely the servants of the spiritual society and live the life of crowned monks. But it is rare to find either element existing in so pure a form as in these examples, and the normal type of medianeval royalty embodies both characters, as we see in the case of monarchs like St. Olaf and Canute, the Saxon emperors, and the great kings of Wessex.

The last are of peculiar importance, since they were the
first to attempt the task of national reconstruction in the spirit of the Carolingian tradition and to inaugurate that alliance between the national monarchy and the national church which is the characteristic feature of the period. So complete was this fusion in Wessex that the synods and councils of the Anglo-Saxon church became merged in the secular assemblies, and the ecclesiastical legislation of the tenth and eleventh centuries is the work of the king and his council, in which, however, the churchmen took the most prominent place. In the same way it was the king who took the initiative in the reform of the Church and in the restoration of monastic life which had been almost destroyed by the Danish invasions. Moreover, it is in Wessex, even more clearly than elsewhere, that we can trace the growth of a new vernacular culture on the basis of the Carolingian tradition under the patronage of the national monarchy. For King Alfred's remarkable translations of St. Gregory and Orosius and Boethius and Bede, which he carried out with the help of foreign scholars, "Plegmund my archbishop, and Asser my bishop, and Grimhald and John, my mass priests," actually represent a deliberate attempt to adapt the Christian classical culture, which had been confined to the international world of Latin culture, to the needs of the new national culture. For it seems good to me," he writes in his preface to St. Gregory's Pastoral Care, or "Herd Book," "that we also should turn some of the books that all men ought to know into that language that we can all understand, and so bring it about, as we easily may with God's aid if only we have peace, that all the youth of England, sons of free men who have the wherewithal, shall be set to learning before they are fit for other things, until they can read English writing well; and let those whom one wishes to educate further and to advance to a higher rank afterwards be instructed in the Latin language."

The work of restoration which was inaugurated by Alfred and his successors in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom was carried out on a far larger scale and with more permanent results by the Saxon kings in Germany. Indeed it is possible that the latter owed something to the example of their English predecessors, for Henry the Fowler allied himself to the house of Alfred by the marriage of his son Otto I with the daughter of Athelstan, and there are features in his policy in which historians have seen the influence of Anglo-Saxon prece-
dents. Nevertheless, Henry himself was an unlettered barbarian, who cared nothing for culture, who showed little favour to the Church, and who ruled Germany as the warrior leader of a tribal confederation. His power rested not on the universal claims of the Carolingian monarchy, but on the loyalty of his fellow Saxons, who still preserved their old tribal organisation and traditions in a purer form than any of the other peoples of Germany. The strength of this tribal feeling may be seen in Widukind’s History of the Saxons, which is inspired throughout by a spirit of purely tribal patriotism, although it is the work of a monk of Corvey, the headquarters of ecclesiastical culture in the region, and dates from after the revival of the Empire.

It was Henry’s son Otto I who was the first to recover the Carolingian tradition and unite it with the tribal patriotism of the Saxon people. In contrast to his father, he was not satisfied with his election by the secular magnates, but took care to be crowned and anointed according to the solemn ecclesiastical rites at Aix, the old capital of the Empire, and he inaugurated the policy of close co-operation with the Church which was to make the episcopate the strongest foundation of the royal power. To an even greater extent than under the Carolingian Empire the episcopate became an organ of secular government. For the bishop was no longer merely a counselor and overseer of the local count; he had absorbed the functions and privileges of the latter and had begun to acquire the dual character of the mediæval prince-bishop, the ruler of an ecclesiastical principality. This system was, of course, irreconcilable with the spiritual independence of the Church and the canonical principle of episcopal election, since it was essential for the ruler to keep the appointment of bishops in his own hands, as they had become the only reliable instruments of royal administration. In Lorraine, for example, the dukedom was held by Bruno, the Archbishop of Cologne, the brother of Otto I, and it was the bishops who controlled the disorderly feudal nobility and maintained the royal authority throughout the whole territory.

Nevertheless, this fusion between the Church and the royal power did not merely result in the secularisation of the former; it also lifted the monarchy out of the restricted environment of the tribal polities and brought it into relation with the universal society of Western Christendom. The Papacy, for all its weakness and degradation, remained the
head of the Church, and the ruler who wished to control the Church, even in his own domains, was forced to secure the co-operation of Rome. And even apart from this the whole weight of Carolingian precedent and tradition forced the new kingdom towards Rome and the imperial crown.

Modern nationalist historians may look on the restoration of the Empire as a regrettable sacrifice of the true interests of the German kingdom to an impracticable ideal. But for the statesmen of the time Christendom was just as much a reality as Germany, and the restoration of the Carolingian monarchy in Germany found its natural fulfillment in the restoration of the Christian Empire. It is true that an interval of thirty-seven years had gone by since the death of the last nominal emperor, but for the greater part of that time Rome had been in the power of Alberic, the greatest of the house of Theophylact, who had been strong enough to keep possible rivals at a distance and to appoint a succession of Popes who were not unworthy of their office. His son, the infamous Pope John XII, was, however, incapable of taking his father's place and was driven to follow the example of the Popes of the eighth century, and call on the German king for help against the kingdom of Italy.

Consequently Otto I was undertaking no novel adventure, but merely treading a well-worn and familiar path when he answered the appeal of the Pope, like so many rulers before him, and entered Italy in 961 to receive the imperial crown. But none the less his coming produced a profound change in the European situation. It brought Northern Europe once more into contact with the civilised world of the Mediterranean from which it had been so long divorced. For Italy, in spite of its political disorder, was now at last entering on a period of economic and cultural revival. The rich trading cities of the South and the Adriatic—Naples, Amalfi, Salern, Ancona and Venice—were in close relation with the high civilisation of the Eastern Mediterranean and were large Byzantine in culture, and their influence had a stimulating effect on the economic and social life of the rest of the peninsula, especially on the cities of the Lombard plain and of Romagna.

And this revival of Italian culture was accompanied by a reawakening of national feeling and of the old civic traditions. Venice was arising in the splendour of her youth under the first of her great doges, Peter Orsolo II, while ever
rulers like Alberic and Crescentius attempted to recall the memory of Rome's past greatness.

In the cities of Italy the old traditions of secular culture still survived. They alone in the West still possessed lay schools in which the grammarians kept alive the old ideals of the classical schools of rhetoric. They produced scholars, such as Liudprand of Cremona, Leo of Vercelli, and Stephen and Gunzo of Novara, who rivalry the monastic scholars of the North in their learning, and far surpassed them in the quickness of their wits and the sharpness of their tongues, as we see in the amazing epistle in which Gunzo overwhelms an unlucky monk of St. Gall, who had ventured to criticise his grammar, with a torrent of mingled erudition and abuse. The persistence of classical and even pagan influences in Italian culture is also shown in the curious story of Vilgard, the grammarian of Ravenna, who was a martyr to his belief in the literal inspiration of the sacred poets, Horace, Virgil and Juvenal, and appears in a more attractive form in the charming little poem "O admirabile Veneris idolum" composed by an unknown clerk of Verona. No doubt this only represents one aspect of Italian culture, which was by no means lacking in religious elements. The very poet whom I have just mentioned was, according to Manitius, also the author of "O Roma Nobilis," that classic expression of the Christian ideal of Rome, and the same ideal inspires the remarkable poem on the procession on the feast of the Assumption—"Saecla Maria quid est?"—dating from the time of Otto III, which is almost the only literary product of the Roman culture of that age which we possess.16

Nevertheless, as in the fifteenth century, the revival of Italian culture and its complete independency of the North were undoubtedly accompanied by a movement of religious decline and moral disorder. The Holy See had become the slave of nepotism and political factions, and had lost its international position in Christendom. And its situation was the more perilous inasmuch as the Church north of the Alps was being affected by the new moral ideals of the movement of monastic reform and had begun to set its own house in order. At the council of Saint-Base de Verzy in 991 the French bishops openly declared their belief in the bankruptcy of the Papacy. "Is it to such monsters (as Pope John XI or Boniface VII), swollen with their ignominy and devoid of all knowledge human or divine, that the innumerable-priests
of God throughout the world who are distinguished by their knowledge and virtues should lawfully be submitted?” asks their spokesman, Arnoul of Orleans. “We seem to be witnessing the coming of Antichrist, for this is the falling away of which the apostle speaks, not of nations but of the churches.”

If Italy had remained isolated from Northern Europe, Rome would have naturally gravitated towards the Byzantine Empire, as was indeed the deliberate policy of Alberic and other leaders of the Roman aristocracy, and there would have been a real danger that the eleventh century would have witnessed a schism, not between Rome and Byzantium, but between the old world of the Mediterranean and the East and the young peoples of Northern Europe. Actually, however, this danger did not materialise. The Northern movement of reform did not turn against the Papacy, as in the sixteenth century, but became its ally and co-operated with it to renew the religious life of Western Christendom; and the first representative of this movement to occupy the Papal chair and to prepare the way for the new age was the very man who was the representative of the Gallican party at the council of Saint-Basle and recorded its anti-Roman pronouncements, Gerbert of Aurillac.

This change, however, could never have taken place had it not been for the existence of the Western Empire. It was the coming of the Empire that rescued the Papacy from its servitude to local factions and restored it to Europe and to itself. It is true that the restoration of the Empire seemed at first to mean nothing more than the subjugation of the Papacy to a German prince in place of a local magnate. Nevertheless, the new conditions inevitably changed the horizon of imperial policy and brought with them wider and more universal aims. The Empire gradually lost its Saxon character and became an international power. Otto I married the Burgundian-Italian Queen Adelaide, while their son Otto II was the husband of a Greek princess, Theophano, who brought with her to the West the traditions of the Byzantine imperial court. Thus the offspring of their marriage, Otto III, united in his person the twofold tradition of the Christian Empire in its Carolingian and Byzantine form. From his mother and from the Calabrian Creek, Philagathus, he received the influence of the higher culture of the Byzantine world, while his tutor, Bernard of Hildesheim, at once a scholar, an artist and a states-
man, represented all that was best in the Carolingian tradition of the North. Moreover, he was intensely sensitive to the higher spiritual influences of the time as we see from his personal friendship with St. Adalbert of Prague, and his relations with the leading ascetics of Italy, St. Romuald and St. Nilus.

With such a character and such an upbringing it is not surprising that Otto III should have conceived an imperialism that was Byzantine rather than Germanic, and that he should have devoted his life to the realisation of its universal claims and ideals. It was in pursuance of this end that he broke with the tradition of centuries by making his youthful cousin Bruno Pope, instead of a member of the Roman clergy. But it was not in Bruno, but in Gerbert, the most learned and brilliant scholar of the age, that he found a true kindred spirit who was capable of co-operating with him in his life's work. Hitherto he had been conscious of the inferiority of Western culture in comparison with Greek civilisation and refinement. It was Gerbert who taught him that it was the West and not Byzantium that was the true heir of the Roman tradition and who inspired him with the desire to recover this ancient inheritance. "Let it not be thought in Italy," wrote Gerbert, "that Greece alone can boast of the Roman power and of the philosophy of its Emperor. Ours, yea ours, is the Roman Empire! Its strength rests on fruitful Italy and populous Gaul and Germany and the valiant kingdoms of the Scythians. Our Augustus art thou, O Caesar, the emperor of the Romans who, sprung of the noblest blood of the Greeks, surpasses the Greeks in power, controls the Romans by right of inheritance and overcomes both alike in wisdom and eloquence." 18

Consequently when the early death of Bruno made it possible for Gerbert to succeed him as Pope Sylvester II, Otto proceeded with his help to carry out his plans for the renewal of the Empire and the restoration of Rome to its rightful place as the imperial city and the centre of the Christian world. His attempt, and still more the Byzantine forms in which it was embodied, has, it is true, aroused the derision of modern historians, who see in it nothing but a piece of childish make-belief, cloaked in Byzantine forms. 18 But in reality Otto's policy, though without political results, had far more historical significance than any of the practical achievements of contemporary politicians, for it marks the emer-
gence of a new European consciousness. All the forces that went to make up the unity of medieval Europe are represented in it—the Byzantine and Carolingian traditions of the Christian Empire and the ecclesiastical universalism of the Papacy, the spiritual ideals of monastic reformers, such as St. Nilus and St. Romuald, and the missionary spirit of St. Adalbert, the Carolingian humanism of Gerbert, and the national devotion of Italians like Leo of Vercelli to the Roman idea. Thus it marks the point at which the traditions of the past age flow together and are merged in the new culture of the mediaeval West. It looks back to St. Augustine and Justinian, and forward to Dante and the Renaissance. It is true that Otto III's ideal of the Empire as a commonwealth of Christian peoples governed by the concordant and interdependent authorities of Emperor and Pope was never destined to be realised in practice; nevertheless, it preserved a kind of ideal existence like that of a Platonic form, which was continually seeking to attain material realisation in the life of mediaeval society. For the ideal of Otto III is precisely the same ideal that was to inspire the thought of Dante, and throughout the intervening centuries it provided an intelligible formula in which the cultural unity of mediaeval Europe found conscious expression. Nor was it as sterile in practical results as it is usually supposed, for the short years of Otto and Gerbert's joint rule saw the rise of the new Christian peoples of Eastern Europe. It was due to their action, inspired in part by Otto's devotion to the memory of his Bohemian friend St. Adalbert, that the Poles and the Hungarians were freed from their dependence on the German state-church and given their own ecclesiastical organisation which was the indispensable condition for the independence of their national cultures.

This marks a vital modification in the Carolingian imperial tradition. The unity of Christendom was no longer conceived as the unity of an imperialist autocracy, a kind of Germanic Tsardom, but as a society of free peoples under the presidency of the Roman Pope and Emperor. Hitherto conversion to Christianity had involved political dependence and the destruction of national tradition, and this is the reason why the Wends and the other Baltic peoples had offered so stubborn a resistance to the Church. But the close of the tenth century saw the birth of a new series of Christian states extending from Scandinavia to the Danube. The eleventh cen-
tury saw the passing of Northern paganism and the incorporation of the whole of Western Europe into the unity of Christendom. And at the same time the long winter of the Dark Ages had reached its end, and everywhere throughout the West new life was stirring, new social and spiritual forces were awakening, and Western society was emerging from the shadow of the East and taking its place as an independent unity by the side of the older civilisations of the oriental world.