THESIS,

THE BATTLE OF TOURS IN CIVILIZATION,

FOR THE DEGREE OF

IN THE SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES,

BY

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It will be the aim of this piece to show the difference of the two great races which have contributed more than any others to the progress of society; to give an account of the contact between them for the supremacy and to show the effects which that struggle has had upon the civilization of the world.

Of the battle itself, the records remaining are few, and even these are far from complete, so that it is mainly from its effects that we judge of this grand struggle of two peoples, differing in race and religion, for the mastery of the political, intellectual and moral world.

It will be necessary to trace the rise and progress of a people and a religion the most rapid and brilliant recorded upon the pages of history; Mohammedanism.
just a century before the date of this famous battle, the prophet and founder of this new and powerful creed had died.

Before the time of Mohammed, the native tribes of Arabia had been a nomadic people, with little or no education except a certain shrewdness and power of observation which has been characteristic of the Semites from the earliest times. They had no united government but were separated into tribes each of which was governed by a chief.

Their religious creed was not well defined but included the worship of idols and other inanimate objects.

It was into the midst of this simple people that Mohammed came; the man who was destined to become the originator and leader of a
religion and government, the most remarkable he
world had ever seen.

He was an Arab;
a native of Mecca, who followed the occupation of
a merchant until past the prime of life; during
this period he did not attract marked attention
but was known to be just and honorable in all
his dealings.

About this period of his life, he brought
forward a new religion which he claimed to have
received from the hand of God; he accepted both
Christian and Jewish creeds but maintained that
his own was more perfect than either.

Opposition was so strong against him that, in the
year 622, he, with a few followers, was forced to fly
for his life to Medina.

At this place, he had better success.

From this time, his power and influence rapidly increased.
Had the reformer been contented with the success he was gaining and had he continued as he began all would have been different, the battle of Tours would never have been fought. Until the time of the Hijra, the conduct of Mohammed had been unimpeachable, a simple-minded man seeking to convert his fellow countrymen to his new religion; but now a change came over him, ambition found a dwelling place in the mind that had before the time been above earthly things and the so-called prophet of God became a blood-handed warrior.

All his enemies had been on spiritual things but now he boldly proclaimed: “The sword is the key to Heaven and Hell.” He sought to gain a spiritual end by worldly means.
From this time, his career of conquest began and tribe after tribe fell beneath his sway until the whole peninsula called him lord. He melted and moulded the scattered bands of his countrymen by the heat of religious enthusiasm into a single homogeneous mass which was yet plastic to the touch of his master hand.

His ambition grew with his empire and he was preparing to bear the crescent beyond the borders of his native peninsula but death intervened before his plans were completed.

Under his successor the East was conquered and then the Moslem Border turned their eyes westward. All northern Africa was conquered and overrun by these fanatical and relentless warriors, who in the course of all their conquests...
had never lowered their standard to an earthly
prize. They scarcely paused for
breath at the Pillar of Hercules before they crossed
into Spain, eager for plunder and conquest.

The year 711 marks the beginning of the
conquest of Spain; the Goths who held that
country gathered their forces to meet these turbaned
warriors, but were utterly routed in the three day
battle of Guadalete, with a loss of their king, Roderic,
the "Last of the Goths."

The Gothic forces
were so scattered by their defeat that they could
offer little or no resistance to the Saracens who
took possession of the country and pillaged or
destroyed the churches and temples that they found.

It was the custom of these Mohammedans
to force one of three things upon the people they had
captured: tribute, the Koran or the sword.
From these Gothic people they exacted tribute and many were the byrane who fell, under the
invader's steel, the victims of Modern greed
and cruelty.

But the Saracens were not contented
with the precautions already gained, ambition
had grown with each successive victory and
always had the scimitar proved better metal than
any weapon it had encountered.

The wielders longed to try the keenness of its edge
in the fertile valley beyond the Pyrenees, and
standing on the top of three mountains, they
looked down with eager eyes upon a land
which they hoped might acknowledge Mohammed
in the future and fuse unite all nations into
one creed, one government, and one civilization.

It was a grand thought and what was there
to prevent the realization of their highest ambition? Had they not proved themselves invincible when opposed to the enemies of Islam during a century of conquest, and in that time had they not carried their banner in triumph over a large part of the civilized world?

They gathered a powerful army behind the Pyrenees and when all was ready, they poured into Gaul like an avalanche, ravaging as they went. Their leader was the celebrated Abd-el-rahman, but of their numbers very little is known beyond the fact that it was a large and powerful army, composed mostly of light cavalry. For a time they met with but slight resistance which only served to increase the feeling of security in these ducal
enthusiasts, and they plundered without limit. From the place of their landing in Spain, they had penetrated to the heart of the continent, and good cause had Christendom to fear the outcome of a deluge of invaders which threatened all Europe with destruction.

The Saracens were rapid in movement, dauntless in courage and cunningly countless in number; but the Franks, among whose youth now came, were a brave and sturdy race, accustomed to the hardships of war, and well fitted to become the champions of their religious belief; yet, it was not without a feeling of apprehension that they saw their hosts swarming over the Pyrenees.

Three Franks had come down from the North with the deluge of barbarians that
undermined and laid low the tottering structure of imperial Rome. From the crowded region of the North, came wave after wave, tribe after tribe of these people, each pushing those who preceded it, only in turn to be itself hurried on by those following. In the journey southward, the foremost tribes were unable at last to go farther and being retained in place by pressure from without, each tribe finally came to consider the country it happened to occupy as its own possession, while each of the countries came in time to have a boundary more or less plainly marked. The transition, from a roving life to the permanent condition that appeared afterwards, was not accomplished in any short period of time; confusion reigned everywhere for a while, but finally systems grew from this chaos.
At the time of the Saracen invasion, order had been restored to some extent, but was far from the settled condition of affairs in later times.

Large in stature, with fair complexion, light hair and blue eyes, were the Teutonic Frankish warriors that had given the death blow to the empire of the Saracen. It was in this contact with Rome that these barbarians were brought under the influence of Christianity, which although it may have softened in a degree their savage dispositions, had not greatly modified their habits of life.

In her dying struggle, Rome had given to the invaders, as the thing most worthy of being preserved, the Christian religion and the Teutonic Frankish code now called upon to defend.

From the first, there had been among
these Teutonic people an independence in all
things; the individual was the paramount thing
before which all else had to give place.
It may have been selfishness on the part of the
individual, or it may have been the feeling of
equality among these people, that gave birth to the
spirit of freedom which always has been
characteristic of the Teutonic race.
A nation of pure blood was an superior race
one in which liberty and independence in all
things would rise and flourish, and it was this
characteristic more than any other that made
the Teutonic leaders in all things, since this
progressive race first rose into prominence among
the nations of the world.

Such were the people, whose the
Saracenic now encountered.
These Franks were not the people to remain long in idleness. The Mayor of the Palace, whose power must nearly approached that of a sovereign, had come of noted family and was himself not lacking in those elements which make a soldier and a statesman.

Charles Martel was not the man to be dismayed by the reputation or even the appearance of three invaders; he gathered his forces and prepared for the conflict which he knew could not be averted.

On the plains between Tours and Poitiers, in the year 732, the two armies came face to face and each realized that a crisis had come. Charles took a position and awaited the attack of the Mohammedans which he knew would surely follow. For six days the armies lay...
facing each other, each trying to gain some
advantage by strategy, but on the second day the
Saracens mounted on their fleet horses and armed
with the terrible scimitars, came down like the
billows of an angry sea upon three Christian
knight, who sit solid ranks, with broadsword
or ponderous battle-ax, cut down three turbaned
warriors as they advanced.

Again and again did the host of Islam
reform and charge, but southern activity and
daring were no match for northern solidity and
strength.

Napoleon said, "God
always decides in favor of the heavy battalions"
and this battle does not weaken the assertion.

Then, too, a rumor spread among the Mohamme-
dans, that their camp was being plundered and
many of the Mohammedans, fearful for the safety of their
booty, withdrew from the fight; this decision just at the turning point decided the contest: the invaders were driven from the field with an enormous loss, their leader being among the slain.

The shattered and broken forces of Islam sought shelter behind their mountain wall from which they never again issued to carry destruction and desolation into the heart of the continent. Mohammedanism had risen to the height of its glory and in this battle had reached the culminating point of its brilliant career. The star of its destiny had gone down with the three hundred thousand warriors who fell on the bloody plains of Tours.

No longer did visions of a universal empire disturb the dreams of the Saracens; never would they behold the world on bended knee in homage to their prophet.
or even to the caliph, his successor.

Henceforth, their energies were to be spent in preventing the dissolution of this mighty empire of a century's growth.

Although the Christians, rejoiced in their victory over the Saracens, yet neither party knew how prominent a part each played in the world's history—a part the importance of which can be scarcely realized even in our own time, and which becomes more and more clearly seen as civilization advances.

It is true that at the time and previous to the great battle, the Saracens had made great progress in the arts, in learning, and in general civilization, so that the Christians had no cause to look down upon their foes, whom they despised as heartily, because they were inferior to them in this respect; indeed, the Moors, far
from being the monuments of barbarity that the chronicler of the time would have us believe, had many redeeming qualities to which their opponents might have turned their attention with profit. But notwithstanding their virtues, had the Mohammedans conquered in that battle, it would be safe to say that the outcome would have been far different in the world's history. Gibbon, the historian, says, "A victorious line of march had been prolonged above a thousand miles from the Rock of Gibraltar to the bank of the Loire; the repetition of an equal space would have carried the Saracens to the confines of Poland and the Highlands of Scotland. The Rhine is not more impassible than the Nile or Euphrates and the Arabian fleet might have sailed without an naval combat into the mouth of the Thames."
Perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford and her pulpit might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mohammed."

It is impossible for the historian to positively assert what the consequences would have been, had something in the course of events happened contrary to what really occurred, consequently no one can say truly what now might be the state of affairs had Charles Martel been defeated.

All that remains to be done under the circumstances is to take the most probable result after a careful consideration of the facts.

It could only be expected that with people so vastly different by birth and living under such opposite conditions, there should be a corresponding disagreement in the two civilizations.
This difference assuened the form of a contract. A free rugged Bryan warrior, who fought for their land and their creed, had within themselves the germs of that progress and improvement from which has grown the civilization of to-day. They had all the essential qualities of progress but like a block of unbroken marble, their civilization was in the rough; the softening process of time and the many-blowe under the guidance of a master hand were necessary to bring out the true beauty and strength of their civilization and to give it that polish which, ever increasing, always develops new beauties as it grows.

Arabian civilization was an abnormal growth. Springing up almost in a night time, it reached at once the height of its glory, but its vitality was gone; though it remained
standing for a time, yet decay had begun already to eat away its vitality and soon it was to totter and fall, not altogether useless, but as a thing which had served its purpose and then returned to the elements from which it came.

It cannot be said that had the Semitic race conquered the Aryan, the world would have remained in the condition of the eighth century. Mohammedanism could never have torn from the Aryan heart the inborn love of improvement, the spirit of progress, that has made Europe all that it is.

It could never have rooted from European soil the tree planted by Aryan hands—no, neither oppression might have hamp- red and confined the growth till it produced only poor and distorted fruit, without promoting their own culture to a proportionate degree.
The battle of Tours was the turning point in the world's history. Upon the result hung the destiny of Europe. From that time the Arabian power diminished and could no longer hope to carry into execution its cherished design of conquest and dominion; the magic spell was broken, victory had been the charm which held the hosts of Faramo under the direction of a single will.

One defeat had ruined the marvellous and gigantic fabric—a structure lacking in all the essentials which compose the foundations of stability; internal strife and final downfall called these doughty warriors to do and die in other lands from which they never returned.

But Europe, by and by Europe, has not faltered; every step taken has been in the right direction.
and everything has been alive with progress
and activity.
This same battle brought Christianity
into a union for the common defence, petty
jealousies were overshadowed by the general danger
and all became brother fighting for one great
cause. They were brought under the
influence of a powerful leader whom they continued
to respect and obey long after the enemy had been
repelled. From this fact may be traced
the progress of that century and of the centuries
following.
The authority of the Mayor of the Palace
was important but he was only a forerunner of
a greater one who was to follow him: Charles
Bartel, the blind instrument of Destiny, made
it possible for his grandsons to be all that he was.
Throughout all the annals of time, few are more renowned than that of Charlemagne whose reign forms an important chapter in the history of civilization and of the world.

Sicily, the God who ruled the destinies of nations and moulded the empire of the world, in unying the race of men to carry out this plan, never more plainly decided the fate of a people than at the Battle of Tours.