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# THE CARLOVINGIAN COINS

## THE FULL SERIES OF

## The Mysteries of the People

OR

History of a Proletarian Family
Across the Ages

By EUGENE SUE

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**THE ABBATIAL CROSIER; or, *Bonaik and Septimine*.**
**THE CARLOVINGIAN COINS; or, *The Daughters of Charlemagne*.**
**THE IRON ARROW-HEAD; or, *The Buckler Maiden*.**
**THE INFANT'S SKULL; or, *The End of the World*.**

**THE PILGRIM'S SHELL; or, *Fergan the Quarryman*.**
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**THE EXECUTIONER'S KNIFE; or, Joan of Arc.**
**THE POCKET BIBLE; or, *Christian the Printer*.**
**THE BLACKSMITH'S HAMMER; or, *The Peasant Code*.**
**THE SWORD OF HONOR; or, *The Foundation of the French Republic*.**
**THE GALLEY SLAVE'S RING; or, *The Family Lebrenn*.**

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# THE CARLOVINGIAN COINS

: : : : OR : : : :

## THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARLEMAGNE

**A Tale of the Ninth Century**

**By EUGENE SUE**

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH BY

**DANIEL DE LEON**

NEW YORK LABOR NEWS COMPANY, 1907



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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The Age of Charlemagne is the watershed of the history of the present era. The rough barbarian flood that poured over Western Europe reaches in that age a turning point of which Charlemagne is eminently the incarnation. The primitive physical features of the barbarian begin to be blunted, or toned down by a new force that has lain latent in him, but that only then begins to step into activity—the spiritual, the intellectual powers. The Age of Charlemagne is the age of the first conflict between the intellectual and the brute in the principal branches of the races that occupied Europe. The conflict raged on a national scale, and it raged in each particular individual. The colossal stature, physical and mental, of Charlemagne himself typifies the epoch. Brute instincts of the most primitive and savage, intellectual aspirations of the loftiest are intermingled, each contends for supremacy—and alternately wins it, in the monarch, in his court and in his people.

*The Carlovingian Coins; or, The Daughters of Charlemagne* is the ninth of the brilliant series of historical novels written by Eugene Sue under the title, *The Mysteries of the People; or, History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages*. The age and its people are portrayed in a charming and chaste narrative, that is fittingly and artistically brought to a close by a veritable epopee—the Frankish conquest of Brittany, and, as fittingly, serves to introduce the next epopee—the Northman's invasion of Gaul—dealt with in the following story, *The Iron Arrow Head; or, The Buckler Maiden*.

DANIEL DE LEON.

New York, May, 1905.

# PART I.

# AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

# CHAPTER I.

## AMAEL AND VORTIGERN.

Towards the commencement of the month of November of the year 811, a numerous cavalcade was one afternoon wending its way to the city of Aix-la-Chapelle, the capital of the Empire of Charles the Great—an Empire that had been so rapidly increased by rapidly succeeding conquests over Germany, Saxony, Bavaria, Bohemia, Hungary, Italy and Spain, that Gaul, as formerly during the days of the Roman Emperors, was again but a province among the vast domains. The ambitious designs of Charles Martel had been realized. Childeric, the last scion of the Merovingian dynasty, had been got rid of. Martel's descendants took his seat, and now the Hammerer's grandson wielded the sceptre of Clovis over an immensely wider territory.

Eight or ten cavalry soldiers rode in advance of the cavalcade. A little apart from the smaller escort, four cavaliers ambled leisurely. Two of them wore brilliant armor after the German fashion. One of these was accompanied by a venerable old man of a martial and open countenance. His long beard, snow white as his hair that was half hidden under a fur cap, fell over his chest. He wore a Gallic blouse of grey wool, held around his waist by a belt, from which hung a long sword with an iron hilt. His ample hose of rough white fabric reached slightly below his knees and left exposed his tightly laced leather leggings, that ended in his boots whose heels were armed with spurs. The old man was Amael, who under the assumed Frankish name of Berthoald had, eighty years before, saved the life of Charles Martel at the battle of Poitiers against the Arabs, had declined the post offered him by Charles, as jailer of the last descendant of Clovis, and, finally, smitten by conscience, had renounced wealth and dignity under the Frankish enslavers of Gaul, and returned to his people and country of Brittany, or Armorica, as the Romans named it. Amael now touched his hundredth year. His great age and his somewhat portly stature notwithstanding, he still looked full of vigor. He handled with dexterity the black horse that he rode and whose spirit seemed no wise abated by the long road it had traveled. From time to time, Amael turned round upon his saddle in order to cast a look of paternal solicitude upon his grandson Vortigern, a lad of hardly eighteen years, who was accompanied by the other of the two Frankish warriors. The face of Vortigern, of exceptional beauty for a man, was framed in long chestnut ringlets, that, escaping from his scarlet coif, tumbled down below a chin that was as dainty as a woman's. His large blue eyes, fringed with lashes black as his bold arched eyebrows, had an air at once ingenuous and resolute. His red lips, shaded by the down of adolescence, revealed at every smile two rows of teeth white as enamel. A slightly aquiline nose, a fresh and pure complexion somewhat tanned by the sun, completed the harmonious make-up of the youth's charming visage. His clothes, made after the fashion of his grandfather's, differed from them only in a touch of elegance that bespoke a mother's hand, tenderly proud of her son's comely appearance. Accordingly, the blue blouse of the lad was ornamented around the neck, over the shoulders and at the extremities of the sleeves with embroideries of white wool, while a calfskin belt, from which hung a sword with polished hilt, encircled his supple waist. His linen hose half hid his deerskin leggings, that were tightly laced to his nervy limbs and rejoined his boots, made of tanned skin and equipped with large copper spurs that glistened like gold. Although his right arm was held in a scarf of some black material, Vortigern handled his horse with his left hand with as much ease as skill. For traveling companion he had a young warrior of agreeable mien, bold and mercurial, alert and frolicsome. The mobility of his face recalled in nothing the stolidity of the German. His name was Octave. Roman by birth, in appearance and character, his inexhaustible Southern wit often succeeded in unwrinkling the brow of his young companion. The latter, however, would soon again relapse into a sort of silent and somber revery. Thus for some time absorbed in sadness, he walked his horse slowly, when Octave broke in gaily in a tone of friendly reproach:

"By Bacchus! You still are preoccupied and silent."

"I am thinking of my mother," answered the youth, smothering a sigh. "I am thinking of my mother, of my sister and of my country."

"Come now; you should, on the contrary, chase away, such saddening thoughts. To the devil with sadness. Long live joy."

"Octave, gayness ill beseems a prisoner. I cannot share your light-heartedness."

"You are no prisoner, only a hostage. No bond binds you but your own word; prisoners, on the contrary, are led firmly pinioned to the slave market. Your grandfather and yourself ride freely, with us for your companions, and we are escorting you, not to a slave market, but to the palace of the Emperor Charles the Great, the mightiest monarch of the whole world. Finally, prisoners are disarmed; your grandfather as well as yourself carry your swords."

"Of what use are our swords now to us?" replied Vortigern with painful bitterness. "Brittany is vanquished."

"Such are the chances of war. You bravely did your duty as a soldier. You fought like a demon at the side of your grandfather. He was not wounded, and you only received a lance-thrust. By Mars, the valiant god of war, your blows were so heavy in the melee that you should have been hacked to pieces."

"We would not then have survived the disgrace of Armorica."

"There is no disgrace in being overcome when one has defended himself bravely—above all when the forces that one resisted and decimated, were the veteran bands of the great Charles."

"Not one of your Emperor's soldiers should have escaped."

"Not one?" merrily rejoined the young Roman. "What, not even myself? Not even I, who take such pains to be a pleasant traveling companion, and who tax my eloquence to entertain you? Verily, you are not at all grateful!"

"Octave, I do not hate you personally; I hate your race; they have, without provocation, carried war and desolation into my country."

"First of all, my young friend, I am not of the Frankish race. I am a Roman. Gladly do I relinquish to you those gross Germans, who are as savage as the bears of their forests. But, let it be said among ourselves, this war against Brittany was not without reason. Did not you Bretons, possessed of the very devil as you are, attack last year and exterminate the Frankish garrison posted at Vannes?"

"And by what right did Charles cause our frontiers to be invaded by his troops twenty-five years ago? His whim stood him instead of right."

The conversation between Vortigern and Octave was interrupted by the voice of Amael, who, turning in his saddle, called his grandson to him. The latter, anxious to hasten to his grandfather, and also yielding to an impulse of anger that the discussion with the young Roman had provoked, brusquely clapped his spurs to the flanks of his charger. The animal, thus suddenly urged, leaped forward so violently that in two or three bounds it would have left Amael behind, had not Vortigern, restraining his mount with a firm hand, made the animal rear on its haunches. The youth then resumed his walk abreast of his grandfather and the other Frankish warrior, who, turning to the old man, remarked:

"I do not marvel at the superiority of your Breton cavalry, when a lad of the age of your grandson, and despite the wound that must smart him, can handle his horse in such a manner. You yourself, for a centenarian, are as firm in your saddle as the lad himself. Horns of the devil!"

"The lad was barely five years old when his father and I used to place him on the back of the colts raised on our meadows," answered the old man. The recollection of those peaceful happy days now ended, cast a shadow of sorrow upon Amael's face. He remained silent for a moment. Thereupon, addressing Vortigern, he said:

"I called you to inquire whether your wound had ceased smarting."

"Grandfather, I hardly feel it any longer. If you allow me, I would free my arm of the embarrassing scarf."

"No; your wound might open again. No imprudence. Remember your mother, and also your sister and her husband, both of whom love you like a brother."

"Alas! Will I never see that mother, that sister, that brother whom I love so dearly?"

"Patience!" answered Amael in an undertone, so as not to be heard by the Frankish warrior at his side. "You may see Brittany again a good deal sooner than you expect—prudence and patience!"

"Truly?" inquired the youth impetuously. "Oh, grandfather, what happiness!"

The old man made a sign to Vortigern to control himself, and then proceeded aloud: "I am always afraid lest the fatigue of traveling inflame your wound anew. Fortunately, we must be approaching the end of our journey. Not so, Hildebrad?" he added, turning to the warrior.

"Before sunset we shall be at Aix-la-Chapelle," answered the Frank. "But for the hill that we are about to ascend, you could see the city at a distance."

"Return to your companion, my child," said Amael; "above all, place your arm back in its scarf, and be careful how you manage your horse. A too-sudden lurch might re-open the wound that is barely closed."

The young man obeyed and gently walked his horse back to Octave. Thanks to the mobility of the impressions of youth, Vortigern felt appeased and comforted by the words of his grandfather that had made him look forward to a speedy return to his family and country. The soothing thought was so visibly reflected in his candid features that Octave met him with the merry remark:

"What a magician that grandfather of yours must be! You rode off preoccupied and fretful, angrily burying your spurs into the flanks of your horse, who, poor animal, had done nothing to excite your wrath. Now, behold! You return as placid as a bishop astride of his mule."

"The magic of my grandfather has chased away my sadness. You speak truly, Octave."

"So much the better. I shall now be free, without fear of reviving your chagrin, to give a loose to the increasing joy that I feel at every step."

"Why does your joy increase at every step, my dear companion?"

"Because even the dullest horse becomes livelier and more spirited in the measure that he approaches the house where he knows that he will find provender."

"Octave, I did not know you for such a glutton!"

"In that case, my looks are deceptive, because a glutton, that am I—terribly gluttonous of those delicate dainties that are found only at court, and that constitute my provender."

"What!" exclaimed Vortigern ingenuously. "Is that great Emperor, whose name fills the world, surrounded by a court where nothing is thought of but dainties and gluttony?"

"Why, of course," answered Octave gravely and hardly able to refrain from laughing outright at the innocence of the young Breton. "Why, of course. And what is more, more so than any of the counts, of the dukes, of the men of learning, and of the bishops at court, does the Emperor himself lust after the dainties that I have in mind. He always keeps a room contiguous to his own full of them. Because in the stillness of the night—"

"He rises to eat cakes and, perhaps, even sweetmeats!" exclaimed the lad with disdain, while Octave, unable longer to contain himself, was laughing in his face. "I can think of nothing more unbecoming than guzzling on the part of one who governs empires!"

"What's to be done, Vortigern? Great princes must be pardoned for some pecadillos. Moreover, with them it is a family failing—the daughters of the Emperor—"

"His daughters also are given to this ugly passion for gormandizing?"

"Alas! They are no less gluttonous than their father. They have six or seven dainties of their own—most appetizing and most appetized."

"Oh, fie!" cried Vortigern. "Fie. Have they perhaps, also next to their bed-chambers, whole rooms stocked with dainties?"

"Calm your legitimate indignation, my boiling-over friend. Young girls can not allow themselves quite so much comfort. That's good enough for the Emperor Charles, who is no longer nimble on his legs. He is getting along in years. He has the gout in his left foot, and his girth is enormous."

"That is not to be wondered at. Bound is the stomach to protrude with such a gourmand!"

"You will understand that being so heavy on his feet, this mighty Emperor is not able, like his daughters, to snatch at a stray dainty on the wing, like birdies in an orchard, who nibble lovingly here at a red cherry, there at a blushing apple, yonder at a bunch of gilded grapes. No, no; with his august paunch and his gouty foot, the august Charles would be wholly unable to snap the dainties on the wing. The attention due to his empire would lose too much. Hence the Emperor keeps near at hand, within easy reach, a room full of dainties, where, at night, he finds his provender—"

"Octave!" exclaimed Vortigern, interrupting the young Roman with a haughty mien. "I do not wish to be trifled with. At first, I took your words seriously. The laughter that you are hardly able to repress, and that despite yourself breaks out at frequent intervals, shows me that you are trifling with me."

"Come, my brave lad, do not wax angry. I am not bantering. Only that, out of respect for the candor of your age, I have used a figure of speech to tell the truth. In short, the dainty that I, Charles, his daughters, and, by Venus! everybody at court lusts after more or less greedily is—love!"

"Love," echoed Vortigern, blushing and for the first time dropping his eyes before Octave; but as his uneasiness increased, he proceeded to inquire: "But, in order to enjoy love, the daughters of Charles are surely married?"

"Oh, innocence of the Golden Age! Oh, Armorican naïveness! Oh, Gallic chastity!" cried Octave. But noticing that the young Breton frowned at hearing his native land ridiculed, the Roman proceeded: "Far be it from me to jest about your brave country. I shall tell you without further circumlocution—I shall tell you that Charles' daughters are not married; for reasons that he has never cared to explain to anyone, he never has wanted them to have a husband."[A]

"Out of pride, no doubt!"

"Oh, oh, on that subject many things are said. The long and short of it is that he does not wish to part with them. He adores them, and, except he goes to war, he always has them near him during his journeys, along with his concubines—or, if you prefer the term, his 'dainties.' The word may be less shocking to your prudery. You must know that after having successively married and discarded his five wives, Desiderata, Hildegarde, Fustrade, Himiltrude and Luitgarde, the Emperor provided himself with an assortment of dainties, from which assortment I shall mention to you incidentally the juicy Mathalgarde, the sugary Gerswinthe, the tart Regina, the toothsome Adalinde—not to mention many other saints on this calendar of love. For you must know that the great Charles resembles the great Solomon not in wisdom only; he resembles him also in his love for *seraglios*, as the Arabs call them. But, by the way of the Emperor's daughters. Listen to a little tale. Imma, one of these young princesses, was a charming girl. One fine day she became smitten with Charles' archchaplain, named Eginhard. An archchaplain being, of course, arch-amorous, Imma received Eginhard every night secretly in her chamber—to discuss chapel affairs, I

surmise. Now, then, it so happened that during one winter's night there fell so very much snow that the ground was all covered. A little before dawn, Eginhard takes his departure from his lady-love; but just as he is about to climb down from the window—an ordinary route with lovers—he beholds by the light of a superb full moon that the ground is one sheet of white snow. To himself he thinks: 'Imma and I are lost! I cannot get out without leaving the imprint of my steps in the snow'—"

"And what did he do?" asked Vortigern, more and more interested in the story that threw an undefined sense of uneasiness in his heart. "How did the two escape from their perilous plight, the poor lovers!"

"Imma, a robustious doxy, a girl both of head and resolution, descends by the window, bravely takes the archchaplain on her back, and, without tripping under the beloved burden, crosses a wide courtyard that separates her quarters from one of the corridors of the palace. Although weighted down by an archchaplain, Imma had such small feet that the traces left by them could not choose but keep suspicion away from Eginhard. Unfortunately, however, as you will discover when you arrive at Aix-la-Chapelle, the Emperor is possessed of a demon of curiosity, and has had his palace so constructed that, from a kind of terrace, contiguous to his own room and which dominates the rest of the buildings, he is able to discover as from an observatory, all who enter, go out, or cross the open space. Now, then, the Emperor, who frequently rises at night, saw, thanks to the brilliant moonlight, his daughter crossing the yard with the amorous fardel."

"Charles' anger must have been terrible!"

"Yes, terrible for an instant. Soon, however, no doubt greatly elated at having procreated a maid who was able to carry an archchaplain on her back, the august Emperor pardoned the guilty couple. After that they lived lovingly in peace and joy."

"And yet that archchaplain was a priest? What of the sanctity of the clergy!"

"Ho, ho! my young friend. The Emperor's daughters are far from failing in esteem for priests. Bertha, another of his daughters, desperately esteems Enghilbert, the handsome Abbot of St. Riquier. Fairness, nevertheless, compels me to admit that one of Bertha's sisters, named Adeltrude, esteemed with no less vehemence Count Lambert, one of the most intrepid officers of the imperial army. As to little Rothailde, another of the Emperor's daughters, she did not withhold her lively esteem from Romuald, who made his name glorious in our wars against Bohemia. I shall not speak of the other princesses. It is fully six months that I have been away from court. I would be afraid to do them injustice. Nevertheless, I am free to say that the Crosier and the Sword have generally contended with each other for the amorous tenderness of the daughters of Charles. Yet I must except Thetralde, the youngest of the set. She is still too much of a novice to esteem any one. She is barely fifteen. She is a flower, or rather, the bud of a flower that is about to blossom. I never have seen anything more charming. When I last departed from the court Thetralde gave promise of eclipsing all her sisters and nieces with the sweetness and freshness of her beauty, because, and I had forgotten this detail, my dear friend, the daughters of Charles' sons are brought up with his own daughters; and are no less charming than their aunts. You will see them all. Your admiration will have but to choose between Adelaid, Atula, Gonarade, Bertha or Theodora."

"What! Do all these young girls inhabit the Emperor's palace?"

"Certainly, without counting their servants, their governesses, their chambermaids, their readers, their singers and innumerable other women of their retinue. By Venus! My Adonis, there are more petticoats to be seen in the imperial palace than cuirasses or priests' gowns. The Emperor loves as much to be surrounded by women as by soldiers and abbots, without forgetting the learned men, the rhetoricians, the dialecticians, the instructors, the peripatetic pedagogues and the grammarians. The great Charles, as you must know, is as passionately fond of grammar as of love, war, the chase, or choir chants. In his grammarian's ardor, the Emperor invents words —"

"What!"

"Just as I am telling you. For instance: How do you call in the Gallic tongue the month in which we now are?"

"The month of November."

"So do we Italians, barbarians that we are! But the Emperor has changed all that by virtue of his own sovereign and grammatical will. His peoples, provided they can obey him without the words strangling them, are to say, instead of November, 'Herbismanoth'; instead of October, Windumnermanoth.'"

"Octave, you are trying to make merry at my expense."

"Instead of March, 'Lenzhimanoth'; instead of May—"

"Enough! enough! for pity's sake!" cried Vortigern. "Those barbarous names make me shiver. What! can there be throats in existence able to articulate such sounds?"

"My young friend, Frankish throats are capable of everything. I warn you, prepare your ears for the most uncouth concert of raucous, guttural, savage words that you ever heard, unless you

have ever heard frogs croaking, tom-cats squalling, bulls bellowing, asses braying, stags belling and wolves howling—all at once! Excepting the Emperor himself and his family, who can somewhat handle the Roman and the Gallic languages, the only two languages, in short, that are human, you will hear nothing spoken but Frankish at that German court where everything is German, that is to say, barbarous; the language, the customs, the manners, the meals, the dress. In short, Aix-la-Chapelle is no longer in Gaul. It now lies in Germany absolutely."

"And yet Charles reigns over Gaul!—is not that enough of a disgrace for my country? The Emperor who governs us by no right other than conquest, is surrounded with a Frankish court, and with officers and generals of the same stock, who do not deign even to speak our tongue. Shame and disgrace to us!"

"There you are at it again, plunging anew into sadness. Vortigern! By Bacchus! Why do you not imitate my philosophy of indifference? Does, perchance, my race not descend from that haughty Roman stock that made the world to tremble only a few centuries ago? Have I not seen the throne of the Caesars occupied by hypocritical, ambitious, greedy and debauched Popes, with their black-gowned and tonsured militia? Have not the descendants of our haughty Roman Emperors gone in their imbecile idleness to vegetate in Constantinople, where they still indulge the dreams of Universal Empire? Have not the Catholic priests chased from their Olympus the charmful deities of our fathers? Have they not torn down, mutilated and ravished the temples, statues, altars—the master-works of the divine art of Rome and Greece? Go to, Vortigern, and follow my example! Instead of fretting over a ship-wrecked past, let's drink and forget! Let our fair mistresses be our Saints, and their couches our altars! Let our Eucharist be a flower-decked cup, and for liturgy, let's sing the amorous couplets of Tibullus, of Ovid, and of Horace. Yes, indeed, and take my advice: let's drink, love and enjoy life! That's truly to live! You will never again come across such an opportunity. The gods of joy are sending you to the Emperor's court."

"What do you mean?" queried Vortigern almost mechanically, and feeling his inexperienced sense, though not perverted, yet dazzled by the facile and sensuous philosophy of Octave. "What would you have one become in the midst of that court so strange to me, who have been brought up in our rustic Brittany?"

"Child that you are! A swarm of beautiful eyes will be focused upon you!"

"Octave, you are mocking again. Am I to be taken notice of? I, a field laborer's son? I, a poor Breton prisoner on parole?"

"And do you think your reputation for a bedevilled Breton goes for nothing? More than once have I heard told of the furious curiosity with which, about twenty-five years ago, the hostages taken to Aix-la-Chapelle, at the time of the first war against your country, inspired everyone at court. The most charming women wished to behold those indomitable Bretons whom only the great Charles had been able to vanquish. Their haughty and rude mien, the interest centred in their defeat, everything, down to their strange costumes, drew upon them the looks and the sympathy of the women, who, in Germany, are ever strongly prone to love. The fascinating enthusiasts of then are now become mothers and grandfathers. But, happily, they have daughters and grand-daughters who are fully able to appreciate you. I can assure you that I, who know the court and its ways, had I only your youth, your good looks, your wound, your graceful horsemanship and your renown as a Breton, would guarantee myself the lover of all those beauties, and that within a week."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE COURTYARD OF THE PALACE.

The conversation between the young Roman and Vortigern was at this point interrupted by Amael, who, turning back to his grandson and extending his arm towards the horizon said to him:

"Look yonder, my child; that is the Queen of the cities of the Empire of Charles the Great—the city of Aix-la-Chapelle."

Vortigern hastened to join his grandfather, whose eyes he now, perhaps for the first time, sought to avoid with not a little embarrassment. Octave's words sounded wrong on his ears, even dangerous; and he reproached himself for having listened to them with some pleasure. Having reached Amael, Vortigern cast his eyes in the direction pointed out by the old man, and saw at still a great distance an imposing mass of buildings, close to which rose the high steeple of a basilica. Presently, he distinguished the roofs and terraces of a cluster of houses dimly visible through the evening mist and stretching out along the horizon. It was the Emperor's palace and the basilica of Aix-la-Chapelle. Vortigern contemplated with curiosity the, to him, new panorama, while Hildebrad, who had cantered ahead to make some inquiries from a cartman coming from the city, now returned to the Bretons, saying:

"The Emperor is hourly expected at the palace. The forerunners have announced his approach.

He is coming from a journey in the north of Gaul. Let's hasten to ride in ahead of him so that we may salute him on his arrival."

The riders quickened their horses' steps, and before sunset they were entering the outer court of the palace—a vast space surrounded by many lodges of variously shaped roofs and architecture, and furnished with innumerable windows. Agreeable to a unique plan, with many of these structures the ground floor was wholly open and had the appearance of a shed whose massive stone pillars supported the masonry of the upper tiers of floors. A crowd of subaltern officers, of servants, and slaves of the palace, lived and lodged under these sheds, open to the four winds of heaven and heated in winter by means of large furnaces that were kept lighted night and day. This bizarre architecture was conceived by the ingenuity of the Emperor. It enabled him, from his observatory, to see with all the greater ease all that happened in these wall-less apartments. Several long corridors, profusely ornamented with richly sculptured columns and porticos after the fashion of Rome, connected with another set of buildings. A square pavilion, raised considerably above ground, dominated the system of structures. Octave called Vortigern's attention to a sort of balcony located in front of the pavilion. It was the Emperor's observatory. Everywhere a general stir announced the approaching arrival of Charles. Clerks, soldiers, women, officers, rhetoricians, monks and slaves crossed one another in great haste, while several bishops, anxious to present the first homages to the Emperor, were speeding towards the peristyle of the palace. So instantly was the Emperor expected and such was the hurly at the event, that when the cavalcade, of which Vortigern and his grandfather were a part, entered the court, several people, deceived by the martial appearance of the troupe, began to cry: "The Emperor!" "Here is the Emperor's escort!" The cry flew from mouth to mouth, and in an instant the spacious court was filled with a compact mass of servitors and pursuivants, through which the escort of the two Bretons was hardly able to break its way in order to reach a place near the principal portico. Hildebrad had chosen the spot in order to be among the first to meet Charles and to present to him the hostages whom he brought from Brittany. The crowd discovered its mistake in acclaiming the Emperor, but the false rumor had penetrated the palace and immediately the concubines of Charles, his daughters and grand-daughters, their servants and attendants, rushed out and grouped themselves on a spacious terrace above the portico, near which the two Bretons, together with their escort, had taken their stand.

"Raise your eyes, Vortigern," Octave said to his companion. "Look and see what a bevy of beauties the Emperor's palace contains."

Blushing, the young Breton glanced towards the terrace and remained struck with astonishment at the sight of some twenty-five or thirty women, all of whom were either daughters or grand-daughters of Charles, together with his concubines. They were clad in the Frankish fashion, and presented the most seductive variety of faces, color of hair, shapes and beauty imaginable. There were among them brunettes and blondes, women of reddish and of auburn hair, some tall, others stout, and yet others thin and slender. It was a complete display of Germanic feminine types—from the tender maid up to the stately matron of forty years. The eyes of Vortigern fell with preference upon a girl of not more than fifteen, clad in a tunic of pale green embroidered with silver. Nothing sweeter could be imagined than her rosy and fresh face crowned and set off by long and thick strands of blonde hair; her delicate neck, white as a swan's, seemed to undulate under the weight of her magnificent head of hair. Another maid of about twenty years—a pronounced brunette, robust, with challenging eyes, black hair, and clad in a tunic of orange—leaned on the balustrade, supporting her chin in one hand, close to the younger blonde, on whose shoulders she familiarly rested her right arm. Each held in her hand a nose-gay of rosemary, whose fragrance they inhaled from time to time, all the while conversing in a low voice and contemplating the group of riders with increasing curiosity. They had learned that the escort was not the Emperor's, but that it brought the Breton hostages.

"Give thanks to my friendship, Vortigern," Octave whispered to the lad. "I am going to place you in evidence, and to display you at your true worth." Saying this, Octave covertly gave Vortigern's horse such a sharp touch of his whip under the animal's belly that, had the Breton been less of a horseman, he had been thrown by the violence of the bound made by his mount. Thus unexpectedly stung, the animal reared, poised himself dangerously for a moment and then leaped so high that Vortigern's coif grazed the bottom of the terrace where the group of women stood. The blonde young girl grew pale with terror, and hiding her face in her hands, exclaimed: "Unhappy lad! He is killed! Poor young man!"

Yielding to the impulse of his age as well as to a sense of pride at finding himself the object of the attention of the crowd that was gathered around him, Vortigern severely chastised his horse, whose leaps and bounds threatened to become dangerous. But the lad, preserving his presence of mind and drawing upon his skill, displayed so much grace and vigor in the struggle, despite his right arm's being held in the scarf, that the crowd wildly clapped its hands and cried: "Glory to the Breton!" "Honor to the Breton!" Two bouquets of rosemary fell, at that moment, at the feet of the horse that, brought at last under control, champed his bit and pawed the ground with his hoofs. Vortigern raised his head towards the terrace whence the bouquets had just been thrown at him, when a formidable din arose from a distance, followed immediately by the cry, echoed and re-echoed: "The Emperor!" "The Emperor!"

At the announcement, all the women forthwith left the balcony to descend and receive the monarch under the portico of the palace.

While the crowd swayed back and forward, crying: "Long live Charles!" "Long live Charles the

Great!" the grandson of Amael saw a troop of riders approaching at a gallop. They might have been taken for equestrian statues of iron. Mounted upon chargers caparisoned in iron, their own iron casques hid their faces; cuirassed in iron and gloved in iron, they wore leggings of iron, and bucklers of the same metal. The last rays of the westering sun shone from the points of their iron lances. In short, nothing was heard but the clash of iron. At the head of these cavaliers, whom he preceded, and, like them, cased in iron from head to foot, rode a man of colossal stature. Hardly arrived before the principal portico, he alighted slowly from his horse and ran limping towards the group of women who there awaited him, calling out to them, as he ran, in a little shrill and squeaky voice that contrasted strangely with his enormous build:

"Good-day, little ones. Good-day, dear daughters. Good-day to all of you, my darlings." Without giving any heed to the cheers of the crowd and to the respectful salutations of the bishops and other dignitaries, who hurried to meet him, the Emperor Charles, that giant in iron, disappeared within the palace, followed by his feminine cohort.

## CHAPTER III.

### IN THE GALLERIES OF THE PALACE.

Amael and his grandson were lodged in one of the upper chambers of the palace, whither they were conducted by Hildebrad to rest after the fatigue of their recent journey. Supper was served to them and they were left to retire for the night.

At break of day the next morning, Octave knocked at the door of the two Bretons and informed them that the Emperor wished to see them. The Roman urged Vortigern to clothe himself at his best. The Breton lad had not much to choose from. He had with him only two suits of clothes, the one he wore on the journey, another, green of color and embroidered with orange wool. This notwithstanding, thanks to the fresh and new clothes, in which the colors were harmoniously blended and which enhanced the attractiveness of the charming face as well as the gracefulness of his supple stature, Vortigern seemed to the critical eyes of Octave worthy of making an honorable appearance before the mightiest Emperor in the world. The centenarian could not restrain a smile at hearing the praises bestowed upon the figure of his grandson by the young Roman, who advised him to draw tighter the belt of his sword, claiming that, if one's figure is good, it was but right to exhibit it. While giving his advices to Vortigern in his wonted good humor, Octave whispered in his friend's ear:

"Did you notice yesterday the nose-gays that fell at the feet of your horse? Did you notice who the girls were from whom the bouquets came?"

"I think I did," stammered the young Breton in answer, and he blushed to the roots of his hair, while despite himself, his thoughts flew to the charming young blonde. "It seems to me," he added, "that I saw the two bouquets fall."

"Oh, it seems to you, hypocrite! Nevertheless, it was my whip that brought down the two bouquets! And do you know what imperial hands it was that threw them down in homage to your address and courage?"

"Were the bouquets thrown down by imperial hands?"

"Yes, indeed, seeing that Thetralde, the timid blonde child and Hildrude, the tall and bold brunette, are both daughters of Charles. One of them was dressed in a green robe of the color of your blouse, the other in orange of the color of your embroidery. By Venus! Are you not a favored mortal? Two conquests at one clap!"

Engaged at the other end of the chamber, Amael did not overhear the words of Octave that were turning Vortigern's face as scarlet as the color of his chaperon's cloak. The preparations for the presentation being concluded, the two hostages followed their guide to appear before the Emperor. After crossing an infinite number of passages and mounting and descending an equal number of stairs, in all of which they encountered more women than men, the number of women lodged in the Imperial Palace being prodigious, the Bretons were led through vast halls. To describe the sumptuous magnificence of these galleries would be no less impossible than to enumerate the pictures with which their halls were ornamented. Artisans, brought from Constantinople, where, at the time, the school of Byzantine painting flourished, had covered the walls with gigantic designs. In one place the conquests of Cyrus over the Persians were displayed; at another, the atrocities of the tyrant Phalaris, witnessing the agonies of his victims, who were led to be burned alive in a brass caldron red with heat; at still another place, the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus was reproduced; the conquests of Alexander and Hannibal, and many other heroic subjects. One of the galleries of the palace was consecrated wholly to the battles of Charles Martel. He was seen triumphing over Saxons and Arabs, who, chained at his feet, implored his clemency. So striking was the resemblance that while crossing the hall Amael cried out:

"It is he! Those are his features! That was his bearing! He lives again! It is Charles!"

"One would think you recognize an old acquaintance," observed the young Roman, smiling. "Are you renewing your acquaintance with Charles Martel?"

"Octave," answered the old man melancholically, "I am one hundred years old—I fought at the battle of Poitiers against the Arabs."

"Among the troops of Charles Martel?"

"I saved his life," answered Amael, contemplating the gigantic picture; and speaking to himself, he proceeded with a sigh: "Oh, how many recollections, sweet and sad, do not those days bring back to me! My beloved mother, my sweet Septimine!"

Octave regarded the old man with increasing astonishment, but, suddenly collecting himself, he grew pensive and hastened his steps, followed by the two hostages. Dazzled by the sights before him Vortigern examined with the curiosity of his age the riches of all kinds that were heaped up all around him. He could not refrain from stopping before two objects that attracted his attention above all others. The first was a piece of furniture of precious wood enriched with gilt mouldings. Pipes of copper, brass and tin, of different thicknesses rose above each other in tiers on one side of the wooden structure. "Octave," asked the young Breton, "what kind of furniture is this?"

"It is a Greek organ that was recently sent to Charles by the Emperor of Constantinople. The instrument is truly marvelous. With the aid of brass vessels and of bellows made of ox-hides, which are concealed from view, the air enters these tubes, and, when they are played upon, one time you think you hear the rumbling of thunder, another time, the gentle notes of the lyre or of cymbals. But look yonder, near that large table of massive gold where the city of Constantinople is drawn in relief, there you see no less ingenious an object. It is a Persian clock, sent to the Emperor only four years ago by Abdhallah, the King of Persia." Saying this, Octave pointed out to the young Breton and his grandfather, who became no less interested than Vortigern himself, a large time-piece of gilt bronze. Figures denoting the twelve hours surrounded the dial, which was placed in the centre of a miniature palace made of bronze, and likewise gilt. Twelve gates built in arcades were seen at the foot of the monumental imitation. "When the hour strikes," Octave explained to the Bretons, "a certain number of brass balls, equal in number to the hour, drop upon a little cymbal. At the same moment, these gates fly open, as many of them as the corresponding hour, and out of each a cavalier, armed with lance and shield, rides forth. If it strikes one, two or three o'clock, one, two or three gates open, the cavaliers ride out, salute with their lances, return within, and the gates close upon them."

"This is truly a marvelous contrivance!" exclaimed Amael. "And are the names of the men known who fashioned these prodigies around us, these magnificent paintings, that gold table where a whole city is reproduced in relief, this organ, this clock, in short, all these marvels! Surely their authors must have been glorified!"

"By Bacchus, Amael, your question is droll," answered Octave smiling. "Who cares for the names of the obscure slaves who have produced these articles?"

"But the names of Clovis, of Brunhild, of Clotaire, of Charles Martel will survive the ages!" murmured the centenarian bitterly to himself, while the young Roman remarked to Vortigern:

"Let us hurry; the Emperor is waiting for us. It will take whole days, months and years to admire in detail the treasures that this palace is full of. It is the favorite resort of the Emperor. And yet, as much as his residence at Aix-la-Chapelle, he loves his old castle of Heristal, the cradle of his mighty stock of mayors of the palace, where he has heaped miracles of art."

## CHAPTER IV.

### CHARLEMAGNE.

Following their guide, the two hostages left the sumptuous and vast galleries, and ascended, closely behind Octave, a spiral staircase that led to the private apartment of the Emperor, the apartment around which wound the balcony that served as observatory to Charles. Two richly dressed chamberlains stood in the outer vestibule. "Stay for me here," Octave said to the Bretons; "I shall notify the Emperor that you await his pleasure, and learn whether he wishes to receive you at this moment."

Despite his race and family hatred for the Frankish Kings or Emperors, the conquerors and oppressors of Gaul, Vortigern experienced a thrill of emotion at the thought of finding himself face to face with the mighty Charles, the sovereign of almost all Europe. This first emotion was speedily joined by a second—that mighty Emperor was the father of Thetralde, the entrancing maid, who, the evening before, had thrown her bouquet to the youth. Vortigern's thoughts never a moment fell upon the brunette Hildrude. An instant later Octave reappeared and beckoned to Amael and his grandson to step in, while in an undertone he warned them: "Crook your knees low

before the Emperor; it is the custom."

The centenarian cast a look at Vortigern with a negative sign of the head. The youth understood, and the Bretons stepped into the bed-chamber of Charles, whom they found in the company of his favorite Eginhard, the archchaplain whom Imma had one night bravely carried on her back. A servitor of the imperial chamber awaited the orders of his master.

When the two hostages entered the room, the monarch, whose stature, though now unarmed, preserved its colossal dimensions, was seated on the edge of his couch clad only in a shirt and hose that set off the pre-eminence of his paunch. He had just put on one shoe and held the other in his hand. His hair was almost white, his eyes were large and sparkling, his nose was long, his neck short and thick like a bull's. His physiognomy, of an open cast and instinct with joviality, recalled the features of his grandfather, Charles Martel. At the sight of the two Bretons the Emperor rose from the edge of the couch, and keeping his one shoe in his hand, took two steps forward, limping on his left foot. As he thus approached Amael he seemed a prey to a concealed emotion somewhat mingled with a lively curiosity.

"Old man!" cried out Charles in his shrill voice that contrasted so singularly with his giant stature, "Octave tells me you fought under Charles Martel, my grandfather, nearly eighty years ago, and that you saved his life at the battle of Poitiers."

"It is true," and carrying his hand to his forehead where the traces of a deep wound were still visible, the aged Breton added: "I received this wound at the battle of Poitiers."

The Emperor sat down again on the edge of his bed, put on the other shoe and said to his archchaplain: "Eginhard, you who compiled in your chronicle the history and acts of my grandfather, you whose memory is ever faithful, do you remember ever to have heard told what the old man says?"

Eginhard remained thoughtful for a moment, and then answered slowly: "I remember to have read in some parchment scrolls, inscribed by the hand of the glorious Charles and now preserved in your august archives, that, indeed, at the battle of Poitiers"—but interrupting himself and turning to the centenarian he asked: "Your name? How are you called?"

"Amael is my name."

The archchaplain reflected for a moment, and shaking his head observed: "While I can not now recall it, that was not the name of the warrior who saved the life of Charles Martel at the battle of Poitiers—it was a Frankish name, it is not the name which you mentioned."

"That name," rejoined the aged Amael, "was Berthoald."

"Yes!" put in Eginhard quickly. "That is the name—Berthoald. And in a few lines written in his own hand, the glorious Charles Martel commended the said Berthoald to his children; he wrote that he owed him his life and recommended him to their gratitude if he ever should turn to them."

During the exchange of these words between the aged Breton and the archchaplain, the Emperor had continued and finished his toilet with the aid of his servitor of the chamber. His costume, the old Frankish costume to which Charles remained faithful, consisted in the first place of a pair of leggings made of thick linen material closely fastened to the nether limbs by means of red wool bandelets that wound criss-cross from below upwards; next of a tunic of Frisian cloth, sapphire-blue, and held together by a silk belt. In the winter and the fall of the year the Emperor also wore over his shoulders a heavy and large otter or lamb-skin coat. Thus clad, Charles sat down in a large armchair placed near a curtain that was meant to conceal one of the doors that opened upon the balcony which served him for observatory. At a sign from Charles the servitor stepped out of the chamber. Left alone with Eginhard, Vortigern, Amael and Octave, Charles said to the elder Breton: "Old man, if I understood my chaplain correctly, a Frank named Berthoald saved my grandfather's life. How does it happen that the said Berthoald and you are the same personage?"

"When fifteen years of age, driven by the spirit of adventure, I ran away from my family of the Gallic race, and then located in Burgundy. After many untoward events, I joined a band of determined men. I then was twenty years of age. I took a Frankish name and claimed to be of that race in order to secure the protection of Charles Martel.[B] To the end of interesting him all the more in my lot I offered him my own sword and the swords of all my men, just a few days before the battle of Poitiers. At that battle I saved his life. After that, loaded with his favors, I fought under his orders five years longer."

"And what happened then?"

"Then—ashamed of my imposition, and still more ashamed of fighting on the side of the Franks, I left Charles Martel to return into Brittany, the cradle of my family. There I became a field laborer."

"By the cape of St. Martin, you then turned rebel!" exclaimed the Emperor in his squeaky voice, which then assumed the tone of a penetrating treble. "I now see the wisdom of those who chose you for an hostage, you, the instigator and the soul of the uprisings and even wars that broke out in Brittany during the reign of Pepin, my father, and even under my own reign, when your devil-possessed countrymen decimated my veteran bands!"

"I fought as well as I could in our wars."

"Traitor! Loaded with favors by my grandfather, yet were you not afraid to rise in arms against his son and me?"

"I felt remorse for only one thing—and that was to have merited the favor of your grandfather. I shall ever reproach myself for having fought on his side instead of against him."

"Old man," cried the Emperor, purple with rage, "you have even more audacity than years!"

"Charles—let us stop here. You look upon yourself as the sovereign of Gaul. We Bretons do not recognize your claims. These claims you hold, like all other conquerors, from force. To you might means right—"

"I hold them from God!" again cried the Emperor, this time stamping the floor with his foot and breaking in upon Amael. "Yes! I hold my rights over Gaul from God, and from my good sword."

"From your sword, from violence, yes, indeed. From God, not at all. God does not consecrate theft, whether a purse or an empire be involved. Clovis captured Gaul. Your father and grandfather plundered of his crown the last scion of that Clovis. Little does that matter to us, Bretons, who refuse to obey either the stock of Clovis or that of Charles Martel. You dispose over an innumerable army; already have you ravished and vanquished Brittany. You may ravage and vanquish her over again—but subjugate her, never. And now, Charles, I have spoken. You shall hear not another word from me on that subject. I am your prisoner, your hostage. Dispose of me."

The Emperor, who more than once was on the point of allowing his indignation to break loose, turned to Eginhard and, after a moment of silence, said to him in a calm voice: "You, who are engaged in writing the history and deeds of Charles, the august Emperor of Gaul, Caesar of Germany, Patrician of Rome, Protector of the Suevians, the Bulgarians and the Hungarians, I command you to write down that an old man held to Charles a language of unheard-of audacity, and that Charles could not prevent himself from esteeming the frankness and the courage of the man who had thus spoken to him." And suddenly changing his tone, the Emperor, whose features, for a moment stern in anger, now assumed an expression of joviality shaded with shrewdness, said to Amael: "So, then, Breton seigneurs of Armorica, whatever I may do, you want none of me at any price for your Emperor. Do you so much as know me?"

"Charles, we know you in Brittany by the unjust wars that your father and yourself have waged against us."

"So that, to you, gentlemen of Armorica, Charles is only a man of conquest, of violence, and of battle?"

"Yes, you reign only through terror."

"Well, then, follow me. I may perhaps cause you to change your mind," said the Emperor after a moment's reflection. He rose, took his cane and put on his cap. His eyes then fell upon Vortigern, whom, standing silently at a distance, he had not noticed before. "Who is that young and handsome lad?" he asked.

"My grandson."

"Octave," the Emperor remarked, turning to the young Roman, "this is rather a young hostage."

"August Prince, this lad was chosen for several reasons. His sister married Morvan, a common field laborer, but one of the most intrepid of the Breton chieftains. During this last war he commanded the cavalry."

"And why, then, was not that Morvan brought here? That would have been an excellent hostage."

"August Prince, in order to bring him we would have first had to catch him. Although severely wounded, Morvan, thanks to his heroine of a wife, succeeded in making his escape with her. It has been impossible to reach them in the inaccessible mountains whither they both fled. For that reason two other chiefs and influential men of the tribe were chosen for hostages; we left them on the road on account of their wounds, and proceeded only with this old man, who was the soul of the last wars, and also this youth, who, through his family connections, is related to one of the most dangerous chieftains of Armorica. I must admit that in taking him, we yielded also to the prayers of his mother. She was very anxious that he should accompany his grandfather on this long journey, which is very trying to a centenarian."

"And you," resumed the Emperor, addressing Vortigern, whom, during the account given by Octave, he had been examining with attention and interest, "no doubt also hate inveterately that Charles, the conqueror and devastator?"

"The Emperor Charles has white hair; I am only eighteen years old," retorted the young Breton, blushing. "I can not answer."

"Old man," observed Charles, visibly affected by the lad's self-respecting yet becoming modesty, "the mother of your grandson must be a happy woman. But coming to think of it, my lad, was it not you who yesterday evening, shortly before my arrival, came near breaking your neck with a fall from your horse?"

"I!" cried Vortigern, blushing with pride; "I, fall from my horse! Who dared to say so!"

"Oh! Oh! my lad. You are red up to your ears," the Emperor exclaimed, laughing aloud. "But, never mind. Be tranquil. I do not mean to wound your pride of horsemanship. Far from it. Before I saw you to-day my ears have rung with the interminable praises of your gracefulness and daring on horseback. My dear daughters, especially little Thetralde and the tall Hildrude, told me at least ten times at supper that they had seen a savage young Breton, although wounded in one arm, manage his horse like the most skilful of my equerries."

"If I deserve any praise, it must be addressed to my grandfather," modestly answered Vortigern. "It was he who taught me to ride on horseback."

"I like that answer, my lad. It shows your modesty and a proper respect for your elders. Are you lettered? Can you read and write?"

"Yes, thanks to the instruction of my mother."

"Can you sing mass in the choir?"

"I!" cried Vortigern in great astonishment. "I sing mass! No, no, by Hesus! We do not sing mass in my country."

"There they are, the Breton pagans!" exclaimed Charles. "Oh, my bishops are right, they are a devil-possessed people, those folks of Armorica. What a pity that so handsome and so modest a lad should not be able to sing mass in the choir." Saying this, the Emperor pulled his thick cap close over his head and leaning heavily on his cane, said to the aged Breton: "Come, follow me, seigneur Breton. Ah, you only know of Charles the Fighter; I shall now make you acquainted with another Charles whom you do not yet know. Come, follow me." Limping, and leaning on his cane, the Emperor moved towards the door, making a sign to the others to follow; but stopping short at the threshold, he turned to Octave: "You, go to Hugh, my Master of the Hounds, and notify him that I shall hunt deer in the forest of Oppenheim. Let him send there the hounds, horses and all other equipments of the chase."

"August Prince, your orders will be executed."

"You will also say to the Grand Nomenclator of my table that I may take dinner in the pavilion of the forest, especially if the hunt lasts long. My suite will dine there also. Let the repast be sumptuous. You will tell the Nomenclator that my taste has not changed. A good large joint of roast venison, served piping hot, is now, as ever, my favorite treat."

The young Roman again bowed low; Charles stepped out first from the chamber. He was followed by Eginhard, then by Amael. As Vortigern was about to follow his grandfather, he was retained for an instant by Octave, who, approaching his mouth to the lad's ear, whispered to him:

"I shall carry to the apartments of the Emperor's daughters the news that he intends to hunt to-day. By Venus! The mother of love has you under her protecting wings, my young Breton."

The lad blushed anew, and was about to answer the Roman when he heard Amael's voice calling out to him: "Come, my child, the Emperor wishes to lean on your arm in order to descend the stairs and walk through the palace."

More and more disturbed in mind, Vortigern stepped towards Charles as the latter was saying to the chamberlains: "No, nobody is to accompany me except the two Bretons and Eginhard;" and nodding to the lad he proceeded: "Your arm will be a better support to me than my cane; these stairs are steep; step carefully."

Supported by Vortigern's arm the Emperor slowly descended the steps of a staircase that ran out at one of the porticos of an interior courtyard. When the bottom was reached Charles dropped the young man's arm, and resuming his cane, said: "You stepped cleverly; you are a good guide. What a pity that you do not know how to sing mass in the choir!" While thus chattering, Charles followed a gallery that ran along the courtyard. The men who accompanied him marched a few steps behind. Presently the Emperor noticed a slave crossing the courtyard with a large hamper on his shoulders. "Halloa! You, there, with the basket!" the Emperor called out in his piercing voice. "You, there, with the basket! Come here! What have you in that basket?"

"Eggs, seigneur."

"Where are you taking them to?"

"To the kitchen of the august Emperor."

"Where do those eggs come from?"

"From the Muhlsheim farm, seigneur."

"From the Muhlsheim farm?" the Emperor repeated thoughtfully, and almost immediately added: "There must be three hundred and twenty-five eggs in that basket. Are there not?"

"Yes, seigneur; that's the exact rent brought in every month from the farm."

"You can go—and be careful you do not break the eggs." The Emperor stopped for a moment, leaned heavily upon his cane, and turning to Amael, called out to him: "Halloa, seigneur Breton, come here, draw near me." Amael obeyed, and the Emperor resuming his walk proceeded to say:

"Charles the Fighter, the conqueror, is at least a good husbander—does it not strike you that way? He knows to an egg how many are laid by the hens on his farms. If you ever return to Brittany, you must not fail to narrate the incident to the housekeepers of your country."

"If I ever again see my country, I shall tell the truth of what I have seen."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PALATINE SCHOOL.

Thus chatting, the Emperor Charles the Great arrived before a door that opened on the gallery. He knocked with his cane, and a clerk dressed in black opened. Struck with surprise, the clerk bent the knee and cried: "The Emperor!" And as he seemed to be about to rush to the door of a contiguous hall, the Emperor ordered him to stop:

"Do not budge! Master Clement is giving his lessons, is he?"

"Yes, my august Prince!"

"Remain where you are," and addressing Amael: "Seigneur Breton, you shall now visit a school that I have founded. It is under the direction of Master Clement, a famous teacher, whom I have summoned from Scotland. The sons of the principal seigneurs of my court come here, in obedience to my orders, to study at this school, together with the poorest of my attendants."

"This is well done, Charles—I congratulate you on that!"

"And yet it is Charles the Fighter that has done this good thing—let us go in;" and turning to Vortigern: "Well, my young man, you who cannot sing mass, open your eyes and ears at their widest; you are about to see pupils of your own age, and of all conditions."

The Palatine school, directed by the Scotchman Clement, into whose precincts the two Bretons followed the Emperor, held about two hundred pupils. All rose at their benches at the sight of Charles, but he motioned to them to resume their seats, saying:

"Be seated, my boys; I prefer to see you with your noses in your books, than in air, under the pretext of respect for me." And seeing that Master Clement, the director of the school, was himself about to descend from his high desk, Charles cried out to him: "Remain on your throne of knowledge, my worthy master; here I am only one of your subjects. I only wanted to cast a glance over the work of these boys, and to learn from you whether they have made any progress during my absence. Let the boys come forward, one by one, with the copy-books in which to-day's work is being done."

The Emperor prided himself not a little on his literacy. He sat down on a stool near the chair of Master Clement, and carefully examined the copy-books brought to him. It appeared that the pupils who were the sons of noble or rich parents, exhibited to the Emperor mediocre, or even poor work, while, on the other hand, the poorer pupils, or those whose parents were of lower rank, exhibited such excellent work that Charles, turning to Amael, said: "If you were as proficient in letters as myself, seigneur Breton, you would be able to appreciate, as I do, these manuscripts that I have just been looking over. The sweetest flavor of science is exhaled by these writings." Thereupon addressing the scholars who had distinguished themselves, the Emperor said impressively: "I give you great praise, my children, for the zeal you display in carrying out my wishes; strive after perfection, and I shall endow you with rich bishoprics and magnificent abbeys." The Emperor stopped and turned towards the lazy noblemen's sons and the sons of the idle rich; his brow puckered, and casting upon them an angry look, he cried out: "As to you, the sons of my Empire's principal men, as to you, dainty and prim lads, who, resting upon your birth and fortune, have neglected my orders and your studies, preferring play and idleness—as to you," the Emperor proceeded in a voice of ever heightening anger, and smiting the table with his cane, "as to you, look for admiration from other quarters than mine. I care nothing for your birth and your fortune! Listen to my words and keep them firm in your minds: if you do not hasten to make amends for your negligence by constant application, you will never receive aught from me!"

The rich idlers dropped their eyes all of a tremble. The Emperor rose and said to a young clerk, named Bernard, barely twenty years of age, the excellence of whose work had attracted Charles' attention: "And you, my lad, you may now follow me. I appoint you from to-day a clerk in my chapel, nor will the evidence of my protection end there."

The Emperor looked satisfied with himself. With a complaisant air he turned to Amael: "Well now, seigneur Breton, you have seen Charles the Fighter, emulating in his humble capacity of man, the acts of our Lord God when on earth. He separates the wheat from the chaff, he places the just at his right, the wicked at his left. If you ever return to Brittany, you will tell the school-masters of your country that Charles is not altogether a bad superintendent of the schools that he has founded."

"I shall say, Charles, that I saw you officiating in the midst of the pupils with wisdom, justice, and kindness."

"I wish letters and science to shed splendor upon my reign. Were you less of a barbarian, I would have you assist at a sitting of our academy. We there assume the illustrious names of antiquity. Eginhard is called 'Homer,' Clement 'Horace,' and I 'King David.' These immortal names fit us as giants' armors do pigmies. But, at least, we do honor, at our best, to those geniuses. Now, however," said the Emperor, rising and breaking off the thread of his discourse on his academy, "let us, like good Catholics, proceed to church, and hear mass upon our knees."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BISHOP OF LIMBURG.

Preceding his suite, that consisted of Eginhard, Amael, Vortigern and the newly-created clerk Bernard, the Emperor left the school-room and hobbled his way along a winding gallery. Encountering at one of the sharp and rather dark turns a young and handsome female slave, Charles addressed her with the same familiarity that he ever used towards the innumerable women of all conditions that stocked the palace. The Emperor chucked her under the chin, put his arm around her waist, and was about to carry his libertine freedom even further when, recollecting that, despite the darkness of the spot, he might be seen by the men in his suite, he motioned to the female slave that she withdraw, and laughing, observed to Amael: "Charles likes to show himself accessible to his subjects."

"And above all to the female ones," retorted the aged Breton. "But I know that the priest's holy-water sprinkler will readily absolve you of all your sins."

"Oh, the pagan of a Breton; the pagan of a Breton!" murmured the Emperor as he hobbled along and presently entered the basilica of Aix-la-Chapelle, contiguous to the palace.

Vortigern and his grandfather were both dazzled by the indescribable magnificence of the temple, where all the attendants at the imperial palace were now gathered. At a distance Vortigern discerned, seated near the choir and among the numerous concubines of Charles, the Emperor's daughters and grand-daughters, clad in brilliant apparel, with the blonde and charming Thetralde close to her sister Hildrude. The Emperor took his accustomed seat at the chanter's desk among the sumptuously dressed choristers. One of these respectfully offered the Emperor an ebony baton, with which he beat time and gave the signal for the several chants in the liturgy. A little before the end of each stanza Charles, by way of signal, would raise his shrill voice and emit a gutteral cry, so strange and weird, that, on one of these occasions, Vortigern, whose eyes had accidentally encountered the large blue eyes of Thetralde obstinately fixed upon him, could hardly keep from laughing outright. So ridiculous was the figure cut by the Emperor, that despite the imposing appearance of the ceremony and despite the embarrassment into which the glances of Thetralde threw him, the youth's sense of decorum was severely taxed.

The mass being over, Charles said to Amael: "Well, now, seigneur Breton, admit that, at a pinch, however much of a fighter I may be, I would make a passable clerk and a good chaunter."

"I am not skilled in such matters. Yet I am free to tell you that, as a singer, the cries you uttered were frequently more discordant than those of the sea-gulls along our Brittany beach. Moreover, to me it looks as if the head of an Empire should have better things to do than to sing mass."

"You will ever remain a barbarian and an idolater," cried the Emperor, stepping out of the basilica. At that moment, and still under the portico of the monumental building, a dignitary of the court pushed himself forward and bowing low, said to Charles:

"August Prince, magnanimous Emperor, tidings have just been received of the death of the Bishop of Limburg."

"Oh! Oh! Only now? That surprises me greatly. People are so hot after the quarry of bishoprics that the death of a bishop is always announced two or three days in advance. Did the deceased bishop die in the odor of sanctity? Did he commend himself to the next world by the founding of pious establishments, or by rich bequests to the poor?"

"August Prince, it is said that he bequeathed only two pounds of silver to the poor."

"How light a viaticum for so long a journey!" exclaimed a voice. It proceeded from Bernard, the poor and learned pupil whom Charles had just appointed clerk of his own chapel, and who, agreeable to the orders of the Emperor, had kept close to his master since they left the Palatine school.

Charles turned abruptly towards the young man, who, crimson with confusion, already regretted the boldness of his language and was trembling at every limb. "Follow me!" said

Charles with severity; and observing that other dignitaries of the court took the call as if addressed to themselves, he added: "No, only the two Bretons, Eginhard and the young clerk. The rest of you may keep yourselves in readiness for the hunt that we shall start upon in a few minutes."

The brilliant crowd kept itself aloof, and the Emperor regained the gallery of the palace accompanied only by Vortigern, Amael, Eginhard and the poor Bernard, the last more dead than alive. The clerk walked last, fearing that he had angered the Emperor by his stinging sally on the niggardliness of the deceased bishop. The surprise of the young clerk was, accordingly, great when, arrived at the extremity of the gallery, Charles half turned to him, and with beaming eyes, said:

"Draw near, draw near! Do you really think the Bishop of Limburg left too little money for the poor?"

"Seigneur, pardon my inadvertent boldness!"

"Answer. If I bestow that bishopric upon you, would you, the day you appear before God, have a better record for liberality than the Bishop of Limburg?"

"August Prince," answered the clerk, his head swimming at the thought of such unheard-of good fortune, and dropping on his knees: "It rests with God and your will to decide my fate."

"Arise. I appoint you Bishop of Limburg. But follow me. It will be well for you to learn, from personal observation, the greed with which bishoprics are striven for. The riches that they entail may be judged from the ardor with which their possession is pursued. And yet, once won, the cupidity of the incumbents, so far from being assuaged, seems whetted. Do you remember, Eginhard, that insolent Bishop of Mannheim? When, at the time of one of my campaigns against the Huns, I left him near my wife Hildegarde, did not the worthy feel so inflated with the friendship that my wife showed him, that he carried his audacity to the point of demanding from her as a gift the gold wand that I use as a symbol of my authority, for the purpose, as that impudent bishop declared, of using it for a cane? By the King of the Heavens! The sceptre of Charles, of the Emperor, is not so readily to be converted into a walking stick for the bishops of his empire!"

"You are in error, Charles," put in Amael. "Sooner or later, the bishops will use your sceptre for a baton by means of which to drive peoples and kings as may suit themselves."

"By the hammer of my grandfather! I will break the bishops' mitres on their own heads if ever they dare to usurp my power!"

"No; you will do no such thing, and for the simple reason that you stand in fear of them. As a proof, behold the vast estates and the flatteries that you shower upon them."

"I, fear the bishops!" cried the Emperor; and turning to Eginhard: "Is that matter of the rat settled with the Jew?"

"Yes, seigneur," answered Eginhard, smiling. "The bishop closed the bargain yesterday."

"That happens in time to prove to you that I am not afraid of the bishops, seigneur Breton—I, flatter them? When, on the contrary, I miss no opportunity to give them severe or gentle lessons wherever they deserve reproof. As to the worthy ones, I enrich them; and even then I look twice before bestowing upon them lands and abbeys belonging to the imperial domains. And the reason is plain. With this or that abbey or farm I am certain of securing to myself some soldier vassal greatly more faithful than many a count or bishop."

Thus pleasantly chatting, the Emperor regained his palace, and in the company of Vortigern, Amael, Eginhard and the freshly appointed Bishop of Limburg, re-ascended the steep spiral staircase that led to his private apartment. Hardly had Charles entered his observatory when one of his chamberlains announced to him:

"August Emperor, several of the leading officers in the palace have solicited the honor of being admitted to your presence in order to lay a pressing request before you—the noble lady, Mathalgarde (she was one of the numerous concubines of Charles) also called twice on the same errand. She awaits your orders."

"Let the petitioners come in," answered Charles to the chamberlain, who immediately left the room. Addressing the young clerk, now bishop, with a jovial yet impressive air, Charles pointed to the curtain of the door, near which his usual seat was located, and said: "Hide yourself behind that curtain, young man; you are about to learn the number of rivals that the death of a bishop raises. It will aid your education."

The young clerk had barely vanished behind the curtain, before the chamber was invaded by a large number of the palace familiars, officers and seigneurs at court. Urging their own claims, or the claims of the clients whom they recommended, the mob deafened the Emperor's ears with their clamor. Among these was a bishop magnificently robed, and of haughty, imperious mien. He elbowed himself forward into Charles' presence as fast as he could.

"This is the bishop of the rat," Eginhard whispered to the Emperor. "The price he paid the Jew was ten thousand silver sous. The Jew scrupulously reported the amount to me, as you ordered."

"Bishop of Bergues, have you not enough with one bishopric?" Charles cried out to the haughty prelate. "Do you come to solicit a second?"

"August Prince—I have come to pray you that you grant me the bishopric of Limburg, just vacant, in exchange for that of Bergues."

"Because the former is richer?"

"Yes, seigneur; and if I obtain it, the share of the poor will only be all the larger."

"Now, all of you, listen to me attentively," the Emperor cried, pointing his finger at the bishop and in a tone of severity: "Knowing the passionate love of this prelate for frivolous and ruinous curiosities, which he purchases at prodigious prices, I ordered the Jew Solomon to catch a rat in his house, the vilest looking rat ever caught in a rat-trap, to embalm the beast in precious aromatics, to wrap it up in oriental materials embroidered in gold, to offer it to the Bishop of Bergues as a most rare rat imported from Judea upon a Venetian vessel, and to sell it to the prelate as the most prodigious and miraculous of rats."

A loud outburst of laughter broke from the throats of all the dignitaries in the audience, except the Bishop of Bergues, who shamefacedly cast down his eyes. "Now, then," proceeded Charles, "do you know what price the Bishop of Bergues paid for that prodigious rat? *Ten thousand silver sous!* The Jew reported to me the amount—which will be distributed among the poor!" Charles stopped for a moment, and presently resumed with heightened severity: "Ye bishops, have a care! It should be your duty to be the fathers, the purveyors of the poor, and not to show yourselves greedy of vain frivolities. Yet here you are, doing exactly the opposite. More than all other mortals are you given to avarice and idle cupidity! By the King of the Heavens, take a care! The Emperor's hand raised you, it may also pull you down. Keep that in mind."

As Charles was uttering these last words, the courtiers were seen to part and make way for Mathalgarde, one of the Emperor's concubines. The woman, a dame of surpassing beauty, approached Charles with a confident air and said to him gracefully:

"My kind Seigneur, the bishopric of Limburg is vacant. I have promised it to a clerk who is under my protection, not doubting your kind approval."

"Dear Mathalgarde, I have bestowed the bishopric upon a young man—a very learned and deserving young man; I could not think of taking it back from him."

Mathalgarde was not disconcerted. Assuming the most insinuating voice at her command, she seized one of the Emperor's hands and proceeded tenderly: "August Prince, my gracious master, why bestow the bishopric so ill by giving it to a young man, perhaps a child. I conjure you, grant the bishopric to my clerk."

Suddenly a plaintive voice that proceeded from behind the curtain fell upon the startled ears of the attendants: "Seigneur Emperor, be firm—allow not that a mortal tear from your hands the power that God has placed in them. Be firm, Seigneur." It was the voice of poor Bernard, who, fearing Charles was about to allow himself to be seduced by the caressing words of Mathalgarde, wished to remind him of his promise. The Emperor immediately rolled back the curtain, behind which the clerk stood, took him by the hand, drew him forward, and presenting him to the audience, said: "This is the new Bishop of Limburg!" Before the audience could recover from their stupor Charles said to Bernard in a voice loud and piercing enough to be heard by all present: "Do not forget to distribute abundant alms—it will some day be your viaticum on that long journey from which man never returns."

The beautiful Mathalgarde, whose hopes had thus been rudely dashed, reddened with anger and abruptly left the apartment. The other courtiers, along with the Bishop of Bergues, speedily followed the chagrined woman, no less disappointed than herself.

"Seigneur Breton," the Emperor said, as soon as the chamber was cleared, and motioning Amael to approach the door, which he opened wider to step out upon the balcony and enjoy the pleasant warmth of the autumn sun, "do you still think Charles is of a mood to allow the bishops to use his sceptre for a baton with which to drive him and his people?"

"Charles, should it please you this evening, the experiences of the day being over, to accord me a short interview, I shall then express to you sincerely my thoughts upon all that I have seen here. I shall praise what seems good to me—and I shall censure the evil."

"Then you see evil here!"

"Here—and elsewhere."

"How 'elsewhere'?"

"Do you imagine that your palace and your city of Aix-la-Chapelle, this favorite residence of yours, is all there is of Gaul?"

"What do you say of Gaul! I have just traversed the North of those regions. I have been as far as Boulogne, where I had a lighthouse erected for the protection of the ships. Moreover—" but breaking off, the Emperor pointed in the direction of that portion of the courtyard that the balcony commanded, saying: "Look yonder—listen!"

Amael saw near one of the galleries a young man, robust and tall of stature, wearing a thick

black beard, and clad in the robes of a bishop. Two of his slaves had just brought out to him a gentle horse, as befits a prelate, and led the animal near a stone bench in order to aid their master in mounting. But the young bishop, having noticed two women looking at him from a nearby casement, and no doubt wishing to give them a proof of his agility, impatiently ordered his attendants to take the horse from the bench. Thereupon, disdaining even the help of a stirrup, he seized the animal's mane with one hand and gave so vigorous a jump that he had great difficulty to keep his saddle, lest he fall over on the other side. The perilous leap attracted the Emperor's attention to the prelate, and he called out to him in his shrill, squeaky voice: "Eh! Eh! You, there, my nimble prelate. One word with you, if you please!" The young man looked up, and recognizing Charles, respectfully bowed his head.

"You are quick and agile; you have good feet, good arms and a good eye. The quiet of our empire is every day disturbed by wars. We stand in great need of 'clerks' of your kidney. You shall stay with us and share with us our fatigues, seeing you can mount a horse so nimbly. I shall bestow your bishopric upon someone who is less sprightly. You shall take your place among my men-at-arms."

The young bishop lowered his head in confusion. He looked at the Emperor with a suppliant eye. But the latter's attention was speedily drawn from the discomfited prelate by the distant barking of a large pack of hounds, and the reveille of hunting trumps.

"It is my hunting-train," exclaimed the Emperor. "We shall depart for the hunt, seigneur Breton. This evening we shall continue our chat. Return with your grandson to your apartment. You will be served the noon meal. After that you will both join me. I am curious to see whether this youngster is as good a horseman as report makes him. Moreover, although the exercise of the chase is a frivolous pastime, you may, perhaps, find that Charles the Fighter makes good use even of frivolities. Be off now to dinner—and then, to horse!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### TO THE HUNT.

Octave had come to take Amael and his grandson to the noon meal. While they walked towards one of the courtyards of the palace, in order to join the hunting suite of the Emperor, the young Roman, profiting by a moment when the aged Breton could not overhear him, said in a low voice to Vortigern:

"Lucky boy. I am convinced that two pairs of eyes, one black as ebony, the other of azure blue, have been peering through the crowd of courtiers—" but interrupting the flow of his words at the sight of the deep crimson that suffused the lad's visage, he proceeded to say: "Wait till I have finished before you grow purple. Well, as I was saying, two beautiful blue eyes and two equally beautiful black ones have, more than once, sought to detect in the crowd of courtiers—Whom?—the venerable figure of your grandfather, because there is nothing so attractive as a long white beard. So much is that so that this forenoon, at mass, the blonde Thetralde and the brunette Hildrude quite forgot the thread of the divine service in order to contemplate incessantly—your grandfather, who was seated next to you. Come, now, you are blushing again. Are you, perchance, afraid lest the fascinating daughters of the Emperor fall in love with the centenarian?"

"Your jokes are becoming insupportable."

"Oh, how contagious is the court air. Hardly is this Breton away from his native fogs than he has become as full of wiles as an old clerk."

More and more embarrassed by the banterings of Octave, Vortigern only stammered a few words. The noon meal was disposed of. The aged Breton, his grandson and the young Roman were presently mounted upon their spirited horses that they found held ready for them by slaves in the courtyard of the palace, and they rode briskly out to join the Emperor.

Two of the sons of Charles, Carloman and Louis, or Luthwig as the Franks pronounced it, had arrived that same morning from their castle of Heristal and now accompanied their father, together with five of his daughters and four of his concubines, the other women of the palace being this time excluded from the hunt. Among the huntresses was Imma, the paramour who had so bravely borne Eginhard, the archchaplain, upon her back. Still handsome, she now bordered on the full ripeness of womanhood. Near her rode Bertha, searching with her eyes for Enghilbert, the handsome Abbot of St. Riquier. A little behind the couple came Adelrude, who, from afar, smiled upon Audoin, one of Charles' most daring captains. Last of all trotted the brunette Hildrude, together with the blonde Thetralde, both endeavoring to detect, no doubt, the Breton centenarian, as Octave had told Vortigern. Most of the seigneurs of Charles' suite wore singular costumes, brought at great expense from Pavia, whither commerce unloaded the riches of the Orient. Among the Emperor's courtiers, some were clad in tunics of Tyrian purple furnished with broad capes, ornamented with facings of embroidered Phoenician birds'-skin, while feathers of

Asiatic peacocks' tail, neck and back, caused their rich vestments to glitter in all the shades of blue, gold, and emerald. Others of the courtiers wore precious jackets of Judean dormouse, or weasel—gowns much prized and as dainty and delicate as the skin of a bird. Finally caps with floating feathers, leggings of silk, boots of oriental red or green leather, embroidered with gold or silver, completed the splendid accoutrement of these people of the court.

The rude rusticity of the Emperor's costume stood off in marked contrast with the magnificence of his courtiers. His coarse and large leather boots, furnished with iron spurs, reached up to his thighs; under his tunic he wore a broad sheep-skin coat with the fleece on the outside, and his head was covered with a cap of badger-skin. In his hand the Emperor carried a short-handled whip which he used to stir up the hunting dogs with. Thanks to his tall stature, which greatly exceeded that of any of his officers, Charles was able to detect Vortigern and Amael from afar, whereupon he cried out to the grandfather:

"Eh, seigneur Breton. Come, if you please, to my side, with your grandson. I wish to ascertain whether, indeed, he is as good a horseman as my little girls claim."

The ranks of the courtiers parted in order to allow a passage to Amael and his grandson, the latter of whom modestly followed his grandfather, not daring to raise his eyes lest they should fall upon the group of women that surrounded the Emperor. Charles watched Vortigern attentively, and the gracefulness with which the youth handled his horse, drew from the Emperor the remark:

"Old Charles can judge at a glance of the skill of a rider. I am satisfied. But I suspect you love the hunt better than you do the mass, and a horse's saddle better than a church bench."

"I do prefer the hunt to the mass," frankly responded Vortigern; "but I prefer war to the hunt."

"Though your answer is not that of a good Catholic, it is the answer of a sincere lad. What do you think, my little ones?" added the Emperor, turning towards the group of huntresses. "Are you not of my mind?"

"You asked the young man for his opinion, and he spoke out with sincerity. He says what he does; he will do what he says. Valor and loyalty are written upon his face," was the prompt answer that came from Hildrude.

The blonde Thetralde, not daring to speak after her elder sister, grew cherry-red, and cast a look of intense jealousy, almost of rage, upon the brunette Hildrude, whose quick repartee she envied.

"There is nothing left to me but to join in the praise of the young pagan's frankness, lest I get into trouble with my little girls. Come forward," and leaning over towards Amael, he pointed angrily with his whip at the crowd of courtiers who shimmered in their costly finery, and prinked in their flowing plumes. "Look at that bevy of richly caparisoned customers. Look at them well. You will presently wish to remember the figures they are now cutting," saying which, the Emperor rode off at a gallop, followed by all his court, and calling out to the courtiers as well as to the Bretons:

"Once in the forest, each to himself, and at the mercy of his own horse. At the hunt there is neither Emperor nor courtier. There are only hunters and huntresses!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FOREST OF OPPENHEIM.

The hunt to which Charles the Emperor had galloped off with the buoyancy of youth, took place in a vast forest located at the very gate of Aix-la-Chapelle. The autumn sky, at first radiant, had been gradually overcast by one of the mists that are so frequent at the season and in that northern region. Obedient to the Emperor's orders, none of his courtiers attached himself to his steps. The hunters scattered. The more daring and venturesome did not quit the pack, now fretting in their leashes to start in pursuit of the deer across the thickets. The less daring and less enthusiastic sportsmen contented themselves with following at a distance the sound of the horns or the barking of the hounds; they straggled behind, or waited to see the deer dash across their path with the hounds and hunters at his heels. From the very start of the hunt, Charles, carried away by his ardor for the sport, left his daughters to themselves, unable as they were to follow him through the thickest of the jungle, into which the Emperor of the Franks plunged like the hottest of his huntsmen. For an instant, separated from his grandfather in the rush and crush of the tumultuous assembly, where nearly a hundred horses, gathered in a small space, were excited by the din of the horns, to which they added their own impatient neighing, champed their bits and reared wildly, Vortigern raised himself in his stirrups and searched with his eyes for Amael, when suddenly his own horse took the bit in his mouth and galloped off rapidly with his rider. When the young Breton finally succeeded, by dint of violent efforts, to master his mount, he

found himself at a considerable distance from the chase. Seeking to penetrate with his eyes the mist that spread ever further and thicker over the forest, the young man perceived that he was on a long avenue whose issues it was impossible to distinguish. He listened, expecting to hear from the distance the noise of the chase, which would have guided him in his efforts to joint it. The profoundest silence reigned in this part of the forest. A moment later, however, the tramp of two horses rapidly approaching from behind, struck his ears, and immediately after, a cry, uttered in anger rather than fear. An instant later, Vortigern detected a vague form across the mist. By degrees the form became distinct, and soon the blonde Thetralde was disclosed to the wondering eyes of the young Breton, urging on her horse, and clad in a long robe of sapphire blue cloth, trimmed with ermine, white as the coat of her palfrey. On her blonde tresses Thetralde wore a small cap, also of ermine. A sash of Tyrean silk of lively colors, the long ends of which fluttered behind her in the air, was wound around her delicate waist. The childlike and charming visage of the Emperor's daughter, now enhanced by the ardor of her run, shone with the flush of health. Blushing at the sight of Vortigern, Thetralde dropped her large blue eyes, while the tight corsage of her robe rose and sank under the throbs of her maidenly bosom. Vortigern's disturbance equalled Thetralde's. Like her, he remained mute and embarrassed. His eyes also were lowered, and he felt his heart beat violently. The silent embarrassment of the two children was broken by Thetralde. In a timid and diffident voice she said to the young Breton without daring to raise her eyes to him:

"I thought I would never be able to join thee. Thy horse had such a long lead of my palfrey—"

"My horse carried me away—"

"Oh, I noticed it—my sister Hildrude also," Thetralde added frowning with her pretty eyebrows. "Both of us thereupon rushed in thy pursuit—we feared that in thy unacquaintance with the paths of our forest thou mightest lose thy way."

"It did seem to me that I heard the gallop of two horses—"

"My sister wished to run ahead of me; but I struck her horse on the head with my whip. The frightened animal bolted to one side, carrying Hildrude along. She was angry and uttered a cry of rage."

"Perhaps she runs some danger!"

"No, my sister will be able to master her horse. But as the mist is very thick, she will not be able to meet us again. I am so happy about that!"

Vortigern felt on the rack. Nevertheless, an ineffable sense of joy mingled with his agony. Anew the two children remained silent, and again the daughter of the Emperor of the Franks was the one to break the silence:

"Thou dost not speak—art thou annoyed that I have joined thee?"

"Oh, no, lovely princess—"

"Perhaps thou thinkest me wicked because I struck my sister's horse? When I saw her striving to pass me, I no longer could control myself."

"I hope that no ill may have befallen your sister."

"I hope so too."

For a moment Thetralde and Vortigern again relapsed into silence. With a slight touch of vexation the young girl once more resumed the conversation:

"Thou art very quiet—"

"I know not what to say—"

"Nor I either; and yet I was dying with the wish to speak to thee—what is thy name?"

"Vortigern."

"I am called Thetralde—pronounce my name."

"Thetralde—"

"I love to hear thee pronounce my name."

"Where do you think the hunt is now?" asked the young Breton with increasing uneasiness. "It will be difficult to find the hunters. The mist grows ever denser."

"Should we lose ourselves," Thetralde replied laughing, "I do not know the paths of the forest."

"Why did you not, then, remain near the people of the court and the seigneurs of the escort?"

"I saw thee running off rapidly, and I followed thee."

"That throws both you and me into a great perplexity."

"Art thou sorry to find thyself alone here with me?"

"Not at all!" cried Vortigern, "only I fear that this dense mist may change into rain towards

evening, and that you may get wet. We should try and join the chase. Do you not think so?"

"In what direction shall we go?"

"It seemed to me a moment ago I heard the feeble sound of horns at a great distance."

"Let us listen again," said Thetralde, bending her charming head to one side, while Vortigern sought to listen from the opposite side.

"Dost thou hear anything?" queried the Emperor's daughter raising her sweet voice and addressing Vortigern, who stood at a little distance. "I can hear nothing."

"Nor I either," rejoined the young Breton.

"Here we are lost!" cried the young girl laughing merrily. "And if night overtakes us, what a terrible thing!"

"And you laugh at such a plight?"

"Is it that thou art afraid, and thou a soldier?" But immediately the handsome face of Thetralde assumed an uneasy look and she observed: "Does thy wound hurt thee, my brave companion?"

"I am not thinking of my wound. I am only uneasy at perceiving that the mist grows still thicker. How can we regain our route? Whither could we go?"

"But I do wish to speak of thy wound," replied Charles' daughter with infantine impatience. "Why is not thy arm any longer protected by a scarf, as it was yesterday?"

"It would have incommoded me in the chase."

Thetralde quickly detached her long belt of Tyrean silk and held it out to Vortigern. "Take this, my belt will take the place of thy scarf, and sustain thy arm."

"It is unnecessary, I assure you."

"Bad boy!" cried Thetralde, holding out her belt to Vortigern; and fixing upon him her beautiful blue eyes, almost imploringly said: "I beg of thee; do not refuse me!"

Vanquished by the timid and loving look, the young Breton accepted the scarf; but as he held the reins of his horse with one hand he found it difficult to fasten the belt into a scarf-band around his neck.

"Wait," and Thetralde approached her palfrey close to Vortigern's horse, leaned over in her saddle, took the two ends of the belt and tied them behind the lad's neck. The touch of the young girl's hand sent so wild a thrill through his frame that Thetralde, noticing the circumstance, said, as she finished the knot: "Thou tremblest—is it out of fear, or out of cold?"

"The mist is becoming so thick, so wet," answered Vortigern, with increasing uneasiness. "Are not you yourself cold? I very much fear for you in this icy mist—"

"Fear not for me. But seeing thou art cold, we can walk our horses. It would be useless to move any faster. Perhaps the chase that we are in search of will come our way."

"So much the better!"

"I am delighted to learn that thy grandfather and thyself will remain a long time with us."

"May we be fortunate enough to do so!"

The two children continued their way, walking their horses side by side in the long avenue, where one could see not twenty paces ahead, so thick had the mist become. Night presently began to draw near. After a short interval of mutual silence, Thetralde resumed:

"We Franks are the enemies of the people of thy country; and yet I feel no enmity whatever towards thee; and thou, dost thou entertain any hatred for me?"

"I could not feel hatred for a young girl."

"Thou must feel very sorry for being far away from thy own country. Wouldst thou wish me to ask the Emperor, my father, to render grace to thy grandfather and thyself?"

"A Breton never asks for grace!" proudly cried Vortigern. "My grandfather and I are hostages, prisoners on parole; we shall submit to the law of war."

A fresh interval of silence followed upon this exchange of words. But soon, as Vortigern had foreseen, the dense mist changed into a fine and penetrating rain.

"The rain is upon us!" exclaimed the young Breton. "Not a sound is heard. This route seems to be endless. No! here is a side path to the left. Shall we take it?"

"As it may please thee," answered Thetralde with indifference.

The girl was about to turn her horse's head, agreeable to the suggestion of Vortigern, when the latter suddenly leaped down from his mount, detached the belt of his sword, took off his blouse, remaining in his thick jacket of the material of his breeches, and said to Thetralde:

"I consented to accept your scarf. It is now your turn. You must now consent to cover yourself with my blouse. It will serve you for a mantle."

"Place it on my shoulders," answered Thetralde blushing; "I dare not drop the reins of my palfrey."

No less agitated than his girl companion, Vortigern drew near her and laid his garment on the shoulders of Thetralde. But when it came to tying the sleeves of the blouse around her neck and almost upon the palpitating bosom of the young girl, who, with her eyes lowered and her cheeks burning, raised her little pink chin in order to afford Vortigern full ease in the accomplishment of his kindly office, the hands of the lad shook so violently, that his mission was not accomplished until after repeated trials.

"Thou art cold; thou art shivering worse than thou didst before."

"It is not the cold that makes me shiver—"

"What ails thee then?"

"I know not—the uneasiness that I feel on your behalf, seeing that night approaches. We have lost our way in the forest. The rain is coming down heavier. And we know not what road to take —"

Interrupting her companion with a cry of joy, Thetralde pointed with her finger to one side of the avenue of trees that they were on, and exclaimed: "There is a hut down yonder!"

So there was. Vortigern perceived in the center of a cluster of centenarian chestnut trees a hut constructed of thick layers of peat heaped upon one another. A narrow opening gave entrance to the bower, before which the remnants of some dry wood recently lighted were still seen smouldering. "It is one of the huts in which the woodcutter slaves take refuge during the day when it rains," explained Thetralde. "We shall be then under cover. Tie thy horse to a tree and help me alight."

At the bare thought of sharing the solitary retreat with the young girl, Vortigern felt his heart thump under his ribs. A flush of burning fever rose to his face while, nevertheless, he shivered. After a moment's hesitation, the lad complied with the orders of his companion. He tied his horse to a tree, and, in order to assist the young girl to alight from her mount, he extended to her his arms and received within them the supple and nimble body of Thetralde. So profound was the emotion experienced by Vortigern at the touch of the maid, that he was almost overcome. But the daughter of Charles, running towards the hut with pretty curiosity, cried out merrily:

"I see a moss-bank in the hut and a supply of dry wood. Let's light a fire. There are still some embers burning. Hurry. Hurry."

The lad hastened to join his companion and stumbled over a large log of wood that rolled at his feet. Stooping, he saw strewn about it a large number of burrs that had dropped down from the tall chestnut trees overhead. At once forgetting his embarrassment, he exclaimed with delight:

"A discovery! Chestnuts! Chestnuts!"

"What a find," responded Thetralde, no less delighted. "We shall roast the chestnuts. I shall pick them up while thou startest the fire."

The young Breton did as suggested by his girl companion, all the more readily seeing that he hoped to find in the sport a refuge from the vague, tumultuous and ardent thoughts, big at once with delight and anxiety, that he had been a prey to from the moment of his meeting with Thetralde. He entered the hut, took up several bunches of dry wood and rekindled the brasier into flame, while the daughter of Charles, running hither and thither, gathered a large supply of chestnuts which she brought into the hut in a fold of her dress. Letting herself down upon the moss-bank that lay at the further end of the hut, the interior of which was now brightly lighted by the glare of the fire which burned near the entrance, she said to Vortigern, motioning him to a seat near her:

"Sit down here, and help me shell these chestnuts."

The lad sat down near Thetralde and entered with her into a contest of swiftness in the shelling of chestnuts, during which, like herself, he more than once pricked his fingers in the effort to extract the ripe kernels from their burrs. Presently, looking into her face, he said archly:

"And here you have the daughter of the Emperor of the Franks; seated inside of a peat hut and shelling chestnuts like any woodchopper and slave's daughter."

"Vortigern," answered Thetralde, returning the look of her companion with a radiant face, "never was the daughter of the Emperor of the Franks more happy than at this moment."

"And I, Thetralde, I swear to you that since the day I left my mother, my sister and Brittany, I have never been more pleased than to-day, than now, near you."

"And if to-morrow should resemble to-day? and if it should be thus for a long time, a very long time—wouldst thou always be pleased?"

"And you, Thetralde?"

"Say 'thou' to me. We address one another with 'thou' in Germany. Say to me: 'And thou, Thetralde?'"

"But the respect—"

"I say 'thou' to you, and do not respect you the less for it," rejoined the maid laughing. "Say to me: 'And thou, Thetralde?'"

"And thou, Thetralde?"

"So thou wishest to know whether I would be happy at the thought of all our days resembling this one, and our living together?"

"Yes, my charming Princess!"

The young maid remained pensive, holding in her delicate fingers a half opened chestnut husk. Presently she raised her head and broke the silence with the question: "Vortigern, is it far from here to thy country?"

"It took us more than a month to come here from Brittany."

"Vortigern, what a beautiful journey that would make!"

"What sayest thou?"

Thetralde made a charming gesture commanding silence: "Hast thou any money about thee?"

And proceeding to detach from her belt a little embroidered purse, she emptied its contents into her lap. There were several heavy pieces of gold and a large number of smaller pieces of silver and copper. Two of the latter, one of silver and one of copper, and both of about the size of a denier, were pierced and tied together by a thread of gold. "This is all my treasure," the girl observed.

"Why are these two pieces tied together?" inquired Vortigern, with a look of curiosity.

"Oh, these two must never be spent. We must preserve them carefully. One of them, the copper one, was struck the year of my birth; the other, the silver one, was struck this year, when I shall be fifteen. Fabius, my father's astronomer, has engraved upon these pieces certain magical signs corresponding to planets of happy influence. The Bishop of Aix-la-Chapelle blessed them. They are a talisman."

"If it were not that they are a talisman, Thetralde, I would have requested these two little pieces from thee as a souvenir of this day."

"To what purpose wouldst thou keep a souvenir of this day rather than of the next days to follow? Dost thou not desire that all should resemble one another? If thou desirest these two little pieces, here, take them; I give them to thee. A talisman is a useful thing on a journey. Place them in the pocket of thy jacket."

Vortigern obeyed almost mechanically, while the young girl, after ingenuously counting up her little hoard, resumed, saying: "We here have five gold sous, eight silver deniers, and twelve copper deniers; besides my bracelets, my necklace and my earrings. With that we shall have money enough to journey as far as Brittany. Night is upon us; we shall spend it under the shelter of this hut. To-morrow we shall have the woodcutter slave lead us to Werstern, a little burg situated on the skirt of the forest, about two leagues from Aix-la-Chapelle. We shall buy some simple clothing for myself, a traveling cloak of cloth. To-morrow at daybreak we shall start on our route. Do not fear that I shall recoil before fatigue. I am neither as tall nor as strong as my sister Hildrude, and yet, if thou shouldst be tired or wounded, I am sure I could carry thee on my back, just as my sister Imma once carried her lover Eginhard on hers. But our chestnuts are now all shelled. Come and help me to put them under the hot ashes. We shall eat them when roasted."

Raising with one hand the fold of her robe in which lay the nuts, Thetralde ran to the brasier. Vortigern followed her. He felt as in a dream. At times his reason gave way under the spell of an ardent and intoxicating vertigo. He knelt down silently, disturbed in mind, beside Thetralde before the brasier, into which the girl, steeped in thought, was slowly throwing the chestnuts one by one. Without, the rain had stopped; but the mist, now thickened to a fog with the approach of night, rendered the darkness complete. The reflection of the brasier only lighted up the charming faces of the two children on their knees beside each other. When the last chestnut had followed the others under the cinders, Thetralde rose, and leaning with familiar candor on Vortigern's shoulders said to him, taking his hand:

"And now, while thy supper is cooking, let us go back and sit down upon the bench of moss for me to finish telling thee my prospects. I have thought over what we are to do."

The night became profound. The flickering, vacillating flame in the expiring brasier seemed to cry for fresh fuel. The chestnuts, that had been consigned to its warmth, snapped noisily from their hulls into the air, announcing that their toothsome pulp was ready to be partaken of. Without, the horse and the palfrey of Vortigern and Thetralde pawed the ground and neighed impatiently, as if calling for their provender. The fire finally went out. The chestnuts changed to charcoal. The neighings of the horses resounded ever louder in the midst of the nocturnal silence of the forest. Thetralde and Vortigern did not issue from the hut.

## CHAPTER IX.

### AT THE MORT.

From the start of the hunt, the Emperor of the Franks had rushed headlong on the heels of the hounds. Amael, at first somewhat uneasy at the disappearance of his grandson in the midst of so large a concourse of cavaliers, was taken by accident towards that part of the forest whither the stag was leading the hounds from cover to cover. Amael even had the opportunity to assist, shortly before nightfall, at the killing of the stag, which, exhausted with fatigue after four hours of breathless running, turned at bay before the hounds when they had reached him at last, and strove to defend himself against them with the aid of the magnificent spread of antlers that crowned his head. The Emperor had not for a moment lost track of the hounds. He followed them speedily at the mort, together with a few others of the hunters. Jumping from his horse, he ran limping towards the animal at bay that already had gored several hounds with his sharp horns. Choosing with an experienced eye the opportune moment, Charles drew his hunting knife, and, rushing upon the desperate animal, plunged the weapon into the stag just above its shoulder, threw it down and then abandoned it to the hounds, that fiercely precipitated themselves upon the warm quarry and devoured it amidst the sonorous fanfare of the hunters' horns that thus announced the close of the chase and called their scattered fellows to reassemble. With his bloody knife in his hand, and after having contemplated with lively satisfaction the wild pack now red at their nozzles and contending with one another for the shreds of the stag's flesh, the Emperor's eyes fell upon Amael, to whom he called out gaily:

"Eh, seigneur Breton—am I not a bold hunter?"

"You will pardon my sincerity, but I find that at this moment the Emperor of the Franks, with his long knife in his hand, and his boots and coat spattered with blood, looks more like a butcher than like an illustrious monarch."

"I feel happy, nevertheless, and consequently inclined to be indulgent, seigneur Breton," replied the Emperor, laughing; then, lowering his voice, he observed to Amael: "Now, see how the clothes of the seigneurs of my court look."

In fact, most of the Emperor's seigneurs and officers, now hastening in on horseback to his presence from all sides of the thickets in response to the horns, presented an appearance that contrasted sadly with that which they had presented a few hours before. Magnificently attired at the start of the hunt, those seigneurs, who looked so resplendent in their rich tunics of silk, now presented a sight that was as ridiculous as it was pitiful. The embroideries on their tunics, at first so rich in color, were now frayed, soiled with mud, and torn by the branches of the trees and the thorns of the briars; the feathers that floated proudly from their caps, now drooped, wet, broken and draggled, resembling long, dislocated, and limp fish-bones; the boots of oriental leather had vanished under a thick coat of slush, and not a few of them, torn by the thorns, exposed their owners' hose, not infrequently also their skin itself. They shivered and looked distressed. Charles, on the contrary, simply and warmly dressed in his thick sheep-skin coat, which reached down over his boots of rough leather, and his head covered with his badger-skin bonnet, rubbed his hands with a cunning look of satisfaction in his eyes at the sight of his courtiers shivering with the cold and the wet. After contemplating the spectacle for a moment, Charles made a sign of intelligence to Amael and said to him in an undertone:

"Just before breaking ranks for the hunt, I recommended you to observe the magnificence of the costumes of these coxcombs, who are as vain as Asiatic peacocks, and even more devoid of brains than the bird whose spoils they wear. Look at them now—the fine fellows!" Amael smiled approvingly, while the Emperor, shrugging his shoulders, turned to the seigneurs with his squalling voice: "Oh, ye most foolish of people, which is at this moment the most precious and useful of all our raiment? Mine, which I bought with barely a sou? Or yours, which you have had to pay for through the nose?"

At this judicious raillery, the courtiers remained silent and confused, while the Emperor, placing both his hands on his spacious paunch, roared out aloud.

"Charles," Amael said to him unheard by the others, "I prefer to hear you speak with that sly wisdom than to see you disemboweling stags."

But the Emperor did not answer the aged Breton. He suddenly interrupted the discourse, extending his hand towards a group of nearby serfs, and crying out:

"Oh! Look at that pretty girl!"

Amael followed with his eyes the direction indicated by Charles and saw amid several of the woodcutter slaves of the forest who had been attracted by curiosity to see the hunt, a young girl barely covered in rags, but of remarkable beauty. A much younger child of about ten or eleven years held her by the hand. A poor old woman, as wretchedly clad as the girl, was in the company of the two. The Emperor of the Franks, whose large eyes glistened like carbuncles with the fire of lust, repeated, addressing Amael:

"By the cape of St. Martin! The girl is beautiful. Is it that your hundred years on your back render you insensible to the sight of such rare beauty, seigneur Breton? What a beautiful girl!"

"Charles, the misery of that creature strikes me more strongly than her beauty."

"You are very commiserate, seigneur Breton—so am I. Linen and silk should clothe so charming a figure. No doubt she is the daughter of some woodman slave. I can tell you, one runs at times across wonderfully beautiful girls in the forest. More than once I have dropped the chase in the middle of the heat to pursue another scent. But in honor to truth, I have never seen such a charmer before. It must be her good star that brought her across the path of Charles." Without removing his eyes from the young girl, Charles called to one of the seigneurs in his suite: "Eh! Burchard. Come here; I have orders for you."

The seigneur Burchard quickly alighted from his horse and hastened to obey the call of the Emperor. The latter, moving a few steps away from Amael, whispered a few words in the ear of the seigneur, who, showing himself greatly honored with the mission given him by his master, bowed respectfully, and, leading his horse by the bridle, approached the old woman and the two younger girls who stood by her, motioned to them to follow him, and vanished with his charge behind the group of hunters. A deep flush colored the cheeks of Amael; he puckered his brows, and his features became expressive of as much indignation as disgust. At that same instant Amael noticed that the Emperor was looking about him with a certain degree of uneasiness and calling out aloud:

"Where are my little girls? Can they have lost track of the hunt?"

"August Emperor," said one of the officers, "Richulff, who accompanied your august daughters, told me that when the rain began to fall some of them concluded to return to Aix-la-Chapelle, while the others decided to seek the shelter of the pavilion, where you ordered supper to be held ready."

"Think of the timorous bodies! I wager that my little Thetralde is not among the Amazons who are afraid of a drop of water, and who hastened back to the palace. As they are all safe, I shall not worry. Let us hasten to the pavilion ourselves, because I am ravenously hungry." And remounting his horse, the Emperor added: "We shall find at the pavilion the damsels who have preferred to sup with their father. The stout-hearted lasses shall be well feasted, and I shall bestow rich presents upon them."

Seeing that Charles was manifesting some slight uneasiness on the score of his daughters, Amael, in turn, began to feel preoccupied with regard to Vortigern, whom, for some time, he had been searching for with his eyes among the groups of the approaching knights. As his eyes fell upon Octave, who just then came running in at a gallop, the aged Breton inquired from him with no little anxiety:

"Octave, have you seen my grandson anywhere?"

"We parted company almost at the very start of the hunt."

"He is not with us," proceeded Amael with increasing uneasiness. "Night is here and he is not familiar with the paths of the forest."

"Oh! Oh! seigneur Breton," put in the Emperor of the Franks, who, immediately upon remounting his horse, had drawn near the aged man and overheard his question to the young Roman, "you seem to feel uneasy about your youngster. Well, what if he should have lost his way this evening? He will find it again to-morrow. Do you fear he will die of one night spent in the forest? Is not hunting the school of war? Come, come! Be at ease. Besides, who knows," added Charles with a roguish air. "Mayhap he encountered some pretty woodcutter's daughter in some of the huts of the forest. It is like his years. You surely do not mean to make a monk of him? Pretty lassies are meant for handsome lads."

## CHAPTER X.

### EMPEROR AND HOSTAGE.

Led by the Emperor of the Franks, the cavalcade of hunters rode towards the pavilion where supper was to be partaken of before the return to Aix-la-Chapelle. Charles called Amael to his side, and noticing, as they rode, that the aged Breton continued preoccupied about Vortigern, the Emperor turned to the centenarian with a merry twinkle in his eye:

"What do you think of this day? Have you recovered from your prejudices against Charles the Fighter? Do you think me at all worthy to govern my Empire, a domain as vast as the old Empire of Rome? Do you deem me worthy of reigning over the population of Armorica?"

"Charles, in my youth your grandfather proposed to me that I be the jailer of the last descendant of Clovis, an ill-starred boy, then a prisoner in an abbey, and having barely one suit of clothes to cover himself with. That boy, when grown to man's estate, was, upon orders of Pepin, your father, tonsured and locked up in a monastery, where he died obscure and forgotten. Thus

do royalties end. Such is the expiation, prompt or late, reserved for royal stocks that issue from conquest."

"Then the stock of Charles, whom the whole world calls the Great," rejoined the Emperor with an incredulous and proud smile, "is, according to your theory, destined to run out obscurely in some do-nothing king?"

"It is my firm conviction."

"I took you at first for a man of good judgment," replied the Emperor shrugging his shoulders; "I must now admit that I was mistaken."

"This very morning, in your Palatine school, you observed that the children of the poor studied with zeal, while the children of the rich are lazy. The reason is plain. The former feel the need of work to insure their well-being; the latter, being provided with and in possession of ample fortunes, make no effort to acquire knowledge. It is to them superfluous. Your ancestors, the stewards of the palace, have done like the children of the poor. Your descendants, however, being no longer in need of conquering a crown, will imitate the children of the rich."

"Despite a certain appearance of logic, your argument is false. My father usurped a crown, but he left to me at the most the Kingdom of Gaul. To-day Gaul is but one of the provinces of the immense empire that I have conquered. Obviously, I did not remain idle and torpid like the rich boys in your comparison."

"The Frankish Kings, together with their leudes, who later became great landed seigneurs, and the bishops, plundered Gaul, divided her territory among them, and reduced her people to slavery. But after a period, be it short or long, learn this, Oh, great Emperor, the people will rise in their strength, glorious, terrible, and they will know how to reconquer their patrimony and their independence!"

"Let us drop the future and the past. What think you of Charles?"

"I think that you are mistakenly proud of having almost reconstructed the administrative edifice of the Roman emperors, and of causing, like them, your will to weigh upon the whole domain, from one end to the other. Of all that, nothing will be left after you are gone! All the peoples that have been conquered and subjugated by your arms will rise in revolt. Your boundless empire, composed of kingdoms that no common bond of origin, of customs, or of language holds together, will fall to pieces; it will crumble together and will bury your descendants under its ruins."

"Do you mean to imply that Charles the Great will have passed over the world like a shadow without leaving behind him any lasting monument of his glory?"

"No, your life will not have been worthless. By ceaselessly warring against the Frisians, the Saxons and other peoples who wished to invade Gaul, you have checked, if not forever, at least for a long time, the maraudings of those hordes that ravaged the north and east of our unhappy country. But if you have barred the entrance of the barbarians into Gaul over land, the sea remains open to them. The Northman pirates almost every day make descents upon the coasts of your Empire, and their boldness increases to the point that ascending in their vessels the Meuse, the Gironde and the Loire, they threaten the very heart of your dominion."

"Oh, old man! This time, I fear me, your misgivings do not lead you astray. The Northmans are the only source of disquiet to my sleep! The bare thought of the invasions of those pagans causes me to be overcome with involuntary and unexplainable apprehensions. One day, during my sojourn at Narbonne, several vessels of those accursed people extended their piratical incursion into the very port. A sinister presentiment seized me; despite all I could do to restrain them, the tears rolled out of my eyes. One of my officers asked me the reason for my sudden fit of sadness. 'Do you wish to know, my faithful followers,' I answered, 'do you wish to know why I weep so bitterly? Certes, I do not fear that these Northmans may injure me with their piracies; but I feel profoundly afflicted at the thought that, in my very lifetime, they have the audacity of touching upon the borders of my Empire; and great is my grief because I have a presentiment of the sufferings that these Northmans will inflict upon my descendants and my peoples;'" and the Emperor remained for several minutes as if overpowered by the sinister premonition that he now recalled.

"Charles," Amael resumed with a grave voice, "all royalty that issues from conquest, or from violence, carries within itself the germ of death, for the reason that its principle is iniquitous. Perchance those Northman pirates may some day cause your stock to expiate the original iniquity of the royal sway that you hold from conquest."

Whether, absorbed in his own thoughts, the Emperor failed to hear the last words of the Gaul, or whether he could make no answer to them, he suddenly cried out:

"Let us forget the accursed Northmans. Speak to me of the good that I have done. Your words of praise are rare; I like them all the more for that."

"You are not cruel out of wilfulness, although you might be reproached for the massacre of more than four thousand Saxon prisoners."

"I remember the event perfectly," Charles said with emphasis. "I had to terrify those barbarians by a signal example. It was a fatal necessity!"

"Your heart is accessible to certain promptings of justice and humanity. In your capitularies you made an effort to improve the condition of the slaves and the colonists."

"It was my duty as a Christian, as a Catholic. All men are brothers."

"You are no more Christian than your friends, the bishops. You have simply yielded to an instinct of humanity, natural to man, whatever his religion may be. But still you are not a Christian."

"By the King of the Heavens! Perhaps I am a Jew?"

"Christ said, according to St. Luke the Evangelist: *The Lord hath sent me to preach deliverance to the captives—to set at liberty them that are bruised.* Now, then, your dominions are full of prisoners carried by conquest from their own homes; the estates of your bishops and your abbots are stocked with slaves. Accordingly, neither you nor your priests are Christians. A Christian, according to the words of the Christ, must never hold his fellowman in bondage. All men are equal."

"Custom so wills it; I merely conform myself thereto."

"What is there to hinder you, and the bishops as well as you, all-mighty Emperor that you are, from abolishing the abominable custom? What is there to hinder you from emancipating the slaves? What is there to hinder you from restoring to them, along with their liberty, the possession of the land that they themselves render fruitful with the sweat of their brow?"

"Old man, from time immemorial there have been slaves, and there ever will be slaves. What would it avail to be of the conquering race if not to keep the fruits of conquest? By the King of the Heavens! Do you take me for a barbarian? Have I not promulgated laws, founded schools, encouraged letters, arts and sciences? Is there in the whole world a city comparable with Aix-la-Chapelle?"

"Your gorgeous capital of Aix-la-Chapelle, the capital of your Germanic possessions, is not Gaul. Gaul has remained to you a strange country. You love forests that lend themselves to your autumn hunting parties, and the rich domains, whence every year the revenues are carted to your residences on the other side of the Rhine. But you do not love Gaul, seeing that you exhaust her resources in men and money in order to carry on your wars. Frightful misery desolates our provinces. Millions of God's creatures, deprived almost of bread, shelter and clothes, toil from dawn to dusk, and die in slavery—all in order to sustain the opulence of their masters. If you cause instruction to be given to some pupils in your Palatine school, you allow, on the other hand, millions of God's creatures to live like brutes! Such is the condition of Gaul under your reign, Charles the Great!"

"Old man," rejoined the Emperor, with a somber face and rising anger, "after treating you as a friend this whole day, I looked for different language. You are more than severe, you are unjust."

"I have been sincere towards you, the same as I was towards your grandfather."

"Mindful of the service that you rendered my grandfather at the battle of Poitiers, I meant to be generous towards you. I meant to do the right thing by myself, by your people, and by you. I hoped to see you, after this day spent in close intimacy with me, drop your prejudices, and to be able to say to you: I have vanquished the Bretons by force of arms; I desire to affirm my conquest by persuasion. Return to your country; report to your countrymen the day that you spent with Charles; they will trust your words, seeing that they place implicit confidence in you. You were the soul of the last two wars that they sustained against me. Be now the soul of our pacification. A conquest founded on force is often ephemeral; a conquest cemented in mutual affection and esteem is imperishable. I trust in your loyalty to gain the hearts of the Bretons to me. Such was my hope. The bitter injustice of your words dashes it. Let us think of it no more. You shall remain here as a hostage. I shall treat you as a brave soldier, who saved my grandfather's life. Perhaps in time you will judge me more justly. When that day shall have come, you will be allowed to return to your own country, and I feel sure you will then tell them what is right, as to-day you would only tell them what is wrong. All things will come in due season."

"Although your hopes can not realize the object that you proposed, they, nevertheless, are an evidence of a generous soul."

"By the cap of St. Martin! You Bretons are a strange people. What! If you should believe that I deserve esteem and affection, and if your countrymen should share your opinion, would neither you nor they accept with joy the authority that you now submit to by force?"

"With us it is no question of having a more or less worthy master. We want no master."

"And yet I am your master, ye pagans!"

"Until the day when we shall have reconquered our independence by a successful insurrection."

"You will be crushed to dust, exterminated! I swear it by the beard of the eternal Father."

"Exterminate the last of the Breton Gauls, strangle all the children, and you will then be able to reign over the desert of Armorica. But so long as there lives a single man of our race in our country, you may be able to vanquish, but never to subjugate it."

"But tell me, old man, is it that my rule is so terrible, and my laws so hard?"

"We want no foreign domination. To live according to the laws of our fathers, freely and as becomes free men, to choose our chiefs, to pay no tribute, to lock ourselves up within our own frontiers and to defend them—these are our aspirations. Accept them and you will have nothing to fear from us."

"To dictate conditions to me! to me, who reign as sovereign master over all Europe! To have a miserable population of shepherds and husbandmen impose conditions to me! to me, whose arms have conquered the world! Impudence can reach no further!"

"I might answer you that, in order to vanquish that miserable population of shepherds, of woodmen and husbandmen entrenched in their mountain fastnesses, behind their rocks, their marshes and their forests, your veteran bands had to be requisitioned for Gaul—"

"Yes," cried the Emperor in a vexed voice, "in order to keep your accursed country in obedience, I am forced to leave there my choicest troops, troops that I may need at any moment here in Germany, where I have hard battles to fight."

"That must be an unpleasant thing to you, Charles, I admit. Without mentioning the maritime invasions of the Northmans, there are the Bohemians, the Hungarians, the Bavarians, the Lombards and so many other people whom your arms have overcome, the same as they overcame us, the Bretons—all vanquished, but none subjugated. From one moment to the other they may rise anew, and, what is graver still, menace the very heart of your Empire. As to us, on the contrary, all that we demand is to live free; we never think of going beyond our frontiers."

"Who guarantees to me that, once my troops, are out of your infernal country, you will not forthwith resume your armed excursions and attacks against the Frankish forces that are bivouacked on this side of your borders?"

"The other provinces are Gallic like ourselves. Our duty bids us to provoke them, and to aid them to break the yoke of the Frankish kings. But the thoughtful people among us are of the opinion that the hour for revolt has not yet come. For the last four centuries the Catholic priests have moulded the minds of the people to slavery. Alas, centuries will pass before they re-awaken from their present stupor. You admit that it is dangerous for you to be compelled to keep a portion of your best troops tied up in Brittany. Recall your army. I give you my word as a Breton, and I am, moreover, authorized to make the pledge in the name of our tribes, that, so long as you live, we shall not go out of our frontiers."

"By the King of the Heavens! The joke is rather too harsh. Do you take me for a fool? Do I not know that, if I grant you a truce by withdrawing my troops, you will take advantage of it to prepare anew for war after my death? But we shall always know how to suppress your uprisings."

"Yes, we shall certainly take up arms if your sons fail to respect our liberties."

"And you really expect me—me, the vanquisher, to consent to a shameful truce? To consent to withdraw my forces from a country that it has cost me so much trouble to overcome?"

"Very well; leave, then, your army in Brittany, but depend upon it that, within a year or two, new insurrections will break out."

"Insane old man! How dare you hold such language to me when you, your grandson, and four other Breton chiefs are my hostages! Oh! I swear by the everlasting God, your head will drop at the first sign of an insurrection. Do not lean too heavily upon the good nature of the old Charles. The terrible example I made of the four thousand prisoners whom I took from the revolted Saxons should be proof enough to you that I recoil before no act of necessity. Only the dead are not to be feared."

"The Breton chiefs who remained on the way by reason of their wounds, and who will speedily join me and my grandson at Aix-la-Chapelle, would, no more than my grandson and myself, have accepted the post of hostages had the same been without danger. Whatever the fate may be that awaits us, we shall not falter in our duty. We are here in the very center of your Empire, and well in condition to judge of the opportuneness for an uprising. From this very place we will give the signal for a fresh war, the moment we think the time is favorable."

"By the King of the Heavens! This audacity has gone far enough!" cried the Emperor, pale with rage. "To dare tell me that these traitors, according to what they may see and spy near my court, will themselves send to Brittany the order to revolt! Oh, I swear by God, from to-morrow, from this very evening, both you and your grandson will be cast into a dungeon so dark that you will need lynx's eyes to find out what goes on around here. By the cap of St. Martin! Such insolence is enough to turn one into a ferocious beast. Not another word, old man! Here we are at the pavilion. I shall now join my daughters. The sight of them will console me for your ingratitude!"

Uttering these last words with mingled rage and sorrow, the Emperor put his horse to the gallop in order to reach all the quicker the hunting pavilion, where he expected to meet his daughters, and satisfy his growing hunger. The seigneurs in Charles' suite were about to follow their master's example and quicken the steps of their mounts, when the Emperor, suddenly turning around, cried out to them, with an imperious voice:

"No one shall follow me. I want to be alone with my daughters! You shall await my orders near the pavilion."

## CHAPTER XI.

### FRANK AND BRETON.

The Emperor rode rapidly forward toward the hunting pavilion. The seigneurs of his suite received the angry order of their master with silent obedience, and, reining in their horses, proceeded at a slower gait towards the rendezvous. Lost among them, Amael rode along, steeped in thought, revolving the recent conversation he had with Charles, and at the same time more and more a prey to anxiety at the prolonged absence of Vortigern. The Emperor's courtiers shivered under their robes of silk and drabbled feathers, and silently grumbled at the whim of their Emperor, whereby the looked-for time was retarded when they might warm themselves at the fire of the pavilion, and revive their spirits with supper. Arrived in the close neighborhood of the pavilion, they alighted from their horses. They had been conversing together about a quarter of an hour, when Amael, who had also alighted and leaned pensively against one of the nearby gigantic trees of the forest, noticed Octave hastening in his direction and calling out to him:

"Amael, I was looking for you—come quick!"

The aged Breton tied his horse to the tree and followed Octave. When both had walked a little distance away from the group of the Frankish seigneurs, the young Roman proceeded:

"I feel mortally uneasy on the score of Vortigern. Your grandson having been carried away by his horse early in the hunt, Thetralde and Hildrude, two of the Emperor's daughters, followed him on the spot. What may have happened? I can not guess. I am told positively that Hildrude, who seemed greatly irritated, rode back to Aix-la-Chapelle with two other sisters and all the concubines of the Emperor who had come to the chase. Thetralde must have remained alone behind with Vortigern in some part of the forest."

"Finish your account."

"I know from experience how easy-going are the morals of this court. Thetralde has taken notice of your grandson. She is fifteen, has been brought up amidst her sisters, who have as many paramours as their own father has mistresses. Despite himself, Vortigern has made a lively impression upon the heart of Thetralde. The two are children. They have vanished together, and must have been lost together, seeing that three of the Emperor's daughters have returned to the palace and the other two are at the pavilion. Only Thetralde is not to be found. If she lost her way in the company of Vortigern—I would this morning have been of the opinion that it was to be hoped—"

"Heaven and earth!" broke in the aged Breton, growing pale. "How dare you joke on such a matter!"

"This morning I would have considered the adventure highly amusing. This evening it seems to me redoubtable. A minute ago, angered at something or other, the Emperor clapped both his spurs to his horse's flanks, ordered that none should follow him, and rushed towards the pavilion. Rothaide and Bertha, daughters of Charles, notified of their father's approach by the clatter of his horse, and believing that his whole suite was with him, sped away to the upper chambers of the pavilion—Bertha with Enghilbert, the handsome Abbot of St. Riquier, Rothaide with Audoin, one of the Emperor's officers."

"And then?"

"The Emperor arrives all alone and dismounts. 'Where are my daughters?' he calls out impatiently to the Grand Nomenclator of his table who happens to be superintending the preparations for the supper. The Grand Nomenclator answers in great embarrassment: 'August Emperor, allow me to go and announce your arrival to the Princesses; they have withdrawn to the upper chambers in order to take some rest while waiting for supper.' 'I shall go myself and see them,' replies Charles, saying which, he clambers up the stairs. Old Vulcan surprising Venus and Mars at their amorous escapade, could not have been more furious than was the august Emperor when he surprised his daughters in the arms of their gallants. The Grand Nomenclator having remained near the door of the staircase soon heard an infernal racket in the chambers above. The irate Charles was plying his hunting whip right and left over the two amorous couples. A profound silence ensued thereupon. The Emperor having the habit of not noising such things about came down again, calm in appearance, but pale with rage, and—"

Octave's narrative was at this point suddenly interrupted by tumultuous cries that proceeded from the pavilion. Slaves were seen rushing out of the building with lighted torches in their hands, and immediately the shrill voice of Charles himself was heard calling out:

"To horse! My daughter Thetralde has lost her way in the forest! She has not returned to the palace—and she is not here in the pavilion. Take the torches—and to horse! To horse!"

"Amael, in the name of your grandson's welfare," whispered Octave precipitately in the Breton's ear, "follow me at a distance. There is just one chance left to us of saving Vortigern from the Emperor's rage." Saying this, the young Roman disappeared among the seigneurs of the court who were hastening towards their horses, while Charles, whose rage, restrained for a moment, now exploded with renewed fierceness, screeched at them:

"Look at them, gaping open-mouthed, like a herd of startled sheep! Let each one take a torch

and follow one of the avenues of the forest, all the while calling out to my daughter as loud as he can. Halloa there—let someone take up a torch and ride ahead of me!"

At these words, Octave seized a torch and approached the Emperor, while other seigneurs rode rapidly off in several directions in search of the lost Thetralde. The meaning of the hurried recommendation that Octave had addressed to him a minute before flashed at this moment clear through Amael's mind. Mounting his horse at the same time that Charles and the young Roman who bore the torch did theirs, he allowed the two to take somewhat the lead of him, and then followed them at a distance, guided by the torch that Octave held aloft.

As Octave later narrated to him, the Emperor alternated between fits of rage, provoked by the freshest proof of the libertinage to which his daughters were addicted, and uneasiness at the disappearance of Thetralde. These several sentiments were given vent to by broken words that from time to time reached the ears of the young Roman who preceded Charles by only a few paces.

"My poor child!—where can she be?—Perhaps dying of cold and fear—at the bottom of some thicket, perhaps!" murmured the Emperor. Presently he would call out at the top of his voice: "Thetralde! Thetralde! Oh, she does not hear me! King of the Heavens, have pity upon me. So young—so delicate—a chilly night like this is enough to kill her. Oh, my unhappy old age, that this child might have served to console—she would not have resembled her sisters! Her fifteen year forehead was never crimsoned with an evil thought. Oh, dead! Dead, perhaps! No, no—youth is full of pranks! Besides, these daughters, all of whom I have brought up like boys, are all accustomed to fatigue. They accompany me during my long journeys. But yet, the night is so dark—and it is so chilly!" Whereupon the Emperor would again call out: "Thetralde!" and suddenly reining in his horse and listening, the Emperor of the Franks broke the silence with the sudden question: "Did you not hear a sound like the neighing of a horse?"

"I did, august Prince," answered the young Roman.

"Listen! Listen again!"

Octave kept silent. Soon again the sound of distant neighing broke upon the stillness of the forest.

"No doubt any longer. Despairing of finding her way, my daughter must have tied her palfrey to a tree!" exclaimed the Emperor, his heart bounding with hope. Calling out to Octave, he ordered: "Gallop! Gallop faster!" and himself increasing his own speed to the utmost cried out uninterruptedly: "Thetralde! Thetralde! Thetralde, my daughter!"

Amael, who followed Charles at a goodly distance, keeping himself well in the shadow, also fell into a gallop the moment he noticed the torchlight that guided him suddenly move with increased swiftness into the darkness. The Emperor and Octave were close upon the spot where, before entering the woodcutter's hut, Vortigern and Thetralde had tied their mounts. The glimmer of the torch fell upon and lighted the white body of Thetralde's palfrey, throwing into the shade Vortigern's horse that was tied a few steps further away. The Emperor recognized his daughter's favorite mount, and cried out:

"Thetralde's palfrey!" and immediately thereupon perceiving the hut itself by the light of the torch borne by Octave, he added: "Oh, King of the Heavens! Thanks be to you!" The Emperor quickly dismounted and walking precipitately towards the hut which lay about twenty paces from the path, he called back to Octave: "Walk faster! My daughter is there. Precede me!"

Gifted with an eye even more piercing than Charles', Octave had recognized with a shudder the horse of Vortigern close to Thetralde's palfrey. Foreseeing the outburst of fury that the Emperor was about to fall into at the spectacle that Octave surmised awaited his aged eyes, the Roman resorted to an extreme measure. Affecting to stumble, he dropped the torch in the hope of extinguishing it at his feet, as if by accident. But Charles quickly stooped down, as quickly raised it and rushed forward towards the entrance of the hut. Trembling with fear, the young Roman followed closely behind the Emperor. Charles suddenly stood still as if petrified at the threshold of the hut, whose interior was now brilliantly lighted by the torch in the Emperor's hand. Having also dismounted, Amael was enabled, without his steps being heard by Charles, to draw nearer, and stood close to him at the very moment that, struck with stupor, the Emperor of the Franks stopped, motionless.

Profoundly asleep, and stretched out upon the floor with his unsheathed sword beside him, Vortigern barred the entrance to the hut. In order to enter it, an intruder would have been compelled to walk over his body that lay across the threshold. In the depth of the retreat, stretched on a bed of moss and carefully wrapped in the lad's tunic, Thetralde enjoyed a slumber as profound as her guardian at the entrance. The girl's head and face, charming in their candor, rested on one of her arms that lay folded beneath. So deep was the sleep of the two, that neither the young girl nor Vortigern was at first awakened by the glare of the torch.

Thick drops of perspiration rolled down from the forehead of the Emperor of the Franks. The stupor that first seized him at finding his daughter in a solitary hut in the company of the young Breton, was soon followed by an expression of undefinable agony. Presently the cruel doubts concerning the chastity of his youngest daughter made room for hope when he noticed the serenity of the slumber of the two children. The Emperor gathered additional comfort from the precaution that Vortigern had taken in laying himself athwart the entrance, obedient, no doubt,

to a thought of respectful and chivalrous solicitude.

Thetralde was the first to open her eyes. The glare of the torch fell upon her face. She half raised her head; still half asleep, carried her hand to her eyes, and sat up. In a second, seeing her father before her, she uttered a cry of such sincere joy, her charming features expressed a happiness so utterly free from all embarrassment, that, bounding to her father's neck, she was pressed by Charles to his heart with delirious rapture:

"Oh!" the Emperor exclaimed, "I fear naught, her forehead is free from shame."

The words of the enraptured father reached the ears of Amael, who had remained motionless behind the Emperor, whose life was soon in no slight danger, seeing that, in her first and spontaneous outburst of joy to fall on her father's neck, Thetralde had struck Vortigern with her feet as she bounded forward. The young Breton, thus awakened with a start, his eyes dazzled by the glare of the torch, and his mind still clouded with sleep, grasped his sword and jumped up. At the sight of the two men at the entrance of the hut, one of them tightly holding Thetralde in his arms, the lad imagined that violence was being attempted upon her. He seized Charles by the throat with one hand and, raising his sword in the other, cried: "I will kill you!" Immediately, however, recognizing the father of Thetralde, Vortigern dropped his weapon, rubbed his eyes, and exclaimed:

"The Emperor of the Franks!"

"Himself, my lad!" replied the Emperor in a cheerful voice, while he again kissed the forehead and head of his daughter with almost frantic delight. "The vigor of your clutch proves to me that ill would he have fared who should have entertained any evil designs against my little girl!"

"We are your enemies, and still you received my grandfather and myself with kindness," answered the young Breton ingenuously and without lowering his eyes before the penetrating looks that Charles shot at him. "I have watched over your daughter—as I should have watched over my own sister."

Vortigern emphasized the words 'my own sister' in such a manner that Amael, fully sharing the confidence of Charles, whispered at the latter's ear:

"I have no doubt of the purity of these children."

"And you here?" exclaimed the Emperor astonished. "Be welcome, my esteemed guest!"

"You looked for your daughter—I also set out in search of my grandson."

"And I have found her, the dear child!" exclaimed Charles with ineffable tenderness, again and again kissing the forehead of Thetralde. "Oh, how I do love her—more than ever before!" And holding the girl close to his breast the Emperor moved toward the interior of the hut, and threw himself down upon the moss-bench, broken with fatigue. There he seated Thetralde upon his knees, and contemplating her with looks of unspeakable happiness, said: "Come now, my little one, tell me all about your adventure. How did you lose track of the hunt? How did you resign yourself to spend the night in this hut?"

"Father," answered the girl, lowering her eyes and hiding her face on Charles' breast, "let me collect my thoughts—I want to tell you all that happened, absolutely everything, without concealing aught."

After a short interval that followed Thetralde's answer, Vortigern drew near Amael, who tenderly pressed him to his heart, while, standing at a little distance, the torch in his hand lighting the scene, the young Roman, it must be admitted, looked more astonished than enthusiastic at the continence of Vortigern.

"Father," Thetralde resumed, raising her head and attaching her candid looks upon the Emperor of the Franks, "I must tell you everything. Not so? Everything—absolutely everything?"

"Yes, my little darling, without omitting anything." But after a second's reflection, Charles said to Octave: "Plant that torch in the ground, and watch our horses with this young lad."

The Roman bowed and obeyed; accompanied by Amael's grandson he stepped out of the hut.

"What, father, you send Vortigern out?" remarked Thetralde in an accent of sweet reproach. "I would on the contrary, have wished him to remain near us, in order to confirm or complete my story, my dear father."

"All you tell me, my dear daughter, I shall believe. Speak, speak without fear before me and the grandfather of the worthy lad."

"Yesterday," Thetralde began, "I was on the balcony of the palace when Vortigern rode into the courtyard. Learning that he came hither as a prisoner, so young, and wounded, besides, I immediately took an interest in him. When shortly after, he came near being thrown from his horse, perhaps even killed, I was so frightened that I uttered a cry of dread. But when Hildrude and myself saw that he proved himself an intrepid horseman, we threw our nose-gays to him."

"You both told me how you admired the skilfulness of the lad's horsemanship, but you said nothing about the throwing of your bouquets. Well, let us proceed—continue."

"I certainly was very happy at your return home, good father. Yet, I must confess to you, it seems to me that my thoughts turned as much on Vortigern as on yourself. All night my sister and I talked about the young Breton, about his gracefulness, about his comely face that was at once sweet and bold—"

"That is all very well—that is all very well. Let us skip all that, my daughter. Let us drop the details concerning the lad's looks."

"Then you object, father, to my telling you all? He made a deep impression upon us."

"Let us come to the episode of the chase."

"It was dawn before I fell asleep, but only to dream about Vortigern. We saw him again at church. When I was not contemplating his bold and sweet face, I was praying for the safety of his soul. After mass, when I learned that there was to be a hunting party, my only fear was that he might not be one of the party. Judge, then, of my joy, father, when I saw him in your retinue. Suddenly his horse took fright and carried him off! Before I could reflect I plied the whip upon my palfrey to join him. Hildrude followed and tried to pass me. That irritated me. I struck her horse on the head. The animal bolted and carried her off in another direction. I was alone when I overtook Vortigern. The mist, then the rain and thereupon the night fell upon us. We noticed this woodcutter's hut and a brasier that was almost extinct. We then said to each other: 'It is impossible to find our way back, let us spend the night here.' Happily we noticed some chestnuts that had dropped on the ground from the trees. We gathered them, roasted them under the cinders—but we forgot to eat them—"

"Because, I suppose, you were both tired, no doubt—and, in order to take rest, you lay down on this moss-bench, and the lad across the threshold?"

"Oh, no, no, my father! Before falling asleep we chatted a good deal, we disputed a good deal. It was due to our discussion that Vortigern and myself forgot all about the chestnuts. Thereupon sleep overtook us and we stretched ourselves to rest."

"But what was the subject, my child, of the discussion between you and the lad?"

"Alack! I had wicked thoughts—those thoughts were combatted by Vortigern with all his might. It was upon that that our dispute ran. But I must admit that, after all, he was right. You will never believe me. I wanted to flee from Aix-la-Chapelle and go to Brittany with Vortigern—to marry him."

"To leave me—my daughter—abandon your father—me, who love you so much?"

"Those were the very arguments of Vortigern. 'Thetralde, dost thou think well,' he said to me, 'to leave thy father who loves thee? Wouldst thou have the regrettable courage to cause him so deep a grief? And as to myself, whom, as well as my grandfather, he has treated with kindness, should I be thy accomplice? No! No! Moreover, I am here a prisoner on parole. To flee would be to disgrace myself. My mother would refuse to see me.' 'Thy mother loves thee too much not to pardon thee,' I said to Vortigern; 'my father also will pardon me; he is so good! Did he not show himself indulgent towards my sisters, who have their lovers as he has his mistresses? To love can neither hurt nor injure others. Once married, we shall return to my father. Happy at seeing us again, he will forget everything else, and we shall live near him as do Eginhard and my sister Imma.' But Vortigern, ever inflexible, returned incessantly upon his word as a prisoner and the grief that his flight would cause his mother and grandfather. His warm tears mingled with mine as he consoled and chide me for the child that I was. Finally, after our dispute had lasted a long while, and we had wept a good deal, he said to me: 'Thetralde, it is now late; thou surely must feel fatigued; thou shouldst lie down on this bed of moss; I shall lay myself across the entrance with my bare sword at my side, to defend thee, if need be.' I did begin to feel sleepy; Vortigern covered me with his tunic; I fell asleep and was dreaming about him when I was awakened by you, my father."

The Emperor of the Franks listened to the naïve recital with a mixture of tenderness, apprehension and grief. At its close he heaved a sigh of profound relief that seemed to issue from the silent reflection: "What a danger did not my daughter escape!" This thought soon dominated all the others that crowded to his mind. Charles again embraced Thetralde effusively, and said:

"Dear child, your candor charms me. It makes me forget that even for a moment you could entertain the thought of running away from your father, which would have been a mean thing to do."

"Oh! Vortigern made me renounce the wicked project. And, now, as a reward to him, you will be good, you will marry us, will you not, father?"

"We shall talk later about that. For the present we must think of regaining the pavilion, where you will rest awhile. We shall depart to Aix-la-Chapelle. Stay here a moment I have a few words to exchange with this good old man."

Charles stepped out of the hut with Amael, and as soon as they were a few paces away, he turned towards the aged Breton with a radiant face on which, however, deep concern was depicted:

"Your grandson is a loyal lad; yours is a family of worthy and brave people. You saved my

grandfather's life; your grandson has respected the honor of my daughter. I know but too well the dangers that lie, at the age of these children, in the wake of the first impulse of love. Had Vortigern yielded, he would have had to pay for it with his life. I am happy and by far prefer to praise than to punish."

"Charles, when a few hours ago I expressed to you my uneasiness concerning Vortigern's absence, you answered me: 'Good! He will have run across some pretty woodcutter's daughter. Love is meet for his years. You do not mean to make a monk of the lad?' What, now, if he had treated your daughter like a woodcutter's child?"

"By the King of the Heavens! Vortigern would not have left the hut alive!"

"Accordingly, it is permissible to dishonor the daughter of a slave, and yet shall the dishonor of the daughter of an emperor be punished with death? Both are the children of God, alike in His eyes. Why the difference in your mind?"

"Old man, these words are senseless!"

"You pretend to be a Christian, and you treat us as pagans! My grandson has conducted himself like an honest man; that is all. Honor is dear to us Gauls of old Armorica, whose device is: *Never did Breton commit treason.* Will you render me a favor? I shall be eternally grateful to you."

"Speak! What do you wish of Charles?"

"A short while ago you seemed struck with the beauty of a poor slave girl. You mean to make her one of your concubines. Be magnanimous towards the unhappy creature; do not corrupt her; render their freedom to her and her family; give those people the means to live industriously and honorably."

"It shall be so, by the faith of Charles; I promise you. Besides, I consent to withdraw my troops from your country, provided you pledge to me your faith as a Breton that, during my life, you will not make any incursions beyond your own frontiers. Give me your hand, Amael—your loyal hand in sign of acceptance."

"Here it is, Charles," promptly answered Amael, grasping the hand proffered by the Emperor. "Let it be the hand of a traitor, and that it fall under the axe if our people break the promise! We shall live at peace with you. If your descendants respect our liberties, we shall live at peace with them."

"Amael, it is sworn!"

"Charles, it is accepted and sworn!"

"Instead of returning to Aix-la-Chapelle, you and your grandson shall spend the night in the pavilion of the forest. To-morrow, at early daybreak, I shall have your baggage forwarded to you, together with an escort, charged to accompany you as far as the frontiers of Armorica. You shall depart without delay."

"Your directions will be followed to the letter."

"I shall now return to the pavilion alone with my daughter. I shall tell my courtiers that I found her in the hut. Alack! the calumnies of the court are cruel. People will not believe in the innocence of Thetralde, and if, besides, they should learn that she spent a part of the night with your grandson in that obscure retreat, they will take for granted all that they now impute to her sisters. Oh! My father's heart bleeds strangely. I have loved my daughters too much. I have been too indulgent towards them! And then also, my continuous wars beyond my own kingdom, together with the affairs of state, have prevented me from watching over my children. And yet, during my absence, I always left them in the charge of priests. Neither were they left idle; they embroidered chasubles for the bishops! But, it seems that our Lord God, who has ever and otherwise stood at my side, has willed it so, that I be struck in my family. His will be done! I am an unhappy father!" Charles thereupon called to the Roman:

"Octave, nobody—do you understand me, nobody—must know that my daughter spent a part of the night in this hut with that young man. Evil tongues do not spare even the chastest and most admirable souls. The secret of this night is known only by me, my daughter, and these two Bretons. I am as certain of their discretion as of my own and Thetralde's. You are lost if but a word of this adventure circulates at court. It is from you alone that it can have proceeded. If, on the contrary, you help me to keep the secret, you may rely upon increasing favors from me."

"August Emperor, I shall carry that secret with me into my grave."

"I rely upon it. Fetch me my horse and my daughter's. You are to accompany us to the hunting pavilion, and thence to Aix-la-Chapelle. I will place you in command of the escort that I give these two hostages to return to their own country. I shall furnish you with an order to the commander of my army in Brittany. You will start to-morrow, early, with the escort to the pavilion of the forest, and you will thence depart for Armorica."

Octave bowed, and the Emperor proceeded, addressing Amael:

"The moon has risen. It sheds sufficient light upon the route. Jump upon your horse, with your grandson. Follow this avenue of trees until you reach a clearing. Wait there. You will shortly be sent for. I shall despatch my messengers to take you to the pavilion, where you are to stay until

your departure early to-morrow morning. And now, Adieu!"

Amael returned to his grandson, whom he found in a deep study, seated on the stump of a tree that bordered the route. The lad was silently weeping with his face hidden in his hands, and heard not the steps of his grandfather approaching him.

"Come, my boy," said Amael to him in a mild and grave voice. "Let us to horse, and depart."

"Depart!" exclaimed Vortigern, with a tremor, rising impetuously to his feet and wiping with his hand the tears that moistened his face.

"Yes, my boy! To-morrow we start for Brittany, where you will see again your mother and sister. The nobility of your conduct has borne its fruit. We are free. Charles recalls his troops from Brittany."

* * * * * * *

Shortly after our return home from Aix-la-Chapelle, my grandfather, Amael, wrote the above narrative, which I have faithfully joined to the preceding ones of our family. Myself, Vortigern, buried my grandfather not long after at the ripe age of one hundred and five years, shortly after my own marriage with the loving Josseline. Charles the Great died at Aix-la-Chapelle in the year 814.

# PART II.

# THE CONQUEST OF BRITTANY

## CHAPTER I.

### IN THE BLACK MOUNTAINS.

In the year 818, seven years after Amael and his grandson Vortigern left the court of Charles, the Emperor of the Franks, to return to their home in Brittany, three riders, accompanied by a footman, were one evening painfully climbing one of the steep hills of the ridge of the Black Mountains, that raise their rugged ribs to the southwest of Armorica. When, having reached the top of the rocky pile over which the path wound its way, the travelers looked below, they saw at their feet a long chain of plains and hillocks, some covered with rye and wheat ready for the harvesters, others running northward like vast carpets of heather. Here and yonder, vast moors also were perceived stretching out as far as the eye could follow. A few straggling villages, reached by an avenue of trees, raised the roofs of their houses in the midst of impassible bogs that served for natural defences. The panorama was enlivened by herds of black sheep that browsed over the ruddy heath or the green valleys, watered by innumerable running streams. Among the green were also seen steers and cows, and especially a large number of horses of the Breton stock, strong for the plow, fiery in war.

The three riders, preceded by the footman, now proceeded to descend the further slope of the rugged hill. One of the three, clad in ecclesiastical robes, was Witchaire, considered one of the richest abbots of Gaul. The vast lands of his almost royal abbey bordered on the frontiers of Armorica. His two companions, on horseback like himself, were monks belonging to his dependency, and both wore the garb of the religious Order of St. Benoit. The two monks rode behind the abbot at a little distance, leading between them a packsaddle mule loaded with the baggage of their superior, a man of short stature, sharp eye, and a smile that was at times pious, at other times cunning. The mountain guide, a robust, thick-set man in the vigor of life, wore the antique costume of the Breton Gauls—wide breeches of cloth held at the waist by a leather belt, a jacket of wool, and, hanging from his shoulders on the same side with his wallet, a cloak of goat-skin, although the season was summer. His hair, only partly covered with a woolen cap, fell over his shoulders. From time to time he leaned upon his *pen-bas*, a long staff made of holly and terminating in a crook.

The burning August sun, now at its hottest, darted its rays upon the guide, the two monks and Abbot Witchaire. Reining in his horse, the latter said to the guide:

"The heat is suffocating; these granite rocks radiate it upon us as hot as if they issued from a furnace; our mounts are exhausted. I decry yonder, at our feet, a thick forest; could you not lead us to it? We could then take rest in the shade."

Karouer, the guide, shook his head, and answered, pointing with his *pen-bas* in the direction of the dense woods: "To reach them we would have to make a leap of two hundred feet, or a circuit of nearly three leagues over the mountains. Which shall it be?"

"Let us, then, pursue our route, my trusty guide. But tell us how long will it take us to arrive in the valley of Lokfern?"

"Look yonder, below, away below, close to the horizon. Do you see the last of those bluish crests? That is the Menez-c'Hom, the highest peak of the Black Mountains. The other peak towards the west, and lying somewhat nearer, is Lach-Renan. It is between those two peaks that lies the valley of Lokfern, where Morvan, the husbandman and Chief of Brittany lives."

"Are you certain that he will be at his farm-house?"

"A husbandman always returns to his farm-house after sunset. We shall find him there."

"Do you know Morvan personally?"

"I am of his tribe. I fought under him at the time of our last struggles against the Franks, when Charles, the Emperor, lived."

"Is this Morvan married, do you know?"

"His wife Noblede is the worthy spouse of Morvan. She is of the stock of Joel. That says everything. We honor and venerate her."

"Who is that Joel, whom you mentioned?"

"One of the worthiest men, whose memory Armorica has preserved green. His daughter, Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sen, offered her own life in sacrifice for the safety of Gaul when the Romans invaded these parts."

"I have been told that your people apprehend an invasion of the Franks in Brittany, and that you are making ready for a declaration of war from Louis the Pious, son of the great Charles."

"Have you seen any preparations for war since you crossed our frontier?"

"I have seen the husbandmen in the fields, the shepherds leading their flocks, the cities open and tranquil. But it is known that in your country, woodmen, husbandmen, shepherds and town folks transform themselves into soldiers at a moment's notice."

"Yes, when our country is threatened with invasion."

"And do you apprehend such an invasion?"

Karouer looked at the abbot fixedly, smiled sarcastically, made no answer, whistled, and presently broke out into a Breton song, mechanically whirling his *pen-bas* as he strode rapidly forward in the lead of the three monks.

Night drew on. Karouer and the dignitaries whom he guided, having been all day on the march, were now approaching one of the highest points on the mountain path that they had been following, when, struck by an unexpected spectacle, Witchaire suddenly reined in his horse.

The sight that took the abbot by surprise was, indeed, startling. A flame, hardly distinguishable by reason of its great distance, and yet perceptible on the horizon, whose outlines the dusk had not yet wholly blotted out, had barely arrested his attention, when, almost instantaneously, similar tongues of fire gradually shot up from the distant tops of the long chain of the Black Mountains. The fires gained in brilliancy and size in the measure that they broke out nearer and nearer to the spot where the abbot stood. Suddenly, only twenty paces away from him, the startled prelate perceived a bluish gleam through a dense smoke. The gleam speedily changed into a brilliant flame, that, shooting upwards toward the starry sky, spread a light so bright that the abbot, his monks, his guide, the rocks round about and a good portion of the crag of the mountain stood illumined as if at noon. A few minutes later similar bonfires continued to be kindled from hill to hill, tracing back, as it seemed, the route that the travelers had left behind, and losing themselves in the distance in the evening haze. The abbot remained mute with stupefaction. Karouer emitted three times a gutteral and loud cry resembling that of a night bird. A similar cry, proceeding from behind the plateau of rocks where the nearest bonfire was burning, responded to the signal from Karouer.

"What fires are these that are springing up from hill-top to hill-top?" the abbot inquired with intense curiosity the moment he recovered from his astonishment. "It must be some signal."

"At this moment," answered Karouer, "similar fires are burning from all the hill-tops of Armorica, from the mountains of Arres to the Black Mountains and the ocean."

"But to what purpose?"

As was his wont, Karouer made no answer to such pointed interrogatories, but striking up some Breton song, quickened his steps, while he whirled his *pen-bas* in the air.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BRETON CHIEF.

The home of Morvan, the husbandman, who was chosen Chief of the Chiefs of Brittany, was located about the middle of the valley of Lokfern, and nestled among the last spurs of the Black Mountains. A strong system of palisades, constructed of tough trunks of oak fastened together by means of stout cross-beams, and raised on the near side of deep ditches, defended the approaches of the farm-house. Outside of the fortified enclosure, a forest of centenarian oaks extended to the north and east; to the south, green meadows sloped gently towards the windings of a swift running river that was bordered with beeches and alders.

The house of Morvan, its contiguous barns, kennels and stables, had the rough exterior of the Gallic structures of olden days. A sort of rustic porch shaded the main entrance to the house. Under this porch, and enjoying the close of the delightful summer day, were Noblede, the spouse of Morvan, and Josseline, the young wife of Vortigern. The latter, a radiant woman of smiling beauty, was suckling her latest born, with her other two children, Ewrag and Rosneven, respectively four and five years of age, at her side. Caswallan, a Christian druid, an aged man of venerable appearance, whose beard vied in whiteness with his long robe, smiled tenderly upon little Ewrag, whom he held on his knees. Noblede, Morvan's wife and sister of Vortigern, now about thirty years of age, was a woman of rare comeliness, although her features bore the stamp of a rooted sadness. Ten years a wife, Noblede had not yet tasted the sweets of motherhood. Her grave aspect and her high stature recalled those matrons, who, in the days of Gaul's independence, sat loyally by the side of their husbands at the supreme councils of the nation.[C] Noblede and Josseline were spinning, while the other women and daughters of Morvan's household busied themselves with the preparations for the evening meal, or in the other domestic occupations, such as replenishing with forage the stalls that the cattle were to find ready upon their return from the fields. The Christian druid Caswallan, with Ewrag, the second child of the blonde Josseline, on his knees, had just finished making the boy recite his lesson in religion under the following symbolic forms:

"White child of the druid, answer me, what shall I tell you?"

"Tell me the parts of the number three," the child would answer, "make them known to me, that I may learn them to-day."

"There are three parts of the world—three beginnings and three ends to man as to the oak—three celestial kingdoms, fruits of gold, brilliant flowers and little children who laugh. These three kingdoms, where the fruits of gold, the brilliant flowers and the children who laugh are found, my little Ewrag, are the worlds in which those, who in this world have performed pure and celestial acts, will be successively born again and will continue to live with ever increasing happiness. Now, what must we be in order to perform such acts?"

"We must be wise, good and just," the child would reply. "Furthermore death must not be feared, because we are born again and again, from world to world with an ever renewed body. We must love Brittany like a tender mother—and bravely defend her against her enemies."

"Yes, my child," broke in Noblede, drawing her brother's child to herself. "Always remember those sacred words: 'To love and defend Brittany';" and Morvan's wife tenderly embraced Ewrag.

"Mother! mother!" cried up little Rosneven, joyfully clapping his hands and rushing out of the porch followed by his brother Ewrag: "Here is father!"

Caswallan, Noblede and Josseline rose at the gladsome cries of the child and walked out towards two large wagons heavily laden with golden sheaves, and drawn by a yoke of oxen.

Morvan and Vortigern were seated in front of one of the wagons surrounded by a considerable number of men and lads belonging to the household, or to the tribe of the Chief of the Chiefs, carrying in their hands the sickles, the forks and the rakes used by the harvesters. At a little distance behind them came the shepherds with their flocks whose bells were heard clinking from the distance. Morvan, in the vigor of life, robust and thick-set, like most of the inhabitants of the Black Mountains, wore their rustic garb—wide breeches of coarse white material, and a linen shirt that exposed his sunburnt chest and neck. His long hair, auburn like his thick beard, framed his manly face. His forehead was high; his eyes intrepid and piercing. As to Vortigern, the maturer gravity of manhood, of husband and father, had succeeded the flower of youth. His looks were expressive of sweet delight at the sight of the two boys who had ran out to meet him. He jumped down from the wagon and embraced them affectionately while he looked for his wife and sister, who, accompanied by Caswallan, were not long in joining him.

"Dear wife, the harvest will be plentiful," said Morvan to Noblede, and pointing to the overloaded wagons, he added: "Have you ever seen more beautiful wheat, or more golden sheaves? Look at them and wonder!"

"Morvan," put in Josseline, "you are this year harvesting earlier than customary. We, of the region of Karnak would leave our wheat to ripen on the stalk fully two weeks longer. Not so, Vortigern?"

"No, my sweet Josseline," answered her husband, "I shall follow Morvan's example. We shall

return home to-morrow, so as to start taking in the harvest as soon as possible."

"I am going to furnish you with still more matter for astonishment," Morvan proceeded. "Instead of leaving the sheaves in the barn that the grain may ripen, this wheat that you see there, and that was cropped only to-day, will be threshed this very night. Vortigern and myself will not be the only ones to ply the flails on the threshing-floor of the barn. So, then, Noblede, let us have supper early, and then to work!"

"What, Morvan!" exclaimed Josseline, "after this tiring day's work, spent in gathering in the crop, do you and Vortigern mean to spend the night at work, and threshing, at that?"

"It will be a cheerful night, my Josseline," put in Vortigern. "While we shall be threshing the wheat, you will sing us some songs, Caswallan will recite to us some old legend, and we shall stave in a barrel of hydromel to cheer the laborers who have come to join us. Work goes hand in hand with pleasure."

"Vortigern," the Christian druid said, smiling, "do you, perchance, think that my arms are so much enfeebled by old age that I could no longer wield a flail? I mean to help you at work."

"And we?" put in Josseline, laughing merrily, "we, the daughters and wives of the field-laborers, did we, perchance, lose the skill of carrying the wheat to the threshing-floor, or of bagging the grain?"

"And we?" Ewrag and his brother Rosneven cried in turn, "could not we also carry a stalk, six stalks, twenty stalks?"

"Oh! you are brave boys, my little ones," exclaimed Vortigern, embracing his children, while Morvan said to his wife:

"Noblede, do not forget to have the guest's chamber in order and supplied with food."

"Do you expect any guests, Morvan?" inquired Josseline, with great curiosity. "They will be welcome; they will assist us at the threshing to-night."

"My beloved Josseline," answered the Chief of the Chiefs, smiling, "the guests whom I expect eat the choicest of wheat, but never take the trouble of either sowing or harvesting. They belong to a class of people who live on the fat of the land."

"The guest's chamber is always ready," replied Noblede; "the floor is strewn with fresh leaves. Alack! No one occupied it since it was last occupied by Amael."

"Worthy grandfather!" exclaimed Vortigern with a sigh.

"He came to us only to languish a few weeks and pass away."

"May his memory be blessed, as was his life," said Josseline. "I knew him only a very short while, but I loved and venerated him like my father."

The family of Morvan, together with the rest of his tribe who cultivated his lands in common with himself, men, women and children, about thirty in all, presently sat down to a long table, placed in a large hall that served at once for kitchen, refectory and a place of assembly during the long nights of the winter. From the walls hung weapons of war and of the hunt, fishing nets, bridles and horse saddles. Although it was midsummer, such was the coolness of that region of woods and mountains, that the heat of the hearth, before which the meats for the supper were broiled, felt decidedly comfortable to the harvesters. Its flamboyant light mingled with that cast by the torches of resinous wood, that were fastened in iron clamps along the four walls. After the industrious group had finished their repast, Morvan was the first to rise.

"And now, my boys, to work! The night is clear, we shall thresh the wheat on the outside floor. Two or three torches planted between the stones on the edge of the well will give us light until the moon rises. We shall be through with our task by one o'clock in the morning, we shall sleep until daybreak, and we shall then return to the fields and finish taking in the crop."

The torches, placed at Morvan's orders around the edge of the well, cast their bright light upon a portion of the yard and buildings that were within the fortified enclosure. Several men, the women and the children, took a hand in unloading the wagons, while those who were to do the threshing, Morvan, Vortigern and the old Caswallan among them, stood waiting for the grain to be brought to them, their flails in their hands, having for the sake of comfort, stripped themselves of all their superfluous clothing and keeping only their breeches and shirts on. The first bundles of grain were placed in the center of the floor, whereupon the rapid rhythm of the flails, vigorously wielded by robust and experienced arms, resounded through the air. Apprehending a speedy war, the Bretons were hastening to take in their crops and place them under cover in order to save them from the ravages of the enemy, as well as to deprive these of food. The grains were to be concealed in underground caves covered with earth. Morvan, whose forehead began to be moistened with perspiration, said, while rapidly handling the flail:

"Caswallan, you promised us a song. Take a little rest and sing. It will inspire us in our work."

The Christian druid sang "Lez-Breiz," an old national song that ever sounded sweet on the ears of the Bretons. It began thus:

"Between a Frankish warrior and Lez-Breiz

A combat was arranged;
It was arranged with due formalities.—
May God give the victory to the Breton,
And gladsome tidings to his county.—
That day Lez-Breiz said to his young attendant:
Rise, furbish up my handsome casque; my lance and my sword;
I mean to redden them in the blood of the Franks.—
I shall make them jump this day!"

"Old Caswallan," said one of the laborers when the druid had finished the long and inspiring strain that warmed the blood of his hearers with martial ardor, "let the accursed Franks come again, and we shall say, like Lez-Breiz: 'With the aid of our two arms, let us make them jump again to-day'—"

A furious barking of the shepherd dogs, that for some little time had been emitting low and intermittent growls, interrupted at this moment the remarks of the laborers, and all turned their eyes towards the gate of the enclosure, whither the dogs had precipitated themselves furiously.

## CHAPTER III.

### ABBOT AND BRETON.

The strangers whose approach the dogs announced were Abbot Witchaire, his two monks and his guide Karouer. Preceded by the guide, who pacified the alarm of the watchful animals, the clerical cavalcade rode into the enclosure, while Karouer informed the abbot:

"This is the house of Morvan. We have arrived at our destination. You may now dismount."

"What are those torches yonder for?" asked the prelate descending from his horse, the reins of which he threw over to one of his monks. "What is that muffled sound I hear?"

"It is the sound of the flails. Doubtlessly Morvan is threshing the grain that he has harvested. Come, I shall lead you to him."

Abbot Witchaire and his guide approached the group of laborers, upon whom the torches cast a clear light. Morvan, intently at work, and the noise of the flails deafening the sound of the steps and voices of the new arrivals, failed to hear them. Not until Karouer had tapped the Chief of the Chiefs upon the shoulder in order to draw the latter's attention to him, did Morvan turn to look. Recognizing Karouer, the Chief of the Chiefs stopped a moment and said:

"Oh! Is that you, Karouer? What tidings do you bring from our man?"

"I bring him to you in person," answered Karouer, pointing to his traveling companion. "He stands before you in flesh and bone."

"Are you the Abbot Witchaire?" asked Morvan, slightly out of breath with the heavy work that he had been performing; and crossing his robust arms over the handle of his flail, he added: "As I expected your visit, I have had supper prepared for you. Come to table."

"I prefer first to speak to you."

"Noblede," said Morvan, wiping the perspiration that inundated his forehead with the back of his hand, "a torch, my dear wife!" And turning to the abbot: "Follow me."

Taking up one of the torches that were stuck at the edge of the well, Noblede preceded her husband and Abbot Witchaire to the chamber that was reserved for guests. Two large beds stood ready, as also a big table furnished with cold meats, milk, bread and fruit. After placing the torch into one of the iron clamps fastened in the wall, Noblede was about to withdraw when Morvan said to her in a significant tone:

"Dear wife, come and kiss me good night when the threshing is done."

A look from Noblede informed her husband that he was understood, and she stepped out of the guest's chamber where Morvan remained alone with Abbot Witchaire. The abbot immediately addressed the Chief of the Chiefs:

"Morvan, I greet you. I am the bearer to you of a message from the King of the Franks, Louis the Pious, son of Charles the Great."

"And what is that message?"

"It is couched in but few words:—The Bretons occupy a province of the Empire of the King of the Franks, and refuse to pay him tribute in homage to his sovereignty. Besides, the Breton clergy, generally infected with a leaven of old druidic idolatry, denies the supremacy of the

Archbishop of Tours. Such are the consequences of that regrettable heresy, of which Lambert, Count of Nantes, wrote to King Louis the Pious as follows: 'The Breton nation is proud and indomitable; all that there is Christian about them is the name; as to the Christian faith, its cult and works, they would be searched for in vain in Brittany.' Wishing to put an end to a rebellion so outrageous both to the Catholic Church and the royal authority, King Louis the Pious orders the Breton people to pay the tribute that they owe to the sovereignty of the Frankish Empire, and to submit themselves to the apostolic decisions of the Archbishop of Tours. In case of failure to comply, King Louis the Pious will, by means of his invincible arms, ruin the country and compel the obedience of the Breton people."

"Abbot Witchaire," Morvan answered after a few moments' reflection, "Amael, the grandfather of Vortigern, my wife's brother, entered into an agreement with the Emperor Charles to the effect that, provided we held ourselves within our own borders, there never would be any war between us and the Franks. We kept our promise, so did Charles. His son, whom you call 'The Pious,' has not troubled us until now. If to-day he demands tribute from us, he violates the provisions of the compact."

"Louis the Pious is King by divine right, sovereign master of Gaul. Brittany is part of Gaul, consequently Brittany belongs to him and must pay him tribute."

"We will pay tribute to no king. As to what regards the clergy, I have this to say to you: Before their arrival in Brittany the country never was invaded. Since a century ago, all that has changed. It was to be expected. Whoever sees the black robe of a priest, soon sees the glint of a Frank's sword."

"You speak truly. The Catholic priest is everywhere the precursor of royalty."

"We now have but too many of these precursors. Despite their continuous quarrels with the Archbishop of Tours, the good priests are rare, the bad ones numerous. At the time of the last war, several of your churchmen acted as guides to the Franks, while others seduced some of our tribes into treason by making them believe that to resist your kings was to incur the anger of heaven. Despite such acts of treason, we defended our liberty then; we will defend it again both against the machinations of the clergy and the swords of the Franks."

"Morvan, you look like a sensible man. Is it proposed to enslave you? No! To dispossess you of your lands? No! What is it that Louis the Pious demands? Merely that you pay him tribute in homage to his sovereignty. Nothing more!"

"That is too much—and it is iniquitous!"

"Consider the frightful misfortunes to which Brittany will expose herself if she refuses to acknowledge the sovereignty of Louis the Pious. Can you prefer to see your fields laid waste, your crops destroyed, your cattle led away, your own house torn down, your fellows reduced to slavery —can you prefer that to the voluntary payment of a few gold sous contributed by you into the treasury of the King of the Franks?"

"I certainly would prefer to pay even twenty gold sous, rather than be ruined."

"It is not merely your own earthly possessions that are at stake. You have a wife, a family, friends. Would you, out of vain pride, expose so many beings, dear to your heart, to the horrible dangers of war, of a war of extermination, of a war without mercy, all the more when, as you must admit, you can no longer find in the Breton people the indomitable spirit that once was its distinctive feature?"

"No," answered Morvan with a somber and pensive mien, his elbows resting on his knees and his forehead hidden in his hands; "no, the Breton people are no longer what they once were."

"To my mind, the change is one of the triumphs of the Catholic Church. In your eyes it is an evil. But, if evil it be, it is a fact, and you are bound to recognize it. Brittany, once invincible, has been several times invaded by the Franks during the last century. What has happened before will happen again. And yet, notwithstanding the mistrust that you entertain of your own powers of resistance, notwithstanding the certainty of succumbing, could you still wish to engage in the struggle in lieu of paying a tribute that curtails in nothing, either your own liberty or that of your people?"

Shaken by the insidious arguments of the priest, Morvan remained silent for a moment; after a short struggle with himself, he asked: "How high will be the tribute that your King demands?"

Witchaire thrilled with joy at Morvan's question. He concluded the Breton had decided in favor of base submission. At that juncture Noblede entered the apartment to give her husband the good-night kiss. At sight of her the Breton blushed. He allowed his wife to approach him without affectionately advancing to meet her, as was his wont. The Breton woman almost guessed the cause of the embarrassed manner of Morvan, and of the triumphant looks of the Frankish abbot. Concealing her grief, the woman walked to her husband, who remained seated, and kissed his hand. A tremor shook the Breton chief's frame; his will, shaken for a moment, regained its own command; he leaped up and passionately clasped his wife to his breast. Happy and proud at feeling the throbbing of her own heart answered by her husband's, the Gallic woman cried, casting a look of contempt at the priest:

"Whence comes this stranger? What does he want? Is he a messenger of peace or of war? Race

of priests, race of vipers."

"This monk is sent by the King of the Franks," answered the Breton chief; "I do not yet know whether he brings peace or war."

Noblede looked at her husband with increasing astonishment, when the abbot, considering the moment favorable to obtain the desired answer from Morvan, said:

"I am to return immediately. What answer shall I carry to Louis the Pious?"

"You cannot resume your journey without taking some rest," Noblede hastened to observe, while, with her eyes, she interrogated her husband, who seemed to have relapsed into incertitude. "It will be time enough to depart early in the morning. Remain here over night to recover your strength."

"No, no!" exclaimed the abbot with impatience, fearing the influence of the Gallic woman upon her husband. "I return immediately. Shall I take to Louis the Pious words of peace or of war? I must have a categoric answer."

The Breton chief, however, rose from his seat, and walking towards the door of the apartment answered Witchaire:

"I shall use the few remaining hours of the night to think the matter over; to-morrow you will have my answer." Saying this, and despite the insistence of the abbot upon an immediate answer, Morvan left the guest's room, accompanied by Noblede.

A few minutes later, Morvan, his wife, Vortigern and Caswallan, assembled at a secluded spot, under the spreading branches of a tall oak tree not far from the house, to consider the subject of Abbot Witchaire's errand to Brittany.

"What does this messenger of the King of the Franks want?" asked Vortigern of Morvan.

"If we consent to pay tribute to Louis the Pious and to recognize him as our sovereign, we shall escape an implacable war. I know not what answer to make. I hesitate before the prospect of the disasters that will attend a new struggle—the massacres, the fires."

"Hesitate! Yield to threats!"

"Brother," answered Morvan with deep sadness, "the Breton people are no longer what they once were."

"You are right!" put in Caswallan. "The breath of the Catholic Church, so deadly to the freedom of the people, has passed over this unhappy country also. The patriotism of a large number of our tribes has cooled. But, on the other hand, should you consent to submit to a shameful peace, then Brittany will be peopled with slaves before a century shall have rolled away."

"Brother," added Vortigern, "would you yield to threats, instead of reviving the spirit of Brittany in a sacred war against the foreigner? That would be to debase ourselves forever! To-day we would pay tribute to the king of the Franks, in order to avoid a war; to-morrow we would have to yield to him one-half of our patrimony, in order that he may allow us to retain the rest; after that we would have to submit to slavery with all its degradation and wretchedness, in order to be allowed to preserve our lives. The chain will have been riveted to our limbs, and our children will have to drag it during all the centuries to come!"

"Unhappy Brittany!" exclaimed Noblede. "Have we fallen so low as to begin to measure the length of our chains? Look at these three brave, wise and tried men, wasting their time in discussing the insolence of a Frankish king! There is but one word you can answer with—WAR! Oh, degenerate Gauls! Eight centuries ago, Caesar, the greatest captain of the world, and at the head of a formidable army, also sent messengers to summon Brittany to pay him tribute. The Roman messengers were answered with a beating, and chased with contempt out of the city of Vannes. That same evening, Hena, our ancestress, offered her blood to Hesus for the deliverance of Gaul, and the cry of war resounded from one end of the country to the other! Albinik the sailor, together with his wife Meroë, performed a journey of more than twenty leagues across the most fertile regions of Gaul, but then burnt down by a conflagration that the people themselves had kindled. Caesar saw before him only a waste of smouldering ruins, and on the day of the battle of Vannes our whole family—women and young girls, children and old men—fought or died like heroes! Oh! These ancestors of ours worried their heads little about the 'dangers of battle'! To live free or die—such was their simple faith, and they sealed it with their blood, and winged their flight to those unknown worlds where they continue to live!"

Noblede was addressing Morvan, Vortigern and Caswallan in these terms, when the abbot, who had left his apartment and inquired after Morvan from the people about the house, approached the oak under which the Breton family was in council. Although the moon was shining in all her splendor, the first glimmerings of the dawn, always early in the end of August, already began to crimson the horizon.

"Morvan," said Abbot Witchaire, "day is about to dawn. I can wait no longer. What is your answer to the messenger of Louis the Pious?"

"Priest, my answer will not burden your memory: RETURN AND TELL THE KING THAT WE WILL PAY HIM TRIBUTE—IN IRON."

"You want war! Very well, you shall have it without mercy or pity!" cried the abbot furiously, and leaping on his horse which the monks held ready for him he added, turning again to the Chief of the Chiefs: "Brittany will be laid waste with fire and sword! Not a house will be left standing! The last day of this people has arrived!"

As the priest uttered these words, his gestures seemed to call down curses and anathemas upon the Breton chief. Angrily putting the spurs to his horse and followed by the two monks, the prelate rode rapidly away.

The abbot had hardly been a quarter of an hour on the road, when he heard the gallop of an approaching horse behind him. Turning, he saw a rider coming towards him at full speed. It was Vortigern. The abbot drew in his reins, yielding to a last ray of hope. "May your coming be propitious. Morvan regrets, I hope, the insensate resolution that he took?"

"Morvan regrets that in your hurry you and your two monks should have departed without a guide. You might easily lose your way in our mountains. I am to accompany you as far as the city of Guenhek. There I shall furnish you with a safe guide for the rest of the journey; he will take you to our frontiers."

"Young man, you are, I am told, the brother of Morvan's wife. I conjure you, in the name of the safety of Brittany, to endeavor to change the insensate and fatal resolution of this man who happens to be the chief of your nation."

"Monk, the fires lighted last night on our mountains, and which, no doubt, you must have seen, were the signals of alarm, given to our tribes to prepare for war. Your King wants war—let his will be done. But, now, answer me a question. You come from the court at Aix-la-Chapelle. Could you tell me what has become of the daughters of the Emperor Charles?"

The abbot cast a look of surprise at Vortigern: "What is it to you what may have become of the Emperor's daughters?"

"It is now about eight years ago that I accompanied my grandfather to Aix-la-Chapelle. I there saw the daughters of Charles. That is the reason for my curiosity concerning them."

"The daughters of Charles have been consigned to nunneries by order of their brother, Louis the Pious,"[D] was the sententious answer of Witchaire. "May they, by dint of repentance, merit the pardon of heaven for their past and abominable libertinage."

"And Thetralde, the youngest of Charles' daughters, did she share the fate of her sisters?"

"Thetralde died long ago."

"She died!" exclaimed Vortigern, unable to conceal his emotion. "Poor child! So beautiful—and to die so young!"

"She, at least, never gave Charles cause to blush."

"And what was the cause of the death of that child? Could you tell me?"

"It is not known. Up to her fifteenth year she enjoyed a nourishing health. Suddenly she began to languish, grew ill, and barely in her sixteenth year, her light went out, in the arms of her father, who never ceased weeping for her. But this is quite enough about the daughters of Charles the Great. Once more, will you or will you not, endeavor to cause Morvan to abandon a resolution that can have for its only effect the ruin of this country? You are silent—do you refuse?"

Absorbed in the thoughts that the fate of the ill-starred Thetralde had started in his mind, Vortigern remained mute and melancholy. His thoughts flew to the young girl who died so young, and the touching remembrance of whom had long remained alive with him. Impatient at the prolonged silence of the Breton, the abbot put his hand on Vortigern's shoulder, and repeated his question:

"I ask you, yes or no, will you endeavor to cause Morvan to renounce his insensate resolution?"

"Your King wants war; he shall have war."

And Vortigern, relapsing into his own meditations, rode silently beside Witchaire until the two reached the city of Guenhek. There Vortigern entrusted the guidance of the abbot to an experienced guide, and while the messenger of Louis the Pious proceeded towards the frontier of Brittany, the brother of Noblede hastened back and rejoined his wife Josseline at the house of Morvan.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DEFILE OF GLEN-CLAN.

The defile of Glen-Clan is the only practicable passage across the last links of the Black Mountains—a mountain chain that constitutes a veritable girdle of granite as a natural protection to the heart of Brittany. The defile of Glen-Clan is so narrow that a wagon can barely thread it; it is so steep that six yoke of oxen are barely able to drag a wagon up its craggy incline, from the top of which a stone of considerable size would roll rapidly down to the bottom of the pass—a pass cut, like the bed of a mountain torrent, at the feet of immense rocks that rise on either side perpendicular over a hundred feet in the air.

A distant rumbling noise, confused at first, and becoming more and more distinct as it draws nearer and nearer, disturbs one day, shortly after the angry departure of Abbot Witchaire from Brittany, the otherwise profound silence of the solitude. By little and little the dull tramp of cavalry is distinguished; presently also the clanking of iron arms upon iron armor, and finally the rythmic tread of large troops of foot soldiers, the lumbering of wagon wheels jolting upon the stony ground, the neighing of horses and the bellowing of yoke-oxen. All these various sounds draw nearer, grow louder, and are finally blended into one steady roar. They announce the approach of an army corps of considerable proportions. Suddenly the mournful and prolonged cry of a night bird is heard from the crest of the rocks that overhang the defile. Other similar, but more distant cries answer the first signal, like an echo that loses itself in the distance. Silence ensues thereupon—except for the tumultuous din of the advancing army corps. A small troop appears at the entrance of the tortuous passage; a monk on horseback guides the scouting party. At the monk's side rides a warrior of tall stature, clad in rich armor. His white buckler, on which three eagle's talons are designed, hangs to one side from the pommel of his saddle, while an iron mace dangles from the other. Behind the Frankish chief ride several cavalrymen accompanied by about a score of Saxon archers, distinguishable by their long quivers.

"Hugh," says the chief of the warriors to one of his men, "take with you two horsemen, and let five or six archers precede you to make certain that there is no ambush to fear. At the slightest sign of an attack fall back upon us and give the alarm. I do not wish to entangle the gross of my troop in this defile without the necessary precautions."

Hugh obeys his chief. The little vanguard quickens its step and soon disappears beyond one of the windings of the pass.

"Neroweg, the measure is wise," observes the monk. "One could not advance with too much precaution into this accursed country of Brittany, where I have lived long enough to know that it is extremely dangerous."

"At the end of this defile, I am told, we enter upon even ground."

"Yes, but before that we shall have to cross the marsh of Peulven and the forest of Cardik; we then arrive at the vast moor of Kennor, the rendezvous of the two other armed bodies of Louis the Pious, who are marching to that point across the river Vilaine and over the defile of Mount Orock, as we are to penetrate through this one. Morvan will be attacked from three sides, and will not be able to resist our forces."

"I marvel that so important a pass as this is not defended."

"I furnished you the reason when I delivered to you Morvan's plan of campaign, that was forwarded to me by Kervor, a pious Catholic who came over to the Frankish side and submitted to the authority of our King. He is the chief of the southern tribes whose territory we have just crossed."

"I loved to see those people so docile to the priests; they furnished us with supplies, and at your voice knelt down as we passed."

"At the time of the other wars you would have dropped fully one-half of your troops in this region so cut up with bogs, hedges and woods. The change between now and then is great. The Catholic faith penetrates little by little these people, formerly so intractable. We have preached to them submission to Louis the Pious, and menaced them with the fires of hell if they attempted to resist your arms."

"Indeed, more than one of the troopers of the old bands who fought here at the time of Charles the Great, have told me they could no longer recognize the Bretons, who, in their days, were almost invincible. But for all your explanations, monk, I cannot understand how this pass comes to be abandoned."

"And yet nothing is simpler. According to his plan of campaign, Morvan counted with the resistance of the tribes that we have just crossed. In one day, without drawing your sword, you have cleared a track that would otherwise have cost you three days' hard fighting, and a fourth of your troops. Morvan, never apprehending your early arrival at the defile of Glen-Clan, will not think of having it occupied until this evening, or to-morrow. He has not enough forces at his disposal to place them where they would lie idle while he himself is being attacked from two other sides by as many army corps."

"To that argument I have nothing to say, my father in Christ, you know the country better than I. If this war succeeds, I shall have my share of the conquered territory; and, according to the promise of Louis the Pious, I shall become a powerful seigneur in Brittany, as my elder brother, Gonthran, is in Auvergne."

"And you will not forget to endow the Church."

"I shall not be ungrateful to the priests, good father. I shall employ a part of the booty in building a chapel to St. Martin, for whom our family has ever entertained a particular devotion. Could you, who are well acquainted with the customs of the Bretons, tell me what corners they hide their money in? It is claimed that they remove all their treasures when they are forced to flee from their houses, and that they bury them in inaccessible hiding places. Is that so?"

"When we shall have arrived in the heart of the country, I shall acquaint you with the means to discover those treasures, which are, almost always, concealed at the foot of certain druid stones, for which these pagans preserve an idolatrous reverence."

"But where shall we find those stones? By what signs are they to be recognized?"

"That is my secret, Neroweg. It will become *ours* after we shall have reached the heart of the country."

Thus conversing, the monk and the Frankish chief slowly ascend the craggy slope of the defile. From time to time, some of the horsemen, or foot soldiers, detached as scouts, ride back to acquaint Neroweg with their observations. Finally, Hugh himself returns and informs his master that there is nothing to cause any apprehension on the score of an ambuscade. Completely reassured by these reports, and by the explanations of the monk, Neroweg gives the order for the advance of his troops, the footmen first, the horsemen next, then the baggage, and last of all a rear corps of foot soldiers.

The army corps breaks up and enters the pass that is so narrow as to allow a passage to only four men abreast. The long and winding column of men covered with iron, crowded together, and moving slowly, presents a strange spectacle from the top of the rocks that dominate the narrow route. It might be taken for some gigantic serpent with iron scales, deploying its sinuous folds in a ravine cut between two walls of granite. The misgivings of the Franks, somewhat alarmed when they first began threading their way through a passage so propitious to an ambush, are presently removed and make place for unquestioning confidence. Already the vanguard that precedes Neroweg and the monk is drawing near the issue of the defile, while at the other end the baggage wagons, drawn by oxen, begin to set themselves in motion followed by the rear guard that consists of Thuringian horsemen and Saxon archers. The last wagons and the rear guard have barely entered the defile, when suddenly the lugubrious cry of the night bird, resembling that which had greeted the first arrival of the Frankish army, resounds again, and is echoed from peak to peak, along the whole length of the overtopping rocks. Immediately thereupon, pushed by invisible arms, several enormous boulders detach themselves from the surrounding rocks that an instant before seemed a solid part of themselves, roll and bound with the rattle of thunder from the top of the crest down to the foot of the mountain, and fall crashing upon the wagons, crushing a large number of soldiers to death, mutilating many more and disabling the train. In their paroxysms of death, or rendered furious by their wounds, the oxen crowd upon or roll over one another, and throw the rear guard of the Franks into such frightful disorder that it is wholly unable to make another step in advance; it is cut off from the gross of the troops by the lumber in its way; it is reduced to utter impotence. All along the rest of the length of the defile of Glen-Clan the Franks are in similar plight. All along the line, fragments of rocks roll down from the overtopping crests, crushing and decimating the compact mass of soldiers below. The gigantic serpent of iron is mutilated, cut into bleeding sections; it writhes convulsively at the bottom of the ravine, while from the summits on either side, now crowned with a swarm of Bretons, who kept themselves until then concealed, a hailstorm of arrows, boar-spears and stones rains down upon the bewildered, panic-stricken and impotent Frankish cohorts, caught and hemmed in between the two granite walls, from whose tops our men deal prompt and unavoidable death to their invaders. Vortigern is in command of these resolute and watchful Bretons. His bow in one hand, his quiver by his side, not one of his bolts misses its mark.

The butchery is frightful! The carnage superb! The Gallic war-songs and cries of triumph from above answer the imprecations of the Franks from below. A frightful butchery!

A superb carnage! It lasts as long as our men have a stone to throw, a bolt or a spear to hurl at the foe. His own, and the munitions of his companions being exhausted, Vortigern cries down from the summit of the rocks to the frantic Franks below, accompanying the cry with a gesture of defiance:

"We will thus defend our soil, inch by inch; every step you take will be marked by your blood or our own; all our tribes are not like those of Kervor!"

Saying this, Vortigern struck up the martial song of his ancestor Schanvoch:

"This morning we asked:
'How many are there of these Franks?
How many are there of these barbarians?'
This evening we say:
'How many were there of these Franks?
How many were there of these barbarians?'"[E]

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MARSH OF PEULVEN.

Vast is the marsh of Peulven. To the east and the south its shape is like a bay. From that side its edges are bordered by the skirts of the dense forest of Cardik. To the north and west, it waters the gentle slopes of the hills that succeed upon the last spurs of the Black Mountains, whose tops, empurpled by the rays of the westering sun, rise in the distant horizon. A jetty, or tongue of land that runs into the edge of the forest, traverses the marsh through its whole length. Silence is profound in this desert place. The stagnant waters reflect the inflamed tints of the ruddy twilight. From time to time flocks of curlews, herons and other aquatic birds, rise from amidst the reeds that cover the marsh in spots, hover about and fly upward, emitting their plaintive cries. Several Frankish horsemen appear from the side of the mountain. They climb the hill, reach its top, and rein in their horses. They sweep the marsh with their eyes, examine it for a moment, then turn their horses' heads and ride back to join Neroweg and the monk, whose forces, decimated shortly before in the defile of Glen-Clan, have been subsequently harassed without let on their further march by little Breton bands, who, placed in ambush behind hedges, or in ditches covered with dry wood, unexpectedly fell upon either the vanguard or the rear guard of the Franks, and, after bloody encounters, again vanished in that region so interspersed with obstacles of all sorts, impracticable for cavalry, and with which the Frankish foot soldiers are so utterly unfamiliar that they ventured not to separate themselves from the main column, ever fearing to fall into some fresh ambush. On horseback behind the monk, Neroweg stands on the summit of a hill not far behind the one that the scouts have just ascended. He awaits their return in order to continue his march. The vanguard has halted at a little distance from the chief. Further away rest the bulk of his troops. A small detachment of the rear guard was ordered to take its stand about a league further back in order to guard the baggage, the wagons and the wounded of the sorely harassed army.

The lines on the face of the Frankish chief denote deep concern. He says to the monk:

"What a war! What a war! I have fought against the Northmans, when they attacked our fortified camps at the confluence of the Somme and the Seine. Those accursed pirates are terrible foes. They are as dashing in attack as they are cautious in retreat, and they ever find a safe shelter in the light craft in which they come over the seas of the North as far south as Gaul. But by St. Martin! these accursed Bretons are fuller of the devil, and harder to get at than even the pirates! They were a source of trouble to Charles the great Emperor; they have become the desolation of his son!" And Neroweg repeats dejectedly: "What a war! What a war!"

The monk turns upon his saddle, and stretching out his hand in the direction traversed by the Frankish troop, says to Neroweg:

"Look toward the west!"

Turning his eyes in the direction indicated by the priest, the Frankish chief notices behind him tall columns of ruddy smoke rising at intervals from the hills that the army has left behind it. "Look yonder! Everywhere a conflagration marks our passage. The burgs and villages, abandoned by the fleeing inhabitants, have, at my orders, been delivered to the flames. The Bretons have not, like the Northman pirates, the resource of vessels on which to flee with their booty back to the ocean. We are driving the fleeing population before us. The two other army corps of Louis the Pious are, from their side, following similar tactics. Accordingly, we and they will meet to-morrow morning at the village of Lokfern. There we will find, driven back and heaped together, the populations that have been attacked from the south, the east and the north during these last days. There, surrounded by a circle of iron, they will be either annihilated or reduced to slavery! Ah! This time without fail, Brittany, never before overcome, will be subjected to the Catholic Church and to the power of the Franks. What if your soldiers have been decimated in the struggle for the triumph of the faith and royalty! The troops that you still have, will, when joined to the other army corps, suffice to exterminate the Bretons!"

"Monk," answers Neroweg impatiently, "your words do not console me for the death of so many brave Frankish warriors whose bones have been left to bleach in the defile of Glen-Clan and on the hills of this accursed country!"

"Rather envy their fate. They have died for religion; they are now in paradise, in the midst of a chorus of seraphim."

Neroweg shrugs his shoulders with an air of incredulity, and after a moment of silence proceeds: "You promised to point out to me where these pagans conceal their treasures."

"On the other side of the marsh of Peulven which we are now to traverse, lies a vast forest in which a large number of druid stones are found. Have the earth removed at their foot, and you will find large sums of money in silver and gold, and many precious articles that have been hidden there since the beginning of the war."

"When will we arrive at that forest?"

"This evening before nightfall."

"I do not wish to risk my troops in that forest, and fall into another ambush like the one of the

defile!" cries Neroweg. "The day is drawing to its close. We shall encamp to-night in the midst of the bare hills where we now are, and where no surprise is to be feared."

"Here are your scouts back," observes the monk to the Frankish chief. "Interrogate them before you make up your mind definitely."

"Neroweg," reports one of the riders who had scouted to the edge of the marsh, "as far as the eye reaches, nothing is seen on the marsh; there is no sign of any men; there is not a boat in sight. On the shores there is not a single hut, and there is no evidence of any entrenchment."

Impatient to judge by himself of the nature of the field, the Frankish chief, followed by the monk, immediately rides forward and reaches the top of the hill shortly before occupied by the scouts. From the eminence Neroweg beholds a vast expanse of marshy ground in whose numerous pools of stagnant water the last rays of the sinking sun are mirrored. The jetty, covered with sward and lined with a thick fringe of reeds, reaches clear to the other side, and is lost on the edge of the forest. "There is not the slightest fear of an ambush in crossing this solitude," says Neroweg with visible mental relief. "The march across can only take up half an hour, at the most."

"We have about an hour more of daylight left us," observes the monk. "The forest you see yonder is called the forest of Cardik. It stretches far away to the right and left of the marsh, seeing that, towards the west, it reaches the borders of the Armorican Sea. But that portion of the forest that faces the jetty is at the utmost a quarter of a league long. We could easily put it behind us before night, and we would then be on the moor of Kennor, an immense plain where you could encamp in absolute security. To-morrow at daybreak if it should please you, we can ride back into the forest and rummage at the foot of the druid stones for the treasures hidden there by the Bretons. Glory to your arms, and may the booty be large!"

After a few minutes of hesitation, Neroweg, tempted by cupidity, sends a man of his escort to give to his troops the order to march and traverse the jetty, a narrow walk of about three feet wide, perfectly even, covered with thin grass, and lying in plain view from one end to the other. Neroweg feels easy in mind. Nevertheless, remembering the rocks of Glen-Clan, he prudently orders several horsemen to precede the troops by about a hundred paces. Marching behind their chief, Neroweg's troops begin to defile along the jetty, which soon is covered with soldiers from end to end. Massed from the foot to the top of the hill, behind the advancing column, are the last detachments of Neroweg's army. They break ranks as fast as it is their turn to enter upon the passage.

Suddenly, from the midst of the clumps of reeds that rise at irregular intervals along the length of the tongue of land, the cry of night-birds goes up—cries identical with those that had resounded from the summits of Glen-Clan. Upon the signal, the muffled sounds of rapid hatchet strokes are heard. They teem to be the answer given to the cries of the night-birds. Instantly the seemingly solid walk sinks at scores of places under the feet of the marching soldiers. Woe is those who happen to find themselves over these hidden traps, that are constructed of wooden beams and strong chains concealed under a layer of sward! The scheme, devised by Vortigern, proves successful. The movable bridges can, at will, either support the weight of the troops that march over them, or tip over under their tread, by the dexterous knocking from under the loose boards the wooden pegs that are their only support.

Plunged in the water up to their necks, Vortigern and a large number of stout-hearted men of his tribe have held themselves motionless, mute and invisible in the center of the clumps of reeds that border the jetty near each of the traps. When the jetty is entirely covered with Frankish soldiers, the hatchets are, at a signal, plied with energy; the pegs drop out; and the passage is suddenly cut up by scores of gaps twenty feet wide. Pell-mell foot soldiers, cavalrymen and their horses tumble to the bottom of these suddenly opened ditches, and are received thereupon by the sharp points of piles providently sunk at the bottom.

At the sight of these death-dealing traps, suddenly gaping before them at their feet, and at the sound of the wild cries and imprecations uttered by the wounded and by those who are being pushed forward into the abysses by the crowding ranks behind, a tremendous disorder, followed by a panic, spreads among the Franks. Fearing the path to be everywhere undermined, the soldiers crowd back and forward upon one another in a frenzy of despair. The frightened horses rear, tumble down, or rush furiously into the marsh where they vanish together with their riders. The confusion and rout being at its height, the Bretons rise from their places of concealment among the reeds, and hurl promiscuously a shower of bolts upon the confused heaps of soldiers, now rendered insane with fear, and in their panic either trampling upon one another, or themselves being trampled upon by their uncontrollable steeds. Other war-crys respond from a distance to the war-cries struck up by Vortigern and his men. A troop of Bretons issues from the forest and ranks itself in battle array at the border of the marsh ready to dispute the passage if the Franks dare to attempt it The sight of these fresh foes carries the panic of Neroweg's troops to its acme. Instead of marching onward towards the edge of the forest, the front rank faces about, anxious only to join the body of the army that still finds itself massed at the entrance of the fatal causeway. The rush is effected with such fury that the deep trenches are speedily filled with the bodies of a mass of wounded, dead and dying warriors. The heaped-up corpses soon serve as a bridge to the fleeing Franks, whose rear the Breton bolts assail unpityingly. At the spectacle of the routed Franks, Vortigern and his braves strike up anew the war song with which they had assailed the ears of the distracted Franks at the defile of Glen-Clan:

"This morning we asked:
'How many are there of these Franks?
How many are there of these barbarians?'
This evening we say:
'How many were there of these Franks?
How many were there of these barbarians?'
Victory and Glory to Hesus!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FOREST OF CARDIK.

"What a war! What a war!" exclaim the warriors of Louis the Pious, leaving at every step some of their companions behind among the rocks and the marshes of Armorica. "Every hedge of the fields, every ditch in the valleys conceals a Breton of steady eye and hand. The stone of the sling, the arrow of the bow whiz everywhere through the air, nor miss their aim. The pits of the precipices, and the bottoms of the stagnant waters swallow up the bodies of our soldiers. If we penetrate into the forests, the danger redoubles. Every copse, the branches of every tree, conceal an enemy!"

Neroweg, having barely escaped with his life from the disaster of the marsh of Peulven, spends the night upon the hill with the remaining fragment of his army. At early dawn the next morning he orders the trumpets and clarions to call his men to their ranks. At the head of his warriors he again steps upon the narrow jetty of the marsh. He is determined to force his way into the forest of Cardik. Footmen and horses again trample over the heaped-up corpses in the wide trenches. No ambush now retards the passage of the Franks. By sunrise the last detachments have crossed the marsh, and all the forces still at the command of Neroweg are deployed along the skirts of the forest that is now serving as a retreat to the Gauls of Armorica, and where they have taken their next stand.

The primeval forest extends, towards the west, as far as the steep banks of a river that runs into the sea, and towards the east, up to a chain of precipitous hills. Furious at the defeat he suffered on the previous evening, the Frankish chief is hardly able to restrain his ardor. Always accompanied by the monk, he advances into the forest. The oaks, the elms, the ash trees, the birch trees, raise their gigantic trunks and interlace their spreading branches. Between these trunks, all is underwood, bramble and briar. Only one narrow and tortuous path presents itself to Neroweg's sight. He enters it. Daylight barely penetrates the walk through the dense vault of verdure, shaped overhead by the foliage of the stately trees. Thickets of holly seven or eight feet high fringe the way. Their prickly leaves render them impenetrable.

Unable to wander off either to the right or to the left, the soldiers are compelled to follow the defile of verdure. Laboring under the shock of their recent disasters, they march with mistrust through the somber forest of Cardik, speaking only in undertones, and from time to time interrogating with uneasy looks the leafy branches of the trees, or the thicket that borders the route. For a while nothing justifies the apprehensions of the Frankish cohorts. The silence of the forest is disturbed only by the rhythmic and muffled sound of their steps, and the clank of their arms. But even the silence itself nourishes the vague fears of the Franks. The defile of Glen-Clan and the marsh of Peulven also were silent! More than one-half of the rest of the army now left to Neroweg has entered the forest, when, reaching one of the turns of the winding path, the Frankish chief, who marches at the head of his horsemen accompanied by the monk, suddenly stops short. The path has vanished. Gigantic oaks and elms, a hundred feet tall and from fifteen to twenty feet in circumference, and bearing the evidence of having only freshly fallen under the axe of the woodman, lie heaped upon each other and so tangled in their fall across the route that their enormous branches and colossal trunks present an impassible barrier to the cavalry. Only foot soldiers might possibly scale the obstruction, and cut their way across with hatchets.

"Oh! What a war!" cries out Neroweg, clenching his fists. "After the defile, the marsh! After the marsh, the forest! I shall have barely one-third of my forces left by the time I join the other chiefs! Accursed Bretons, may the fires of hell consume you!"

"Yes, these heathens will burn! They shall burn until the last day of judgment!" responds the monk with deep vexation. "Courage, Neroweg! Courage! This last obstacle being overcome, we shall arrive at the moor of Kennor. There we shall join the other two army corps of Louis the Pious, and we shall all jointly penetrate into the valley of Lokfern, where we will exterminate these accursed Bretons to the last man."

"Have you seen me falter in courage? By the great St. Martin, it looks as if you were in league with the enemy, judging by the route you have guided us on! Already have you twice led us into an ambush, you miserable priest!"

"Have I not braved all the dangers at your side?" observes the priest, holding up his left arm,

that is wound in a bloodstained bandage. "Was I not myself wounded last evening when we attempted to cross the marsh of Peulven? Can you question my courage or fidelity?"

"How are we to find another route? The one barred is the only one, you told me, that crosses this forest, otherwise impracticable to an army."

The monk looks around; he reflects; but no answer proceeds from his lips. A prey to discouragement and increasing terror, the soldiers begin to grumble, when suddenly three quickly succeeding cries of the night-bird pierce the air. Immediately the Breton slingers and archers, ambushed behind the breast-work of fallen trees, assail the Franks with a volley of stones and arrows. Enormous oak branches, previously prepared, detach themselves from the tops of their trunks, and come down crashing upon the heads of the soldiers, killing or mutilating them. Anew, panic seizes the Franks; a fresh carnage decimates them. Cavalrymen thrown from their horses, foot soldiers trampled under the hoofs of the frightened steeds, all blinded, their flesh torn as in their fright they precipitate themselves into the thick of the prickly holly hedges—such is this day's spectacle presented to the delighted Breton eyes by the invading army of Neroweg. What an inspiring spectacle to the Armorican Gauls! The air is filled with the moans of the dying, the imprecations of the wounded, the threats hurled at the monk, now roundly charged with treason.

The carnage and the panic are at their height when, climbing to the top of the breast-work of trees whence he can gain a full view of the distracted foe, Vortigern appears before the Franks and calls out to them defiantly:

"Now you may try to cross the forest. Our quivers are empty. We shall retreat to replenish them and shall be ready to meet you in the valley of Lokfern."

Vortigern has barely uttered these words when his eyes catch sight of the chief of the Franks, who, having descended from his horse, holds up against the stones and bolts of his assailants, his white buckler, on which three eagle's talons are seen painted. At the sight of the device of his own stock's ancestral foe, Vortigern places his last arrow upon the string of his bow.

"The descendant of Joel sends this to the descendant of the Nerowegs."

The arrow whizzes. It grazes the lower border of the Frank's buckler, and penetrates his knee just above the jointure.

Neroweg falls upon the other knee, points out the Gaul to several archers in his vicinity, and cries:

"Take aim at that bandit! Kill him!"

The Saxon arrows fly through the air; two strike, and quiver where they strike, in the upturned branches of the tree on which Vortigern has mounted; the third enters his left arm.

The descendant of Joel quickly draws out the sharp-edged iron, throws it back at the Franks with a defiant gesture, and disappears behind the twisted branches of the improvised barricade.

Three times the cry of the night bird is again heard in the forest, and the Bretons disperse along paths known only to them, again singing as they go, the ancient war-song, the sound of whose refrain is gradually lost in the distance:

"This morning we asked:
'How many are there of these Franks?
How many are there of these barbarians?'
This evening we say:
'How many were there of these Franks?
How many were there of these barbarians?'
Victory, Victory for Gaul!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MOOR OF KENNOR.

About four leagues in width and three in length—such is the expanse of the moor of Kennor. It constitutes a vast plateau that slopes to the north toward the valley of Lokfern, and is bounded on the west by a wide river that pours its waters into the Sea of Armorica only a little distance away. The forest of Cardik and the last spurs of the mountain chain of Men-Brez border on the moor. The moor is covered throughout its extent by heather two or three feet high and almost burned out by the scorching sun of the dog-days. Level as a lake, the immense barren and desert plain presents a desolate aspect. A violent east wind causes the tall heather, now of the color of dead leaves, to undulate like a peaceful sheet of water. Above, the sky is of a bright blue on this sultry and windy day. An August sun inundates with its blinding light the desert expanse of heather,

whose silence is disturbed only by the sharp chirp of the grasshopper, or the low moan of the gale.

Presently a new element enters upon the scene. Skirting the bank of the river, a black and confused mass heaves into sight, stretches out its length, and moves toward the centre of the plain. It is the one of the three army corps led in person by Louis the Pious against the Breton Gauls. Long before its appearance, other troops, formed in compact cohorts, have been descending on the east the last slopes of Men-Brez. They, likewise, are advancing toward the plain—the place agreed upon for the junction of the three armies that had invaded Armorica, burning and ravaging the country upon their passage, and driving the population back towards the valley of Lokfern. The only division absent from the rendezvous is the contingent captained by Neroweg, which, since morning, has been struggling in the forest of Cardik. Finally it has issued in disorder from the woods, and re-formed its ranks. After incalculable labor, hewing, axe in hand, a passage through the thickets, leaving their cavalry behind, and forced to retreat upon their steps back to the marsh of Peulven, the troops of Neroweg at last succeed in crossing the forest. These troops now number barely one-half their original strength. They are reduced, not only by the losses sustained in the passage of the defile of Glen-Clan, of the marsh of Peulven, and the forest of Cardik, but also by the defection of large numbers of men, who, being more and more terror stricken by the resistance that they encountered, refused to listen to the orders of their chief, and followed the cavalry in its retreat. Neroweg's greatly reduced contingent now also appears in sight from the opposite side. The three army corps have descried one another. Their march converges towards the centre of the plain. The distance between them becomes so small that they are able to see one another's armor, casques and lances, glistening in the sun. The division of Louis the Pious, having been the first to descend into the plain over the hills of Men-Brez, halts, in order to wait for the other divisions. The troops under Louis the Pious himself are no less demoralized and reduced in numbers than the division under Neroweg. They have undergone similar vicissitudes during their long march, having had to cut their way across a seemingly endless series of ambushes. The sight of their companions arriving from the opposite side revives their courage. Henceforth they expect to fight in the open. As far as the eye can reach, the vast plain that they now have entered upon lies fully exposed to view. It can conceal no trap. The last struggle is now at hand, and with it the close of the war. The Bretons, crowded together just beyond in the valley of Lokfern, are to be crushed by a combined armed force that is still three times stronger than theirs.

The vanguards of the three converging divisions are about to join when suddenly, from the east, whence a dry and steady gale is blowing, little puffs of smoke, at first almost imperceptible, are seen to rise at irregular distances from one another. The puffs of smoke are going up from the extreme eastern edge of the moor; they spread; they mingle with one another over an area more than two leagues in length; by little and little they present the aspect of one continuous belt of blackish smoke rising high and spreading into the air, and from time to time breaking out into lambent flames.

The fire has been kindled at a hundred different spots by the Breton Gauls with the dry heather of the moor. Driven by the violent gale the girdle of flame soon embraces the horizon from the east to the south, from the slopes of Men-Brez to the skirt of the forest. It advances with rapid strides like the waves of the incoming tide lashed by a furious wind. Terrified at the sight of the burning waves that are rushing upon them from the right with the swiftness of a hurricane, the Frankish ranks waver for a moment. To their left, runs a deep river; behind them, rises the forest of Cardik; before them the plateau slopes towards the valley of Lokfern. Himself running for life towards the valley, Louis the Pious thereby gives to his troops the signal to flee. They follow their king tumultuously, anxious only to leave the moor behind them before the flames, that now invade the plateau from end to end, entirely cut off their retreat. Impatient to escape the danger, the cavalry breaks ranks, follows the example set by the king, traverses the cohorts of the infantry, throws them down, and rides rough-shod over them. The disorder, the tumult, the terror are at their height. The soldiers struggle with the horsemen and with one another. The fiery wave advances steadily; it advances faster than it can be run away from. The swiftest steed cannot cope with it. The all-embracing sheet of fire reaches first the soldiers whom the cavalry has thrown down and left wounded behind; it speedily envelopes the bulk of the army. In an instant the distracted cohorts are seen up to their waists in the midst of the flames.

By the valor of our fathers, it is the hell of the damned in this world! Frightful! torture! Excruciating pain! A cheering sight for the eyes of a Breton Gaul, harassed by invaders, to behold his merciless assailers in. Frankish horsemen cased in iron and fallen from their steeds, roast within their red-hot armor like tortoises in their shell. The footmen jump and leap to withdraw their nether extremities from the embrace of the caressing flames. But the flames never leave them; the flames gain the lead. Their feet and legs are grilled, refuse their support, and the men drop into the furnace emitting cries of despair. The horses fare no better despite their breathless gallop; they feel their flanks and buttocks devoured by the flames; they become savage. They are seized with a vertigo; they rear, plunge and fall over upon their riders. Horses and riders roll down into the brasier at their feet. The horses neigh piteously, the riders moan or utter curses. An immense concert of imprecations, of fierce cries of pain and rage rises heavenward with the flames of the magnificent hecatomb of Frankish warriors!

Oh! Beautiful to the eye is the moor of Kennor, still ruddy and smoking an hour after it is set on fire and consumed to the very root of its heather! Splendid brasier three leagues wide, strewn with thousands of Frankish bodies, shapeless, charred. Warm quarry above which already flocks

of carrion-crows from the forest of Cardik are hovering! Glory to you, Bretons! More than a third of the Frankish army met death on the moor of Kennor.

"What a war! What a war!" also exclaims Louis the Pious.

Aye, a merciless war; a holy war; a thrice holy war, waged by a people in defence of their freedom, their homes, their fields, their hearths; Oh, ancient land of the Gauls! Oh, old Armorica, sacred mother! Everything turns into a weapon in the hands of your rugged children against their barbarous invaders! Rocks, precipices, marshes, woods, moors on fire! Oh, Brittany, betrayed by those of your own children who succumbed to the wiles of the Catholic priests, stabbed at your heart by the sword of the Frankish kings, and pouring out the generous heart blood of your children, perchance, after all, you will feel the yoke of the conquerer on your neck! But the bones of your enemies, crushed, burned and drowned in the struggle, will tell to our descendants the tale of a resistance that Armorica offered to her casqued and mitred invaders!

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE VALLEY OF LOKFERN.

Decimated by the conflagration of the moor of Kennor, the Frankish army flees in disorder in the direction of the valley of Lokfern, that lies slightly below the vast plateau on which an hour before the three Frankish divisions have joined, confident that their trials are ended. Escaped from the disaster of the conflagration and carried onward by the impetuosity of their steeds, a portion of the Frankish cavalry that follows Louis the Pious in his precipitate flight, arrives at the confines of the plateau. Driven by a terror that left them no thought but to outstrip one another, the fleeing riders seem to give no heed to the sight that unfolds before them. At the foot of the slope that they are about to descend, stands the numerous Breton cavalry, drawn up in battle array, under the command of Morvan and Vortigern. It is only a cavalry of rustics, yet intrepid, veterans in warfare, perfectly mounted. Carried by the headlong course of their horses beyond the edge of the plateau and down the slope to the valley, the Franks rush in confused order upon the Breton cavalry that is drawn up as if to bar their passage; they rush onward, either unable to restrain their still frightened steeds, or conceiving a vague hope of crushing the opposing Bretons under the irresistible violence of their impetuous descent. The Breton cavalry, however, instead of waiting for the Franks, quickly parts in two corps, one commanded by Morvan, the other by Vortigern. One corps seems to flee to the right, the other to the left. The space from the foot of the hill to the river Scoer being thus left free by the sudden and rapid manœuvre of the Gauls, most of the Frankish horsemen find themselves hardly able to rein in their horses in time to escape falling into the water. A moment of disorder follows. It is turned to advantage by Morvan and Vortigern. The Frankish riders being dispersed and engaged with their steeds, Vortigern and Morvan turn about and fall upon them. They take the foe upon the flanks, right and left; charge upon them with fury; make havoc among them. Most of them are sabred to death, or have their heads beaten in with axes, others are driven into the river. During the fierce melee, the remnant of the infantry of Louis the Pious, still fleeing from the furnace of the moor of Kennor, arrives upon the spot in disorder. Trained in the trade of massacre, they promptly reform their ranks and pour down upon the Breton cavalry. At first victorious, these are finally crushed, overwhelmed by vastly superior numbers. On the other side of the river the rustic Gallic infantry still continue to hold their ground—husbandmen, woo-men and shepherds armed with pikes, scythes and axes, and many of them supplied with bows and slings. Behind this mass of warriors, and within an enclosure defended by barricades of heaped up trunks of trees and ditches, are assembled the women and children of the combatants. All their families have fled distracted before the invaders, carrying their valuables in their flight, and now await with indescribable agony the issue of this last battle.

Weep! Weep, Brittany! and yet be proud of your glory! Your sons, crushed down by numbers, resisted to their last breath; all have fallen wounded or dead in defence of their freedom!

The river is fordable for infantry at only one place. The monk who accompanies Neroweg points out the passage to the troops of Louis the Pious. They cross it immediately after the annihilation of the cavalry of Morvan. The Armoricans who are drawn up on the opposite bank of the Scoer heroically defend the ground inch by inch, man to man, ever falling back toward the fortified enclosure that is the last refuge of our families. Marching over heaps of corpses, the soldiery of Louis the Pious finally assail the fortified enclosure, all its defenders having been killed or wounded. The enclosure is taken. According to their custom, the Franks slaughter the children, put the women and maids to the torture of infamous treatment, and lead them away captive to the interior of Gaul. Ermond the Black, a monk and familiar of Louis the Pious in this impious war, wrote its account in Latin verse. The death of Morvan is narrated in the poem as follows:

"Then presently the cry runs through the ranks
That Morvan's head, the Breton chieftain's head,
Has been brought in unto the Frankish King:

To see it haste the Franks; they shout with joy
At prospect to behold the grisley sight.
From hand to hand the bloody head is passed,
Marred with the sword that hewed it from its trunk.
Witchaire the Abbot next is called upon
T’ identify the member, if it be
The head of Morvan, that redoubted chief.
He pours some water on the matted front,
He laves it, wipes the hair from off its brow,
And cries '‘Tis Morvan—‘tis his Gallic lour!'"

Thus Brittany, once lost to the Franks, is placed anew under their sway.

## EPILOGUE

Vortigern, the grandson of Amael, wrote this account of the war of the Franks against Brittany. Left for dead on the banks of the Scoer, he did not recover his senses until a day and a night had passed after the defeat of the Bretons. Some Christian druids, led to the spot by Caswallan, who had escaped the massacre, came to the field of battle to gather the wounded who might still be alive. Vortigern was of the number. From them he learned that his sister Noblede, the wife of Morvan, together with other women and young girls who took refuge in the fortified enclosure, had stabbed themselves to death in order to escape being outraged by the Franks and led into slavery. After Abbot Witchaire left the house of Morvan on his return trip to announce to Louis the Pious the refusal of the Armorican Gauls to pay the tribute demanded from them, Vortigern returned with his wife and children to Karnak in order to gather in the crops from his fields. The harvest being in, he left his family at the house of his parents, and returned to Morvan in order to join the latter's forces, and oppose the army of Louis the Pious. Immediately after his wounds were healed, Vortigern returned to Karnak, where he rejoined his wife and children. The Franks had not dared push their invasion beyond the valley of Lokfern. They contented themselves with leaving Armorica devastated and stripped of her bravest defenders. Yet is she not subdued. She but waits the moment to revolt anew.

Vortigern joined this narrative to the other narratives of his family, and he accompanied his own account with the two Carlovingian coins, the gift of Thetralde, one of the daughters of Charles the Great. These relics of the family of Joel now consist of Hena's little gold sickle, Guilhern's little brass bell, Sylvest's iron collar, Genevieve's silver cross, Shanvoch's casque's lark, Ronan the Vagre's poniard's hilt and his branding needle, Bonaik's abbatial crosier and Vortigern's Carlovingian coins, together with the narratives that accompany them.

Myself, Rosneven, the oldest son of Vortigern, who make this entry at the foot of my father's narrative, can only record here my father's death on the fifth day of February of 889. These have been sad years for Brittany, and also for our own family in particular. Our special sorrows proceed from the estrangement of my younger brothers, one of whom left Gaul and sailed to the country of the Northman pirates. I lack both the spirit and the will to recite these lamentable events. Perhaps my youngest brother Gomer, gifted with more energy, ability and perseverance than myself, may some day undertake the task.

THE END.

## FOOTNOTES:

[A] "The daughters of the Emperor Charles always accompanied him on his trips into the interior of Gaul. They were handsome beauties; he loved them passionately; he never allowed them to marry, and kept them all with him till his death. Although happy in everything else, Charles experienced in them the malignity of adverse fortune; but he buried his chagrin, and behaved towards them as if they had never given cause for evil suspicions, and as if rumor had never been busy with their names."—*Chronicles of Eginhard, p. 145, Collected History of France.*

[B] For Amael's story, see "The Abbatial Crosier," the preceding book of the series.

[C] "The Gallic woman equalled her husband in courage and strength. She sat in his councils of war with him. Her eyes were more furious when she was angered, and she swung her arms, as white as snow, and dealt blows as heavy as if they came from an engine of war."—Ammienus Marcellinus, *Notes of the Martyrs*, vol. XVIII, book IX.

[D] "The heart of Louis the Pious (Charlemagne's son) was, naturally, long indignant at the conduct indulged in by his sisters under the paternal roof, the only blot upon its name. Desiring, then, to amend these disorders, he sent before him Walla, Warnaire, Lambert and Ingobert, with the order to watch carefully, as soon as they should arrive at Aix-la-Chapelle, that no new scandal should occur; and to put

under heavy guard those who had soiled the majesty of the empire with a criminal commerce (with the daughters of the Emperor). Certain ones, guilty of these crimes, came before Louis the Pious to obtain pardon, which they received. Audoin alone resisted. He smote Warnaire that he died, wounded Lambert in the thigh, and slew himself with one blow of his sword.... Whereupon Louis the Pious decided to drive out of the palace all that multitude of women which occupied it in the time of his father."—L'Astronome, *Life of Louis the Pious*, pp. 345-346, *Collected History of France*.

[E] See "The Casque's Lark."

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