

turn to God, and preparations for the baptism of the king as also of the people were immediately begun. On Christmas Day, 496, A.D., the memorable event took place. How the heart of Clotilda must have leaped for joy as she saw her greatest desire thus accomplished!

St. Remy, whom Bossuet calls the Samuel of the French people made great preparations for the imposing ceremony. Hinemar has left a most eloquent description of the magnificence displayed on the occasion of this the most impressive event in the history of the French kings.

The street from the palace to the church had been splendidly carpetted. The church itself was gorgeously decorated and lighted up with perfumed tapers. A procession started from the palace at the head of which were carried the Gospels and the cross. Then came the king whose hand was held by St. Remy. The queen and the two sisters of the king followed: the rear of the procession was brought up by the flower of the French army.

Arrived at the church the king was so much struck with the magnificence displayed that he asked the holy father if this were the kingdom of Christ which he had promised him. "No, Sire," replied the bishop, "it is but the beginning of the way that leads to it."

On reaching the baptismal font the king asked to be baptized. The bishop addressing him said "Sicambre, * bow down thy head; adore that which thou hast burned, and burn what thou hast adored." Then having professed his faith in the Blessed Trinity, Clovis was baptized and anointed. The three thousand soldiers who were with him, along with their wives and children were also received into the church by the bishops and priests who were present on this solemn occasion. Of the sisters of Clovis, Alboflède was baptized and afterwards entered a convent, while Lanthilde who had imbibed the

Arian heresy became reconciled to the true faith, and was anointed.

This was an occasion for great rejoicing throughout the realm. The king wishing to banish tears and sorrow from his kingdom released all prisoners and made liberal donations to the church. He wore the white robe of the neophytes for a period of eight days and once during this time when St. Remy was reading to him the Passion of our Lord, the king, moved to indignation by the description of the cruel torments endured by the Saviour, exclaimed "Oh, would I had been there with my soldiers to avenge Him!"

The news of the conversion of Clovis spread joy throughout the christian world. Expecting in him a valiant defender of the Church Pope Anastasius was particularly happy. Clovis was now the only Catholic sovereign in the world, the others being either pagans or having embraced the doctrines of one or the other of the great heresies, Arianism or Eutychianism. The emperor Anastasius had gone over to Eutychianism, while Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths in Italy; Alaric, king of the Visigoths in Spain and Aquitaine; Gondébaud, king of the Burgondes in Gaul and Trasamond, king of the Vandals in Africa, all professed Arianism.

The date of the baptism of Clovis was almost coincident with the accession of Anastasius to the papal throne. The new pope looked upon this as an omen of good. He therefore wrote the following letter to the king of the Franks.

"We congratulate Ourselves, most glorious son, that your entry into the christian faith concurs with Our entry into the pontificate. For may not the chair of St. Peter start for joy when it sees the nations hasten to it; when it sees the net which that fisher of men, that porter of heaven, has been commanded to spread, being filled throughout the ages? This is what we wish to make known to your Serene Highness, through the priest Eumerius, so that, knowing the joy of your father, you may increase in good works, you may

* Clovis was descended from the tribe known in the north of Germany as the Sicambres.