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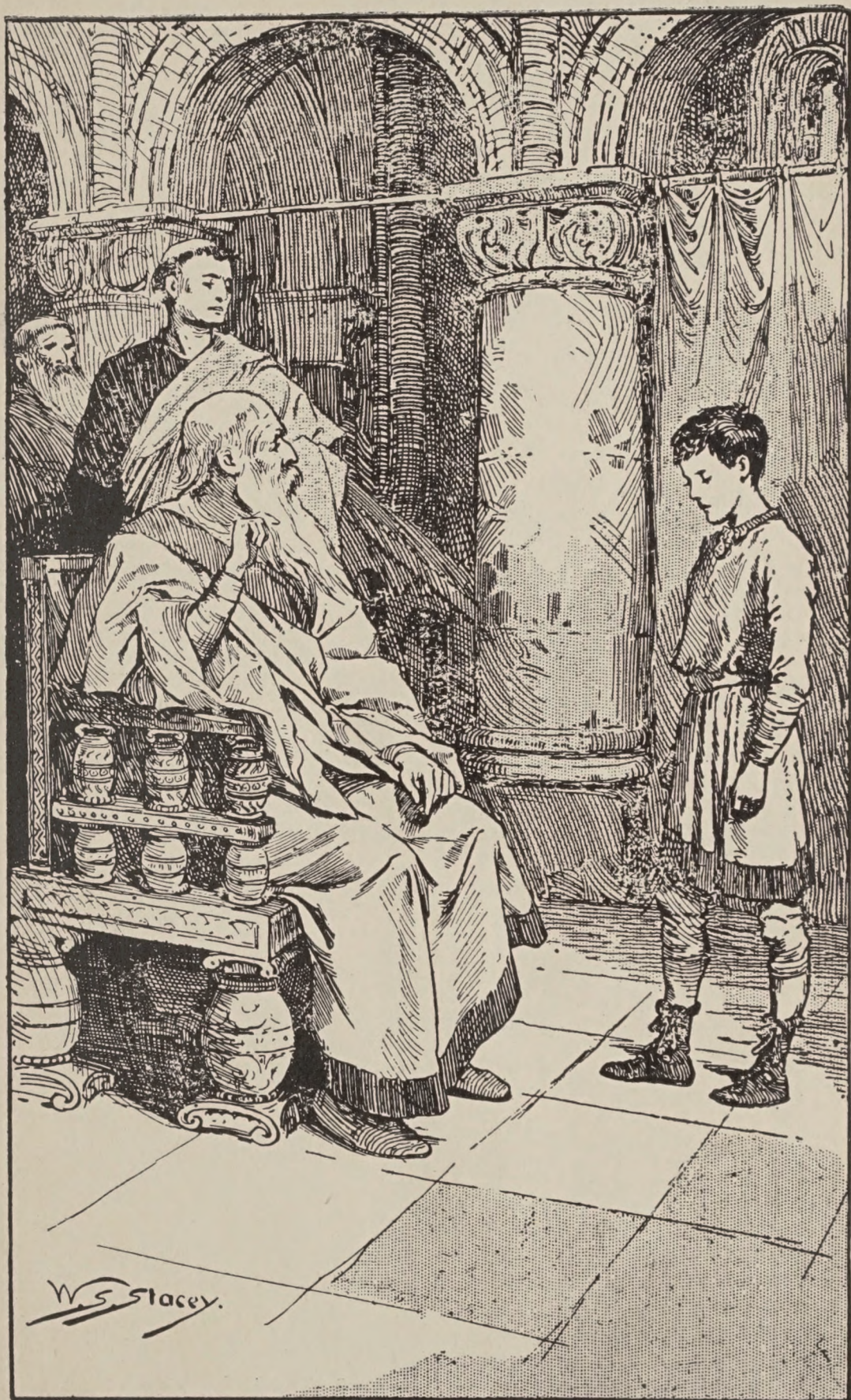
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'COME HITHER, MY CHILD,' SAID THE BISHOP. p. 15

THE
COOK AND THE CAPTIVE
OR, ATTALUS THE HOSTAGE

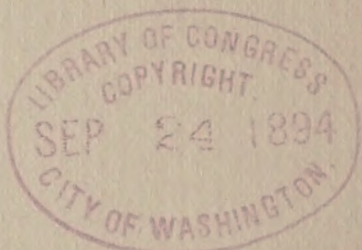
BY
CHARLOTTE M^{ony} YONGE

AUTHOR OF

"THE CONSTABLE'S TOWER," "THE SLAVES OF SABINUS," ETC.



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. S. STACEY



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THOMAS WHITTAKER
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1894

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PREFACE.

THIS story, so far as the captivity and escape of Attalus and Leo's devotion to him are concerned, is literally true in every point, and stands on the authority of the noted contemporary, the historian of the time, St. Gregory, Bishop of Tours. It may be read in Thierry's "Récits des Temps Mérovingiens," and in Madame Guizot de Witt's "Histoire de France en Chroniques," or, more accessible to English readers, the adventures are given in "Golden Deeds."

In one respect I have ventured to vary. Both the French versions call Attalus *le neveu de Grégoire*; but as the Latin *nepos* stands both for a nephew and a grandson, and as the good Bishop had formerly been married, and Tetricus was his son, it seems most probable (as well as most convenient to the story-teller) that Attalus was his grandson.

PREFACE.

The other characters are necessarily imaginary, but such wandering and eccentric Celtic pilgrims as Gilchrist were wonderfully numerous throughout the sixth and seventh centuries, and did much to prepare the way for more systematic missionary work. They were not often in full orders, but would be able to baptize. Roswitha, too, has many examples among the early Frank ladies.

The period is very little known, when Gaul had been divided between the various tribes of conquerors, Goths, Burgundians, and Franks. Most professed Christianity, but remained very savage and violent, the Franks especially so. The cities were, however, almost entirely Gallo-Roman, and within them all the Christianity, education, and civilization of the Latins were still preserved.

A word or two further on the names. The Franks, or Sicambrians, as they were also called, had a harsh, guttural sound, which can best be represented by *h*—Hlodwig (loud or famous war), Hildeberht (battle maid bright), and the like. The Latin writers represented this by *c* or *ch*. Hence we get Clovis and Childebertus; and French, altering the Latin, gradually made Hlodwig first Ludwig or Ludovicus, and finally Louis; though

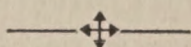
PREFACE.

in these days Clovis has been used as a Christian name. French historians talk of Childebert, Childe-ric, etc., but I have thought it best to make them Hildebert, etc., as nearest to the original, and therefore so used in more modern books.

The Frankish habits are gathered up to the best of my ability—where there is very little authority for them. The Burgundians, be it remembered, had a tolerable code of laws, and were the most civilized of the various tribes.

St. Remi, who baptized Clovis, died in the January of 533, and as Attalus's adventure is dated in 532, and his first shelter was Rheims, I ventured to bring them together.

THE COOK AND THE CAPTIVE



CHAPTER I.

LEO IN HIS KITCHEN.

LEO, Leo, give me a bit of cake." So spoke a boy of about ten years old, wearing a white serge tunic with purple borderings, and a round gold ornament hung round his neck.

"You, Attalus, I thought you were at your studies," returned Leo, a brawny young man scantily clad in dark wool, who was busy over a stove of tiles, in which were pigeon-holes filled with charcoal. He had just taken out a crisp-looking pile of little cakes from one of his small ovens.

"By good luck there is a pilgrim come who talks some odd tongue nobody can understand,

and they want old Philetus to try to make him out."

"No doubt he left you something to do in the meantime."

"Nay, now, good Leo, don't be cross; I shall know my lines of Virgilius Maro twice as well if you sweeten them with one of those delicious honey cakes. Why, it is all about the bees, and how to get a swarm."

"You read me off your bees, three times over, sir, and then I'll give you a honey cake."

"Leo, that's too bad! You might as well be old Philetus himself with his bald head and wrinkled brow."

"Come, come, or I shall be asking what you are doing in my kitchen, and calling Rhys to pin a cloth to your tail."

"Now, don't be cross, good Leo."

"I like to live and learn," returned the cook, who had indeed a most intelligent face, though very dark and heated and grimed with charcoal. "There, I see your tablet."

"Yes, the old wretch rubbed it over three times just because I had got a letter or two wrong in the spelling."

“There now, let me look. I can tell what that is, sir. That is M.”

“Yes, the first letter of *mella*. If he did not go and box my ears and efface it all because I had not put two l’s!”

Attalus was carrying a frame like a slate, but within it was a tablet of wax. On this he had written at his master’s dictation his lines of one of the *Georgics* of Virgil, scratching them into the wax with a style, a sharp-pointed steel instrument, and making all the letters capitals, and such as we call printed letters, with no divisions between the words and no stops, so that the only wonder is how any one ever read them at all.

“Nay, but let me have a bite to moisten my throat before I begin, good Leo, sweet Leo.”

“Ah!” said Leo, granting him a broken crumb, “you are not like your grandfather, sir, a very saint. Do you see that dish?”

“Dry stickjaw barley cakes, fit to choke a man,” said Attalus. “For the next beggar, I suppose?”

“Nay, they are for my Lord Bishop’s own eating. They are his dainties; I am going to put these honey cakes over them, so that his guests may never find out what are his provisions.”

“Rather he than I! I know it; and, moreover, that he has a glass colored red up to the brim that none may suspect him of drinking water but only wine. What good is there in that?”

“Surely you should know, sir; it is the way wherewith he subdueth the old self and the desires and passions thereof.”

“But what is the good if no one is to know of it, nor praise him for it?”

“That would take away all the benefit of his humility. Ah! he is a true saint.”

“I wish he was not! I wish he was not a saint or a bishop, but was content to be a senator still.”

“For shame, Attalus! I shall give you no more cake if you speak thus profanely.”

“I do not see the harm of it. If he was a senator still we should not have nothing but dull old priests and dirty beggars crouching about; but I should have a fine horse and a suit of armor, and not have all this dismal grammar and poetry to weary out my head.”

“You would never wish to be like a wild savage Frank or Burgundian?”

“Would I not! They have beautiful horses,

and they gallop, throw the spear and hit the mark, and no one dares to gainsay them. They hunt—I have heard their horns in the forest—and shoot and spear the wild boar and the stag, while we can scarce put the tip of our nose outside the walls.”

“But you would never give up the name of Roman to be a wild barbarian, and all your great forefathers—”

“I would. I would be free and get beyond this narrow bound, and have done with Virgil and Quintus Curtius and withered old Philetus, and all of them.”

“Ah! and Philetus will return to find you if you do not know your lines. Come, sir; first the bees and then the honey cake.”

Attalus with a groan began the lines in which the old Roman poet Virgil in his *Georgics*—a poem about husbandry—describes the mode of dealing with bees; drawling it out and moaning over it much as a boy of any century would do unless he had a real spirit of learning. It was, however, more to him what a task from the “Deserted Village” would be to an English boy, for Latin was his mother tongue, and, in spite of what

he had said, he was proud of being a true-born Roman, though these were very sad times for the Romans in Gaul, or indeed anywhere else.

The place he lived in may be found in the map of France, in the department of the Haute-Marne, by the name of Langres. However, the river Marne is probably the only thing that remains the same as it was in the year A.D. 530, and even that has altered its name from *Matrona*. *Attalus* knew the city by the name of *Andematunum Lingonum*, from the old Gaulish tribe whom the Romans had called *Lingones*; and the present name is taken from that tribe, most of the French towns having been called after the ancient Gallic clans instead of by the names the Roman conquerors gave them.

The Roman Empire had been overrun by many savage nations of the stock we call Teutonic. There were Saxons and Angles, as we all know, in Britain. There were Burgundians in the north-west of Gaul, Goths in the south, Franks in the middle, but they had for the most part not wrought as terrible havoc among the inhabitants as had been the case in England. The Goths and Burgundians had been Christians before they came

into the country, and they respected the Roman bishops and even the magistrates; and the Franks were converted not long after they had settled upon the banks of the Seine and Loire.

Most of the towns and cities had strong walls, and these wild men were like the Scot who said he had rather hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak. They did not interfere with the old inhabitants of these fortresses, except now and then to demand sums of money or jewels from them; and the inhabitants all held themselves tributary to the Roman Empire, but were able to govern themselves. Often they made their bishop their governor, and they generally chose one who was able to act as a statesman and manage their affairs with the barbarians. Gregory, the grandfather of Attalus, had been an excellent magistrate or senator, as the office was then called, at Augustodunum or Autun. After his wife died he took holy orders, and wished to live a retired life, but the men of Langres, knowing him to be as able and experienced as he was good and holy, elected him to be their bishop, and besought him with tears to accept the office and become their protector.

Thither, then, he moved, after his consecration,

with his son Tetricus and his little orphan grandson Attalus. It was a large household, for Gregory was a rich man, and used hospitality freely, though he lived sparingly himself. This kitchen of his—a place very unlike modern kitchens—was a low room fitted throughout with tiles, and with a charcoal stove full of pigeon-holes, one row of them holding the hot embers, those above, the food that was to be cooked. A table was at hand on which some cold meats were laid, and there were shelves holding the various utensils.

Just at present there was a pause in the operations, during which Leo stood listening to and sometimes prompting his young master. They were a great contrast. Attalus had a fair skin, rosy cheeks like a girl's, delicate features, and dark eyes, but his hair, cut short in Roman fashion, was light. Leo, on the other hand, had the very blackest and crispest of hair, and great eyes of the darkest hue with bluish whites, and not only his cheeks but his bare arms and legs were brown as if stained. His features were, however, straight and well-formed, and if the blood of a colored race mingled with his it was probably Moorish and not Negro. He had been born a slave in the family

of Gregory, and had been always happy and contented in his lot, for Christianity had much softened the life of servitude, especially with a good master. Leo's father and mother had been lawfully married in church, and always treated kindly and honorably, waited upon like relations through their old age, and buried with all the honors due to Christians, and he, being always intelligent, had early made himself useful and respected in the house; but he had in his youth preferred activity to learning, though, since his master had become a bishop, and moved to Langres, keeping his house full of priests, clerks, and the like, Leo had been seized with the ambition to become a scholar, and took every opportunity of picking up what learning he could from Attalus or any other of his housemates.

Supper was, however, near at hand. It might have been called dinner, for it was the only meal to which the household sat down in full order, and it took place at about five o'clock. Snatches of food were taken at other times of the day, and more luxurious households had a regular dinner at twelve, but Bishop Gregory hardly ever ate until the evening, and then he kept open house.

So Leo began in haste to take his meats out of their holes and to dish up.

Philetus's voice was also heard calling for Attalus, who had to hasten away to repeat his lesson, not sorry that Leo had insured his learning it.

Philetus was waiting in the court, which was turfed over, though the turf was much burned up by the sun. There was a fountain in the middle, and a colonnade of circular pillars and curiously carved capitals all round the sides, making a cloister, paved with beautiful glazed tiles forming an intricate pattern in red and yellow. There were benches, stools, chairs, and tables in the cloister, for except in the depth of winter it was the common resort of the house, and it served as Attalus's school-room.

Philetus was a deacon, a Greek, as might be seen by his clearly defined features. He was not young, and had been cast about a good deal in the world. He had lived through the sack of many cities, and could speak many languages besides the Greek in which he had been educated at Lyons, and thus he had been fitted, so far as acquirements went, to be the tutor of the young Attalus.

“Come, sir, I see you have been wasting your time in gluttony in the kitchen as usual,” he exclaimed.

By way of answer Attalus began to gabble off his lines headlong without a single error.

“Come, sir, this will not do. Let me hear them slowly and with the right accent.”

“Are not you disappointed of your box on the ear? I see your fist doubled.” And away rushed the boy far beyond Philetus’s powers of pursuit.

Ere long, however, he came, as running at full speed he turned a corner, with a bounce against a grave-faced person in a dark dress, no other than his Uncle Tetricus, a priest, and a rather severe man. He caught the runaway by the shoulder and demanded, “What means this, Attalus?”

“It means, father,” said Philetus, “that he has treated me with rudeness. I was called away to interpret for the holy man from Ireland, and I gave him a lesson to study. He wastes his time in the kitchen, gabbles something—I know not what—unintelligibly, and flees away that instant without a word.”

“He was going to cuff me when I had said the whole without missing a word,” responded Attalus.

“No answering again, sir,” replied Tetricus; “you who love the kitchen so well have no need of supper. Sit in that corner and study your lines, and half a dozen more for disrespect to your tutor.”

“But I said it perfectly, only he would not attend.”

“No replying again, I told you. Take your tablet and go into the corner. Think upon the duty of a Christian to submit in silence.”

Attalus durst say no more, but he went, violently kicking his heels, into the corner, stuck his iron style viciously into the stones till it broke, and then scribbled with the stump over the wax of his tablet. Heat was needed to take out the writing properly, but to destroy it in this way was a relief of a certain kind to a naughty boy, under a strong sense of injustice.

CHAPTER II.

THE BISHOP'S SUPPER.

WHERE is my little Attalus?" asked Bishop Gregory, looking round after blessing the food which was set forth upon a table shaped like a horseshoe, and with its outside arranged for guests, who could recline, in old Roman fashion, upon couches.

The Bishop was a grand-looking old man, with a bald head, but a little silver hair falling upon his neck beneath the remains of his tonsure, which in ancient Gallic fashion, like that of Tetricus and the other priests, had been a crown. His beard was long and white, and his garments were of white wool bordered with purple, a gold cross hung round his neck, and he had a sapphire ring on his finger, a delicate finger as of one who had dealt all his life with books. His cheeks were clear and beautiful with the fair pureness of a good old man's age, his eyes dark and still bright

and lively as he looked about for the darling of his old age.

“He was insolent to Philetus, sir,” said Tetricus, “and I therefore sent him into a corner of the cloister to learn his lesson and repent.”

“What was his insolence? Ask Philetus to come here and relate it.”

Philetus came, and bending low before his clemency, he told how Attalus had been sent to learn by heart the lines of Virgil to occupy him while his tutor was engaged with the holy pilgrim Gilchrist, then how he had escaped to the kitchen, and then on being called he had gabbled out something, no one knew what, headlong, and so ran off laughing.

“Are you certain that he did not repeat the lines?” asked the Bishop.

“My lord, I am not sure. He recited them off so fast.”

“Let him come hither and say them to me,” said the Bishop. “He deserves a more severe punishment if he merely pretended to say them; but if he did, and Master Philetus did not hear, well, it is the part of a wise man to have patience with the petulance of boyhood. Let the boy be called.”

Attalus came willingly. He knew that he had more justice if not indulgence to look for from his grandfather than from those who called him a spoiled boy.

“Come hither, my child,” said the Bishop. “What is this that I hear? That you did not treat Philetus as your tutor and governor.”

“Sir, he would not attend to my task, and was about to strike me, because he said I did not know it, when I did, and had just said it,” said Attalus, looking up with defiant eyes.

Gregory bade him repeat it, and this he did, perfectly.

“This was what thou didst repeat before?”

“Only I was in haste, and said it faster, and neither he nor my Uncle Tetricus would listen to me, but blamed me more for trying to answer them.”

“You have been saucy, but not so misbehaved as they supposed. You shall be restored to your place on telling Philetus you are sorry for your hasty manner.”

“Father, I, a Roman, ask pardon of a beggarly Greek?” cried the boy with flashing eyes.

“Alas, my son, pride like this abases any,

whether Greek or Roman! Philetus is thy tutor, and thou art bound to treat him with the respect due to his office, even as saith the law. A spirit like this of pride and contempt is far worse than the momentary impatience under provocation which I could have excused. If thou canst not school thyself to apologize to Philetus, thou must sit apart from the table and eat dry bread.”

Attalus only half heard the rather lengthy words of the good Bishop, at least he only took in that he must either ask the Greek's pardon or sup on dry bread, and all the pride of his Roman forefathers was rising in him to declare that he had rather live on bread and water all the rest of his days than humble himself to one whom he considered little better than a slave, nay, to whom he greatly preferred the slave Leo. He durst not make any answer to his grandfather, but he turned on his heel and went off into the farther end of the great dining-hall, and sat himself down on the mosaic tiles of the pavement.

Bishop Gregory sighed; but there were guests to attend to, and it might be best to leave him to himself. The pilgrim with whom Philetus had been engaged was brought forward, walking very

lame. He was a small, wiry, red-haired man, with his hair cut in a crescent shape, in the distinctive fashion of the Celtic churches, and wearing a coarse, scanty, reddish-brown garment, and he spoke Latin, but with an accent and pronunciation so different from that of the educated Gallo-Romans that it was no wonder that he had not been at first understood. He was on a pilgrimage to Rome, whither almost every Christian of much enterprise or desire to learn made his way in those days, to see the tombs of the martyrs, behold the full glory of worship, and study the faith as it was impossible to do in the barbarian lands.

He had much to tell which all were anxious to hear of the state of the Church of Ireland, now come to the second generation of its conversion. He looked about with great surprise at Gregory on his chair inlaid with ivory, and his attendance of clergy, priests, deacons, and subdeacons.

“This is a king!” he said, “a wealthier king than we have. No such bishops have we. Ours dwell in the cells of the monasteries, and go hither and thither as the abbot bids them.”

“The better for the bishop,” observed Bishop Gregory; “but is it also the better for his people

not to look to their spiritual head as the chief authority?"

"Ah! but 'tis the abbot who is the father and has the land. Such monasteries as you have here! They are castles and forts."

"'Tis our need against the barbarians."

"And what could the barbarians do at their worst but help you to the better keeping of your vow?"

"His monasteries are but clusters of huts," suggested one of the guests.

"The better for them. Their huts all stand about their church and their general kitchen and eating-room; for the rest, each man to himself. What can be better for their prayer and meditation?"

"Oh, then they do live in community like our own monks?"

Tetricus, afraid, perhaps, of a dispute on the comparative merits of the two systems, asked whether the guest had ever seen the great St. Patrick.

The face lighted up with a look of love and joy, transforming the worn, plain, and freckled features, as he told how, when quite a little boy, his mother

had taken him to the saint in his cell at Armagh to be baptized, and how the holy man had asked the child if he knew why he came.

“‘To become the servant of Christ my Lord,’ I answered,” said the pilgrim, “so they tell me, though I remember only the long beard and tender eyes of the ancient man; but he replied, ‘Servant, then, of His thou shalt be, little one,’ and he named me Gilchrist, for *gil* in our tongue signifies servant. My mother ever kept up in me the memory that a servant of Christ must be servant of all men, and seek to take the lowest place, and so she objected not that I should leave the kingship of our sept to mine uncle, and seek the cells at Armagh.”

“Am I mistaken?” asked Bishop Gregory. “Methought I had been told that Saal—no, a place with a name like holy Paul’s Jewish name, or that of the Israelite king—was the last home of the blessed Patrick?”

“The holy father is right,” returned Gilchrist; “Sabrelhall, or as we call it, Saul, was his best-beloved resting-place, and it was thence that he departed to paradise; but he had already chosen Armagh to be the chief see of Ireland—a fair spot

on the Ridge of the Willow Tree. Will my lord hear how he gained it?"

"Any deed of St. Patrick is worth hearing," returned Gregory.

"The hill belonged to a chief named Daire, who set store by it and would not give it, but offered a spot in the valley. A day or two later he sent the holy man a great caldron holding three firkins. '*Gratias agam*' (I will give thanks), said the saint. So Daire asked the messenger what said the Bishop. 'He said naught but "Gratzacham,"' replied the kerne. 'What a fool the fellow must be,' said Daire, 'to say naught but "Gratzacham" to such a kettle as mine. Go, slaves, and take it away.' He was obeyed, and the saint merely turned his head and again said his two words of thanks. 'What said he?' asked the chief. 'What, "Gratzacham" when I give, and "Gratzacham" again when I take away? He shall have it back again.' A third time the holy Bishop merely answered '*Gratias agam*,' and the chief was so struck with his meekness that he cried out that for these three 'Gratzachams' he should have the hill he sought. And when the Bishop went out to view the hill, behold, on the very spot he had chosen for the

altar, there lay a little newborn fawn, the mother roe standing beside to guard it. Some would have slain her, but the holy Patrick forbade them. He took the little fawn up in his arms and carried it to a safe place, the roe trotting by his side till he laid it down. The altar of our church, the mother church of Erin, is where the fawn lay."

As Gilchrist told this pretty tale, Attalus had crept nearer and nearer the better to hear the strangely accented Latin in which it was related. His grandfather saw his face of intense interest but carefully abstained from drawing on him the attention of the disciplinarian tutor or uncle, and only thanked the pilgrim and asked what more stories he could tell of the great apostle of Ireland.

So Gilchrist told what some of them already knew: how Patrick, of noble Roman birth, had been stolen from his home by Irish pirates, made a slave, and set to keep sheep on the mountain side; but how he ever said his prayers, about which he had been sadly careless at home, and how, after five years, a voice sounded in his ears at night calling on him to escape, at which he made his

way to the coast where a ship was ready to take him in, and he reached Bononia once more. But the thought of the heathens he had left returned on him, till he again had a vision of an Irish chief calling for his help. "Even as St. Paul had seen the man of Macedonia summoning him into Europe," commented Gregory.

Many a history had Gilchrist to tell, notably of the two daughters of King Lear of Connaught, who, going to the fountain of Cruachan in the early morn, Ethne the fair and Fedlima the rosy, saw the Bishop and his friends, white-robed, and singing their morning praise, and thought they were of the fairy race made visible, then listened, learned the faith, and were baptized. He told too, of Angus, King of Munster, who begged St. Patrick to consecrate and crown him. In the course of the ceremony Patrick unwittingly struck his pastoral staff absolutely into the king's foot and kept it there, while Angus, in perfect submission to his spiritual father, accepted it as part of the rite, never winced nor sighed, and the mischance was not known till the blood was seen running from his foot. Then when the saint, much distressed, asked his pardon, he said, "All is good to

me that comes in the name of Christ, and from my father.”

All this Gilchrist told, and ended by chanting to them the Latin translation of the “Breastplate of St. Patrick,” which he had given to King Leir of Ulster as a defense against all enemies, within and without. It ends with:

Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ at my right, Christ at my left,
Christ in the fort,
Christ in the chariot seat,
Christ in the ship,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

I bind to myself to-day

The strong power of an invocation of the Trinity,
The faith of the Trinity in Unity,
The Creator of the elements.

It is not clear how much Attalus heard of the “Breastplate,” for even as it began, after the story of Angus was finished, he had begun to weep. He was sobbing throughout the hymn in a low, repressed manner, and when it was ended he came forward, threw himself on his knees before his grandfather, and cried in a broken voice, “Oh, for-

give me, forgive me, for my proud speech and idle ways! I ask Philetus's pardon, and I will never, never talk of beggarly Greeks again."

"God bless thee, my child, as thou hast felt Christ in those holy words, and forgive thee all thy sins, as no doubt He forgives thee these," said the Bishop, laying his hand on the boy's head, raising him, and kissing him. "Philetus, thou forgivest him?"

"I have no other choice, my lord," returned Philetus, rather vexed that the boy had not been made to humiliate himself personally, and muttering to the subdeacon, his neighbor, "It was a charm. Such Latin as that must be no better than a charm."

CHAPTER III.

GARFRIED OF THE BLUE SWORD.

THE pilgrim, Gilchrist, turned out to be almost incapable of standing the next morning. He had trodden upon the sharp remains of a broken ax or dagger on some old battle-field, and, rusty as it was, it had penetrated the tough skin of his bare foot, and the rust had poisoned the wound. He must have been in much pain all the evening, though after he had limped in and had washed his feet he had let no token escape him; but it was now recollected that he had talked all supper-time instead of eating, and the subdeacon, Lucius, who lay next him on the hall floor, believed that he had been saying prayers in his barbarous Irish all night.

“Talk of the Spartan boy!” said Philetus, who knew something of surgery and dressed his wound, “even barbarian Christians can go far beyond him.”

Gregory was obliged to use his episcopal authority and command the zealous pilgrim to remain without moving upon one of the couches, not even attempting to come to church, as he was actually trying to do on his hands and knees. He was forced to lie still under pain of being unable to continue his journey to Rome, and the whole household had ample time to hear his many and most wonderful stories, and to learn by heart the "Breastplate of St. Patrick," as well as others of the beautiful hymns of the old Irish Church, among them one whose English version is familiar to us as a Eucharistic hymn:

Kneel down, and take the Body of thy Lord,
And drink the Sacred Blood for thee outpoured.

However, Attalus soon had another interest more congenial to him than the narratives of Gilchrist. One afternoon a brilliant-looking troop drew up at the gateway of the court. The sun shone on brazen armor, scaly armpieces, broad breastplate, gay shield, and on tunics of purple, red, or blue, in especial on the gilded wings of the helmet of the tall leader, and on the long hair, loosely gathered beneath it, now faded, tanned by

the sun, but once evidently of the same golden fairness as that of the young boy who rode beside him. All were on large, heavy horses, but carefully groomed, the skins of the bays shining like silk, and the dappled grays showing their mottling of black and white. The household was not alarmed, for the party was recognized as belonging to the Burgundian, Garfried of the Blue Sword, a comparatively civilized man (as were all the Burgundians), who had had so much intercourse with Gregory as Senator of Autun as to be called his friend and brother.

By that title, indeed, each hailed the other, as Gregory, hastily warned, came out to the top of the steps of the hall to meet his guest, not without a murmur, far in the rear of his train, among subdeacons and readers, that to pay such respect to a wild barbarian was beneath the dignity of a bishop. But barbarians were not to be trifled with, even though, like Garfried, they had been orthodox Christians their whole lives through. So the chief and the Bishop embraced, kissing each other fervently on both cheeks, and went into the hall hand in hand, as soon as Gregory had offered his guest a great cup of wine, after tasting it with his lips,

and Garfried had drained it off. It was the universal custom as the pledge of hospitality and of peace; and Gregory likewise kissed and welcomed the two boys, of about fourteen and twelve years old. Tetricus and Attalus also were called forward to give the greeting of hospitality, and the three lads stood looking at one another shyly, for they had no common language, or only a few words. Friedbald and Baldrik knew no Latin, nor did Attalus speak that parent dialect of old high German which was the native tongue of the young Burgundians.

Slaves came round with great handsome embossed brazen bowls to wash the feet of the guests, and to help Garfried and his principal companions to disarm, and in the meantime Leo and his assistants were hurrying on the preparations for supper, and adding all the extra dishes they could supply in haste, as more than one dying cackle in the court testified. The visitors had, however, brought their share, for they had captured two or three of the progeny of a wild sow in the forests on their way, and these were being hastily scalded and roasted for the Gauls, far from ignorant of the excellence of "crackling."

It was not etiquette to ask a guest his business, and the rules of politeness are never so exact nor so well observed as where terrible consequences may fall upon any breach of them. So the supper was served, with silver bowls for the higher guests to eat their stew of broth from, and Garfried tried to screw up his long legs on the couch as he well knew was Roman good manners, and looked reproof at his sons as they knew not what to do with their legs, and finally hung them down. Pieces of kid, the little pigs, and roasted fowls came round afterward, and varieties of cheeses, fruits, and sweets prepared with honey. Meanwhile there was an exchange of news, for Garfried was well able to speak Latin, and he told of the wild doings of the Frankish kings, who were far more savage and less tamed by Christianity than were the Burgundians. These had been subdued and brought to belong to the Frank kingdom by Clovis, the first Christian king of the Franks; and his widow, Clotilda, who had brought about his conversion, was living as saintly a life as was then possible, and guarding her little grandson Chloald, who is known to us as St. Cloud, from the cruel savagery of his uncles. There was much to

be told about the quarrels of her sons, Hloter, Theuderic, and Hildebert, who had divided their father's kingdom between them, and of her nephew Theudebert's war with the Thuringian Germans, a much more untamed race, against whom he himself had done his part.

All this lasted till the meal was over, and then Garfried told what had brought him. "Know, most holy Bishop, that my wife, Adelhild, seeing me in great danger of death after King Theuderic's raid, made a vow that her next child should be dedicated to God, St. Denis, and St. Martin, if I recovered. She hoped, poor woman, that it might have been a maid-child, when no scath would have been done. Forgive me for talking as an unchastened heathen," he exclaimed, crossing himself; "but there stands the child, my son Baldrik, and I have brought him hither to ask of you to foster him, give him the tonsure, and bring him up to fulfill his mother's vow and be a worthy priest."

Baldrik, though he knew not the language, knew well enough why his father had brought him, and as he saw the Bishop's eyes fixed on him his fair cheeks became dyed of a deep red.

“We will do our best, with God’s good help, to train him,” returned the Bishop. “Hath he manifested any vocation?”

“He hath known to what he is destined,” replied the father; “but for the rest he hath been like other boys, though not untoward. You, I see, have a young lad in training.”

“My beloved daughter’s son,” replied Gregory; “but I am not wholly decided as to his destiny. I wait to see him show what is his mind when he is less childish. He will rejoice in a companion.”

“I thought he was shaven,” said Garfried, “but I trow it is only the Roman fashion. You will give my boy the tonsure ere I leave him with you?”

“If it be your will,” replied Gregory.

“To tell the truth,” said Garfried, lowering his voice, “he may be the safer thus. At any time Theudebert or Hildebert may recollect that I and my boys bear the blood of King Gondebald of Burgundy and of Odin, and if they should cut us off—which they would not do save at their own peril and loss”—and he grasped his dagger-hilt—“then would the life of the youngest, his dead mother’s darling, be safe, even as Chlodoald’s was when his brethren were slain.”

The elder son, Friedbald, who could follow the words, muttered, "Better die as a brave man than live as a priest."

"Sayest thou so, my son!" said Gregory in the Frank tongue. "Mayhap as much courage is needed by the priest as by the soldier. Come hither, my son," he added to Baldrik, in the same language, laying his hand on the young head, while the boy shuddered at the first touch on his fair hair. "Nay, I am not going to shear these bright locks to-night. Wilt thou come and be comrade and brother with my Attalus?"

"My father says I must. My mother has vowed me," returned Baldrik.

"Thou art obedient. It is well. Take him, Attalus," and he laid the two boys' hands in each other. "Use him as thy friend and brother."

"Let him show me the horses and the boar-spears and axes," cried Attalus, with glancing eyes.

"Ah!" put in Garfried, "I was about to say that some of the serfs, as I rode in, when they saw the sucking-pigs on my men's saddles, told us that the old boar and sow were making great havoc of their crops, and it would be a good deed to slay

them. I thought, if you gave me hospitality for another day, that I would go in quest of them."

"It will be a deed of charity," said Gregory.

So in the early morning there was a great scene of bustle. Friedbald went with his father as a matter of course, and Baldrik pleaded hard to have one chase more, while Attalus entreated his grandfather to let him go for once and see the enterprise. He hesitated, for a boar-hunt was a particularly dangerous sport, especially when there was the chance of meeting an infuriated sow; but the boy was wild to go, and when Leo came up respectfully to beg leave to go out with the hunters, otherwise he was sure that the daintiest morsels would never be scientifically cut off, and that the bristles would never be secured for the painters and binders of the precious books, and when he further promised to take the utmost care of the young Lord Attalus, Gregory consented, on condition that his grandson promised to keep close to Leo, and not to run into danger with Baldrik and Friedbald.

Attalus had a mule, for every one learned to ride, as it was the only way of moving about, and Gregory with his whole household were wont to

move from one of the towns of his See to another. Of course the Burgundian guests were all well mounted, and Attalus begged and prayed to be allowed to have one of the horses, old as it was, which had belonged to his grandfather's days as Senator; but the ways even of old Lartius were thought to be too dangerous, and he was refused.

Even then it may be feared that he would have persuaded Niger, the slave who had charge of the stables, if Leo had not come up and absolutely refused to take charge of him on anything but his own animal, named Jugurtha in derision of its pace.

“You would be far in front of me—Lartius would carry you into the very haunt of the swine, and I should find my lady sow snorting over you for the sport of her piglings.”

So Attalus was forced to submit, with a sulky face, believing that Friedbald and Baldrik were laughing at him, though their father spoke to him in a friendly way: “Cheer up, young Herr, you will not find that any one needs much speed if the boar lies where I am told to seek him.”

They went out at the gate of the town, and a rabble rout of men and boys were following, when

Garfried turned round, shook his great boar-spear, and shouted in his bad Latin that no one was to follow and disturb the animals. He only wanted as guides a couple of stout Gallic peasants, the same whose field had been devastated; as to the others, if they followed, they must expect to be treated—"like the swine they are," muttered Friedbald, looking ready to charge upon them with his spear.

They fell back, the boldest meaning to follow at a safe distance out of sight, where they might chance to pick up a little pig.

There were some twenty Burgundians besides Garfried and his two sons, Leo, and Attalus, and four great hounds, two and two in leashes, bristly brindled creatures, with fine crested heads, fierce fangs, and deep thunderous voices. Attalus shrank from them, and wondered to see Baldrik fearlessly caress them, and the great heads laid lovingly against him.

They passed the field, where the stone fence had been knocked down, and there were traces of the hog family in the grievous trampling and rooting up and the vine lying prostrate. Then they turned off the smooth Roman road into the forest,

a tangle where the peasants led the way, and truly the horses had little chance of outspeeding those on foot, though there was a kind of rough path.

Attalus was not sorry now that Leo kept close beside his mule's head. The Burgundians, who went before, made the path all the easier for those who followed on their traces; but there were fears of being left behind and lost, which made the kind companionship welcome, as the rest hurried on their way, leaving their traces only in broken or bent boughs, which now and then swung back again, and were held or sometimes cut off by the great butcher's knife which Leo carried with him.

They had gone on to a more open space, where the trees had grown more scantily, and there was a marsh filled with rushes, a few alder-bushes growing up among them, and a sluggish stream taking its course along the midst. They heard shouts and cries and blasts of a horn, and were about to direct their course by them when suddenly out of the thicket burst Baldrik on his horse, which was rushing off at full speed, quite beyond his control, and dashing blindly against a tree, fell with him. The horse was up again in a moment, and flew on; the boy lay senseless, and before Leo

and Attalus had had time to reach him, out came, with furious floundering pace, the much-dreaded, raging mother-pig, and was about to wreak her vengeance for her scattered brood upon the prostrate boy, when Leo, standing over him, arrested her progress by seizing her by the ear with one hand, and with the other plunging his knife into her throat with all the judgment of his art, so that she fell dead just as Garfried broke through the trees with his spear.

CHAPTER IV.

GARFRIED'S GRATITUDE.

BALDRIK lay insensible, and only groaned as Leo dragged the weight of the sow from off him; but he was living, as Leo assured the father, who threw himself from his horse to call to him to look up and say where he was hurt.

The rest of the hunt came clamoring up, and it appeared that while Garfried, Friedbald, and their men were engaged with the boar, which had slaughtered one of the dogs and torn the side of one of the men, standing at bay under a steep bank, where his lair was to be found, Baldrik had caught sight of some of the little pigs, and, remembering the exploit of yesterday, had ridden at one with his spear; whereupon their incensed mother had broken forth from the bushes, and his horse, taking fright, had rushed away headlong, and apparently had dashed his head against one of the

branches of the trees, for there was a heavy black bruise and a wound under his hair across his brow, and his leg also hung as if it had been broken in the fall.

There was a certain rough knowledge of surgery among the Burgunds, and Attalus declared that Philetus would know what would be a cure, for he loved to be called Machäon, after the old man who doctored people in the "Iliad." This last piece of information was lost upon Garfried, who was, with the help of his shield-bearer and Leo, binding the broken limb with his belt to the shaft of a spear, and causing some branches to be cut down on which Baldrik could be carried back to Langres, as he still lay unconscious, stunned by the blow, which might be regarded as the worst part of the mishap.

Leo did not, however, forget to secure the boar's head and feet and a couple of the unfortunate little orphan pigs, which he put, alive and squeaking, into a bag on his back, falling thus into the rear, while hungry townsmen and peasants, who had been watching in the distance, went out to dispute over the remainder of the booty.

Meantime, as the slow and melancholy march

proceeded on the way, Attalus was replying to the chief's inquiries as to the manner in which the accident had happened, the boy giving a true and generous account, as one who loved Leo and was glad to tell of his deeds.

"Who is this Leo?" asked Garfried.

"He is our cook; the best and most dainty cook in Langres," was the answer.

"A slave?"

"Oh, yes, a slave, and so was his father before him."

"Where is he?"

Leo was not to be seen in the immediate company, and when the town and the Bishop's abode were reached, the first cares of every one were bestowed upon the patient. Attalus had ridden on in advance to warn those at home, and a couch had been prepared in a quiet chamber opening out of the cloister, where Philetus stood, swelling with consequence, waiting to receive the sufferer. He was in great request, with Gilchrist still on his hands, and he liked acting as physician to the household far better than teaching his often refractory pupil. He puffed out his lips and talked wisely about Hippocrates and Galen, but he did

what was most needful and cut Baldrik's long hair from round the wound. It made him murmur something about being shorn, and Philetus unwillingly had to abstain from cutting away the mass of yellow locks, which would be a great inconvenience as he lay.

Philetus augured that he would soon regain his senses, but that it would take some weeks to repair the fracture. The father, reassured, obeyed the invitation to supper, but asked on the way for Leo the cook, who had saved his son's life.

Attalus ran off to the kitchen, where he found his friend stooping over the choicest of his pigeon-holes.

"Leo, Leo, come! the Count Garfried wants to see you."

"A plague upon it," muttered Leo, just raising his face, fiery red and black with cinders. "Can't he wait till I have finished stewing these dormice and washed my face?"

Attalus insisted, and Leo called to his Gallic assistant, Rhys, who had the French aptitude for cookery, though it was not without a pang and a murmur that the mice were intrusted to him; but Attalus dragged Leo away, and the tall Burgun-

dian met him with, "Good slave, thou hast saved my son's life."

"By God's good mercy I was in time," responded Leo, bowing to the chief.

"What can I do for thee? I would fain buy thy freedom from the Bishop and take thee with me to hold Burgundian lands."

Attalus could not but look with dismay at Leo. He did not like to lose his best playfellow.

Leo made answer, "Sir, I thank your great clemency, but I am not made to cultivate lands. It suits me better to remain as I am with my good master, though I thank the good Lord Garfried most heartily."

"The abject Roman!" cried Friedbald in his own language, "to prefer bonds to freedom."

Leo understood and smiled. It was of no use to explain to the wild young chief that what he did prefer was civilized life and power of improvement, for which his whole nature thirsted, under conditions of slavery which hardly pressed upon him with such a master as Bishop Gregory. He had saved from casual gifts nearly enough to buy his manumission when he thought good, and could set up a cookshop in the town with advan-

tage. There was little to tempt him in freedom among a semi-savage, semi-Christianized race in a state of constant warfare, where he, as a peaceful being, would simply meet with contempt, even if he were not murdered, for the rate of price for killing a Roman was much below that for killing one of Burgundian, Frank, or Gothic blood. So he refused the persuasions of Garfried, who was forced to end by assurances that he would find a friend and helper in any time of need. Leo bowed and thanked him, and promised to remember his goodness, and then Garfried handed him a token by which he might appeal—namely, a coin of the Emperor Constantius, much effaced, but still recognizable. He bade his son, Friedbald, look at it and remember it; and Leo made a little hole in it and hung it round his neck with grateful thanks, for in those uncertain times a break-up of the Bishop's household might make it well to be secure of an asylum. Then he was allowed to go back to his dormice.

Wounds and blows were not such very uncommon disasters among the Burgundians as to cause much sensation, and Garfried soon saw that his son was in a fair way of recovery, and therefore

desired to leave him at once in the home that was to be his forever. Poor little Baldrik, who had fully recovered his senses, was sad and down-hearted at being left alone and unable to move, but he bore the idea with the silent acquiescence of his sturdy uncomplaining race. His father was anxious that he should receive the tonsure and minor orders before he was left as a dedication and also, though he was unwilling to speak of it, as a protection. He was far from being able to walk, so that he was carried on his mattress by two Franks to the narthex or antechapel of the church, and there his golden locks were clipped, and the Bishop laid a hand upon him, praying that he might be accepted as a servant of God, but not conferring the grace of ordination on him. He thus was accepted as a reader, though he had yet to learn to read, but he would carry the sacred books.

Friedbald was far more affected than any one else. To him it was the loss of a dear brother and playfellow, and he could not help sharing the Frank spirit of contempt for the unwarlike priesthood, and thinking that Baldrik was condemned to be a coward, who would learn to read, and never handle a sword.

Friebald was actually dashing away tears from his eyes as he saw his brother's long locks fall beneath the shears, and when his father called him to mount, and he bent over the boy for an embrace. But Baldrik seemed still to be half stunned, and not thoroughly awake to all that was passing, and all to which he was pledged, and he lay inert, hardly roused by all that was going on round him, or the clatter of the horses' hoofs as his father rode away.

Philetus found him a far better patient than Gilchrist, who was restlessly eager to proceed with his pilgrimage, would not obey orders, and made attempts at walking and getting to church, which resulted in inflaming the wound and bringing on dangerous symptoms. If Philetus had to use most painful remedies, even cutting away the flesh, he would bear all in absolute silence and endurance, even rejoicing in suffering, as for his Master's sake; but to lie still and let it heal was more than he could bear, even though Philetus assured him that he would bring on gangrene and have to lose his foot. He seemed rather to like the notion of hopping to Rome on crutches and leaving his bones among the martyrs; and nothing in any

way quieted him but Bishop Gregory telling him that the detention that seemed the hardest to him was the appointed cross that he had to bear, and that suffering or even death brought on by willful imprudence and disobedience could not be reckoned as such a sacrifice as that of will. It might be suspected, too, that the cleanliness, discipline, and good order of the Romano-Gallic household were part of the penance, especially as he thought them worldly. He would much rather have been sleeping on dirty fern in a hovel he could not stand upright in, and living on porridge and pignuts, than lying on a comfortable couch, eating a good meal every day, and having Philetus and a slave daily coming to wash him, instead of only occasionally spending a night up to his neck in a loch, which reckoned as fast, not ablution. Baldrik really set him an example of patience. The boy at first slept a good deal, and when better was content to lie still and try to learn to read. Attalus wanted to play games with him, such as dice or knucklebones, or a sort of nine-pins; but to learn the rules of a sedentary game was quite as difficult and wearisome to him as the conquest of the alphabet—a terrible difficulty, for he never

could remember the difference between E and F, and O and Q, though he had them drawn with chalk on the floor and studied them at all intervals. It was with dismay that he discovered that Attalus knew a second alphabet and a second language. "Oh!" said Attalus, grandly, "I knew my Greek *alpha beta* when I was a mere infant, and you will have to learn it too unless you wish to remain a mere mass-priest, instead of being a bishop."

"Friedbald and the Burgunds will make one," said Baldrik, serenely.

"They cannot, if you have not the learning."

But what Baldrik liked best was to hear stories out of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," of Achilles' wrath and Diomed's expedition, though he was greatly shocked at the murder of sleeping men. "A Burgund would never have done such a cowardly thing, nor even a Frank," he declared. Hector's death, however, filled him with enthusiasm, and still more did he enjoy Ulysses' adventures in Polyphemus' cave. But he could not understand why Attalus was to be taught about false gods. "Thou dost not worship them still?" he said.

"No, no, indeed; we have overturned their

altars, and no one would be so foolish as to bow down there.”

“And we have renounced Odin and Frey—I heard a Thuringer captive do so to whom my father stood sponsor—but we don’t learn lessons nor sing stories of them. My father was very angry when he found Friedbald and me listening to the song of Siegfried and the flame circle, and said such things were heathen. Yet thou learnest of thy people’s old gods.”

It was a question far beyond Attalus.

CHAPTER V.

KING HILDEBERT'S HOSTAGES.

THE Franks are coming!" A party of men and women, Gallo-Roman artisans chiefly, came hurrying into the cloistered court with the tidings. "Sporus saw their armor glinting through the forest!"

"Are the town gates closed?" asked Tetricus, who was the nearest at hand.

"They are being closed," cried many voices; "and the Tribune Marcius is gone down to command."

"He must take heed," said Tetricus. "If they come from King Hildebert we cannot exclude them; if from his enemies we must."

Tetricus went in search of his father, whom he met coming from the little chamber that served as his study.

Gregory was the chief authority, civil as well as ecclesiastical, in Langres. The sons of Clovis

had divided his territory between them in a strange manner—each taking different towns, with the country round, not all in one continuous territory, but all mixed up together, and each holding a share of Paris. In fact, the right to a town really meant the having a place to put to tribute, if not to pillage. There had been four brothers, Theuderic, Hildebert, Hlodomir, and Hlothar; but Hlodomir was dead, and his children, except Chlodoald (or Cloud), who had been made a monk, had been murdered by their uncles, and there had been fierce fighting over the new division. Langres belonged to Hildebert; and Gregory, in the name of the inhabitants, had made oath to pay him a yearly tribute, and to exclude the other kings. The old Roman walls were kept in repair, and were sufficient to protect against sudden inroads of the Franks, who had no means of besieging a fortified place. The actual government belonged to the Senator, with a few magistrates, known by old Roman titles, under him. Gregory, well knowing that the Franks felt the impression of dignity and were awed by it into fair behavior, lost no time in having the hall arranged for an interview, while Tetricus went out

to the gates to add judgment to the action of the Tribune.

Between twenty and thirty armed Franks, mostly carrying the ax which took its name from them, and the chiefs wearing spiked helmets, rode up to the gate, and the foremost demanded entrance. "Open the gate, ye Gallic slaves, or it shall be the worse for you!"

"In whose name?" asked Tetricus.

"What matters that to thee, thou priest?" shouted the leader.

"It matters little to me, but to thee it matters; since if thou comest not with authority, the gates remain shut," answered Tetricus, who had measured the numbers with his eye, and saw that if this were a mere raid of their own they would not be able to effect an entrance.

"In the name of Hildebert, King of the Western Franks," thundered the leader, "who commands his Roman tributaries to give his free men entrance."

With a sigh that the great name of Roman had fallen so low, Tetricus still refused to admit more than the leader, Wolfram, and three of his followers; and as the gates were strong, and guarded

within and without with heavy brass, he was able to carry this out, letting the four favored ones in one by one, and at the same time sending out skins and jars of wine and of cider, which were to be followed by all the food that could be hastily got together, to regale the rest of the warriors and keep them from turning their attention to mischief.

The tall figure of Wolfram stalked along in shining pointed helmet, leathern coat guarded with brass plates, leathern buskins, kite-shaped shield rudely painted with the semblance of a wild boar, sword beside him, and ax over his shoulder—a contrast to the slender, black-robed Tetricus, whom, however, he regarded with a certain contemptuous awe, as a witch might be looked on. It was easy to see that he was only so far a Christian as the ax of Clovis had compelled him to baptism, but that he had a mysterious dread of the priesthood as well as of Roman civilization.

Fully aware of this, Gregory had been preparing an imposing spectacle in the hall. He had robed himself so as to show at once that he was Bishop and Senator. Over his long white woolen

garment he wore the toga, which had dwindled to a white scarf edged with purple, and over that again a rich crimson gold-bordered mantle. His miter was on his head, his pastoral staff—fashioned like a sheep-hook—was held in one hand, the ivory staff of a senator in the other, and he sat on the ivory-inlaid curule chair at the arched circular end of the hall of justice, an embodiment of dignity, with all his train of priests, deacons, subdeacons, and readers drawn up behind him, as well as a few of the civil officers of the town.

Wolfram was evidently half disconcerted at the first moment at the sight of the Bishop in the great arched basilica, but he put a bold face upon it, and tramped on, while Gregory, though he would not meet this invader at the entrance as he had met his friend Garfried, touched the silver cup of greeting with his lips, and sent it by the hand of his chief attendant to be served to the Frank.

Wolfram stood still. "I drink not till I have performed my king's commands," he said.

Gregory expected some terrible exaction as he said, "Speak on."

"The King of the Western Franks, King Hil-

debert, son of Clovis,¹ sends his commands to his tributary, Bishop Gregory, and does him to wit that the war with his nephew Theudebert, King of the Eastern Franks and Burgunds, being over, they two have bound themselves by a treaty of peace to deliver pledges on either side, each to each; and King Hildebert therefore calls on you, as in duty bound, to deliver up to him your young grandson, to be made a hostage to King Theudebert for his peaceful behavior and for the surrender of the cities of Nasium and Tullium into his hands."

"My grandson!" repeated Gregory, in distress.

"Yea! Where is he? He is to be in King Theudebert's safe-keeping, together with other nobly born, until such time as the cities be restored to him by King Hildebert."

"My grandson belongs to the Roman Empire," said Gregory, with little hope, but doing all in his power to save Attalus from such a fate.

"Then let your Roman Empire look to him if it can," sneered Wolfram, gaining more assurance.

"What have we to do with quarrels of your Hildeberts and Theudeberts?" cried Tetricus,

¹ He said Hlodowig, the same as Louis.

waxing angry, perhaps rash. "Why takes he not one of his own nobles?"

"That is known to the kings themselves, thou shaven priest," said Wolfram, contemptuously.

"And what if I refuse to let my grandson be taken to be hostage in a quarrel wherewith I have no concern?"

"Then," said the Frank, swinging his ax from his shoulder, "the Kings Hildebert and Theudebert will wreak their just wrath on yonder miserable serfs of farmers and the like, for the disobedience and presumption of one who should have taught them better."

It was a fearful threat, for Gregory had no means of shielding the unhappy Gallic peasants who dwelt between Langres and Autun, and who under his government had been thriving with cattle and crops. Wolfram spoke, however, more placably. "Come, Herr Bishop, since such they call thee, best let the boy go peaceably—Tullium and Nasium will soon be made over, and thou wilt have him back, taught to ride and handle an ax like a Frank, instead of a puling Roman! Ha! youngling," turning toward Attalus and Baldrik, who both stood by the Bishop, the latter leaning

on a stout stick, "wilt come and see a Frankish burg? Thou art a likely fellow," and he fixed his eyes on Baldrik.

"I know a Frank burg well enough," he answered.

"Ha! That's no Roman tongue! What art thou?"

"I am Baldrik, son of Garfried of the Blue Sword," answered the boy, before any one could prevent him from speaking out.

"He is surrendered to my keeping by his father, and has, as thou seest, already received minor orders," Gregory hastened to say, for he saw the Frank's eyes glisten at the thought of the prey so near him.

"A shaveling, eh! That's soon outgrown. Hark you, Herr Bishop, let me take yonder Baldrik youngster with me, then will I leave thy dainty grandson."

Both boys looked up imploringly—Attalus in longing to stay, Baldrik with hope to be restored to the free life he loved, instead of remaining in the cramped clerical and civilized household which with returning health he began to loathe; but Gregory shook his head. "Nay, good Herr Wolf-

ram, that may not be. The boy Baldrik was committed to me as a sacred trust by his father, and I may not let him go out of my hands."

"Sir," Baldrik put himself forward, "I would be glad to go. Thou hast been very good to me, but my leg is well, and I would fain be among bold men and spears and axes once more, and Attalus would never endure the life."

"Thou knowest not what thou askest, my child," said Gregory. "Thou art my charge and that of the Church, committed to my trust by thy father. I were guilty and forsworn to part with thee."

"Then I take this one," said Wolfram, stepping toward the boys, and laying his hand on Attalus's shoulder with a grip that made the little fellow shrink and cry out, "O grandfather!"

"If it must be so there is no help for it, so thou wilt spare my peasants and my townsmen. Thou wilt swear that he will be restored so soon as Tullium and Nasium are in possession of King Theudebert?"

Wolfram made no difficulty about taking the oath. If it were kept the detention would be short; but whether the towns would be given up

was, in the first place, doubtful, and then the good faith of Theudebert; so it was with a failing heart that good Bishop Gregory consented, knowing that the young Roman nobles were selected as the more worthless hostages, in preference to the sons of Frank counts. Yet to yield the child was the only means of preventing his poor, outside the walls, from being ravaged, or the city from being put to tribute, besieged and starved in revenge for his disobedience; nor could he permit his flock thus to suffer, any more than he could yield up Garfried's son to his enemies. He could only give what was his own, much as it cost him to part from his beloved grandson, and to send him to unknown suffering and danger, as well as to break off his education and expose him not only to hardship, but to companionship that might affect the whole course of his life.

It rent the old man's heart, but he was resolute. He invited the guests to stay all night, but Wolfram would not hear of it. It was scarcely noontide, and all he would do was to accept a banquet which Leo was hastily preparing.

After drinking the guest-cup with him, Gregory prayed to be excused, and that Tetricus and

Laurentius, the Consul, might be allowed to entertain them, while he prepared Attalus for the journey.

He took the boy with him into the antechapel. Attalus was weeping, and when he said, "My poor child!" exclaimed, "O Sir Father, Baldrik would be glad to go."

"True, my son; but I have given my word to his father. He is not mine, nor have I a right over him."

Then with earnest words and tears Gregory entreated the boy to bear his duty to God in mind, to say his prayers, to keep from all evil, and bear insults and hardships patiently. At Treves, or wherever the court of Theudebert might be, he was sure to find a church and clergy, who would be friendly to him for his grandfather's sake, and he was to seek them out and follow their counsel. Gregory would do all that was possible to obtain his return, and with him were to go Gola, the old Moorish slave who had always been as a nurse to him, and would take charge of his clothes, and the younger Festus, who had the care of his mule.

So Gregory, hiding his tears, delivered the

weeping boy up to Wolfram, who made oath, in the name of his master, that he should duly be restored, sound and unhurt.

All the household came out to see him start, the clergy of all ranks standing up with folded hands, while Bishop Gregory, choked with emotion, gave his solemn blessing; all the slaves, many of them weeping, for Attalus had been the pet of the house in spite of many a prank; Leo, still black with charcoal, with tears running down his face, loaded Festus with provisions and put a honey-cake into Attalus's hand, and last of all, Gilchrist stumbled forth on his knees and cried, "God be with the boy! Remember holy Patrick's breastplate."

CHAPTER VI.

THE COUNCIL AT SOISSONS.

AS far as Soissons, or Noviodunum as he had learned to call it, Attalus did not fare ill. Wolfram and his men took little notice of him, and the two slaves kept near him. At night Wolfram called a halt near the edge of a great wood, where he sent his men to collect sticks so as to make a fire to keep off the wolves that might be in the neighborhood, and struck a light with a flint brought from the chalk country on the Seine. Some rabbits and partridges had been shot with arrows or pulled down by the dogs on the way, and these served for the food of the escort, with some wine which the Franks had required of the Langres people; and they sat carousing and shouting or singing over it, paying hardly any attention to their hostage, after Wolfram had shouted to him to lie down there, pointing to a great beech-tree, and not to stray farther.

Gola was in despair at his young master having to sleep out-of-doors, but Attalus somewhat haughtily told him that it was the duty of a Roman soldier. They had no lack of food, bread, smoked fish, cheese, dried grapes, and an earthenware bottle of wine; and the bed of beech leaves, raked together by Festus, was comfortable, so that after lying awake a little while, looking up at the sky through the branches, and wondering what his fate would be, Attalus went to sleep, and did not wake till the camp was astir.

Again the troop went on, and in due time they reached Soissons, an old Roman town, where the fortifications still stood, and in the midst was the forum, or market-place, and the theater, open to the sky and surrounded with galleries of seats. Large Roman houses, and small dens built on to their sides, stood all round. It had been made the capital of the Meerwing kings, and at this moment the helmets of Hildebert's men glanced within the open space of the forum, those of Theudebert in the theater. The kings themselves lodged in the houses of the propretor and the legionary, for Noviodunum had been a grand old Roman town. It had a fine old church, once a

basilica or hall of justice, and a train of priests and clergy was passing into it, a sight which made Attalus feel as if he had come to friends.

He was driven on, however, to the Roman house, where the once beautiful, paved court was full of rude Franks, sitting on the ground, their horses tethered round them. They were feasting on the remnants of the meal that the chiefs had been eating within, sitting in groups, some gnawing bones, some, a little more dainty, grilling them over the fires that they had lighted on the ground with fragments of the once fine old wood-work, others drinking out of their helmets; all laughing, shouting, or bickering at the top of their voices, except one party, who sat listening to a harper chanting a lay of ancient heroism and bloodshed. Through all these various parties Wolfram made his way to the hall of the palace, where, under the fine old arches and mosaic ceiling, on the rich inlaid pavement, the table was spread, and the two long-haired kings, Hildebert and Theudebert, and their chiefs were carousing together out of finely chased silver cups, while the rude relics of their feast lay on the tables around.

The kings were uncle and nephew, but there

was not much difference in their ages. They both looked harsh and rugged, but Hildebert, whom Attalus had seen once or twice before, looked somewhat the more civilized, or it might be only that his hair and beard were less rough, and his dress nearer the Roman than that of Theudebert, who was very sunburned, and save for his rich sword-belt and the jeweled chain at his neck might have been taken for a mere hunter. Their chiefs were with them, and Bishop Silius, whom Attalus knew already and looked to with hope; but the Bishop was a timid man, and looked very uncomfortable at Theudebert's right hand. Garfried, for whom the poor boy looked, was not there.

“Ha! Wolfram,” cried the King, “hast brought the hostage?”

“Ay, Herr King, I have brought the priest's darling, here, petted up like a lady's tame fawn. The old Bishop made no small ado at parting from him. Sent mule and slaves with him, forsooth.”

“He'll set high store by him, nephew,” said Hildebert, laughing. “Thou wilt make a good profit of thy pledge, even if it be not convenient to me to part with the cities.”



BISHOP SILIUS TAKES CHARGE OF ATTALUS.

“It skills me not to barter and bargain,” replied Theudebert, carelessly. “Take him, Hunderik, keep him safe, and we will do the best we can with him.”

“Trust me, Herr King, I will see to the little Roman rogue like a fresh-caught foal.”

The epithet was not given tenderly, or it might have been hopeful. However, the Bishop held out his hand to Attalus, and presently ventured to ask whether he might not have the guardianship of the young hostage; but this was received with a burst of rude laughter, and a declaration that he was too much of the same sort as the old man at Langres, and would quickly know how to let the child slip through his fingers. However, they allowed him to take Attalus home with him for the night, Hunderik fiercely telling him that he should be held accountable for the production of the pledge the next morning.

“See, Bishop Silius, if that’s what they call thee! thou claimest to be a shepherd, as they tell me. Herd this same sheep of mine to the best of thy power, for if thou lettest him go, thy Church and thy priests shall aby it.”

Attalus had never heard such uncivil language

addressed to his grandfather; but Bishop Silius was a timid, though a very kind man, and had never inspired respect in the wild Franks, who had only become nominal Christians at the will of Clovis. He hurried out of the theater and along the street, holding the hand of Attalus, evidently in dread of the scoffs and laughter that broke out at the coward priest. "Like an old ewe and her lamb," cried one rude voice, raising a storm of mocking voices.

"Oh, my lamb, my lamb, would that I could keep you!" he cried; and no sooner was he within the shelter of his own house than he drew the boy into his arms, and wept over him profusely as the lamb thrown to the wolves. How could his holy brother Gregory consent?

"It was the only way to save the peasants or the town from being sacked," said Attalus.

"Ah! thou art the lamb indeed, the victim," exclaimed Silius. "Would that there were means of saving thee from these pagans, who know not God and will make thee forget Him."

"God will not forget me," dreamily answered Attalus.

"Good child! Ah! it is foul sin and shame to

let him go among the heathen, and be beaten and foully used. Yet that ferocious robber will require him of me, and it will go ill with us if we hide him or keep him back."

"See here, your Holiness," said one of the Bishop's train, a dark, sinister-looking subdeacon, not young, "there is a child here very like the noble Attalus—a slave lad, the son of the deceased slave woman Retia. He has the same dark eyes and light hair, he is quick-witted, and is clever in waiting at your Holiness's tables. Change the dress, and none of those Franks, who were all half drunk last night, would know the difference. Then, when these two kings and their rabble followers have left the city, it will be easy to pass the young patrician back to Langres or Autun."

"It is a risk," said one of the priests, thoughtfully. "Yet Retius is quick-witted and would support the part, and as long as they found him not out, he would be better off there than as a slave here."

"Or even if they discovered him, they would do him no harm," continued the subdeacon Ter-givus. "Let this noble boy lie quiet and out of

sight here till all are well away, then could we pass him home to his Clemency of Langres by the time all was forgotten."

"But," said Attalus, looking in utter surprise from one to the other, "my grandfather would not have me if I ran away and broke the terms."

"Nay, child, I said not that thou shouldst go back at once, when peril could come; wait here—or, as a safer place, at Tours—till the bargain is forgotten."

Attalus shook his head. "The Frank Wolfram offered to take the son of Garfried of the Blue Sword instead of me, and my grandfather would not, because Baldrik had been committed to his trust."

"That might have brought danger on him through the vengeance of him of the Blue Sword," observed Tergivus; "but this is a mere worthless slave, after whom none will inquire."

"My grandfather holds a slave of full worth," cried Attalus, hotly.

"Thy grandfather is a saint," interposed Bishop Silius. "Deem not that we would ask thee to do aught that he would hold as evil; yet it is permitted to dissemble with the unbeliever, and we

would fain save thee from pollution and hardship such as he would dread for thee."

"He would not have me act treacherously, nor send another into my own danger," cried Attalus.

"The boy *will* not," whispered Tergivus. "No doubt he likes the freedom of the Frank better than his books."

This was very sore to Attalus, just as he had begun to feel that he was doing something brave and true, of which his grandfather and uncle would approve. Bred up by such men as Gregory and Tetricus, he little knew the artful spirit which oppression had engendered among the Gallo-Romans, and he shrank back from Silius when beckoned up to him.

"Do not persuade me to be mean," was on his tongue.

"My son, Heaven forbid that I should persuade thee to what thy good and holy grandfather would forbid. It was only that my good friends would spare thee, yea, and him, from ills thou dost not guess at. When—if—thou seest him again, let him know that the device was not mine, and I only might have consented in the hope of saving thee, my fair lad, the jewel of his old age."

“God can save me,” said Attalus.

“Christ in the fort,
Christ in the field.”

There was a strange bright gleam on the boy's face and uplifted eyes as that sense of confidence came home to him.

Silius bowed his head and wept. It might be for the child who knew not what he was about to encounter, or it might be for those loftier, purer thoughts which had become obscured in him by the long and weary course of striving to bend with the storm and avoid oppression.

CHAPTER VII.

ATTALUS LEFT ALONE.

THAT quiet night in Silius's household was the last peaceful one that Attalus was to enjoy for many a month. It was still early morning, and the first hymns of the day were being sung in the church attached as usual to the Bishop's dwelling, when there was a thundering at the door and shouts for the little dog of a Roman.

He durst not wait for anything but Silius's hasty blessing and murmur of "God help thee, good and high-souled child, and bring thee back to thy grandfather!"

The Bishop was too much in dread of the wild Franks willingly to show himself, but Tergivus would have led the boy forth. Attalus, however, put his hands behind his back, marched forth, and solemnly said, "I give myself as King Hildebert's hostage, of mine own free will and by the desire of my grandfather, Bishop Gregory."

Nobody particularly attended to him, and as he spoke Gaulish Latin the Franks would not have understood him if they had, but it gave him a certain feeling of being like Regulus, whose story he told to old Gola walking beside his mule.

Perhaps it was well that he should have such consolation, as they went through moors that grew wider and with less and less token of habitation, though still with the straight Roman way to guide them. He asked for Festus, and Gola answered that he had been claimed by a shaggy Frank, who told King Hildebert that he wanted a groom to tend his horses Roman fashion. The poor fellow had wept, and declared that he belonged to Bishop Gregory ; but was only laughed at and told that the Bishop was no better than a bondsman himself, and so he was beaten and driven away.

Then, when there was a halt, and Gola was producing the wallet of provisions which Silius's pitying household had replenished, a great rude voice shouted out something about seeing what the gluttonous little Roman was swallowing, and a big hand clutched the bag away, leaving Attalus and Gola nothing but the dry morsels of bread remaining from their original store. Hot tears rose to

the boy's eyes, and he would have cried out against the spoiler, but Gola held him fast, with a sign to hold his peace, and he recollected that to break out at that fierce-looking man might be dangerous. He never saw the wallet again, except hanging as a pouch at the girdle of the Frank. Gola, however, contrived at night to get a lump of half-raw goat's flesh for supper, which he was hungry enough to devour down to the very bone. But worse still was to come. Gola had wrapped him up and laid him down to sleep under a tree, with the mule tethered near; but when the sound of horns and the confusion of voices awoke him, the mule was gone. Gola was out of sight too, but presently, on his frightened call, came back to him.

"Ah! poor Jugurtha," he said, with tears in his eyes; "his halter has been cut and he has been carried off by that malicious young heathen. I followed, but he laughed at me. Alas! what will become of him?"

"He is mine!" cried Attalus. "Am I to be robbed as well as kept a prisoner? I will appeal to Hunderik."

That was not so easy, however, for Hunderik's

winged helmet was to be seen in the midst of several others, the spears bristling beside them and their armor jingling and shining in the sun, and they rode on so fast that poor Attalus, on foot, had not a chance of overtaking them. It was a hard matter to him to get through that day's journey, with very little food, and that of the roughest, coarsest kind, thrown to him with laughs of scorn; and when his feet, unused to such walking over rocks and thorns, lagged behind, there was a cry of "Ho! pledge, wouldst escape?" and one of the men threatened to beat him or goad him forward.

That night they reached Treves, Augusta Trevirorum as it was called, a considerable city, with a fine triumphal arch and many Roman buildings. Hunderik did not care to sleep within the walls, but went to dine there on the good fare of the cooks, and some of the inhabitants came out to see whether the Franks had anything to barter with them for provisions. One was a Jew who had fine armor to dispose of, a beautiful sword inlaid by the Greeks of Constantinople, and a breastplate both strong and light. He described it, but he had been prudent enough to leave it in the

city, and Hunderik's own sword was dented and injured at the point, his breastplate sorely battered. What would the Jew take for his ware? Here was his chain of gold. No, that was not worth a quarter of the sword's value, for half the links were gone. A dozen of kine which he would send down from the hills? The Jew was too wary to trust to promises. At last, after refusing several such offers, he cast his eyes on Gola. That slave would make up the balance.

"He is mine," shouted Attalus.

"I am my Lord Bishop Gregory's," exclaimed Gola. "He sent me in charge of his grandson, whom I have tended from his infancy."

"Slave tending a slave," said Hunderik, with a sneer.

"He is full old," said the Jew, approaching to handle his arms and legs, as was the custom of slave-dealers. Attalus threw himself between, crying out, "He is mine! he is mine! You shall not touch him."

"What insolence is this?" and with his heavy hand Hunderik knocked the boy down, so that he lay unconscious for some minutes; and when, dazed and bewildered, he opened his eyes and sat

up, Gola, Hunderik, and the Jew were all gone. The Jew, perhaps, saw his way to selling the poor old Moor again to his true master, and thus making a considerable profit out of his bargain; and while Gola was weeping and bending over his young charge, two great Franks bound his hands and arms and dragged him off, with kicks and blows, under charge of the Jew, laughing and mocking aloud as he wept, bewailed, and implored in a language they could not understand.

Poor little Attalus! his desolation was complete. He sat crouched upon the ground, trying not to weep and provoke the mirth of the rude warriors who passed by him, and whose jeers he happily did not understand. How much he had really loved old Gola as well as depended on his care he did not know till he had thus lost him and with no knowledge of his future. It was late in the day, and there was no one to go out and forage for his supper, and he was too miserable and frightened to do it for himself; but he sat there, in the same sad posture, sometimes sobbing quietly to himself, sometimes murmuring a prayer that God would take care of him, till it had grown dark, and at last slumber overpowered him—the

first time he could remember going to sleep without Gola's tender care of him.

He was wakened by the horns and the stir among the troop, and he stood up, aching, weary, and too faint and exhausted even to feel hungry, so that he tottered when he began to move, and he felt a moment's hope that if he sank down, was forgotten, and left behind he might creep back into Treves, where there were plenty of Roman clergy, and perhaps find Gola once more. But he was disappointed. He was too valuable thus to be neglected, and presently he heard Hunderik saying what he knew too well meant, "Where's the little dog of a hostage? Ha! limping like a sickly calf. Take him up before you on your horse, one of you."

So Attalus found himself astride the neck of one of the great lumbering war-horses of the Franks, as wretchedly uncomfortable a perch as could be conceived, though he did not fall off, and was carried along, belted to the horseman, as a miserable forlorn piece of baggage for whose relief or ease the rider cared not in the least. However, it was important to keep him alive, and thus, when at the halting-place on the border of a forest

he was found to have swooned quite away and was lifted down unconscious, he was shaken hard by way of restoration, and when he opened his eyes a wine-cup was held to his lips. He turned away his head, but heard, "Ho! ho! bring the horn." The notion of being drenched like a horse waked the boy thoroughly; he swallowed the draught, a long one, and then found himself revived enough to eat a bit of the toughest of flesh, half raw, half dry, and without bread or salt, but he was famished enough to swallow anything, and when lifted on horseback again he actually slept in a manner, though conscious all the time of the painful jar of the horse's tramp, the tight belt round him, and the roughness of the leathern garment against which his head hung rather than rested.

How he got through those last few days he could never tell—they were all like one long and horrid dream, in which he seemed to have been going on forever, bound fast on the rack of the rude saddle, with the tramp of the horse ever jarring through him; and he was past all curiosity as to what was to come next—it seemed as if there never would be any end, though latterly he began to be dimly conscious that the horse was mounting

more slowly up a hill, and that there was forest ground all round, the tops of trees making a darkness. At last there was a halt, the belt that cut into him was unstrapped, he was lifted down, and when it proved that he could not stand he was picked up in those same rude arms and carried into some kind of dark shelter, where there was a strange buzz of rough and shrill voices mingled together, and the light of a red flickering fire flashed out.

Something he heard in Hunderik's always alarming voice about a miserable little feeble mouse of a Roman hostage, who must nevertheless be kept alive and safe, for he might be worth something to them; but he was past understanding it, and had little perception of anything but being brought into warmth, laid down upon something soft and strange, and presently a woman's voice saying some word that probably meant "drink," for a vessel of something very hot and like broth was held before him, while a woman's arm raised him, and a woman's great knotted hand put a spoon to his lips.

"Wretched little weakling! Thou hast nearly been the death of him."

“No, no, Frau. Even a bishop’s lambkin is not so frail as that.”

So much Attalus heard and half understood, while the very greasy soup went down his throat, followed by a dose of warm sour milk; and he was dimly sensible of figures carousing round a long table, of firelight, of female forms flitting about waiting on the men, and of the light glancing now and then on bushes of hair as fair and flaxen as that of Baldrik before it was shaven; of pitying, wondering, girlish voices now and then; but women and girls were strange unwonted creatures to the Bishop’s grandson, who did not remember his own parents, and had come to the household after the old man had ceased to be a senator and had become a priest. Gola was the only nurse he could remember, and sorely he missed him now, in the long feverish, exhausted state in which he lay before sleep at last gave a respite to his woes.

CHAPTER VIII.

HUNDERIK AT HOME.

WHEN Attalus awoke there was morning light in the place, but it was for the most part in twilight, only that spots of red sometimes came in here and there, and played upon what he now saw to be the rude beams, or rather trees, of an open pointed roof of reed and heather. He was lying on a heap of fern and heather, but he felt dreadfully stiff and sore, and as recollection came back to him he was afraid to move, even if he could have done so without pain, for fear of bringing some of his tormentors on him, or waking the terrible-looking wolf-hounds with rough dun hair and long noses that lay slumbering by the still smoldering remnant of the wood and peat fire, where a little red light glowed among the ashes.

The odd noises that he heard were, he perceived, the snores of the men, who had flung themselves down to sleep as he had done. It was a curious

place in the eyes of Attalus, who had always lived in handsome, well-built Roman houses, with courts in the middle, with well-paved apartments for giving audience, for eating, living, and sleeping, disposed round them, and baths adjoining, with hot and cold water laid on. True, they were of only one story, and had no glass windows, but they were well furnished according to the notions of the time, and had carved bedsteads, like sofas, in the little sleeping-rooms, and in the others tables, chairs, and couches, and a whole library of books, rolls of vellum, which Attalus had once regarded as his enemies, but which he now began to miss. He had been amused at Baldrik's wonder at these civilized appurtenances, and he was now to be amazed at the lack of them. The house was high and large, the elevation being in fact up to the height that a sufficient number of trees could attain, their trunks being set close together, and the interstices stuffed with clay, reeds, and heather. The span of the roof was the same, as far as could be safely supported by rafters of tall pine-trees, with beams extending across below them. The roof was fairly weather-tight, but open in the middle over the hearth, whose odors

of wood and peat smoke still filled the edifice. There were no windows, but the two ends had wide and open doorways, and there was a wide space down the middle, the sides being divided off by wooden structures that put Attalus in mind of the stalls of horses, only that these were closed in at the top; and far away, near the farther entrance, he heard the stamp of horses, and lifting up his head perceived that they were tied up in rows at that end. A cock, whose crow had first wakened him, gave another summons, and was seen to be perched on one of the beams overhead, with all his family round him; and there were other gruntings and bleatings which showed that there was a considerable live stock all awake.

All this he perceived gradually while still half awake and coming to a full recollection of his situation, which was certainly as sad—not perhaps as possible, since there was the hope of deliverance when the cities should be surrendered, and his grandfather would do all that could be done for his recovery; but all was as dark and dreary as could be imagined when he came to think it over, as he had never had time or space to do since Hunderik had carried him off.

At last, however, he had time to realize that, though his grandfather and uncle, and even poor Gola, were so far away, and did not even know where he was, there was an Almighty All-seeing Protector ever close to him, and that he might trust to be defended. He said his prayers, and ended with "St. Patrick's Breastplate," kneeling on his heap of ferns, but still so stiff and aching that he dropped down again, very glad to rest. Just then some of the women began to appear from their great boxes, which he now perceived to be beds—almost amounting to the separate cells of a monastery, or what would now be called cubicles, except that conveniences for the toilet were altogether lacking.

The washing, as he found later, for those who esteemed such practices, was done at a spring at a little distance from the dwelling on the mountain-side, and such attention to the hair as ever was paid was an amusement for the leisure hours of the day. A comb was a great possession, only belonging to the wife of the lord of the settlement.

Presently, as he still lay on his heap of ferns, too stiff and tired willingly to move, three children came toward him, two little girls with bright

hair, about his own age, and a younger boy. He thought he heard them say, "Come and look at the new pledge boy," but he could not be sure of their language, though he knew well enough when the boy called out, "Give! give!" and snatched at the golden bulla on Attalus's neck. The chain was welded on, and it would not come off, though his hard pull hurt severely, and Attalus with a cry tried to push him away, upon which he roared.

Two or three women rushed up, and one, whose gold necklace and armlets showed her to be Hunderik's wife, struck Attalus a sharp blow, while the child continued to tug at the gold medallion as if he would cut the poor boy's throat. There were loud exclamations all round, and it ended in Frau Bernhild producing a great pair of shears with which she severed the chain, when her boy Hundbert bore it off in triumph, and Attalus was left smarting under the deep wale it had made in his neck, and trying not to cry, but feeling as if he had lost his rank and had been made a slave outright.

The lady spurned him for a moment with her foot, muttering something that he knew well to be "Little slave!" but he was too worn out and de-

jected to show anger. One of the little girls who stood by gazing at him said, "Don't cry, boy," and the other, "Was it a charm?"

"It showed my rank as a Roman," said Attalus, trying to put this into her language.

"Hundbert will weary of it and throw it aside," suggested the elder of the girls; "I will try to get it again for you."

"But if mother gets it you will never have it," said her sister. "Was it gold?"

"It was. All Roman boys have golden bullas," said Attalus.

"Come and have some milk," said the elder one, in a consoling voice; "Bruna is just bringing it."

This was a refreshing idea, and Attalus rose slowly and with pain, and let the little maid take his hand. Two such creatures were entirely new to him; he had never spoken to a girl in his life, excepting to a beggar at his grandfather's gate; but no one since he had been in Hunderik's charge had till now said a kind word to him, and he could not help looking gratefully up in the fair pink-and-white face full of tenderness such as the girl might have shown to a frightened foal or puppy-dog. Indeed, as they moved toward the door, the great

wolf-hounds came leaping round her, and the half-grown ones, with big soft clumsy paws, almost knocked Attalus down, to the laughter of the other girl, while they barked and whined with eager joy, and Frau Bernhild called out, "Roswitha! Valhild! Where are you going?"

"To feed the dogs, mother, and get some milk for the hostage," was the answer of Roswitha.

She led him, accompanied by Valhild, outside the door, into a great space of irregular yard, with a few barns and sheds, a stack or two of fagots, logs of wood around, and other ricks of straw or hay. The house where they had slept was higher and more completely roofed than the others, and the huge crossed trunks of pine-trees that formed the gable ends were at their tapering summits decked with skulls of horses, and on each side of the door stood a tall trunk of pine carved as a pillar. Cows, horses, sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry were scattered all about the yard; there were rudely clad men, women, and children running about, eating, or lounging among them. Only a few seemed to be employed effectively—some of the women were milking, a few of the men grooming the horses, and another was cutting up a sheep

that had been killed. There was a kind of pavement before the doorway, but all the rest was a swamp of foulness and dirt, trampled on without caution or regard by bare or merely sandaled feet.

The fowls came flocking round Roswitha, and she threw them scraps and barley, the latter of which she took from the barn behind her. Then stopping one of the women with a bowl of milk, she took possession of it, and after drinking a little herself, Valhild claimed it and drank deeply, but still more was left than even Attalus, hungry as he was, could finish at one draft, and Roswitha took her share.

The sun was up now above the pine and beech trees on the hillside, and a loud blast on some kind of horn was heard, upon which all the horses, colts, and foals pricked up their ears and started off in the direction whence the sound came. The cows had already begun to gather together, and at another signal of the same kind, but different, gravely set forth under the charge of their herdsman in another direction. So did the goats, who seemed to need no signal to make them go off toward the mountain led by a great old fellow with a long gray beard, but with feet full of antics.

The sheep were not put in order without many blasts, and much barking and setting in order by the great shaggy dogs; nor did the swine-herd and his dogs get their grunting and squeaking charge into marching order for the woods without much trouble, which so diverted Attalus that he laughed for almost the first time since he had left Langres.

Roswitha looked pleased, and he asked her where he could have a bath. She had never heard of such a thing, but when she understood she took him to the spring, which leaped out of a mossy fern-clad rock above the farmyard, and had a basin scooped out for it below, before it made its way as a stream across all the defilements of the yard.

He wished the girls would go away, so that he could have stripped and had a real bath; but they had no notion of what he meant, and were much too curious about the ways of this strange new being to get out of his way. However, he washed head, hands, and feet, and felt much refreshed.

Still he was so weary, sore, and strained with his miserable ride that he could not walk without pain, and he spent most of that day and the fol-

lowing lying on a heap of straw, half asleep, except when little Hundbert tormented him, evidently fancying the new-comer a strange animal imported for his amusement, pulling about the poor boy's clothes, taking away whatever there was to take, poking his fingers into his eyes, and ordering him about. Once when Attalus could bear it no longer he attempted to drive the little tyrant off with a cuff; but this led to a roar, and Frau Bernhild rushed up, threatened Attalus, and gave him a few smart strokes, which grieved and angered him more than all. He, a high-born noble, to be beaten by a barbarian woman!

Roswitha tried to protect him, but in vain, for the novelty of worrying him was only too delightful to her spoiled brother; and he had no peace except when the urchin was asleep or eating. Hunderik himself and his warriors indulged in a long rest after their expedition, and did not lounge out of their boxes till nearly noonday, when they looked at their horses, devoured the sheep and the broth in which it had been boiled, drank ale, and spent the rest of the day in cleaning up their armor, or in having their heads combed by their wives, who were called off from their spinning for

the purpose. Hunderik played with his little son, who rode on his knee and tried on his helmet, shrieking and laughing with joy; but he took no notice of his daughters, nor of Attalus, except that, probably on the complaint of either the boy or his mother, he observed, "Thou dog of a hostage, if thou layest hands on my son it shall be the worse for thy skin."

CHAPTER IX.

A STRANGE SUNDAY.

WERE the people of Hundingsburg Christians? It perplexed Attalus, who had never observed any token of prayers, nor seen any one make the sign of the cross, and found that the day he had been used to call Dominica, or the Lord's Day, was termed by them only the Sun's Day. He had hoped to see or hear of a priest on that day, and asked Roswitha if they would not go to church; but she did not understand him, and when she gathered that he meant some kind of observance she said, "My father is going to hang up some of his spoil on the Erman-saul, and then he will come back with his kinsmen, and we shall feast upon the colt that he has killed."

"But that is like pagans!" exclaimed Attalus, with a shudder. "Are you not Christians?"

"Oh, yes; at the King's bidding, they said

there came a man, a priest, and dipped us all in the river, and named us all in the name of the King's God," said Roswitha; "I remember it now."

"Yes," said Valhild. "Mother held back and said He was not a warlike God, and father said the King had conquered in that name, and we were on Gaulish soil and must bow to the God of the Gauls, and King Clovis would have it so."

"But He is the great King over all the earth, the only God," returned Attalus, aghast.

Neither of them fully understood the other, but Roswitha added, "It cannot hurt Him and will do us good if father gives his spoil to our old god, Erman, and then he will bring us good luck."

"Is there no Christian priest?" exclaimed Attalus; "no one to tell you of the one great God and Christ, in whose name you are baptized?"

Valhild shook her head. "Father does not want those black-gowned Romans to come spying and lording it about here. You know it, Roswitha; you have heard him say how they knocked down the Rolandsaul and Ermansaul at Treves, and how no luck has since come to the Burgunds."

Attalus did not understand this, nor take in much of what the girls tried to explain to him,

that the two pine-trees on either side of the door were called the pillars (*Säulen*) of Roland and Erman, and were held sacred; and that there was a much larger pillar in a temple in the depths of the forest, to which their father was about to present a part of the spoil of his expedition against the Thuringians under King Theudebert.

How far all this was idolatry Attalus did not know. He had a dim notion that he had heard of these pillars of Roland and Erman before, and that there had been a debate at his grandfather's table whether they were really idolatrous, or only emblems of power civil and military.

He was rested by this time, and growing used to life without the neat and dainty habits to which he had been bred, and when he was out of Hundbert's way he rather liked the companionship of the little girls, since, though Valhild despised him as a miserable, incapable, cowardly Roman, Roswitha admired him as a model of learning and wisdom. Curiosity and enterprise prevailed with him, and he determined to avail himself of the doubt he had heard expressed as to whether it really were a pagan rite and accompany the whole family to see what they did.

Very early in the morning the master was heard blowing his horn to summon the household together. No one was left at home but the few needful to watch the house, the fire, the babies, and the cattle of the establishment; the horses were not let out of their inclosure till enough had been caught for those who chose to ride them barebacked. Roswitha and Valhild meant to do so, both astride on one cream-colored shaggy steed; but before mounting Roswitha offered to help Attalus catch a horse, and Valhild called out that he would be afraid to ride and must go afoot with the slaves. This put him on his mettle, and with only a little help from Roswitha he caught the old black mare that she pointed out to him by her long forelock, and vaulted on her successfully, as he had learned to do at the riding-school kept at Autun in the old circus. As he was not riding as a Roman gentleman it concerned him the less that the little foal, with curly forehead and stout legs, would trot after them. Hunderik never troubled himself about his daughters or his slaves, but was proud of his little son, whom he took up, screaming with joy, before him on his horse, a great powerful fiery creature, white and dappled

with shaded black, and with heels that would let no other rider come near him.

On they went through the forest paths, trodden in some degree, though impeded by the year's growth of boughs. Once they halted near a river to eat and rest the horses, but soon after noontide they reached a great bleak open space, purple with heather, with a few houses like Hunderik's, only smaller, standing round the borders at the edge of the forest, and on a mound in the midst a great tall upright stone, which Roswitha said was the Ermansaul. It really was an old stone of the ancient Celtic druidical worship, but the Franks had adopted it as the Pillar of Erman, though it did not by any means equal in splendor the Ermansaul of Eresburg, where there was a statue within an actual temple. The people of the houses came out to welcome Hunderik, and after some delay and preparation, and while the horses were being fed, one of the colts which had galloped along with the party was captured and led away.

“Black Rana's colt! Oh, the dear thing!” said Roswitha. “I did not think they would have taken him, he was so tame and good!”

“Taken him? What for?” exclaimed Attalus.
“Not for a heathen offering!”

“Hush! hush!” said Roswitha, “they will hear you. But I did love that dear soft-nosed colt, and he let me mount him.”

The little maid was in tears, and her sister laughed at her. “Soft-hearted Roswitha,” she said.

“I am sorry for my colt,” she answered. “O Atli, is it true that Christians never make their horses an offering?”

“No, indeed,” he answered. “My grandfather would be shocked and bid you renounce such deeds.”

“Then we should have no luck and no victory,” cried Valhild. “Mother would beat you if she heard you.”

“Demons do not give victory. It is the Almighty God of armies,” said Attalus.

Perhaps it was well for him that Valhild’s attention was called off by a movement beside the houses, and a song arising which sounded like

Herman sla derman,
Sla piper, sla drummen,
Der kriegler is kommen,

accompanied by loud drummings and blasts of wind-instruments. Then Hunderik, in his bright helmet, on his great white steed, at the head of all his warriors fully armed, rode forward, waving the sword that had been the price of Gola. They all galloped with thundering pace on their heavy horses round the mound several times, their armor flashing, and the wild song pealing from every throat to the accompaniment of the beats of the drum, the clang of iron, and the blasts of horns and fifes; and there was something wonderful in the excitement which filled everybody present and seemed to carry them along. The girls danced with their feet and joined in the wild song at the top of their shrill voices, and Attalus caught himself doing the same and shouting "Herman sla derman," before he recollected that it was an idolatrous chant, and, crossing himself, was silent. When the circuit had been made three times, faster and more furiously every time, there was a pause, and then Hunderik dismounted, came forward, and hung on some arrangement for the purpose the bleeding head of the poor colt, the whole ground being strewn with other horses' heads and skulls in various stages of decay.

Roswitha turned back and hid her tearful eyes from the sight of her favorite, but Valhild pressed forward to see better, and Attalus could not help looking, too, while the warriors laid before the pillar the shields, helmets, and axes of the Thuringians they had overcome or despoiled; but he could not help remarking that most of these trophies were composed of broken or dented weapons which could not serve again.

After the solemnity there was a great feast. The caldron in which the colt had been cooked was brought out, and the priest, who acted as host, but whose helmet and breastplate showed him to be himself a warrior, served out the broth and collops of flesh into the bowls or the helmets which every one produced. Valhild went up to claim the share of herself and her sister in the bowl which her mother had caused a slave to bring. The amount dealt out to the hero's daughters was ample, and they offered Attalus some; but the idea of horse-meat made him shudder, and he knew it was an idolatrous festival, and so he refused to taste, and only tried to satisfy his hunger with some bread that had been left from the midday meal. When the bowl was emptied

by the help of the slave in charge of the horses, Valhild made another expedition and procured some strong ale, whereof they all drank, and then listened sleepily to the shouts and songs with which the rude banquet was being finished.

All slept where they were, for it was too late to travel through the forest, where there might be wolves to carry off stragglers, and it was a beautiful night of early autumn, with a round red moon shining over them. Attalus, though very sleepy, roused himself to gaze at it, recollect his grandfather and St. Patrick, and say his prayers and the "Breastplate" before he finally composed himself among the heather and cranberries for his night's rest.

The horns were sounding their harsh reveille when he awoke with a start to see the sky through the trees golden with the sunrise. Every one was stirring, and the cavalcade was soon on its way home. Valhild, however, insisted on riding alone and letting Attalus ride with Roswitha. "She was a poor, feeble, weeping child, who would never be a Velleda, and she was only fit to ride with the craven Roman pledge, who would never be brave if he shrank from gallant horse-flesh."

But Roswitha was more thoughtful, and as she sat in front of Attalus she asked him why he would not eat horse-flesh. "Christians never do—real Christians," he said.

"Real Christians?" she said—"do real Christians kneel and say what thou saidst last night?"

"Didst thou hear me? I thought thou wast asleep."

"Valhild was. I was not. It was Latin, was it not? And to whom didst thou speak?"

"To my God, the One God, in whose name thou wast baptized!"

"Tell me," said Roswitha—"I love a tale;" and through that forest ride Attalus poured into her ears the great story of the Christian faith as he knew it. And as in that ride, and in other quiet hours, he talked to Roswitha, who listened with eager ears, he thought of the young St. Patrick, and was glad that the Frankish tongue came to him freely enough to make him able to be understood by the gentle-natured girl, who was really a baptized Christian though ignorant of the faith.

CHAPTER X.

THE HORSE HERDS.

WHERE is Roswitha?" asked Frau Bernhild. "She can keep Hundbert quiet while I broil these kidneys for thy father. Thou only lettest him get into the fire between my feet."

"Roswitha? I think she is out by the stream with Atli," returned Valhild.

"She is forever with that little dog of a pledge," muttered the mother.

"Ay," said Valhild; "he has bewitched her, as it seems to me, with some of his Roman arts."

"I will go and see what they are about," exclaimed the mother. "If he puts those feeble-hearted Gaulish notions into her, and teaches her his miserable fashions, what brave Frank will have her to wife?"

Frau Bernhild, with Hundbert following her, made her way, guided by Valhild, to a sort of

cave which the brook had in times of flood filled up with sand. On this Attalus had traced with a stick the shapes which looked weird and awful to the Frank lady, but which Roswitha was endeavoring to imitate, while she said after him, "B O S, *bos—ochs*; M U S, *mus—maus*."

With a sort of howl or shriek the lady fell on them. "Little wretch of a pledge! is this the way thou practicest your spells on my daughter? Frey, Grim, and all guard thee, my child, and blast his plans!"

"They are no spells, mother," said Roswitha; "he was only teaching me to read and write."

"Read and write, thou senseless maid! who do you think will ever wed thee, if thou takest up with such bond-slave's foolery? Rub out the witch words this instant, and come and mind the fit business for a Freiherr's daughter, not run after this scum of a slave." There was no resisting the argument of the lady's powerful fists, which she was ready to apply to both the offenders, and while Valhild and Hundbert danced upon the letters, and Attalus crept out of the way, Roswitha was dragged off by her mother to the accompaniment of a sharp scolding, by no means dimin-

ished by her venturing to say something about not fearing Frey, for a Christian had renounced Odin and all his folks.

“Hold thy peace, thou wicked child; name not the All-father by his own name, or he will visit on thee thy daring words toward him and his.”

Bernhild had herself called Odin Grim, for his name was held sacred; and Roswitha was musing whether the All-father was the same as Atli's One God, or whether he were really Odin and an idol. She hardly heard the growls with which her mother was murmuring at Hunderik's having brought home the little Roman wretch to poison and bewitch her daughters.

The next morning Attalus was roughly roused from sleep by Bodo, a big hard-handed man, who acted as a sort of steward or foreman to the household; and he was told he was to go out with the rest and herd the horses.

“I?” exclaimed Attalus, sitting up. “But that is thrall's work. I am no thrall.”

“Art not?” said Bodo, flourishing his whip. “That thou wilt soon see.”

“I am a freeman. I belong to my grandfather, Senator and Bishop, and to King Hildebert,” cried



'ATTALUS WAS ROUGHLY ROUSED FROM SLEEP BY BODO.'

Attalus, louder than caution would have allowed, but that he was only half awake. "I will ask Hunderik."

The whip came smartly down.

"Hunderik is gone wolf-hunting with King Theudebert," said the fellow, scornfully. "It is his command and my lady's; much we heed such talk—Gaulish serfs are ye all. Come at once, or shall I have to flog thee out, thou tardy, lazy lubber of a coward Roman?"

Attalus looked round, but no one was to be seen save thralls in even greater fear of Bodo than himself, and he was forced by the terrors of the whip waving over him to rise and come out of the house to the place where the horses were being assembled. A basket of oat-cakes was there, and one was thrown to Attalus, who at first disregarded it, but the slave next to him grinned and advised him not to neglect it, for it was all he would get during the day, except what he might pick up in the forest.

Bodo mounted one of the best horses bare-backed, and called out to the slave not to let Atli lag behind, and then, with another blast of the horn, set forth, the horses following as by well-

accustomed instinct, and about ten or twelve of the slaves coming likewise, several of them riding. One of them, who looked as if he were partly negro, scoffed at the boy's endeavor to keep up with the rest, or rather to keep out of the way of blows which cut his heart more than his limbs by the indignity to a free Roman. However, a more good-natured-looking fat fellow, whom he had seen laughing with every one, stopped his horse and said, "Get up here, boy. Hogmane can carry double."

"That he does already," called out one of the others, and there was a good-humored laugh; but Attalus was helped to climb up by the leg of his friend, and they rode on through the forest, the merry slave, Milo, exchanging with his fellows drolleries that Attalus could not understand, but occasionally pausing to ask if he were at his ease, and likewise what he had done to offend the Hausfrau so grievously, and in Gallic Latin, which sounded friendly.

"Only talking to Roswitha—showing her how we write and read."

"That will not do," said Milo. "See, now, I

lived in a great household at Genabum, where the master had us all to church every morn, and there came a subdeacon day by day to teach the children; but the Franks made a descent on us and put the town to ransom, and I was taken to make up the contribution my master was rated at. A freer life it is, if a rougher, and thou wilt soon get to like it best. One is not troubled with catechists, and prayers and psalms, and fast-days."

Attalus gave a sort of groan of horror. "Poor lad," said Milo, mistaking him, "'tis fast-day with thee willing or no; but eat up thy oat-cake; never fear—I have a lump of pork in my wallet, and thou shalt have thy share, and I will show thee how to set snares for rabbits or quails."

"Oh! thou art good," exclaimed Attalus, a little diverted from his dismay at Milo's willing relapse into heathenism in his comfort at finding a friend, whose broad well-fleshed chest was a much more comfortable pillow than he had known before; and he was glad to venture on eating his oat-cake, which, tough and hard as it was, occupied his teeth and his throat as far as the horses went—namely, to an open space between the

wooded hillsides, where they were to feed and disport themselves till nearly sundown.

The thralls were to be posted at intervals around the space, partly to keep the horses from overrunning too much at once and spoiling it for the time for future pasture, and partly to prevent their getting into the surrounding forests, where they might not only be lost but might become the prey of wolves and bears.

All this Milo explained to Attalus while taking up his station on the borders of the juniper and stunted birch that marked the limits on their side, while the horses with one accord trotted down to drink at the little brook. Milo was an easy-going, good-natured, careless fellow, to whom, as long as he had plenty of food and could lie down in the sun, all matters of religion or of freedom were alike, though he would have preferred belonging to a civilized Roman, chiefly because the language was natural to him, and he was better fed, clothed, and housed; but good city manners were a trouble to him, and the lessons of the catechist a still greater one. However, he was sorry for the little Roman boy, knowing what he had lost, and liked, too, to speak with him

the odd mixed tongue which in time became French.

So Attalus was not utterly solitary. No one minded his being with Milo, nor indeed what became of him, so long as he was out of Roswitha's way. Moreover, as most boys would do, he had lost a good many of the dainty habits to which he had been bred, so that the absence of the bath and of clean or even whole clothes ceased to cause him personal discomfort. The guardianship of the horses did not prove altogether such a difficult matter, for the herd never strayed far away from their leader—a great powerful gray, who would never be caught nor allow any one to mount him but Hunderik. To turn him back from wherever he wished to go, always followed by the whole herd, required the full force of the keepers united; but he had a great deal too much sense often to make such an attempt, and when he did it was a serious and dangerous business to oppose the stampede. Moreover, he knew quite as well as the herdsmen when it was time to go home, and never waited for the horn to summon him. All the others followed him obediently except the young half-grown colts, who seemed occasionally

to take a fit of restiveness, or thinking for themselves, and wanted to start on fresh ground near the marsh or woodland, where they would have been bogged or perhaps lost and devoured by the wolves. These required watching, but were easily headed back by any one on the alert. Attalus was never in any real charge, and was allowed to do as he pleased and keep with Milo, who was very kind to him, and showed him how to snare the wild game, and even to shoot it with rude bows and arrows of their own construction; and when brought down, they plucked or skinned the creatures and roasted them on sticks or by burying them amid stones in the earth, keeping the hare and rabbit skins, and spreading them to dry, so as to have a store to make winter coats. It was not exactly Leo's cookery, but Attalus really enjoyed it quite as much or more, and during this summer-time he was not at all unhappy; in fact, more and more of the Roman was dropping from him as he grew more roughened by the hardy life he was leading and the companions with whom he more or less consorted on the heath, where the pasture was changed from time to time under Bodo's directions. Attalus, like the other herds-

men, slept in the shed where the horses were sheltered at night, riding barebacked to and from the feeding-ground on whichever steed would let him mount. He was ragged and dirty, and, worst of all, he was fast getting hardened to forget not only his learning but his faith. Wakened by the horn, he rushed out to secure a horse and a lump of food without the prayers, which he forgot all day; and at night when he rode home he was so sleepy that he only remained awake long enough to devour the rude meal Milo secured for him; and he was on his way to become as great a heathen as the Franks around.

As long as he was with Roswitha and Valhild he had felt bound to show himself a Roman and a Christian, and had felt the stimulus of the elder girl's admiration and real desire to learn the faith. But now he was cut off from her and hardly ever even saw her—going out in the early morning and coming home tired late at night, and never supping or sleeping in the great family building—there was nothing to keep him to higher thoughts. The free open-air life was making him grow tall and strong, and the boy nature was coming out in him and swallowing up the character that home

care had fostered, so that he cared more for riding and catching game than for anything else except perhaps holding his own among the other lads and proving to them that a Gallo-Roman was no coward.

CHAPTER XI.

GOLA'S RANSOM.

AT Langres there was daily prayer, both public and private, for the poor little exile. He was mentioned each day when the sick, the oppressed, and the captives were prayed for at the holy Eucharist, and his grandfather, his uncle, and all who loved him in the household made their prayers that he might he kept safely and restored without harm to body or soul.

The first that was heard of him was one cold winter's day, when to the open door of the court of the house of Bishop Gregory there came a Jew, followed by three or four slaves. He bowed low to the doorkeeper, and demanded whether the great and clement lord of the household would deal with him for a useful and accomplished servant, or for one strong to bear burdens.

“My master never purchases a slave,” answered

the porter, looking out at the little door of his lodge, cut in the thickness of the brick wall, where he was enjoying the first pan of charcoal embers of the season.

“ Marcus, Marcus, dost not know me ? ” cried a lamentable voice.

“ Gola’s voice ! ” exclaimed the porter, emerging now, and beholding a wretched and forlorn-looking figure, his once comfortable woolen tunic and trousers reduced to rags, his sandals worn to shreds so that his feet were bleeding, a beard long and, like his hair, quite white, instead of only grizzled, and his face, once all roundness and good-nature, sallow, haggard, and lean, with the Moorish yellow tint showing so that it was like old parchment.

“ Gola ! Is it thou ? ” cried Marcus again. “ Poor Gola, how camest thou here, and where is the young Attalus ? ”

“ Alas ! alas ! Heaven only knows, ” cried poor Gola, clasping his hands and lifting them up, while tears ran down the deep furrows in his cheeks. “ I was rent from him in the night by the brutal Franks and sold to this—this—this— ” He paused, afraid to utter the opprobrious epithet

upon his tongue, and the Jew took up the word: "I bought him from the Frankish noble Hunderik for a sword and breastplate worth ten pounds weight in silver, paid down on the spot. I have maintained him in sickness and health for these four months, and I cannot think of letting him go for less than seven."

"The Frank had no right to sell what did not belong to him," returned the porter. "Here, come in and warm thyself, poor brother Gola, and tell us how this chanced, and where are the boy and Festus. Go thou, Peter, and fetch Father Philetus and Master Cornelius. But tell us of the young master, Gola."

"Alas! would that I could! but Festus was taken from us at Soissons, I fear me with his own good-will. The Kings made over my poor young lord, my heart's darling, to an untamed savage barbarian named Hunderik. On the outskirts of Treves this. Abner says he took on him to exchange me for his weapons, and I was carried away by force in the night, or I would never, never have left the darling of my heart."

By this time all the household had come together—Philetus, the tutor; Cornelius, a freedman,

the steward of the household; Baldrik, who had come to look grave, prim, and demure, with his tonsured head and little clerical gown; Leo, with bare arms and dough sticking about them; Gilchrist, the Irish monk, still walking lame, together with several more clergy and many more servants, all eager to hear of little Attalus.

The Jew, Abner, looked from one to the other as if he were reckoning what price he could put on even letting Gola speak.

“Thou merchant,” demanded Philetus, “how didst thou become possessed of a slave who belongs to the holy and clement Gregory, both Senator and Bishop?”

“By fair and honest purchase, sir, as he can tell thee himself.”

“What right had any man to sell thee the slave who is the property of my lord?” demanded Cornelius.

“It was the free lord Hunderik of Hundingburg, to whom the youth and his following had been granted by King Theudebert,” responded the Jew, with low bows and in a submissive voice. “The slaves were made over to him, and he sold this man to me for an inlaid breastplate of brass

and silver, curious work of Rome, and a Byzantine blade of excellent metal, worth ten pounds of silver."

"The robber!" was the murmur that went through the spectators.

"Might is right in these days, alas!" said Philetus; and Cornelius added, "It is most unfortunate that his Clemency is absent."

"Hunderik is a mere barbarian savage," broke out Baldrik; "I have heard my father say so. It is frightful for Attalus to be in his hands. But for this man, he is Bishop Gregory's. Keep him here. The rogue of a Jew had no right to buy him."

"The noble citizens would not see a poor Jew defrauded," whined Abner; "nor would the great and clement Bishop, nor the Consul of this place."

For Philetus and Cornelius were consulting whether it might not be better to refer the matter to the Consul, as they called the chief magistrate of the place under the Senator; but Cornelius recollected that a Jewish physician and likewise a Jewish handmaid of his wife were thought to have much influence over him, and he strongly suspected that the cunning Abner had had some intimation from them of a favorable time for bring-

ing Gola to the house of the Bishop. Gregory was, in fact, gone to the Court of Hildebert at Paris, carrying the yearly tribute of his district, and hoping to ascertain the fate of his grandson and the chances of his restoration. There was little hope in an appeal to the magistrate, considering who had his ear. It was probable, yet not certain, that Gregory, though on principle he never purchased slaves, would think it right to redeem poor Gola, who looked half starved, half clothed, and with clasped hands implored his rescue. He had evidently been very ill, and had suffered in every respect; and Cornelius would have ventured to advance the amount, sure that the Bishop would pardon him for exceeding the rule, but he really had not the money in hand. All that was available had been carried off by Bishop Gregory to satisfy the never-ending demands of King Hildebert, and the household was subsisting on the provisions brought in from the Bishop's estates, and on the offerings of the Christian peasantry. There was silver and gold plate belonging to the table, but though Gregory might have parted with it for such a purpose, the steward could not venture on so doing.

Gola wept bitterly, and entreated, "Oh, let him not take me away! I shall die in his hands. He will poison me as worthless."

Perhaps this was unjust to the Jew, but it moved the servants very much, and Philetus began to bargain for Gola's being left where he was till the master's return, to satisfy all claims; but of this Abner would not hear, inferring in a sneering though abject tone that he knew something of Roman faith.

Little Baldrik was the first to move. He came forward holding out the silver and ivory cup from which he drank and the buckle of his belt. "These are my own," he said; "take them and set poor Gola free."

The Jew smiled. "The fifth part of him may be, young priestling."

But already Leo was coming to the front, with a black and grimy canvas bag. Slave as he was, many a guest of his master had flung him a small coin in acknowledgment of the good dinners that he had prepared; and he had sometimes, moreover, been borrowed when one or other of the townsmen was about to make a feast and wanted the services of the best cook in Langres. He had

accumulated all with the view of purchasing his own freedom, but he now threw the bag down before Abner, naming the amount, and saying, "Take all and release him. It is worth nothing to me, and this is his fair purchase."

"I must have what I gave for him, or he is a dead loss," said the Jew.

"Dead verily. So he will be soon in thy keeping," said Leo.

Again Baldrik put in his oar: "Alive or dead, my father, Garfried of the Blue Sword, will come and take account of him from thee."

"Well, well," said the Jew, "let us see what is in that bag. Would I take a slave's word?"

Leo poured out his hoard on the pavement of the court; a large amount in quantity, but the value of each coin very small. They were of many mints, Roman and Frank, one or two going back to Julian and to Carausius, but this was not the point. The sum was just what Leo called it; but Abner, of course, estimated many pieces at a smaller price, and finally declared the contents to be far beneath any such ransom as he could accept for Gola, even with Baldrik's contribution

added. Cornelius now brought a few coins of his own property; Philetus had nothing to give; but Leo's example stimulated some of the other bystanders to bring a few more sesterces—though none had saved like Leo, and the amount was but little swelled.

However, Abner had purchased poor Gola chiefly as a speculation, and had seen him pining away and growing more aged and weak every day, partly from grief, and partly from the very different scale of living he met with at Treves from the comforts of a favorite servant in an episcopal household. The Jew already perceived that no one else would buy the worn-out old man, and that all he would gain was here; and as soon as he saw that there was absolutely no more to be got he began to chaffer with Cornelius, and finally, declaring that he was moved entirely by pity and the affection that these Gentiles showed for one another, he accepted the ransom and moved off, while Gola threw himself at Leo's feet, sobbing out attempts at thanks, mingled with his grief and despair at Leo having thus given away all he had laid up for his own freedom.

“And I—wretch that I was!—had not voice nor manhood enough to refuse to profit by thy sacrifice.”

“No sacrifice,” said Leo, gruffly, “to remain here under our good master. How could I see my old comrade carried off by the dog Jew? It would have preyed on my mind forever. But let us hear of young Attalus.”

“Alas! alas! that I should be here, restored to my home and all its blessings, when he, the boy, the darling of my soul, is in the hands of those fiends, I know not where.”

The whole household closed round Gola to hear what he had to tell, which only went as far as that King Theudebert had put Attalus under the charge of Hunderik, and the successive deprivations that the poor boy had suffered; and there his knowledge ended, and he could only tell of the dismal court of the slave-dealer and his own sufferings.

Baldrik spoke out: “Hunderik lives up in the hills and moors beyond Treves. He is a wild barbarian. If my father knew, he would hasten to Hundingburg with all his freemen and would fight

with him till Attalus was free. Friedbald will be there. Oh, that I could still fight!"

"Well crowed for a young priest," said Cornelius, and though Baldrik blushed and shrank into himself, his eyes still glanced fire.

"We shall see first," said Philetus, "what tidings our lord brings home from Paris, and whether the cities for which Attalus is a hostage have been delivered up."

Meantime Leo and the rest led the rescued Gola off to be fed and clothed.

CHAPTER XII.

GILCHRIST'S VENTURE.

GILCHRIST, the Irish pilgrim, had been detained much against his will at Langres by repeated outbreaks of the disease in his wounded foot, and the fever and weakness that accompanied them; but at last recovery had set in, and he could walk, so that he would already have set forth if he had not been assured that he would find it absolutely impossible to cross the Alps in the coming winter, and that if he set out now it would only be to leave his bones upon the mountains.

Native of warm, damp Ireland, he hardly believed what he was told, even on the word of the Bishop and of Tetricus, who had both made the journey, and described to him the precipices, the glaciers, the avalanches, and the impossibility of finding his way without the guides whom he could

not pay, so that his only chance was by joining some company of pilgrims who were certain to be crossing in the summer, and were sure to allow him to accompany them and share their food.

However, he had been detained, much against his will, so long that he seemed like a regular inmate of Gregory's house, and shared many of its interests, besides having become tolerably familiar both with the Gallic form of Latin and the broken Frankish that passed for the vernacular.

He spent the night in one long vigil. He preferred to do such watchings up to his neck in water, but as the river was too far off for this, he prostrated himself on the pavement. He always did the like, only not for so long a time, on Fridays, and seemed able to exist without food or sleep, or with the smallest possible amount, much longer than the household, who inherited habits of Roman ease, though kept in check by Christian self-denial. Indeed there was very little of him save a frame of bones covered by a freckled skin, with an eager soul looking out of a pair of vivid dark eyes.

No sooner was the house astir, and the morning daily Eucharist over, than he stood forth and said,

“I go to find the boy, the grandson of the holy Bishop.”

There was a general outcry :

He knew not where to go, the ways were forest ; he would be eaten by the wolves ; he would be starved himself ; he would be lost in the woods ; he would meet with mere barbarians ; he did not know which road to take—it was mere madness. To all he had but one answer : “ God would lead him. The boy was a lamb of God’s own. He would go to seek him. As to starving, he could live on a little ; as to the wolves, if it were Heaven’s will, he was as willing to go to paradise by their teeth as by any other way.”

What was the use of trying to persuade a man who had no fears, no shrinking from pain or discomfort ? Besides, no one present possessed that authority of the Bishop to which alone he would give way, and he was absolutely determined. He knew that he must pass through Treves, and there he meant to put himself under the protection of the memory of the great St. Athanasius, the champion of the faith, as he well knew ; but beyond this all was uncertain. Philetus insisted on writing a letter to bespeak kindness and protection

from the clergy or the monks of Treves for the crazy pilgrim, and Leo filled his wallet with the food likely to last longest, and, moreover, walked out a mile or two from the town with him to prevent him from giving it all away to beggars.

“Would that I were going with thee!” said Leo as they parted; “I could succor the boy more effectively than thou art like to do.”

“Come, then,” said Gilchrist.

“I cannot—I am a slave.”

“I had forgotten,” said Gilchrist. “Yet aid me by thy prayers.”

So the little worn figure in brown frock and hood disappeared from sight, and no word was heard of him.

No doubt, said some of the more irreligious of the household, the wolves had had him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HOLLOW TREE.

THE winter was not a very severe one. If it had been, the less promising colts would have had to be slaughtered, so as to leave food enough for the rest; and the family of Hunderik would have eaten them with as little scruple as they had in devouring the swine or cattle, of whom, as a matter of course, all the young progeny were eaten, and only the parents left to keep up the stock.

The horses were always spared to the last, though they could not at times be turned out, but a good deal of the labor of their herds was spent in collecting the ferns and reeds, and anything that would serve for fodder, to help out the small amount of hay and straw that had been stored in the early autumn. Whenever it was tolerably fine and free from snow the horses were taken out to pick up what they could in some of the

more sheltered valleys, where springs resisted the less violent frosts and kept the grass tolerably moist.

Milo, and Attalus with him, had gone out with a favorite mare and her foal, to take them, apart from the others, to a place in the forest sheltered by high trees, but open to noontide sun, and where a little green had been discovered, showing the first signs of early spring. There was a small stream, bordered but not covered by ice, and they were endeavoring to find a little fish or two to add to their own ration of a lump of hard salt fish, when suddenly a strange sound fell upon their ears—the chanting voice of a man, singing words in a language neither understood; but Attalus looked up as he caught the lilt, and exclaimed, “That is the ‘Breastplate of St. Patrick!’” and he started forward in the direction of the sound in among the trees.

There was a great hollow tree, between several other huge primeval firs, with long sweeping branches hanging almost to the ground, and there, in the hollow, scarcely to be distinguished from the ruddy brown of the pine stems in his dark reddish dress, stood a hooded figure, freckled, red-

bearded, and singing forth in his native Erse that beloved hymn—

Christ in the field,
Christ in the fold,

and by his side lay two pretty, delicate-limbed deer.

“Gilchrist! Gilchrist!” shouted the boy, flinging out his arms.

The hermit started, the hinds sprang up, but one of them limped, and instead of bounding off shrank to Gilchrist for protection, while he exclaimed, “Blessed be the saints! Found, found! as I promised his Clemency the Bishop,” and he gathered the boy into his embrace.

“Gilchrist, Gilchrist, how didst thou come here? Didst come to search for me? Milo, 'tis a pilgrim, a guest of my grandfather's. Oh, let me hear! How is he? How is my uncle? Am I ever to go home?”

Gilchrist answered each confused question as well as he could, and they gradually came on each side to an understanding of the situation. Gilchrist told of the return and repurchase of Gola in the absence of the Bishop, and how he himself had set forth on finding that Attalus was left alone,



THE DISCOVERY OF GILCHRIST'S HIDING-PLACE. p. 130

so as to discover what had become of him. His way had been very long, and much hindered, especially since he had passed Treves, and no doubt he had been nearly starved, and existed by something little short of miracle; but to that these primitive Irish saints were well used, and Gilchrist said not a word of his hardships.

Lying at the bottom of a steep place he had found the half-grown fawn, its leg broken, and its side torn by a hunter's dog, and the mother standing over it. She had darted away at first, and the creature struggled, but soon submitted under his hand when he bound it up, and both had become his fond companions ever since. The hind still had milk enough to afford him a little support when all else was lacking, and they had slept beside him and kept him warm. They had gone a little way off, their great soft wistful eyes regarding his visitors with some alarm, but it was plain that they were not about to leave him.

Had he been at Hundingburg? Yes, some days ago he had been to the town, as he called it, but there had been a yelling forth of words that he could not understand, and he saw dogs ready to be loosed, which made him fear for his hind and

her fawn, and he had retreated, endeavoring to make his approaches more warily, as indeed he had not been able to discover whether this were the place of Attalus's captivity. He had decided to wait as near as was prudent, and endeavor to find out whether this were the dwelling of Hunderik. So he had wandered on till he had found the shelter of this hollow tree, such a hermitage as many a Celtic anchoret of those centuries owned, there to rest his foot, which showed signs of renewed mischief.

He was perfectly contented there. He said he wanted for nothing—he ate the seeds out of the fir cones, and caught the little fish, and he would not even taste a piece of Milo's meat because it was Lent. Milo was far past keeping fast-days, and Attalus had forgotten the time of year. Indeed, the fresh smell of the pines, with their young scaly buds becoming visible, was very grateful.

There was much to tell and tell again on either side, till, as the sun began going down and bathing the stems of the pines with ruddy light, Gilchrist exclaimed that it was time for his evening praise and prayer, and began to chant. It was badly pronounced Latin, but the words were familiar to

Attalus, and spoke of home, and to Milo they were the cadence of a long, long forgotten time, and by and by, when Gilchrist and Attalus had ceased, the rough fellow's face was covered with tears.

“Father,” he sobbed, “thou wilt not go away. I will come back again to-morrow and bring thee—”

“I—I could not go if I would,” said Gilchrist, smiling, and holding out a foot which frost, rocks, and dust had brought to a state that would have horrified Philetus, and made Attalus cry out with pity and dismay. Yet Gilchrist, in his solitude among the whispering pines, and with no companions save the two deer, seemed far happier than ever he had done in the household at Langres.

Milo and Attalus went back, with their two horses, both grave and sad, many a thought and yearning within them. Attalus was wakened from the indifference that had been growing on him, and felt utterly homesick and weary as the dear old faces of his grandfather, Leo, and even his stern uncle and Philetus, rose on him; the chantings in the chapel sounded in his ears, and as he looked down at his ragged and dirty tunic, supple-

mented by a goatskin belted round with a thong, he felt a great disgust with himself and all his surroundings. He gazed away over the hills and woods, and wondered whether Gilchrist had come with the expectation of helping him to escape. But of this nothing had been said, nor did it appear that Gilchrist could move, besides, he supposed he was still a hostage; and as he lay on his bed of fern, among the horses, he wept bitterly, and prayed as he had never prayed since the earlier days when hope had not faded away from him.

Milo had a good deal more liberty than Attalus, since no one thought of his escape being possible. Gilchrist's lair was at no great distance, and as soon as the first dawn of the March morning began to come in he was stirring, and was soon on his way, while the cattle's dull champing sounds of chewing the cud, the cock's occasional clarion, and the early twitters of the sparrows were alone to be heard around. With a hard, dried griddle-cake, saved from what had been thrown to him for his supper, he was on his way, while the sky above the trees grew lighter, and presently he heard another sound—at first he thought that of a fox stealing home, but it really was that of Attalus's bare feet,

and a hand was thrust into his, as almost fearfully the boy looked about on the world in this unaccustomed light. He, too, had brought a share of his supper. He was drawn by the longing to see the good man again, with all of home that the contact with him brought.

The sun had not risen, only the tender shoots on the tops of the pine-trees were gaining a brighter, redder hue, when the two came in sight of the little brown figure kneeling, and could hear his lowly murmured prayer, while his two deer were feeding on the frosty grass around. He looked much more congenial there amid the pine woods than ever he had done in the great Roman palace, and both his visitors were struck with a strange feeling of new reverence, such as Attalus had scarcely felt even in church.

Milo threw himself at the hermit's feet and cried aloud, "Oh, pray for me, win pardon for me! I am a sinful man!"

Gilchrist laid a hand on him and prayed with him, and promised to join constantly in prayer with him and with Attalus, whose boyish indifference and childish faults were now recollected with shame and pain,

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HIND AND THE HOUNDS.

NO one could have supposed that a wild and lame Irish hermit, living in a hollow tree, could have made such a difference to Attalus as did the presence of Gilchrist, and not merely to Attalus and Milo but to others besides them.

Attalus was roused from his dreary indifferent state, in which he had been fast falling into the heathen and ungodly ways of the Franks around. To hear that his dear old Gola was safe and had carried tidings of him to Langres was great joy, and gave him hopes of his grandfather being able to do something for him; but above all the renewal of prayer and all good influences woke him up to the consciousness that had been passing away from him.

It was the same with Milo, and one or other of them tried to visit the hermit constantly in the

lengthening mornings and evenings. There were others who followed their example, creeping out to see what strange resort they had. Some thought that the little russet man was a sort of wizard, and shrank back from him; but others came near, drawn by an irresistible sort of attraction, and listened while he told them of the One All-father and of His Son the Redeemer.

Roswitha had not been so entirely kept apart from Attalus after the winter began, though he was seldom admitted within the family dwelling; but she had met him on the snowy days when the cattle could not be turned out, and there had been little conversations, not much more than gossip, about the horses, cows, and goats; but he somehow fell into the habit of bringing her home the first signs of spring—a willow catkin, a primrose flower, or a buttercup—and she watched for him.

“What makes thee go off to the fir-wood cave so often?” she asked. “Is it true that there is an old wizard there who bewitches thee?”

“Oh, nay, nay, Roswitha. He is a good old man, who tells me those holy words thy mother cut me short in saying to thee.”

“I thought thou knewest them well before?”

“ Ah! but I had forgotten in this godless place. Come, Roswitha, and see him some morn.”

Roswitha had more liberty just now, for both Valhild and Hundbert were unwell. Probably it was from the feverish forms of illness that often beset the dwellers in conditions that might be very healthy in the summer, when life was spent in the open air, but in wet winters like the past were apt to be very unwholesome. Frau Bernhild never cared much for her daughters, and Valhild might peak and pine, fret or rage, without much notice; but little Hundbert was quite another affair—the only son, and the pride of the family as well as the darling. Indeed, Bernhild could never be sure that, if her boy died, his father might not take another wife; for Christianity sat very lightly on him, as on others of the Franks, and he would only have been following the example of the royal line of the Meerwing.

Roswitha was a good deal let alone, since both the sick children preferred the tendance of their mother, and of their foster-mothers, to her more fitful attentions.

So she joined Milo and Attalus one morning when they went in quest of Gilchrist, and she

stood with hands clasped and face raised in wonder as he sang forth his early morning hymn, and they both chimed in with responses at the appropriate intervals.

When it was over she sprang forward and cried, "Oh, sir, is it Attalus's god?"

Perhaps, as the child stood before him, with her fair flaxen hair glinting in the light of the rising sun, the hermit thought of Ethne and Fedlima, the pupils of St. Patrick, as he laid his hand on the shining head and answered her that he did, indeed, serve the God of Attalus, to Whom she had been dedicated in the waters of the stream.

Thus, day after day, did Roswitha come and listen to the words, given in an uncouth form, indeed, and rendered and explained by Attalus, who was more and more alive to such thoughts under this contact. Milo, too, was wondrously attracted, as he had never been in his civilized Gallo-Roman life. More than one of the household followed them. The boys began by throwing stones, but somehow they fell short, and the way in which the hermit stood under his tree, with his hands lifted in blessing, gradually awed them, and whispers went through Hundingburg that it was a mighty wizard

who lived under the blasted fir. Yet others said that it was one who came in the name of the God Who had given Clovis the victory, and Who was to be worshiped in Gaul instead of Odin and Frey.

Hunderik growled, and when he heard of the wise man living alone within the tree with the two deer, which some affirmed to be his familiar spirits, he declared that he would put it to the proof. Roswitha threw herself before him, crying, "O father, father, hurt not the holy man!"

"By Thor's hammer, thou art bewitched too!" he cried, and thrust her aside so roughly that she fell on the hearth, while her father strode out, calling after him his two great shaggy hounds, Fest and Swift, and with his Frankish battle-ax over his shoulder.

She rose upon her knees, with outstretched hands, calling aloud on God to shield the good man. It was the first prayer that had found voice under Hunderik's roof.

Then, unable to bear the suspense, she rushed out, and found Attalus trying to force his way through the crowd that were looking at their master, hesitating a little to follow.

“Atli!” she exclaimed in a hasty, breathless whisper, “I know the short cut over the hillock and marsh. Let us run on and warn him. He may get away into the woods and save the dear hind and fawn.”

The children slipped over the rude fence on the farther side, and made their way, hand in hand, down a rocky slope, much impeded with broom bushes and thorns, down to the broad expanse of boggy ground now waving with growing grass and reeds, and full of golden king-cups which traced the streams to be avoided. Roswitha leaped and sprang from one tuft of rushes and willows to another, Attalus following her; but, haste as they would, speed was impossible on that uncertain ground, and they were still hardly among the stunted holly and beech which bordered the bog when they heard the baying of the hounds.

Up they rushed, breathless, and forced to rest and to gasp at times in their journey up the slope, regardless of briars and bushes, and at last they fairly dropped at the feet of Gilchrist, who was returning with his bowl of water from the brook.

“Oh, fly, fly! get into the wood with the deer,”

panted out Roswitha. "He is coming—father, with the dogs—"

"Thanks, my child; but why should I fly? The God Whom I serve can protect me, or else take me to His glory."

"But the deer?" sighed Roswitha, with her arms round the pretty white neck of the fawn.

"His they are too," said Gilchrist.

The hind was out of sight. The scent and sound of the pursuers had given her the alarm, and she had bounded away into the depths of the forest; but the fawn, still very lame, though nearly full grown, kept close by his master.

On came the sound. From the farther side of the gorge, with only the brook between, there burst the two great tawny dogs, baying in loud echoing notes, and close behind them followed Hunderik, tall and fierce, his long hair flowing from his winged helmet, and his ax in hand. A crowd of followers could be seen in the thicket behind him, not very solicitous to advance, for, however brave they might be in battle, they were quite uncertain what the mysterious hermit might do to them. There he stood on the other side, the small rusty-brown figure, with the white fawn by

his side, in front of his hollow tree, the sweeping branches of the other pines closing him in.

He had thrust the children a little back with authority that they were too awe-struck to resist, and perhaps, too, neither could entirely conquer the recoil at the bounding forward of the two huge hounds Fest and Swift, both as tall as they were themselves. The creatures swept headlong down their side of the ravine, through the brook, then up again.

But there, behold, they did not fall on the white fawn, which had shrunk close up to the hermit. One hand was on her head, the other raised. The dogs crouched at his feet and did no hurt!

Their master raised his hunting-cry, "Hie on!" The dogs pricked their ears, but the only move was that one came toward Roswitha to caress her, as she threw her arms round him and called him good Fest, then held out her hand to Swift.

The question might be asked, did the hounds abstain because of her presence? Or was it that they were really wolf-hounds, not deer-hounds? Or was it that the entirely undaunted attitude and bearing of the hermit had a strange effect in cowing them?

Such things have often been in those days of contention between utter savagery and the gentle and holy, if still wild, representatives of Christianity. Were they miracles, or a divine control of natural causes?

Hunderik called across the gorge, "What dost thou here on my land?"

"I serve the only God of heaven and earth, and call on others to serve Him," returned Gilchrist.

In spite of Hunderik's shout, there was an awe upon him. If his dogs would have fallen on the deer he would have been encouraged, but the strangeness of the thing impressed him with something like fear. Nor did he wish to slay or use violence toward the hermit. He knew that such doings might bring him into disgrace or trouble with one or other of the kings, whose attitude toward the Christians could never quite be calculated. If Theudebert heard that he had chased away and slain a Christian hermit, it might be looked on as if he had killed a fox, or it might be met by a cast of his battle-ax. So he only blustered out, "By my sufferance alone thou lurkest here." Then he shouted to his dogs, which

came dashing after him at full speed, and he did not hear the reply of Gilchrist:

“By the permission of my God.”

He was gone, and all his rabble rout followed, while the hermit and the two children fell on their knees and gave thanks.

CHAPTER XV.

HUNDBERT'S RECOVERY.

WHEN Attalus and Roswitha returned home they found Hundingburg in a state of commotion. A messenger had arrived from King Theudebert to summon Hunderik to Treves, where a council was to be held to decide whether there was to be a raid into the Gothic kingdom of Aquitania.

The messenger was installed on a seat by the hearth, and Bernhild had been called off from her attendance on her sick child to prepare a banquet for him, and likewise to put in order her husband's best array, both peaceful and warlike, for the expedition, so that he and his followers might start early the next morning.

Little Hundbert was fretting in the arms of his foster-mother, and insisting by turns that his mother should come to him or that Valhild should play with him, and poor Valhild was far too

wretched and miserable to do so with any animation, in spite of an occasional slap or shake from her mother in passing for not exerting herself to amuse the child. When Roswitha came in she was greeted with a few sharp words and a blow for being always out of the way when wanted, and ordered to go and do what Valhild failed in, to attend to her brother while her mother was occupied. Roswitha sat down on a low wooden stool and held out her arms. Hundbert nestled into them, refreshed by the change. He pulled out all her long hair, entangled it with his own, tied it round his own neck, and made her endure a good deal; but she did so in silence, or only with friendly, cheerful little mutterings to him; and when he began to moan again and grow restless, she sang to him in a low crooning voice, till finally he fell asleep in her lap, as she leaned against a big cask, and kept her position, stiff and cramped as she was, while murmuring over St. Patrick's Breastplate.

The bustle went on vehemently meantime—furbishing of armor, sharpening of swords and axes, packing of wallets with dried food, spreading and folding of garments and the like. The night's rest

only lasted as long as darkness made it needful, and by break of day the whole camp was astir, horses being caught, and the goods being packed on the backs of the more sturdy and less spirited, and all being set to eat a good meal, in which the riders followed their example.

The sun had scarcely peeped over the fir-trees before all were in the saddle, Hunderik's gilded wings glancing at the head of them, and the breast-plate, Gola's price, shining on his bosom.

About twenty men followed him. Bodo was left with half the number for the protection of the household, for though there was little probability of an attack, no one could tell what enemies might be in store. However, there was no great danger. Bernhild and her women could fight in defense of hearth and children almost as well as the men, and at the worst, if the timber-built houses were burned, they could retreat into the woods. So that it was not with much fear that they were left, as indeed was usually the case in the summer; but Hunderik's last words to his wife were, "See that thou hast the boy well and strong for me when I return; an heir I must have."

These were words which filled the mother with

terror, not only with her burning maternal affection for her only boy, but for the too likely consequence to a wife who gave her husband no male heir. It was true that the Franks were nominally Christian, but their hold on their religion was very slight, and even where the doctrines and the pious practices were most closely kept, the holiness and inviolability of marriage were very slow to be accepted. Even two centuries later the noted Charlemagne was very faulty in this respect. Thus Bernhild was conscious that her fair cheeks were growing weather-stained and rugged, and she had been quite startled when she caught a glimpse of her face in a pail of water. If her little Hundbert was gone, what hold should she have on her husband?

And Hundbert pined more and more every day. Valhild was better, only very fractious, and often bringing on herself blows, for her mother was almost angry that a worthless maid-child should recover when her beautiful boy was getting weaker and weaker. He could not stand now, and he cried whenever any one touched him except his mother.

Suddenly an idea came to her. Perhaps it was inspired by hearing Bodo, who in his authority was

much sharper with the establishment than even his master, threaten those who stole away in the morning and evening to the old rogue in the woods, and chiefly Milo and Attalus, whom he accused of making all the others idle, and rated sorely, threatening them with the lash.

Attalus flashed out; "I am no slave," he said, "to be struck by a base retainer!"

"We will see," began Bodo; but Roswitha dashed at him, crying, "He is a freeman of noble blood; not to be touched. I will call my mother if thou layest a finger on him. O mother!"—for Bernhild was close on them.

"Get away with thee, Bodo," she said; "thou hast no right to threaten or chastise a free-born hostage of my lord's;" nor did she listen to his murmurs of "An abject Gaul," but turning to the two children she exclaimed, "Atli, Roswitha, this man is wise, a diviner. He saved his deer from the hounds. Take me to him. Mayhap he will heal my son."

"He hates unholy magic arts," began Attalus, rather imprudently; "but often God grants His servants to work wonders."

"Oh! let us take Hundbert to him, mother,"

entreated Roswitha; "he will pray to his God over him and cure him."

Bernhild muttered a little about Frey, but though slow to own herself persuaded, she really longed after anything that could give her hope for her boy. She wrapped him up in a deerskin, in spite of his low moans, and bade the two children show her the way; she would try anything.

For weeks Hundbert had been in the atmosphere of peat and wood smoke, and every other variety of foul smell—the steam of soup, the scent of the stable, and, chief of all, savage human nature frying over the fire. True, the building had much involuntary ventilation, but it was all carefully kept from him by the sides of the stall or compartment belonging to his parents, and at night he slept (or did not sleep) in his mother's box-bed.

When first taken out into the pure fresh spring air he began to gasp and cry, and his mother wrapped him more closely; but presently his little wasted hands pushed the covering aside, and he drew a longer breath. He was quiet all the way, almost asleep, while Attalus and Roswitha sped on, closely followed by the anxious mother, and the chief of the idle household following in the rear,

to the valley, with the brook in the green meadow, now bright with flowers between; and beyond the steeper bank, crowned with the pine-trees. The two deer were feeding in the valley, and Attalus pointed them out as the creatures that had been safe from the dogs. Roswitha sped on, across the stepping-stones which had been placed since Gilchrist's hermitage had become a resort. She sprang up to the pilgrim in his hollow tree to warn him that her mother was bringing her little sick brother to be healed.

Gilchrist shook his head. "I am no saint to work miracles," he said; "I can pray for the child, but his life or death is in God's hand. Pray, pray with me, my children, if haply God will have mercy on the little one."

Meantime Bernhild had passed the stream and mounted the bank. She stood before the hermit with her wonted air of command.

"Old man," she said, "heal my son."

"It is not in me to heal the sick," replied Gilchrist, looking quite as dignified, in spite of his rags, his small stature, and wild locks and beard, as did the chieftainess.

“Thou canst not? Then will I have thee chased away by dogs and servants.”

“I cannot heal, woman. It is not in me, but in my God, and He will not be commanded, but entreated.”

“Entreat Him! Oh, entreat Him, then,” cried Bernhild. “I will do anything, offer anything to save my son!”

“Wilt thou give up thy pagan ways, and bring him up to lead a Christian life?”

“Yes, yes; I will never offer to Grim or Frey again. I will give him to be baptized in the name of your Christ.”

“Life and death are in God’s hands. The boy hath not been baptized?” said Gilchrist.

“He was born since King Clovis sent the priest,” said Roswitha.

“Thou wilt give him to be made the child of God?” said Gilchrist.

“I will, I will,” she cried, “if only he may live! But oh,” as the hermit turned toward the stream below them, “he may not brook the water! Man, it will go ill with thee if thou art the death of Hunderik’s only son and heir.”

“Wilt thou have his soul saved unto everlasting life?” demanded Gilchrist, sternly.

“Oh, let him live!” cried the mother, somewhat cowed by the tone, and amazed by seeing that Hundbert lay in her arms smiling, and murmured something faintly that sounded like content.

She let the hermit take him from her, and the strong arm seemed to please him, for he murmured, “Good!”

Descending the path to the stream, Gilchrist, with Roswitha’s help, for the mother stood passive and awed, divested the child of his wrappings. They were hot, heavy, and stifling, and Hundbert cast them from him, enjoying the soft May breeze on his limbs; but when Gilchrist entered the shallow stream, and, pronouncing the holy words, dipped him once, twice, thrice, in the clear limpid water, the first time he gave a gurgling scream, and his mother started forward, but before she could snatch him away, the three immersions had been made, the latter two only with the renewed exclamation of “Good, good man!”

“He is the servant now of God the Christ for this life, and for that which is to come,” said Gilchrist, beginning to repeat the Lord’s Prayer in

his strange Latin, in which Attalus and Roswitha joined. The mother was drying the boy's limbs but not interrupting, though to her it sounded like an incantation; but the child was manifestly no worse, and only showed himself impatient at being wrapped up again. Presently he tried to sit up in his mother's arms and noticed the fawn, and though he was so weak as to fall back again immediately, there were evident signs of the great oppression having left him. He asked for food, and Attalus brought the only things at hand, a few wild strawberries from the bank, which he ate with great enjoyment, then fell asleep, and so was carried home. He woke to eat, slept again, and insisted on being carried out into the open air. There he gained strength every day, and his recovery was owned by all the household as a miracle.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN UNWILLING MISSIONARY.

GILCHRIST'S fame was established in Hundingburg, and there was a resort to him, not only of the various people of the household, but those from a distance, most of them expecting him to cure their children, and offering him gifts of all kinds—calves, kids, young horses, baskets of wood-strawberries, even collars and bracelets of gold.

He would accept none of the gifts, hardly even food for the day; yet his two deer had deserted him, whether driven away by the concourse, or invited by the blandishments of their own kind, for a great stag had appeared on the opposite side of the valley. Gilchrist consented to pray over the sick, and the mothers held that they recovered; but he was more willing to teach and to answer questions, though even that was very reluctantly done. His real delight was in solitude

and in higher communings, and he wandered farther and farther into the depths of the forest, to avoid these interviews, as his lame foot was, at last, thoroughly healing. One morning Milo, who had thought to be so early that he could not escape, found no sign of him; and repeated visits from Attalus, Roswitha, and others of his newer admirers failed to find him. He had vanished as strangely as he had come, but the effect of his presence had not been entirely thrown away. Attalus had returned to the endeavor to keep up his better habits, and Roswitha and Milo equally desired to do so. They regularly said with him the prayers and Creed that he had taught them, and when it was possible he told them the sacred history of the gospel as it came back to his memory.

Nor was there any more obstruction from Bernhild. She did not listen, but she never interfered to separate the children, except that, as summer advanced, Attalus had to be out with the horses all day as before. It was Valhild who most disturbed them. She held that there was much more amusement in the stories of Odin and Thor than in theirs. She liked to think of Frey flying

over the grass and scattering the shining gossamer; and she believed when it thundered that Thor was wielding his hammer, and often threatened Roswitha that it would descend on her in anger for forsaking the gods of her fathers. She was constantly teasing her sister for loving the gods of the serfs and slaves, instead of the gods of the free conquerors; and there were a good many quarrels in consequence, for Roswitha had not learned forbearance as a Christian duty, though she was naturally more gentle than her sister. The rest of the household were little affected, except Bodo, who scorned it all. He held Hundbert's cure to be all a matter of woman's fancy, and declared that Gilchrist's sudden departure proved him to be the impostor he was, a mere sham wizard who had fled from fear of being found out. Respect for his absent lord withheld him from absolutely ill-treating Atalus, but he kept the boy strictly to the herding of the horses, never allowed him to sleep or eat in the house, and prevented his speaking to Roswitha whenever he could without her appealing to her mother. To Milo he was very severe and cruel, and kept him herding the horned cattle in-

stead of the horses, so that he could hardly ever exchange a word with Attalus.

The cloud that had seemed to lighten for a short interval had descended more heavily than ever.

Moreover, Hunderik sent a message home by a party of his men who were to bring back some fresh horses. The old villain of a bishop had declared that his grandson was no longer bound, seeing that Tullium and Nasium were delivered up to King Theudebert; but was it to be supposed that he would let the hostage go without a ransom, a handsome payment from the old fellow's treasure and church plate? No, indeed! Let Bernhild and Bodo watch him more closely than ever.

CHAPTER XVII.

A DETERMINED PILGRIM.

GILCHRIST did actually appear again at the house of Bishop Gregory. Long had all hope of him been given up, and there were absolute shrieks of welcome when the porter recognized him, many degrees more ragged than when he had gone away, leaner and more long than ever, and dirty enough to afford any amount of penitential washing to devotees; but looking under his freckles infinitely more bright and healthful and full of vigor.

“Here he was, here was the Celtic pilgrim; not eaten by the wolves! Had he really seen young Attalus? What news did he bring of him?”

Cornelius, satisfied of the young lord's life and health by the first answers, would fain have removed the upper coating of dust and dirt before taking him to the Bishop—a proceeding which the Irishman thought to savor of worldly luxury.

Gregory was far too anxious to wait for these ablutions—but Tetricus came to summon the pilgrim immediately.

“The boy is well, though among folk little better than heathen; he hath not forgotten his prayers.”

“For that I thank the Lord! Is he grown?”

“So grown that I scarce knew him.”

“Is he well cared for?”

“He is cared for more than the sons of our chiefs at home; though,” as Gilchrist gazed round on the dainty garments and furniture of the household, “mayhap you would not think so; but he is in health, and hardship and abasement are better for his soul.”

“Abasement?” Tetricus asked, anxiously.

“They have set him to herd the horses and dwell with the slaves,” answered Gilchrist.

“Barbarian treatment of a noble hostage,” muttered Tetricus, while there was a general groan from all the household who had pressed into the hall to listen.

“Only what we Romans have to endure in recompense for the pride which made us call ours the Lady of Nations,” sighed Gregory. “But it

is sad that it has fallen on my dear child thus early. And you helped him, good pilgrim?"

"I hope so, my lord; yea, I believe verily that God has given to him the soul of his comrade, a Gallic slave, and likewise of the daughter of Hunderik, a child of towardly disposition. Verily, a great door is opened in those hills and forests to one who would abide there and show them the way of life."

This was the chief of what could be extracted from Gilchrist. Of the supposed miracles that he had wrought he said not a word, and when asked whether he were not going back to profit by the great opportunity before him of saving souls, and winning a whole population to the Kingdom of Christ, he shook his head, and said there were too many of them, they thronged him, and since his foot was well, and the season served, he must fulfill his vow and make his way to the home of the saints at Rome. Bishop Gregory even offered to ordain him and send him back to minister to these Franks; but he said he was unworthy and that he could not be stayed upon his way.

There was a sort of selfishness about some of those Celtic hermit saints, whose curious and much

travestied names are scattered about all over France, Germany, and Italy. Some, and those chiefly from Iona, were really missionaries and founders of churches, and their memory is still green, as in the case of St. Gall, St. Columban, and others; but many cared for nothing apparently but to be alone with heaven and to live the severest of lives as anchorites, keeping aloof those who were irresistibly attracted to them, and sometimes moving out of the reach of such intercourse, leaving the world to run on its way, so that they might save their own souls from contact with evil.

Such was Gilchrist. It was even a wonder that he had turned out of the direct road to the Alps (if he knew it) to enlighten Bishop Gregory respecting his grandson. The idea of converting the Frank settlement of Hundingburg had no attraction for him, and he was bent on continuing his journey. He allowed his worn-out garment to be changed for one not ragged, nor in such a state that the Roman household were divided as to whether it should be burned for its foulness or revered for its sanctity; but Leo settled the matter by taking it up with his tongs and poking it into the hottest pigeon-hole of his stove, ob-

serving as he did so that nothing should ever persuade him that what was uncleanly was holy in the sight of heaven.

Gilchrist had by that time disappeared without a word of farewell, and the guards of the town gates reported that he had been at the southern one long before the hour for opening it, and as soon as exit was permitted had been seen walking stoutly on his way, staff in hand.

Nor did Bishop Gregory ever trace him again, unless he could have been a certain pilgrim who was reported to have dragged himself to the tomb of St. Peter, and there to have been found lying dead, with a look of ecstasy on his worn face.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FRIEDHOLM.

GILCHRIST'S brief sojourn had been the first information received at Langres respecting the exile since Gola's arrival, except that it was known that Tullium and Nasium had been delivered up to King Theudebert. Bishop Gregory, therefore, on going to carry his yearly tribute to King Hildebert at Paris, made request that his grandson might be reclaimed with the other hostages. But Hildebert replied through some of his Frankish counts that he could not trouble his nephew about such trifles; and the only encouragement the poor Bishop had was hearing that several lads who lived near the borders had either made their escape or been ransomed. Garfried of the Blue Sword was likewise at Hildebert's spring muster of his feudatories, and he undertook to attempt to

obtain the boy's release. But he was obliged to send a trusty priest to Gregory to tell him that Theudebert declared that he had given Hunderik the hostage to make what he could of him, and he would not interfere. To Hunderik, then, Garfried betook himself, and received in answer a monstrous demand of a large sum of gold for the captive. This it was impossible for Gregory to raise. The plate that still had been left to him did not amount to a quarter of the sum, and his own estates had been exhausted by the tribute and by feeding his poor in the winter. He would have only enough for his household till the harvest and vintage were over in the ensuing autumn.

As he sat considering with Tetricus and Cornelius to how much his few personal possessions would amount if Hunderik would bargain for them, there was a knock at the door, and Leo entered, making a low obeisance. "Sir," said he, "if your Clemency will grant me leave, I hope to bring home young Attalus."

He would not tell them his plans; in fact, they doubted what definite ones he had; but the Bishop trusted him entirely, and, somewhat against the opinion of Tetricus, granted his re-

quest, and gave him leave of absence for as long as he might find it necessary.

Cornelius augured that they would never see him again, and others of the household reminded him that the life of a slave was almost worthless among the Franks.

“Of a slave, maybe,” said Leo, “but not of a good cook. You will find out what I am worth when you have only Rhys to send up your meals.”

“What do the barbarians care for the art of cookery?”

“Have you never seen them smack their lips over his Clemency’s table?” demanded Leo.

He packed up a basketful of his implements and spices, and made ready to start in company with Garfried’s messenger, who bore various gifts from Baldrik to his brother and sister, and tidings that he was well and happy, and could read and write the Latin as well as the Bishop himself.

Friedholm, Garfried’s abode, was only a long day’s journey from Langres on a Roman road. It had once been the station of a Roman outpost, and the buildings remained in part, though some were fire-scathed and black, showing where they had been seized by the Burgundians. Garfried’s

own house was much like Hundingburg, and also had two horses' heads at the end of the beams; but all was neater and more civilized, and there was a small erection near with a cross on the gable, which showed that here was Christianity.

The approach of the messenger was signified by the blowing of a horn, and all the household poured out to hear the tidings of Baldrik, including Garfried himself and his eldest son, just come in from the chase, and the priest of the little settlement. They rejoiced to hear of the absent son, and of Gregory, and then looked with amazement at Leo.

“Hast thou bought thy freedom,” asked Garfried, “and come to dwell with me?”

“Not so, noble sir; but I am come to show thee this token that thou wert so good as to give me, and to entreat you by it to sell me to Hunderik.”

“Thee!—and thy master?”

“I have his permission, and I am certain that thus I could procure the escape of young Atalus.”

“Thou art a faithful fellow; but I fear me much that Hunderik will have no dealings with me. He was much angered with me for bringing him the

proposals of Gregory, and representing to him that he had no right to keep the hostage after the cities have been delivered up. In truth it was not so easy to keep him and this youth"—pointing to his son Friedbald—"from coming to blows."

"Ay," said Friedbald, "thou wouldst never have hindered me but that the old *schelm* demurred when I said the boy should be the prize of the fight."

"Well that he did. Thou, a stripling scarce bearing a man's armor, to stand up against him, a warrior of proof!"

"God would have been against the old traitor," responded Friedbald.

"And whichever way it went there would have been blood feud," responded his father.

Leo looked from one to the other while the debate was going on, and presently the father turned to him. "I say not that I may not find the way to serve thee, but I must take time to consider of the means. So sit thee down to rest and to eat, and take thy night's sleep here, at any rate, and we will see what betides."

Leo was weary and hungry enough to be glad of the invitation, though it irked his spirit to see

the miscellaneous contents of the barbarian caldron, and he could not help asking leave to demonstrate how the beautiful bustard that the hunters had brought in should be dressed.

Garfried smacked his lips at the notion, and declared that now his people would see what food ought to be like. So the next day Leo made all his preparations, and was very happy and busy over them, excepting for the lack of various vegetables that he was accustomed to cherish in the gardens at Autun and Langres; and moreover he was concerned that none of the Burgundians, except Garfried, were inclined to think his preparations anything but useless trouble, declaring that food was just as good and wholesome without so much pains, and that no wonder the Gauls were such poor creatures if they spent so much time and pains over their meals, and made men folk do what was the proper work of the women. Nay, the priest even declared that it must be a mistake that the Bishop of Langres was a saint if he used such dainty meats at his table; and Leo had to rebut the charge hotly, and declare that when his master had the most savory dishes before him,

he—to Leo's grief—would eat nothing but the driest of barley bread, and that he had a glass colored to represent wine, when he drank only water; but he kept this festive table for the many visitors, the kings and chiefs, and especially the senators and magistrates, who expected to be well entertained, to say nothing of the clergy, who were not ascetics when out visiting at any rate. However, on them Leo was judiciously silent, and he had full justice done to him when he served up the bustard, accompanied by doves, in such sort as a Roman emperor of old need not have despised and Garfried and his guests could not help enjoying.

After some consultation, Garfried summoned him. "See here, Leo," said he, "thou hast dressed us a banquet fit for the Cæsar himself, or for a better man, the King of the Ostrogoths. Pity that such skill should go and bury itself among the wild Franks of the mountains."

"I trust not to tarry there long, valiant chief," answered Leo.

"Seest thou? Hunderik has a dainty tooth, and never comes to Treves or any Roman town

but he well-nigh eats the merchants and cooks out of house and home. Now, he will mistrust any offer from me, knowing me to be linked in friendship with the holy Bishop Gregory; but King Theudebert has a muster and council at Treves, to which I and my guests are bound, and whither, no doubt, Hunderik will come. To Treves thou shalt go with me, and I will take thee to the cook's shop that he frequents, to one Aulus Plautius, and bid him to offer to sell thee to Hunderik. He will be willing enough, and will no doubt know how to explain matters so as not to make Hunderik suspicious."

Leo agreed to this, not only with the submission of one always used to bow to the will of others, but as convinced that it was the best hope; and he spent the remainder of his time in Friedholm with more liberty than he had ever possessed, practicing his art only enough to gratify the palate of the chief, and employing his leisure in learning something of the manners and habits of the barbarians, though he was warned that he would find matters very different at Hundingburg from this place, where there was an attempt at enforcing Christian practice and the Burgundian law, which

was more civilized than that of the Sicambrian Franks. For though Hundingburg was in Theudebert's kingdom, and he was called King of Burgundy, Hunderik and his men were Franks of the Yssel.

CHAPTER XIX.

A FRANKISH EPICURE.

THE muster at Treves, to which, a year before, Attalus owed his captivity, was really the assembly of the "theudes," or nobles, the chief men of the people, such as was the practice of all the nations of Teutonic blood. It was the great Council, without which the kings could not act, which decided on war or peace, settled disputes, imposed fines for crimes, and sometimes ended the blood feuds; being, in fact, the germ of parliaments, though known by many different names.

Garfried was in esteem there, as being quite as brave as, but possessing more wisdom than, the wilder warriors, and King Theudebert was apt to show him a certain deference, which was, perhaps, the cause of Hunderik's dislike of him. He thought it prudent to encamp (more properly bivouac) most of his followers in branch huts and

remnants of hovels outside the town, and only entered under the grand old heavy-browed Roman gateway with four or five ax-bearers to assert his dignity, taking Leo with him.

Treves was still internally a thorough Roman town, as much so as Autun or Langres, governed by its bishop and senator, and except at these meetings in the Forum, which were regarded with dread as visitations, as quiet a Roman colony as when St. Athanasius spent the time of his banishment there. Even the Burgundian and now the Frank kings respected the walls too much, and the wealth and the civilization, to attempt to sack the place, since it was an established idea with them that the Gallic cities were geese which laid golden eggs and must not be too much disturbed.

Merchants still managed to exist and to travel with their wares from one station to another, and as jewels, silk attire, and spices were esteemed, as well as rich armor and other goods, specimens were displayed for sale cautiously on the stalls in front of the strongly built houses, with cellars rather like those long used in Scotland, where the seller and his goods might retreat from overeager and violent customers. Indeed, the more pre-

cious articles were sometimes only figured on the walls, advertisement fashion, as may still be seen at Pompeii, though there the enemy was not the barbarian, but nature.

At one of these shops, where a dish with a great roast crane with spits sticking in it, a peacock's tail, and a lobster were figured on the walls, and on a table in front were displayed a pile of oysters and another of snails, Garfried halted and called for Aulus Plautius, neglecting the little slave boy who was in charge.

A close-clipped black Roman head was uplifted on the stone stair.

“Ha! friend Aulus, canst give me a dinner? I have ridden from Friedholm since dawn, and I need some sustenance ere meeting King Theudebert.”

“At thy will, valorous Count. Here are steaks from a stately hart just brought in from the Vosges by a Frank hunter; or rabbits flavored in Italian mode; or, in ten minutes' time, there will be the leg of a calf roasted with oysters.”

“For that I have scarce time to wait,” said Garfried, descending the steps and being led to the back of the house to a tiled room, having one

side open to a vine-clad veranda with a garden beyond, and with tables with the couches for three, in Italian fashion, set on three sides of them. One end of the room communicated with the kitchen, furnished with pigeon-holed stoves of brick, like Leo's own, whence came a delicious odor for hungry men. Leo's heart warmed to the sight and scent, but he stood discreetly behind his master to wait upon him, while Garfried settled himself, but with his feet on the ground, not enjoying the reclining fashion.

Steaming dishes and cups of wine were carried in turn to Garfried, and were carved with his dagger, while he detained the master beside him, and after due compliments he asked, "Does Hunderik frequent this place as heretofore?"

"Hunderik of Hundingburg? Oh yes; he never comes to a muster without gorging himself over my table, though he does not know a daintily fed, chestnut-fatted swine's ham from that of a boar fed on the city's garbage."

"Is he yet arrived?"

"I think not, sir, but he is certain to be here before night."

"I want thee to do me a good turn. Thou

seest this dark-skinned slave? He is a cook as good as is here except thyself. Thou mayest prove him. I want thee to induce Hunderik to purchase him without naming my name."

"Hunderik! Hath he committed a crime that thy countship would pass him on to that wild barbarian?"

"Not at all. He is a thoroughly trustworthy good Christian man, but such sale suits my purposes and his."

"And Hunderik alone will serve the purpose? For I could find a better master, who would give a better price; if, indeed, Hunderik will give any price at all."

"That is not the point. The need is that this man should be in Hunderik's service."

"May I know whence he comes?"

"Better that thou shouldst be ignorant. The need is that he should be sold to Hunderik, and without mention of me. Whatever price Hunderik gives shall be thine own, Aulus, if thou wilt stand our friend and be discreet."

"And what explanation shall I give?" asked the cook.

"What thou wilt. Thine invention will be the

freer for knowing nothing," said Garfried, smiling. "Meantime, I will leave Leo here to give thee a taste of his skill; but I shall remain at hand, and come back after the Council has broken up to see how thou hast succeeded."

Perhaps it was a part of the discretion that Garfried attributed to Aulus that he asked no more questions, and did not mention his own conviction that here was some stratagem. He did not think that it could be a plan of Garfried's for poisoning his enemy, though such proceedings were not by any means unknown among the Franks and Burgundians of the sixth century; but they were chiefly the work of the women, and Garfried's character stood unusually high for honorable proceedings. But when he remembered that Hunderik was said to have a noble Roman hostage belonging to the Bishop of Langres in his keeping, Aulus winked once or twice with his left eye and had his suspicions.

He was too busy to interrogate Leo all the evening, for parties of Franks flowed in, ate and drank, and continued their orgies till late at night, and throughout all Leo was such an efficient helper that Aulus groaned and sighed over the notion of

his being thrown away upon a barbarian, and felt that there must be some grave cause for parting with a treasure whom he longed to retain.

Hunderik was not long in swaggering in to drink a cup of wine and declare that, though he should eat of the King's feast at the Roman palace the next day, he should nevertheless take a final banquet on the good things in which Aulus excelled all others.

In two days' time he came, and sundry friends with him. They threw down their axes, ungirt their swords, loosed their breastplates, and called for wine and meat. Aulus and Leo were ready with a huge side of fat and highly spiced pork, flavored up to the pitch which they knew was most gratifying to the barbarian palate.

"Now there," cried Hunderik, uplifting a lump dripping with oil and adorned with garlic on his dagger—"there's a morsel for a man! Yet I may rate my senseless Frau forever, and nothing will hinder her from sending me the flesh either burned to a cinder or sodden so as to be fit only for the dogs, with the meat like strings of hemp in the midst."

He spoke as men do who eat at club and mess

tables better food than their wives at home know how to provide.

But Aulus had his answer. "What wouldst thou give me, sir, for the man who prepared this mess?"

"Give thee? Half the slaves I have. Give thee? It would not be much to give thee my wife and two daughters into the bargain," cried Hunderik.

"Nay, but what wouldst thou give in good sooth?" said Aulus.

"Art in earnest?"

"Truly I am. I have the man here, a half-Moorish slave by his looks, and am willing to come to terms with thee for him."

"And wherefore part with so rare a cook? Hath he been brawling and slain any—not half of his own worth, I trow?" asked Hunderik, laughing. "A firebrand in thy kitchen, mayhap?"

"Not so, sir. He is a peaceable man so far as I have seen. He has evidently lived in great Roman houses, and been accustomed to their ways."

"Ha! a runaway, whom you do not want to keep?" laughed Hunderik. "Let me see him."

“Hola! Leo! Come and show yourself to the valiant and noble lord.”

Leo came, bearing with him a delicious dish of salmon dressed with onions according to the approved taste.

“Ha! a black-looking fellow. Stout limbs those for housework. Where hast thou served, fellow?”

“In the house of a senator, noble sir,” replied Leo, standing in a most submissive attitude after he had set down the dish.

“A senator? What senator?”

“The Senator of Aurelianus,” said Leo, going back to the household of Gregory’s father, “the noble Marcus Attalus Decius,” giving all with a much more Gallic accent than that with which he usually spoke the language of the Franks.

“Ah! and thou hast left him? Or has a stout Frank carried thee off? Those Gauls have their wily cranks for revenging themselves. Here, let me feel thine arms. Stout flesh and muscle here. Open thy mouth, I would see thy teeth.”

“He will have more to do with thy teeth than with his own,” put in Aulus.

Hunderik’s Frankish wit appreciated the joke, and it ended in the bargaining beginning. Aulus

was, of course, determined that Leo should be sold, and chiefly wanted to escape suspicion by not accepting a price too easily; while, on the other hand, Hunderik was much afraid of somebody else coming in and securing this valuable artist, whom he believed firmly to be the lawful property of some great Gallo-Roman, either a runaway or a piece of stolen goods, such as it was expedient to shelter in the Frank mountains as far as possible from civilization. He therefore concluded his arrangements, weighing out to Aulus all his available gold, twelve pieces, bestowing on him all his furs and skins, and the cattle that his shepherds had driven up, and even an able-bodied young slave, and giving his pledge for two more swine of next season.

CHAPTER XX.

DOMESTIC CAVILS.

LEO was mounted behind one of the slaves who had brought Hunderik's skins and wool for sale to Treves. He asked no questions on the way through the forest and mountains, but looked warily about him and studied the route.

In due time they arrived at Hundingburg, where wife, children, followers, dogs, and goats all poured out to meet the master. Little Hundbert was looking sturdy and healthy, and cried out for joy when his father lifted him up. Bernhild and her two daughters received a cursory greeting, and Bernhild's first inquiry was, "had he brought her the scarlet robe he had promised?"

"I have brought thee a better thing, housewife," was his answer. "Here is a man who can serve up a leg of an old cow so that you would take it for the haunch of a prime stag, and make you broth

that would serve the heroes in Valhalla. Here, Leo, what call they thee? To him thou must give the charge of thy caldron and thy hearth."

Bernhild burst into angry tears. "Was ever such charge given to an honorable housewife? Leave my hearth to a foul, black-visaged Gallic slave, indeed!"

"Yea, and condescend to learn his ways, or it shall be the worse for thee. Thou mayest be glad enough that it is not a fresh wife that I have brought home. Alftrude, the daughter of Wolf-ram, is fairer and fresher."

Bernhild began to weep and exclaim what a true and faithful wife she had been, and Leo was glad enough to fall back from this domestic scene while Bodo showed him the corner of the great building where he would sleep upon a heap of fern and heather, and bestow the rug and the very few clothes that he had brought with him. Of Attalus he saw nothing, and he durst not ask. He was called up by and by to partake of the leavings from Bernhild's great caldron, and it must be confessed that he thought Hunderik excused for his objections.

Other large bowlfuls were carried out to the

various servants and herdsmen who came in from the hills with their cattle, and as Leo stood at the door he fancied that he had a glimpse of Attalus, riding home a colt as the other horses were driven into their inclosure, but he could not make sure—the figure was taller, and the hair was so unlike the delicately curled and combed locks in which poor old Gola had taken such pride. Soon he was called up to make a bowl of the broth eatable for Hunderik, while Bernhild sulked apart, and banged all the stools and bits of armor that fell in her way, muttering, and truly, that hunger used to prepare her husband to think her cookery quite good enough for him before he learned to go and gormandize among the greedy Gauls and Romans.

She called off her two daughters and all her women with her, and looked on contemptuously from a distance.

Presently Hunderik, smacking his lips, called on her to taste the soup that Leo had cleared and flavored for him, and the ill-baked and kneaded lumps of dough that had been converted into something crisp and fresh.

She tossed her head, saying she wanted no Gallic dainties, and she supposed that he meant

his son to be as feeble and tender as the Romans—for Hundbert was sitting on his knee with a little cake in his hand, swallowing alternate spoonfuls from the bowl, and exclaiming, “ Good, good! More, more!” after each.

Hunderik vouchsafed only a savage growl at the perverseness of women, conveying a warning to Bernhild to take care not to provoke him too far.

Presently he called to Leo and said, “ Canst thou dress me a Roman dinner, such as I have eaten at Paris and Soissons? ”

“ I can send up a feast that would serve an emperor. I can dress a banquet with any one,” said Leo, who knew that modesty would not succeed.

“ Sunday is four days hence,” returned Hunderik, after reckoning on his fingers. “ On that day my friends and my kindred come to feast with me. Send them up such a banquet that they may be amazed and say, ‘ We have found nothing so good or so grand at the King’s own table.’ ”

Leo bowed and said, “ Let my master provide me plenty of meat, especially of winged fowl, and he shall be fully obeyed.”

For the next few days Leo was closely em-

ployed. He judged it better neither by word nor look to endeavor to establish any understanding with Attalus until he had gained the confidence and favor of his master; so after having once satisfied himself that Attalus was a strong and healthy lad he took no further notice of him, but applied himself to the sending up of Hunderik's Roman feast—no easy matter in the absence of all the apparatus to which he was accustomed as absolutely necessary to his art, and the difficulty was all the greater as the few vessels and implements that the place possessed were sullenly withheld from him by the mistress of the establishment.

Male slaves were, however, at his disposal, and with their help he managed to contrive ovens in the earth, and even to burn wood into charcoal sufficiently for his purposes, while his master and the hunters, with spears, arrows, and snares, were bringing down a miscellaneous collection of flesh, fowl, and fish, so much that all one day had to be spent in flaying and plucking the spoil, while a few of the women, at Hunderik's express command, were grinding wheat for the flour for the cakes, and their children were seeking for eggs.

And a feast it was! It was midsummer and the

weather was cloudless, so there was no difficulty in placing the tables outside the house in the great yard, which Leo had contrived with difficulty should be cleaned up for the occasion. Boards were spread, supported on trestles. Their covering, well known to Roman use, they could not have, but nobody missed it, especially as bowls of strawberries, loaves of bread, rounds of cheese, and lengths of butter were placed on green leaves and ranged at short intervals along the table wherever the dishes were not to go. The dishes were, in a few cases, of silver, the rest rude crocks; the plates were trenchers, and there were bowls of various sizes and materials—silver, wood, brass, tin, or crockery—for the liquids.

The company began to pour in—great harsh-faced warriors, with tall helmets and tawny beards; older men, with white beards and streaming hoary locks, limping and leaning on their spears; young “theudes” in all the fair glory of Teutonic beauty, a few darker ones in whom the Belgian blood was mixed. Little boys ran about their fathers, or herded in groups, and a band of women had got together, shining, like their husbands, with gold chains and embroidered breastplates, and all, ex-

cept a few worn and withered old hags, fair and handsome, as if there were no middle age. The numbers were far greater than the tables would hold, and the ladies dined apart with Bernhild, and most of them, especially the elders, sympathized with her wrongs, and agreed that they would not suffer their rule to be invaded by a miserable Gallic black-faced slave.

Leo had some experience of Frankish appetites and had prepared accordingly, but he watched with amazement the quantities devoured by this voracious party, who seemed never to have done sending for fresh relays of pork, beef, mutton, hares and rabbits, and all kinds of winged fowl. Happily Leo and his assistants were able to respond to all, sending the more elaborately dressed meats, really fit for Roman banquets, to those who could appreciate them, and others to the ruder tastes.

Wine and beer flowed in the same proportion, and a good many guests sank down and slept long before they were conducted home by their slaves or their wives in the light of the ensuing morning.

Hunderik was fully satisfied. Every one had declared that such a banquet had never before

been held in the mountains, and they complimented Hunderik on the possession of such a slave.

Yet more than one acute Burgundian shook his head, and declared that such a gifted slave would not have been sold into the mountains for nothing, and advised their host to be on the lookout against treachery.

The ladies spoke even more strongly. They agreed with Bernhild that he could be there for no good purpose. They peeped at his dark face, and shuddered. Such as had floating notions of Christianity said he was no doubt in league with the Evil One; another, more of a Pagan, declared that Loki had sent him from Nifelheim! and the old lady who was reputed to be the wisest, and a century back would have been honored as a *Velleda*, or prophetess, seriously warned the anxious housewife that this blackamoor might have been sent by the perfidious Romans to poison her husband.

Hunderik laughed at all she told him, but it had the effect of making him for a time watchful over Leo, who found he could not stir without Bodo or some one else watching him and making sure of

all the ingredients he put into the messes he prepared for his master, also observing with whom he conversed. He therefore thought it wiser to utter no word of Attalus, nor to endeavor to see him till time should have laid all suspicions to rest.

Indeed, Attalus himself was out of reach, for all the younger horses not in use had been sent out to the more distant pastures, where a sort of camp had been arranged, to watch over them, and in huts formed of turf or branches of trees Milo, Attalus, and others spent their time in preventing them from straying too far, or falling a prey to any beasts of the forest. They catered for themselves a good deal with snares, bows and arrows, and hunting-spears, but one or two servants were sent once a week to Hundingburg for leathern bottles of beer and cakes of rye bread.

Attalus enjoyed this life of hunting and of freedom; he was happy with Milo and with the others who had not forgotten Gilchrist's teaching. Daily they met, and chanted together, morning and evening, their hymns and prayers, and were fairly happy together. Only now and then, if the weather was bad, a fit of homesickness would come over the lad, of longing for his grandfather's face, his uncle's

words, and the petting of his playmate Leo beside the stove; or even for something nearer at hand, a little talk with the gentle Roswitha. In general, he felt as if he had been a whole lifetime on the heath herding the horses, and as if nothing else were before him.

Some rumors had come up to him of his master having bought a wonderful slave, who cooked dinners fit for Odin's hall, and it made him declare, "Ah! you do not guess what our good slave Leo could do. You would not beat him nor his dainty cakes. Would that I could taste them!"

"All sauces and spices to suit your Gothic palates, with frogs and dormice," retorted his Frankish listener. "This fellow sends us pig stuffed with chestnut, flavored with garlic! Ah! Thou wilt see when we go back—that is, if Hunderik thinks thee worthy of a taste."

CHAPTER XXI.

GILCHRIST'S PUPIL.

HEO, having assured himself of the safety of Attalus, thought it better to wait, win the confidence of his master, and gain some knowledge of the place and its environs, so as to know the best way to escape when the time should come.

Hunderik continued to delight in his preparations, and gradually liked him better and better, as it was discovered that he knew how to catch as well as to cook his game, and was a bold and cunning hunter. Besides, he knew how to deal out stores of provision with method instead of waste, and gradually Hunderik committed to his charge the victuals to be dealt out to every one of the retainers and slaves, and to feed the live stock.

This was a dreadful offense to Bernhild, the housewife and dispenser of bread, and she continued to hate and distrust the stranger, and to

eat nothing that he provided, but set up a little hearth of her own, and she would fain have withheld her children from him. Valhild held with her, and called him a vile traitor and enemy; but little Hundbert could not but like to sit on his father's knee and devour the dainties from his trencher, and no calls from his mother, nor even her blows, and the angry taunts of Valhild, could keep him from hanging about the rude stove that Leo had managed to erect, and begging for the cakes flavored with honey, or the confections of strawberries and cranberries there compounded.

Roswitha hung about likewise. She did not like to hear her father say that no Frank woman could dress a meal fit for anything but the hounds, and she could not help longing to contrive something that might surprise him. So she hovered round and watched, and by and by she asked how to mix the flour, and how to roll it into a cake, and she offered to find the egg that was wanted, or to fetch the butter. Her mother only grumbled a little but did not interfere, for she knew well enough that Roswitha's value when the time for wedlock came would be greatly enhanced by the knowledge of cookery.

After a few days Roswitha asked, "I saw you, as it were, on your knees yesterday. Art thou a Catholic Christian?"

"Verily I am, fair maid," returned Leo.

"Ah! like the holy man who lived in the hollow tree, and healed my little brother, and taught us many things so much better than what Odin and Thor promised—if there is an Odin and a Thor. Dost thou think there is, Leo?"

"Surely not, lady."

"Yet we hear Thor swing his hammer and make the thunder."

"Ah! maiden, did Gilchrist never tell you that it is the glorious God that maketh the thunder?"

"Gilchrist! Then you know his name?" exclaimed Roswitha.

"I knew him for a wandering monk from Thule. I heard he had been in these parts," said Leo, conscious that he had committed himself.

"Ah! he was a good man. Would that he had stayed! Attalus and Milo and I all loved him, and we used to go and hear him sing, and pray with him. He told us about the God of heaven and earth, and his words made Odin and Frey dwindle to nothing. And he said that there are

houses of his God far, far more beauteous and fair than the Ermansaul, where you Gauls can go and pray, and be made and kept one with the Holy One Who died to save us."

"Quite true, lady, you have drunk in the bulk."

"Atli told me first," she said; "Attalus, our hostage. He is, oh! so learned. He can say psalms, and hymns, and prayers, and he can even read. He would have taught me, only my mother said it would spoil me for a wife to a Graf or Freiherr."

Leo's heart beat high, but he only ventured the question, "Where is he now?"

"He is out upon the Stone Hill pasture with the horses. My father will keep him far away, and as little near the home house as can be, because there are folks who say he ought not to be kept as a pledge, though King Theudebert gave him to us, and that he is really free. But my father says no one has any business to intermeddle, and that he will not let him go without a good ransom, as is only fair and just. So he will hardly ever let Atli come home, or be where any one can see him or help him to escape."

Leo did not enter on the question of Hunderik's

rights over Attalus, and he had too general a distrust of womanhood to betray his acquaintance with the hostage, but he anxiously watched his opportunities, and he greatly aided Roswitha, who often came to him to ask, over their cookery, questions, sometimes about the faith, and sometimes as to what a Christian would do in such and such a matter. Yes, if he were free-born and no slave, Leo had profited by his opportunities in the episcopal household enough to be no bad adviser or instructor for the young girl, and her training, or perhaps rather her will, manifested itself in her obedience to her parents and good-will to all the household, her patience with her little brother and troublesome, mocking sister, and a sweetness that made Hunderik declare that his little Roswitha was worth all the rest of the household, and it would be a sorrowful day for all when he gave her away in marriage. Thus time went on till the mountain pasture was exhausted and the horses were driven home, and then it was, that when the whole family went out to inspect the growth and promise of the young colts, who were all frisking and kicking about wildly in their inclosure, Roswitha found

herself near Attalus, and began telling him, "O Atli, my father has bought a famous cook, a Christian as wise as Gilchrist was, who knows a great many psalms, and can make honey cakes more delicious than any I ever tasted, and he is teaching me."

"Indeed, that is like our good Leo, who was more like a brother than a slave," returned Attalus.

"Leo is his name," said Roswitha.

"Ah! it can never be the same; Leo never would leave his comfortable hearth at my grandfather's palace. Ah! would that I were there! How did thy father obtain him?"

"He bought him from a cook who keeps a tavern at Treves, and brought him home. It makes my mother very angry."

"Ah! it cannot be he! He could not have come into the hands of a cook at Treves, and I believe that Leo is a common name for slaves of Numidian blood, because Africa is the country of lions."

Roswitha was curious for more information about black men, Numidians, and lions.

However, when Attalus was sitting alone on the stone wall around the inclosure for the horses, he

beheld a curly black head and well-known face. With a cry of joy he rushed up to his friend: "Leo! Leo! Can it be thou, old friend?" he cried, throwing his arms round him; but Leo unloosed them. "Silence! Silence, sir, or we are undone. Sit on the wall, and do not seem to heed me."

"But tell me at least, the barbarians have not fallen on Langrès?"

"No, no; all is well there. Thy grandfather is well, only grieving for thee. I came of my own will, with his consent, to try to save thee."

"Dear Leo; good friend!" cried Attalus, keeping his distance with great difficulty.

"Hush! Hush! There is no time to tell thee more. Only, never by word or sign let the barbarians guess that we are connected. It is our only chance, and thou must be patient. I must win this master's confidence; he thinks me a refugee, and if he saw a look or sign pass between us, his suspicion would be awakened, and we should be lost."

Attalus had no time to promise, for at the moment voices were heard, and Leo put his finger to his lips and darted away, and a general

stampede among the colts caused Attalus to rush to join the shouting throng who turned them back. He had indeed need of patience, for he was kept out in the shed, under Bodo's superintendence, and was not allowed to approach the house nor to see any more of Roswitha. The report that hostages had escaped, and Garfried's challenge of the right to detain him, had rendered Hunderik more vigilant than ever. The boy remained in a state of wonder, doubt, and burning curiosity, looking daily for a summons from Leo, till hope deferred began to fade away. He dared ask no questions, but he found that Leo was supposed to have done something that put him at enmity with the more civilized parts of Neustria.

Of Roswitha Attalus saw nothing; indeed, he was the less willing to put himself in her way that he was afraid of betraying Leo, and on her side she was warned by the cook not to try to bring him and Atli the horse-herd together. She supposed that he was afraid of Atli's knowing him and accusing him of being a runaway, or of some past evil doings.

She looked up with her great blue eyes and said, "Thou hast done no great wrong, surely,

Leo; thou who knowest so many prayers and psalms?"

"No, sweet maiden, I trust I have a clear conscience; but ask no questions and say not a word."

"Ah! thou art a runaway, as father says; but he will let none hurt thee."

CHAPTER XXII.

A WEDDING PARTY.

HUNDERIK had arranged for another great feast to take place on the day on which the harvest was completed. It was understood through the household that this would probably be a betrothal feast; for Aldewold of the Yellow Beard sought a daughter of Hunderik for his son Aldebert, though which maiden would be chosen was uncertain, and neither was beyond childhood.

As to choice, neither of the parties concerned was supposed to have the slightest, nor indeed had they. Aldewold would take one or other for his son, and the bride would be made over as passively as if she were one of the cows of the establishment.

“Which will he take?” said one young girl to the other, as they looked at themselves by turns in a bucket of water.

“Me,” said Valhild. “He will not like your slavish Christian tastes, and I shall be Hausfrau, have a golden collar and bracelets, and rule over my thralls and slaves.”

“I should like the golden collar,” said Roswitha; “but I hope Aldewold is not given to the worship of Grim and Frey; I should like to live near a city.”

“That comes of thy loving to talk to Atli and Milo and Leo, and all that mean slavish Roman crew. Thou wilt never be like a brave Frankish Frau, to make all afraid of her. Thou canst not even box the ears of a thrall who pulls thy hair—she laughs at thee!”

“I do not like to hurt any one,” said Roswitha, as if she were ashamed of herself, and Valhild laughed.

“Yea, thou art a miserable coward, and no one will ever honor thee as Hunderik’s daughter should be honored. I believe thou wouldst like nothing so well as to get shut up in one of those Roman houses which they call nunneries that Gilchrist talked of, where they do nothing but say their prayers all day long, and never eat flesh, nor go out, nor see a man.”

“I am sure I do not want to see a man,” said Roswitha; “they do nothing but order one about and beat one.”

“That is because you are so poor and tame a creature,” cried Valhild. “I shall soon make my husband know better than to beat me.”

“He is the stronger,” sighed Roswitha.

“Not always,” said Valhild; “and, even so, I should always be the craftier, and coax if I could not force.”

“Ah! I had rather be out of the way of it all,” said Roswitha; “I would fain be only with good women, and learn how to serve their holy God.”

Poor little maidens, all they had to look forward to was the being bestowed, without will of their own, on the Frank whose offers best pleased their father, whether they liked him or not, or whether he were previously married or not. It was quite doubtful whether they would win his love; and even if they did succeed, it might be only for a time, and there was often poison or murder on the part of a rival. Only a strong, masterful, or unusually attractive and artful woman could hope to prevail, so mournful was the lot of her sex among the heathen and half-heathen Franks. No

wonder that this festival was no joy to Roswitha, and that even Bernhild looked sadly at her daughters, and gave them counsel that would sound strange in the ears of a bride in these happier times, as to how to win their place in the household, and how to keep the husband's heart, and prevent themselves from being degraded.

She had not much hope for Roswitha, though the eldest, the prettiest, and the best cook, but wanting in spirit and too much inclined to the Christian teaching, which was thought to soften and weaken the will, and raise scruples which would have to be trodden down.

Roswitha longed to talk to Leo, whom she had begun to regard as a wise counselor; but Leo was exceedingly busy over the preparations for the feast, and could hardly spare a moment from his compounding, roasting, boiling, and baking to speak to her; besides that, he was surrounded with a company of other slaves obeying his directions. She was soon called away, that both she and Valhild might be arrayed in their best garments, and have their long flaxen hair arranged to hang in silky folds over their shoulders to meet the party hourly expected.

All the banquet was ready, and Leo was able to go away to give out the portion to the various herdsmen, a matter which had lately become part of his business, since his master thought him unusually trustworthy and in his way economical.

The guests were near, and Hunderik was coming to his door to greet them. The two foremost were a sunburnt old man, whose cheeks were a darker russet brown than the once flowing, now whitened, heavy eyebrows and mustache and beard that almost hid them, and made his countenance like that of an old lion. Tall, slim, and active, but not yet at his full height or strength, his son came beside him, fair and handsome, and with a timidly happy look in his gray eyes which made Valhild pinch her sister and say, "There's a hero for one of us—may it be me! For I see he is dull, and will leave all to me."

Hunderik held out his hand in welcome, and called on his daughters each to present a cup of wine on dismounting to their two guests. Roswitha served the old man, Valhild the younger.

"Ha! fair-faced maids," cried Aldewold, "but younger than I thought for. Which of them is for our house, Hunderik?"

“We have not yet fixed our terms,” returned Hunderik, “and it is ill to chaffer between a full man and a hungry one.”

So the guests were conducted into the house, where along the central passage tables were arranged, and the usual profuse Frank banquet was served. Hunderik, as each dish appeared, extolled the extreme abilities and faithfulness of Leo, whom he had had the good luck to purchase, and who not only made meat a different thing from what he had ever known before except at a Roman table, but was the wisest of men in controlling the household and preventing waste, so that he had been put in charge of all the stores. “Far better to trust to than women folk, who were hard and griping when angry, and over-soft where they loved.”

Bernhild’s brow might well grow dark, especially when Aldewold asked in a tone of banter, “Which, then, of the maidens took after her mother?”

“That I will not say;” laughed Hunderik; “our bargain is not made yet.”

And not till the rage of hunger was appeased did the two fathers begin to bargain, for it was all

a question of barter and sale, and Hunderik chose his time just as it was getting dark, and before the two sets of Franks began their carouse, but when their heads were comparatively clear. Hunderik, however, had no great confidence in his own power of reckoning or ability to perceive where his self-interest lay, and he called up Leo to consult.

There is no need to tell how they argued over acres of land, pounds of gold or silver, herds of cattle and the like, and what would be the father's dowry, and what the bridegroom's "morning gift"; nor how Hunderik tried to base his promises of gold on the ransom for his hostage that he expected to force from that mean old sordid rogue, Gregory the Bishop, who was cheating him of his due granted to him by King Theudebert.

They came at last to an agreement, though without reference to any such trifle as the decision which of the young ladies was to have the preference. Aldebert sat by all the time, but he was much too shy and loutish to make any approach to attention to them.

When the bowls of spiced drink were brought for deeper revelry Hunderik, perhaps inspired by his first draft, declared that the wedding should

be in the old fashion of their forefathers—the maids should each be mounted on one of his best steeds, and have a fair start, and whichever Aldebert first overtook and captured should be his. All the hearers broke out with shouts of applause. Christian rites of marriage were as yet little heard of among these wild Franks, and that the maiden should be made over by her father after due agreement and a few words of troth uttered on either side, was held to be a true and binding marriage, even among the less savage. Roswitha, however, listened with shame and dismay, and hid her face in her mother's lap; but she met with small sympathy there. Bernhild shook her off, and almost boxed her ears. "Be a woman," said she, "and not a babe; and be proud to be sought, like your mothers before you, by a brave man on horseback."

Poor Roswitha fell back, and when the great leathern vessels of wine and ale were going round, and nobody attended to aught else, she wandered in the rear of the party, crouched down, and wept; and thus Leo presently saw her as he was passing by, putting aside remnants of the feast, and trying to secure provision for the journey. He was a strange confidant, but the maiden in her wretch-

edness knew none other, and clutched at his tunic. "O Leo," she cried, "can you help me? I cannot bear to be borne off by those heathen men, caught as though I were a wild beast! Valhild is much more willing. How shall I avoid them?"


Leo had much rather not have been delayed, but he could not help listening to the sobbing girl, and he stood thinking what might help her. "See here," at last said he. "Turn thy horse amid the pine-trees, where those who know not the windings can scarce follow thee, and when thou art well out of sight of all, then turn him loose, and get thee to the old pilgrim's hollow tree. There none will find thee, no stranger, and our own people will never look for thee."

"Then, O Leo, wilt thou not come and tell me when all is over, and when Valhild is won? I know she will be willing; but I am the eldest. Come, then, and take me out."

"Nay, that I cannot promise," said Leo. "Do not wait for me. Remember there will be feasting and reveling, and the cook may not be absent. Thou canst come to the border of the wood and listen. Heaven be with thee, child, however it may be! Now I must go. They shout for wine."

CHAPTER XXIII.

RACING FOR A WIFE.

TRANGE was that scene! The two girls were placed on their horses by their father, Roswitha shedding tears, her parents both telling her not to be a babe, for a happy lot was before her, unless her folly, added Hunderik, provoked Aldebert, as was too likely. She durst not say, "May it not be Valhild?" for Valhild was looking on in mockery, and pretty well determined to keep in her horse and be overtaken; though she knew that Roswitha had not been mounted on the fleetest, and suspected that it was already decided which should be caught.

The two maidens were allowed a fair start, as far as the fir wood, and a rising ground hid them. Then Aldebert sprang on the back of his handsome bay, and all the spectators, already holding their horses, sprang into the saddle, and gave chase tumultuously a little in the rear, shouting, halloo-

ing, and crying out vehemently, some falling in the rush, some hindered by vicious horses, who stood still kicking, some getting in one another's way.

Aldebert, splendidly mounted, kept ahead of all. Alas for Roswitha's hopes! She turned her horse's head into the fir wood and trusted she was unseen, and that Valhild galloping away would alone fix the attention, and she knew that Valhild would slacken her pace as soon as she heard hoofs behind her.

But ah! there was a crackling of boughs, and the tramp of a horse. Her steed, in her haste, was impelled into a tangle of branches, and she could not disengage it. There was the panting of a horse's nostrils close to her, Aldebert's great hands were round her dragging her down. His exultant voice cried, "I have you, I have you, my sweet, my own!"

"Oh, let me go!" and she struggled hard. "My sister will suit thee far better than I."

"That is my concern," said Aldebert, grasping her. "It is thee I will have, and no other." Then as she tried to push him away, "No, no, little maid. Why hate me? I will be good to

thee. Thou art gentle and good. My mother will like thee, and hark! they say thou art Christian. Well, so am I. Thou shalt see thy priest, and we will get him to bless our wedlock. Thou wilt not find another young Freiherr to promise thee as much."

This pacified Roswitha a little, partly she felt herself helpless in those great arms; at any rate she sat passively while he lifted her in front of him on his horse, and it may be that something responsive arose in her heart in answer to his caresses. However, she submitted to the inevitable.

Meanwhile the house had been left empty. All had gone to see this most exciting chase, except a few colts that had been shut in lest they should impede the others. They had, at Leo's suggestion, been left under the care of the Roman hostage.

And now, turning back from the eager throng, Leo made his way to the meadow, and there walked along on the other side of the rude stone inclosure that shut in the colts, and when he came near the place where the boy was standing he bent down, and lying on the ground under the wall, he called in a low voice, "Attalus!"

There was a start, and the instant inquiry, "Is it Leo?"

"Take care! Turn thyself away from me. Keep thine eyes on the troop out there. Let no one guess we are talking."

The voice seemed to come out of the earth, but Attalus obeyed it.

"Now, listen, before I am missed. Our time is come. This is an opportunity for returning home."

A thrill of ecstasy darted through the limbs of the poor hostage, but the word "How?" was hardly uttered before Leo added, "Do not sleep sound to-night, but wait near the gate of the yard till I shall call thee. No more now."

And Leo was gone, while Attalus, hardly believing he had heard aright, walked up and down, trying to understand what had come so suddenly upon him, endeavoring to collect his ideas so as to pray that the deliverance that seemed so near might be no delusion, and when called to supper forcing himself to eat, though his agitation was so great that he could hardly swallow, even while he suspected that it might be well to lay in a good store in case of flight.

He had long hours to wait by the time Leo, using full speed, had come back to the house. For indeed he had much to do—the banquet was to be prepared again, now that the capture had been made, and Leo's whole attention was required for the various concoctions for the evening festival.

Roswitha, silent if not reconciled, was brought back to have all the female skill of the household employed on her hair and robes. Valhild, sullen and disappointed, had been caught by a young Frank, who was expending all his offers and persuasions on her father for what was in fact her purchase.

Leo was called on to assist his master in the reckoning, and it ended in the acceptance of the terms. Valhild was a certain incumbrance, and more would be left for Hundbert. So the two children sat side by side as brides, and the feast was redoubled in length and boisterous mirth. When at length the revelers retired to their beds, Leo had to assist in serving a highly unnecessary cup all round, and as the bridegroom of the morrow looked out of his box-bed he exclaimed, "Ha! my new father's trusty man! How is it that thou

dost not take one of his horses and flee away over the border?"

"The very thing I mean to do to-night," replied Leo, in the like tone of banter.

"Then our people had better take care thou dost not carry off anything of ours," sleepily replied Aldebert, and turned round to rest.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A RIDE FOR FREEDOM.

WATCHING, praying, wearying, walking about in the dark to keep himself awake, sometimes resting, then sleeping a little against his will and dreaming he was in the halls of Langres, then waking to try to reckon how far the stars were on their path, Attalus waited. Once he thought himself pursued, and woke to the certainty that he heard a great trampling of the horses, then saw that there was a faint tinge of dawn in the east, and that the great star he had been watching was lower in the sky. Philetus had taught him to call that planet Jupiter. Would he begin all over again with Philetus?

There was a step near. He durst not move till he heard the low murmur, "Art thou there, and ready?"

"Most ready, O Leo!"

"All are sound asleep at last. Didst thou leave the gate open?"

“No—is it so?”

“Wide open, and the horses gone.”

“It must have been left open when all went to try to get a share of the feast,” said Attalus, for it was generally secured with a thong of leather or a nail. “I think Whitefoot and Longmane would come at my whistle; or could we not escape best on foot?”

“Hardly safe; the ground is not broken enough if the horses are caught by others. Try what thou canst do.”

The lad whistled in a low, peculiar note, and the dark outlines of two of the horses which had not strayed far could be seen trotting up. They were fond of Attalus and were easily secured, with a little coaxing, and he had their saddles and bridles hanging up in the shed.

“Hast thou arms?” asked Leo.

“I am never trusted with them, not even a boar spear.”

“I will fetch some,” said Leo.

Attalus held his two steeds, caressing their necks softly, and bidding them bear him well to home and joy, while Leo ran lightly toward the house, where he took up a buckler and a spear. With

all his care the spear point rang against the ax, and Hunderik's sleepy voice called out, "Who goes there?"

"Leo, thy servant," was the answer. "I am going to call Attalus to turn out the young colts. Morning is coming, and he is a heavy sleeper."

"Do as you will," returned the Frank, and went to sleep again.

Leo left the hut. He had already provided himself with a shield and a spear, and a bag of food which he had left with Attalus and the horses. The boy sprang into the saddle as he saw his friend coming in the twilight, Leo handed him the weapons, and off they started, as the sky reddened in the east, and they saw before them the wide brown heath. Attalus could hardly check a shout of ecstasy as he felt Whitefoot bound under him, and the free morning breeze blew cheerily in his face. Two years a captive, and now his face was set toward home!

"Not that way," called Leo, presently. "That leads to Treves."

"Is not Treves our first destination?"

"Too near. Hunderik will seek there first, and there is no one whom I can trust. We must make



THE COOK AND THE CAPTIVE.

for Rheims, though it is a long stretch, and there I know the priest Paulellus will receive us. Haste now till we are off this open heath, where we may be seen a long way off."

"Happily they will have to catch all the horses before we can be pursued, and none will come to Bodo or Milo as willingly as to me. They do not know the trick."

"No; moreover they will all be tired out by the chase of the bride, for many went for a long way, not knowing how soon the poor child was caught," said Leo, laughing.

"Poor Roswitha!" said Attalus. "May she be happy with her barbarous husband! I wish she could have fled with us. And Milo too. He was my best friend."

"The poor little maid!" said Leo, "her fate should anyway be a savage Frank, and mayhap Aldebert will not be worse than any other. He spoke kindly to me."

Here broken ground made it needful to give all attention to the horses, but by the time they had descended the little slope, and reached a marsh around a small brook, they could no longer see Hundingburg, and therefore knew that they were

out of sight from thence, though the daylight was now full and the sun was just rising.

Thus far Attalus knew the ground, and he likewise knew that this stream flowed into the Meuse, and that this river had to be crossed before reaching Rheims. Leo advised that they should take it for their guide, keeping as near it as the boggy nature of the ground would permit. The greenness of the grass and rushes around would prevent them from losing sight of its course, though they could not approach it very nearly.

The fresh clear air seemed to invigorate them and their horses, and on they went till the marsh had given way to thickets and steeper ground, and here they paused a little to let their horses graze, and to eat the bread and meat which Leo had secured—less, unfortunately, than he had hoped for, since too many guests were around the remnants of the meal for him to pick up more than would serve for a scanty meal or two, and Attalus, in his haste and excitement, had forgotten to bring the remains of his supper; but the joy of freedom was meat and drink to them, and they mounted again, and made their way through the trees and

bushes more slowly, sometimes being obliged to leave their horses.

Having heard nothing but the quacks of the wildfowl, and the songs of the birds in the woods, they augured that there was no pursuit in this quarter, and full of hope and high spirits, made their way on farther as best they might, but a good deal impeded by the bushes, and obliged to trust to the direction of the sunshine through the trees to assure them that they were keeping to the southeast.

At last they came out of the wood, and saw the broad Meuse lying before them, the sheet of still water shining brightly in the afternoon sun amid the green fields, but there were cattle feeding in the meadows, figures as of shepherds or herdsmen watching them or milking them were visible, and there were clusters of huts along the banks.

“No crossing here for us by day,” said Leo; “we must lie by till all these folk are out of the way in their beds.”

“Will they not help us?” sighed Attalus. “Not if they be Gauls?”

“I would not trust them,” said Leo. “If Hun-

derik fell on them for sheltering his runaways there is no treachery they might not perform; and if they be Burgundians, or have a Burgundian master, most likely he is in alliance with Hunderik, and would feel bound to give us up. I shall trust to no one till I come to the priest Paulellus."

"Ah! if I could only get a draft of the milk that I see those maidens drinking!" sighed Attalus.

"Maybe there are some berries here," was all the consolation Leo could give him, and they got what solace they could out of a few bramble-berries and cranberries not yet ripe, of which Leo gave almost all to the boy. They also saw a few large mushrooms, but Leo was not sure enough of their qualities to let Attalus eat them, so they whiled away the time as best they could till the sun was gone down, and then, after chanting the evening prayers in a low voice, they still waited till the spark of the last light was out in the village below, and then stole down across the meadows toward the river, Attalus starting more than once at dark outlines, and at the sound of a cow champ-ing her cud as she lay.

Arrived at the bank of the river they met another difficulty. The horses were but slightly

trained, and had no notion of swimming rivers, and there was no impelling Leo's horse, Longmane, into the water. Attalus's Whitefoot started and snorted, but yielded to his caressing hand—they had long been comrades, and he felt sure that he could have ridden it across; but Leo was no horseman to begin with, and had had more than one trouble with Longmane, which had only been got over by Attalus's familiarity with the creature, and even the mounting was a difficulty.

“He might let thee be carried away by the river,” exclaimed Attalus, after many attempts and persuasions.

“I had far rather trust to myself and the buckler than to any beast with a perverse will,” returned Leo.

“Then will I do the same,” said Attalus.

“Nay, not so,” cried Leo. “Thou mayest ride and swim thy horse through. I can follow with my shield.”

“Never!” stoutly declared Attalus. “Thou hast run into peril, borne months of slavery to the barbarian for me, and shall I desert thee now? No, sink or swim together.”

“There is not much danger of sinking,” said

Leo. "I have crossed streams before with a float."

"But the horses," sighed Attalus. "Old Whitefoot, canst thou find thy way home, and keep from the wolves? Good old fellow, fare thee well! I would thou couldst bear my greetings to Milo and Roswitha, and tell them all is well with me."

"That is less certain yet," muttered Leo; "but we may get on more safely on the other side without the horses, so we will let them go."

Attalus clung to Whitefoot's glossy neck, perhaps he kissed it, and the good steed stood on the bank of the river, whinnying as if unwilling to part from the lad, who had always been kind and affectionate.

The bucklers which Leo had secured were kite-shaped frames of light basket-work, covered with leather and stamped with devices, almost equaling in length the bearer himself, all save his head, with the point made so as to rest on the ground, and they were slightly bent inward. Thus they were fit to act as floats, and could hold in their concavity the knives and the few clothes that the fugitives carried. The use of the great old-fashioned Roman baths still frequented in the cities had

taught both to swim a little, and they waded in, pushing the shields in front, and feeling the bottom with the handle of the spear till they were out of their depth, when the spears were laid across the bucklers, and they used the freed hand to swim with. The river, smooth and quiet as it looked, carried them a good way down before they could get to the opposite shore, forcing their way at last through a reed bed, to the great indignation of all the feathered inhabitants, who made such an outcry that Leo could only hope there was no one to hear it.

On firm ground at last, they resumed their clothes and threw themselves on the grass, Attalus crying out triumphantly, "Ha, ha! Hunderik, the river is between thee and me! Leo, brave Leo, this is all thy doing. Thou must be free as thou hast freed me."

"Do not cry out too soon, young sir," returned Leo. "It is far to Rheims, and there is no safety till we are on the other side; but we will thank God that we are so far on our way."

They did so, and then lay down to sleep as well as hunger and the chill of the stream would allow them.

CHAPTER XXV.

ST. REMI'S LAST CONQUEST.

IN early dawn Leo awoke, and seeing a thick wood at a little distance called Attalus, thinking it better to hide there before it was light, since he saw tokens of habitation.

Aching and hungry Attalus complied, and they spent most of the day among the trees, making but little progress, and as the wood was fir finding nothing to eat, except a few seeds picked, but with much trouble, from the cones. However, they discovered that it skirted a Roman road, which, no doubt, led directly to Rheims, and a milestone told them how many stadia they had yet to go—a weary reckoning to the exhausted, famished boy.

Nor durst they proceed along it by day, for they heard passengers on it at times, and when night came, though they could avail themselves of

it, and knew they were in the right path, Attalus could not help dragging along, scarcely able to put one foot before the other, and at last as morning dawned, he threw himself down, and cried out that he should give himself up to the first traveler he saw. Captivity was better than this.

“Yea, for thee, who art a hostage and a noble,” said Leo. “I am only a runaway slave, fit for chains and death.”

“No, no!” burst out Attalus, “I would rather die, starved on the road. Then thou canst go on and tell my grandfather thou didst the best for me.”

“We are not come that far yet,” said the slave; “see there—”

For the light revealed a tree laden with fruit. They were only wild plums, but there were plenty of them, and they were not at all to be despised by these hungry travelers, who ate enough to feel greatly refreshed as they went on their way, venturing along the beaten track as long as they could see a far stretch of it before and behind.

By and by they heard galloping behind them. Happily there was a huge bramble-bush close at hand. They rejoiced now that they had no

horses to conceal; they crept behind the briers, and then lay flat on their faces, a good deal terrified, and laying their hands on their knives as the sound of the hoofs slackened in front of them and the riders actually came to a halt.

It was a voice only too well known that said, "I suspect Rheims is not the place, Aldebert. We shall have to seek at Treves for the traitor cook, who must have been in the plot, or find that recreant Garfried of the Blue Sword, who is more like to be sheltering them."

"When that slave swore he had tracked the horses to the marsh—" began Aldebert's voice.

"In league with them! In league with them," answered Hunderik. "He shall smart for it! And as for them, the rogues, bearing off my two best horses, too! when I catch them, one shall be hanged, and the other chopped into little morsels."

With these words, having only paused to breathe their horses, the riders galloped on, while the two fugitives at first lay closer than ever, trembling; but presently Leo exclaimed, "Thanks be to God for the difficulties of our way. If we had not been carried so far down the river, they might have overtaken us."

“And been carrying out those good wishes,” said Attalus. “The savage barbarian! As though I were not a hostage, and really free.”

“Little would he heed that in his wrath,” replied Leo! “But come, up and away! we shall meet no more foes in our path, and can go on boldly now.”

If they went on boldly it was still more wearily, and well it was that the two long years of privation had hardened Attalus to hunger and fatigue, or he could never have held out those last miles, which seemed to lengthen themselves out endlessly.

This was the third night of their journey, and the longest of all before the dawn began to show them the outlines of the flat buildings of Rheims, and even then it seemed as if they would never come nearer. However, just as Attalus was about to sink with weariness, the sound of a church bell revived him, and he struggled on, refreshed by the welcome, home-like sound that had not fallen on his ear for these long months and years.

They passed without question under the ancient gate, a triumphal arch with Corinthian columns, for it was Sunday morning, and people were

thronging in to the Matins service. It was still dark, and Leo, anxious to get out of the streets, lest he should meet his master, asked at haphazard the first man he met for the house of Father Paul-ellus, the priest. The man, he thought, looked curiously at the two dusty, wayworn travelers, each carrying a shield and a spear; but happily he was in too great haste to do more than briefly reply, "The first house beyond St. Christopher's."

Leo thanked him, and then was sorry to see that he turned to gaze after them.

They had almost forgotten the days of the week in their wanderings, and the Lord's Day had been only observed among the Franks by feasts that had more of the sun in them than of Him Who made the sun. This was once more a Christian place, and Attalus clasped his hands, but his thirsty tongue refused to utter anything as they passed the massive low-arched cathedral, and when they reached the friendly door he was reeling against Leo, and looking deadly white.

Would it be a friendly door? It opened, and a priest stood there, arrayed to serve in church. "We belong to Bishop Gregory," said Leo. "This is his grandson. We pray thee of thy

goodness to take us in and shelter us for his sake—or rather, for the sake of God.”

“Come in, come in,” was the answer. “This is my dream of last night. I beheld two doves, one white, one black, come and perch on my hands. Come in, come in, ye whom your Maker hath sent me.”

Across a small court Leo half bore Attalus in, who was a white dove, indeed, at that moment, and placed him on one of the low couches in the outer room. “Sir,” said the faithful servant, “it is no time for eating, I well know, but we have not tasted aught but wild fruit since four mornings ago, and my lord’s grandson is well-nigh spent.”

“All I can provide is thine, good man. This is best at first, till I return, and the food is served,” said Paulellus, hastily bringing a jar of wine and some cakes of bread. “Eat, and be refreshed.”

“And, sir, we are pursued. I pray that the door may be secured.”

“It shall be, it shall, my son—both this door and the outer one. Eat and rest with the blessing of Heaven. Or first, bar this door behind me, and the outer one, for to Mass I must go, or I would

minister to your needs at once. Poor Brother Gregory's grandson at last!"

He bent down, kissed Attalus, and made the sign of the cross over him, dipped a bit of the bread in the wine and gave it into his mouth, then hurried away; but Leo touched neither food nor drink till the two doors had been fastened with heavy bars, nor then until he had fed Attalus with morsel after morsel, and the boy revived enough to say, "Eat thyself, dear Leo."

They both ate, and then slept soundly, Attalus on the couch, Leo lying across the threshold, neither of them stirring until Paulellus came in, admitted by another entrance to the court on the side of the church.

"Give thanks, my sons," he said; "you have been delivered from a great danger. Did you not hear?"

"No," said Attalus, "we have slept soundly."

"Methought once I heard a trampling," said Leo.

"Trampling? yea, verily, thou didst so, my son. Full in the midst of the Psalm—it chanced to be 'He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunters'—in burst two huge barbarians, shouting

'Where are my runaway slaves?' Then rose up our holy ancient Bishop, and holding up his hand said, 'Peace, my son; seest thou not Whose worship thou disturbest?' The barbarian halted a little. The tall form, gray hairs, and uplifted hand of the holy Remigius no doubt struck him with a certain awe, but he muttered, 'I want my slaves.'

"'Kneel down and worship, my son,' then said the holy man; 'we will hear thee at a fitting time. This is the house of God. Thou must beware!' Those wild Franks have a certain fear."

"And he calls himself Christian," put in Atalus. "But will he come? Did the Bishop hear him?"

"The wild ruffians obeyed, and bowed their knees, and when all was over the Bishop summoned them, and the foremost—Hunderik of Hundingburg, is he not?"

"Yea, we were with him."

"He laid his complaint that thou hadst been given to him by King Theudebert as a hostage, and that the treacherous slave whom he had purchased had come merely to aid thee to escape."

"True, sir, but I was no longer a hostage, Tul-

lium and Nasium having been surrendered, and Leo came to aid me.”

“So the Bishop made him confess, though he went on muttering that the King had given thee that he might make what he could of thee. Then did the Bishop, with the voice of a young and indignant man, break out: ‘O man of greed and violence, who makest thy prey of a child, weak and unprotected, heeding not justice nor mercy, forgetting Who is the helper of the friendless, away with thee, nor dare to pursue the child of God into His precincts!’ The Frank was cowed and fell back, holding his hands up as if to ward something off.”

“And Leo, is he safe? Faithful Leo, who saved me?”

“Even so. The Bishop then said, ‘Renounce this unjust and evil purpose, that thus thou mayest be forgiven and a blessing rest with thee and thine.’ He was really overpowered with the splendor of the church and the majesty of the Bishop, and the awe of the Presence, and both he and his comrade fell on their knees. What they said I know not, but the Bishop blessed them, and, moreover, bade them to his table.”

“Are they there now? Not gone?” cried Atalus in alarm.

“There is no fear, my son,” returned Paulellus. “When the Bishop’s feast is over, their steeds will be led to his door by a few of the citizens, so as to do them honor, and they will be escorted out of the city, and the gates shut after them. Remigius has conquered in God’s name once more.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOME.

THE fugitives were far too much exhausted to continue their journey for two days, nor was it needful, for even if the fitful spirit of Hunderik should change, and he should demand the restoration of Leo, the walls of Rheims were strong enough to keep him out.

They spent the rest of that Sunday chiefly in sleep, and only awoke enough to join in thanksgiving in church, after they had been bathed and freed themselves from the dust and mire of the journey. Attalus looked forward to the morrow's real elaborate Roman bath, with all its rubbing and shampooing and hot and cold temperatures, and then, he said, he should really feel cleaner than he had done for two whole years.

Such relics of Roman habits were a refinement considered to be over-luxurious by many of the clergy, but the belief that dirt was a sign of mortification had yet to make its way among them.

His clothes had become a spectacle of rags, and the citizens, who had heard his story, vied with one another in presenting garments for the use of both himself and his faithful friend—slave he could not call Leo, in the assurance that his grandfather would reward such devotion by manumission. Washed, trimmed, and dressed, the two scarcely recognized each other again as the squalid beings who had fled from Hundingburg.

That exterior cleansing they held to be a type of their restoration to the privileges and blessings of the Church, of which they had been so long deprived, and Attalus especially felt that richly adorned altar and the dark vaults of the church of St. Christopher as his truest resting-place and home.

Afterward he was called on to be presented to the Bishop, or rather Archbishop, Remigius, or, as the French have always called him, St. Remi. Attalus knew that this was a great honor, and one that would delight his grandfather. For Remigius was in one way the Apostle of the Franks, and it was he who had baptized King Clovis. “Sicambrian, love what thou hast hated, renounce what thou hast loved!” were the memorable words that

he had spoken when he had baptized and anointed the half-savage but awe-stricken king. It was whispered among the devout of Rheims, and came to be an article of firm belief among the French in after times, that the oil wherewith St. Remi anointed the king had come in a holy ampulla, or vase, brought by a dove from heaven. All this was long ago, and Remi was a very old man, but still full of vigor and able to rebuke the violence of the Frank, and to be much interested in the escape of the grandson of Gregory of Langres.

If he had not been otherwise remarkable his great age would have made him memorable, for he was no less than ninety-four years old. When Attalus, followed at some distance by Leo, was brought toward him, the old man was sitting on his couch, with cushions behind him, his long gray beard and the locks that remained showing pure and silvery, his dark eyes still bright under their white brows, his face aquiline. He had once, it is said, been nearly seven feet tall, and though he bent over the staff on which his hands were clasped, he still presented a most noble and majestic appearance. Attalus always recollected him, like Jacob leaning on the top of his staff, and his

greeting was in Jacob's words, "God be gracious unto thee, my son!"

The boy could not but bend the knee before him, and wait in silence to be questioned. Remi caused him to tell the whole story of his captivity and of his rescue, and beckoned Leo to come nearer and give his history of the escape, and of his entrance into Hunderik's service while he was still the servant of Gregory of Langres.

Then, while allowing that Hunderik fully deserved to lose Leo's price for his extortionate and illegal demand for Attalus, he added, "Though I command it not, yet it seems to me that it would be well that none should be able to speak against us as evil-doers, and therefore that the amount should be restored, if possible, to this ungodly man."

Attalus and Leo both exclaimed that this should be their endeavor, and then the old man gave his solemn blessing to the boy "delivered out of the hands of the fowler," and to the faithful and loving "brother, not servant," who had ventured himself for his rescue.

They bore his words away warm at their hearts when they set out with an escort of traveling mer-

chants, and happily mounted on mules, feeling the contrast to their former miserable journey ; though, such is human nature, Attalus could have complained of missing the spirit of the unbroken horses to which he had become accustomed.

In due time they rode into Langres, and without much notice reached the door of the Bishop's court-yard, though Attalus could not help staring round on all sides, marveling to see walls and trees, houses and stalls so unchanged since he went away, long, long ago as it seemed, and his heart leaping almost to his throat with the dread that he might not find his grandfather or his uncle in health or safety.

The change was all in himself. He had shot up from a little childish boy into a tall, strong-limbed lad ; looking a good deal more like a Frank than a Roman, so that the porter exclaimed, " Ha ! Leo ! returned, art thou ? Hast not sped ? Or is this stranger come to deal with the master for the young lord ? "

Attalus held his peace to hear the whole of this, then jumped to his feet and cried, " What wouldst give for him, old Lucius ? "

Lucius, in utter amaze, held out his hands.

“Is it?—it is!” then broke into a cry of wild joy, half choked with a sob. The servants came running together at the sound, but Attalus hurried through with winged steps, found his grandfather on his knees in the chapel, fell at his feet, and burst out in one joyful cry, “Praise, praise God, I say, Who hath brought me home, safe and sound, by the hands of this good—Oh! where is Leo?”

Leo was the center of all the other inhabitants of the house, eagerly gathering up the knowledge of his exploit. A few minutes more, and Bishop Gregory, leaning on his grandson’s arm, came out to him, and embraced him with a shower of tears, repeating almost the same words as St. Remi had said: “No more a servant, but a son beloved. Leo, thou art free, to whom I owe my child’s life and freedom.”

And Attalus, at the same moment, was exchanging ecstatic greetings with one after another—Tetricus, who called him a brand from the burning; Philetus, who hoped he had not forgotten all his Greek; and Baldrik, who looked far more like a Roman than he did; while poor old Gola seemed to purr round him like a cat, and was not happy till he had attended his nursling to bath and bed.

What more is there to tell? Leo was freed and endowed, but was sent to Tours as being more out of Hunderik's reach in case that chief should repent him of his relenting. There the historian, Bishop Gregory, heard the history of the escape, which he recorded in his great Chronicle. The sum paid for Leo was diligently raised, and was sent to meet Hunderik at the next gathering of the chiefs of the Burgundian kingdom, and perhaps it saved the life of the taverner, Aulus, whom Hunderik believed to be a party to the treachery, as he considered it. He had complained to King Theudebert, who only laughed at him for being outwitted.

Attalus, though an affectionate and right-minded lad, had become so accustomed to an outdoor life of activity that he had a strong distaste for scholarship and the training of the clerical life, and his grandfather, who lived only a few years after his escape, advised his uncle not to try to force his will. Finally, he became Count of Autun—that is to say, the guardian of the inhabitants, privileged to plead their cause with the King, as well as to be responsible for them.

He was sent for one day to a nunnery, where the

Abbess wanted to consult him on a summons from the reigning king, Hlothar, to pay a heavy contribution to assist him in his war against his brother.

For a few moments she looked at him from under her veil. Then came full recognition. "Atli, the hostage!" "Roswitha, the maiden!"

Her fate had not been a hard one. She had been kindly treated. Aldebert and his parents had a strong tincture of Christianity, and her devotion confirmed them in it. At the end of a year, however, her young husband was killed in a skirmish with the Thuringians, and then no objection was made to her repairing to the nearest convent. Her father-in-law escorted her thither, and she had been readily admitted, instructed in the faith, and received into the sisterhood. There she had lived a peaceful life of devotion, far happier than was otherwise possible for any woman in those days, the dreadful period of Fredegonda and Brynhilda. It was a course of devotion and of almsdeeds, into which the violent seldom broke. "And," said she, "I owe all to thy captivity among us. Save for thee and thy friends, Leo and Gilchrist, never should I have aspired to better things."

“Thou art, thou hast been happy?”

“Verily I have. My poor young husband was always good to me; I loved him as a child might do, and have been glad I knew him and his mother. But peace is not in this world beyond walls like these, and the true Heavenly Love, whereof thou spakest to me first by the Erman-saul, is what I have ever craved for.”

“Ah!” said Attalus, “I see once more why my captivity came about.”

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