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Charlemagne

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Having been in a great stagnation for ages, Europe was completely enlightened to its power thanks to Charlemagne¹. Due to his comprehensive and numerous abilities, the dark ages was totally converted into prosperity and opportunity. A lot of inventions and systems he created represent a wise solution to the terrible crisis.

After becoming the ruler of Roman Empire or the King of Franks in A.D. 768², Charlemagne had to encounter the tough situation. Many kingdoms were separated into fragments which meant lack of central authority to control or organize. For him, reformations were very crucial and needed to be put in the first priority which will be discussed as followings.

For an empire to thrive and expand its territory, efficient sustainability of army force is imperative. Likewise, Charlemagne realized this importance and finally invented many tools that enhanced his army's potential³. The first one was stirrups, which boosted horseman's speed and stability which turned out to be a powerful force behind his cavalry capability. Moreover, in order to ensure that the protection was adequate for the troop, armor was added as a shield that prevented the horse from

¹ <http://www.livescience.com/4892-charlemagne-changed-world.html>

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlemagne>

³ <http://www.helium.com/items/1767472-charlemagne>

being stabbed and attacked by other weapon such as spears and sword. He also came up with using siege or onslaught as a strategy to defeat the enemy which was one of the ways that helped his force gained victory. Not only inventing and being intelligent, he also paid a lot of attention to strengthen his army force by using local officials called counts as his representative to find men to join the army force and take a great care of them with justice and fairness. To ensure that everything was continually operated, he also paid regulars visits to his staffs and made sure they were doing efficiently. Due to his intelligence and perfect responsibility, his kingdom could defeat most of Barbarian tribes in Western Europe and was able to expand his Frankish Empire and gather Germany, France, major part of Italy, and some parts of northern Spain together which was a hopeful sign for a bright future of Europe in the middle ages.

⁴Education was another aspect he also focused on. To stimulate learning environment throughout the society, he converted his own castle into a learning center and also asked scholars as well as specialists in various subjects. In addition, those academic staffs were required to distribute the old manuscripts which represented a great source of knowledge to his residents. Those books were called illuminated manuscripts as each page was elaborately designed and some pages were covered with gold. He also spent some of his time studying history, philosophy, economics, culture, and other subjects which were related to liberal arts, which was the main way for him to accomplish enough sophistication to be a great ruler. Thanks to his broad vision, the manuscripts he introduced had been utilized for many hundreds of years and gave such a strong foundation for every individual.

⁴ <http://medievaleurope.mrdonn.org/charlemagne.html>

Apart from education and military matter, economic reformation was also included in his development plan. In the past before he became the ruler, taxes were regularly collected by local officials and the barter system was a main way for people to exchange things with each other. Charlemagne realized that it was cumbersome and predicted that this system would eventually result in overuse of political power and lack of equity during the exchange process. Consequently, the old monetary system was modified in order to make economic activities more convenient and manageable. He changed the old monetary unit, gold, into silver coins. Due to the fact that the value proportion of one gold coin to one silver coin was one to twelve, the new monetary unit reflected a more affordable way for people to obtain some possessions or make mutually beneficial trade.⁵ He also modified the laws of trade and provided an opportunity for the peasants to engage in any economic activities which was an expression of sympathy he had and did for people in lower classes. To ensure that no injustices happened, he assigned all local governors and officials to be responsible for regular inspections. Regarding the method to maintain the justice in the kingdom, he created the jury system and transformed the trial system. In the past, the trial by ordeal was used extensively which he found rather torturing and unfair for people who were inferior in status. This fact motivated him to introduce the trial by jury which everything was based on evidence and witness to ensure that no righteousness was missed. That was a beginning for the development of modern trial system which has existed until today.

Another part of changes that Charlemagne made was Church reformation. In spite of being a brave and straightforward ruler, he also realized the importance of maintaining the level of morality in all regions. Thus, he concentrated on the new

⁵ <http://medievaleurope.mrdonn.org/trialbyjury.html>

style and tone of music used in the ceremony and many revivals which were considered crucial to be included in order to instill moral attitude in everyone's mind.

⁶According to his impressive performances regarding the expansion of Christianity across Europe, Pope Leo III proudly crowned him as the Emperor on Christmas Day in A.D. 800, giving rise to the cultural reunion from each separated fragments which were eventually merged together.

⁷In conclusion, a great number of reformations that came from Charlemagne's idea ultimately converted the hopeless and fragmented Roman Empire into the prosperous Europe in the middle ages which could be counted as a big change to the world. Undoubtedly, Charles the Great and Father of Europe later became two other common names which were loyally called by Romans. Vague and unpredictable future was unbelievably turned into possible opportunity.

⁶ <http://history-world.org/charlemagne.htm>

⁷ <http://www.findingdulcinea.com/features/profiles/c/charlemagne.html>