

Andrea da Barberino
THE ROYAL HOUSE OF FRANCE
(I REALI DI FRANCIA)
and Related Medieval Romances



translated from the Italian

by

Max Wickert

[A Selection]

Note

I began this translation in 2007 after Oxford accepted my version of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* and completed it in draft by the time the Tasso appeared in 2009. The work, in fact, combines three separate romances, two by Andrea da Barberino (*I Reali di Francia* and *L'Aspromonte*) and one (*Li Fatti di Spagna*) by an anonymous Franco-Venetian writer. Taken together, they form a handy retelling of the entire Carolingian cycle of romances, from the supposed descent of French kings from the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, to Roland's death at Roncesvalles. (Only this last episode is familiar to educated English readers.) The book should thus serve as a useful source text for the Matter of France, as Malory's *Morte Darthur* is for the Matter of Britain.

The three Italian works take up well over a thousand pages, and I decided to make an abridged version, with omitted portions given in narrative summaries. The text excerpted here reflects the present stage of abridgment. (The dots in the table of contents indicate sections completed but not reproduced here.) Obviously further cutting is needed to bring the volume down to a size that a reader will have the patience to finish, and that a publisher might reasonably go for.

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Andrea da Barberino, *THE ROYAL HOUSE OF FRANCE*

BOOK ONE, PART ONE: *CONSTANTIUS FLOVUS*

*Constantine and Sylvester*¹

1

In the days of Constantine, King of Rome, there was at Rome a saintly Pope, shepherd of Holy Church, whose name was Pope Sylvester, and who was, both he and the other Christians, cruelly persecuted by Constantine, who wished to them all dead. That same Pope Sylvester often lay hidden high up in a mountain covered by forests that was called Mount Soractis, but Constantine attempted to force him to come down from that mountain. So Sylvester departed far from Rome and went to the mountains of Calabria, into their darkest heights, called the mountains of Aspramont [that is, the Bitter Mountains]², in the bitterest parts thereof, and he brought with him certain disciples who had been baptized to become Christians and servants of Christ.

At that time Constantine sickened with leprosy, and was ill for twelve years, for he found no cure from the many physicians that he tried. At last, like a man desperate, he demanded that his physicians cure him, else would he put them all to death. The doctors told him that he should take the blood of seven young virgins, all of an age, and, after taking certain medicines that they would give him, to bathe in that blood, and that he might in this manner be healed. Constantine took the

¹The apocryphal legend of Saint Sylvester was long used to justify the temporal powers of the papacy, and to buttress the legitimacy of the so-called *Donation of Constantine*. Seasoned travelers and art-historians will also recognize the story as the subject of the remarkable frescos in the Cappella San Silvestro at SS. Quattro Martiri, Rome.

² Insertions in brackets are the translator's.

medicine, and, the seven maidens having been found, their mothers were brought down to the court under the pretense of charity, as if Constantine intended to feast them. Standing by the chamber door, they heard that their daughters were to be killed for Constantine's cure, and began to lament loudly. Constantine, hearing their wailing, asked what was the matter, and was told the cause.

Constantine thereupon grew tenderhearted and took pity on them, saying to his servants, "Send them away," and gave them certain courteous gifts, and pardoned the lives of those innocents, speaking these words: "I would rather die the death and bear the torments of my disease than use such cruelty." These words of his and his goodly promise were so pleasing to God, that God multiplied the issue of his blood with honor so great that it became the wonderment of the whole world.

2

On the following night Constantine saw in a vision two men garbed in white, and asked them whether he might be healed. "Yes," said they, and told him: "Let yourself be guided by that Sylvester who preaches faith in Christ, for he knows how to prepare a water that will make you well." Constantine did not believe them either the first or the second time; but the third time he asked them who they were. They replied, "We are Peter and Paul, apostles of Jesus Christ." At this, Constantine believed them, and on the morrow he heard a voice that cried out: "Do as you have heard, and have faith, and you shall be healed."

Constantine summoned one of his nobles, called Lucius Albanus, the captain of his bodyguard of knights, and commanded him to go to Mount Soractis and to bring back that Sylvester who preached the faith of Christ. Whereupon they went there with a thousand knights, and did not find

him, but heard that he was in Aspramont. So they journeyed for many days, and, having found the mountain, encircled it so that he would not run away.

In the morning, when Sylvester saw the mountain surrounded, he lifted his hands in prayer to God and said, “The day that I have yearned for, when I will come into the glory of Life Eternal, has come,” believing that Constantine wanted to put him to death as a martyr. But he praised and thanked God, and comforted his companions so that they might not fear death for the love of God.

3

Then Lucius Albanus ascending the mountain to mid-height with his men, left his company, went alone to the summit, and demanded to know which of them was Sylvester. He replied to him that he was the very man. Said Lucius Albanus, “Constantine summons you.” Said Sylvester, “I am well pleased; but first, I pray you, to let me say Mass.” He answered that he might, freely. And then Sylvester besought him to let his companions go; and he promised to do so.

Now Sylvester took Lucius by the hand. He brought him to a little garden of his, where he planted a few turnip seeds, covered and blessed them and commended them to God. Then he went to say Mass. At the moment of the elevation, Lucius Albanus saw Christ on his cross right above the host, even as he had heard that he was crucified at Jerusalem. Sylvester, having said the Mass, turned to Lucius and said: “Go, my friend, and gather one of those turnips, and roast it in the fire, and then we will depart from here.” Astonished at this, Lucius said: “Even just now you sowed them. Why do you jest with me?” Sylvester said: “Go, servant of God, for nothing is impossible to Jesus Christ.” The man went in pure faith, and he found the plants great as bread loaves. Then he brought one of them and knelt before Sylvester and asked for baptism, and told how he had seen Jesus Christ and witnessed the miracle of the turnip-seeds, and he was baptized and asked Saint

Sylvester not to speak of this to Constantine. Soon, leaving Aspramont, they in a short time came from thence to Rome.

Upon presenting themselves to Constantine, they asked him what he desired of them. Constantine told them what he had heard in his vision and said: “Let me have some of that water that you know how to prepare.” Saint Sylvester replied: “The water that I know how to prepare is the water of Holy Baptism; if therefore you wish to be cured, it behooves you to be baptized in the Faith of Jesus Christ.” And he preached to him, and told him who Christ was while in this world, and how Saint Peter was one of his twelve apostles, and how Saint Paul was converted, and how Vespasian performed vengeance.³ Thereupon Constantine vowed that if Christ would cure him, he would never worship other gods, and would have all Rome baptized. Sylvester said: “Rise from your bed, in the name of Jesus Christ.” He at once left his bed, and Sylvester baptized him in a great basin. As he poured the water over his shoulders, all his leprosy fell away, and his flesh remained as clean as that of a one-year-old child.

Constantine let his entire family be baptized; but two of his sons, of whom one was named Constantine like his father, refused to be baptized. One fled to L’Aquila and was there slain by his enemies. The other son was called Constant, which had been the name of his grandfather, and he fled to Constantinople and died within a few days. And the third was named Constantius, but commonly known as Flordimont and he was baptized⁴; he was about twenty years of age.

³ Vespasian began the campaign against Judea that ended with Titus’ conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 AD. Typically, medieval anti-Semitism construed this event as God’s “just vengeance” upon the Jews for their murder of Christ.

⁴ Constantius’ baptismal name (not mentioned here) by which he is known ever after, is Flovus. An alternative name, Flordimont (orig. *Fiordimonte*), drops from the narrative after this point.

Constantine had been Emperor for twenty years⁵ and he presently had all Rome baptized, and endowed the Church of God through his pious faith and in gratitude for his conversion, little thinking that shepherds of the Church would spoil the whole world for earthly gain and become spiritual tyrants.

Thereafter he made Sylvester Bishop of Rome and overlord of all the bishops of the world.

(Although we say Pope, it should be known that at Rome he is called Bishop of Rome.) He caused Constantine to discover the heads of Saints Peter and Paul. Sylvester and Constantine laid the first foundation stones of their church, and it was endowed with much gold and silver by them and by others; and they caused many other churches to be erected.

4-19: **Flovus, King of France** [summary]

One day in Rome, Constantine's son, Constantius, whose baptismal name was Flovus and who was destined to become the first Christian king of France, was publicly insulted by Saleones, one of his father's pagan friends. He avenged himself by stabbing Saleones to death, thereby incurring his father's wrath. Outlawed by Constantine, he fled with two companions: his old tutor, Giambaron, and his cousin Sanguin.

At Corneto they found refuge with the hermit Samson, who turned out to be Flovus' maternal uncle, a Christian who had gone into hiding from persecution and who was now living a saintly life. That night an angel appeared to Samson and presented him with the Oriflamme, the sacred and invincible future banner of France, prophesying the greatness to which Flovus' lineage was destined.

The four companions rode together to Milan, then ruled by the pagan tyrant Artilla. With the miraculous aid of the Oriflamme, they routed Artilla, who embraced Christianity and was baptized under the name of Durante. Flovus conquered and converted the rest of Lombardy and then crossed the Piedmontese Alps with his three friends.

Although Constantine and Rome had converted to Christianity, there were still few Christians in Europe at that time. The Britain of Uther Pendragon and Arthur had been Christian, but their descendants were driven from the British Isles by the pagan Angles and fled to Brittany. In the next generation, Brittany came to be ruled by Salard, son of Codonas, and most of England was also at last Christianized, though the north remained pagan. Most of the rest of Europe was still heathen, including Spain, France, Burgundy and Germany. In Asia, Christianity had advanced somewhat toward the Indian border, especially in Armenia, but Constantine's conversion had made many bitter enemies for the Christian religion in the East.

⁵Here the original inserts a somewhat confused parenthetical remark: "This makes it plain that he had been ill eight years and not longer, although the account of one holy father speaks of twelve (and for good reason, since he was counting the whole time when he was emperor but not yet baptized)."

Flovus and his companions crossed the Alps, traveled through Burgundy and reached Frankish territory in the province of Saxony, where the rule was disputed by two great lords. The stronger, the Duke of Saxony, was trying to overthrow the weaker, Nerino, King of Provins, by besieging his city. Although Flovus suspected that the Duke was in the wrong, he offered his service to him, provided he be given an honorable command. He was haughtily rejected and driven from the camp. The companions fought their way to Nerino's city, presented themselves as Italian knights-errant, without revealing Flovus' identity, and were accepted as champions.

A successful sally on the besieging camp by the companions encouraged Nerino to venture a full-scale battle a day later, in which Flovus killed Parco, one of the enemy's foremost leaders. Nerino, still unaware of Flovus' identity, discovered it by spying upon him in his chambers. Knowing who Flovus was, he offered fealty to Constantine and converted to Christianity, along with all his subjects.

Nine days later, in a great assault on the besiegers' camp under the Oriflamme banner, Nerino's side achieved a great victory. The Duke of Saxony, forced to negotiate, apologized to Flovus for his earlier contempt and offered him his daughter Brandoria in marriage, with his dukedom for her dowry. Flovus, after consulting with his companions and Nerino, accepted, on condition that the Duke and all his subjects become Christians. They did. Flovus married Brandoria, who in the course of two years bore him two sons, Florellus and Floris. A year later, both Nerino and the Duke died, leaving their realms to Flovus.

Meanwhile one of the Saxon nobles, Gilroy the Strong, Duke of Sauterne revolted and offered himself in vassalage to Florentius, King of Paris, a descendant of the ancient Trojan royal line. At the advice of his wife Brandoria, Flovus now raised an army of forty-thousand and laid siege to Paris. In the first encounter things went badly for the Flovus: Giambaron and Sanguin were unhorsed and captured, he himself sustained two serious wounds in combat with Florentius, and his army was forced to retreat. However, Brandoria rallied the remainder of the Saxon army, which overwhelmed the Parisians and rescued their leaders. Both Florentius and his nephew Aeneadus were killed, thus ending the Trojan dynasty in France.

Flovus took and sacked Paris. Gilfroy fled and the remaining population surrendered. Samson was freed, as was Sanguin, who had fallen in love with Florentius' daughter Soriana because she assisted him during his imprisonment. He now asked for her hand in marriage. The nuptials were celebrated with great pomp. In due time, Flovus conquered all Florentius' possessions and had their inhabitants baptized. He himself sent for his children and established his royal seat in Paris. Giambaron also sent for his wife, whom he had left pregnant in Rome, and who had in the meantime born him a son, baptized Richard but generally known as Richier. This child was destined to become the first Paladin of France.

.....

Richier in Barbary

43

King Danebrun, seeing the great damage inflicted on his army, deemed it a great shame to strike camp. When the truce had been concluded, he sent ambassadors to Spain, Africa, Bellamarina,

Lybia, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, Syria, Turkey and Greece, and to all his other domains, with news of the battle and of the death of many kings and lords, and of the truce concluded. And in every region he bade proclaim the death of its lord, including Arcaro's death in Turkey. After their departure, those who had gone to Turkey were peradventure carried by the winds to Barbary. They reached the son of the King of Tunis, whose name was Achirro and told him all about how the battle had gone, and of the death of his father, Gloriard, at which he lamented greatly. They also told him of the death of Arcaro, who was reputed to be very valiant and puissant, and of many others. They pleaded with Achirro to give aid to Danebrun, so that the Christian faith be not increased, and to avenge his father's death, and that of his cousin Arcaro. He promised to assist them to the best of his power.

The queen, Achirro's mother, who was Turkish and Achirro's aunt (that is how the king came to be Arcaro's cousin), sent for the ambassadors to learn the manner of Arcaro's death, and that of Tydion, his brother, King of Turkey, and father to Arcaro and Basiroc. When they came before her, they rehearsed the whole matter. Weeping she asked who it was that had killed her nephew, who was so strong, and they replied: "A young man, not yet twenty-two years of age, still without hair on his chin, who is called Richier, the First Paladin of France. He has only recently taken up arms, and he is the handsomest youth I have ever seen." Unfortunately for Richier, by the queen's side there stood a young maiden who was her daughter and King Achirro's sister. When she gave ear to the words of the ambassadors, she instantly fell in love with Richier, so that she began to sigh and said to the ambassadors: "You praise him in a way that makes look like you have seen him." One of the ambassadors replied: "If only it pleased Mahomet to make him a Saracen, even as I have seen him both armed and disarmed after the truce was declared! He is lovelier and handsomer than we can say. Even so, may he be pierced by a lance, at the first blow struck in battle!" The maiden said

softly to herself: "First let all the pagans in the field be slain!" The ambassadors departed and a few days later went away upon their voyage.

The maiden, whose name was Phegra Albana and who was fourteen years old, began to think of Arcaro's great prowess and the great fame that he had achieved. Soon she said: "What nobility must reign in that noble and handsome Richier, since he has slain Arcaro! Therefore I wish with all my heart that he were my lover." She resolved inwardly to send him a secret letter and a handsome present. Calling one of the servants who waited on her, twenty-four years of age, she made him swear by many things sacred to their gods that he would never speak of their conversation; and the timorous youth swore to do whatever she commanded. She said: "You must go to Rome and take with you my beautiful and noble palfrey, and a shield, and a pearl ornament, that is a crown, and present them on my behalf to that Christian knight called Richier the Paladin." And to this end she swore him her emissary, and made him once more give his oath by Balaam, their god, and by Beelzebub, and by all the other idols of which no one should speak. She presented him with a letter to give to Richier, written in her own hand in a barbarous tongue. Then she said: "If any gift of speech ever ruled in your heart, I pray you use it then, and commend me to him, and tell him by word of mouth that I will never love a man other than him; implore him, if he have any trace of pity or love for me, to come and see me. Though the letter says as much, perhaps your gift of speech may make him the more ready to love me." Then she gave him money and sent him away, without telling her mother or brother, with letters of free passage throughout the land. The next day, having boarded a ship, he crossed to Sicily and thence to Italy, so that he reached the city of Rome. As he went through the city inquiring for the Paladin Richier, he encountered him riding with one of his friends and followed by many servants. Richier asked him whom he was seeking. The servant replied: "I seek Richier the Paladin." Richier made himself known to him, and he seemed to him

handsomer than Phegra had said. He took him by the hand, drew him apart, saluted him on Phegra's behalf, and put her letter in his hand. The worthy Richier read it and it spoke in the form and manner that follows:

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“So great is the power of Love and of the gods of lovers that none can defend himself against it. On countless occasions, upon hearing a person praised, men and women have been inflamed with love for the object of that praise. For reason naturally admits and concedes that he who seeks honor will do so by deeds rather than praise himself, and leaves the praise to the operation of whatever virtue is worthy of it. It is for that reason that I, a frail woman, unworthy of such a noble love, whenever the world brings me manifest report of your much-praised virtues, am seized by it with new love for you and turn toward you, not because I, Phegra Albana, daughter of the King of Barbary, am worthy of you (praised be your great nobility above that of all men alive!); no, I only yield to love because virtue must love and be loved by everyone. Therefore I yield myself to your nobility. I call upon Venus with the power that she had in the workings of love among lovers of old. I pray to her and to all the gods who have ever shared that same torment of love to inflame your heart with love for me as they have inflamed mine for you. Moreover I implore you, to find a secret way for us two lovers to see each other. I, Phegra Albana, love my lord, but have never seen him. Yet have I such hope in him, that I feel certain that I shall see him, and after I have seen him, I will gladly die and blessedly enter the secrets of the next life. I do not know what else to say, for my sighs, my tears, my love, my fear of rejection make me tremble while I await the servant whom I have sent to you. I keep saying, ‘Ah me! What news will he bring back?’ I fix my eyes upon the fated sword by which I expect to die if I am not loved by you. I therefore pray you not to shorten

the appointed span of my life, and commend myself to you, my lord Richier. Phegra Albana commends herself full of longing to see you.”

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When Richier had read this letter he, he said to the servant: “I will give you an answer this evening,” for he did not wish any of his companions to know of it, and he motioned to one of his own servants to bring the man to his chamber. Upon returning home, Richier called him to his room (they had already put the horse sent by Phegra into Richier’s stable), and Phegra’s messenger upon arrival began in piteous words to describe the actions of his love-struck lady and oath that she had made him swear, and her beauty and gentleness, and her desperate love for Richier. Also, he promptly gave him the pearl coronet and the sword. Then they went to look at the horse.

When Richier heard of the love of that lady, he, rapt in countless conjectures, grew thoughtful. He treated her messenger with great honor. At night, he could not sleep, fearful of being deceived. In the morning the servant said to Richier: “My lord, if you feel any doubt, cast me into your prison, and then send one of your own servants to Phegra. If you find any treachery in me, do with me what you wish.” Richier questioned him closely about the lady’s condition, and the servant praised her highly, speaking of her infinite beauty. Richier sighed as he spoke with him, and he felt as if he were talking with the lady herself. At last, overcome by the power of love, he decided to go and see her before the expiration of the truce.

On the third day, without the knowledge of his father or any other person, disguised and in armor, and mounted on the horse that Phegra had sent him, he went on his way with the servant. Within a few days they crossed into Sicily, and from Sicily they reached Barbary by ship. Having come to court, he secretly presented himself to Phegra in her chamber, and when she saw him she, in the

presence of her servant, threw herself upon his neck and kissed him. Said the servant, “Certainly, my lady, to make such lovely couple as you are took all the power of the gods. No other lover would befit you, and no other beloved him.”

When she let go of him and threw herself to her knees at his feet, Richier made her rise, and implored her for the sake of God to keep him hidden, so that he might not be recognized, for he had slain Arcaro. She said, “So that you may be sure of me, I want you to baptize me.” So he baptized her, and her servant was baptized along with her. Then she said: “Take of me whatever pleasure you desire, even as you will.” Richier answered: “O noble lady, I do not wish to lay a sinful hand on your person until you are in Paris and stand before King Flovus, my liege. And I desire that the Holy Father should baptize you with his own hands. I will make you my wedded wife in front of the Pope and the Emperor Constantine and Flovus and my father. All those will do you great honor.” Phegra said: “My lord, we shall go there whenever it please you.” Richier answered: “That will be when we have made preparation and the weather is fair for sailing.” Thus Richier stayed on in Tunis, unrecognized, for many days, serving alongside the servant who had gone to Rome. And often he performed his services with such refinement that all marveled at it, believing him to be of Phegra’s retinue.

But tell me, Phegra, and tell me, Richier, where are your senses? O blind love, how many men have you dressed in women’s clothes! O Hercules, you went spinning. O Achilles, you danced with Deidamia. I see the men whom no weapons could overcome being overcome by that great tyrant of Love; and those who defended their freedom with swords and weapons making themselves slaves of weak women and being cast into Love’s prison, trussed up and in chains. Richier, defeated by love, has transformed himself from a great lord into the servant of a girl.

46-49: **Richier in Prison** [summary]

Phegra's brother Achirro, intending to give her in marriage, proclaimed a tournament for her hand. Countless pagan princes, some of whom had already gathered troops for the siege of Rome, arrived. Phegra sent word by way of her trusty servant, Acaïl, to Richier counseling their escape, but he decided to stay on for the tourney, making sure the arrangements for their departure afterwards were in place. On the first day of the tourney, the apparent victor was Argiro's brother (and Phegra's cousin), Basiroc. But then Richier appeared in the lists, disguised as a White Knight. When he overthrew Basiroc three times, the latter planned to have him murdered by treachery. The plot is discovered by Alcaïl and prevented by Phegra. Richier defeated Basiroc once more and disappeared from the lists. No one could discover the identity of the White Knight. Meanwhile the lovers, along with Alcaïl, prepared to escape by ship. That night, however, an itinerant harper entertaining the guests at supper recognized Richier and secretly informed Achirro. Achirro ordered all the city gates locked and dispatched a group of armed men to arrest the sleeping Richier and cast him into a dungeon. Alcaïl was also arrested, but, pleading ignorance of Richier's identity, feigned elation at his capture. With some reluctance, but fearing to compromise herself and to endanger her lover, Phegra did the same. Richier, hauled in chains before the Basiroc and the assembled barons, defiantly confessed who he was. Both Basiroc and Achirro moved to kill him on the spot, but were prevented by others, who feared a violation of the truce. In the end, Richier was cast back into his dungeon, while his enemies prepared to set out for Rome, swearing to bring back Flovus and Constantine and to execute them all upon their return. The news of Richier's capture spread throughout the pagan world and encouraged countless others to swell the Saracen ranks at Rome. As the truce expired, over 150,000 more heathens assembled there, while on the Christian side, reinforcements from France were delayed.

50: **Richier's Escape**

Three days after the King of Barbary had departed from Tunis and was embarked for Rome (leaving Richier under heavy guard in prison), Phegra called her faithful servant Alcaïl and told him: "What can we do to get Richier out of prison?" Alcaïl said: "My lady, we shall fare ill, for he has ten watchmen for perpetual guard, day and night." Said Phegra, weeping: "Would I had fallen dead the day I fell in love with him, since I shall be the cause death for him and all his followers; for the Christians now have no hope of Richier, and it will be said throughout the world that I have betrayed him. Women will not call me a lover, but a rather a traitress, and among traitresses will I be counted. Therefore I am determined to get him out of prison; I care not if I die, if only he escapes. Go then and find out any way and means to get him out prison, and go you with him, and have no mind of my person so long as he gets away." Alcaïl said to her: "My lady, here is the way you can get him free. Go to your place in your mother's bed-chamber. Snatch up the prison keys in secret, taking care that she do not notice, for she seeks his death to avenge her nephew, Arcaro. When you

have the keys, tell me, and I will give those guards so much to drink that they shall be besotted. Then we will take Richier from prison and with him get away from here.” Phegra said, “You have thought this out well,” and set about this plan. On the following day, Phegra stole the keys from her mother. Alcail, as soon as knew of it, being quartered by day with those guards, when evening came, having previously drugged a barrel of good wine, first brought another barrel of it to them and ate and drank with them; then he brought in yet another. They began to feel warm and grew thirstier, and already everyone in the palace and its surroundings had gone to sleep. Then he said to them, “I will try to find another barrel of wine,” and they gladly agreed. He then went and filled the barrel with the drugged wine, and they drank so much of it that they were soon sleeping on the floor like swine. When Alcail saw them all asleep, he at once went to Phegra and she gave him the keys. He returned to the prison, released Richier and brought him to Phegra. She armed him with the best arms she could find, and armed her dear servant also. Weeping she embraced Richier and asked his pardon, telling him that she knew nothing of his capture. Then she said: “O my lord, go hence with Alcail and have no care for me. Though I would very gladly go with you, I am afraid that I should cause perdition to both you and me at the hands of the great numbers throughout the land who are following my brother. I shall pretend that Alcail has helped you escape. I pray you to remember me, who for your sake am putting myself in mortal danger.” Then Richier embraced and kissed her (other sin there was not) and swore to her on the faith as a knight never to take woman other than her, promising that, at the end of the war in Rome, he would come back for her. She had letters prepared for him to gain passage through the country, and gave them to him, weeping. Richier and the servant departed and went to the stable that the servant used to tend and took two horses from Phegra’s side.

They left the city, whose gates stood open for people coming and going from the port, for men were still embarking to follow the king. Richier's escape from prison happened three nights and two days after the king's departure, yet there were still people who came behind him. Arrived at the port, they took a ship, paying a somewhat more than customary fare, and there were many others who sailed with them. The ship deposited them in Sicily at the city and port of Trapani, where they lodged for two days. Then they embarked aboard a vessel bound for Provence, which, after many days, either because of dangerous winds or high waves, left them, as pleased God, on the shore of Italy. Many times did Richier lament inwardly that he was not at Rome, fearing that the battle had begun. The city where they landed was called Alpheia, and upon arrival they rested there for three days, while the ship continued upon its way. A river called the Arno ran through the midst of that city, which was later called Pisa. That city was very pleasing to Richier and his companion.

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51-59 ***Richier at the Siege of Rome*** [summary]

Fighting incognito, Richier became the chief instrument in delivering the city of Rome from Saracen seizure and then returned to France.

60: ***Phegra Albana Summons her Lover***

Mention must now be made of some deeds undertaken and performed by the Paladin Richier for the love of Phegra Albana. When the abovementioned events had occurred in Rome and in France, three years after the liberation of Rome from the siege, Richier went to Africa unrecognized in the form and manner following:

Danebrun, the Sultan of Cairo, returned to Egypt with great loss of barons, men and possessions. All Syria, all Persia and Africa and Egypt were filled with lamentations for the dead left behind at

Rome. Therefore the Sultan sought to discover in what wise Richier had escaped from prison.

Hearing the report that Phegra had freed him, he summoned many lords to Cairo. When they were told of Phegra's actions, they condemned her to be burned at the stake, both her and her mother.

But since her kingdom could not be possessed without warfare, the Sultan ordered a great levy of men from Morea and Numidia, and appointed a great baron called Alifer as their commander. Him he sent to Barbary with two-hundred thousand Saracens on horseback. As the war began, many cities of the realm rebelled and surrendered to the Sultan, since of no man in the royal line remained alive. Wherefore Phegra's mother named one of her nephews as king, whose name was Philoter. After many battles, the ladies and the king were besieged in the city of Tunis. Since they had no hope of either peace or assistance, they stood in great fear.

Phegra, finding herself at this pass, summoned one of her servants and enticed with such great promises and so urgently implored that he promised on oath to do whatever she commanded. She sent him into the Christian region, and, having given him a letter, commanded him not to rest until he found the Paladin Richier. She secretly bade goodbye to him, confiding to him all her troubles, and he took the letter. The servant departed, and, even more eager to gain Richier's grace than that of the lady, secretly succeeded in passing the enemy camp, and rode off into Numidia. From Numidia he crossed to Aragon, and thence into France. Upon arrival in Paris, he found the Paladin Richier, reported his mission by word of mouth, relating all the troubles of which Phegra had told him. Richier sighed, and then read the letter, that spoke in the following manner:

“Phegra Albana, your sworn lady, not by her merit nor because she is worthy of so great a lord, commends herself to you. Force and Fortune are taking me to task for having helped you escape. Yet am I more content to die at the hands of those who desired to kill my lord Richier, knowing he

has escaped them, than I would be had Danebrun achieved victory over the Christians. Now I am besieged on account of your escape. My whole realm is lost. My mother holds only the city of Tunis, together with a youngster, my mother's nephew, who has been crowned king since no direct heir other than a woman survives, and I am she. If not only you, but the powers of the King of France and the Roman Empire gave us aid, we would yield the city into your hands at your arrival. By that knighthood which by you have ever held in the highest honor, and by that faith which you swore when you held me in your arms, I commend myself and my mother to you."

Richier wept as he was reading this letter. After he had perused it, he mused for a long time on how Phegra had helped him escape. It also struck him that all Christians were able say that they gained the Roman victory against Danebrun only because she had freed Richier from prison. Then, considering her nobility and her goodness and her beauty (for the power of love held him fast), he decided to come to her aid. Thus he went to King Florellus and requested leave to go to Saxony, and to take Folicard with him, and the king gave him leave. He left Paris and went from there to his fiefdom.

Two days later, he sent for Folicard and said to him: "You must swear to make me the gift of a favor that I want to ask you." Folicard replied: "My lord, saving my honor, I am ready, to the death." Richier, ruled by his profound loyalty, said: "My brother, the favor you must bestow on me is to remain here as Lord of Saxony until I return," and told him where he wished to go. At this, Folicard grew very woeful; nonetheless, he stayed on as lord. Richier made him swear on the sacrament not to reveal to any man whither he had gone. Then he called together all the captains and chiefs of his country and commanded them to render obedience to Folicard until his return. Secretly, on an unfamiliar horse and bearing altered arms, he then set out with the servant whom Phegra had sent.

They traveled to Barcelona, crossed into Sicily, and from Sicily embarked for the port of Bizerte, sixty miles distant from Tunis, for Tunis had no seaport since its borders were fifteen miles from shore. As soon as they disembarked, they mounted their steeds and on the third day arrived at the Sultan's camp.

61-63: The Battle for Tunis [summary]

When Richier reached the besiegers' camp outside Tunis, he was set upon by some soldiers who attempted to rob him. He put up a strong defense, killing one of the attackers, but his servant was killed. Hearing the noise of the scuffle, a group of officers arrived. They surveyed the casualties on each side, and took Richier to the tent of Alifer, the siege commander. When asked his ancestry and name, Richier said that he came from Aragon and was called the Black Knight. Alifer, angered by the death of his own men, at first thinks that Richier should be stripped of his arms and hanged as a felon; but then, deferring to his officers, who were impressed by Richier's valor, he told Richier that he may enter the city, but that after the its capture, his arms should be forfeit to the first challenger able to take them away from him. Richier was then deposited outside the city gates. There he was at first detained under guard at an inn. After three days, the inn-keeper asked him to pay for his lodgings, and Richier, having no money, gave him his shield in pawn.

A day later, Richier joined a sally of the Tunisians, immediately took one of the besiegers prisoner and captured two enemy horses. He sent the prisoner to court and used the horses to redeem his shield. The royal seneschal, impressed with the account of Richier's exploit, had him sent for and questioned. Richier once more identified himself as the Black Knight from Aragon and was given honorable quarters among the castle guard.

A day later, Richier fought with heroic distinction against the attackers, even capturing one of their banners. Report was brought back to Phegra Albana, who begins to suspect the Black Knight's identity. She had him sent for and recognized him instantly, though he refused to acknowledge who he was until she got him apart in private. He then asked her to keep his identity secret. She agreed and suggested his promotion to commander-in-chief of the Tunisian defenses. He at first demurred, but accepted after a general acclamation. In the festivities that followed, Philoter is formally crowned king and, as his first royal act, gave Richier leave to engage Alifer's forces in full-scale battle. Battle was joined the next day, raging fiercely, but turning out badly for the Tunisians, who were considerably outnumbered by the besiegers. Alifer almost succeeded in killing Philoter, but Richier rescued the young king. As the Tunisians retreated into the city, Alifer called Richier to parley and addressed him in this manner:

64: A Demand for Surrender

“O most valiant knight, whoever you may be, I do not know you. Yet it much grieves me that fortune has brought you here to serve the people of Barbary, who are generally abhorred by all other peoples. You have today caused the deaths of many noble lords of their country, thus preventing them from fighting the greatest enemy of our Faith. If you should say: ‘I do so for the love of my

lady, and this love makes me defend Tunis” I would ask you to consider that the ladies of Syria and Egypt and Greece are far lovelier and nobler and seemlier than these Barbary women. Therefore, if your valor be great, you should think on ladies of honest character rather than these, who in the vanity of their dishonest lust have neglected the death of their own blood, and who have let the slayer their father and of many of their kin escape from prison, by making the guards of his dungeon drink poisoned wine. They freed the greatest enemy of our Faith. I therefore must say to you that he who serves a woman like that deserves not to be praised but to be despised. What merit, what glory, what dominion can anyone who serves such a lady expect? Why not rather serve a lord who is able to offer reward for services rendered? I therefore advise you that, if you serve him, the Sultan’s power will before very long overcome the great multitude of his enemies, since even though our great enemy Richier stand in their defense, nothing can in the end defend them, so countless is the number Persians and Arabs and Syrians and Egyptians in that vast empire which the Sultan rules. If you were to serve him, he would make you a great lord, for he has ever loved brave and valorous men. Think not that I am saying this for fear of you, but only for the love that chivalry inspires in me. It is my desire that it should be honored, especially when I see a man who is brave and valiant. I find it most displeasing that this woman should be the death of your valor; indeed, even if I thought that Phegra Albana’s power could resist us, I would only pity you. Therefore, since the chance of Fortune is calling you to the haven of safety, seize it; for if you scorn it, Fortune may be angry at you, and if you call on her later, she may turn away.”

Richier replied as follows: “Alifer, I have listened to your words, to which I answer this: The more a thing is loved, the more the lover must love it. And the less a thing is loved, the less a lover should prize it. Therefore, if I do not love the Sultan, wherefore should the Sultan love me? And if the thing beloved by me is not loved by you, how could my soul love you? A commander who seeks

honor ought not at the same time plot treason, nor should he be afraid of death. Very well then, if you are displeased with me, I too am displeased with you; and if you regret my loss honor, I regret its loss by you. If I love a lady unworthy of respect, prove it to me by combat, and I shall maintain that she is indeed worthy of respect. If the Sultan truly loves brave and virtuous men, and Fortune gives me the victory, then he shall love the Black Knight (so I style myself) better than he shall love you after your defeat. Therefore, if you really seek to acquire honor, let us not cause the death of so many man, but let us finish this fight man-to-man. This, to my mind, is the seemly thing for you and me to do.”

65-67: **Tunis Delivered** [summary]

Richier returned to the royal apartments to prepare for the duel. He secretly visited Phegra who informed him that many suspected his identity, but that she had kept the secret. He then received the good wishes of king Philoter, said his prayers and went to sleep. Phegra spent the night amid misgivings. In the morning, she helped arm him, gave him a pearl garland as her favor, and accompanied him to the gate as he rode out to meet his foe. After an exchange with lances, the contest began in earnest, Alifer wielding a huge mace against Richier's sword. A scuffle led to an exchange of weapons. Alifer, despite his previous possession of the great mace, pleaded that it now gave Richier an unfair advantage. Richier generously threw the mace away and took up another sword. At a desperate moment, Alifer overheard his enemy ejaculate a prayer to Jesus and at once realized that the Black Knight must be Richier himself. He cried out to his troops, but it was too late for him. Richier thrust him through the throat and killed him. In the melee that followed, the besiegers were thoroughly routed. Those who did not take to flight were killed or captured.

At the feast that followed in Tunis, Richier liberated the captives and sent them back to the Sultan with a deceptive message according to which the Black Knight was a cousin of Follicard's, named Richier of Saxony, who has killed his namesake, the Paladin Richier, in a duel. The Sultan, placated by this news, made truce with Tunis, pardoned Phegra and her mother, and invited the supposed Richier of Saxony to come to Egypt and take command of an army with which to conquer Lombardy, and inflict whatever other harm he could on the Christians in Europe. Despite Phegra's doubts, Richier accepted the Sultan's invitation. He took leave of her, once more vowing never to love any other woman, and set out with a servant. Upon arrival in Cairo, he was detained at the palace gate by corrupt guards demanding a customary bribe. In the scuffle that followed his refusal, he killed the porter, reached the royal hall, dispatching ten more men along the way. Richier's servant, terrified when countless others rush in, abandoned Richier for dead and took flight. Upon arrival in Tunis, he reported Richier's death. Phegra heard his report, rushed to her chamber in despair and hurled herself upon a sword. The people of Barbary, believing their champion dead, once more feared reprisals from the Sultan.

In Cairo, Richier was at the point of being overwhelmed by superior numbers, when the Sultan himself entered. Despite the dead bodies all around, he was impressed by the prowess of the newcomer. When he learned that this was the Black Knight, he pardoned him and offered him the command of the Italian expedition. Richier promised to accept, swore fealty to the Sultan, but secured permission to first return to Tunis. There he learned of Phegra's death.

He once more swore never to love any other woman. Meanwhile, the people of Tunis took comfort in the return of their defender. He became fast friends with King Philoter and, after a year's stay, decided to take him to France to have him converted and baptized.

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BOOK TWO: **FLORAVANT**

Floravant's Banishment

1: The Royal Birthmark [summary]

Richier, the First Paladin of France, reigned as Duke of Saxony, a faithful and beloved retainer to King Florellus of France. The King married a Bavarian princess. His brother Floris, King of Arden, already had two sons, Leo and Lionel, but Florellus' wife long remained barren. Twenty years passed before she at last bore him a boy. At his birth, the child had a mark on his right shoulder, shaped like a red cross. From that time forward, all the true successors to the crown of France bore such a mark. The child was named Floravant, after the French phrase meaning "This flower will greatly advance," for it was prophesied that he would grow up to rule many provinces and kingdoms, and that this mark was a sign thereof. Later this mark was called "the niello mark", since those who were born after him had it in the form, not of a cross, but of a floret of niello-work. (After Floravant, the first four who were thus born were Bevis of Hampton, Charlemagne, Roland and William of Orange.) Floravant was brought up in the finest learning and chivalry under the special care of Richier. So much did Florellus and his queen love him that he became their only idol. But God does not wish His children to be loved better than God Himself, and He therefore afflicted the king with tribulation, so that he might repent.

2-6: Salard's Beard

When Floravant completed his eighteenth year, having heard of the exploits that his grandfather Flovus had performed at that age, he grew ashamed of being idle and of wasting his youth in inaction. Mindful of what he heard Richier say about his deeds when he was at Floravant's age, he felt it shameful to remain a scholar. One morning, when his father had returned from church and was sitting on his throne giving audience, Floravant came before him, knelt to him, and asked to be

dubbed a knight and given arms and a horse, since he was desirous of risking his venture and conquering realms for himself. His father and the barons began to laugh, though this seemed to them all a promising sign. King Florellus answered: “My son, you are not yet of an age to perform deeds of arms, for you have not yet studied the arts of chivalry. I desire that you should first learn swordsmanship.” Floravant replied: “My dear father, I am very content to do so. I pray you to have me instructed.” King Florellus commanded the best master-of-fence in the world to be summoned. His barons said: “My lord, there is no better fencing master on earth than Salard, Duke of Brittany. If you were to send for him and ask him to teach the boy, he will do it.” So the king sent for Salard.

A few days later Salard arrived and the king asked him to be pleased to instruct Floravant. He thanked the king, saying that he was unworthy to teach so noble a youth as Floravant, but that he would gladly do so. He added: “Your Sacred Majesty⁶, the pupil never fares well who has a better opinion of himself than of his master, unless he fears that master.” Then King Florellus, in the presence of all his barons and of Floravant himself said to Salard: “I hereby give you Floravant to be instructed by you. And I swear to you, by this crown” (and he touched the crown on his head) “that if Floravant opposes you or disobeys you in any thing against the law of reason, I will ordain such a punishment that its rigor will be spoken of for all time.” At these words, Salard grew somewhat reassured, for he thought of the dangers that attend adolescent youth. The king, to remove all further obstacles, assigned them a beautiful garden one league outside Paris, in which there stood a splendid lodging. There he began to instruct him, and they engaged in swordplay at their pleasure. They passed their lives in this manner: they would fence from the third hour of the morning⁷ until noonday dinner. After they had eaten, they took various pleasures, and slept, sometimes in their

⁶ Your Sacred Majesty: literally “O Holy Crown” (*O santa corona*), a formula frequently used.

⁷ Medieval hours are counted from six a.m. Swordsmanship practice thus lasts from 9:00 a.m. to noon, and from 3:00 p.m. until Vespers (6:00 p.m.). It is resumed after supper until late evening.

rooms, sometimes on the grass in the garden. At the end of the ninth hour, they returned to swordplay until Vespers. Then they took some recreation. When they had supped and refreshed themselves they returned to swordplay. Many times, after they had eaten, they took their pleasure practicing on certain little lawns in the garden, so as to be alone. In this life they spent four months, by which time Floravant knew swordsmanship as expertly as Salard, and often won the match, since he was younger and more agile of limb. Salard was old and very proud. He was a very rich and clever man and almost all of France was governed by his counsel. He was the oldest of the Christian lords, and all men treated him with great respect.

It befell by ill luck one day in the garden, after they had eaten, that when Salard had put Floravant to the test, they greatly tired themselves in swordplay, and after they were somewhat winded, they lay down to sleep in the shadow of some trees on a meadow. Salard was old and had a very large beard. He was a handsome man, and kept his beard very clean. When he had lain down, because he was old, be it because of his age, or because of the effort, or because he had eaten, he began to snore very loudly, so that Floravant was unable to sleep. Growing angry, young man that he was, he took up his sword to cut off his head, saying: "Shall that old man keep me from sleep?" But when he stood above him, he grew ashamed and said to himself: "You will be forever despised for this. And they will say you have killed him, not for the true reason, but out of envy for his swordsmanship. Yet shall I avenge myself for the offense." So he drew forth a knife and sheared the beard off Salard's chin so gently that he did not feel it. Then he left him and went to rest under another tree and was soon asleep.

It was not long before Salard awoke. Feeling with his hand for his beard, he found it cut, and at once guessed that none other than Floravant could have done this. Starting up, he began to look for him all through the garden. When he had found him, he at once drew his sword to cut off his head.

But suddenly he thought: "What am I doing? This is the son of the King of France. They will not say that I have killed him because of my beard, but because he knew swordsmanship better than I. Better that I should go to his father and show him the wrong that he has done me. If he does not avenge me, I shall make such war upon him that he will lose the kingdom of France; I will ally myself with the rulers of Spain and Gascony." Thus incensed with pride and rage, he left by himself, mounted his horse, and rode to Paris. In this angry mood, he came before King Florellus, who, seeing the disturbance in his countenance, asked him the reason. With a threatening face, Salard spoke to him, reminding him how his father had been killed at Rome in the service of Florellus' father Flovus and of his grandfather Constantine, and of how many wounds Salard had received upon his body. "And now your son, because I am an old man, treats me insultingly. He has cut off my beard in the garden while I was asleep, as you can see."

King Florellus, furious with his son, promised to avenge the deed in a manner that would be forever remembered. He reassured Salard and said: "I shall show you that I love Salard better than my wicked and ungrateful son." He summoned a justicer and asked Salard where Floravant could be found, and he told him. The king bade the justicer to seize him like a thief and to bring him to him. The justicer went to the garden with many armed men. They found Floravant still sleeping. Without calling out to him, the justicer had him bound first, and after they had fettered him, they roused him. When Floravant awoke, he demanded who they were and why they had taken him in so villainous a manner. The justicer explained the whole matter, and how his father had had him seized for having cut off Salard's beard. Floravant was greatly distressed that they had found him sleeping, and so they took him to Paris in chains, threw him into prison and told the king that he was there. They had brought him so quickly and so secretly that no man was aware of it. His mother the queen

knew nothing of it, and early the next morning mounted her horse and went with many attendants to some pious ceremonies outside Paris. Having heard mass, she made her way back toward Paris.

3

In the morning King Florellus made all his barons gather at court and, rising to his feet, spoke to them in this fashion: “No man should put his hope in anything but the sacred and divine will of God, Who gives and takes as pleases Him. Whoever has the office of governing worldly affairs should above all things love and maintain justice. He should not be partial, since he who takes sides cannot judge rightly. The more supreme a man is in lordship, the more should he judge justly, because others act by his example. No man should ask his master to do what will be shameful to him or what will diminish his domain. He should be mindful of his master’s danger before asking him for any grace to himself or others. Therefore I command you, in the matter that now concerns me, that during the next three days none should request any favor of me, either for himself or another, on pain of losing his head.” Having spoken these words, he sent for his son Floravant. When he stood before him, he ordered his justicer to take him to the gibbet, that is the gallows, and there to hang him by the neck like a thief and scorner of the crown of France, since he, to its scorn and dishonor, had viciously and dishonorably cut off the beard of Salard, Duke of Brittany, while Salard lay asleep. He commanded the justicer to take him away, and he did so, weeping bitterly. There was none present who dared to speak to the king about this decision, because of the command that the king had earlier issued. The whole court was filled with lamentation, and no further defense was offered. Floravant asked the king’s and Salard’s pardon, but neither would listen to him. He cried out to the barons, saying: “Help me!” but no man dared move.

A blindfold was put over his eyes. Again and again, Floravant called out to Richier, saying; “Why will you not help me, dear Richier?” believing him to be among the assembled nobility. But Richier was far from the city in one of his possessions, taking his pleasure. Some had sent for him, but they had come too late, since he was a league and a half away from the city. (They had left even as Floravant was being brought to the king’s palace.) Then Floravant was taken outside the palace, and they moved toward the place of execution. All men were weeping, and even the justicer prayed to God that he be spared his task and went more slowly about his work than was his wont.

4

While the justicers were about to issue from the gate, they encountered the queen who was returning from her pious rites. She was astonished to see such a crowd and stopped to see who was being brought to justice. All men stood astonished and none dared speak a word. When Floravant arrived near his mother, the queen did not recognize him because of his blindfold. However, since he seemed very young to her, she said: “May God strengthen your heart, for it is a great shame that so young a man should be led to his death.” Floravant recognized her voice and cried out loudly: “Alas, mother, pray to God for me!” When the queen heard her son, she nearly fainted from her stead, had she not been supported by her attendants. Coming to herself, she said: “Oh you villain justicer, how dare you lead my son to his death?” Then the justicer, weeping, told her of the whole business, and how the king made him do it whether he would or not. The queen commanded him to turn back to the palace, and so he did.

When they returned to the palace courtyard and the queen arrived there, the crowd was so dense that she could not pass through and her outcry reached even to the palace. At the noise, the king came to the balcony and saw that they were bringing Floravant back. The king rushed down the

stairs, and all his lords followed him. Upon arriving in the courtyard, he called the justicer and demanded to know why he was bringing Floravant back. The justicer answered, "At the command of the queen." Then the assembled people, throwing themselves upon their knees in the courtyard, cried for mercy. The king, possessed by the devil, commanded him to do as he was told, calling him a disobedient and traitor servant, so the justicer went on his way to bring Floravant to the gallows to be hanged. The queen, hearing the king's command, fell on her knees before him and said: "My dear lord, how long did you yearn to have a son! And God gave you one, and now for a small offense He takes him away from you. O my lord, either kill me, his wretched mother, alongside him, or give him back to me alive!" The king, pierced by great sorrow, answered her: "My queen, O my queen, if you continue to speak of this, I will have you burned at the stake." She, seeing him adamant in this opinion, saw Salard standing not far from the king, threw herself to her knees at Salard's feet. Salard bade her rise, and the Queen said, sobbing: "O most noble duke, the fame of you and your ancestors is resplendent throughout the world, for your family was the first who fought for our Faith. I beseech you, let not a little point of honor blot out the glory of so much fame, so that it will afterwards be said: Salard had the King of France's son hanged for so trivial a fault. Rather, make peace with Floravant and impose on him some penance for his offense. Have him banished from the kingdom; if you do this, I promise that if you ever come back, I will make you my kinsman and give you our daughter for a wife." Salard, hearing the queen's words, was moved to pity by her promises. He took her by the hand, and gave his solemn pledge palm to palm, and so did she. Salard said: "What do you wish me to do?" She answered; "Ask the king for mercy."

Salard came before the king and said: "Your Sacred Majesty, you have condemned whoever asks for mercy within three days to lose his head, therefore I will not ask for mercy. But I myself will give

grace to Floravant and pardon his life and his offence, except that I desire you to banish him from all Christendom.” The king, hearing Salard, wept for joy and said: “Let it be as you say!” and commanded that Floravant be sent for. More than a thousand messengers ran after the justicer, and he returned to the palace.

The king had come back to the palace and Floravant was brought before him. Floravant knelt before his father, who said to him: “Go and kneel down to Salard.” He obeyed and asked Salard’s pardon. Salard said: “Ah Floravant, why were you not ashamed, not only about my beard, but about the dishonor to me and the crown? Little do you know how much blood I and my people have shed to preserve your race. But you shall go questing through faraway lands to avenge me. Be it sufficient for you that I free you from the death penalty.” And thus he gave him leave to go.

5

King Florellus asked for Floravant when Salard had dismissed him and said to him: “My son, for the great offense that you have committed, I command you, within three days from now, to be gone far from all Christian lands, on pain of your head. If after three days you are taken, I shall have your head cut from your shoulders.” Floravant kissed his feet. All the barons bowed to him and commended him to God and there was none present who did not weep. As he was leaving his father and his barons, the queen took him by the hand and led him to her chamber. King Florellus had a ban proclaimed throughout the city of Paris that after three days any man who took or killed Floravant would receive a thousand golden marks from the king’s treasury, if he could prove that he took or killed him in any Christian country. He also provided in the ban that any man who gave him aid or companionship should forfeit his head.

When the queen learned of the decree, she embraced Floravant, weeping and sighing, and said: “Ah, my dear son, what a parting this is! I am losing you, alas, and I shall never see you again!” Full of woe and holding him in her arms she added: “My dear son, since your father has banished you, do not delay your departure, which shall pierce my heart like a sharp knife.” He, full of courage, spoke comfort to her, saying: “Dear mother, do not be afraid. Gird me with my armor and have patience. Give me a good sword and a beautiful horse, for this journey, mother, makes me take heart to seek fame and honor.” Then his mother presented him with a good and perfect armor for his back, and she herself girded it on him, and put on him a green surcoat (signifying a young lover), and gave him the sword that the French call Joyous, and a horse which was also called Joyous.⁸ When he was fully armed, he mounted his horse and his mother handed him his shield, which bore a golden cross in a field of white. As he departed, his mother and the whole assembly bowed to him, and he rode off with shield on neck and lance in hand. His grieving mother fainted dead away, and when she recovered retired to her chamber. Floravant rode out from Paris all alone, since, for fear of the king’s decree of banishment, none would bear him company. He made his way toward Balda at a venture, for he did not know whither to go, and he commended his soul to God.

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Octavian of the Lion

48: *The Lion*

Drusolina who, as told above, rested near the fountain, and ran after the lion when he seized her other son, overcome rather by love of her child than by fear, and he led her to the shore where the

⁸ The Italian words for sword and horse are of different genders. Thus the sword is called *Gioiosa* [f.], and the horse, *Gioioso* [m.]

Seine meets the sea. Drusolina saw a ship that by chance had just then entered the bay of the Seine, and signaled to it with her veil. The sailors were astonished, for in those days that part of the forest was uninhabited. They quickly sent a four-oared boat landward and, when they drew near her, hailed her and asked who she was. She told them that she was a lady of very noble lineage, who had been shipwrecked and spent three days in these woods. "I escaped with two of my children, but this lion here has devoured one of them, and taken the other from me." The mariners were unwilling to come ashore for fear of the lion. At this, the lion ran from the beach and into the woods. Now the mariners drew landward quickly and took Drusolina in their boat. As soon as she was in, the lion returned to the shore. The mariners fled over the water, and the lion put down the baby on the sea's margin within reach of the waves. Drusolina sank to her knees and implored the sailors so urgently that they took pity on her and the infant. They returned to shore, took up the boy, and went back into the boat. As they left the shore, the lion reappeared and leapt in to swim. The sailors rowed mightily, and it seemed to them that the lion was walking on the water as if on solid ground; it seemed to Drusolina that he swam so swiftly that he overtook the vessel, leapt aboard, sat at Drusolina's feet, and there lay down. She, inspired by God, at once realized that this was a miracle. Considering that the lion was the noblest of all irrational creatures, and remembering the legends of certain saints, she told the sailors to have no fear of it, for it was her husband, claiming that God had sent him to be her escort. She told them: "This is his son," and added: "know that I am a king's daughter, and wife to a king." One of the sailors said: "It must be true, for the lion is king over all other beasts." Upon returning to the ship, they climbed aboard, but the shipmaster would not allow the lion on board. Yet they implored him so urgently that he at last allowed him into the ship. The shipmaster gazed intently at Drusolina and asked her what her name was, how she had come there, and who she was. She told him what she had told the sailors and said that her name was Rosana, and the shipmaster kept gazing at her. She began to pray to God for help, fearing to receive some

shame. The shipmaster gave her food and drink, and some of her color returned to her cheeks, so that the shipmaster grew more and more enamored of her. Turning back toward the waves, they entered the high seas, with a good wind in their sails. Day by day the shipmaster grew more enamored with her, so that he at last decided to take his pleasure with Drusolina and commanded her to go down into the hold. She guessed his wicked intent and implored him for God's sake to do her no violence. But he commanded the sailors to take her forcibly below deck, and he was the first who moved to seize her. At this the lion threw himself upon his back and tore him to pieces, also killing four of the sailors. The rest sued for mercy. They asked Drusolina's pardon, and she pardoned them. The lion lay down, and Drusolina knelt to render thanks to God for the good escort that He had sent her. The sailors said: "Dear lady, the shipmaster is dead; the ship is now yours. Give command whither you wish to go." She said: "Take me to Scandia." (This city is now called Chalon and lies some forty miles from Bruges in the direction of Germany.) So they brought her to Scandia. At their arrival in port, the news spread through the city that a ship had docked with a lion that had a wife and children. Drusolina discolored her face with herbs and ointments (she paid for these things from the dead shipmaster's treasure) so that none recognized her, and she kept herself closely veiled and her countenance covered.

King Balant, hearing of this marvelous lion who had a wife, went to the port to see. When he saw it, he was greatly astonished and said: "My lady, if you wish to stay in this city, I promise you that you shall have fair lodging in my palace, for your and your lion, and that you shall lack for nothing." Drusolina accepted his offer and went with King Balant, her father. He did not recognize her, but she recognized him all too well. She was given a chamber and a hall with a garden, and was all things needful to life for man or woman. Balant considered himself very distinguished by this affair, and the lion slept in the chamber and kept continual watch over Drusolina and the child.

She remained for eighteen years in Scandia. She was called Rosana and her child was called Octavian of the Lion. The all called him this, because everyone believed that he really was the lion's son.

The news of his naming spread as far as the Levant and old Danebrun, the Sultan of Egyptian Babylon, heard that a lion had a wife and a son by a human mother, and that this son was now eighteen years old. The Sultan through the mouth of an ambassador requested that the lion and the lion's wife and child to be sent to him. Balant, fearing the Sultan's power, thought that he would once more lay siege to him, as he had in the past. He was in great terror of this, and told Rosana, the lion's wife. She replied that she had no wish to go, and that, if he did not wish her to stay in Scandia, he should put her back on her ship and she would set out at a venture. King Balant replied to the ambassadors that he desired neither to force her will nor to banish her from his kingdom. The ambassadors departed and returned to the Sultan. They made their way through France and England, sailed around all of Spain, entered the Strait of Gibraltar, skirted the whole coast of Africa and Libya, and arrived in Egypt at the Sultan's court.

49-51: ***The Second Siege of Scandia*** [summary]

Enraged by Balant's refusal, Danebrun declared war and named his son commander of the attacking army. The son gathered as allies the kings of Spain, Aragon, Granada, and Portugal, and moved against Scandia to besiege it. One of Balant's vassals from across the Rhine, the giant Giliant of Mondres, rebelled and joined the Sultan's party. During a desperate sally, King Balant was defeated by the young Sultan and taken captive.

Hearing this news, Octavian of the Lion prevailed upon Balant's queen and his mother to bestow arms upon him and to dub him knight. They did so. Among the weapons he received was Floravant's sword, Durandel, which the queen had hidden away. He then rode out into battle, overthrew the young Sultan and took him captive into the city, where the Sultan agreed to release Balant and to lift the siege, in return for his life and liberty. With peace thus established, the Sultan offered his daughter Angaria⁹ in marriage to Octavian. This daughter was very beautiful and Octavian, instantly in love with her, accepted. He was assigned a huge portion of the Sultan's realm as a marriage gift, and wedded the young princess amid great solemnity. A short time later, the young Sultan returned with his army to Egypt.

⁹ Angaria: The future mother of Beviset and great-grandmother of Bevis of Hampton.

Balant now decided to punish the rebel Giliant, and led his army across the Rhine. He was met by two of Giliant's relatives, the giants Carabrun and Amphiros, but Octavian slew them both. The army moved northward to Hull, Giliant's capital. There Octavian met Giliant in single combat. He unhorsed him, but began to lose ground in combat on foot. The reason was that Octavian had been brought up as a Saracen and was invoking Balaam and Apollyon, rather than the true God. When he was almost defeated, he saw the lion looking on and recalled that Drusolina had warned him against trusting these idols. He renounced them and invoked the God of his mother. The lion roared in approval and in an instant, the tide of battle turned. Unable to withstand Durandel's terrible blows, Giliant surrendered and was brought captive to Scandia.

Brother Against Brother

52

Not many days had passed when King Balant, considering Octavian of the Lion's prowess, thought how to interest Octavian in a war against the King of France, to avenge his father and his brother, as well as grandchildren and his daughter. One day he called Octavian to his chamber and told him, weeping, of all that had befallen with Floravant, King of France—how he had slain his nephews Finagut and Mambrin, and his brother Galeran, and had carried away his daughter Drusolina, and many times defeated and wounded Balant himself. “Therefore, if through your valor I might be avenged, I shall not only not hesitate to make you lord at my death, but shall make you king of my realm even while I live, since I am old and have no heir but you.” Octavian answered: “O King Balant, my lord and father, what pleases you in this matter, shall please me, and it will the time will seem like a thousand years until I find myself in the field in Paris against Floravant to avenge you.”

King Balant thanked him and embraced and kissed him; then he sent out many ambassadors, and summoned many friends and relatives, especially the Kings of Spain, Portugal, Granada and Aragon, and such lords as were in Gascony, Tartary and divers parts of Germany, and to all those from whom he believed to receive assistance. In a short time he assembled a Saracen host and descended with two hundred thousand Saracen troops upon France, burning and pillaging. He brought the

queen, Drusilla, Octavian's wife, and a huge number of nobles with him and laid siege to the city of Paris.

When the King of France saw such a huge army in his realm and all around Paris, he had great fear, and he knew the cause of their arrival. King Balant pitched camp surrounding the city and assailed in on several sides. Octavian himself stayed in one camp, with his mother, his wife and the lion; Balant in another with his queen; Giliant and a marquis from Aragon in the third. The whole countryside was burning, and they despoiled and pillaged the realm.

On the morning of the third day, the Emir¹⁰ of Spain armed and rode toward Paris. He dispatched a herald to Paris to demand that the king give battle. Florent asked the Paladin Richier to arm, and he obeyed, thanking Floravant for the great honor, and rode into the field. He broke a lance with the Emir of Spain and hurled him dead from his horse to the ground. Then he rode against the Marquis of Aragon. Richier slew him likewise. Balant, enraged by this beginning, sent Giliant into the field. They broke their lances and Richier's horse fell dead beneath him, and he was captured instantly. For the sake of honor, Giliant sent him to Balant, and King Balant sent him to Rosana, that is, to Drusolina, Octavian of the Lion's mother, who was very joyful thereat. Giliant demanded battle from the city. Then Floravant called Gisbert Boldface and said: "My son, I have no sons of my own, but after my death I shall make you heir to my realm." In the presence of many nobles he ordained him to be their lord if any ill should befall him. "And if I am taken or killed, let him govern the realm." He called for arms and, once in armor rode out from Paris.

When he came where Giliant was waiting, they saluted each other, and Giliant said: "Floravant, you have killed my father, whose name was Adimodan of Ordret; but today I will avenge him." They

¹⁰ orig. *Amiraglio*. The English word 'admiral' is derived from the Arabic. Andrea consistently employs it in its original sense.

took to the field and exchanged heavy buffets. Floravant fell to earth together with his horse and was captured and brought to Balant. He sent him to Rosana to be rendered, for honor's sake, to Octavian of the Lion. Drusiana was very joyful to have him under her watch. Giliant returned to challenge more battle, and the people of the city were in grief, because their lord had been taken prisoner.

53

When Gisbert saw Floravant and Richier captured and the whole city plunged in grief, he said: "Now that my lord has been taken, it is not pleasing to God that I stay in Paris like a sluggard." He called for his weapons and, once armed, rode into battle. There was no other knight in Paris who would venture such a fight. Upon reaching Giliant, he demanded combat. Giliant asked who he was and Gisbert replied that he was a merchant's son from Paris." Giliant said: "You are no knight, and I may not fight but with knights." Gisbert said: "If you promise to wait for me, by my faith, I shall turn back to be dubbed knight." Gisbert said no more, but turned his steed around and rode back at a gallop into the city and to the queen, and she dubbed him knight. Her returned into the field and challenged Giliant, and they both rode into the field and gave each other heavy blows. Giliant broke his lance, but Gisbert threw him wounded from his horse. Then the whole army rushed to arms when they saw Giliant fallen.

Octavian of the Lion armed also and rode into battle. When he reached Gisbert, he saluted him and asked him who he was. He replied: "I am a merchant's son of Paris. But you who question me, who are you?" Said Octavian: "I am the son of the lion, whom you see near us, and of a woman." And the lion was indeed nearby. They challenged each other and broke their lances against each other, but did each other no other hurt, so that neither had the advantage. The lion let out three

great and terrible roars, so that it seem to make the whole ground shake, and both Saracens and Christians grew afraid. Balant was much amazed by the strange sound, which seemed of a more than natural kind. The two brothers drew their swords and that day engaged in three engagements, and the battle was ever equal, so that none had vantage over the other. After each exchange the lion let out three roars. By evening both their shields and armors were cut to pieces, and they in pleasant words concluded a truce, swearing to return to combat in the morning. Gisbert returned to Paris, and Octavian and Giliant to their tents. Each of them gave great praise to his adversary. On the next morning they returned to the fight with better shields. After they broke their lances, the lion gave out three roars. Balant said: "That lion signifies a great mystery. May Balaam help us!"

The two brothers once again seized their swords and on that day engaged in many attacks and terrible combat, and they were ever equals. They grew to love each other's prowess so much that, toward evening, neither wished to wound the other. Fearing to hurt the other, each would beg the other to turn to his faith. Octavian said: "Adore the God of my mother, for he is so good a God that he helps me whenever I call on him." And Gisbert said: "Adore Jesus Christ, who was willing to die for us on the cross." And at each exchange the lion roared.

King Balant asked his soothsayers what the roaring of Octavian's lion might signify. One of them said: "Either our side or the others' must renounce its God." Balant believed he had won the war when he said: "Floravant is taken; he will renounce his." But the contrary was true.

In the evening Octavian besought Gisbert so hard that he trusted him and went with Octavian to Drusolina's tent. She was pacing back and forth, for she had ever much honored them. When Floravant saw Gisbert, he sighed and was afraid, but Octavian said: "My lord Floravant, have no fear. Gisbert is as safe here as in Paris." Drusolina helped Octavian doff his armor, and Floravant and

Richier helped Gisbert, and the lion seemed no less delighted by Gisbert than by Octavian. At this, Balant arrived and asked whether Gisbert was a captive, and wondered why the lion made so much of both men. When they sat down to dinner, many in the army said to each other: "By our gods! These two champions seem like brothers and like sons of the lion and Rosana." Balant agreed. After they had eaten, King Balant returned to his tent, while there was great moaning and sadness in the city. The two lords slept together.

In the morning they armed and made a pact that Balant, his wife and queen, with Octavian's mother and the lion, as well as Floravant and Richier under good guard, should observe the battle. And thus agreed, they came to the field. Octavian and Gisbert measured the ground and broke their lances against each other. Then the lion roared so loudly that the astonished knights could hardly keep in the saddle. When the three roars fell silent and the horses obeyed the reins again, the two brothers, with swords drawn, fired with great daring, turned around to strike amid the above said nobles and the ten thousand troops. As they approached each other, the lion leapt between the two and spread its paws, and it was larger than a great giant, and spoke in a loud voice: "Hurt each other no longer, and hear my words. Know that you are brothers and sons of Floravant and Drusolina. I am Saint Mark, who have protected this lady for eighteen years." In an instant he vanished, and left behind a great splendor. Then it was clear that Drusolina had not sinned against Floravant as she had been accused. Balant, seeing and hearing such a great miracle, lost all his ill will and hatred against Floravant and turned to him and embraced him, and his wife embraced Drusolina. The two brothers threw their swords to the ground, leapt from their horses, and embraced. All those nearby dismounted and cried out, on their knees: "For pity's sake, baptize us!" When Drusolina embraced Floravant, she fainted for joy and asked his pardon, and so did Richier. The greatest joy was when Drusolina embraced her sons. There was no man there so cruel or so hardhearted as not to weep.

She remembered the hardships that she had endured in the forest, and her fear of Floravant's sword, and the miracle of the furnace.

Floravant rode toward the city with King Balant. All the armed men who were with them laid down their weapons and entered the city unarmed with Floravant and Octavian's lovely wife (she was present too) and with brave Richier and Balant and Drusolina and the queen her mother, and Gisbert and Octavian, and many nobles. When all was known in the city, there was great rejoicing. King Balant was baptized along with his wife, and the majority of his army was also baptized. Whoever would not be baptized was put to the sword by his own company, so that about seventy-thousand were slain and all the others were baptized.

The queen of France, that is to say, Floravant's mother, was condemned to the fire and was burned like the deceitful, wicked, treacherous and cursed woman that she was, who to win one of her quarrels consented to so much harm to Queen Drusolina and her two innocent children.

Afterwards, King Balant reaffirmed Octavian as his heir upon his death and left France to return to Scandia. There he had his whole kingdom baptized. He did not live long thereafter and Octavian became lord of Scandia and all its terrain and later conquered the whole kingdom of Lower Phrygia.¹¹ Floravant lived for three more years; when he died, he left the crown of France to Gisbert Boldface. Drusolina lived for five years after Floravant.

BOOK THREE: *THE ANCESTORS OF THE HOUSE OF CLAIRMONT*¹²

¹¹ Lower Phrygia: This is the identification of *Frigia bassa* favored by Italian scholars; however, Lower Frisia, which likely adjoins "Scandia", seems to me a distinct possibility.

¹² House of Clairmont: The title may seem strange, but in the final paragraph of Book Two Andrea explicitly states that the following book concerns the "*gesta di Chairamonte*" and "*Ottaviano del Leone*". Though the name

.....

Gisbert the Leper

3

While the aforesaid events were taking place in Egypt and Syria, King Gisbert of France received a true report of how his nephew Beviset, Octavian of Lion's son, had conquered Cairo. This filled Gisbert such great pride that, as he stood in his chamber, he turned toward the crucifix and said: "From this time onward no greater ruler in the world is greater than I; not even God seems more powerful on this earth." At once he was afflicted with leprosy, so sorely that the queen was killed by his stench. Having thus become a leper and trying all manner of physic, he could find neither relief nor cure. He sent for all the doctors to be found in the world, and none knew how to remedy or cure his illness. Then Gisbert realized that he grievously trespassed against God; he summoned the old Duke of Saxony, that is, the Paladin Richier, and made him vice-regent of France. He consigned his lordship to Richier and one of his own sons, whose name was Michael. Then he shrived himself and received communion, and secretly departed, dressed as a hermit. He went into the Pyrenees Mountains in Spain. For a long time he roamed the forests of Spain like a wild beast, until the thorns and brambles and forest twigs stripped him naked.

At that time Beviset, who was under siege at Jerusalem, sent to France for aid. Richier, acting not like a vice-regent but like a very king, remembered that the line of Constantine had need of him and made ready a huge navy and moved to Beviset's aid with a great host. They did not fight many battles, before they had rescued him from Jerusalem and brought him aboard ship. They hoisted

Clairmont is not mentioned in Book Three, a glance at the genealogical tables will make the aptness of the title clear. The line that ends with Roland originates with Octavian of the Lion and continues through Beviset, Guy and Bevis of Hampton, to Clairmont and Bernard, and Roland's father, Miles.

sail, abandoned Jerusalem, and returned to France. Beviset went back to the realm of Scandia which Balant had left to Octavian, and his race later conquered England.

4

Gisbert Boldface, after roaming through most of the forests of Spain like a wild beast, settled for seven years in a cave in very desolate region of the mountains of Granada, where no other living things dwelt but bears and wild swine and wolfcats¹³ and apes (that is, macaques). The cave was near the banks of the Guadiana which makes its course through Granada and Spain before entering the Sierra Aracena. After Gisbert had passed seven years there in harsh penitence, commending his soul to God (twice every day he washed in the Guadiana, and he lived on forest berries like an senseless beast), God granted him such grace at the outset of the eighth year that, purged by his great penitence, he was cured of his disease. He found himself naked and covered with hair, and he had so long out of his natural senses that he did not know where he was and how he had come there. He saw that the river issued from very high peaks and he decided to follow its course upstream. He journeyed for many days until he arrived the kingdom of Aracena near a city called Merida . There was a great war going on there, since the King of Lusitania¹⁴ wanted to conquer its queen Sibyl and was besieging Merida. As Gisbert arrived at a hamlet of a few houses, he was taken by some soldiers of the army and brought before King Carianus of Lusitania. When the king saw him, he laughed because Gisbert was naked. He seemed nearly starved and begged to be fed for the sake of God and was given some bread. When the king saw him eating so eagerly, he said in jest: “Take him inside to Merida, that they may there relieve his hunger and have nothing themselves to eat.” Thus he was taken near the gate in mockery and lift by the moat of the city. Gisbert went to

¹³ wolfcats: orig. *gatti mamoni*, imaginary creatures. Italian peasant mother still frighten children with these.

¹⁴ Lusitania: This is usually a synonym for “Portugal”, but Andrea seems to distinguish the two, since he introduces a separate King of Portugal below.

the gate and pleaded so urgently that they took him in. They asked him questions and he could not understand them; but a Provençal soldier for hire who was in the city understood him. Talking with him, Gisbert said: “If you give me good armor and a good horse, you will see that I am truly of noble lineage. For a great sin of mine I have been struck with leprosy; but now my gods have pardoned me and I am cured.” The people of the city did not believe him, but sent secret letters to Queen Sibyl to acquaint her with the case. She decided to use her science, by the art of necromancy, to discover who he was. When she knew that he was Gisbert, King of France, she sent a secret messenger to Merida with orders that they clothe him, arm him and appoint him captain and commander of the city, for this was her pleasure. And so it was done.

When Gisbert was armed and made captain of all the men inside the walls, he sent to King Carianus of Lusitania to ask whether he would engage his person in combat with him. He replied that it was not his custom to engage with wild beasts. Therefore Gisbert had the people in the city arm and attacked the camp, with himself in their midst. Then King Carianus assailed him and wounded him in the thigh with a poisoned lance; but Gisbert cut off his head and routed his whole army.

Returning inside after his victory, he had himself tended to, but no medicine prevailed against the poison, and he would have remained in the city of Merida until his life left him. Hearing of this, Sibyl sent a ship by way of the Guadiana and had Gisbert brought to the city of Seville¹⁵ and tended him with her own hands. When Gisbert was nearly recovered, Sibyl said to him: “My lord Gisbert, if you want to be cured, I desire you to become my husband.” He was very pleased by this and, when he realized that she knew him, told her ‘yes, truly’, provided that she were baptized, and she agreed. He took her to wife and she was baptized; from that moment on, she would have nothing

¹⁵ Seville: In the original both the name of the queen and of her city are *Sibilla*.

to do with the art of necromancy. Thus, created ruler, he remained for some years in solace and delight in the Sibyl's realm of Aracena.

5-9: Gisbert's Flight to France

5-9a: Seville to Urbion [summary]

Gisbert was so much enamored of Sibyl that he forgot his own kingdom. One day a minstrel from the court of King Libanor of Lusitania, Carianus' brother, arrived in Seville. He recognized Gisbert and returned to Libanor and told him that his brother had been slain by Gisbert, King of France, who was believed to be dead in his own country. Libanor sent news of this to King Sadranopus of Spain, Balisdac of Granada, and King Arlottius of Portugal. They sent out an army to besiege Seville and seize Sibyl and Gisbert. Gisbert, finding that his name was known, feared treason, but rode out to combat. He slew Libanorus and Arlottius, but the people of Seville began to consider treacherously handing him over to Sadranopus. Sibyl suspected their plot, told Gisbert about it, and they decided secretly to flee.

On the night of the intended betrayal, they escaped from Seville unrecognized. They traveled through Castile toward Aragon. Meanwhile the citizens of Seville handed over the city to the enemy on condition that it not be sacked. When Gisbert and Sibyl are not found, the King of Spain issued a warrant for them to be taken wherever they might be found.. Gisbert avoided all populated areas and at last reached Saragossa, crossed the Ebro and entered Aragon. He and Sibyl took refuge at an inn near the castle of Urbion but were recognized by their host. The host pretended to treat them hospitably, but denounced them to the castellan as soon as they were asleep. Defenseless in their chamber, they were imprisoned and the news of their capture was sent to Seville. Exulting in their capture, the King of Spain and his allies came to fetch them.

The castellan of Urbion had a daughter who, when she heard of Gisbert's beauty and exploits, fell in love with him. One night she stole the prison keys and contrived to talk with him. He persuaded her to have a secret letter sent to Richier in France. A manservant of the castle had long been in love with this girl, and she promised him her love if he delivered the message. He eagerly set out and brought the news to Richier, who was now advanced in years. Richier immediately sent word to Beviset, and into Brittany, Germany, Saxony and Provins, appointing a rendezvous of armies at Lunel. The news that Gisbert was alive made everyone eager to comply and a huge host assembled. Among its champions were Beviset, Hewett of Arden (Theobald of Lima's son), Eripes of Brittany (son of Salard), Corvalius (son of Giliant), Richard the Abbot of Saxony (son of that Folicard of Marmora whom Richier had baptized at Pisa) and many others. The host hastened to Urbion and began laying siege to it. But now the King of Spain arrived with his army. Seeing that they could not enter the castle they made ready to give battle to the Christians.

In the battle that followed, the Christians at first prevailed. Beviset, Corval of Ordret, Corval of Brittany, Eripes and Abbot Richard slew some of the chief Saracens, including both Arlottius and Libanor, but near the end the desperate pagans rallied and the castellan of Urbion rode out. The Christians thus found themselves hemmed in front and rear. At this moment, with the help of the castellan's daughter, Gisbert escaped from prison, armed, and rode out to wreak havoc among the enemy. While the castellan took refuge in the keep, the rest of the castle surrendered. One part of the Christian host took possession, while Gisbert rode off to assist the rest against the main Saracen force. His arrival was decisive. The pagans were utterly routed and both King Sadranopus of Spain and King Balisdac of Granada were killed. Only the master of the castle held out in his keep,

9: *Return to Paris*

By sheer force the keep was taken and destroyed. Gisbert had the castellan's legs tied together with iron shackles, then called for archers and said to him: "Sir warden, if you become a Christian I will pardon your life; if not, I will have you shot to death with arrows." That dog replied: "Son of a dog, take this!" and spat at Gisbert, who at once ordered them to shoot. So the man died and his whole castle was destroyed and razed to the ground. All the nobles went back to Paris with Gisbert, where there was great rejoicing at his return. Gisbert gave the maiden who had rescued him from prison in marriage to the servant who had brought his letter to France, and endowed him with a rich castle near Paris. He was baptized and given the name Thierry Goodfriend¹⁶ and his wife, whose earlier name was Galiziana, was baptized Diamia. She bore many sons and daughters.

.....

BOOK FOUR: *BEVIS OF HAMPTON*

The Sorrows of Bevis' Boyhood

1

After Duke Guy of Hampton had taken the daughter of King Otho of Bordeaux in Gascony to wife, she grew with child during the first year and brought forth to Duke Guy an exceedingly handsome man-child. This gave great joy to Guy, and to his father, and to all his friends and subjects, and indeed throughout all England. He named the boy Bevis of Hampton, because at Hampton had he been born, which city his grandfather Beviset had founded; so he was named Bevis after him. Duke Guy put him in the care of his greatest and most trusted friend, who was named

¹⁶ orig. *Bonoamí*

Sinibald of Castle Saint-Simon, and because of its better climate and safety Sinibald sent the nurses with the child to Castle Saint-Simon, and entrusted Bevis to Lucy, his wife. (Sinibald had himself a son whose name was Thierry.) Bevis was raised in great lavishness. He always had three nurses to suckle him, and he was nursed for seven years; later, when Sinibald had him weaned, he always made him dine in his company, and kept him for two more years at the castle. When he had commenced his tenth year, he dressed him in rich garments, and sent him back to his father Guy at Hampton, who was much delighted thereat and gave great gifts to Sinibald and appointed a tutor to Bevis who should teach him to read, for although Sinibald had him schooled at the castle, he still knew little.

When Bevis was still at study, his mother Brandoria was twenty-four years of age, and she was very beautiful, so that many times in her chamber, looking upon herself in her mirror, she cursed that she had ever been given Guy of Hampton for a husband, for he was a white-haired old man, of the kind who cared not for the ladies. And she said: "My father should have well considered that Duke Guy passed so many years without a wife, because little love for women held sway in his heart. If he had no love for women as a youth, how could he have it now in his old age? And so I, wretch, am losing my time and am cheated of kisses and vows and beautiful clothes, and live at war with Love even as Love makes me burn. When I see my aged husband, I am never so glad as not to grow sad, and I perforce hide my thoughts and laugh, though I feel like weeping. What good does it do me to hear of his valor? What good is his great lordship to me? What good to me is great wealth and beautiful clothing, if I am left naked of what I ought to have? Moreover he lives filled with jealousy, and a guard is put upon me, and he believes that I lose no sleep over it. He only loves the son that I have borne him because he knows he cannot beget any others. But I shall discover a way to find a young husband, and I shall waste no time setting about it."

Brandoria, entered and tempted by the fiend, being a young woman filled with lust rather than true love, brooding in her burning thought, did not see how she might be able to kill the duke and give his domain to a new lover, for she feared that if she revealed her plan to any lord, that lord would betray her as she had betrayed her own. For many days she remained in that frame of mind. At last she called to mind that Duke Guy had killed Count Rainier of Maganza, and how Count Rainier had left behind two sons, that is Dudon and Alberic . They were thirty-five years old, very handsome men, and neither of them yet had a wife. She thought within herself: “These men will be delighted to avenge their father, and they are very young. Let Dudon make common cause with me, and I shall make common cause with him.”

Having conceived of this plan, one day when Duke Guy had gone out to hunt, she called a trusted servant, whose name was Anthony (but who was called Gascon since he was from Gascony) and said to him: “Gascon, it behooves you to serve me in an embassy.” He cast himself on his knees before her, and professed himself completely at her disposal. She made him swear and promise never to reveal his mission, and he so swore.

Said Brandoria: “You must go to Maganza, no matter how long the journey, for I will make your service worth while, and take this letter from me to Dudon.” Anthony said: “O my lady, he is Duke Guy’s deadly enemy!” Said Brandoria: “This I know better than you. Go and obey my command, for you must know that I little love this disgusting, white-haired old man.”

The servant at once understood these words of hers. He took the letter and embarked from the port of Hampton, and arrived by ship at the port of Chalons, then at Ponthieu and at Strasbourg, crossed the Rhine, reached Dudon’s court at Maganza, and concluded his mission in secrecy.

Dudon knew who of the lady, how young and fair she was, and he had heard from various traveling minstrels that she loved Duke Guy but little. Therefore he readily trusted the plan, but after he had read the letter, he mused greatly over its contents and at once took counsel with his brother Alberic, to whom he read the letter, which in brief contained the following words:

“To Dudon, son of Rainier, Marquis and Count of Maganza, cordial greetings. Your lover Brandoria, daughter of King Otho of Gascony, commends herself to you. Partaking of your love, she suffers two torments on your account: One is the love I bear you, for even as I am ever far from you in body, I am ever near you in thought. The other torment of mine is that, loving you, I remember hearing it said that my old husband, unworthy of me, has killed your father in the presence of the Emperor Angelus Constantine and King Pepin, and has never been avenged. If the old duke should die now, on whom shall you be avenged? His son is a mere boy and will be kept under guard. Meanwhile you shall grow old, and there will be no Brandoria to love you and supply the means, as I will now supply them in order to have you for my husband and to make you lord of all this land. Once he is dead, none of his race shall remain, for we shall keep Bevis in prison. For, as you know, Guy has been outlawed, and the King of France shall be pleased at his death. Come seize both the realm and me as your wife. Go lie in ambush at Hampton, and I will put him safely into your hands. After you have slain him, I will surrender the city of Hampton and myself to your mercy. Come quickly, so that Guy may not suspect your arrival.”

After his brother Alberic had heard the letter, Count Dudon asked him what he deemed fit to do. He replied: “Let whoever of us refuses to undertake this enterprise be considered a traitor.” So in few days they assembled as many armed men as they could, and secretly commanded a ship to be

rigged at the port which is called Dunkirk¹⁷ and which lies by the sea facing England midway between Flanders and France. Dudon then departed from Maganza, and crossed the Rhine, and marched through Flanders, having disguised all the arms and ensigns so as not to be recognized; and his brother Alberic went with him. They mustered eight thousand knights and passed Liege and Antwerp and, having reached Dunkirk, secretly and swiftly embarked.

They sailed and in a few days reached England and disembarked by night on certain beaches far from the port and rode toward Hampton. They lay in wait in a great forest near Hampton, to which Brandoria had commanded Anthony to bring them. When they lay in wait, Dudon called Anthony and said: "Go to the city and tell Brandoria how we have come, and that she should not delay lest we be discovered by the peasants of the countryside." The messenger went to the city and entered it as soon as the gates were opened. As soon as Brandoria had risen, he went to her and told her everything, and she replied, saying: "Tomorrow morning I shall send him off to hunt. Bid them be of good cheer and have no fear, and assure them that they shall not be discovered." And Anthony returned to them. They secretly waited in the forest, which was large, and prepared their ambush in three separate parts of the wood so that it might not fail.

3

The duchess Brandoria, after she had sent the message, at once feigned feeling ill-disposed and began to say that she was with child, and that she had felt that she was with child for many days past, considering the time since the duke last lay with her. She therefore sent for Duke Guy and said to him: "I am with child and I have a great desire for some wildfowl taken by your hand." Laughing with pleasure at hearing her say that she was pregnant, the duke offered to go to the woods to get

¹⁷ Dunkirk: orig. *Oregiaco* (L. *Oregiacum*, capital of the Atrebati in Roman times). I have taken the license of substituting the more familiar Dunkirk for this obscure place-name.

her one, and ordered the hunt to be made ready in the morning. On the following dawn, he summoned an escort of three hundred knights.

When the duchess heard how he was going escorted and armed at all points, she, knowing his valor, sent for him and said: "Now I see that you love me not, since you go armed to seize a timid wildfowl which, being unarmed, you could scarcely seize unless in arms." She knew how to say so many things that the duke doffed his armor, making all his followers disarm as well, and left with no more than a hundred unarmored companions. So he rode forth from Hampton to the hunt; and when he reached the forest, the hunt was put in order. Having entered the forest with his followers, they flushed some wildfowl by the noise of their horns and their shouts and their dogs, as is the custom.

4

While Guy was passing through the forest, a stag leapt up, and the dogs ran in chase of it. Guy turned to pursue it and rode far ahead of his companions, for the stag drew him into the densest part of the wood. At last it was taken, and around that stag all the hunters assembled. And they were not aware that they were in the midst of three ambuscades, and that in three directions men were at their backs. The wretched hunters took flight, and all of them were killed.

Duke Guy, remounting his steed, wrapped one of his garments about his arm, and with sword in hand defended himself. Even the knights of Maganza said afterwards that he performed wonders in his person, for none would have believed that he, being old and unarmed, could make such a valiant defense. Certainly it is true that none of them wanted to kill him to do honor to Dudon or Alberic, so that they killed his horse.

But at that point Dudon rode up and said: “O treacherous duke, you have killed my father, but now the time of vengeance has come.” Guy threw himself to the ground on his knees, took up a handful of earth, crossed himself and commended his soul to God. That day was the first of August in the year of Our Lord Jesus Christ . . .¹⁸ Dudon drove his lance through his loins and pinned him to the ground. The Duke already had many wounds before this, and now the other added countless more. So died Duke Guy, with all his companions, during the hunt, by the contrivance of his wicked wife. (But let not any old man believe that a young woman could not love him in the marriage act, or for love of offspring, for the cause is not the aged body, which can grow warm with love even as in a young man.)

Duke Guy being dead, Dudon and his whole army marched toward Hampton and entered the city without opposition, since it was unguarded, and went up to the palace, where Brandoria received them as lords. A few men-at-arms knew those of Maganza and raised the alarm and would have offered battle; but when it was known that the Duke was dead, they made no further defense. Many of them fled and many others were killed. The townsmen, filled with fear, laid down their arms. Dudon and Alberic took possession of the town and settled their kin throughout the land. And Dudon sent to Maganza for more forces to seize the other towns and for reinforcement. He took Brandoria to wife and made himself Duke of Hampton, as will be seen in due time.

5

As the aforesaid matters were taking place in the city of Hampton, Duke Guy’s son Bevis, who was eleven years of age, hearing how his father had died, was struck with terror, not knowing what to do

¹⁸ All manuscripts here leave a blank space for the year. As well they might! But see note 51.

(for he had heard how his mother had caused his death), He feared that she might kill him also, and, child that he was, hid himself under a manger of the stable and covered himself with hay.

Some servitors having entered the stable and calling out, Bevis heard them and came out from underneath the manger, weeping. Sinibald, so that he would not be discovered, bid him be silent, had one of Guy's horses saddled for him, put him upon the steed, and they left the palace to get him away.

It happened that Brandoria stood at one of the palace windows and saw Bevis crossing the courtyard, though the men of Maganza knew him not. Then Brandoria called out to Dudon, who was standing armed in the hall above, and said: "O my lord, Duke Guy's son is getting away, and I believe that it is Sinibald of the Castle who his leading him out. If he is not taken, all England will give fealty to him, and you shall have perpetual war." Dudon, who was still in armor, mounted his horse with a loud cry and pursued Sinibald apace, accompanied by a great crowd of men.

When Bevis was outside the gate with Sinibald, they rode off in haste and were half a mile away when Dudon issued from the gate. As they spurred on their horses behind them, Sinibald became aware of them and made Bevis apply his spurs, and they crossed the river. Having reached the other side of the stream, Dudon arrived at it, shouting.

Sinibald bade Bevis make speed, but fortune prevented him, for the road was rocky and Bevis' steed lost two of its shoes and could go no further. Thus he was overtaken. Sinibald began to offer a valiant defense against Dudon's knights, but so many people arrived, along with Dudon himself, that Sinibald began to retreat toward the Castle.

Then Dudon rushed up and seized Bevis by the hair with his left hand and held him suspended in the air, and drew his sword intending to disembowel him, saying: "I killed your father, and you shall not be the cause, nor your offspring, of my undoing." But one gentle man-at-arms said: "My lord, for God's sake, do not give such a scandal to your line as to be called cruel. Think of his mother, who has made you master. There are plenty of means to kill him, without being blameworthy."

At these words, Dudon threw him to the ground and said: "Seize him and bring him to the duchess Brandoria, and bid her guard him well until my return." Then he went from there to Castle Saint-Simon, and laid siege to it, threatening to destroy it. But this fortress was strongly situated, strong in towers and walls, strong in armed defenders, and at all times furnished with victuals for four years. They made mock of him; nonetheless he pitched his camp there.

Bevis was brought to his mother, who locked him up in a well-guarded room from which it was impossible to flee, keeping the keys in her own chamber so that none other could open for him. And when Dudon did not come to the city by nightfall, Brandoria lamented greatly, like the lecherous and cruel villainess that she was.

6

One night, when two days after Bevis was imprisoned by his mother had passed, Dudon of Maganza dreamt, while encamped near Castle Saint-Simon, that he was hunting and took many wild beasts, among which he took a little lion cub, and it seemed to get away from him and then turned on Dudon and killed him.

Dudon awoke and arose and called to him Alberic and some others and told them what he had dreamt. One, the eldest of them, said: "Upon my faith, you show poor judgment to nurture a

serpent in your bosom. You have Bevis in prison, and the whole city loves him better than you. If he should escape, he soon would kill you. He is the lion cub that fortune has shown you.”

Dudon sent a hundred armed men to Hampton to tell Brandoria to send Bevis to him, but she told them that she would have him killed that morning. She had a little cake and a fresh loaf of bread prepared, both envenomed, along with a poisoned beverage, so that whoever first partook of them would die. And she called one of her trusted ladies-in-waiting and gave her the keys of the room where Bevis stayed, telling her: “Go and take this repast to Bevis and let him eat.”

The chambermaid knew the whole truth and, coming to Bevis, said: “There, little boy. Take your last bite. Your mother sends you this.” Bevis was very bright and of good understanding. Hearing her say “last bite,” he asked the chambermaid to explain, and she told him the whole truth. Bevis began to weep, and said: “O cruel mother of mine, you caused the death of my father, and now you want to kill me, whom you carried nine months in your womb! O good chambermaid, you felt more pity for me than my own mother!”

At these words the chambermaid wept, and said: “O little lad, I cannot help you but in one way. As soon as your mother has supped and gone to sleep, I will leave all the doors open for you. Blacken your whole face and your leggings, turn your garments inside out, and flee for your life, if you can.” Then Bevis knelt down and she drew some coins from her pocket and gave them to him to buy bread once he was abroad. When she came back to Brandoria, she said: “I took it to him.” And when the beastly lady had supped, she said: “I want go to sleep, and afterwards I’ll have Bevis buried.”

Meanwhile, as she was sleeping, Bevis, with the aid of the chambermaid, left his room. He had rubbed his hands and his whole face with soot from the wall, and was completely blackened, even to

his leggings, and he had turned his garments inside out, so that he looked like a kind of Bedlam. He left the palace and, having found a bread vender, bought three loaves from him and went far from Hampton. He began journeying through the forests and was going from there toward Bristol, but stayed away from the city and got away. For more than ten days he traveled like a beast through the bushes and the woods, until he arrived at a place in the island of Britain called Haverforwest atop a mountain on a seaside bluff. All his clothes were torn by thorns and he had eaten more berries than bread, and so had reached the shore of the Irish Sea.

His mother, after she had slept, called the chambermaid and said to her: "Let us go and see Bevis. But the chambermaid had gone there before her and had locked all the doors, and well knew that he was not there. Arriving at the room, they did not find him. Said the duchess: "You have helped him escape." But she replied: "I locked the gates; but I fear lest others have opened them for him." At last, in terror of Dudon, they decided to say that he was dead and buried. They also took a little of the cake and the bread, of which proof was made and they were found to be poisoned. Thereafter no further search was made and it was soon noised about that he had died of the poison that his mother had given him. Dudon then raised the siege, but ever kept armed men and fortifications near Castle Saint-Simon, waging constant war upon it. And he ruled the realm of Hampton and within the year had a son by Brandoria, named Gailon.

7

Bevis, finding himself on the cliff of Haverforwest and having nothing to eat, greatly grieved over his fortune and his mother, and prayed to God to help him. He remained there for one night. In the morning he saw a ship approaching that was coming from Ireland and bound for Spain. Bevis stripped off his shirt, seized a wooden stick to which he attached it, and signaled as he had heard

people tell. Those in the vessel knew that this cliff was hazardous to ships. Therefore, upon seeing his signal, they said, "Some ship must have foundered lately near Haverforwest, and readied a little boat, lowered their sails, and rode at anchor. They sent the boat with four oarsmen to shore and, having found Bevis, brought him aboard.

In the vessel there were merchants of foreign parts, and one of them said: "Tell me, sweet lad, where do you come from? what is your name? and how did you arrive at the seashore?" Bevis replied: "Pray pardon me, but I feel such great hunger that I am dying of it." The merchants had him brought food and drink. When he had eaten, he said: "Noble merchants, now I can talk and tell you what you have asked. Know that my father was tradesman, in fact a miller, and my mother a hired washerwoman. She fell in love with a man who treacherously killed my father. A soldier wanted to save me and gave me this clothing. But my mother's lover caught me and sent me back to my mother. She intended to poison me, and I fled to the seashore. So here I am in this ship, and I would like to become servant to all of you. My name is Augustine. Now I have told you my whole story." And the merchant clothed him in handsome attire, befitting a young manservant.

One of the merchants said, while seated at table and Bevis waited on him very expertly: "Who taught you to serve?" He replied, "Some noble persons who were lodging near the mill, and I learned it in their house." Said one of the merchants: "I don't believe you, for you look to me like the son of a gentleman and of a great and noble lady." At this, every one of the merchants wished him for a servant, and they began to quarrel, but Bevis said: "My lords, I think I was born under an evil star. My mother tried to poison me; my father was murdered; and now you want to be my death! I'll serve all of you together, and I am willing to enter into the service of all your households." So he made peace among them. They all wondered at the quickness and eloquence of his speech.

Now these merchants visited the Spanish seaports, and then the seaports of Morocco by way of the outer sea, and afterwards they entered the Strait of Gibraltar and visited all the markets of Africa and of Egypt and Beirut and all of Syria. Then they came to Cyprus, and from there they entered the Gulf of Anatolia and came within sight of Armenia¹⁹. That country they wished to visit, because some of them hailed from it and also because it contained a city called Armenias situated on the Cilician border near the kingdom of Amazonia where the Amazons dwelled in ancient times.

Bevis saw them growing glad and asked them: “How far are we from the country where you took me up?” One of the merchants answered: “This place is located in the very center of the world.” Said Bevis: “Praised be God that I have escaped the hands of my enemies!” So they arrived at the harbor of the city of Armenias, and Bevis saw great crowds of people on shore, and huge pavilions that covered the entire strand. He asked what this meant, and was told: “This is a merchant fair that is held every other year for one month, and we have come to this fair to sell and cheapen our wares.”

Bevis and Drusiana

8-14: *Augustine, Swallowtail and the Princess*

8

The merchants' ship entered the harbor of Armenias. Coming to land, they pitched their pavilion and unloaded their wares from the ship, and commanded Augustine (for so Bevis called himself so as not to be recognized) to stand guard over the merchandise, and he did so. As the merchants left him, they told him to sell cloth and other things. Bevis said to himself: “Cursed be my mother who

¹⁹ The name of the country (*Erminia*), its capital city, Armenias (*Ermenias*), and its king, Armin (*Ermenione*), are clearly cognates.

in an evil hour conceived and bore me, for I am the son of a duke and a queen, and am now brought so low as to chaffer wares! Would that these merchants gave me leave to depart! For I might then be able to serve some great lord, and would learn chivalry. But I am reduced to selling cloth. If anyone asks me for it, I will give it to him, so that they will no longer let me play the merchant.”

That morning King Armin rode out of the city with many armed knights and came to see that fair, which was great and beautiful; and as he rode, he reached the pavilion where Bevis was, and seeing such a great pavilion, stopped to look, since it was well furnished with merchandise, and his attendants encircled the pavilion. Bevis began to speak to those who stood foremost, and they began to make jest of him. Bevis therefore knelt down before the king’s horse with a mien so gentle and reverent that the king viewed him with interest.

Bevis began to say: “Your Sacred Majesty, I pray you by your nobleness to bid these men who stand foremost not to ruin my merchandise, for I shall be blamed for it by the merchants, my masters.” The king did not understand him, but an interpreter who was with him told him laughingly all the words that Bevis had spoken.

Then the king through the mouth of that interpreter asked him whence he came, and whether he was a Christian, and in what manner he had come to this country. King Armin would not have asked this but for the gentle behavior that he observed in him.

Bevis said: “Your Sacred Majesty, since it pleases you to inquire about my condition, I shall tell you of it. Know then that my father was a tradesman, that is, a miller, and my mother a hired washerwoman; and she became enamored of another man, younger than my father, and had my father murdered and took that other man for her husband. And afterwards she meant to poison me. I fled, and these merchants took me up in their ship; I have been with them for six months and

served them, so that I can say that I have forty masters. But I would prefer to be at some nobleman's. I am skilled carving at table, and I know how to manage a horse, since I managed a horse at our mill."

As Bevis was speaking these words, the king smiled, greatly delighted by the youth's handsome appearance, and asked him his name. Bevis answered: "I am called Augustine, and I am a baptized Christian." The king said to one of his barons: "He must certainly be the son of some great and noble person who does not wish to be recognized."

As these words were spoken, the greater part of the merchants chanced to come back. The king said: "Augustine, do you want to stay with me? You shall not keep on selling merchandise." "Yea, by my faith," Augustine replied, "but not without the leave of my masters, the merchants, for they have always been very good to me." Then the king told one of his treasurers to buy the lad and departed to view the fair.

The treasurer could reach no terms with the merchants, and having rejoined the king, told him so; and the king, having made the tour of the fair, which was great, and having returned to the pavilion, had the merchants summoned. He reached an accord with them and bought Bevis for ten times the price of a slave, had him mount behind him on the saddle and returned toward the city.

When he dismounted, Augustine leapt into the saddle and guided the king's steed into the stable. He was charged to tend on him with the king's other pages, and he fared very well. Whenever the king dined, he sent for Augustine, for he took pleasure in hearing him discourse, since he talked very eloquently. He spent five years in this manner, and very soon could speak the language like one born to the country. He had grown into a handsome youth and went about better dressed, for a servitor, than the rest of the household.

King Armin had a tethered horse. It was the most beautiful horse in the world, and he had kept it shut away and tethered for seven years because no man could tame it; although many had many times tried to tame it, none had the hardihood to break it to the saddle.

Now that Bevis was at the court, King Armin went one day to see that horse, and Bevis saw him coming and heard the king say: "I would give great gifts to whoever could tame it and ride it." Bevis said to him: "O that he were my horse now, for I would tame him and saddle him and ride him!" The king understood him and said: "Augustine, by my faith, if you tame him, I would do much good for you, and I would relieve you of your duties as a stable boy, and you would only have this one to govern."

So Bevis stripped to his doublet, took up a stick, and turned toward the horse. When he drew near it, the horse reared and Bevis gave a shout into its ear, and the horse sought to lunge toward Bevis, for it had a chain around its long neck. Bevis gave him a great blow and threw himself at the locks of his mane, and give him a cuff on his left ear, so that the horse began to stumble. Bevis grasped the chain and dragged him from the manger, led him into the courtyard, had him shod, saddled and bridled him, and mounted. When he desired him to move, the horse made three leaps, but Bevis had a great club and struck him on the croup and on the flanks, and the horse began to tremble and went as Bevis wished.

He had him broken to the saddle in eight days and he rand and did whatever Bevis wished. He became in all things so excellent, that a more excellent horse could be not found at its time. But he refused to be ridden by any except Bevis. He grew so accustomed to him that, when Bevis spoke, the horse obeyed him, so that many ignorant persons said that Bevis was a demon who had entered

the body of that horse. He was in charge of this horse only, and with it outraced all the other horses. For that reason they named the horse Swallowtail²⁰, saying that it seemed like a flying swallow when it ran.

10

After Bevis had tamed Swallowtail, King Armin bestowed ever greater love on him, and appointed him carver at his royal table. Bevis served better and more courteously than any other servitor, and he therefore carved for King Armin. He began to wear gentlemanly attire and was of such beauty that one day, when one of the king's daughters came into the hall where the king was eating and played the harp, she saw Bevis near her father, serving in so courteous and nimble a manner that none seemed his equal. She, seized with an ardent passion, began to love him. She was called Drusiana, and, when she fixed her eyes upon Bevis' face, their glances met, and both of them, pierced by love, lowered their eyes, and both their faces changed color, so that both knew that they were in love. But Bevis, overcome by shame and timidity, always kept his love more hidden from Drusiana, so that she might not stay with him. Returning to her chamber and overcome by this ardent love, she lived sighing, thinking and dreaming night and day of the fetters that bound her, and of ways that she might find to do what would please her.

On the third day she sent for Bevis. But he was fearful and did not come to her, and Drusiana checked her wrath so as not to displease him. But she made plans to hold a feast with certain ladies, and to invite ten of the best gentlewomen of the city to come to her one morning to dine with her. Each of them was to bring along two or three young serving-men. Having given order to invite them, she got all things in readiness, except the servitors to carve for herself.

²⁰ Swallowtail: '*Rondinello*' in Italian. In the English tradition, this horse is sometimes named *Arundel*. I have coined the name to retain the etymological connection with *rondine* (swallow).

The morning of the repast having arrived, the seneschal of the hall said to her: “Lady Drusiana, you have no ladies-in-waiting to carve for you.” She delayed the dinner until King Armin was seated at table, and then she entered with three damsels, she playing, and the three damsels dancing. Then she, accompanied by three aged matrons, came up to her father, and there was much joy at her arrival. After they had danced a little, she knelt down smiling and asked her father for twelve servers to carve for the ladies she had invited.

The first to be so summoned was Augustine, and the king said to him: “Augustine, go serve and carve before Drusiana.” Augustine, blushing modestly, was obliged to obey, and he went to Drusiana’s chamber and was commanded to carve before her. While the dinner was being prepared and the damsels were dancing, Drusiana took Bevis by the hand and asked him to dance.

After they had twice gone round the hall, Drusiana drew him aside and said: “What is your name?” He replied, kneeling before her: “Madam, I am called Augustine.” “And how did you come to this country? where are you from? and of what people, of what nation are you?” He replied: “Madam, my father was a tradesman, that is to say, a miller, and my mother was a hired washer-woman; and I am from the West, from a valley called Pizzany.²¹ My mother grew enamored of a young man, because my father was old, and she contrived that this young man murdered my father. After my father’s death, she took this young man for a husband and tried to poison me, but I fled to the sea, and a merchant ship came along, and I signaled to it and was taken aboard. I spent six months serving those merchants. It has now been five years or a little more since they arrived in this country and they sold me to your father. This is how I came to your house as a slave.” As he was speaking these words, he wept, and Drusiana wept with him, and to comfort him said: “If you will obey me, I shall enfranchise you and make you free.” Bevis bowed, saying: “My lady, I am prepared

²¹ Pizzany: orig. *Pizzania*, doubtless a lispig semi-pun on *Britannia*.

to do whatever pleases you and is honorable to you and your father, even to the death.” She asked him: “How old are you?” He replied: “I am sixteen, my lady.” And she answered: “I am almost fourteen.” And she was so beautiful that she had no equal. At last the ladies said, “Let us go to dinner.” Water was brought for their hands, and Bevis held the water-basin for Drusiana, and she splashed a little water in his face, whereat Bevis grew embarrassed and bowed down. Then Drusiana said, “It is certain that you are a very proper miller’s son who, when a damsel splashes some water in his face, will not splash all the water in his basin back in hers!” At this all the ladies laughed and she went in to dinner.

11

When Drusiana was seated at table along with all the other ladies, her eyes were ever fixed on Bevis’ face; and she was so smitten by her love, that she could not eat, and was considering how she could give rest to the ardent flames of love. The more she thought and the more she stared at Bevis, the more inflamed she grew. She considered how she might at least kiss him, and as she was thinking she saw that the tablecloths reached to the ground all around, since it was more proper for the ladies not to be seen from beneath the table.

She let fall her knife and bent down and, pretending to be unable to reach it, said: “Augustine, hand me that knife.” Bevis bent down, and when he was beneath the table, she said: “Look, here it is!” and took him by the hair and chin and kissed him and took up the knife and sat back up. Bevis returned from under the table with all his color changed by shame; and Drusiana, all burning with love, had similarly changed color. At this she sighed and said, “Ladies, you must pardon me, for I feel utterly changed.” One of the ladies said, “You speak truly, as is plain by your face.” They wished to escort her, but she asked them to stay seated, and said: “Augustine, why don’t you come

with me?" and called one of her hand-maidens to come with her, along with Bevis, and left for her chamber.

Arrived in the chamber, she said to her maid: "Prepare a sideboard, for I wish to dine here." The maid went to the wardrobe for the sideboard, and Drusiana threw herself upon Bevis' neck and said: "Augustine, I love you more than anything in the world; and if you will do as I say, you will be well beloved." Augustine said, "My lady, I am not worthy to be loved by so very noble a lady as you are, for I am of low degree. Nonetheless, I am ready to serve you in any way I can that befits your honor and your father's, who has bought me." She kissed him, and Bevis trembled with fear of being discovered.

When the maid returned to the chamber, Drusiana let him go. He left the chamber and returned to the hall where the king was seated, and went to eat with the king's other servitors, and Drusiana was left in sorrow. Many times did she send for him, and he never agreed to come. More than a year passed during which he never went to her, and nonetheless two or three times every day, as he went riding for exercise, he passed at the foot of Drusiana's windows so that she could see him, and her love grew ever greater. Most of the time Bevis was riding Swallowtail, sometimes saddled and sometimes bareback. That is how these two lovers fell in love--that is Bevis, called Augustine, and Drusiana.

12

When Drusiana had completed her fourteenth year, and Bevis his sixteenth, King Armin, Drusiana's father, decided to have her marry. He ordained a rich tournament and had the terms proclaimed by mouth of his heralds, namely that he who should win the tournament would have his daughter for wife, only providing that none but Christians might enter the tournament.

Therefore many lords of both Greater and Lesser Armenia came to the tournament; and there also came many lords of Greece, among whom was King Marcabrun of Apollonia, a city that lies on the Black Sea and whose domain extends toward the river Danube and in Eastern Rome from the Danube to just beyond Constantinople.

That King Marcabrun came by sea, and with his great navy sailed through the Dardanelles, and passed the Aegean Archipelago; then hugging the coast of the Peloponnesus and the island of Cyprus, he reached the harbor of Armenias with ten ships laden with knights-at-arms. King Armin did great honor to him, and, the day of the tournament having arrived, a tourney-ground was constructed in the courtyard where there should be jousting, with blunted lances. Drusiana was to stay on a balcony of the palace accompanied by many ladies.

That morning Bevis, seeing dinner made ready in the great hall of the palace, was afraid that he would have to serve Drusiana. So he took Swallowtail, saddled him, took up a sickle for cutting herbage, and rode on Swallowtail with other reapers to the outskirts of the city to cut fodder. And there were more than two-hundred reapers in Bevis' company.

13

When the reaping was done, all of them loaded their burdens upon their horses, and Bevis looked on with great pleasure. When each man had loaded his burden, Bevis did likewise. Twelve burdens were loaded where Bevis stood and the others were scattered in diverse places about the countryside, but all now were gathered around him, he being the most honored among them since he served the king. Bevis now took up handful of long sheaves and fashioned a garland of hay for himself. And loading his burden which consisted of two large sheaves and one smaller one, he

mounted atop them, and they rode back toward the city, while Bevis sang and the others answered in chorus.

The music they made was so loud, that everyone ran up to see them. They passed by the courtyard and received better notice than the knights at joust. But when Bevis arrived at the courtyard, he had a sudden mind to joust. Bevis said to some of the servitors: "If I had armor, I would gladly joust. But I see many attendants furnished with helmets and shield. Let me go take a shield and helmet from one of them."

He went into the courtyard and, finding a servitor who had a shield and helmet, asked whether he might borrow it. But the man spoke ill to him. Then Bevis laid hands upon him, took away his helmet and shield, and returned to the stable. Many of the hostlers there mounted along with him on certain packhorses, and they rode with him into the courtyard, more in fun than in the belief that Augustine would go jousting. He had no spear, but passing along the street he saw above a door a long pole, holding up wool that had been hung there to dry.

Bevis seized that pole, threw all the wool to the ground. Followed by a great outcry of women, he entered the lists with that pole, and over sixty reapers following him. All the people cried out at this fine show, but with his first blow, he unhorsed the Count of Messuri who was a great friend of King Marcabrun. Therefore King Marcabrun, while Bevis was turning, came riding full tilt at him from behind. Bevis did not avoid him, and they exchanged two mighty blows. The king broke his spear on Bevis' shield, but he dealt with the king in such wise that he knocked him from the saddle.

It was the custom in those realms that whoever was unhorsed in any nuptial tourney should lose his armor. Therefore Bevis cried: "Disarm these two fallen ones!" The Count of Messuri was disarmed, but King Marcabrun refused to be disarmed, mounted his horse, and returned to his

lodging. Bevis was clad with the Duke of Messuri's armor, and the garland of hay that he had fashioned in the fields was placed upon his helmet. That day he unseated sixty knights, and had them all disarmed, and gave their armor to his reapers. Here one received a piece of it, and here another, and he had in his following two hundred servitors of the stable, or more. Drusiana was mad with joy at seeing Augustine's prowess.

Meanwhile King Marcabrun returned armed and better horsed, and Bevis once more unseated him, and he was perforce stripped and lost his armor. He therefore returned back to his lodging and once more armed himself and bade his attendants and subject to arm also, saying: "If this felon unseats me once more, cut him down with your swords." By chance two of King Armin's attendants who had been unhorsed lay there. They went to tell of these things to Drusiana, and she made her father command that, as soon as King Marcabrun came back to the tiltyard, the tourney's end should be sounded. And so it was done. Then Bevis returned to the stable to disarm with the other servitors, and they fed their hay to the horses. Drusiana sent for him, but he would not come, and she, like a desperate woman, came to him in person.

14

Augustine having won the joust and returned to the stable, Drusiana sent for him, and he would not go. She, overcome by a burning love greater than her fear or her shame, set out like a desperate woman and with a matron and a damsel went all the way to the stable. Now although she had come there at other times, and better accompanied, to see the horse, this time it appeared unseemly for a maiden. But who is it that can offer defense against that mighty power, blind love?

Drusiana, arriving at the stable and finding Bevis, began to say: "Oh, Augustine, well may you boast that, when you would not come to me after my messages, I should come to you. This is a day when

I need you to carve before me at the table; and I will have you know that there is not a lord in Armenia who would not come if I sent for him.” Bevis replied, saying: “My lady, go back to your chamber, for it is not to your honor for a tradesman’s son to carve before you. Take a nobler servant than me, for I am a serf, and a slave of your father’s, purchased with money.” She took him by the hand, and as they paced up and down in the stable, Bevis bowed and Drusiana sighed.

Bevis still had the garland of hay on his head, and she asked it of him. Said Augustine: “This garland was not fashioned for you, but belongs to the reapers.” At last he managed to sit down on a little bench, and said: “If you want it, you may take it.” Drusiana wanted him to put it on her head, and asked him to do it. He, ever trembling with modest shame, would neither put it on Drusiana’s head nor hand it to her, and she for shame could not throw her arms about his neck or kiss him. At last she herself took the garland, placed it upon her head, and returned to her chamber. All night long she had nothing else on her mind.

King Marcabrun and the other barons were with King Armin, and they began to talk on their behalf, asking that Drusiana be given as a wife to King Marcabrun of Apollonia. But in this matter things remained between yes and no. Amid all this a new thing befell.

15: *Luciferus* [summary]

Luciferus, a Saracen giant, son of the King of Buldras, arrived at the head of an army to demand Drusiana’s hand. When Armin refused, Luciferus attacked, captured Armin and Marcabrun, and laid siege to the city.

Making Enemies

16

After King Armin and King Marcabrun were captured, all the people began to flee, and in the city there arose much wailing and fear. One of King Armin’s brothers, whose name was Duke Hewellyn,

sallied out of the city to deliver its people. When he entered battle, he encountered with Luciferus, but was thrown to the ground and captured and brought to his tent. His soldiers were pushed back into the city by force of arms; many of them were slain and many taken. The gates were shut and the city suffered great tribulation and noise and fear and lamenting. And Drusiana above all wept for fear that the city would be lost.

Bevis, who was walking beneath the palace, heard say how Drusiana was weeping. Love caused him to share her woe, and he, caring and fearing for nothing, went where she was weeping, reached her chamber, and found her there, in tears, with many other women.

When she saw him, she threw herself upon his neck and embraced him, saying: "Alas, Augustine, what shall we do? For my father and your lord has been captured, and King Marcabrun with him, and now they have also taken Duke Hewellyn, my uncle." Augustine said: "My lady, have no fear. For I sense such valor and might within myself that, if you give me a good suit of armor and dub me knight, I shall go into battle. And my souls tells me that I will recapture your father and the others who have been taken. However, the arms that I have acquired in the joust are insufficient for so great a danger as this battle."

Drusiana led him to her chamber and gather up a good suit of armor for him. Bevis armed, and when he was armed, he rose and put all his armor to the test, and every part of it broke. And he pushed the helmet from his head with the pommel of his sword and broke it, and said: "My lady, these arms will not do for me." Drusiana said: "I have no better armor, but I have plenty of worse ones." Then she remembered something and said: "I do have one suit of armor that belonged to my grandfather, and it was brought from Rome, as I have heard tell of it by my father. But it is old and rusty." Bevis made her fetch it and put severely to the test, and found it strong and suitable;

whereupon he said, "My lady, these will do for me," and armed himself, and Drusiana helped him. When he was armed and Drusiana had dubbed him knight, she gave him a sword named Clarenza which had belonged of old to Sir Lancelot of the Lake. Some English knight, fleeing from England, had brought it to that country.

After she had dubbed him knight, she threw herself upon his neck and kissed him and said, weeping: "Sir Augustine, I commend you to my father, but, before you go, I would like a boon from you." Augustine said: "My lady, I am ready even unto the death to serve your noble person." She then asked that he should marry her; and then they drew aside and both swore troth to each other. He married her with a golden ring that she gave him.

Drusiana said: "Now I must mind you better than I did before; and you, Sir Augustine, must mind me better." Said Bevis: "My lady, since you are my spouse, I wish to be open with you. Know then that my name is not Augustine, but Bevis of Hampton, and that I was the son of Duke Guy of Hampton, and am of the blood of the Emperor Constantine."

When Drusiana heard this, she was the happiest woman in the world. She took another ring from her pocket, fashioned exactly like the one with which she had married him, and put it upon Bevis' finger, saying: "Let this be the spousal of love in perfection. Do you keep one of these rings, and I will keep the other, for as long as we shall live in this world." This done, he put the helmet on his head, went to the stable and mounted Swallowtail. Drusiana handed him his shield and lance and said: "Go, and my God grant you victory!"

Bevis rode to the gate and found all the knights who had fled from the battlefield. Then he too a thousand select knights, issued from the city, and rode toward the enemy camp with banners spread. The Saracens marveled greatly, saying: "Who might this be who has so much boldness as to return

to the field, now that all others have been put to flight and their lords are in prison.” And at the alarm, the entire host rushed to arms.

17

Bevis, chosen captain for the first time over a thousand knights, came out of the city; and the entire opposing camp full of wonder kept saying: “Who might this be who had such boldness as to venture battle against us?” Luciferus went to King Armin and asked him: “Who might this armed man be who is riding to battle, carrying a banner bearing a red lion on a blue field with a chevron of gold? King Armin said: “I know not who he might be; but I have heard say that such insignia are born by a knight of the West named Duke Guy of Hampton.” King Marcabrun said: “This must be Augustine, for Drusiana will have knighted and armed him.” Said Luciferus: “In that case, I do not want Drusiana for wife, if she submits to a man of meaner birth than herself.” And he asked who this Augustine was. King Armin told him how he had bought him, and how he had won the tourney, and how valiant he was of bearing.

At these words Luciferus put on his enchanted armor and mounted his horse and rode to the field with lance in hand. When Bevis saw him, he left his troop and rode out against him; and Luciferus also left his army and rode out toward Bevis, and they greeted each other.

Said Luciferus: “Sir knight, in the name of your God I command you not to conceal your name from me. Tell me who you are and what your real name is.” Bevis told him all that befell him by fault of his mother, how it had called himself Augustine, but that his real name was Bevis of Hampton, son of Duke Guy of Hampton, descendant of the Emperor Constantine. And he told him how he had been made a knight by Drusiana and obtained his armor from her. “And for love of her have come here to do battle with you.” Luciferus Said: “For the love of your father and of

your grandfather, I will pardon your life, and for the love of your lineage. Go, return to the city!”

Bevis replied: “I have not come here to return without a fight; and I have vowed to Drusiana that I would bring her your head and return her father Armin. Therefore be on your guard, for I shall trust you with nothing but death.”

In a rage, Luciferus attacked, and they gave each other great knocks with their lances. Then they laid hands on their swords and turned to the combat and began a great and perilous battle. Drusiana from her palace watched the battle, and knelt down, praying to God for Bevis. Whatever blows Bevis received on his armor, Drusiana received in her heart.

As the two engaged in hand-to-hand combat, Bevis had already received many wounds, but could not pierce the Saracen’s armor. Filled with wrath, he took Clarenza in both hands and, shifting his shield upon his back, gave him a mighty blow. The air was filled with sparks, but other hurt he could not give him. Luciferus roared and struck at him with such fury that he made him bow down to the mane of his horse, utterly stunned. At this Drusiana fell down full length upon the ground as if she herself had suffered the blow. Bevis received it upon his armor, and Drusiana received it in her heart.

Bevis, feeling his inward wrath increasing, began a mighty assault. While he was fighting, Drusiana returned to her window, and by chance Bevis at that moment lifted his gaze toward that part of the palace and saw Drusiana. Imagining that she saw him also, he throw away his shield and too Clarenza in both hands, and smote at Luciferus bitterly. He likewise threw away his shield and took his sword in both hands and, letting go the reins of his bridle, dealt a great blow.

Bevis had pricked Swallowtail with his spurs. The horses clashed, and Luciferus’ steed veered to the left in such a manner that his blow did not reach Bevis, but went to leftward, and so great was the

force with which Luciferus endowed that blow, that he needs had to bend forward above his horse's mane and the tip of his sword touched the ground. In that swerving, the enchanted helmet which he wore broke the strap that attached it on the right, and Bevis saw it parting from the hauberk, and struck a blow that went between the helmet and hauberk and severed his head from his chest. So died Luciferus of Buldras.

At this a great shout went up. The thousand knights whom Bevis had left behind rushed to battle, and from the city many knights sallied out and assailed the enemy army who betook themselves to flight, abandoning their tents and their banners. Bevis galloped toward the tents accompanied by many armed men and freed King Armin and King Marcabrun, as well as Hewellyn, King Armin's brother, and had them re-armed. While they were re-arming, King Armin said: "Augustine, you have earned a great reward." Bevis replied: "Sire, my name is not Augustine, but rather I am named Bevis of Hampton, and I was the son of Duke Guy of Hampton." And he bestowed upon King Armin all the treasure belonging to Luciferus, saying: "I give you this so that you may enfranchise and free me as soon as we have returned to the city." This said, he mounted his steed and returned to the battlefield.

Then the whole host was pursued even unto their ships, and many were killed or taken, and many ships fled and many of them were burned. Then Bevis left the victorious battle and returned to the city; and Drusiana went to meet him at the stable, where he had tied up his Swallowtail, and brought him to her chamber. She took off his helmet, and she was alone with him, and she threw herself around his neck, kissed him, and then removed his armor to tend to some small hurts and wounds.

At this moment, Hewellyn, Drusiana's uncle, returned and entered the chamber, finding Drusiana with her arm around Bevis' neck. At these Hewellyn was offended and spoke many insulting and

ugly words to him. Bevis could not suffer this, and he laid hands on Hewellyn, threw him to the ground, and gave him countless kicks and blows, so that he could scarcely return to his palace, battered all over as he was.

Meanwhile the king returned with the victorious army, and he went to see Count Hewellyn, believing that he had received these hurts in the battle field or in prison; and he for shame did not say what had befallen. The king asked him whom he deemed worthy to become Drusiana's husband, and he replied that she should be given to King Marcabrun. "I shall give Bevis one of my own daughters," said he. The king replied: "I intend to give Drusiana as a wife to Bevis." And he returned to the palace.

Bevis came in the presence of King Armin and presented a deed of sale for the treasure that Bevis had given to King Armin in the tent, by which he would be released and be able to buy back his liberty, paying for his enfranchisement with the treasure of Luciferus of Buldras that he had won with sword in hand. And the king enfranchised him and made him a free man.

Bevis in Buldras

18

When King Armin had left his brother and returned to the palace, Duke Hewellyn sent for King Marcabrun. He being Bevis' enemy, he told him all that the king his brother had said, and they together swore the death of Bevis, one for love of Drusiana, the other to be avenged for the blows that Bevis had given him. Both now awaited the means, the pretext and the opportunity. When some days had passed, King Armin gave order that Bevis was to be made overlord of a part of Armenia and be given Drusiana for wife.

This being a day of great feasting at the court, with many pleasant events, the King that day showed many favors to Bevis. At nightfall in Duke Hewellyn's palace, Duke Hewellyn and King Marcabrun conferred about what to do in the following manner:

Duke Hewellyn said: "You know, King Marcabrun, that I much resemble King Armin. I shall dress in the royal robes with the crown on my head and the other regalia. Come midnight, I shall be seated on the royal throne and you shall be with me along with some of our trusted friends. We shall send for Bevis and make him swear to go wherever we may send him. Do you make a letter to be delivered to King Baldras of Buldras, saying that the bearer of the letter is Bevis, who killed his son Luciferus, and bid him to hang him." All this happened even as they had planned.

Shortly after midnight, while Hewellyn sat on the throne as if he were king, he sent for Bevis. He knelt before him believing him to be King Armin, for there were few light as and he kept in the shadows, so that Bevis firmly believed that he was King Armin. He made him swear to assist him in his necessity, and Bevis swore on his life to do as he commanded.

Then he commanded him to go to Buldras bearing this letter, and gave him the letter. Bevis did not suspect what it said. He took it at once and went to arm himself. But Hewellyn said: "There is no need for either armor or horse, for they will be more of a hindrance to you." And he commanded him to go to sea unarmed. He only carried Clarenza, his swords, and had an old nag conveyed in a packet-boat.

As he sailed, he passed the island of Rhodes and, sailing through the Aegean Isles, passed the Hellespont and landed in Apollonia. Then he rode for many days and, upon arrival in Buldras, did not find the king but was told that he was in Slovenia in a city named Sinella. Bevis took the road toward Sinella, and suffered much hunger on that road from Buldras to Sinella.

At one day's journey from Sinella he found in the countryside a fountain in a forest clearing, and there sat a traveler with a pilgrim's cloak on his back who was eating, and who invited Bevis to eat. He, who had suffered from lack of food, sat down to eat with him of the bread and the meat that he had. As they were eating, the rascal drew out a bottle of wine and gave it to Bevis to drink. This was a drugged beverage, and when Bevis had drunk it, he lay down to sleep on the grass. The villain robbed him and took his money and his clothes and his sword and his horse. While he was going through his belongings, he found the letter addressed to the king. Seeing the address, he decided not to kill him, but put the letter back into his breast. Then he went on his way with the things that he had stolen from him and with the old horse.

Bevis slept until the next day, without waking, but when the wine lost its effect, he awoke. Seeing himself thus deceived, he was very sorrowful, and searching about, found the letter. Thereupon he thanked God and went on foot to Sinella, entered the palace and present the letter to the king, who read it. When he saw that it said that this was Bevis who had killed his Luciferus, his son, he wondered why he should be so poorly attired, and asked Bevis whether he was a knight. He replied that he was, and that he had been robbed along the way and tricked by means of a drink. Then the king in a loud voice cried to the barons that he had about him: "Seize that traitor who has killed Luciferus, my son." The barons drew their swords and he perforce was taken, since he had no arms. His hands were tied behind his back and the king commanded him to be taken at once to a gallows outside the city and there to be hanged by the neck in revenge for Luciferus, his son.

Bevis was brought to the gallows to be hanged; and as he walked, he greatly bewept his fortune, and commended his soul to God, and uttered many complaints against King Armin who had those deceived him, for he believed that it was King Armin who had sent him to his death; but it was Duke Hewellyn.

While Bevis was being conducted to the gallows by command of the king, he came to pass outside the city alongside one of the king's gardens, where stood one of the king's daughter, who was called Margery. Hearing the noise, she went with some of her ladies to see, and asked: "Who is this man who is being brought to justice?" She received this answer: "This is Bevis of Hampton, the man who killed your brother with sword in hand in the city of Armenias." Margery: "Is he the man, then, who is reputed to be such a great warrior? By my faith, I would not that he should die so honorable a death!" and she ran ahead of them in order to see him; and made them remove the blindfold which they had put over his eyes. When she saw so young and handsome a knight, she asked him whether he had been knighted. Bevis replied, "My lady, I am a knight, and the son of a duke and a queen. I have been wrongfully condemned to death here, because Luciferus fought me in fair fight." Margery said: "Bind up his eyes again, for I do not wish him to die so honorable a death, but I want him to die like a traitor." And she commanded them to hold him there while she went to her father, King Baldras.

She, with some of her ladies and some of her knight, mounted and went to the king. There she knelt at his feet, asking for a boon. Her father granted her wish, and she said: "Let Bevis, whom you have sent to the gallows, be delivered to me alive and well. For I wish to make him die slowly in revenge for Luciferus, my brother. I intend to hold him in the dungeon of our tower called Madkeep.

Her father, who had no other sons or daughters, granted her boon, and give her a ring from his treasury that he drew from his finger so that she should be believed. She returned to the gallows and had Bevis brought to the palace and made them cast him in the dungeon of the Madkeep

Tower. She threatened that she would make him die by degrees and set a guard of ten Saracens at the gate of that tower.

On the following night she went to the tower by a trap door which led underground, and when she opened the trap door, Bevis feared that she was a serpent that was coming to attack him and which had been placed in that tower to devour whoever was imprisoned there. Finding a rusty sword that had belonged to a Christian who had starved to death in that tower, he stood ready to kill her with it. But when he heard her open and saw the light of her little torch, he dropped the sword.

When Margery had entered to him, she greeted him and asked his name, and how he had arrived in that region. Bevis told her all that had befallen him from the day of his birth up to that moment.

She had such pity for him that she wept while Bevis retold his fate, and then she said: "Sir knight, by my faith, if you will be guided by me, I will bring you out of this prison, and I shall so prevail on my father that he will grant your life and make you captain of all our people. What I wish from you is that you become my husband." Bevis replied, "My lady, if I promised something to you on oath and do not keep promise, I would be a recreant knight. I have already told you of the love that I have sworn to Drusiana, which I will in no wise betray, and I would rather die than break my oath."

Margery replied: "Blessed are those who love sincerely. But I beg you not to wish to die rather before you abandon your love." But no matter how much she flattered or threatened him, Bevis never consented to any of her demands. She then set a term of a month to think about this matter and departed. But every day she had a little dog sent through an opening beneath the exit, with food and drink for Bevis food and tied it to his neck.

A month passed and she never spoke with him until the month was over. Then she went to speak with him, but could not bend him to her will, for he ever asked for death instead; meanwhile her

love increased, and she sent food to him for the great love she bore him, hoping that the time would come when she would have her will. In this manner Bevis remained in prison for three years and four months.

20

King Armin, having inquired for Bevis in order to give him Drusiana for wife, unable to find him or to tell what had occurred, feared that he might be dead. He made diligent search for him and tried to make out where he might be. At last he found his armor and his horse, without his sword. He thought that he might have fled for fear at what he had done to Duke Hewellyn. And so his search and state of mind continued for two years and some months. Finally, finding him not, he determined to marry Drusiana to King Marcabrun, and often asked Drusiana's about it, but she would in no wise consent. At last the king used force and she assented with one condition. She would do as he wished, but wanted to delay the marriage for one year. King Marcabrun was satisfied with this. So her troth was plighted, and she was put under the guard of forty gentlewomen and ladies-in-waiting, and one of her cousins, whose name was Floris, with sixty knights. Drusiana thought: "If I were in Apollonia, perhaps Bevis would come to me."

And King Marcabrun married her and went to his own country, and prepared the feast, inviting many barons to it. And she had Swallowtail brought there, and brought with her Bevis' armor; and she sent for a prisoner of hers, called Pulican, who was half man, half dog. He was a dog from the waist down, and a man from the waist up. He could run so fast that no other animal could overtake him, and he could speak very well. He was the son of a dog and of a Christian gentlewoman. His mother was from a city of Armenia called Capadocia. A Turk, King of Lycaonia and Isauria, had for a long time waged furious war upon it and, being unable to conquer it, had made peace and taken

her for wife, promising that he would be baptized. But when he sent for her and had her in his power, he in order to humiliate her had her stripped naked and tied head down on a bench. He then sent for a great mastiff and had her covered several times by it, and she grew heavy with this Pulican. While pregnant, she fled to King Armin in Armenia and gave birth to this animal, and died in the pangs of childbirth. King Armin, curious to see what might become of this animal, had it raised, and when it was grown up kept it in prison or chained up for safety. And Pulican was its name. It is for this beast that Drusiana asked her father, and he sent it to her at Apollonia in chains. With it he sent his cousin, Floris, with the above-mentioned sixty knights. And she was hoping that God would send back to her Bevis, her true husband.

Having entered the sea, they sailed for many days before they arrived in Apollonia, where a great feast was held. And she lived in Apollonia until one year was almost spent, in a private palace of that King Marcabrun. Then she began to lament greatly because Bevis could not be found, and prayed constantly to God that he might give him back to her, if he was still alive.

21

Three years and four months had passed since Bevis had been imprisoned in the city of Sinella in Slovenia, and the court marveled greatly that he was still alive, since, according to what Margery had made publicly known, he had been given nothing every day but a little crust of bread and some water. But in private she had sent a little dog to him by a passage underground who carried him bread and wine and whatever else he needed, and by these means he had survived. But only Margery and Bevis knew of this.

It happened one day that the captain of those ten men who guarded the tower in which Bevis was imprisoned said to his companions: "By the god Apollyon, that god of the Christians has wrought a

great miracle for this Bevis whom we are guarding in this tower! For it has been three years since he came to this prison, and he has eaten nothing but bread and water. Certainly our gods would not have done this for us.” And, consulting with one another, they decided to free him from prison and to go away with him, saying: “He will make us all rich.” They decided that two of them should lower themselves into the prison by a hempen rope, and they all swore to this plan.

One night, having found a hempen rope, two of them, clinging to it with their hands and feet, supporting their feet in a loop and with a torch in hand, were lowered by their other companions through the trap door at the top of the tower. When Bevis saw the torchlight and saw them, he thought they had been sent to bind him and to bring him from the tower to be slain. At once he snatched up the sword that he had found in the prison when he was first shut in it, and remained quiet. When they were a hand’s breadth from the ground, Bevis gave a blow and killed them both, and the light went out. Bevis said: “You two will not be binding me!” After a short wait, their companions began to suspect that the two men had agreed with each other and played them false. Therefore two others descended by the same means, and Bevis did with them as he had done with the first pair. In this manner, he slew eight of them.

This is how things stood for about half an hour, when he heard those who remained above beginning to say: “You traitors, who wish to trick us, since you wish to conspire with each other rather than with us. But we shall raise the alarm.” Then Bevis understood what they had come to do, and cleverly cried: “We’ll come up from here; pull us up.” And he took his sword in one hand and grasped the rope with the other, and these two with great effort pulled him up, and he with great effort arrived at the top of the tower. Having reached the summit, he slew the remaining two. Then he tied the rope by which they had drawn him up to the side that faced the courtyard and lowered himself down into it.

It was the first watch of the night (almost a third of the night had passed) and Bevis landed at a venture upon the ground, and he scarcely remembered where he was when he arrived there. Reaching the wall of the enclosure, he entered a garden, removed a long piece of wood from a bower and by means of it ascended the wall. Drawing it up alongside him, he began to descend along the outside. It took a great effort, but at last he let himself drop into a water-filled moat, receiving little hurt, but getting wet and bedraggled all over. He began to travel, and traveled for many days unrecognized through Bosnia, lodging in the woods and deserts, eating herbs and wild berries.

On the morning after the night of his escape from prison, many in the city saw the rope hanging from the tower. They all gaped, saying: "What thing is here?" When those in the king's palace received notice of this, they ordered a search of the top of the tower. Much blood being discovered, they reported this to the king, but they did not find the two dead guards there, because Bevis had thrown them down into the tower. Then the king had the inside of the tower searched, and they found all ten of the dead guards.

The alarm was raised, and on every side men went out on horseback and on foot to pursue him. Word was sent to Dalmatia, to Croatia, and throughout Slovenia and Hungary and Bosnia and a part of Rumania that he should be apprehended. But he only traveled by woodland paths, and suffered so much hunger and fear that it was a wonder that he did not die. After many days he chanced to arrive on the shore of the Black Sea, and he saw a city at his left hand which was named Varna. Bevis walked toward the city, and come men who overtook him along the shore said to the citizens: "We saw a man all covered with hair and miserably dressed on the shores of the sea."

That morning a ship full of Christians was leaving that city bound for Constantinople. As they were sailing alongshore, Bevis signaled to them to take him on board. When he arrived on the ship, one of King Baldras' nephews, whose name was Alibrun, rode up on the beach and shouted to them to send him back to the land; if they did not, ten seaports would be barred to them. They therefore wanted to send him back, but he killed many of them, and the others begged mercy and hoisted sail. Alibrun then boarded a pinnace and came alongside the ship. Leaping aboard, he killed certain sailors, but Bevis severed his head from his shoulders and scuttled the pinnace, and so they safely continued on their voyage.

Bevis in Apollonia

22

While sailing over the Black Sea toward Constantinople, Bevis had the ship's merchants change their dress, and himself so well attired that he seemed like the vessel's lord and commander. After leaving Varna, they encountered a storm. The winds being contrary, they changed course landward, fleeing for their lives. Battling the wind, they came to a river mouth and saw a fair city. Entering the river, they came alongside a fisherman casting net near their ship. At this, Bevis asked the sailors: "What is this city called?" And they told him that its name was Apollonia.

Then Bevis called out to that fisherman, and he came aboard and replied as he was questioned, saying that the city was called Apollonia, and adding: "You must know that today in that city there is great feasting, and tomorrow a yet greater one, because tomorrow our king Marcabrun will be united with Drusiana, daughter of King Armin of Armenia, since it is now one year since he brought her here and she has not yet bedded him." Bevis said: "Why has she not bedded him?" He answered: "Because this was the agreement when he sent for her." Bevis said: "Will you bring me on land?"

“Certainly not,” said the fisherman, “because you would seize me to sell me as a slave. Ask for something else.”

Bevis pleaded with him so long, and made so many promises, that he invited him on his ship. He had the merchants give three hundred golden coins to the crew, and they paid willingly so that he would leave their ship, and Bevis descended into the fisherman’s little boat. As soon as he had left the ship, they at once hoisted sail and fled to the high seas.

Bevis, as he neared land, asked the fisherman: “By your faith, tell me the truth: has King Marcabrun done with Drusiana as you say.” The fisherman replied: “Certainly not, because he has set his cousin, called Floris, as a guard upon her, with sixty knights and twelve damsels. Such was the agreement when he sent for her from Armenia, and King Marcabrun gave his word, and ye would never break it.” At this Bevis asked: “Why did the lady make this condition, to wait for a year?” He replied: “I cannot tell you that, but I have heard say that a noble youth arrived in Armenia, whose name was Bevis of Hampton, son of a duke called Guy of Hampton. He was sold to King Armin and won a battle against a Turk called Luciferus, and accomplished many other feats, and was freed. It happed that he struck a brother of King Armin’s, and fled for fear. The king had made search for him through many regions, but could not find him.. Thus the king’s brother, whose name is Hewellyn, prevailed on King Armin to give her in marriage to King Marcabrun. And Drusiana did not wish this and asked for a year’s delay, in the event that Bevis would return. It is now three years and four months since there have been news of Bevis. And you must know that it is now a capital crime to make mention of Bevis, and that he has been declared an outlaw at the King Marcabrun’s behest. Today concludes one year since Drusiana has joined her husband, and tomorrow she will be united with the king. Therefore there is a great festival in the city; and I and many others are fishing

to provide the court.” While these words were being spoken, they reached land. Bevis stepped ashore, took his sword, and, after thanking the fisherman, went on foot toward Apollonia.

Walking toward the city, he found a pilgrim near it in the shadow of some trees. Bevis greeted him and stayed with him a little while. Then he said to him: “Friend, I would gladly give you my clothes, if you will give me yours.” The pilgrim said: “I will not, by God!” And Bevis undressed and the rude fellow would not change with him. But Bevis rushed at him, threw him to the ground, gave him blows in kicks in quantity, and took off his clothes, finding a sword girded to his side. He snatched it away from him and discovered that this was his own sword, Clarenza. Said Bevis: “By my faith, this sword is mine. You must be the man who stole it from me at Sinella.” And the ruffian seemed to plead for a thousand years to let him escape his hands. This done, they parted. And Bevis, pilgrim’s cloak on his back, pilgrim’s hat on his head, girt with Clarenza, staff in hand with a satchel tied to containing the captured food and wine and the ring that Drusiana had given him, recaptured from the ruffian, went from there to the city of Apollonia.

Reaching the gate, he began to act the beggar, saying that he came from the Holy Sepulcher. He found lodging at the house of a merchant, where about eight merchant were seated at table. Bevis entered the lodging and said: “God save you. I beg you, give me alms for the love of God and for the sake of soul of Bevis, who was a good knight.” He twice accosted them in this manner, and the merchants said to him: “Do not mention that knight’s name.” Then Bevis said the same in a louder voice, and the merchants were afraid and rose from the table, for fear of being denounced to the king. Bevis without more ado ate of the viands that were spread on the table, and no one spoke to him, since they were thankful that he should eat and then, God willing, be gone. And so he did.

As soon as he had eaten, he (God willing) departed. Walking through the city, he came to a church, and saw many ladies leaving it. Bevis came up to four of them, who seemed to him of some rank, and said to them: "Give me alms for the love of God and of the soul of Bevis, who was a good knight." Three of them closed their eyes and walked away, but the third remained behind and said: "What Bevis are you speaking of?" He replied: "Of Bevis of Hampton, Drusiana's husband." Said the lady: "How do you know Bevis? Do you have some truthful report of him?" "Yes, by my faith," said he; "I have, my lady, been in prison with him for nearly three years and four months, and have this morning left ship with him." Said the lady: "My friend, for God's sake, see if you can find him and send him in secret to Drusiana, for she has sworn to hurl herself from her balcony and kill herself, rather than consent to be the wife of any man other than Bevis. If you find him, tell him that I am the waiting-maid by whom his mother sent the poison to his room, and who helped him escape. Because he escaped, my husband and I had to flee here. At our arrival in Greece, we heard tell that Bevis was in Armenia, and came to Armenia, but could not find him. Drusiana keeps me with her for love of him, and she trusts me more than any other woman." All the while that she was speaking these words, she wept. Then she drew four cold coins from her purse, gave them to Bevis, and said: "If you are asked what you were saying to me, tell them: 'I was asking the way to the Holy Sepulcher, since I have a desire to go there.'" She left him then to rejoin her companions, and told them that he had asked for the way to the Holy Sepulcher.

23

When the lady had left, Bevis went toward Drusiana's palace and by one of the balconies found many noblemen diverting themselves, some playing at drafts and others at chess, among which there was a knight who had lose ten gold coins to a merchant. Bevis stopped and said: "Give alms to me for the love of God and of the soul of Bevis, who was a good knight." The man who had lost said:

“Get you to the gallows, rogue, and do not mention the name that you have mentioned.” And Bevis once more asked him in the same manner, and the knight rose up and took the chessboard to strike him on the head. But the merchant who had won the coins took hold of him and by his words prevailed on him to grow calm. Then he turned to the pilgrim, that is to say to Bevis, took him by the hand and led him to his lodging, saying: “Come with me, and I will give you alms.”

While they were on their way, he asked him: “What is the Bevis for whose sake you are begging?” He replied: “He is Bevis of Hampton, husband to Drusiana.” The merchant said: “Do you then know tidings of him?” Bevis replied: “Who are you to ask me about it?” He answered: “I am the husband of the lady-in-waiting who saved him from the poison. If I could find him again, I have enough money to bring him for a year’s hire two-hundred knights.” Bevis replied: “Be of good cheer, for he is as alive and well as I am. For three years or more, I have been in prison with him, and we together fled from that prison, he and I. Not many days will pass before he will come to find me in this city. But tell me the truth, I pray you: Has King Marcabrun bedded Drusiana.” The merchant replied that he had not, and told him how all things stood. Bevis then said that he wished to go to the king’s palace, and that the other should stay. The merchant directed him to go to the king’s kitchen, where the wedding sweets were being prepared, and gave him four gold pieces and begged him to find Bevis and to encourage him to return to him.

Bevis departed, while the merchant begged him not to mention Bevis at court, since whoever named him was condemned to death. Bevis went to the court, that is to the kitchen, where there were more than fifty cooks, and began to beg: “Give me alms for the love of God and of the soul of Bevis, who was a good knight.” At these words a seneschal of the kitchen shouted to the cooks: “Take hold of this fellow and carry him to the justiciary.” Then all the cooks and their helpers and servants rushed at Bevis, here with paddles, here with skewers, here with ladles, here with sticks, and Bevis received

quite a few blows. He was ashamed to resort to his sword, but instead took up his pilgrim staff. The first on whom he tried it was the seneschal, and he struck him dead. Then he pummeled all the cooks and broke much of the crockery. All fled from the kitchen, and some of them fled toward the hall and encountered Floris, Drusiana's cousin-in-law, and told him of the great commotion in the kitchen.

Floris went to the kitchen and, finding Bevis there, said to him: "You scoundrel, what have you done here? Why have you done this?" Bevis said, "Hear my reasons," and recounted how he had begged, for the love of God and of the soul of Bevis, who was a good knight. Floris took his hand, drew him from the kitchen, and told the cooks to return to their tasks. He brought Bevis to a chamber and asked him which Bevis he was begging for. He said: "For him of Hampton, husband of Drusiana, the man who slew Luciferus." Floris asked: "How is it that you know Bevis?" He replied: "For three years and four months I have been in prison with him in a city called Sinella. When Bevis escaped from prison, I also escaped, and I am certain that he will be here today or tomorrow. I have come to know whether Drusiana has bedded King Marcabrun." Floris replied that she had not, and told him of all that had occurred. Then he asked him whether he would be pleased to speak with Drusiana. "Gladly," said Bevis. Floris left him in that chamber, saying: "Wait for me here, and I will go to Drusiana and speak with her, and then come back to you." And so he did.

He went into the hall, spoke secretly with Drusiana, telling her that he had news of Bevis. She stood still for a while, then left the hall and went to her chamber, saying to Floris: "Go to that pilgrim of yours and bring him to me." And he went to Bevis and led him toward Drusiana's chamber, passing through the midst of the barons in the hall.

Having come with Floris to where Drusiana was, Bevis kneeled and greeted her on Bevis' behalf. She took his hand, drew him apart to a more hidden place, beckoning Floris to come with them, and asked him for news of Bevis. He replied: "My lady, first give me something to eat, and then I will tell you news of Bevis." She had food and drink brought to him, and when he had eaten, Bevis said to Drusiana: "Bevis told me to ask you if you have bedded King Marcabrun." Drusiana replied: "I would first be burned at the stake rather than let him touch my person. Tell my lord that this very night I will kill myself rather than let him find me in bed with King Marcabrun." Bevis told her that he had been for three years in prison with Bevis: "And both together we fled from prison. And you must know that he would rather stay in prison than give his consent that a damsel who held him there should kiss him on the cheek. And if he had wished to take her to wife, he would now be Lord of Hungary and of Bosnia and of Slovenia. Instead he preferred for love of you to stay in prison all his life." Drusiana began to weep.

At this point King Marcabrun entered the chamber and, finding Drusiana in tears, said to the pilgrim: "I am of a mind to have you thrown to the ground from the windows of this palace." Drusiana said: "My lord, do not do this, for this is a holy man who has come from the Holy Sepulcher of Christ. He has been in Armenia and tells me that my father has died. That is why I am weeping. God pardon him." At this, the king went out, shedding some tears for love of Drusiana.

She prayed the pilgrim that he would let her see Bevis, and he replied: "This very knight I will bring him before your eyes, for he is filled with great love, and he has shown this in prison when he would not for his life content the damsel who held him, out of love for you."

Speaking thus with her and Floris, he heard a horse neighing loudly. Said Bevis: “This must be a very fierce horse.” The lady replied: “There is not a better horse in all the world, for that is Swallowtail, who belonged to Bevis of Hampton. Moreover, I still have his armor in this room. Would to God that he were back!” Bevis said: “Ah, who is master of this horse? For Bevis has told me that none dare touch him save you and he alone.” She replied: “He is fettered.” “By my faith,” said Bevis, “I have such hope in God, that, for the love of Bevis, I shall govern him.” Then Drusiana said, “I do not believe you, but let us go see him.”

She and Floris and Bevis then went to the stable where Swallowtail was, and there was no other person nearby. Some had said that the king went there, but most said that this was not true. The three of them—Drusiana and Bevis and Floris—having come to the stable, Bevis called out: “Swallowtail!”

When the horse heard him, he recognized him instantly, and he began to neigh and show signs of joy. Bevis threw himself around his neck and embraced him. Drusiana marveled greatly and said: “Pilgrim, you are surely acting by witchcraft, since there is none who can touch him but Bevis and I.” Then Bevis cried: “A beast has more sense than my own wedded wife, for it recognized me before she did.” Drusiana stared at him and began to call him to mind; nonetheless she wanted to prove by certain tokens that it was he, and said: “Are you then my Bevis, my lord? If you are, where is Clarenza, my sword?” Bevis showed her the sword, which was inscribed with letters that declared: “I am Clarenza.” Then Drusiana said: “Where is the ring that I gave you?” And Bevis showed her the ring. Then she said: “I am still not certain, unless I see the mark which Bevis had on his right shoulder, that is the purple birthmark of the Royal House of France, which Floravant brought out of his mother’s womb.” Bevis then showed her his right shoulder. At last Drusiana said: “Now I

know truly that you are my lord,” and embraced him. And Bevis embraced her also, weeping with tenderness and joy.

25

Growing faint with great joy, Floris said, weeping: “Dearest cousin, let us depart from this place, for if King Marcabrun should find you here, we shall all die.” Then they returned into the royal palace, and in the evening the king came to visit Drusiana, since next day the lady was to be with him.

Seeing her weeping, he comforted her, believing that she wept at father’s death. And she said, “My lord, by my faith, that pilgrim heard Swallowtail neighing. He told me that he had a great mind to tame him.” The king replied, “Would God that he did! for if he could but break him to the saddle for me, I would little care for other knight in the world that should tend him.” Drusiana said, “He says he has a great mind to tame him.” The king desired to go with him to the stable, accompanied by some barons. Bevis called out at the horse, grasped him by the mane, and held him fast, and the king bestowed him into his care, and promised him much treasure.

When morning came, Bevis sent for a blacksmith and had him shoe and saddle and bridle the horse, and when he had been furnished with the things needful, he mounted him and took him to drink outside the city. He passed through the middle of the courtyard, and all the barons ran to see him, saying: “That pilgrim is a good rider.”

When Bevis had reached the river outside the city and made Swallowtail drink, he said within himself: “What shall we do now, Swallowtail?” While he was speaking and sighing, he looked up and saw a long ways off a beautiful castle, which seemed to him very strong. He called out to a peasant who was delving the earth at the edge of the river and asked him: “What castle is this?” He replied:

“This castle is called Montefeltro, and it belongs to a noble duke named Canor, who is an enemy of our lord, King Marcabrun.” Then Bevis thought to flee, if he could, into that castle with Drusiana.

He returned to the palace, and while he was passing the courtyard, some said: “Look how well that pilgrim rides that horse, which only he of Hampton used to ride!” Bevis led him into the stable, and when he had bestowed him there, betook himself to Drusiana’s chamber and told her how had seen a castle where he hoped to go with her. And he gave her a powder with which to fashion a potion, and handed her the flask that he had taken from the feigned pilgrim, saying: “If you make King Marcabrun drink of this when he retires, he will fall asleep at once as soon as he lies down on the bed. Then come to me in the stable and I will wait for you at the foot of the stairs. We will leave from there; but bring with you the keys of the gate facing Montefeltro, whither we are going.”

Having made these provisions, he returned to the stable to tend to Swallowtail.

26

The feasting was grand, and the nuptial entertainments were richly appointed, with great dances and jousts of many kinds. At last, when the time approached for sleep, Drusiana was brought to the bedchamber for the king’s use; and shortly thereafter King Marcabrun arrived, full of desire to sleep with Drusiana. Upon entering the chamber, he sent all the ladies-in-waiting away and locked himself inside with Drusiana. As he moved to embrace her, she said: “My lord, I pray you first to partake of some repast with me.” He said he was pleased to do so, and she gave him a sweet prepared with the said powder, and she gave him that clear and distilled beverage to drink. When he had drunk, Drusiana said: “I would like to say some prayers for the soul of my father, and thereafter will come to bed right away. Meanwhile, do you go to bed.” He at once undressed and got into bed, and it befell that he was put to sleep shortly thereafter by the power of what he had eaten and drunk.

Then Drusiana took up the aforementioned keys and listened whether any other person was stirring. When she heard that all was quiet, she went in silent secrecy to Bevis, bringing him all his armor. They went to where Swallowtail was stabled, took another fine horse for Drusiana, mounted and rode to the aforementioned gate. She was trembling all over with fright. The main gate being opened (that is, the one that could be opened with the keys that she had), they could not open the post-gate, since one of the burghers living by the gate had it. They called out to him and he came with the keys, but when he saw the lady, he said to Bevis: "Who are you? For it seems no to me honest thing to lead away this lady." Bevis said: "Open the gate and concern yourself no further in this matter, for I go about the king's business."

Meanwhile two of the burgher's companions came up and spoke harshly. One of the said: "By my faith, that horse looks like Swallowtail to me," and ran up at its side. At once the horse veered to the side and gave him a pair of kicks in the chest, so that he fell dead to the ground. Bevis drew his sword and slew the other two, snatched up the keys, opened the gate, and the rode out, taking the road toward Montefeltro. They rode all night long.

When it was near dawn, Drusiana said: "I am exhausted, I can ride no further." She dismounted and walked a while on foot, then remounted her horse. As the day brightened, she wanted to dismount again, but Bevis pointed toward the city whence they had come and said: "We must hurry and ride faster, so that people will not overtake us. And he began to comfort her and to speak cheerfully to dispel her melancholy. But she was tired out by waking and riding, and cursed the day and the hour when she fell in love with him, and blamed him for the pains that she had suffered on his behalf. Then Bevis said: "For my pains I will not blame you, however many I have suffered on your behalf, so much more do I love you and ever will love you." At this, she smiled.

Pulican

27-29: *The Dog-Man*

27

The sun had already passed the house of the fourth wind²² when Duke Sanguin, among other barons who were taking their pleasure, began to say: “This King Marcabrun does not seem to be rising this morning.” When he had said these words, they went to call him. Entering his chamber, they found him still asleep and, when they cried out to him, he did not stir. But Sanguin began to shake him, so that he brought him to his senses. When they opened the window and did not see Drusiana, they questioned the king about her, and he recounted what had happened to him, and how she had given him drink and he had fallen asleep.

At this, one of the barons said: “Last night three men were found dead by the gate, and the gate was open.” At once they made search throughout the palace and, Drusiana not being found, Duke Sanguin went to Floris’ palace with many armed men. Refusing to hear any excuses, they killed Floris and all his company. Because the horse Swallowtail and Bevis armor were nowhere found, they realized that the pilgrim had been Bevis of Hampton.

With the king and his barons assembled in the palace, all the city ran to arms at this news. Then an old baron gave counsel to King Marcabrun, saying: “Do as I advise, if you wish to overtake Bevis and Drusiana. You have Pulican in fetters in your prison, who was born of a lady and a great mastiff, and who is half dog. Drusiana had him fettered because he is very savage. Know that King Armin wanted to have him burned at birth; but Drusiana pleaded for mercy and by wondrous good

²² House of the fourth wind: a technical expression. The hours between sunrise and sunset were designated by the eight directions of the wind-rose, each of them named (Tramontano, Greco, Levante, Scilocco etc.). The time here indicated is that of Scilocco, that is, about eleven o’clock.

fortune succeeded in freeing him. He runs faster than any deer or stag, and he has a sharp nose and is a strong archer. If you promise to free him from prison and his chains, he will overtake Bevis and offer battle, and meanwhile your people will be at his back. In this way you will regain the lady and cause Bevis' death."

Pulican was at once sent for. Brought in fetters before the king, he in brief words told him how things stood and said: "If you promise me to overtake him and succeed to get him into my hands, I swear by this crown to give you the rule of a city and to enfranchise you and make you exceedingly cherished at my court."

Pulican, in his desire to escape prison and gain his freedom, promised him all he wished and requested a light armor of tempered leather, a bow with many arrows, a sword, and three javelins. He dressed himself in the pilgrim garb that Bevis had worn, and then he said to the king: "Have your men follow me." He took up a tattered piece of flag and said: "If I enter the forest, I will tie small strips of this flag to some branches, and by that sign your people can follow, for I will quickly overtake him." Having said this, he left by the gate Bevis had used and followed his tracks. A great crowd of armed men rode out behind him, following the tokens and signs that Pulican provided. And he ran right along the track that Bevis had taken, knowing it by his scent and by the tracks.

28

Bevis had traveled with Drusiana until noon, when the lady, exhausted by waking and riding, said to Bevis: "O my lord, I am so tired that I can no longer sit on a horse. I pray you, let us move a little away from the road, so that I may snatch a few moments of rest." And Bevis, having no other choice, did so.

Having moved about three stone's throws or a little further off the roadside, they found a little clearing and dismounted by the side of a small river which ran with clear water. After leading their horses to drink, they sat down. And, as Love will usually prompt people, it happened that, as they gazed upon each other, Bevis disarmed and, delighting in the solitary woodland place, began to speak of the errant knights of Great Britain long ago. They then embraced several times and Bevis rested his head on her lap, while she leaned hers upon his side, and they fell asleep. Swallowtail came to gaze down on them and saw that they were sleeping. He stopped grazing and became more attentive to stand on guard than to his pasture.

In the meantime, Pulican arrived where Bevis had left the road, and knew by his smell what had occurred. At once he turned around and tied a little piece of the banner so that when King Marcabrun and his men arrived, they would follow in Pulican's traces. By chance two bears and three stags, who fled as Pulican was following the scent, made such great noise that Swallowtail became aware of Pulican, ran toward Bevis with loud neighing and touched him with his hooves. The lady started upright and, hearing the noise, roused Bevis, who quickly threw his hauberk on his back, tied on his helmet, grasped his sword, and mounted.

When he was on horseback, Pulican saw him and quickly turned toward him, crying: "Bevis of Hampton, you are a dead man unless you surrender to me. You did an evil thing to have stolen Drusiana from King Marcabrun. Bevis put his lance in rest and rode at Pulican, but he leapt aside before he could touch him. Then Pulican hurled a javelin at him, but Swallowtail made a great leap sideways so that the javelin missed him. All three of the javelins missed, because of Swallowtail's dexterity. Seeing this, Pulican began to fire arrows at the horse.

Then Bevis dismounted, drew his sword, and walked toward Pulican, saying: “Pulican, no good knight offers combat with bow and arrows; let us use our swords instead.” At this, Pulican threw his bow on the ground, took his sword in hand, and with it began to engage Bevis in combat.

29

As they battled hand-to-hand with their swords, Pulican’s dexterity was so grade that Bevis could not touch him, but Pulican gave him five wounds. Much did Bevis marvel at Pulican’s great agility, and as he kept losing blood, was possessed by a furious rage. But when Pulican saw Bevis tiring, he thought that he would not be able to escape King Marcabrun’s men, and (to have the honor of himself presenting Drusiana to King Marcabrun) he left Bevis standing and ran toward Swallowtail. Swallowtail could do nothing against Pulican’s speed, and Pulican seized him and led him to Drusiana, and said to her: “My lady, mount this horse and come with me to King Marcabrun.” But Bevis, though wounded all over and weighed down with his armor, came up and resumed battle with Pulican by Drusiana’s side.

At that moment Drusiana saw King Marcabrun’s men approaching from afar, and was sorely afraid. She saw the Bevis was tired and wounded and began to speak to Pulican: “Pulican, is this the recompense you render me for the services I have done you when I was nine years old. For you would have been led away to be burned in a blazing fire. They said that you were born in mortal sin and sired by a beast, that is, a mastiff, on a rational woman. I pleaded for mercy for you from my father and saved you from death. And now you want to kill me and my lord? For know that Bevis is my first husband. Ah gentle Pulican, when shall you repay me for having relieved and nourished you, if you do not repay me at this moment? Will you not believe that Bevis can make you a great lord? He will have you baptized with holy water, and you shall become a faithful Christian.”

When Pulican heard these words, he wept with tenderness and said to the lady: “I am your faithful servant,” and threw himself upon his knees, surrendered his sword and declared himself her prisoner. She embraced him and prevailed on Bevis to pardon him and restored peace. Then Pulican said: “My dear lord, by the love of Drusiana I advise you that King Marcabrun is hastening toward you with a great troop of knights.” And he told him how Drusiana’s brother Floris and his sixty knights had been slain.

Then the lady said: “Let us be gone from here!” And Bevis and Pulican swore fidelity to each other. Then Bevis mounted, as did Drusiana, and Pulican ran alongside their horses, and they proceeded to the castle that Bevis had seen. Arriving at the gate, they asked for entry. But the guard went to the lord of the castle, whose name was Duke Canor, and asked his wife if she would allow them to gain entrance. She, curious to see the creature whom they described as half man, half dog, said to the duke: “Let them come in. If they are persons of worth, do them honor; if not, send them on their way.” He therefore gave permission to have them enter, and they were led into lodgings of the duke who they assigned a room and showed them great honor.

30-34: **Montefeltro** [summary]

Castle Montefeltro served as a refuge for the fugitives for a little over eight months, until Marcabrun gained control of it by treachery and destroyed it. Bevis, Drusiana and Pulican fled to the forest.

Separation in the Forest

35

Our author²³ now turns to Bevis and Pulican and Drusiana. After they had left the road and fled to the forest, it proved very troubling for Drusiana to ride, since the time was near when she would give birth, for she had been with child for eight months and fifteen days when they left Montefeltro. Also, as they went through the forest, they had not eaten for three days. Let all think now what poor Drusiana, being pregnant, could do!

On the third day, Pulican killed a young deer, but they had no means of cooking it, for they had no fire. By chance they came upon a little brook which contained many pebbles, and Bevis said to Pulican: “Take up one of those black stones you see” (for these were flint stones). They went a little further and came amid a great quantity of holm oaks, and one of these oaks was very thick, which the wind had some time before broken and felled, and it was half rotten. Bevis dismounted and disarmed. He drew his sword and with so belabored that black stone and rotten wood, that the wood at last took flame and they made a great fire. Pulican skinned the deer and they roasted some of its flesh and ate of it. They tied the rest to their saddle-bows and carried it with them, and they took a large piece of the holm oak and carried it along also.

They traveled through that forest for fifteen days, never finding a human dwelling and eating the venison and acorns and nuts and wild berries. Having at last found a spring of most clear and sweet water, despairing of finding inhabited dwellings, they stopped to rest in that spot, for it was a pleasant spot. They erected a pretty cottage for themselves and their horses, made of wood and thatch, and they gathered up straw that was drying in the fields both for their horses and to sleep on. There Drusiana felt the pangs of labor approaching, and for that reason more than any other they there made their dwelling.

²³ In typical late-medieval manner, Andrea occasionally introduces an unnamed “authority” whose account he is supposedly following. In most Carolingian romances, this “author” is Bishop Turpin. (But see notes pp. [?] and [?].)

36

As pleased God, they had no sooner completed work on their cottage, than Drusiana was delivered of twin boys, and Bevis assisted her as best as he could. Since they had no swaddling bands, they took off their shirts and surcoats and made swaddling of them. Pulican ranged the forest and caught now hares, now pheasants and other wildfowl, and on these they lived. Drusiana rested for eight days after childbirth, and then they baptized the boys, and gave the first-born the name of Guy², and the second-born they named Sinibald².

After the eight days had passed, Pulican said: "Surely I will search throughout this forest so that I may discover some way out of it, or some human habitation. I pray you, Bevis, if three days should pass before I return, to have no worry on my behalf." Drusiana said: "Alas, if you forsake us, we will die of hunger." And then Bevis said to Pulican: "It would be much better, for the love of Drusiana, if you remain and I go searching at a venture. I will return in three days, whether I have good fortune or not." And thus they agreed. Bevis urgently commended his lady and his children to Pulican, mounted his horse, weeping, and rode out into the forest to find a human dwelling.

At the beginning of the second day he encountered a mighty river, and following its banks, he found a ship full of merchants. He prayed them for the love of God that they might take on board himself and his companion and his wife who had just born two children. They merchant pitied the lady and they said they would wait all the next day in the same place. Bevis said to Swallowtail: "Now, my noble horse, you must needs make speed to return to our lodging; for verily I by myself could not hope to return there." Then the horse returned by the way they had taken with all the speed it could.

37

It happened that as soon as Bevis had parted from the cottage where he left Pulican and Drusiana, Pulican (since the day was fair) rose up, took up his bow and quiver and his sword, and entered the forest to hunt wildfowl to feed himself and the lady. Having taken some, he returned to the cottage and found at two stones' throw nearby two lions who were at that moment feeding on a stag. These lions had passed near the cottage and taken and killed that stage just forty spans from the cottage. When Drusiana saw them, she grew afraid, took the two children in her arms and fled through the forest in terror. She thought that the lions had killed Pulican and that Bevis was lost or dead in the wilderness. Therefore she fled in such terror through the woods, with her children in her arms.

Amidst all this, Pulican arrived and saw the two lions. He did not stay near them, but ran to the cottage and, not finding Drusiana, began calling. But she by mischance was already more than a league away. Pulican began to grieve, thinking that the lions had devoured Drusiana and her sons, and said: "Woe is me, sorrowful man! What will Bevis say, to whom he so strongly commended Drusiana and her children?" In his grief, he did not use his nose to follow Drusiana's traces, but took his sword in hand and assailed the two lions. With his first blow, he split the skull of the first and hurled him dead to the ground, though the lion gave him a huge wound in the chest.

But the other lion did even worse, for he clawed him with his paws from behind, ripping open his armor and his flesh, and tried to take him up by the neck in his mouth. But Pulican turned around so nimbly that he did not succeed, and stabbed his bowels with the point of his sword so that it pierced through to the other side. The lion hurled itself against Pulican and assailed his body with his claws, ripping the front of his body. Nevertheless Pulican stabbed at him again so that the lion fell dead to the ground. Pulican could not take twenty steps before he fell to earth like a dead man, with his bowels dropping from his body. There he lay all that day and the night that followed. The next morning Bevis returned to the cottage.

Bevis had ridden all night so as to return to the ship on time. Reaching the cottage in the morning and finding no one, he called out and no one answered. Much grieved he searched here and there, and found the blood of the stag and wondered, saying: "Oh God, whose blood might this be?" As he lamented and gazed further, he saw the two dead lions, and passing beyond them, found Pulican on the ground. Since he was still alive, he questioned him about Drusiana, and Pulican told him what had happened and begged him for the grace of God to baptize him before he should die.

Bevis said: "I will baptize you, but tell me the truth: Do you know what has happened to Drusiana and my sons?" Pulican answered: "I can tell you no more than I have told you already; but I believe that these lions have devoured her and the children. However, when I did not find her when I returned, I in wrath gave battle to these lions."

Then Bevis baptized him with water from the spring that rose near the cottage, and gave him to drink. And when Pulican had drunk, he died. Bevis remained there as grieved as any knight ever was, for the sake now of his lady, now of his children, and now of Pulican. He dug a grave as well as he could and buried Pulican. Then he ran calling out in grief throughout the forest, but at last he went on his way to return where he had left the ship.

Meanwhile Drusiana chanced to arrive by another way at the river that Bevis had found, and, walking along it, found the ship. It was already the end of the day when Bevis should have arrived; thus, when the lady came up, the merchants took her aboard. She commended herself to certain merchants and they had pity on her, assigned a corner of the ship to her and her children, and gave her whatever was needful. When evening fell, they would no longer wait, secretly thinking that the

knight had ravished her somewhere and that she had fled from him. But so as not to grieve her, they did not tell her this.

They embarked, following the course of the river, and entered the sea in the golf called the Sea of Marmara near Constantinople. The river from which they entered it was called Nopolis.²⁴ Drusiana then asked them where they were going. They replied: "We are headed for Cyprus." They thence sailed to many other places. Nonetheless she begged them to put her on land, if they could, in Armenia, and they, after a long time, finally set her ashore in a harbor of Lesser Armenia, and the lord of that land was her father, King Armin.

She disguised her face by using some of the herbs that Bevis had taken from the false pilgrim's bundle. She thus remained unrecognized and turned for assistance to her father King Armin. Ever unrecognized, she stayed for a long time at his court, and there she raised her two sons, that is, Guy and Sinibald.

Bevis Returns to Hampton

39: Voyage to Castle Saint-Simon

Returning to his story, the author speaks of Bevis who, after burying Pulican and not finding Drusiana, returned where he had left the ship. Not finding her, he followed the course of the stream down to the sea and waited to see if perhaps a passing ship would take him aboard. He stayed thus that day and the following night, suffering great hunger. In the morning, at about the third hour²⁵, he saw a great ship passing over the high sea and made such violent signals and cried out that the sailors saw him, lowered the sails, cast anchor, and sent out the longboat with eight

²⁴ Nopolis: this river is imaginary, since no navigable river enters the Sea of Marmara.

²⁵ third hour: that is, about nine o'clock.

oarsmen. They asked him in the English tongue who he was. And Bevis replied that he was an unfortunate knight and asked them to take him aboard. They, seeing such a handsome knight, took him and the horse on the boat and brought him to the ship.

This was God's doing, for the ship that arrived here was commanded by Thierry of Castle Saint-Simon who, having learned that Bevis was in Armenia, had left England for Armenia to find him. Not finding him there, he proceeded to Apollonia, having learned that he was at Montefeltro and how he had parted thence. Therefore he imagined that Bevis was wandering through the land to seek his fortunes, and so he hired a great company of soldiers and was bringing them westward, where his father was ever at war in Hampton.

When he saw Bevis, he asked him whence he came and what his name was. Bevis said that he was called Anthony the Armenian. Thierry then asked if he had ever seen Bevis, and he replied: "I have heard him mentioned." Then Bevis asked for something to eat, and while he was eating, Thierry asked him if he would go to war with them in the west. Bevis said: "I would go even to the House of Ill Fortune. But what do you call the place where you would take me?" Thierry answered: "It is a castle in England, called Castle Saint-Simon, which is at war with a city called Hampton, whose lord is a traitor from Maganza named Dudon. He murdered Duke Guy of Hampton during a hunt, aided by the treachery of his wife." Bevis asked how and why he murdered him, and Thierry told him the whole story. Bevis began to weep, and told them he was weeping out of compassion for that Bevis of whom they were telling him.

Then Thierry asked him where he had received the bearings that he displayed on his shield. Bevis said: "Why do you ask me this?" Thierry replied: "Because Bevis' father bore these very arms: a red lion on a blue field, with a chevron of silver." Said Bevis: "A lady who dubbed me knight gave me

these arms.” As the continued sailing, Bevis promised to stay in his company until the end of the war.

They sailed for many days, and in that time Bevis grew so dear to Thierry, that he asked all those whom he had hired to name him their commander; and so they did. They sailed to Sicily, and there Thierry laded the brigantine, as well as two other vessels, with horses. They crossed the sea as far as Avignon, that is to the mouth of the Rhone, and from there went by land to Bordeaux. There he boarded ship with three hundred knights and brought them to the harbor of Winchelsea, two days journey from the castle.

There they disembarked, mounted their horses and proceeded to Castle Saint-Simon. Sinibald, with many other knight, rode out to meet them. With him came Sir Richard of Canterbury. Unspeakable was the great joy of Sinibald at the return of his son, who had been gone for a year and six months. And he asked him if he had not heard of Bevis. And he recounted where he had been and what he had heard, and how he had enlisted his men, and where he had found Sir Augustine the Armenian, and made him commander. Sinibald was greatly delighted, and they went on to the castle, and in its town all that troop was lodged. All made merry, except Richard of Canterbury, because of the love he felt for Countess Floricia; and already he began to be jealous of Sir Augustine, who was so greatly honored.

40-42: **Dudon Defeated** [summary]

Bevis, joined by Richard of Canterbury and Thierry, launched an expedition against Dudon and Alberic at Hampton. He was assisted by Sir Rupert of the Cross, a nobleman of the town who had long harbored a grudge against the Maganza usurpers. During the attack on the city, Bevis and Swallowtail performed prodigious feats of daring and valor, and in the end Bevis' army captured the town and massacred the men of Maganza. However, Dudon, though gravely wounded but escaped and returned to Maganza.

43: **Recognition**

While the knights were resting at Castle Saint-Simon, Richard conceived a great jealousy of Bevis out of his love for Floricia, for he suspected that she loved Bevis better because of his great feats of prowess. Nonetheless she did not show outwardly the hatred that he carried within.

In the course of tending to the ills of the wounded, Sinibald's wife, Thierry's mother, had often seen Bevis armed and unarmed, and had observed all his noble ways. She one day called Sinibald to her chamber and said: "Sinibald, you shall certainly discover that this Sir Augustine is none other than Bevis, to whom I gave suck. I am of the mind that he is the very image of his father Guy. I propose that we have a bath prepared for him. You will see that he will not want to undress lest he be recognized. But if he undresses, look upon his right shoulder, for he has the purple mark of Royal House of France, and Bevis' is like a little blood-red cross beneath the skin. Sinibald was agreed and gave command.

Then Sinibald went to Bevis and said: "Sir Augustine, I have had a bath prepared for you and me." Said Bevis: "I have no desire to bathe." Said Sinibald: "It is the custom here; I beg you not to shame me by refusing to bathe with me because I am an old man." Bevis blushed and replied: "Very well then, I will do as you please, but let it be late this evening, so that we can go to bed immediately after."

Thus the bath was ordered for the evening; and when evening came, Sinibald called for Bevis and the two entered the chamber and began to undress. Bevis, as soon as Sinibald had entered the bath, put out the light and jumped into the bath also. As soon as he was naked, the duchess, Sinibald's wife, entered the room, but Bevis lowered himself up to his chin in the water, and said to the ladies: "What are you looking for? Do you wish to bathe also?" The noble lady answered: "No, we do not wish to bathe, but we have come to discover the sign of the ancient and noble lineage. You need

not to hide under the water, for I know you very well, since I nursed you for seven years with milk from my breast. You are the son of my lord, Duke Guy of Hampton, and of that monstrous mother, Duchess Brandoria, who desired to cause your death. You call yourself Augustine, but your true name is Bevis.”

When Bevis heard these words, he began to say: “I do not know who this Bevis is of whom you speak.” But she threw her arms around his neck, so that he could no longer hide himself, and pointed to the mark that he bore on his right shoulder. Bevis, seeing that he could not hide himself, made her turn around and confessed that he was the man, saying: “You have caught me in the bath.” At once he put his clothing back on, leaving the bath, and there was great rejoicing. Sinibald embraced him and kissed him, and so did the lady.

Then Sinibald began to say: “O child of Fortune, I commend Richard of Canterbury to you, for it is by his aid that we have ever maintained the war against the traitor Dudon and your disloyal mother. Without him we could never have lasted.”

As he was speaking these words, Thierry joined them, and when he heard that this was Bevis, he never felt so much joy, and knelt at his feet. Bevis embraced and kissed him, and also his father Sinibald; and the lady, above all, could not have enough of embracing and kissing him, calling him son and lord. Then Bevis sent for Richard, and when he came, Thierry told him how the man who had performed such feats of prowess was Bevis, son of his liege, Duke Guy, and in what manner they had recognized him, and the part that his mother had played. At this, Richard rejoiced greatly and ran towards Bevis and knelt before him, begging pardon for the grudge he had born him. Bevis embraced and kissed him, and then called together Sinibald and his foster mother and Richard and Thierry and Floricia (for no others knew what had occurred) and made them swear secrecy,

informing them of the hidden worries in his mind. They all swore to keep him in concealment and to call him Augustine, whatsoever might happen. At this, they left the chamber very happily, and that evening they supped amid great festiveness and joy.

44-45: ***Bevis Enters Hampton in Disguise*** [summary]

Bevis, disguised as a physician, secretly entered Hampton with Thierry, intending to kill Dudon. He found lodging with Sir Rupert of the Cross, a fierce adversary of the Maganza faction, who had long been an ally of Sinibald's. While secret plans were laid to seize the city, Bevis presented himself at court, where (unrecognized by her) he found his mother Brandoria as villainously disposed as ever. However, he contrived to persuade her to have her son Gailon conduct him to Dudon's bedside the next day.

Hampton Reconquered

46

After Rupert of the Cross had learned Brandoria's cruelty, he at once wrote a letter to Sinibald at the castle, and sent it by a servant at night. Sinibald and Richard armed six hundred knights and went by night to Hampton, and stood at watch for the moment when the alarm should be raised in the city. In the evening, Rupert secretly talked with a great number of citizens, and many of them went to his lodging where they saw Bevis and talked with him, and the greater part wept with emotion and offered their aid and their persons. Bevis advised them to have no fear and freely to take up arms upon hearing the first alarm in the morning. They promised to do so, and in the night, after consulting many friends, ordered a gate to be seized by which Sinibald might enter.

When dawn rose, Bevis secretly armed as well as he could, and bade Thierry arm likewise, and after the alarm was sounded, disguised himself as a physician, and went to the palace. Gailon came to meet him and brought him to the keep where Dudon lay, while, as Bevis had advised, Thierry occupied the upper fortress. When they came where Dudon lay, Bevis sent everyone from the chamber, opened the window and greeted Dudon, who lay in bed grievously ill and said: "Master

doctor, you have come in good time!” Meanwhile Thierry climbed to the top of the tower that overlooked the city.

Bevis asked Dudon who had wounded him. He replied: “A knight who is staying at Castle Saint-Simon, whose name is Augustine. But, to tell the truth, I suspect that he is the son of Duke Guy of this city.” Bevis said: “And what brought about this war between you?” Dudon said: “The cause was my father, who was slain in Paris, in the presence of the emperor. I slew Guy, the lord of this city, and made myself its lord,” (and he recounted how Bevis, his son, had fled), “and I fear that he who wounded me is that same Bevis, and I am in great danger of death because of him.”

Bevis said, “Show me your wound.” And when the bandages were removed, Bevis said: “Now know the truth: that Augustine is verily Bevis of Hampton, whose father you have slain.” And while he told him these tidings a squire gave, as Bevis had intended, the signal that Bevis had arranged for. Then Rupert of the Cross, with many armed men, ran up to the castle, and when those within began to defend themselves, Thierry cried out: “Long live Bevis of Hampton! Death to the traitors of Maganza!” and the fortress was taken.

When Dudon heard the noise, he began to say: “Master Doctor, what noise is this?” Bevis said: “I will tell you at once,” threw his cloak aside and drew his sword to kill him, crying, “Traitor, I am Bevis, at whose hands you must die in revenge for my father,” and lifted his sword to strike him. But Dudon said: “It is great shame for a knight to kill a man who is more dead than alive.” Then Bevis blushed and withheld his blow, and he seized him and dragged him from the bed, put his foot on his throat, and said, “Either I kill you now, or you will promise to return to fight with me in a court where the lists shall be secure to us both.” He promised to do so, and to call him into the lists where both of them should have safe-conduct.

At these words, Gailon entered the chamber and said: “Father, there is cry rising throughout the city of ‘Long live Bevis of Hampton!’” Dudon said: “My son, it is worse than that, for we are prisoners, and this man is Bevis.” Hearing this, Gailon was thunderstruck and quite beside himself. And Rupert of the Cross entered the fortress with many armed men and seized it. Arriving at the chamber, they intended to kill Dudon and Gailon, but Bevis would not let them kill them.

Thierry said: “My lord, you are acting like a bumpkin who warms the serpent at his breast that will kill him afterwards. You make yourself think that Gailon will love you like a brother. I will tell you two reasons why you should not trust him: the first is that he is of the blood of Maganza, and the second that he has Brandoria, your mother, for a mother.”

Bevis had both of them seized, and had his mother also, and then armed himself from head to foot and sallied from the palace, and they swept through the city. Already the citizens had admitted Sinibald of the Castle and Richard of Canterbury, with sixty knights and much infantry, and they swept into the city, and many of Dudon’s men were killed and despoiled. Everyone cried: “Long live Bevis, son of Duke Guy of Hampton! Death to the traitor of Maganza!” Thus Bevis took the whole city, and became lord of Hampton, the city founded by his grandfather.

47: ***Dudon and Gailon Return Home*** [summary]

Released on parole, Dudon and Gailon returned to Maganza where they at once began plotting against Bevis.

Bevis and Drusiana Reunited

48: ***Dudon and Pepin Attack***

After Dudon had returned to his territory of Maganza, he at once began hastily to gather great sums of gold and silver, and to hire many armed men. While he was doing so, King Angelus of France died, leaving his son Pepin.

Hearing this, Dudon went to France to speak with Pepin. He swore fealty to him, with the provision that he would assist him against Bevis of Hampton, recalling to Pepin the death of his father, Rainier, who had been slain at Paris in the presence of King Angelus by Guy of Hampton. And he told him how he had slain Duke Guy to be avenged, and how Bevis had taken the reign of Hampton from him.

King Pepin, hearing Dudon promise him vassalage, desirous of making him his man, little seeing that he was doing more harm than good, promised to give him substantial assistance, and ordered ambassadors to be sent throughout his realm to assemble a great army. Those of Aragon and other parts of Spain, fearing that Pepin wished to wage war against them, on account of the army that they heard he was gathering, sent their ambassadors to King Pepin, and he concluded a six-month truce with them all. Then, with a great army on shipboard, he crossed into England to the port of Hampton and landed with fifty-thousand knights, of whom ten thousand were Dudon's. The made camp outside the city of Hampton. Bevis had heard of their coming, and had strongly reinforced the cities garrison and walls and moats and battlements, and had three-thousand and five hundred knights in his pay.

King Pepin had ordered his army in four divisions, each under its own commander. The first he had given to Otho of Trier, with ten thousand knights: he bore the blazon of Duke Guy of Hampton, who had given it to him when they were both in Spain. When Pepin ordered him to lead the first division against the enemy, he replied: "Gladly, but not against friends." The second division he

gave to Gailon; the third to, Alberic; the fourth and last (consisting of twenty-thousand men) he kept for himself. And thus, in four companies, they gathered around the city of Hampton.

49-50: ***Dudon's Death*** [summary]

During the first part of the siege, Dudon's division was defeated and Dudon himself was killed.

Reconciliation with Pepin and the Death of Brandoria

51

When the emperor Pepin heard how Dudon had been slain and his men discomfited, he ordered Otho to go into battle. Otho replied: "Your Sacred Majesty, you must pardon me, for Duke Guy of Hampton was my liege lord, and my banners declare it. I will not here break my allegiance." The emperor, in a rage, mounted his horse, but Otho said: "Your Sacred Majesty, if it please you, I will make peace between you and Bevis." Pepin replied: "I will leave you my banners provided you keep them safe for me." And he promised this, and Pepin rode into battle with ten thousand men, leaving his banners and tents and his prisoners in the charge of Otho of Trier, who promised to render them back even as he had received them.

When Pepin arrived on the battlefield, a great outcry and conflict arose all round. Bevis, seeing the king's men coming, assembled all his host and rode out openly against him with a great lance in hand. One army encountered the other, amid a huge clash of lances, and many men on both sides were knocked down dead or wounded. Pepin and Bevis charged each other with their lances amid the rest. Pepin broke his lance when he struck Bevis, but Bevis could not touch Pepin, who was so short in the waist that his saddle-bow reached all the way to the visor of his helmet.

After their horses passed each other, Bevis turned in a rage and saw that Pepin had drawn his sword and swung around toward Bevis. Then he, enraged, put his lance back in rest and ran at Pepin, aiming it low at the saddlebow and hoping to pierce both it and the emperor. But he aimed so low, that the lance passed underneath the thighs, past both saddlebows, and lifted it Pepin and all, so that he did not stay mounted. Since the lance shattered, Bevis drew his sword and returned at once for hand-to-hand combat. Seeing him knocked down (for the horses had reared), he grasped him by the neck-guard and pulled him from the saddle. Pepin was greatly afraid and said to Bevis: “If you put me back in the saddle, I will make peace with you and render myself as your prisoner.” So Bevis, out of respect for his dignity, put him back on his horse.

Then Pepin called for the trumpets to sound the retreat, and so did Bevis. Pepin and Bevis, with their heads bared of their helmets, went to parley in the middle of the field, and made peace. Said Pepin: “Most valiant Sir Bevis, it befits the Christian faith that you and I should maintain it. I much marvel that you should have done wrong to Dudon of Maganza.” Bevis replied: “It is written, ‘*Audi aliam partem*.’²⁶” Then he told him the whole truth of the treason of his mother, of the murder of his father, Duke Guy of Hampton, of Dudon’s seizure of his city, of how he had fled as a boy, and how he had reached Armenia in the Levant; how he had been there and returned from there, and the courtesy he had shown to Dudon, and the oath that Dudon had sworn. When King Pepin heard this, he wept with compassion and said: “Dudon never informed me of these matters; if he had, I would never have come here.” Then Bevis invited Pepin to lodge inside Hampton, and Pepin rode into the city.

²⁶ *Audi aliam partem*: “Hear the other side”—an ancient forensic adage.

Bevis had commanded, before going to parley with King Pepin, that his mother should be walled up at the foot of the stairs of the palace, with only her head showing, and Rupert of the Cross had her instantly walled up.

52

When Pepin reached the royal palace (which old Beviset had erected) and dismounted to ascend the stairs, he found Brandoria walled up, weeping and crying for mercy. Pepin demanded to know who she was, and was told that this was Bevis' mother. When Pepin had ascended to the palace, he called for Bevis and asked him to pardon his mother. Then Bevis told him in good order how she had tried to poison him, and how her lechery had made her betray his father, because he was old.

At this the emperor wondered greatly and said: "But she is your mother!" Bevis replied: "Your Sacred Majesty, I must ask you to condemn her to death tomorrow morning." The emperor did not wish this, but Bevis said: "You are he who must establish reason and justice in the land, and by right reason you must condemn her to death."

The emperor, half by compulsion, condemned her to death on the next morning. Brandoria called out and asked to speak to Gailon; and Bevis had him brought from prison, and set him free in the presence of Pepin. Gailon knelt to Bevis and begged his mercy. Bevis told him: "If you are loyal, I will treat you like a brother; but if not, I will have you hanged." And he sent him to talk with Brandoria, and she said: "O Gailon my son, I leave you with my blessing, provided you do as I command. I command you never to turn against Bevis, my rightful son, who is the best knight in the world, and the son of the most generous duke who ever bore arms, whom I by monstrous treason caused to be slain. I am worthy of a thousand deaths, and I leave Bevis, my son and your brother, with my blessing. And if you should ever turn against him, I leave you with my curse."

Soon after, she confessed herself and received communion; and Bevis went to Castle Saint-Simon, since none asked him to have mercy on his mother.

And she was quartered, and one of each of her quarters was hung on each of the city gates, with an inscription that declared how Pepin had condemned her to death. That evening, when Bevis returned, he had her taken down and buried. Bevis asked the emperor to let his troops return to Paris, and he sent them back to France and himself remained for two months with Bevis at Hampton. Pepin was waiting for Bevis to free him from his parole, and Bevis was waiting for him to ask to be freed.

Meanwhile it was noised abroad that the emperor was being kept in prison by Bevis of Hampton. Therefore many prepared to war against the realm of France and against all Christendom, and among these were the kingdoms of Spain, of Aragon, of Navarre, the principedom of Wales and many Saracen lands. Therefore the Christians in the West were in great alarm, and so a great counsel of barons was assembled at Paris, and an embassy was dispatched to Bevis.

When Bevis, along with King Pepin, heard this news, the king begged to be released of his word, and Bevis freely granted him parole. Then he asked King Pepin, by his grace, to free him and all his subjects of all tribute and homage to the emperor. King Pepin had drawn up a plenary charter that declared him, both him and his issue, free and exempt from all tribute so long as he kept the Christian faith and defended the Holy Catholic Church. And then he departed

Thinking that Bevis would ransom him with gold and silver, he left Otho of Trier as a hostage and rode out of Hampton and returned to Paris. But Bevis, when the emperor had left, paid great honor to Otho, and soon after sent him to King Pepin with as many armed men as he could take with him.

King Pepin was much rejoiced by this, and praised Bevis greatly for it. As for Thierry, he had accompanied the Emperor Pepin to Paris.

King Pepin assembled a great army to march out against the king of Spain; but when the king of Spain and the others heard that Pepin had escaped from prison and was back in Paris, they all abandoned the enterprise. Pepin sent Otho with a great force throughout the region and reconquered all the land that had been taken, and exacted vengeance for the injury suffered from those who had caused it.

53-56: ***The Conversion of Slovenia*** [summary]

Margery of Slovenia and Hungary, from whose prison tower Bevis had earlier made his escape, was wooed by Druan, a Saracen king. When she refused him, he marched into Slovenia and attempted to take her by force. Pepin, assisted by Bevis, organized a campaign to relieve her. Druan was defeated and killed. In gratitude, Margery and all her people converted to Christianity and were baptized.

Margery

57

Twelve years had passed since the day when Bevis had lost Drusiana with her two children in the woo, and when Pulican had died. Bevis made search for them through the greater part of the world and could not find Drusiana. He had been delivered from the tower of Margery, who much loved him and who meanwhile had become queen of Hungary for lack of other heir. Consider all this, he said: "I will not take a wife if Drusiana is still living and has my two sons with her, whom I baptized in the desert." Therefore he determined to proclaim a tournament, to be held at the end of the year, and he had it proclaimed throughout Germany, France, Rumania, and both Greater and Lesser Armenia, where Drusiana's father reigned. In his proclamation he announced the Bevis of Hampton wanted to take to wife Margery, daughter of King Buldras of Sinella, who had saved his

life. And then Bevis sent many minstrels and servants to the courts of nobles, to find out in secret whether there was word of her.

Hearing this news, King Armin was sorrowful, thinking that Bevis had sent Drusiana, his daughter, away, and believing she had died. But she was staying in his house and he did not know it. By chance, a minstrel arrived, and, being presented to the king, told him many pleasant things. Among others, he related much news from the West, and added how Pepin with his army had returned to France, and of his victory in Slovenia, and how Bevis of Hampton wanted to take Margaret of Sinella to wife, and of the cry which he had caused to be sent throughout the world. This was three years ago, and two of them had already passed. Thereat King Armin grew a little more cheerful for the love of his daughter, as has been said before.

But Drusiana was present in the court when the minstrel spoke these words, and she had Bevis' two children, born at the same time, by her side—that is, Buy and Sinibald. And her father did not know her. Drusiana prayed the king's grace to let the minstrel sup with her. The king granted her request, and she brought him to dine with her, and with Guy and Sinibald. She had the minstrel brought to the table, paid him great honor, and made him repeat all the news of Bevis of Hampton, as he had reported it in the hall. Weeping, she made her harp resound which had such wonderful music that the minstrel, marveling at its music, said: "My lady, I pray do not cause me so much labor."

Drusiana laughed and said: "Your news has made me play, not your office. And may my music redound to the grace of the knight whom you have so well brought to mind." After speaking these words, she sat down to eat, and her sons served her.

The minstrels, when he had eaten, at Drusiana's bidding began Bevis' story—how his father was murdered, and how Bevis fled from his mother, and how he arrived in Armenia, and all the things

he had done for Drusiana; and how he arrived at Sinella, and how Margery had captured him, and how he returned to Apollonia and took Drusiana from thence, and how he had sired two sons in the wilderness, and of the death of Pulican, and how Drusiana had been lost and they believed that the lions had eaten her. And so on, with all that had happened to Bevis until Pepin's return from Slovenia.

Hearing these things, Drusiana made a great lament and shed many tears, and would not say wherefore. But the minstrel believed that she did so out of pity she felt for Bevis. And she said: "Ah, what misadventures there were here!" Then the minstrel said: "Bevis has proclaimed a great feast, for he is taking to wife Margery, daughter of King Buldras of Sinella, who saved his life." Drusiana said: "When will this be?" And the minstrel replied: "It will be more than twenty-two months from now."

58

When Drusiana heard that her lord Bevis was alive and had returned to his country, she was very glad, thinking that her children would return to their ancestral house; and she asked the minstrel how far it was from Armenia to Hampton. The minstrel told her that Hampton was in England, and how long the way there was. Drusiana said: "Do you think that if I set out there with my children, I would get there?" The minstrel said: "My lady, the way there is too far to go; you are in this realm, and this realm seems to me to love you and your children. You would not be wise to leave what you have for what you are not certain of." Drusiana said: "I certainly want to go there, for nothing ventured, nothing gained; and he who changes his country, may change his luck." And she at once went to King Armin and asked his permission to attend Bevis' feast.

The king wondered greatly and told her to thin of how long the way was from Armenia to Hampton, but she said: “My lord, I pray you, let it be no great matter to you to let me try my luck.” The king said: “My lady, I do not know who you may be, but for love of these children of yours I have loved you like a daughter for two reasons: one, because you remind me a little bit of my lost daughter, and second, because I do not know who will rule after my death, and I am of a mind, if these two children of yours grow up well, to make the better of them my heir.” Drusiana thanked him greatly, but once more asked for his leave to go.

King Armin then said: “My daughter, I do not wish to coerce your will; but for the love of these two boys, I desire that you travel in honor, so that my daughter Drusiana be remembered at Bevis’ court.” And the king sent for a valiant knight whose name was Gillian of Armenia (he was formerly of the realm of Capadocia, but the king had promoted him) and commanded him to outfit a ship in the harbor and told him the reason. And he made it ready and the king richly furnished him with whatever he required, with great wealth of gold and silver.

When Drusiana was ready to depart, the king called her and her sons and Gillian, and said to Gillian: “I have ever preferred you since you were a boy, and I have always found you honest and loyal, and thus I have chosen you over all others for this need of mine, so that you will bring me honor. I am putting Selvatica (this is what Drusiana called herself) into your care, along with these two boys. Carry her to England to the city of Hampton. I will give you twenty-five young men, of the noblest in this city, and I have put on board your ship huge masses of gold and silver. You must know that I do not send your forth without good reason, and therefore I command you to procure me honor at the court of Bevis. See that that you never go to eat at his court, unless you have attendance about you, and do honor to this lady and her two boys. If fortune should ordain that she desires to remain in that country, let one of these boys be brought back to me, but now if that is against her

wishes. And you, lady Selvatica, greet Bevis on my behalf, and tell him to remember my daughter and to be pleased not to lose his soul.” Having said, he dismissed them and said: “Go, with my blessing!”

And she embarked with the above-mentioned company and left Armenia the Lesser. They crossed the Gulf of Setalia, caught sight of Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete, Sicily and the shores of Barbary and Spain. Entering the Ocean, they saw the Pillars of Hercules, and after sailing for many months reached England at the harbor of Hampton eight days before the deadline. They entered the city and took a rich palace for their lodging, and that palace belonged to Rupert of the Cross. There they established themselves in rich surroundings, holding sumptuous court.

59

When Drusiana and her sons had rested for three days, Gillian had Guy and Sinibald mount their steeds, and he mounted with them and ten of their young Armenian companions, and rode at pleasure throughout the city, and they were much marveled at. On the fifth day they were invited to court and they agreed to attend the feast, but not to eat; they therefore arrived there after supper. When they entered the hall, Guy and Sinibald held each other’s hands, preceding Drusiana, with Gillian at her side, and behind them all the youths they had brought with them.

Bevis and Rupert and old Sinibald and Thierry and Richard of Canterbury all rose, facing Drusiana, and gave her great honor and reverence. She was placed in a seat of high honor, and sat down between her two sons. Then the dancing began, amid the sound of many instruments. When they had danced a long while, they bid the instruments cease, and Drusiana took up a harp while Guy seized a lute and Sinibald a guitar, and they began to play. After some beautiful passages, the two boys ceased and Drusiana took the guitar and began to sing. She sang of the love of Bevis and

Drusiana, and then she sang a lay about her actions when Bevis was taken in Sinella; of how he returned to her in Apollonia, and she came with him to Montefeltro, and they fled from there into the wilderness; also, of Pulican, and of how she gave birth and how Bevis departed to discover a dwelling place; and of the two lions and her flight and escape to the ship.

While she was singing this lay, Bevis wept bitterly, and so did all the nobility, and the whole company there present. Then Bevis, when she had finished, started up and went toward her, taking her by the hand and saying: "May God and his Mother grand that Drusiana be alive, and would to God that you were Drusiana! But how do you know of these events?" Drusiana replied: "Sir Bevis, I am a lady sent by King Armin of Lesser Armenia, and I greet you on his behalf. He has sent me to beseech you and admonish you that the soul of Drusiana be not lightly struck from memory. My name is Selvatica, and I have always been in the service of Drusiana, so that none except myself knows where Drusiana can be found. I tell you: she is alive and well, and has reared your two children. They are now of the same age as these two boys of mine."

None but Bevis heard her speak these words, and she added: "I have come here for no other reason. I shall now see, sir, whether you love Drusiana and your children, and whether I should send for her and bring her into your presence." Having said this, Drusiana took her leave and returned to her lodging. Bevis had her accompanied there by all his lords and remained behind in deep thought, sighing.

And so the year's term came to an end. When the term had expired, the feasting grew doubly merry, and Margery, with the ladies in her company, prepared for her marriage to Bevis, and sent him messages to remind him of his troth. Bevis replied that he would gladly keep it, but that he wished to wait a little while longer, until the next day. "Then I will do as she wishes." He therefore

remained very pensive. Drusiana meanwhile held splendid court, and there were two reasons why Drusiana remained unrecognized: one was time, for Bevis had not seen her for fourteen years; the other was that she had disguised herself in a way that made her impossible to recognize.

60: **A Pause** [summary]

Things remained in suspense during the night, while Margery grew impatient for an answer.

Husband and Wife Reunited

61

On the next morning there were great preparations for Margery's wedding, and Bevis invited Drusiana to the feast. When she entered with all her splendid company, it was impossible to say how beautifully she was attired, with a gossamer veil covering her face, and her two sons decked out like great lords. Gillian marveled to see such nobility.

When she entered the hall, Bevis said: "My lady, you have told me that you know where Drusiana can be found. If you know, tell me, for I have promised to take this noble lady to wife, and her dowry is the whole realm of Hungary." Drusiana replied: "I have given command that she will appear before you after dinner, with the two sons she bore you. If she does not come, then marry your new wife."

Bevis waited, and after the entertainment water was brought in to wash their hands. Margery was there with more than a hundred ladies. When all the barons were seated at table, and Guy began to carve before Bevis, and Sinibald to mix the wine and to taste the viands. The attendants did not wish to let them do this, but Bevis told them to give them leave. Then the lords began to whisper: "These youths certainly look a great deal like Bevis." And as they continued to wait on Bevis and the

lords continued to whisper, Bevis heard some of their words and asked Thierry of the Castle: “What are these gentlemen saying?” Thierry replied; “My lord, they are saying that these youngsters look like you, and he most of all who is carving before you.” Bevis exclaimed: “Ah my brother Thierry, would God it were so!” And he turned to Guy, who was the elder, saying: “Do you have a father?” He replied: “Yes, my lord, and may God protect him!” And he asked: “What is your father’s name?” Guy answered as Drusiana had instructed him: “His name is Bevis of Hampton, son to Guy of Hampton,” and blushed and began to weep. Bevis turned color and asked Sinibald: “Do you have a father?” “Yes,” he answered, even as Guy had said. Bevis said: “What are your names?” Guy answered: “My name is Guy, and his is Sinibald, and we were born in the wilderness of Apollonia, and you are our father, and she who is sitting here is Drusiana, our mother.”

Then all the noblemen rose and ladies rose from their seats, and Drusiana removed the veil from her face and ran toward Bevis. He also ran toward her and embraced her and kissed her, and despite the long time that he had been without her, he beheld her, in her splendid garments, even as he used to know her. He recognized her and embraced her. There was such great weeping for joy that no language could describe it.

Drusiana fainted and was sustained by Bevis, and her companions embraced her. But all the ladies of Hampton, especially those of Sinibald of the Castle and of Rupert of the Cross, and of many others, escorted her to Bevis’ chamber. And he turned toward his sons with great tenderness, and they went on their knees before him, saying: “O father of ours, above all things we commend our mother to you, who has taken such great pains to raise us at the court of King Armin of Armenia, ever unknown. And we never knew who our father was until we arrived here in Hampton.”

Bevis was unable to reply, but he embraced and kissed them and blessed them both. And when he could speak again, he said: "O my sons, amid what ill fortunes you were begotten, and in what ill fortune born! And I was the midwife who lifted you from the ground and swaddled you." While he was speaking these words to them, he embraced and kissed them, many times thanking God for having protected them and sent them back to him.

The great joy manifested by Sinibald of the Castle can scarcely be described. He took both their hands and said: "O Lord God, blessed be Thou, as befits Thy majesty. For I have lost one Bevis, and Thou hast given me back three." He was old and could not have enough of touching them, weeping with tenderness. Rupert, Thierry, Richard of Canterbury and, at the same instant, the duchess of Castle Saint-Simon came out and embraced them. Bevis entered the chamber and found Drusiana newly dress and recovered; he once more embraced and kissed her. Then she told him how she had run from their hut for fear of the two lions, with her children in her arms; how she had found the ship, and how she had gone to Armenia. And Bevis told her of Pulican's death, and how he had baptized him. Drusiana grew very mindful of Pulican, and prayed to God for him.

Then the lords entered the chamber with Bevis' two sons. Gilian of Arminia was with them and he knelt before Bevis and Drusiana and called them their lord and lady, saying: "How could you remain hidden for so long from your father? And how can I now return to him without you or without at least one of these my young lords? What a joy this would be for my lord King Armin!"

Then they left the chamber and returned to the hall, and the feasting increased. When the lords and ladies were seated, Drusiana sat down by Bevis' side, with her son Sinibald next to her, and Guy next to Bevis. Then Margery arrived in the hall with a great following of ladies and amid tears knelt at Bevis' feet, saying: "My lord, I commend myself to you, now that God has given back your lawful

spouse together with two such lovely sons, whom God may protect and make valiant knights. But now, after the grace that God has shown you, I beg you to have mercy on me, who nor father nor brother nor lord except you.” Bevis answered her: “I can take no other wife, for our law forbids it. But I can give you a noble lord for a husband.” She replied that she would not question his judgment. Then Bevis suggested to Sinibald of the Castle that he should give her for wife to his son Thierry.

Sinibald consented grudgingly; but when Thierry was called, he accepted her without hesitation, and without longer delay pledged troth and wedded her. Since he had no ring with which to marry her, Drusiana gave him the ring with which Bevis had wedded her, and Thierry’ mother gave him another. He received for dower the realm of Hungary and all of Slovenia. Bevis promised to act as their defender, to fight for them and defend them and aid them with all his power, and to maintain their rule in the realm of Hungary against whoever might oppose them. After these holy oaths were sworn, he called Sinibald of the Castle and Thierry apart and told them: “Help me to make this feast complete by giving Floricia as a wife to Richard of Canterbury.” They were content, and the damsel was called and Richard married her. Bevis gave them a rich golden ring and endowed Richard with the city of Lima. For a whole month there was held so rich a feast that tongue of man cannot describe it. Drusiana gave many precious present from her father’s treasury. When the month was over, all took their leaves from Bevis and returned home.

Bevis reigned at Hampton with Drusiana, and afterward had by Drusiana five sons and three daughters. But these did not have the good fortune to survive, so that he was left with only Guy and Sinibald, his first-born, so that he had ten children before he had William, who later became King of England. Thierry of the Castle left in the same year for Hungary, and Bevis accompanied him and saw him crowned as king of Hungary, for King Buldras had died. Afterwards he returned

to Hampton, leaving Thierry behind with his father Sinibald and his mother, whose name was Luisa. After his return, Bevis ruled with Drusiana in great joy, so long that he grew to be an old man and outlived Drusiana's above-mentioned children.

Bevis Banished

62

Now the tale tells that while Bevis was in Hampton, the king of England, called King William, hearing of Bevis' renown, conceived a great love for him. Wanting to make one of his sons a knight, he sent for Bevis, asking him to come to London for the festival.

Bevis, who considered him a friend, went there and took with him Drusiana and his son Sinibald, and he left Guy as lord of Hampton in his place until he should return. They rode to London, where King William showed them great honor. Because of the lack of nobles in attendance at court, Bevis stayed for three months in London, until time came for Drusiana to deliver a child, and she gave birth to a boy. King William wished to have him baptized,²⁷ and he was named William in honor of the king. On that day, a very wonderful steed was given to the king, and the king gave it to Floris, his son. On the next day, the king wished to see that horse, and after he had seen it run for a while, he proclaimed a feast and had prepared a great prize for whoever should prevail at the feast. The prize was of the value of fifty ounces of gold, and for that honor many lords sent horses to compete for them.

When the horse arrived for the race, King William went to look at the place where they would race, and took Bevis with him. When they arrived there, Bevis said: "Your Sacred Majesty, would you

²⁷ The translation is literal ("*lo volle battezzare*"), but clearly the king is also the god-father or baptismal sponsor (see below, Chapters 64 and 78).

desire to race those horses against this one?" He was speaking of Swallowtail. The king began to laugh, saying that he could not run against these thoroughbreds; yet Bevis gave his word, and had it attested in writing, and sent a page for Swallowtail with the message: "Do your best!"

No sooner was the signal given, than Swallowtail ran a great distance ahead of all the other horses, with Floris' horse running second behind him, and so Swallowtail was proclaimed as the best horse there was. When Bevis came before the king, he gave the prize to him. Then Floris came up to Bevis and said: "My lord Bevis, that is a good horse you have here, for he has won the prize."

The king was much amused thereat and Floris was very annoyed. And when they had returned to the royal palace, since the time had come for dinner, Floris, in the presence of his father, asked Bevis for the gift of the horse that had won the prize. Bevis replied: "O Floris, I would give you anything I possess, except Drusiana and Swallowtail and Hampton. I would give even him to you, but this horse has saved me from great peril, and I have promised and sworn an oath that nothing but death will part me from him. Therefore please pardon me." Floris took this very ill and began to feel hatred for Bevis.

When they were at table, the king said to Bevis: "Tomorrow I wish to bestow knighthood on my son Floris, and I wish to send him forth with an army at his back against the king of Ireland. I ask as a favor from you that you ride out as a champion of my people against my enemies." Bevis replied, "With all my heart," and offered himself and his two sons for the enterprise, with as many armed men as he could muster.

After the king and Bevis and the lords had eaten, a knight from Maganza, who was staying with King William and who was very familiar with Floris, took Floris by the hand and they went walking. This knight, named Flockard, said to Floris: “See how much courtly favor your father has shown to Bevis. He has refused you the gift of a horse, and now the king has named him commander of the army, and you will be his subject.”

Floris grew thoughtful, and Flockard said to him: “You had best take this horse from him, and if he makes objection, we will kill him, like the villainous knight that he is.” Floris replied: “How can we take the horse from him?” And he said: “Every night Bevis stays for two or three hours with your father; let us go to his palace with six men and the two of us, before Bevis returns, and let us take away the horse.” Agreeing to this, they mounted their horses (there were eight of them all together) and went to Bevis’ stables, where Swallowtail was lodged.

Bevis had given orders to the man who tended to Swallowtail (his name was Rambald) to give it to no man at Floris’ command. When Floris and Flockard arrived where Swallowtail was, they asked Rambald for the horse in Bevis’ name. Rambald said to them: “If Bevis tells me so himself, I will give him to you, not otherwise.” Flockard said: “What’s this, you villain? Don’t you trust the word of Floris, the son of the king?” Rambald answered: “I’ll believe anybody; but I will not surrender the horse without permission from my master.” Then Rambald cried: “You arch-villain!” and gave him a buffet on his chest, and they rushed in where Swallowtail stood. Floris entered first and went up to the horse and seized him by the bridle.

Meanwhile Rambald, crying out loudly, drew his sword and came up behind Flockard and struck him on the head so that he fell down dead. At the same time many servants of the house were

roused by the noise and killed six of his accomplices; but the other two defended themselves so well that they killed two of Bevis' men and wounded some others.

While there was this ado, and while Floris was trying to pull at Swallowtail, the horse began to cough. He was afraid and turned away, but Swallowtail turned around and with gave him a kick of such great force with both hooves that he fell down dead in the middle of the stable.

When Rambald saw them all dead, he began to say: "Now try to take Swallowtail! Now you have gotten Swallowtail that you came looking for!" Some men who had run up at the noise, seeing the king's son lying dead, ran back to the palace and told his father. Other citizens went to the stable and put the body on a bier and carried it to the palace amid great lamentation. And Bevis' servants fled to escape death.

64

When King William heard of his son's death, he waxed extremely angry, and said to his lords: "Seize that traitor Bevis, for he is a murderer." Bevis put his hand on a weapon, somewhat like a saber, that he had by his side, and took off a royal cloak that he wore on his back, and wrapped it around his arm, crying: "King William, you are my son's godfather, do not do me wrong!" and retired to a corner of the hall. There was not a lord present who dared approach him, or to encounter him, so many of them fell to their knees, begging the king not to offer violence to Bevis, for they knew him as a man of quality, who would never have assented to so great an evil.

Meanwhile the citizens arrived, weeping, with Floris' body, and the king threw himself over him, weeping, and all the barons wept also, and Bevis wept with them. The king wished to know the reason why they had died, and it would not have been known, if a servant of Flockard of Maganza

had not been there who said that he had heard Flockard say to Floris that Bevis was a low fellow not to give him a horse that he had asked for, and that he had been raised to commander in preference to him, and that it would be best to go and take Swallowtail by force, and how they had gone to do so.

Then the lords asked the king to have mercy on Bevis, and he said that he would gladly agree, if Bevis gave him Swallowtail who had caused the death of his son; and he also asked him to hand over Rambald. Bevis replied: "It is would be most ungentlemanly to kill a horse for revenge," and that he would surrender Rambald if he could be found.; "but I must add that Rambald was not to blame in defending himself." The king was somewhat angry at this, but the lords calmed him down enough to make him promise to wait until morning. Three lords then swore to appear with Bevis in the morning, and these were Angelus of Virgales, Angelus of Wales and Count Aumer of Marina.

Leaving the court, the escorted Bevis to his room. In the morning Floris was buried. But Rambald was not to be found. And the three lords appeared with Bevis before the king; and he once more asked for Swallowtail so that he could put him to death. Bevis, weeping, threw himself on his knees before him, and said: "Your Sacred Majesty, take any revenge on me that you please, for I would rather die than let it be said that a mere horse should die in revenge for Floris." The king, considering Bevis' words, realized that it would be a shameful thing for him and his son. Rambald was much sought for, and for that reason the king commanded Bevis to be gone from the realm of England and to leave Hampton, never to return to the island unless King William, that is himself, were dead or sent for him. Bevis, weeping, swore to this on his allegiance, like a loyal knight, and knelt down and kissed his feet. And now Drusiana appeared before the king, knelt down and said these words, weeping all the while:

“Most noble king,” said Drusiana, “for God’s sake, have pity on me on this little child that you with your own hands carried to baptism. I am not a man and cannot go running about the world like a knight in armor. I ask that you graciously bestow the city of Hampton on me and on this little child, until God establish peace between you and Bevis.”

Then the king wept for pity and, calling judges and notaries, freely bestowed the city of Hampton on Drusiana, and commanded Bevis to be gone from the island within fifteen days. Bevis departed, much consoled by the gift that the king had bestowed on Drusiana, and he thanked him profusely.

When he returned to Hampton, he was met by Guy and Rupert, and they made a great feast for him. But when they heard that he was banished, they were much aggrieved and did not want to consent to his departure, saying: “Rest here, and let them make war against us.” Bevis said to them: “My sons, none of our lineage was ever a traitor, from the time that Constantine begot us; I do not now want to begin to betray my troth.” He commanded a ship to be made ready, and so it was done. Bevis knew that his sons were minded to declare war against King William as soon as he had departed, and he therefore gave command that they come with him. He boarded ship with them, and commended Drusiana to the citizens of Hampton, and they all wept.

And so he left Hampton. Sailing over the sea for many days, they left the Ocean, entered the Strait of Gibraltar, passed near Sicily, entered the Adriatic Sea, and came to land at the harbor of Sinella, where King Thierry and Sinibald received them with great honor, and told them the cause of their leaving England. They stayed a year to rest with King Thierry, his father Sinibald and the duchess. And that year Thierry had a boy child by his wife Margery, and he named him Sicurans²⁸. And the

²⁸ Sicurans is the future father of Bertha of the Large Foot, who will marry Pepin the Short and thus become Charlemagne’s mother.

honor bestowed on Bevis and his sons was even as the honor given to the crowned head of Thierry himself, with many other signs of reverence.

66-77: *The Reconquest of Hungary* [summary]

Hearing that the pagan Emir Arpitas had wrongfully seized the Slovene provinces of Dalmatia and Croatia at Buldras' death, Thierry and his father and brothers sent ambassadors to him who were insolently repulsed. Thierry, Bevis, Guy and Sinibald raised a huge army and confronted Arpitas at the city of Ashlac. In the battle that followed, both Sinibald of Castle Saint-Simon and Thierry were slain, but Ashlac was taken and sacked.

Meanwhile Bevis' spies in Hungary reported that a Turkish host under Trifero had invaded and was banding together with the Hungarian rebel Arbaille, a descendant of Attila the Hun, alongside various factions from Bussina, Russia and Poland. Bevis sent for assistance to the Pope, to Constantinople and to Armenia, but was ashamed to request it from Pepin. Yet Pepin learned of the campaign from Otho of Trier. Otho's own army joined with Richard of Canterbury, Rupert of the Cross and Sanguin of Hampton and made its way across Germany. Erminia went to her father Armin, who gave her a navy that sailed under young Sinibald's command toward Sinella.

As Guy of Hampton was arriving from Italy with reinforcements, Arbaille and Trifero marched on Dalmatia. They were joined by vast numbers of Saracens under Morapes of Russia and from Albania. Battle was finally joined near Sinella. The pagans almost prevailed when Trifero unhorsed Guy of Hampton, but Bevis arrived and had his son remount on Swallowtail. Guy overtook Trifero and killed him in combat. Arbaille, learning of Trifero's death, moved his army closer to Sinella and prepared to besiege the city. Against the advice of his father Bevis, Guy undertook a sally. Though it was successful, it created an opportunity for the Saracens to enter the city by a secret passage. Four thousand were already inside the walls, when Bevis rallied in the nick of time, killed Morapes and slaughtered the rest. But then Bevis, concerned at Guy's absence, rode out to find him. This left the city gravely undergarrisoned. Arbaille had posted signal fires on the hill, by means of which, seizing his chance, he now ordered an attack. Though the citizens managed to close the gates just in time, Bevis and Guy were caught in desperate battle outside. Guy was nearly killed, but was rescued by Bevis. Pursued and greatly outnumbered, the two made their way back into the city. The vast Saracen army then ringed the walls even as a great pagan navy took control of the coast.

Meanwhile Bevis' other son, Sinibald, had arrived at Randazzo and heard of his father's plight. He sailed his navy into Sinella harbor and in a great naval battle destroyed the Saracen fleet, thereby cutting off the enemy's supply route. In the interim, Otho of Trier, Rupert of the Cross, Richard of Canterbury and Sanguin of Hampton had completed their march through Germany and Bohemia arrived at Ashlac and found it destroyed. They occupy a fortress at eight miles distance from Sinella. Sinibald established contact with them, greatly heartened by their arrival. Sinibald now suggested that Bevis and Guy should be apprized of the changed situation and that a three-pronged night attack against the besiegers should be launched, from the city, from the sea and from the castle. His plan was adopted. The attack took place by moonlight on the fourth night following. Completely taken by surprise, the pagans were routed. Their two remaining commanders, Tilipon and Arbaul took flight, pursued by Guy and Sinibald.

When they were overtaken, they refused to surrender. In the desperate double that followed, Sinibald was almost worsted by Tilipon when Rupert of the Cross arrived on the scene and attacked the pagan. Enraged at the unsought help, Sinibald cried out: "When I am finished with him, you shall have to deal with me!" He returned to the fight, killed Tilipon, and then turned upon Rupert who, however, left the scene without a word and rode back to the city. Meanwhile, Arbaul in answered Guy's challenge by maligning his mother and calling his legitimacy in doubt. In the

duel that follows, Arbaul is disarmed and begs for mercy, but Guy, remembering the insult, cuts off his head.. The two sons returned to their father and were welcomed with great rejoicing.

After the victory, Bevis marched into Hungary, reconquered the kingdom in less than a year and bestowed its crown upon Thierry' son Sicurans, who later became the father of King Philip. For fourteen years thereafter, Bevis remained in Sinella. He was now entering old age.

The Murder of Bevis of Hampton

78

In the course of those days died the king of Logres, which is the English province facing Ireland, and the city of Logres lies on the shore of a river named Ansiner and has a seaport called Milford Haven, and further down Virgalens and Bristol. This king had an unmarried daughter and no male heir, nor any kinsman to whose protection the daughter could be entrusted. Hence he thought it good to betroth her by testament. Knowing Bevis and his sons as worthy knights, he made his will and left his realm to Bevis' son Guy. He provided thus his testament, with this condition, that he take to wife his daughter Rolandine. Then he died. A message was sent to Bevis in Slovenia, and he equipped a fine fleet and sent Guy and Sinibald to take possession of that territory. Guy married Rolandine, the daughter of said king, and took her to Hampton.

That year king Armin of Armenia died and left his inheritance to Bevis' son Sinibald. Therefore they left Hampton and returned to Sinella. Bevis went with them to take possession of the reign of Armenia, and he gave for wife to Sinibald a close relative of Drusiana's, leaving a very noble vice-regent in Armenia. Then they returned to Slovenia. These family affairs and the investment of the two realms lasted for five years.

When Bevis had passed fifteen years in exile, the King William of England died and bequeathed his realm to William, his godson and the son of Bevis of Hampton. He also pardoned Bevis. At once

Drusiana sent ambassadors to Bevis, and he once more crowned Sicorans king of Hungary, Slovenia, Dalmatia, and Croatia, who remained king there, with his mother as queen. Bevis, accompanied by his sons and their wives, returned to Hampton, where there was great feasting and joy.

When some days had passed, there came to London a great embassy. All the lords of the realm being called, it came to London and there crowned his son William King of England. Then he returned to Hampton, where he lived for a long time in great happiness with his lady Drusiana and grew very old. While he lived, he became a great friend of King Pepin of France, so that the king gave his son Guy a country called Auvergne, midway between Frisia and French Gascony, and at the extreme edge of the Pyrenees toward Bordeaux.

In that country Guy had a son and gave him the name of Clairmont. He lived for sixty years and then died, and in these sixty years he had erected a very beautiful castle. When he died, that castle was named Clairmont. Within no more than thirty years, this was the most beautiful city in all that region, for it filled with so many inhabitants that it became a great city. And in that city Guy had another son, whose name was Bernard. And because Bernard had been born in that castle, all Guy's offspring were called the Clairmonts. Of Sinibald other mention will be made, in the chapters which treat of him.

79

The time came when the remaining son of Dudon of Maganza, Bevis' maternal brother, called Gailon, and now Lord of Flanders and Maganza and of Poitiers and Bayonne and many others, having arrested one of his subjects, as fortune permitted, sent him to justice. Gailon rode there to see him, and the malefactor threw himself upon his mercy. Gailon said: "If you have committed a

crime, how can I let you escape, for I do not wish to act in opposition to justice? Rather will I approve your execution, to set an example to other malefactors.” Then that malefactor cried out and said to Gailon: “It is very well for you to fulminate against me, but not against Bevis, who killed your father who has never been avenged.” At this there were many among the citizens throughout the town, and in many regions, whose voices inclined more toward evil than toward good. Their voices often reaching Gailon’s ears, he decided to murder and kill Bevis, as the devil prompted him.

He left, abandoning his reign and his wife with her five children, and who was pregnant, soon to give birth to Guinam of Bayonne. The names of the other five are: Richard, William, Spinard, Ptolemy and Gryphon, which Gryphon was to be father of Ganelon of Poitiers. Gailon went about unrecognized for sixteen years all over the world, and it was rumored that he had died at the Holy Sepulcher. Then he came to Hampton and he lurked about Hampton near Bevis, plotting a way to kill him and get away. He ordered a swift brigantine, to be kept always waiting at the seashore, and now and then in the harbor. And the very sailors of that brigantine did not know where she was bound, and he kept it in readiness for his escape.

It happened that three miles from Hampton there was a great place of devotion, called Saint-Savior. Drusiana went there every morning for some time to pray and returned later in the morning, and Bevis went there at nine o’clock to look upon the celebrations, since many citizens and country folk came there, and all through the day many joyous games were held. When Bevis had come up to the celebrations, he went so see the diversions and the feast; and when Bevis thought of returning to Hampton, he went to the church and entered an enclosed chapel (as the chapels of noblemen are) to say his prayers and knelt at the foot of the altar. Gailon came in behind him and, seeing him alone, looked three times outside. There was no one in the church except a few women, for most of the people were outside where the festivities were taking place, and Bevis’ attendants were waiting for

him to come out from the church, as was his custom after prayer. Then Gailon, seeing Bevis intent on prayer, drew a sharp and pointed dagger and thrust it through the nape of his neck so that it passed out through his throat in front, in such a way that he ceased to move. So died Bevis of Hampton, the world's greatest flower of knighthood in his time.

Gailon fled from the church and mounted his horse, and someone asked him: "What is my lord doing?" He answered: "He is kneeling at the altar, and I have been sent about one of his affairs." He left, and came from there to the place where he had ordained the said brigantine, leapt from his horse into the ship and fled, in his haste leaving behind one of the crew. He was already more than three miles away before anyone saw him. Some women were first to see that Bevis was dead, and began to cry out. An alarm was raised, and they said: "That traitor, who said he was praying, has murdered him." More than a hundred on horseback rode in his tracks and finding that sailor by his horse, they arrested him. When he was put to the torture, he said: "I do not know who he might be, but he hired us a year ago, and we have been well paid; and I heard him say that he wanted to kill the slayer of his father." If that sailor had not been found, no one would know who had killed Bevis, since Gailon had not been recognized. Gailon did not decide to return to Maganza; rather he went after many days to the Sultan of Egyptian Babylon and renounced God, treading the cross underfoot. And in recompense for Bevis' death, the Sultan showed him great honor and gave him his daughter to wife, and made him commander of all his forces of horse and of foot.

80

When this news was known, Drusiana, as if beside herself, left Hampton and came to the body. When she saw it, she fell upon it like one dead and was carried like one dead into the city, so that the mourning was redoubled. It is impossible to express the great lament that Drusiana made. In her

lament, she recalled all the troubles he had borne for her, and she for him. She immediately commanded that a message be sent to King William of England, and sent another to Guy at Clairmont. The body was kept embalmed until her sons arrived. And they all came, except Sinibald, who was in Armenia. When they had come, they heard what the sailor who had been with the murderer had said. And then they held a rich funeral. Drusiana was so grieved by all this, that she lived for fifteen days more, and then died and was buried in the same tomb with Bevis, her husband and lord. An inscription was placed above the tomb with the following legend: “Here lie Duke Bevis, son of Guy of Hampton, and Drusiana, daughter of King Armin of Armenia. Bevis was murdered by the traitor Gailon of Maganza, his half-brother on his mothers side, while praying on his knees in the church of Saint-Savior.”²⁹

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BOOK SIX: *THE YOUTH OF CHARLEMAGNE*

Bertha of the Large Foot

King Pepin’s Wooing

1

The story now relates that when Pepin was king of France and emperor, since he was very advanced in years and had no wife, and since France was such a noble realm of Christendom, his barons,

²⁹ The original adds a concluding tag: “Here ends the Fourth Book of *Reali di Francia*, entitled ‘Constantine,’ and begins the Fifth. The one ending here is of Bevis of Hampton. Amen.” Evidently, *Constantine* was something like an alternative title of the entire work, perhaps in the way that *Brut* became the title of Layamon’s epic; more importantly, attention is now directed forward to Book Five, which, continuing from the end of Book Three, concerns the descendants of Constantine up to Charlemagne. Andrea insists on the continuity of the Roman Empire with the royal House of France, much as Geoffrey of Monmouth (to say nothing of Layamon and Spenser after him) insists on the continuity of the Roman Brutus, eponymous founder of Britain, with the court of King Arthur. Paris is just as much Troynovant as Camelot or London.

seeing that he had no heir, determined to bestow upon him a young lady of noble blood, whether she be poor or rich. Among those most anxious to do so were Bernard of Clairmont and Gerard of the Thicket³⁰. These commanded many other lords to proclaim a great feast, and persuaded the king to hold court in great magnificence. They issued orders that at Pentecost³¹ all knights should come to court with the ladies their wives, sisters, and their marriageable daughters. There came a huge gathering of lords and a great multitude of fair ladies.

While Bernard and Gerard were sitting by the king's side, Gerard said: "What an honor it is to see so many great lords! And all of them are born in your realm." Pepin said: "You speak truly." Said Gerard: "Verily it is a great merit for a lord to make the Christian faith grow and to maintain it." Pepin said: "You speak truly." Then Bernard said: "How then do you maintain it, since you are old and have no children? Immediately after your death there will be great discord among your lords, and the pasture will lack a shepherd." Pepin said: "Ah, Bernard, it is late for you to tell me this." Gerard replied: "You are not yet too old to have children."

At that Pepin commissioned four great nobles to find for him a lady of noble lineage, be she rich or poor, so long as she was capable of bearing him offspring. One of these nobles was Gerard of the Thicket, the second was Bernard of Clairmont, and the others were Morand of Riviera and Raymond of Trier. These went out secretly looking at the courts of many lords to hear how a good and noble alliance might be made, and they went in person to many regions to look and to listen. They found many of them, but their fathers did not wish to give their daughters to King Pepin, because he was old and short as a dwarf. At last they heard that King Philip of Hungary had a

³⁰ This descendant of Bevis' younger son, Sinibald; eventually becomes the Duke of Burgundy whose rivalry with Charlemagne is a dominant theme in *L'Aspromonte*.

³¹ Pentecost: the Italian reads *pasqua* (Easter); this, however, is the *pasqua rosata* (Rosy Easter), forty days later.

marriageable daughter, and they all four decided to go there, without saying anything to Pepin. And so they did.

They traveled through Lombardy and from there into Hungary, and they found the king at Buda, who showered them with great honor. When he heard who they were, he marveled at their coming. He had a daughter whose name was Bertha of the Large Foot, for she had one foot a little larger than the other, and that was the right foot. She was otherwise a lovely creature, the most beautiful woman in the world and the best rider.

After the ambassadors had stayed for three days, they asked the grace of the king to attend a hunt of lords and ladies. The king had the hunt made ready, and they rode out of the city with a great number of ladies, among them the queen, and Bertha of the Large Foot mounted on a great courser. She rode along the way at a lively canter, laughing gaily all the while.

2

While Bernard, Gerard, Morand and Raymond were proceeding at pleasure, they were ever attentive to Bertha of the Large Foot, noting how expertly she rode her horse. She had with her a damsel of her own age, whose name was Falisetta, daughter of Count William of Maganza.³² She very much resembled Bertha, except in her feet. This Falisetta had been born in Hungary, since her father William had been rescued by Pepin from the hands of Bevis' sons, and Pepin had afterwards exiled him, so that he fled to Hungary with his pregnant wife. Her daughter was raised alongside Bertha, and when they were appareled alike, one of them could scarcely be distinguished from the other.

³² William of Maganza (William of Provence): one of the six sons of Bevis' murderer.

Now, as the hunt progressed, the lords asked King Philip who she was, pretending not to know her in order to draw out the king. King Philip said: "That is my daughter." They greatly praised her beauty and grace, and then asked the king whether he had given her in marriage. He said he had not, but that he was waiting for an occasion to have her married. They rode together while returning to Buda in the evening, and they one and all praised the damsel. Some of them said: "This realm is subject to King Pepin." But Gerard said to them: "King Pepin has subjects enough, for none has more than he." Then they came to King Philip in his hall and said they desired to talk with him and his queen. When they were in a private room, Bernard of Clairmont made the proposal, as they had agreed among them.

When King Philip heard that King Pepin was asking for his daughter, he began to weep and said: "My lords, this realm and all my possessions have ever been ruled by members of the Royal House of France³³. I am thus Pepin's vassal, and he is my liege. But so that my lord will not claim deception, I must advise you that one of Bertha's feet (the right one) is larger than the other." They demanded to see it, and when they did they laughed and solemnly swore to the engagement on King Pepin's behalf, but imposed secrecy until Pepin should send for her. And so they took their leave and returned to France.

King Pepin was very glad of their return, and rejoiced much over them, since they had taken such a long time to come back. They delivered their message to King Pepin and told him what they had done, greatly praising Bertha. King Pepin, exceedingly old as he was, fell in love with her, hearing them tell of her beauty.

3

³³ Royal House of France: King Philip of Hungary is the son of Sicurans, heir of Sinibald of Castle Saint-Simon (IV.36), who had been invested with the sovereignty of Hungary by Bevis of Hampton (IV.47)

King Pepin, hearing of Bertha's loveliness and of how the ambassadors had wooed her for him, summoned all his nobility to court and ordered them to prepare a magnificent feast and to send for the lady. Bernard of Clairmont, Gerard of the Thicket, Raymond of Trier, Morand of Riviera and Gryphon of Maganza with two of his brothers³⁴ went on the mission, with many other lords. The great wealth and the many gifts that the king sent to his lady cannot be told. When they arrived at Buda, where they would betroth her, great honor was shown them and throughout the realm there was much rejoicing at the new alliance. They stayed for five days and then made ready to return.

The queen had told Bertha how old King Pepin was, and she was much troubled thereat. Her mother spoke many words of comfort to her, telling her that he was Emperor of Rome and King of France, and that she would be Empress; and she took comfort in this. But she had not told her how short he was. Bertha thought that, though he might be old, he would at least be a handsome man. The king summoned her to the hall and in the presence of all the nobles of Hungary she was espoused to King Pepin, and was from that time onward called Empress. And so the lords commanded departure and returned to France.

The queen intended to give Bertha a close companion in whom she might confide and, when she had spoken of this to King Philip, he replied: "What more trusty companion could you give her than Falisetta, who has been brought up alongside her?" The queen replied; "You know what infamy has always shadowed all her lineage; I will not trust in her, at least not in that region over there." The king said: "You must be mad; what harm could a woman do?" And thus it was determined that Falisetta should go with Bertha as her secret confidante. Having arranged this, they sent for her and told her what had been decided. She was very glad of it and told them that she would never act against their wishes.

³⁴ Two of his brothers: Gryphon and Spinard, named later in this chapter.

Then Bernard and Gerard and the other lords took their leave and departed with the lady, accompanied by ten ladies-of-honor for her entourage, along with ten young damsels. But Falisetta was reserved as her private confidante, and Bernard and Gerard rode by Bertha's side, while Gryphon, Spinard and Ptolemy rode with Falisetta, for they knew who she was. They paid her great honor, and among themselves often commented that truly Falisetta could not be distinguished from the queen, nor the queen from her, and all marveled how one resembled the other.

After many days they entered the realm of France, where all regions had been prepared to receive them. As they drew near Paris, they were met by great crowds of people and many great lords. When they were a league from Paris, they were met by King Pepin, who stopped with his entire court. Then Gryphon of Maganza came up to Bertha and pointed out King Pepin to her, and she grew very sorrowful thereat.

Falisetta's Treachery

4

Bertha, undone by ignorance and unripe understanding, was troubled when she saw King Pepin. She remembered how her mother had told her that he was old; but she had not mentioned that he was short of stature and deformed, so that now her grief showed in her change of countenance. Gryphon of Maganza saw and took notice of this.

When they entered Paris, there was much festivity, but as they were entering the royal palace, Bertha was unable to rejoice. After they entered the chamber, Falisetta asked her why she was so pensive. She replied: "Sister of mine, my mother has sent you to be my companion and my confidante, so that I may put my trust in you and tell you all my secrets. Therefore, if you will do my will, I shall be rid of much sorrow." And she answered: "I will do anything to please you, even unto death."

Bertha said: “You know how often it has been said how like each other we are; none could tell us apart, except for our feet. I would that you lodge tonight with the emperor in my stead, because I am the most miserable woman in the world.” Falisetta answered: “Alas, my lady, if the emperor should become aware of this, he would have me burned at the stake. But I will give you an answer this evening.” With this they turned to the other ladies and went to the royal hall.

Falisetta, thinking of the empress’ case, sent for Gryphon and Spinard and told them what Bertha had said. When Spinard heard these words, he embraced her and said: “This is your great good fortune: do whatever she asks you. But make sure, if you can, to send her down tonight to the garden by the emperor’s room, and go you to sleep in that room with the emperor. Make him wed you, and then go to bed with him and let him do all his will.” Said Falisetta: “I would not like Bertha to receive any hurt; I would rather die first.” Then they told her: “If, Heaven willing, you become empress, whom will you have to fear? Call yourself Bertha as she does; you look like her and no one will recognize you.” Falisetta long protested, but at last they said so many things that she consented to their treachery.

When Falisetta returned to the chamber, she asked to see the garden alongside it and saw the garden and a doorway on one side of the ante-chamber from which the empress could enter the garden. Shortly thereafter Bertha came from the hall into the chamber and said to Falisetta: “What have you decided to do?” And she replied: “Even as you will; but I am wondering where you will be in the meantime.” Bertha answered; “I will be in your room.” But Falisetta replied: “My ladies-in-waiting will recognize you.” And she led her to a window overlooking the garden, and spoke these words: “You can stay in that garden, and while the king is sleeping, I will come to you and tell my attendants that I have to stay with you.” They agreed on this course of action and together returned to the hall.

After Falisetta and Bertha had reached an accord, Falisetta, before nightfall, told Gryphon and Spinard about it, and they at once found four of their servants and said to them: "That Falisetta who has arrived with the empress shames us; she considers herself an imperial servant, and has to attend her tonight in the garden. Be you there, seize her and gag her, and carry her outside Paris into the Royal Forest and cut her throat." They gave them a thousand pieces of gold and made them great promises. These four ruffians promised to do as they commanded and to keep it all hidden. They went, as opportunity served them, into the garden and remained secretly hidden there.

Now the festivities were rich and magnificent, but because King Pepin was of a ripe old age, they made an early end to the feast. The ladies led Bertha into the bedchamber, and she called Falisetta and drew her along with her into the ante-chamber, accompanied by no other lady. Bertha said: "Keep your promise now, for I do not wish to lie down this night with a dwarf." Falisetta replied: "I do it not willingly, but by command." The queen took off her royal clothing and dressed her in it, and removed her crown and put it on Falisetta's head, so that it would have been a great feat to recognize her, so much did they resemble each other in speech and in looks and in manner, except for their feet. Bertha clothed herself in Falisetta's garments, and they opened the gate which led to the garden, and Bertha went down to it into a painted lodge and sat down to await Falisetta's return. Falisetta returned to the ladies. She had locked the garden gate, and the ladies did not recognize her and conducted her to the bed. While they were putting her to bed, she said: "See what I fine companion I have, who has left me behind and has gone to sleep in the house of her kinfolk!" At this the ladies laughed, and her words were reported to Falisetta's ladies-in-waiting.

Shortly thereafter the emperor arrived and got into bed, but she jumped from the bed. The emperor seized her, intending to exercise his spousal rights, but she said that she wished to wed him as an

emperor. He laughed and went through the wedding ceremony with her, and fondled and kissed her. Then they went to bed and she did as he wished so that she grew pregnant that very night with a boy child. The emperor believed that he had lain with Bertha, and stayed with her in great solace until daybreak.

6

At midnight, while she stayed below, Bertha was attacked and taken by the above-mentioned servants. They threatened to kill her and she, terrified, fearing for her life and afraid of being recognized, did not know what to do. They gagged her and dragged her from the garden and took her outside the city, for the gates of Paris stood open night and day. They carried her to the Forest of the Maine, which was two ships' leagues distant from Paris.

When they had traveled a long way in to the forest and reached its darkest part, it was daylight. They took the wooden gag out of her mouth, and one of them said to the other: "By our Faith, to do this would be a great shame." Bertha heard these words and understood that they wanted to kill her. Therefore, trembling with fright, she began to raise great lamentation, and said: "O King Philip, my father, what kind of a country you have sent me to! O most noble queen, how will your daughter's blood be shed!"

When those who had taken her there heard her speaking about being the King of Hungary's daughter, they stared at each other. One of them said: "What do you have to do with King Philip of Hungary?" She replied: "He is my father." The other said: "You do not speak truly, for your father is William of Maganza." But she said: "William was the father of my companion, Falisetta." It seemed to them that they had acted amiss, and they asked her: "What, then, were you doing in the garden?" She told them in order the whole state of affairs. Then they began to be afraid and said: "We are dead men, for if either King Philip or King Pepin hear of this thing, they will have us killed;

and if we let her go, the men of Maganza will kill us.” But in the end they decided to kill her, saying: “Nothing of this will ever be known, and Falisetta will be empress.”

Now Bertha realized that Falisetta had betrayed her at the advice of her uncles. She fell down on her knees to the assassins and prayed their mercy, saying: “At least have a little respect for my father, and for King Pepin, who is my husband. Moreover, I swear to you that, if you grant me my life, you shall never be killed for this. If you are ever taken, I promise to free you upon my faith as a queen and empress, and as the daughter of a king and queen.” It seemed an evil thing to them to kill her and yet it seemed even more dangerous to let her go. She then said to them: “At least do one thing for me. Do not let your hands shed my blood. Tie me to a tree and let the wild beasts of the forest devour me.”

They began to weep and one of them said to another: “Let us kill her.” The other said: “Perhaps that is best; but do you strike her, for I will not.” At last they stripped off her gown and tied her up against a tree in the darkest gully of the Great Forest, with her hands behind her back, and left her there. They took along the gown, and when they were near the city, slashed it with a knife and stained it with the blood of a dog. This gown they carried to Count Gryphon and told him that they had slain her. He embraced them and asked if she had said anything to them; and they replied that she had not, because she was gagged.

Gryphon said: “Now see that none cry shame upon the deed!” And they pretended that they had not known who she was. He had promised them a certain amount of treasure, and so he said: “Come along, for I wish to keep my promise.” And he made great signs of friendship toward them, promising them even better things. But when he had them in his palace, and his brothers were paying them the reward, he gave order that, as they were leaving, all four should be killed, so that

they would never be able to speak about the matter. And this was the treasure that they earned for the deed.

7

When the four servants were dead, Gryphon and his brothers betook themselves to the palace and found that Falisetta was crowned as the queen and none knew who she was. The reason was that she asked not to be attended by any of the ladies who had waited upon Bertha of Hungary, and none of the ladies of France were accustomed to stay with her. Within a few days, she caused the death of one lady-in-waiting when she grew certain that she would be recognized by her. For this reason nothing could be known of the affair, and she so much resembled Bertha that she seemed her very self. Moreover, her uncles of Maganza told her that they had caused the queen to be slain. While thus reigning, she produced a boy child at the beginning of the ninth month, and named him Lanfroy. One year later, she had another and named him Ulric. In this manner Falisetta lived with King Pepin for many years. King Philip of Hungary was convinced that his daughter was queen. Falisetta had herself called Queen Bertha, and in her letters addressed King Philip as “father”, and his queen as “mother.”

Bertha's Pavillion

8

When the lovely queen had remained tied to that tree almost until nightfall, she had been so long overcome by grief and fear that she no longer wept nor could do anything but commend herself to Our Lady in Paradise. It happened that three miles from that place there ran through that forest a

river that was called the Maine³⁵. On the banks of that river there stood a knight, whose name was Lambert. He was a retainer of King Pepin's reserved for the hunt, and he had a wife and four daughters. That Lambert went tracking and searching through that forest, or rather hunting preserve, and one of his bloodhounds found Bertha tied up and began to bark. Lambert, thinking that there was some beast or quarry there, ran up at the baying of the hound. He saw Bertha and grew astonished and asked her who she was. She scarcely answered him but begged to be untied. He did so and she fell to the ground. She could scarcely speak but told him that she was a merchant's daughter. "And I was forcibly abducted from my garden by four ruffians and brought to this place, for they would deprive me of my virginity. I demanded that they kill me rather and they said: 'We will not kill you, but we will make you die in a strange manner.' Then they tore of my shift and tied me to this tree, as you can see, and carried all my garments away with them." (She spoke in French, like Lambert.)

He had great pity for her and helped her to rise as best she could, and then brought her to his dwelling, which stood on the banks of the Maine, and told his wife how he had found her. She too pitied her and clothed in one of her garments of coarse burlap, saying: "My daughter, you shall stay with us, and whatever we have, we shall share with you." The lady praised God and His Divine Mother, and knelt at their feet and thanked them, and bade them call her Falisetta.

When she had stayed with them for a month, she said to Lambert: "My father, I pray you to buy some writing-sheets and an ink well, that I may write for my necessities. If you do so, I promise your daughters shall gain a dowry." Lambert obeyed, and she wrote whatever she needed for embroidery work and to fashion purses in the French fashion. When her work was finished, Lambert carried it to Paris to sell, and so doubled his money. Then she taught her skill to Lambert's

³⁵ Perhaps the modern Mayenne. For its connection with the name "Charlemagne" see below.

daughters, and thrived so well that in less than five years Lambert grew rich and no longer tended to the hunt. She had taught Lambert's daughter to become so lovely and proper (and his wife, too) that she well showed that she was born of gentle blood.

Lambert showed her as much honor as was in his power, and they all obeyed her. He often told her of the news in Paris. He told her how King Pepin had had two sons by Queen Bertha, the daughter of the King of Hungary. Then she understood all too well how Falisetta had betrayed her with the help of her relatives. She thought night and day how she might be avenged and return into the grace of her lord, much as she might fear death. Then she conceived the idea of fashioning a marvelous pavilion.

9

Bertha had been with Lambert for five years when she sent an order by him to Paris, making him on several occasions spend more than three hundred pieces of gold to purchase silk and thread of gold and of silver. Then she fashioned a marvelous pavilion on which she embroidered in intricate patterns the whole story of what had occurred: first, how she was betrothed in Hungary, and the barons who had brought her, and how she had come to Paris, with all that had happened there, one by one; and each panel had a writ that plainly declared each event.

When the pavilion was finished, she called Lambert and said: "Go hence, on the day of the festival, to Saint Denis, and erect this pavilion in a place where the king and his barons will see it in passing. Sell it at the price of two pounds of silver for every pound of its weight. If anyone asks you where you got it, say: 'I went to Aigues Mortes and set about buying merchandise. A man from Alexandria sold me this. I have brought it here to sell, and my price for it is twice its weight in silver.' But do

not enter any man's house to bring it there for the money, for you might then be slain. Have yourself paid in the open square, and let me know who buys it."

Lambert loaded the thing on a mule and transported it on Saint Denis' Eve to Saint Denis. He erected facing Paris it in a field next to the road that came from Paris, as close to the road as he could. He did not stay long when Gryphon of Maganza arrived there, passing on his way to Saint Denis. He halted at that pavilion and began to read the captions. When he had read a few of them, he asked Lambert whence he had this pavilion, and he answered as Bertha had taught him. "And I desire to sell it." Gryphon pretended to turn him down and said: "Come with me, and I will give you the money." Lambert answered: "By the franchise of My Lord, the King of France, let him who wants it pay me two pounds of silver for each pound of its weight." Gryphon, fearing lest it fall into the hands of others, had it weighed and sent for the money and paid it; then he had the pavilion folded up and carried to his palace. He called together all his relatives who know of the matter and showed them the pavilion. They instantly said, "She is alive!" and sent many secret spies to Alexandria and other parts to search her out. They had the pavilion burnt so that none might see it.

Lambert returned to Bertha and told her how he had sold the pavilion to Gryphon of Poitier. She was much grieved thereat, knowing full well who it was that bought it, and said: "I am not yet cleansed of all my sins." She praised and thanked God and commended herself to His grace.

Falissetta Unmasked

10

The author of these chronicles now says that Philip I, King of Hungary, and his wife, the queen of Hungary, had written many letters to Bertha and sent many secret and confidential messengers to

talk to Bertha, none of whom was able to have speech with her. They sent certain spies, so that one morning one of the king's most trusted servants saw Falisetta come into the hall. When he saw her and heard her speak, he recognized her as Falisetta. Much aggrieved, he at once departed and returned to Hungary. He declared to the king: "My lord, I have seen Falisetta crowned, and she has two sons by King Pepin. One is called Lanfroy and the other, Ulric. And you believe that they are the sons of Bertha, your daughter!" Then King Philip said: "My good man, you must be mistaken." Nonetheless he grew very thoughtful and sad, and spoke of the matter with his queen.

In the course of the next night, they both had an evil dream. In the morning the king said: "I saw in my dream that a bear was pursuing my daughter through a forest, and that she encountered the maws of four wolves and hurled herself into a river, and it seemed to me that a fisherman rescued her." The king was telling this dream that had befallen him to the queen, and she said: "Ah, my lord, I had the very same dream as yours." Both of them lamented this dream. Then the queen said: "We have no other daughter or son than her. Therefore I pray you, my lord, to go and see for yourself." They gave order that eight days from thence his escort and train should be ready, and that none should know whither they intended to go. They departed and rode through Bohemia, and from thence to Constance. Crossing the Rhine, they entered France, nor was their arrival in France known. When they were three leagues from Paris, he sent word to King Pepin that he had come to visit him. King Pepin commanded his barons to mount their horses and ride to meet his father-in-laws, the King of Hungary. He himself went to his bedchamber and said to Falisetta: "Madam, I bring you good tidings, for your father and mother will this evening be at supper with us." She pretended to be very glad at this, but felt exceedingly sorrowful and afraid. The king was astonished to see her grow pale and perturbed, and she said to the king: "One may as readily die of a great joy as a great sorrow." Pepin said: "Make ready to ride to meet your mother." She replied: "I do not

know whether I shall be able to come.” The king departed and went to mount his horse; as he leapt into the saddle, he said to Gryphon: “Go to the queen and tell her to mount up and to ride to meet her father.” Gryphon went to her and found her weeping and trembling with fear. She said to Gryphon: “This is what you have done to me!” He encouraged her to have no fear. “Feign an illness,” said he, “and we shall make the doctors say that you have a malady that will not allow you to speak, since you are dying of joy. We shall see to it that there will be little light. If the queen speaks with you, reply in as horse and halting a voice as you can, and we shall soon find a remedy.” Then he went to mount his horse, and she feigned sickness and went to bed. When Gryphon reached King Pepin, the king asked him: “What is my lady the queen doing?” Gryphon said: “By my faith, I fear that she will die of a sudden illness that has befallen her.” Said Pepin: “I saw it coming when I told her of her father’s arrival.” Riding on, they found King Philip, and they made much feasting and rejoicing together. As they were riding toward Paris, King Philip began to wonder and asked King Pepin: “Why has Bertha, my daughter, not come to meet her mother?” Said King Pepin: “The joy of it has made her ill,” and told him what had happened to her when he told her of her father’s coming. When they arrived in Paris, King Philip was given a royal palace next to the king’s palace, and they went, Pepin into one, and Philip into and the other palace, and all his company was given lodging there.

11

After the queen of Hungary had rested a little, she said to King Philip: “I want to go to see my daughter.” She set out with many ladies and many attendants and nobles and approached the bedchamber of Falisetta, who had gone to sleep in fear. The queen desired to enter the room, and some of the Maganza followers there, as well as some of the girl’s, said: “You may not enter, for she is asleep and the doctors do not wish anyone to speak to her. But if you wait a little, you may return

when she has risen.” The queen of Hungary grew angry and struck the door with her hands and opened it, saying: “How can you say I should go away and come back? Is she not my daughter?” And in she went and found her sleeping. She quickly put her hands to her feet and knew at once that this was not her daughter. She took up a lighted candle and looked at her face, and instantly knew that it was Falisetta. She pretended no to recognize her and that it was indeed her daughter, and said: “She is sleeping so soundly that I do not wish to disturb her. When she wakes up, I will come to her.” Then she returned to her own room and, alone with King Philip, secretly said to him, weeping: “Alas, my lord, our daughter must be dead, for this woman who calls herself Bertha is Falisetta, for I recognized her. That is why she did not come to meet us. I think we should inform King Pepin of this.” King Philip said to her: “My lady, let us not do so, for if Pepin has something to do with it he will kill us, unless we say nothing. Rather let us go back to Hungary and I shall give order to drive him out of Paris and out of all his realm. We shall take such bitter vengeance that it will be forever remembered. But first I want to see her myself.” So they went to the hall and attended on King Pepin, pretending great love and joy. After a while, he said to King Pepin: “Let us go to see the empress.” Pepin agreed and they took each other by the hand. The queen of Hungary heard of it and she too set out and went to be present with them. The Maganzas, with many of their men, all had concealed weapons on them. Arriving at the bedchamber, Pepin had many torches lit, and King Philip took her by the hand and talked with her. He instantly recognized her but gave no sign of this, and seemed delighted with her as with a daughter. Gryphon of Maganza then said: “It would be better, my lord, to let her rest.” The queen of Hungary was present there, and recognized her all the more clearly. Then they left and returned to their lodgings. Gryphon said to Falisetta: “You are in the clear, for they did not recognize you.” Falisetta answered: “God grant it be true, but I am afraid.” Upon returning to their chambers, King Philip secretly grieved lamentably with his wife, but for the rest of the day showed no changed in demeanor.

The Begetting of Charlemagne

12

When the second day had passed, King Philip asked King Pepin's leave to return to Hungary and commended Bertha to him. King Pepin answered; "What are you saying to wish to depart? You have barely stayed with me for two days! It is my wish that you see my hunting grounds by the Maine, and I have had it made ready for love of you." King Philip, so as not to rouse his suspicions, answered that he was most eager to see it, and so, on the next morning, the hunt was made ready. King Philip commanded his wife to visit Falisetta and to pretend not to recognize her. The queen said to him: "Ah, my lord, you keep calling her Falisetta, but I will henceforth call her Falsetta, for verily she has been false and pernicious to me." (Because of these words, the woman was ever after called Falsetta.)

King Pepin and King Philip mounted their steeds, and with them rode Bernard of Clairmont, Raymond of Trier, Morand of Riviera and many others. Having left Paris and reaching the forest, they pursued the hunt all day with great pleasure. It was near evening when King Pepin wounded a stag with an arrow and, seeing that he had hit it, sent a pack of hounds in chase of it and followed its tracks until he had taken it and put it on his horse. He wanted to rejoin his company, but he had turned so far into the forest that he did not find his way back to his men, but found himself by the river Maine. Walking upstream, he arrived at the house of the aforesaid Lambert, where his true wife, Bertha of the Large Foot, was lodged. He dismounted and called out to see if any one was there. Lambert answered him, and when he saw him, he recognized him and said, smiling: "O my royal lord of France, what are you doing so late at night in these parts?" Said the king, "By my faith, I have lost my way and my retinue," and asked if any of them had arrived there. Lambert said that

none had. Then the king asked how far it was from there to Paris. Lambert answered, “It is five leagues,” adding: “My lord, if it please you to stay here, I have some fresh-baked bread and some new picked salad greens.” The emperor laughed at this and said: “I shall do so.” He dismounted and sat down on a great bundle of firewood. Lambert called his daughter to wait on him. After a freshly-kneaded loaf had been taken from the oven, he ordered Bertha to bring a white tablecloth to King Pepin.

13

When Bertha came up to King Pepin, she knelt at his feet in such a gracious manner that he said to himself: “This is not a peasant woman’s bearing.” He looked at her face and said: “If the queen were not ill, by my faith, I would say that this is she and that she is playing some prank on me, so much does she resemble her.” While Lambert came up with the wine, Pepin, still looking at her face, said to her: “Are you Lambert’s daughter?” Bertha answered: “Ah, I am too overmuch his daughter!” Then Pepin said: “Do you want to kiss me, and I shall marry you.” She answered, trembling all over: “I will do whatever you wish.” Pepin said: “Well then, if Lambert agrees, will you sleep with me this very night?” And she answered: “My lord, I should do you will.” When Lambert had given drink to the king, he said to him: “Lambert, is this your daughter?” Lambert replied: “She is my daughter, and more than a daughter to me.” Pepin said: “I desire her to sleep with me tonight.” Lambert answered: “My lord, by God’s mercy! If she is not willing, do not let yourself do violence to her, nor commit an outrage on me in my own house!” Said the king: “If she is not willing, I will use no force, against either her or you.” Lambert turned to her and said: “Do you wish to sleep with King Pepin tonight?” And she said yes. When Lambert heard her, he was very troubled by the matter and said so to his wife, who answered: “She shall never again enter my house, bad girl that she is. I might as well say it: she is strumpet.” While they were speaking thus, Bernard

of Clairmont and Morand of Riviera arrived. They dismounted and said to the king: "You have caused us much worry." The king told Lambert to keep the beautiful young woman hidden, so that she might not be seen, and he obeyed. Meanwhile King Philip of Hungary and the rest of the hunt rode up, brought together there by the sound of the hunting horns, and all of them supped there together. Great was their joy at having found King Pepin. When they had eaten, Pepin said to Bernard: "This man has in his house a lovely young woman, and she has promised to sleep with me tonight. Have a lodging made ready for me wherever it seems best to you, and watch out for King Philip, because of his love for his daughter, the queen." Bernard wanted King Pepin to sleep in the house, but Lambert would not permit it. Bernard did not want to force him, so he took a great wagon or car that stood outside the house, had it drawn up to the river bank, and furnished with a bed atop, big enough for two persons, covered with rich ornaments and sheets and fresh herbs and fronds. Then all went to sleep, finding lodging in one place or another. King Philip slept in Lambert's house. He was grieving on account of his daughter, and Lambert on account of the queen (who called herself Falisetta so as not to be recognized). And Lambert's wife was grieving likewise.

14

When everyone had gone to sleep, King Philip and Bernard had Bertha mount the cart, and Bernard departed. When Pepin went to approach Bertha, she said: "My lord, let us go to bed first." She took his boots off with her own hands, and when they had entered the bed, Pepin embraced her and she began to weep, saying: "Praised by the True God and his Most Holy Mother, for how I have reached the place where I can declare my reason for being." The king sat up and said: "What do you mean 'your reason for being'? Do you have father or mother other than Lambert, or were you ever married?" She embraced him and begged him for God's sake to hear her out, and then she said: "I

have a father and a mother and a husband.” The king said: “Who is your father?” And she replied: “King Philip of Hungary is my father, and King Pepin, Emperor of Rome and King of France, is my husband, and I am Bertha of the Large Foot.” Pepin said: “How can you be Bertha, whom I have left on a sickbed in Paris?” Bertha replied; “That is Falisetta, and I pray you, my lord, to hear how the matter stands.” Then, weeping and praying his mercy all the while, she told the king how Falisetta had been reared in Hungary, how she had brought her with her, and how all things had happened up to their meeting in the car. King Pepin felt for her feet and found them as Bernard and Gerard and Morand and Raymond had told him. Considering how everything had been put in motion by youth on Bertha’s part and by malice on Falisetta, he swore to wreak a terrible and notable revenge. Nonetheless he wished to know whether Bertha was a virgin, and therefore he knew used as a wife in the normal way, and found her intact. That night she grew pregnant with a man-child. In the morning the king said to her: “Bertha, your father King Philip is here. All this has been the work of God, Who has led me into these parts and Who created the stag that led me here.” She was overjoyed to see her father. In the early dawn Bernard of Clairmont arrived by the car, and Pepin told him how things stood. Bernard marveled greatly and talked with the king until full daylight. When they left the car, they sent Bertha ahead. As she walked toward Lambert’s house, King Philip had just risen; as she came to the door, Bertha met him. He stood staring at her and she at him. As the gazes of father and daughter crossed, they recognized each other. Her father looked at her foot and said: “O my daughter!” And she at the same instant cried out: “O my father!” and threw herself to her knees at his feet. Her father embraced her, weeping. Pepin had the gate closed and called for Raymond of Trier and Morand of Riviera, in whose presence he had Bertha declare all the events that had passed. Then they secretly swore to each other that just vengeance should be taken. Lambert fell on his knees before Pepin and Bertha, asking at once for mercy, since he had much blamed Bertha for going to sleep with King Pepin. Bertha asked her father, King Philip, and

King Pepin to graciously bestow husbands upon Lambert's daughters. King Pepin made Lambert declare how he had found her and on what day, so that each fact was in conformity with every other. Then they gave order for the to remain there until she be secretly sent for, so that their Maganza enemies might not know of it. So they returned to Paris and she remained in Lambert's house.

15

Upon returning to Paris, King Philip of Hungary told the queen, his wife and Bertha's mother, of the whole matter and she was exceedingly joyful. Pepin made all his people arm and sent secret word to many parts of the city, commanding that when the alarm was sounded, the Maganza men should be put to death. Then he went with Bernard and many armed men to Falisetta's chamber, while Morand of Riviera arrested Lanfroy and Ulric at Bernard's bidding and brought them to the queen of Hungary's chamber. She put them under guard so that they might not get away.

Meanwhile Pepin and Bernard reached Falisetta's chamber. Pepin ran to the bed, grasped her by the locks of her hair, and drew his dagger to kill her, but Bernard would not let him. Pepin put her under the guard of one of his seneschals and then he and Bernard, with their swords in the hands, rushed to the great hall of the royal palace. Pepin shouted: "Death to the Maganza traitors!" At this signal, the alarm was sounded in the courtyard and throughout the city, according to the orders given. The men of Maganza, hearing the noise, believed it was for an assembly of the people, since King Philip desired to depart. But then they heard say: "There is a huge noise in the square and the palace." Gryphon armed, along with his retinue, and said to his brothers: "The King of Hungary must have seen through Falisetta. Let us go before King Pepin to make our excuse." As they were about to move, a servant arrived, screaming. He was wounded and said: "My lords, hasten to flee,

for King Pepin and all the city are shouting, 'Death to the Maganza traitors!' Already more than sixty of your servants have been killed, and King Pepin goes accompanied by Bernard of Clairmont and King Philip of Hungary and Morand of Riviera and all the people of the city." Then Gryphon, Guinam, Ptolemy and Spinard fled the city, with their many retainers, even as they were set upon by the men that arrived with King Philip of Hungary. King Pepin had Falisetta taken into the square, with both her sons, and commanded that she be burned along with both these children born in adultery. But King Philip and Bernard and Morand, as well as the queen, begged him to have pity on the two youngsters. He was unwilling to consent, and they were about to be thrust into the fire, when all the people began to cry out: "Your Sacred Majesty, have pity on these two innocents!" King Philip asked King Pepin for the mercy that the people of Paris demanded, and he granted them mercy, saying: "God grant that mercy for you bode no evil to me and the realm of France!" So did Lanfroy and Ulric escape the flames, but Falisetta was burnt. And she was ever after by all men called Falsetta, because of the falsehood she had employed.

16: *The Defeat of Gryphon and His Brothers* [summary]

King Pepin now sent four thousand men, led by Bernard of Clairmont, Morand, Raymond of Trier and Raymond of Spain, to bring Bertha from Lambert's house. Gryphon of Poitiers and his brothers, with five thousand loyal Maganza knights, interrupted their flight when they learned of the plan and split their forces in two to intercept the king's army. Bernard, after finding Bertha, prudently also decided to split his forces. He himself rode ahead with two thousand, leaving the other two thousand to guard Bertha, who herself dons armor. Bernard's division encounters half the Maganza force, led by Ptolemy and Spinard, engages them in battle and kills Spinard. Gryphon, leading the rest of the Maganzas, meanwhile attacked the king's other division, led by Morand and the two Raymonds. As the two battles were raging simultaneously, Bertha, seeing Ptolemy attacking Bernard, struck him dead with her lance. On the king's side, Raymond of Spain was gravely wounded by Gryphon. At battle's end, a thousand of the king's knights lie dead and many were wounded, but Gryphon and Guinam suffered a loss of two thousand before they fled to Maganza with the remainder.

After the victory had been celebrated in Paris, King Philip and his wife returned to Hungary. Bertha, now pregnant, was once more Pepin's queen. She loved him tenderly, and for love of him also cared devotedly for his two bastard children, Lanfroy and Ulric.

The Birth of Charlemagne and Murder of his Parents

17

When the end of the term of nine months arrived since Bertha had slept with King Pepin on the car, she gave birth to a boy child which bore the niello mark on his right shoulder which was the sign that manifests the Royal House of France. It was now well known how Pepin had begotten him in the car on the banks of the river Maine, when he found Bertha in Lambert's house, and how Bertha had made him dower and give in marriage Lamberts daughter, and how Lambert had become a wealthy man in Paris, as he well deserved. Therefore, in memory of these things, Pepin desired that the child should bear the name Carlemaine, the first part for the car and the second for the river. In this he did no wrong, since the childe was also "magnus," that is "great."³⁶ There was great rejoicing over Charlemaine and his nativity. It was said that the King of Hungary held a feast greater than any other lord's. And though the child was called Carlemaine, it was sometimes also referred to as Charlot, and thus it happened that his name came to be Charlemagne and not Carlemaine. He had a face and a glance so fierce that no man could look in his eyes without lowering his gaze. He was given to Morand of Riviera to rear, and he had him nursed and educated. He bestowed more love on him than if he had been his own sun. Later, when Charlot has completed twelve years, Bertha gave birth to a girl child.

By that time Lanfroy was sixteen years old, and Ulric, fifteen. Their Maganza relatives were daily writing letters to them, about how their mother had been burnt alive, and how it had been Pepin's decision to burn her, and how Bertha had been the cause of all these evils. Also, that they would lose their lordships if Charles reached the age of fifteen, and would then be subjects not merely of a

³⁶ 'Magnus,' that is 'great': The translation here is rather free, to approximate the puns in the Italian original on 'Carro Magno' (car + river name) and 'Carlo Magno' (Charles the Great, i.e. Charlemagne). Mainet (*Mainetto*), Charles later pseudonym, obviously also puns on the name of the river.

member of the house of France, but of the son of a strumpet and a huntsman. This being what they wrote, the two brothers began to seek Bertha's and Charlot's death. One day, Bertha was giving birth to a girl child. Her door was never closed against them, since Bertha had reared them like her own children ever since she returned with King Pepin. Now Lanfroy saw the food and either seized it or carried it as if he were one of the queen's servants and poisoned that portion of it that he believed or knew to be Bertha's favorite dish, so that she died of that poison three days after. The doctors said that she had been poisoned and Pepin had three of her chambermaid's burnt alive, who were blamed for the act. (Lanfroy and Ulric seemed more eager than any others to avenge Bertha.) There was deep mourning for Bertha throughout France and Hungary. Pepin had the newborn girl baptized and for the love of her mother named her Bertha the Second. She later became Roland's mother.

18

One year after Bertha's death, the two bastards Lanfroy and Ulric were talking together about the rule of France, as those of Maganza had advised them. Lanfroy said: "After Pepin's death the rule will not come down to us, but to Charlot. Therefore it would be better for us to kill both Pepin and Charlot. But first let us send word to Gryphon and the rest of the Maganza clan that they may muster an army and aid us." They sent letters to Gryphon and he put himself in readiness. The two brothers, at a given signal, entered Pepin's bedchamber and found him asleep and alone. With daggers in both hands, they began to strike at him. Pepin started up and tried to flee, but they struck him to the ground in the middle of the room. Charlot came running to the chamber door and saw the two murderous patricides killing his father and saying to him: "And in this same manner will we deal with Charlot, since you wanted to make him our ruler." When Charlot heard these words and saw the bloody daggers, he fled and God helped him, so that they did not see him. He fled from

Paris and while he was riding toward Orleans, he presently came upon a herdsman guarding his sheep. Charlot said to him: "Would you like to change your clothes for mine?" The shepherd, content with the offer, took Charlot's garments and gave him his. (The shepherd's father later sold all these garments, except for the jerkin.). Charlot then smeared himself all over with mud and continued, not knowing whither to go. In the evening he came to the monastery of Saint-Omer. The abbot was a dear friend of Pepin's and had once been one of his servants. Charlot entered the abbey cloister. Some of the monks, who did not recognize him, asked him whether he wished to stay with them. When he said yes, they took him to the abbot and he came to an agreement with him. He put on a monastic robe and became so good a servant to the abbot that he said to his monks: "This page of mine is certainly no peasant's son." He asked him what his name was and Charlot said that he was called Mainet³⁷. The abbot asked him: "Do you have a father?" He answered that he did not.

Meanwhile the two bastards, with the aid of Gryphon of Maganza, seized power and the whole Maganza clan returned to Paris, crowned Ulric king of France, and made Lanfroy seneschal and commander-in-chief of the army. They had a ban published that, on pain of hanging, any man who had news of Charlot should report it to the king of France. In those days, Sergius was Pope of Rome, of old Maganza descent, and he ordered the excommunication of any man who harbored Charlot, or assisted him with help or force or counsel. (Leo was then crowned Emperor, and after Leo his brother Constantine became emperor, and after Constantine, Michael. These emperors ruled for twenty-six years, and after them Charlemagne was named emperor, as the story will relate presently.)

³⁷ The young Charles' alias can be taken either as a diminutive of the 'magne' in Charlemagne [i.e. 'Little Big Man'] or as a reference to the river Maine, the place of his birth. (See chapter 17 above and note.)

While Charles was being eagerly hunted by the Maganzas, the abbot to whom Charles had come declared that he had many times had a vision in which a voice cried out: "That boy whom you employ as your servant is Charlot, son of King Pepin." So he called him to his side one morning and asked him who he was and of what descent. He replied: "I am a herdsman's son. When King Pepin was killed, my father's herd was taken from him and he himself was slain, because he loved King Pepin, and I fled from home." The abbot did not wish to take him at his word, but believed that when he said "herdsman of beasts", he was in fact speaking of men. Charlot stayed in that abbey for four years, as the abbot's servant.

Young Charlemagne in Exile

Charlot at Saint-Omer

19

Two years after Pepin's death, Morand of Riviera, Charles' foster-father, having long sought after Charlot and having heard no news, decided to search for him in person. He left his possessions to his two young sons and entrusted them with the government. Then he stayed in disguise at Paris with some friends, but could find no further news at all. Dressed like a clergyman, he then went searching all the churches and minsters of France within three³ miles of Paris. Finding nothing, he went from there to Rome and many other countries, until almost four years had passed since Pepin's death. Now Morand returned once more in disguised to Paris and again inquired with his friends, and heard nothing to the purpose. He left Paris, armed and on horseback, and made his way toward Orleans. When he had come five miles from Paris, he found a herdsman watching his sheep who wore a very tattered jerkin of silk on his shoulders. Morand halted and it seemed to him that he knew that jerkin. He asked the shepherd, who was about sixteen years old, whence he had that little

jacket. The shepherd replied: “On the day when King Pepin was killed, a page passed this place and asked me to exchange garments. He gave me his clothing and I gave him mine, and my stockings and my shoes. I asked him why he was doing this and he said to me: ‘For fear of being killed..’” The shepherd also gave so many other tokens, that Morand was overcome with joy at the thought that his charge must still be alive.

At that time the abbot often had the aforesaid vision telling him that the boy who called himself Mainet was Charlot. Therefore, when one morning he was alone with him in his chamber, he fell on his knees to him, and spoke in the following manner: “Sire, you can no longer hide the fact that you are my lord Charles.” Then Charles no longer knew how to deny it, but threw himself weeping upon his knees before the abbot, crossed his breast and, trembling with fright, begged him to save him from the hands of the two bastards. The abbot, weeping also, embraced him and encouraged him, saying: “My lord, your father endowed me with this abbey, and I was for eight years his chaplain. Both my person and my abbey are at your disposal. I would rather die a thousand times than that you should fall into the hands of these two treacherous patricides.” Mainet then asked him not to change his employment, lest he be recognized. The abbot secretly had a suit of armor fashioned to the measure of his back, and for love of him kept a great steed ready in his stables. And since Charlot asked questions among all the other monks, he bid him make peace with all of them, and made him sleep in his own chamber. In this manner he kept him there for two years before he was recognized.

20

After Morand had been searching through nearly the whole world and never had any tidings of Charlot except from the above-mentioned shepherd, he asked him what way he had taken and he

pointed with his hand, saying: "He went that way, toward Orleans." It was now Morand's turn to think, and he parted from that shepherd, riding at a venture. In the evening, not knowing of a more secure place to turn, he went to the abbey of Saint-Omer. He dismounted and when the abbot recognized him, he ran to embrace him and had his horse put in the stable. Charlot, however, fled to his chamber, because he always fled from strangers, so as not to be discovered.

Morand took his helmet from his head and the abbot grasped his hand and they strolled hither and thither through the abbey. They fell to talk of the rulership of France and of Pepin's death. Morand spoke with great grief of this to the abbot, and above all he grieved for Charlot. He began to weep, telling the abbot how many countries he had visited to find him, and then recounted how he had that morning found a shepherd with Charlot's jerkin on his back, and what the shepherd had said about their exchange of garments. The abbot, perceiving the great love that Morand had for Charlot and knowing that he had reared him from infancy, knowing moreover that the boy was not altogether safe in that place, decided to apprise Morand of the situation. He took him by the hand and the two went by themselves to the abbot's chamber and entered.

Charlot had grown much taller, and he was wearing a monk's robes. Thus Morand did not know him, but Charlot recognized Morand at once. He could not wait until the abbot revealed his identity, but threw himself upon Morand's neck, saying: "O my father, what have I come to!" When Morand recognized him and heard the words he spoke, he felt at the same time such great joy and such sorrow all mixed together, that he embraced him and could not reply. He would have fallen to the ground, had he not been seated on a chest. When he could speak again, he said: "O my son, you are verily a child of fortune. How many outrages have been committed against you!" The abbot urged them to be silent because of the peril in which they stood, and said to Morand: "So that the monks may not know him, let him go to the kitchen as usual to fetch our food." Morand heartily

thanked the abbot for his great love and great good will and then turned to Charlot, saying: "If Fortune ever favor us so that we may do justice, we will give this man a redoubled reward."

Later, while they were at supper, Charlot said to Morand: "My father, I want to leave her with you." The abbot kept calling him by the name of Mainet, and that name much pleased Morand, who said: "I shall keep calling you Mainet until your true name can be made public." The abbot greatly commended him to Morand, and said to Mainet: "My son, see that you be obedient to Morand; never stray from his commands so long as you wish your enemies to come to grief."

In the morning the abbot rose before dawn and found all the armor he had readied for Mainet, and Morand put it on him with his own hands. After they were armed, the abbot, weeping, gave Mainet his blessing. Morand saddled the steed that the abbot had bought for Mainet and then they laced up their helmets and set out from the abbey. The abbot commended them to God and Morand said to him: "Do not speak of this, not to your monks, nor to our enemies, nor to any person whatever, and implore God to grant us good fortune."

Mainet in Spain: Galeana

21

When Morand and Charlot (now calling himself Mainet) had left the abbey, they traversed France and (the sooner to leave the country) rode toward Aragon, passing first Toulouse, then Narbonne, Elprussa, Perpignan, Barcelona, Aragona, Tolosa and Valencia. After reaching Valencia, they took the road toward Castile away from the sea and in a few days passed from there to Morlingana and then Lucerna. From Lucerna they proceeded to Saragossa, where King Galafron, lord of all the realms of Spain, was holding court. Morand went under the name of Aragonez and Charles once

again as Mainet. Upon reaching Saragossa, they dismounted at a rich inn and spoke Spanish. On the following day Mainet was asked whether he knew how to carve at table. Morand had taught him the art, and he was engaged at court to serve King Galafron's sons.

These were named Marsilius, Balugant, and Falseron. Marsilius, the eldest-born, was a pleasant man, just in rule, of ordinary height, well-spoken and very learned. He took delight in necromancers, and was much taken with their art. Balugant was of huge stature and a great lover of archery. He was a completely untrustworthy man, cruel against his enemies, and pitiless toward his friends. Falseron was a handsome man, tall and stout, and he was the proudest of all three, and intent to be avenged for the slightest offence. Marsilius was eighteen years old, and he was the eldest. Young Mainet carved so expertly at his table, that King Galafron desired him to carve for himself. Mainet prevailed on the king to send for Morand (now called Aragonez) to carve for the princes in Mainet's place. In this manner they passed a year there, during which nothing else of note befell them.

22

A year had passed since Morand and Charles (called Mainet) had arrived at Saragossa. It now happened that on the first day of April King Galafron went to dine in one of his gardens. The meal was laid out on a meadow in the shade of some trees, and they were eating seated upon carpets on the ground, as is the custom in Alexandria and Syria. Mainet was attending them kneeling on the ground. He had on his back a short jerkin adorned with some silver embroidery, and he wore his hair long.

At this point one of King Galafron's daughter, named Galeana, came into the garden, accompanied by twenty damsels, all dressed and adorned in the finest fashion of Spain. When they came to the king, Galeana went to embrace her father. As she embraced him, she said: "May Mahomet bring you

good fortune.” None of the kings and great lords there failed to rise to do reverence to her. The she played upon a harp while the other ladies danced. While they were dancing, Mainet carved, kneeling, before the king. She gazed at him, and he pleased her so greatly that she fell fiercely in love with him. She was not yet of an age to fall in love, but this was the work of a higher power that she was forced to obey, though she was not yet twelve years old.

When King Galafron had eaten, he left the place and returned to the city. Mainet, strolling though the garden, amused himself by fashioning a crown or garland of leaves and put it upon his head. Galeana pointed him out to one of her intimate companions and said: “That youth who carves before my father—may Mahomet grant that he become my husband!” The other lady stared at her and said: “Be silent, you silly girl! You are of such a high lineage. Would you take a servant for a husband?” Galatea answered: “Oh, what do you know of who he may be? His apparel certainly proclaims him for a gentleman. I want him to give me the garland that he wears on his head.” Modestly coming up to him, she asked him for it. Mainet made a quick curtsy and said: “My lady, this garland is not fitting for you, for yours should be of flowers and roses; it is more fitting for reaper. But in the end he gave it to her. Her delight at this caused her love for him to grow and she long kept the garland among her jewels. Mainet felt no love for her, since he had turned his mind to other thoughts. Moreover, Mainet was in the habit every morning of offering countless prayers to God that he might grant him the grace of returning home, and offered many vows to Jesus Christ if he could regain his realm and his crown. Upon returning to the city, they remained, thus disguised, for many years in Saragossa. Five years passed from the time that Galeana fell in love with him, so that he was twenty-on years old, and Galeana fifteen.

It happened one day that Galeana came to King Galafron in the great hall and saw Mainet carving before her father. Turning to her mother, she said: "You are making an old man carve for me, while my father, who is old, is served by Mainet, who is young. I had rather that he should carve before me." That evening the queen procured King Galafron's consent. The queen sent for Mainet and said to him: "You shall henceforth serve my daughter. But do it modestly, and in long-hemmed garments." (For Mainet was wont to wear a short jerkin.) She then gave him a rich scarlet gown that reached down to his feet. Then he was sent to attend Galeana, while Aragonez (that is, Morand) was sent to attend King Galafron.

Not a month had passed when Galeana ordered a meal prepared in a private chamber for herself and three other ladies. This she did because she was burning with love for Mainet, though he never looked at her and did not yet care for her. When all was ready, she found a way to remain alone in the room with her duenna and Mainet, who was carving before her. Then Galeana said to Mainet, in a joking tone: "Where does your love reside?" Mainet modestly blushed all over his face and did not answer, and kept changing color for shame. The duenna said: "Tell me, Mainet, do you already have a lady love?" He answered: "I am touched by sorrows other than the love of woman!" He sighed, remembering the death of his father, and began to weep. Galeana was overcome with so much pity for him, that she wept too, and then asked Mainet who he was and whence he came. He replied: "I am from Barcelona, the son of a merchant who perished at sea." The duenna said: "My lady, he is not worthy of your love, for he is of low degree." Galeana answered: "I do not believe him, for his behavior shows him to be no merchant." Then she said to Mainet: "I want you to be my lover." Mainet replied, "Have pity, for God's sake!" and continued, falling upon his knees before her: "Madam, I am a poor squire, do not make a laughing-stock of me." She saw that he doubted her and told him: "I know you doubt me. Be aware that love only enters in a noble mind." The

duenna added: "He is a man of various love; but the man who loves with a single mind has a noble love." Mainet said: "How then can a man like me, born of burgher stock and not of noble lineage, love nobly?" Galeana once more looked him in the eye and laughed, and Mainet added: "I will never love a woman until the day that I return home." Galeana kept all the words that Mainet had spoken fixed in her memory. Then she took a garland of flowers from her head and tried to put it on Mainet's head, who was standing close by her. But he would not take it. Shortly thereafter the other ladies came into the room. When they had eaten, Mainet departed.

On many later occasions did Galeana show her love to him, as much as modesty allowed. Thus Mainet could not altogether defend himself without being overmastered by love as well. He began to love her in the secret depth of his heart, but gave no outward sign of it, as she did.

24

King Galafron was now ready to bestow his daughter Galeana in wedlock, since she was of marriageable age. He gave order for a splendid court to assemble in the city of Saragossa, the capital of his realm. A great crowd of noble lords arrived at this feast, many simply to witness the celebrations, but most to try to gain Galeana's hand. Among these came Ulien of Sarza, Duke of Africa, Canador of Cyprus, the Emir of Numidia, King Alchin of Judea, the King of Granada, King Alicard of Anfiore, King Polinas of Russia, Sinagon of Pharaonia, the King of Portugal, King Maugris of Pamplona, Pantaleon of Thrace, Calinder of Organa in Syria, and many other nobles. All were young and desirous to prove themselves worthy. More than forty royal heirs came to Saragossa, to say nothing of princes and counts and marquises and other lords. King Galafron bade all three of his sons to show great honor to all these great men, and they did so. After some days had passed, the day of jousts and tournaments was ordered.

One day, while Galeana was at dinner in her chamber with some of her ladies and Mainet was waiting on her, she said to him: "Will you not break a lance for love of me?" Mainet answered, "Madam, I do not know how to joust." He looked her in the face, and she in his, and their glances met. Both lowered their eyes and sighed. Mainet had scarcely left and returned to his room where he found Morand returned. When he told him of the tournament, he earnestly begged Mainet not to don armor, urging many dangers if he did so. Mainet promised him not to arm.

On the morning of the feast when the tournament was to take place in the square, the joust was begun there by those of the lowest rank. Mainet stood in a balcony to watch, and Morand came up to him and once more admonished him not to arm for the joust, again pointing out the danger of his being recognized. When Morand had left, Mainet stayed in the room and took all his armor from a chest and decided to put it on. But he had grown so much, that the armor did not fit him. At this, he scattered it all over the room, cursing his ill fortune, and then retired in bad humor to a little antechamber between two rooms. There he sat on a bench, with his hand at his jaw, with one of his knees folded upon the other and his elbow upon his knee. He was sitting by a side entrance to the great hall and sighed, beset by many thoughts. At this moment, Galeana's duenna entered the hall, saw Mainet and perceived how he sighed; so she drew near to listen. Mainet, unaware that he was being overheard, was saying: "Aye me! when shall I return to my kingdom, where my father wore such a venerable crown, since I cannot procure a jousting armor or prove my worth? O Alexander the Great, you who at my age had already made all Syria subject! O brave Hannibal, you who at my age led the whole army of Carthage! O valiant Scipio Africanus, how gracious was heaven to you in your youth, while all the earth cries shame upon me!" And he struck himself in the face with his hand.

The young duenna felt sorry for him, and she knew by his words that he was of gentle lineage. She entered the room and asked Mainet what ailed him to be so pensive. He, much flustered, told her the cause, and she said to him with a smile: "Will you love Galeana, if she helps you to an armor and a horse, so that you may joust?" Mainet swore to her that he would and the duenna went to Galeana, pulled her aside and told her what had occurred with Mainet and the words she had heard him speak. Then she said: "Surely Mainet is a king's son, but I cannot tell of what country." Then she told her of the agreement she had reached with him. The princess sent for him and spoke to him in the presence of her duenna, while Mainet was kneeling at her feet. Galeana said: "If I arm you, will you promise me that you will never take a lady other than me, and ever to be my faithful lover?" Mainet answered: "I hereby swear that, as long as you live, I shall never love a woman other than you, nor have a wife other than you, provided you also swear never to take a husband other than me." And she swore to this, and he did likewise, by Mahomet. Then the duenna said: "Do not swear by Mahomet, but by whatever God you believe in." And he tendered his oath, and Galeana hers.

25

While Mainet was talking with the two ladies, a seneschal came and said: "My lady, come to dinner." She sat down to eat and Mainet waited on her, and she took a few bites. Then she rose from the table and went with her chaperon to another room, where the armed Mainet from head to foot. Galeana and her duenna covered him up in a veil of fine, white silk. Then the chaperon brought him, with his helmet upon his head and his shield hanging from his neck to the stable and had them give him a mighty steed. Mounted on horseback, he went forth into the lists.

The first man whom he overthrew was Grandonio, at which a great outcry arose. The second was the young king of Granada, as well as many of his attendant lords who tried to avenge him. The he overthrew Alicard of Anfore and Polinas of Russia with some of his companions, when his lance shattered. Galiena had two others brought for him, and with the first he overthrew Ulien of Sarza. At this all the lords and the people were amazed, and when Morand saw him performing such feats, he thought to himself: "Certain that knight must be Charlot." He drew near him, and Charles avoided him to stay unrecognized. Nevertheless he recognized him, and approached when the lance fell from his grasp to hand it back to him. Morando said: "You miscreant, I know who you are! And is this the promise you gave me? I hope to God that this will not be your undoing, and mine too. But since you have begun, see that you bring honor to your blood." With that, he began to serve as his squire.

Mainet moved away and rode against Canador of Cyprus, and unhorsed him. He also unhorsed Alichin of Judea, then the King of Portugal, then Pantaleon, then Calinder, then Sinagon, and many other lords. That day he overthrew sixty lords of cities and towns and won the joust. Galeana was overjoyed, and everyone wondered and asked who he was.

When the trumpets sounded, Morand said to him: "Meet me outside the city!" and appointed a rendezvous in a ravine near a river. So Mainet cast away his lance and fled there. Morand himself went to Mainet's room for some garments and took them to him. After he had disarmed, he washed his face, changed his clothes, mounted Morand's horse, and so returned to court. Morand had secured an inn that stood an arrow's flight from Saragossa, and now brought all the armor there, begging the innkeeper to keep it safe and giving him some money. Then Morand brought Mainet's horse back to the stable.

After Morand had returned to court and restored the horse, he went to the palace. But Galeana, who had not yet seen Mainet return, called Morand to her and said: "What have you done with the man whom you served in the lists?" Morand answered: "Nothing at all." She drew him apart, in the presence of her duenna, and said: "Tell me, Aragonese: who is that young man?" He replied: "Madam, I do not know him very well." Galeana answered: "You do know him." Morand swore: "By Mahomet, I do not know him." Said Galeana: "Don't swear by Mahomet, but by your own God." Then Morand suspected that Mainet had not yet made himself known, and denied it. While they were thus talking, Mainet arrived and Galeana greeted him with great joy.

At the end of the day, the duenna was engaged in some talk with one of the maidservants. Galeana overheard them and rose to move away so that not be discovered, fearing to betray her sworn love. Certainly Galeana had a great desire to know who Mainet was, and many times, when he was by her side, did she ask to tell her, for God's sake, who he was. He always replied that he was a merchant's son from Aragon. But she said to him: "My duenna told me that she heard you weeping, and what you were saying; it cannot be not true that you a merchant's son."

26

King Galafron commanded that the name of the man who had won the tournament be found out, and it could not be discovered. Thus Galafron did not know upon whom to bestow his daughter. He held a parliament in order to give her either to Ulien of Sarza or Grandonio of Morocco. The came to Galeana's knowledge and she sent to her father to say that she had no desire for a husband, except the one that fortune had bestowed upon her, namely the man who had won the tournament. Thereupon all by the king's leave returned to their countries.

King Galafron called together his three sons and asked each of them in turn why he had not been adequate to win the tournament. Marsilius replied: "If our god Mahound had pleased to grant me such power, I would give up half of my share of the kingdom." In the end, it was said that it had been fated by eternal decree.

When some days had passed, Galeana, still anxious to know who Mainet was, had a little hole drilled high on the wall of his chamber through which she could look into his bedchamber. Sometimes she put her eye to it and sometimes her ear. Then she saw that he and Morand made the sign of the cross and prayed before the cross-hilts of their swords, and heard the words that Morand addressed to Mainet, and understood that the so-called Mainet was called Charlot, and the so-called Aragonese, Morand of Riviera. She stood watching like this for about fifteen days, until she came to understand that Charlot was the son of Pepin, King of France, and that Morand was his foster-parent, who watched over him and advised him and lessoned him.

One day she took the time (for other than her no person ever entered the room where she had made the hole and she kept it locked), and having on that day taken up her post, she entered their room all by herself, while her mother was sleeping. When Morand saw her, he was astonished. Both he and Mainet knelt at her feet. She said: "May Christ, who is your God, preserve you!" Morand grew greatly troubled and stared at Mainet, thinking that he had made it known that they were Christians. But she said: "Morand of Riviera, do not trouble yourself, for your master, Charles, is my husband." Then she showed them how she had pierced the partition and seen and heard everything. She related the promise that Mainet had made to her, and she to him, and then threw herself upon Morand's neck, saying: "Dear father, you have had a child to rear. Now you have two. Therefore I desire you to baptize me with your own hands." Morand baptized her, and when she was christened, she desired that Mainet marry her in Morand's presence, promising never to disobey

Morand's commands. He admonished them above all to keep the fact secret. From that moment onward, whenever Morand looked at her, she trembled with fear of having failed him.

The Siege of Saragossa

27-30: *Bramant's Invasion* [summary]

Ulien of Sarza returned to Africa and informed King Bramant of what had happened. Bramant, hearing of Galeana's beauty, was determined to marry her, though he was thirty years older than she. Accompanied by the mighty champion Polynor, he invaded Spain with a huge army and sent ambassadors to Galafron to demand his bride. Galafron at first agreed, but both Galeana and her brothers objected. Hearing this, Bramant and Polynor moved to Saragossa and laid siege to the city. When Galafron and his three sons prepared to ride out against the attackers, Polynor promised Bramant to make short work of them, since he was in possession of the invincible sword, Durandel.

In the battle that followed, Polynor captured Galafron. Galafron's queen and sons urged Galeana to give in and marry Bramant, but she (after seeking Morand's advice) refused. When battle resumed, Polynor fought and captured all three of Galafron's sons.

Morand now decided to ride out against Polynor, who at first scorned to fight with a table-servant. But Morand egged him into combat. Both contestants suffered a fall, but Polynor was so impressed with Morand's valor that he Hearing of his foster-father's capture, Mainet was now determined to ride out. Galeana and her mother gave him an ancient suit of armor from their arsenal and he appeared with it in the field. No man knew who he was, and when he faced Polynor, he told him that he was a merchant's son. Polynor contemptuously refused to give battle, giving three reasons: "First, because you are a tradesman; second, because you are another man's servant; and third, because you have not been knighted." "Will you wait for me then," answered Mainet, "until I get myself knighted?" Polynor agreed. So Mainet rode back into Saragossa. As Galeana was knighting him, he pronounced the following oath: "I swear by the God whom I worship that I will always maintain my faith." He meant his faith in Christ; but all the bystanders thought he meant faith in Mahomet. Then he at once rode back into the field, defied Polynor, and unhorsed him. The two combatants took up their swords and their contest was so mighty that Polynor called a halt, saying: "Who are you? for you are surely no merchant's son." Mainet answered: "My name is Mainet, and I serve at table before Princess Galeana, whose knight I am." They then agreed to suspend their combat until the following morning.

Durandel

31

When Mainet returned into Saragossa, the queen and Galeana embraced him, showing him great reverence and rejoicing exceedingly. That evening a precious bath was prepared for him and he was carefully tended in expectation of his victory. That night Mainet rested well. During the same night

many armed men from the Spanish provinces entered Saragossa to aid King Galafron, and all waited anxiously for the morning.

King Polynor returned to his camp and went to see King Bramant, who asked him about the battle. Polynor replied that the combat would be doubtful and extremely dangerous, and that it seemed best to him to lift camp or to reach a truce so long as they still had the prisoners. King Bramant was astonished and they long paced back and forth in his tent. Then he asked King Galafron who this Mainet might be who carved before Galeana. Galafron replied: "I do not know him, except as my servant." King Bramant said: "How can it be that you have servants in your family whom you do not know?" He answered: "It has been five years since he came here together with this knight whom you hold prisoner. I think he is now about twenty-two years old. Since he was much younger then, I did not care to inquire who he was." Bramant then said: "Tell me, Aragonez: who is this youth?" Morand replied: "I do not know who he might be, but when I came to Barcelona, I met on the road by an inn and we became companions. He told me he was Catalan." And Morand swore by Mahomet that he did not know who he was. Bramant then had him completely fettered in irons and threatened him with death.

That evening Polynor said to Bramant: "I certainly think that it will be better for us to make truce and depart, for I have found that young man to be the bravest knight in the world. I fear that if we fight him, he will beat us and gain the victory." Bramant answered haughtily: "I go fight him myself, so that you may get some rest." Polynor, no less haughty than he, answered: "If you swear to me by Mahomet and on your knighthood that, if I die, you will fight him to death, I shall go into battle tomorrow." King Bramant gave his word and they went to bed.

No sooner had the day dawned, when Mainet put on a new suit of armor, because the other was utterly broken and dented. He then rode into the field and called for battle. King Polynor, like a man desperate, armed also and once more desired Bramant's oath to do battle. Then he rode into the field. They shouted defiance and struck each other mightily with their lances. Neither had the advantage, for this time Polynor was more careful. So they drew their swords and began a most bitter combat. For the space of an hour the battle was equal. Polynor grew enraged at heaven and fortune that a mere youth should so long hold out against him. He began to shout at Mainet that he had chosen to defend a strumpet. Then Mainet, who was in love, threw his shield away and with his sword in both hands assailed him with such fury that his horse reared, wherefore the sword descended on the head of Polynor's steed and cleft it in half. Polynor's horse fell dead and he remained standing. Mainet dismounted and Polynor marveled to see him do so, well noting that this was no merchant's son. He said to him: "Mainet, I demand to know, by whatever God you adore, and by whatever you love best in the world, and by your knighthood: what is your name?" Charles answered: "You have conjured me by three things that are sacred to me. But it would be better for you not to have known." Having said this, he angrily adjusted the sword in his hand and cried: "My name is Charles, son of Philip, King of France and Emperor of Rome, mortal enemy of the two traitors to France and of all Saracens." When Polynor heard him, he tried to ward off death as strongly as any Saracen could, but Mainet brought all his power to bear in the fight and struck at him with both hands on the hilt, joining force to force, and cleft him down to his chest.

When he had slain him, he wrenched away the sword that he held in his hand, remounted his horse, and turned toward Saragossa. Already a great crowd had sallied from the city to aid him, as Galeana had commanded. He rode up to them and they acclaimed him as their captain. Mainet ordered some of them to go to Polynor's corpse and to take away the scabbard of the sword with which he

was girt. He returned the sword that Galeana had given him, and girt himself with Durandel, for it was the better blade.

Victory

The First Fight with Bramant

32

After Mainet had girt on Durandel, he had a good shield brought to him and took a great lance in hand. Then he returned to the field to demand battle.

When King Bramant saw Polynor lie dead, he was much aggrieved. Now the cry for battle was heard coming from him who had slain the man. He therefore went to arm himself, filled with rage, hatred and pride, threatening to feed Mainet's body to the dogs to avenge King Polynor. First he threw on a hauberk of chain mail, and then donned his greaves and cuisses and faultds. Over this he put a cuirass of tempered steel plates, and over all, a covering of dragon skin and a surcoat with two golden images of Mahomet. Then he laced upon his head an enchanted helmet, of such fine temper that no better has ever been found. (Many said that worked into the fabric of that helmet was one of the nails with which Christ was fixed to the wood of the cross.) And all his surcoat, with the two Mahomet's, was sky-blue in color and covered with golden lilies, as were all the trappings of his horse. He mounted the great steed and girt on a longsword that reached to his heels, while a huge and heavy mace hung at his saddle-bow. He grasped an enormous lance, and commanded his men that none should, on pain of death, come to his aid in single combat. Then he had each of his four prisoners given a hard lashing to set them moving.

Finally he rode into the field against Mainet, saluted him and demanded his name and whence he came. He said once more that he was a merchant's son. Bramant asked him, for courtesy's sake, to show his face. Mainet said: "Who will give me surety? Show yours first." Bramant then uncovered his visage, and Mainet uncovered his own likewise. When Bramant saw it, he was greatly astonished that so young a knight had slain Polynor. He stared fixedly at Charles' face and Charles stared back, but Bramant needs had to drop his gaze, so fierce was Charles' glance. Then they lowered their visors, issued their challenges, and took up their positions. Their lances met with such force that they ruptured their lames and spaulders, and bore both their horses to the ground. When they rose again, Bramant grasped the mace that was tied to his saddle and Mainet grasped Durandel, and they both commenced a savage assault.

When Bramant saw Mainet's fierceness, he would gladly have taken him up among his followers, and began to plead with him to join his side, promising him his own son as a companion (a youth then some fifteen years old, whose name was Triamides.) He also vowed to crown him king of three realms. But Mainet, ever refusing these offers and never desisting from the fight, cut Bramant's shield from its neck laces, even as Bramant with his mace completely shattered Mainet's own.

When their mutual exhaustion made a pause in the first assault, each stopped and stood on his guard two lance-lengths from the other. Once more Bramant repeated his questions. Mainet made no answer but ever looked him over carefully to see where he might inflict most hurt, for Bramant so far had the advantage.

Then they commenced their second and yet more dire attack. Bramant was pressing hard upon Mainet, but he was carefully upon his guard and warded off many of Bramant's blows. Thus they

continued until the early hours of the night, and Mainet fortune in battle seemed ever the worse. The sunlight was already giving way to darkness when Mainet said: "Sir knight, in my country it is not the custom for two knights to engage in combat by night." Bramant replied: "If you promise upon your faith to return to the fight tomorrow morning, I will let you go, for you are a most valiant knight." Mainet swore to return to battle the next morning, and so did Bramant. When they were about to part, Bramant said: "Ah, Mainet! Reconsider tonight the matters of which I spoke to you today. I vow that I will crown you king of three realms, and you shall be companion to Triamedes, my son." Mainet promised to think it over, and then said: "King Bramant, I pray you, by the honor of knighthood, to deal honorably tonight with these prisoners. Above all, until we finish our encounter, I commend Aragonéz, the last of your captives, to your care, for he has been a good companion to me." Bramant promised, for love of Mainet, to treat him honorably. Then they both took their horses by the bridle (for they were too exhausted to mount them) and went back on foot, Mainet into the city and Bramant to his camp.

33: *The Fall of Bramant* [summary]

Galeana and all the people of Saragossa spent the night in prayer for Mainet's victory. Meanwhile in the Saracen camp, Bramant once more questioned Morand, who still remained silent about Mainet's identity. Bramant was removing his armor in Morand's presence and Morand noticed that it was impregnable at all points except at his neck. Bramant then asked him to act as an envoy to Mainet, to encourage him to accept Bramant's offers. Morand pretended to agree and received a safe conduct into Saragossa. There he joked with Charles about Bramant's promises, but was careful to inform him of Bramant's exposed throat.

A full scale battle began in the morning, during which the two champions met again. After a terrible struggle, Mainet, after a failed attempt to stab Bramant in the neck, was struck unconscious by a mace blow. Bramant began to drag him back as a captive to his camp, while Galeana and all Saragossa began to lament the disaster.

What happened next is disputed by the sources³⁸. One author writes that Mainet had a dagger hidden in his helmet with which he stabbed Bramant as he was being dragged away. A different account has it that Mainet was still holding on to Durandel and that he swung its pommel at Bramant's face, breaking his front teeth. Bramant dropped him in surprise, and when both had recovered, the combat resumed. Mainet succeeded in smashing the handle of

³⁸ *disputed by the sources* : Surely a deliberate irony on Andrea's part. At a moment when Charles, usually invincible and a paragon of chivalry, seems for once both defeated and willing to seize a rather unchivalrous advantage, Andrea pretends ignorance of the exact truth.

Bramant's great mace, but could not penetrate his enchanted helmet. As the struggle continued, Mainet finally found the vulnerable spot at his enemy's neck, slashed through his helmet laces, laid bare his head, and decapitated him.

At Bramant's fall, the Saracen army was thrown into disorder and surrendered. Mainet claimed Bramant's charmed helmet, the only piece of armor that had withstood the irresistible force of Durandel. Morand, King Galafron, and his sons were set free, and the king, amid general rejoicing, appointed Mainet (the secret of whose identity was still safe) commander-in-chief of the Spanish army.

Ogier the Dane

A New Friendship

34

For many days was a great feast in the city of Saragossa and throughout Spain to celebrate the victory. At that same time, King Anglant in order to assist his brother Bramant sent forth a most valiant knight whose name of King Walfredian, King of Genturia and Sarais and of the mountains of Tubari, Circassia and Cinabor bordering Numidia and Mauritania. He controlled three cities on the sea. One was called Arzous, the next Arram, and the third, Sarrem. It was King Gualfedrian whom Anglant now sent to aid his brother, who had earlier requested assistance when he set out for Aragon. When that king disembarked at Cartagena, he landed with eighty thousand Saracens, and with one of his sons, eighteen years of age, whose name was Ogier. He was an exceedingly handsome youth, of a most courageous and valiant character. The news of that army reached King Galafron at Saragossa, and there was a great uproar in the city because of it. He ordered the recall of all his army, which had recently disbanded. While his forces were coming back, news arrived that King Gualfedrian was one day's journey from Saragossa. Thus they decided to sally out against King Gualfedrian the next day, but during the night his entire host made camp at Saragossa.

King Gualfedrian had learned of the deaths of King Bramant and King Polynor from some men who had escaped from the recent battle, wherefore he decided that he wanted to see Mainet and

sent ambassadors to King Galafron in the city, requesting that he be allowed to parley with him there. He received a safe-conduct to enter the city with a thousand knights. King Galafron and his sons rode out to meet him, and Mainet and Morand rode with them also. King Gualfedrian brought his son Ogier with him. Mainet wore a garland upon his head, adorned with many pearls. When they met, they greeted each other very honorably and turned back toward the city. Mainet took the aforesaid Ogier, King Gualfedriano's son, by the hand, and it seemed to young Ogier that Mainet was so well mannered and so noble in behavior that he grew ashamed of the coarse attire of the folk who came with him. As they rode toward the city, the two kings were talking of Bramant's recent battle, and Gualfedrian asked Galafron to point out Mainet. Galafron answered: "He is the one who is riding alongside your son." When they alit from their horses, King Gualfedrian stood still and looked Mainet in the eye. They two stood looking fixedly at each other's faces, and King Gualfedrian could not sustain the other's gaze, but was forced to lower his eyes. As they dismounted at the palace, Mainet once more took Ogier by the hand.

Ogier was so entranced by Mainet's beautiful manner that for as long as King Gualfedrian remained in the city (and he remained there for three days), he stayed ever in Mainet's company. He ate and slept with him and grew so enchanted with him that he resolved in his heart never to leave his company. Mainet endeavored to honor him as much as he knew and could, until Ogier said to him: "Noble Sir Mainet, my heart is set on living and dying with you." Mainet told him that he held him very dear, but courtly honor forbade that he should keep company with one of lowly estate, since Mainet was a merchant's son and he, the son of a king." Ogier scoffed at this and said: "As for that, what remains but that I should be your servant and share you manners, and that you be my tutor in knightly deeds;" so that Mainet at last accepted him as his companion, and they offered great honor each to the other.

On the third day, Gualfedrian announced that, to avenge King Bramant and to maintain his honor, he desired to do battle with Mainet, and Mainet, in order to avoid further war, agreed to fight him. It was solemnly agreed that if Mainet should lose, King Galafron would do homage to King Anglant, and if Mainet won, the army would turn back. It was further stipulated that King Galafron should offer two hostages,³⁹ and King Gualfedrian likewise. The day of combat being determined, King Gualfedrian returned to his camp and Ogier remained with Mainet.

When the day of battle arrived, King Gualfedrian made his son Ogier hostage, and King Galafron wanted to send Marsilius as a hostage to the camp, but he refused to go, as did both his brothers. They said they would not submit themselves to the son of a merchant burgher. King Galafron sent them away from himself with harsh words, called for Mainet and said to him: "I cannot perform what I have promised you, but before I break my word of honor, I shall go myself, by the confidence I have in you." He mounted his horse and took young Ogier with him. Arriving at the tent of his father, he told him how things stood and that he had come in person to serve as a hostage, so as not to violate his promise. King Gualfedrian, seeing Galafron's noble nature, did not wish to hold him and said: "Just take Ogier with you, for I am confident that you will keep your royal word." So Galafron returned to Saragossa, taking Ogier with him.

On the next morning, Mainet armed, and Galeana and Ogier assisted him. He rode out to battle, wearing the helmet that had once belonged to Bramant, for it was of superior quality and superbly and perfectly fashioned, and many believed that it was enchanted in a manner that no steel had power pierce it.

35

³⁹ Two hostages: Though the words clearly imply two hostages from each side, the context makes it clear that only one is meant.

When Mainet rode into the field, he sounded his horn and demanded battle. King Gualfedrian armed and rode into the field, carrying a huge mace tied to his saddle bow, and rode up to where Mainet was waiting. They saluted each other, offered their defiances, took up their positions, and broke lances, with little advantage on either side. Their lances having shattered, Mainet turned back with sword in hand and Gualfedrian grasped his mace, and they commenced a bitter and savage duel. As they were fighting, King Gualfedrian with his mace broke Mainet's shield to in pieces. Mainet grasped his sword with both hands and bore down on him, and Gualfedrian tried to ward the blow with mace and shield. Mainet slashed through the mace's handle and half way through the shield. Then they both turned to sword play.

At a pause in that encounter when they were winded, Mainet began to speak: "O noble king, I pray you by your love for you son Ogier to end this battle between us. There is no reason for us to engage in such a deadly contest." (Ogier had commended his father to Mainet while he helped him on with his armor.) King Gualfedrian made no reply, but began another onslaught, which lasted until noon.

When their horses grew weary, they stopped for breath. Once more Mainet begged his foe to come to terms, and he replied: "It is not yet time." Before long, they began the third onslaught, during which each inflicted several wounds on the other, and they came to grapple so closely that each grasped the other by the gorget of his helmet. Mainet lifted the visor of the other's casque and exposed the king's face. Then they both let go and Mainet made gashes all over the other's armor. In truth, he would have defeated him right then, had he not looked upon him for love of Ogier, whom he viewed with such great affection. He saw clearly that Gualfedrian was having the worst of the fight.

Being very tired just then, they retired. King Gualfredian already bled from three wounds and, as they were standing motionless, Mainet said to him: “Ah, noble king, why, without good cause, are you intent on own death, or mine, or both ours, in this fight? I pray you, by your love for your son Ogier, to make peace.” King Gualfredian was content to do so, and the concluded peace with this agreement: that he should depart with all his army and return to Genturia (that is, to Africa), and that King Galafron should restore Ogier to him and remain free of all fealty and tribute. Mainet then returned to the city, and Marsilius and his brothers, who all along had conceived a great hatred for Mainet, began to murmur that he had left the fight out of fear. When Mainet came up to Galafron, the king asked him how the fight had gone and whether he had maintained the truth of his cause. Mainet told him how peace had been concluded, and King Galafron said: “You have done well in this and I am very satisfied with your actions. Let things stand even as has been decided.” He reaffirmed all the proposed terms and then called for Ogier to tell him how peace had been achieved. Ogier was delighted by the peace treaty, but saddened at having to leave Mainet. So he knelt at Mainet’s feet and implored him to request his father, King Gualfredian, to let him remain in his company.

Mainet asked King Galafron to ride alongside Ogier, and he did so. King Gualfredian came riding towards King Galafron until they met by the gate. Both dismounted and all their nobles did likewise. The peace terms, as described above, were confirmed and sworn. Then Ogier knelt to his father and asked him by all the gods to leave him with Mainet at King Galafron’s court, “so that” (said he) “I may come to learn his noble manners and the laws of chivalry.” Mainet swore to treat him like his very brother. King Gualfredian, perceiving his son’s eagerness and Mainet’s noble nature, said: “I consent. But I have no other son, and I pray King Galafron to treat him as he would Marsilius, his eldest son.” He promised to do so, and then Gualfredian said to Ogier: “I

charge you never to deviate from Mainet's will, for he is the best knight in the world." Then he embraced Mainet and kissed him and, weeping, commended Ogier to his care. He went on to commend him to Marsilius and his brothers and to all the lords of the court. At last, after embracing his son, he took his leave and returned to his tents. On the following morning he raised camp. He sent a great hoard of treasure to Ogier and left him an escort of five hundred men. In the course of many days, he returned to the port of Cartagena and embarked with his whole army. He set sail and returned to his own country, where he died shortly afterwards and King Anglant took possession of his whole kingdom.

36

Ogier remained with Mainet and learned many of his noble manner; they grew very fond of each other. As they stayed together, Ogier had often seen Mainet kneeling to his sword and at times commending himself to Jesus Christ. Sometimes he heard him weeping in private and became aware that he was very much in love with Galeana. He also observed how often Aragonez instructed and corrected him. He came to believe firmly that he was a Christian and loved him more than before, thinking that he must be the son of some great nobleman, and not of a merchant. It happened one day in Ogier's and Morand's presence that Mainet was greatly reviled by Marsilius, who had come to hate him bitterly for the honor with which his father and the barons treated him. At this, Morand beckoned Mainet to their room and as they entered left the door ajar and did not lock it. Ogier followed them and upon reaching the door stood listening. Morand began to say, "For God's sake, let us no longer stay in this court, but rather return to France to reconquer our French kingdom from the two bastards who have seized it, and avenge King Pepin, your father." When Ogier heard these words, he was so overjoyed that he rushed inside and locked the door behind him. Morand smiled and said: "What are you doing here, Ogier?" He threw himself upon

his knees before him and said: "I have overheard your words and I pray your lord Mainet to make me of the same faith as yours." Morand answered: "What's this? Do you not believe in Mahomet and Apollyon and Termagant and Great Jupiter, as we do?" Ogier said: "You do not believe in these, but in baptism. Therefore I will not rise from my knees until you baptize me." Then Mainet, who understood and knew Ogier to most worthy of trust, fetched a silver basin and a brass bell, and he and Morand baptized him in the name of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Ogier swore to follow Mainet to the death. Then Morand told him who Mainet was and that his name was Charles. Ogier knelt to Charles and made to kiss his feet, but he made him rise to his feet and said: "If by God's grace I return to my kingdom, I promise you, Ogier, that I will create you Gonfalion of the French Crown and you shall bear our sacred banner, the Oriflamme." Then all three shook hands and kissed one another on the mouth. Thereafter Ogier said to Mainet: "My lord, do you wish me to cut off Marsilius' head?" Morand cried out: "For heaven's sake, Ogier, what are you saying? Do you want to bring us into danger? I forbid you to disobey my command, for I am Mainet's second father." Then Ogier said: "And I want to be a second son to you, nor will I ever disobey your orders." Mainet then told him that Galeana was his wife, and how he had secretly baptized and married her. Ogier said: "These sons of King Galafron are so full of ill will against Mainet that it will be better if I stay and keep company and with them, and pretend not to care for you. They may tell me something." Agreed on this, they left the room. Morand said to Ogier: "If you want to know their intentions, show no sign of care or trouble at anything they may say."

37-39: Treachery and Escape [summary]

Ogier, pretending hatred for Mainet, gained the confidence of Galeron's three sons. They told him of a plot to murder Mainet and solicited his aid, promising to reward him with Galeana's hand. Not wishing to arouse their suspicion, he carried news of their plan to Galeana rather than directly to Mainet. When she told Mainet and Morand, they decided to flee. On the night before the intended murder, Galeana brought a fine suit of armor for Morand to Mainet's lodging, but was observed by her mother the queen, who had been let into her sons' conspiracy. Her suspicions aroused, the queen waited for Mainet and Morand to leave the room and removed all their weapons,

including Durandel.. She, however, failed to carry away Bramant's magic helmet and did not know of the armor that Morand had hidden in the inn outside the city.

That night, Galeana disguised herself as a boy, procured a key of the city gate, gathered up a number of her jewels, and joined Mainet. Together with Morand and Mainet, they left the city, stopped at the inn for the spare armor and horses, and set off at a gallop toward the Gascon border.

At dawn, Marsilius and his brothers discovered their absence. Finding Galeana missing also, they gradually realized what had happened. They began slaughtering Mainet's retinue until stopped by King Galafron. Then they set out in pursuit with five hundred knights. The fugitives had meanwhile crossed the Ebro and sped on toward the Pyrenees. They intended to take refuge at Castle Galisflor, two leagues north of Pamplona. Just as they were approaching it, they found Marsilius and his brothers behind them, together with large army led by the Mazzaric, King of Pamplona. Galeana took refuge in the castle while Ogier, Mainet and Morand faced the attackers and routed them. On the next morning, all four set out toward Gascony and by nightfall reached Morlain.

The Return

40-42: From Spain to Rome and Bavaria [summary]

Mainet and the other three continued on their journey, paying their way with Galeana's jewels. Unable to stop safely anywhere in France, they decided to make their way to Rome in order to seek help from Bernard of Clairmont's son, Cardinal Leo. They passed through Avignon, Provence and Savoy, hearing everywhere complaints about the misrule of Pepin's bastard sons. They crossed the Alps into Lombardy and thence to Rome. Upon arrival, they learned that Cardinal Leo was absent in Apulia and took up lodging at an inn near Saint John Lateran. Forced to wait there for three months, they soon found themselves unable to pay for their lodging. One by one pawned all their armor to their hostess until they were reduced to poverty.

At last the Cardinal returned and learned the truth from Morand. He feared the hostility of the Maganza pope, but he provided Morand with money to pay their hostess and redeem their armor and that night secretly visited them at the inn. On the next day, he sent a servant to Bernard of Clairmont with the following message: "The fierce whelp has left the forest and is fleeing to its lair, pursued by two mastiffs. I know not whether it can reach home." The messenger delivered it within twenty days, and Bernard immediately wrote to England and to all the rest of his family, ordering them be in readiness for war, without, however, disclosing the reason. He then set out for Rome with a small force of some six hundred men. Meanwhile, the Cardinal feared for Mainet's safety in Rome and suggested that go to Bavaria to seek Duke Namo's help. Mainet agreed. As he made ready to leave, he said to Cardinal Leo: "If by God's grace I return home, I swear by the One True God to grant free pardon to all men, except to my two traitor brothers." Then he and his three companions began their journey northward.

Shortly before they reached the Po near Pavia, Bernard and his troop came riding in the opposite direction. Ogier stopped one of the servants to ask who they were and the servant, thinking him a bandit, raised the alarm. The two parties came to blows and several men were wounded, but at last Morand recognized Bernard and cried out to halt the fight. Amid general rejoicing, Bernard sent word of their meeting to Cardinal Leo. To Bernard also Mainet said: "If by God's grace I return home, I swear by the One True God to grant free pardon to all men, except to my two traitor brothers." Bernard began to say, "Yet must the House of Maganza be destroyed . . .," but Charles answered: "Ah, Lord Bernard! God will not forgive a man who does not forgive others." Then he resumed his journey toward Germany with Morand, Galeana and Ogier.

Bernard went back to Clairmont. There he immediately summoned Duke Aymon of Dordogne, Otho of England, Miles of Angrant and Gerard of Roussillon, his sons by marriage and Cardinal Leo's brothers, as well as for his two illegitimate sons, Ansewig and Sanguin. He informed them of the facts and bade them prepare for the coming conflict.

Duke Namor Raises an Army

42

When Morand had taken leave of Bernard, he crossed the Po with his companions. They traversed all Lombardy, passed the Alps, and upon arrival at Constance learned that Duke Namor was in Flanders. They traveled thither and found the Duke holding splendid court. Morand had made his companions dismount in the courtyard and they climbed the stairs of the palace together and found the Duke in the hall, watching the company dance. All stopped to look as they entered the hall. Morand was holding Galeana's hand, and she was dressed like a boy. The Duke saw her and pointed her out to some of his nobles, saying: "That boy looks like a girl." After approaching Morand, he said to him: "My dear fellow, that page of yours should have his fingernails pared." Morand laughed and said: "One jester does not fear another jester's jibes." Duke Namor then turned to Charlot and said: "Sir knight, whence are you?" He could wait no longer, but knelt down and said in a loud voice: "Most noble duke, I am Charlot, son of Pepin, King of France and Emperor of Rome; and this is Morand of Riviera. We have come to commend ourselves to you and to entrust ourselves to your power. We pray that it be your pleasure to aid the better cause, even as your predecessors did." When Duke Namor heard Charlot, he at once knelt at his feet and embraced and kissed him, and all the lords that were present, seeing their Duke kneeling, knelt down also. There was none so hardhearted among them who did not weep for joy and sorrow: sorrow at remembering the death of his father; and joy at his own appearance, since everyone had thought him dead.

Morand drew the Duke apart and told him who Galeana was. At once the Duke called for his widowed mother and she embraced and kissed and blessed Charlot, and the Duke, weeping, put Galeana's hand in hers, and said: "Dear mother, this is the queen of France, wife to Charlot and daughter to the king of Spain. Show her as much honor as you can." The duchess embraced and kissed her and then took her to her chamber. It is past telling how highly she was honored and how attired and adorned like a queen. And so she returned to the hall while Charles was telling Duke Namo who Ogier was, and he, for Charles' sake, was shown much honor. Charles was given a rich apartment, with many adjoining rooms. After he disarmed, the duke had royal garments brought for him, so that when he returned to the hall, it was clear that this was indeed Charles, son of Pepin, true heir to the lordship of France. The duke sent letters and ambassadors through all Christendom and to Hungary, with notice that Charles, son of King Pepin, was in Bavaria.

The king in Paris constantly maintained spies in all the territories of Charles' friends, since they refused all obedience to him. Hearing that this was Charlot, some of these spies came to Paris and reported the matter to King Ulric and to Lanfroy. That news was a great cause of fear in Paris. Finally they levied forces throughout the kingdom, and sent for Marquis Belinger of Maine, and Agnetin of Sens to come to their aid against that man who said he was Charles and who was staying in Bavaria. When the Marquis and Agnetine heard the news about Charles from Ulric's messenger, they dressed themselves in purple upon hearing the tidings and sent word to Lanfroy and Ulric that they should come to see them joining with Charles.

Duke Gerard set out from Burgundy with his three brothers and three thousand knights and came to Lanfroy's and Ulric's aid, along with Gryphon and his brothers and many others of Maganza. The Pope sent to Ireland and commanded armies to be sent from Burgundy and Ireland. Twenty

thousand Christians on horse and on foot landed at the port of Bordeaux and began to move toward Paris.

Bernard of Clairmont had tidings of this and attacked them while they were in Irish soil in Lower Frisia⁴⁰ and overthrew them, killing twelve thousand. The King of Hungary came through Bohemia and Germany to Bavaria with twenty thousand archers and twelve thousand men. Also to Bavaria came the King of Bohemia, Marquis Berlingher and Agnentín, Lothair of Anelzimbó and his brother Baldwin, as well as Solomon of Brittany. All these lords and many others, having crossed the Rhine, assembled in Constance, together with Charles and Duke Namo and the King of Hungary. One hundred and fifty thousand knights met there, and therefore a council was held to determine where they should take the field. Many said: "It would be best to wage the campaign throughout the realm, since many cities will surrender to Charles." The Duke said: "Let us have hold a muster, to see how strong we are." But Marquis Berlingher and Agnentín and Solomon counseled going directly to Paris, saying, "Our cause is the right cause," and adding that they did not believe that Lanfroy and Ulric would expect this.

Meanwhile news had come from Paris that Gerard of the Thicket, with Gryphon and the other Maganzas, had come in aid of the two brothers, and that already a hundred thousand knights were at Paris. It was also reported how Bernard of Clairmont had defeated twenty thousand of the enemy. The Duke had the muster held, and a hundred and fifty thousand knights were found there. Then they named Duke Namo of Bavaria Commander-in-Chief of the whole army, and he ordained the divisions in the following manner: He gave the command of the first division to Solomon of Brittany, Marquis Belingher and Angentín. Charles said he wished to ride be with them in the first

⁴⁰ On Irish soil in Lower Frisia: a repeated error in geography; see n. [120] below. In any case, if this army is marching from Bordeaux to Paris, a route via Lower Frisia (?northern Netherlands) makes little sense.

division. It consisted of twenty thousand knights. He gave the second division to Morand of Riviera and Ogier; it consisted of thirty thousand knights. The third was put under the King of Hungary and the King of Bohemia, with many other barons; and it contained seven thousand knight, along with all the banners and carriages. Namo reserved the fourth division, consisting of thirty thousand knights, for himself. When the divisions had been assigned, they began to move toward Paris. As they were entering the kingdom, they passed near the city of Laon on the way to Orleans, the whole camp sprang to arms when a new army appeared. This was Bernard of Clairmont with his sons, and with Sanguin, Duke of Ireland, along with Flovis of Bordeaux and his brother William. They had thirty thousand knights with them. Great was the joy of the host at their arrival. Camp was pitched and all the barons gathered around their banners to see Bernard coming with his army along the road to Brisson (for he had made a wide swerve around Paris in the direction of Troyes in Champagne and therefore did not meet with the first division.) He too made camp and rested his banners.

When Charles was pointed out to Miles of Angrant, he leapt from his horse and ran to kneel at Charles' feet, and embraced him and swore not to take his armor from his back from then on until Charles was lord of Paris and wore the crown of the kingdom of France. Charles rejoiced and made much of him, and of his brothers. Then, for the better repose of Bernard and his army, he and his men were put in charge of the rear guard, while the third division was bestowed upon the Duke of Bavaria, so that the kings of Hungary and Bohemia could take over the fourth, and Bernard the fifth. Now the army consisted of eighty million, not counting men unsuited for battle. That day Miles knelt to Charles and begged for the grace of accompanying him in his division, and Charles consented.

Now a murmur rose among the lords of the host, who said, "We are marching with Charles against his own blood, and with Bernard against his," and there was much talk about this question. Yet Charles gathered all the nobility together and reassured them, swearing that even if they should all kill him, nothing should ever be held against them, and all should be pardoned from that moment onward. "Are you not all great and free nobles? For I abjure them as traitors to me and to my father." Bernard of Clairmont also abjured Gerard of the Thicket as an enemy of the French Crown and of justice. After the barons were reassured, the host began to move and thus banded together marched toward Paris

Back in France

Gerard and Guerrin

43

When news arrived in Paris that the army had passed Orleans, Gerard of the Thicket said to Lanfroy and King Ulric: "We have to take the field against them, so that we may not seem to be afraid." A command was issued that everyone should sally out from Paris. King Ulric issued a public declamation that every citizen capable of bearing arms should, on pain of hanging, sally from the city against the enemy. When they were outside the city, he made the form the first division and made two citizens its captains. The second was bestowed on Lanfroy, and it had twenty thousand knights. In to this division Gerard sent Guerrin, his younger brother, and said to him: "That man Charles says he is King Philip's son and that he was begotten on a car during a hunt. This cannot be believed, since Pepin was so old that you could not have been able. But the mother, to call the succession of this kingdom into question, had plenty of means to get herself pregnant. But about those two who are our masters are certainly Pepin's sons." He continued by saying to Guerrin:

“They demand neither homage nor tribute from us; and Charles, once in power, would require our allegiance, as his father had done from our grandfather. Let us therefore defend our freedom. That is why I ask you, Guerrin, to act like our father whose name you bear.” They set out and drove the citizens in that division before them.

Gerard bestowed the third division on Guinam of Bayonne and Lionet of Altaforgia and his brother Denis, sons of Richard of Morgalia. There were twenty thousand in that division. He bestowed the fourth division on his brothers, Miles and Bernard of Burgundy, and put himself in command of this division. They were thirty thousand knights. The fifth and last he gave to King Ulric, thirty thousand knights of choicest nobility, along with Gryphon and all the flower of Maganza. Thus disposed in ranks, they marched against Charles’ camp.

On the following night, some citizens abandoned their ranks and went over to Charles’ camp, and through them it became known that the burghers had been constrained by force to sally forth into battle. Charles heard this while in parley with his barons and was very grieved by the news. Duke Namor said to him: “Raise the royal banner against them, march out to meet them, and make yourself known. They either will come over to your side or turn to flight, for I know their hearts.” The royal banner was a copy of the Oriflamme, since those of Paris (that is, King Ulric) possessed the true Oriflamme. Charles did as the Duke had suggested, and one army began to move against the other.

44-48: Paris Recaptured [summary]

The battle began and, as Namor had predicted, the moment that Charles showed himself to the citizens, they all cried out: “Long live Charlemagne! Death to the traitors!” Giving command that they should not be hurt, he bade them part and rode into battle against their masters. At the first assault, he slew Lanfroy, but in the battle that followed, countless nobles died on both sides. Well might our author⁴¹ exclaim: “Alas, noble Frenchmen! Alas, you brave

⁴¹ Both this and the following chapter include rhetorical apostrophes by Andrea’s putative “author.”

citizens of Paris! How great was the evil you caused when Pepin wanted to burn Lanfroy and Ulric alongside their treacherous mother and you would not let him burn them! Behold now the consequence of your deed!"

As the battle raged on, Gerard of the Thicket rushed in with his son Miles. The ground was covered with corpses and the noise of battle was heard a mile away. In the thick of the fight, Guerrin, Gerard of the Thicket's brother, did battle with Charles and was killed by him. (He left an only child, whose name was Huon of Auvergne, the future father of Bussy of Auvergne.)

Seeing Guerrin slain, his Burgundians turned in flight. When Gerard of the Thicket was told, he was overcome by grief and rage. Well might our author exclaim: "O you of the most noble blood of Constantine, why did Fortune ordain that in fighting for two bastards you should so cruelly battle each other." As the battle kept raging, the disbanded citizen army returned to Paris and began to kill all those who still supported the two bastards. At last Charles and Ulric came face to face and fought fiercely. Ulric almost escaped by the aid of a crowd of his knights, but as he rode away, Charles threw away his shield and leapt upon Ulric's back, wresting him from the saddle. After a final struggle, he took Ulric captive and handed him over to Namor, and went back to do battle against Gerard of the Thicket.

Gryphon and Guinam of Maganza meanwhile conferred with Gerard. Told of Ulric's capture, he decided to flee. At first he tried to escape to the city, but found that it had rebelled; he therefore takes flight toward Champagne. He would still have been taken by pursuers, had not Charles called them off, remembering that Gerard was a blood relative to both him and Bernard of Clairmont. His brother, Bernard of Mongrana was taken and brought before Charles. Charles magnanimously pardoned him and told him to return to Gerard. He promised a similar pardon to Gerard if he submitted. Much impressed by Charles' generosity, Bernard swore perpetual fealty to him.

Bernard returned to Burgundy. When he heard of his brother Bernard's defection, he spitefully took possession of his territories and proclaimed him an outlaw. Several of Bernard's liegemen protested his injustice and were either imprisoned or executed for their loyalty. Finally, Gerard succeeded in seizing Bernard's young son Aymeric and cast him into a dungeon in Tramogna. When news of the seizure of his lands, the murder of his liegemen, and the imprisonment of his son reached Bernard, he fell ill and shortly after died. (Charles later freed Aymeric, gave him careful nurture, and eventually employed him as one of his commanders in Spain; he also sent him to fight against Aragon under King Desiderius of Pavia. During that campaign, Aymeric captured the city of Narbonne and was made its ruler. He married Helmegard, Desiderius' sister, and through her became the ancestor of a valiant race.)

Charles entered Paris in triumph. He took his seat upon the royal throne in the palace and ordered Ulric to be brought before him. Ulric fell on his knees before him and begged for mercy. Charles said to him: "You wicked, treacherous patricide, son of the devil, how can you ask for mercy, you who have murdered the man who begot you? Had he been a lowly rock, or a senseless beast, or a mere worm, should your hand have been so savage as to shed his blood? I am well aware that it is not fitting that you receive death at my hands, since this would redound to your praise. But so that none may boast of the glory of having spilt our blood, I will avenge the blood of my father with my own hands." He had him carried into the square. Priests were brought to confess him, but he would not, but cried out in a loud voice that Charles was not King Pepin's son. Then Charles, with his own hand, cut off his head, so that none else should lay hands on the blood royal. The nobles carried away his body to bury it in the royal tomb. Charles was unwilling to bury him in sacred ground, because he had not confessed himself, yet the nobles honored his corpse and carried it to church in Charles' honor, and buried it elsewhere. But Charles gave burial to Guerrin of Mongrana, Gerard of the Thicket's brother, and gave it full honors. He himself wept bitterly over him, and ordered the burial of many other lords, including Lanfroy.

Then Bertha, his true-born sister, was brought to the royal presence. Charles embraced and kissed her, weeping with tenderness. She was seventeen years old, and had not been in the palace since the day when Pepin was slain and Charles fled. Charles furnished her with a fine escort of noble ladies to attend her, and she dwelt thereafter in the royal palace.

Charlemagne's Coronation

49

Charles assumed the rule and created twelve counselors to advise him. The first was Duke Namo of Bavaria, the second Bernard of Clairmont, the third the King of Hungary, the fourth the King of Bohemia, the fifth the Marquis Berlingher, the sixth Agnentín, the seventh Ogier of Africa, the eighth Bevis of Agrismont, the ninth and tenth his brothers, Duke Aymon and Otho of England, the eleventh Solomon of Brittany, and the twelfth Morand of Riviera. These began to deliberate about Charles coronation and by his command sent messages throughout Christendom solemnly declaring that Charles pardoned all persons for past injuries and besought them for peace. Soon after it was decided by the full council to send ambassadors to Gerard of the Thicket, and for the better success of their mission, in accordance with Charles' wish, they dispatched Duke Namo and Solomon, Duke of Brittany.

In those days, the Pope died at Rome and Cardinal Leo of Clairmont was elected to succeed him. He came to Paris to have Charles crowned. Charlemagne's fame was already spreading throughout the world and Galafron, King of Spain, recalled how that same Mainet who had stayed so long at his court was none other than Charles, son of Pepin who had reconquered his realm. Galafron was overjoyed at this, since he knew that Charles wished to take Galeana as his lawful wife. Therefore he called together his sons and told them how everything stood, and desired them to go to France for the feast of Charles' coronation, and for the marriage feast of Galeana, to conclude peace with Charles. Marsilius turned to his brothers and asked them what they thought of this. They answered

that they did not wish to travel into their enemy's power. Galafron said to them: "Upon my head, you will be safe in going there." But they did not trust this; so Galafron said: "I shall send to Charles for a safe-conduct." At this they agreed to go and sent envoys to France declaring to Charles that they wished to come and visit his new domain, asking his pardon for any injuries they might have done him in the past, with the excuse that they had not known who he was. Charles sent them the safe-conduct that they required.

At that same time, a letter from Africa to Ogier arrived at Charles' court which much abused him for allowing himself to be baptized. A certain part of it declared: "Shame on you, Ogier, you are '*danes de l'alma*,'" (meaning "You are damned in your soul"). Ogier laughed at these words and showed the letter to Charles and his nobles. Before long the saying spread throughout the court, so that (gossiping) one man would say to another: "You are '*danes*.'" Therefore, when the Pope came to baptize Ogier, he desired to be baptized Ogier Danes, but was ever after called Ogier the Dane, and the name remained with him.

Now the story turns to Duke Namor and Solomon, but first to Galeana. Charles sent Morand of Riviera and Miles of Angrant and Marquis Berlingher and Agnentin, accompanied by ten thousand knights, to fetch Galeana, and they brought her to Paris.

50

Duke Namor and Solomon of Brittany, who had been sent to make peace with Gerard of the Thicket, found Gerard at Bellandes. They delivered their embassy on behalf of the Council of France, asking him to make peace and to come to terms with Charles, son of King Pepin. They told him that Charles was of his own lineage, sprung from Constantine, and that that Charles intended him for the first rank of his council. This is the reply that Gerard made to them: "You sons of a

whore, how dare you come to my country and to remind me of a bastard who knows not who his father is? To make it worse, you tell me that he wants me as a servant in his council chamber--he, who is not worthy to be a servant of mine. You traitors, who have betrayed and murdered the man who in justice should be King of France, you have come to your death.” And he commanded them to be seized. But the Duke and Solomon put their hands to their swords and the alarm was sounded. Gerard left the hall and his men drew on the ambassadors; they would there have been killed had not Miles, Gerard’s brother, asked the ambassadors to yield themselves to him and taken them upstairs with him, keeping them well guarded. Gerard wished to have them killed, but Miles prevailed to have them sent to prison in Tremogna.

When this was done, Gerard with a great army overran the whole realm of France, with much robbing and killing and devastation of the land. News reached Paris of Gerard’s depravations and crimes, and of Duke Namo’s and Solomon’s imprisonment. Charles bit his hands for sorrow and assembled his Council, complaining to it about Duke Gerard and demanding vengeance. Above all he directed his complaints to Bernard of Clairmont, and that lord offered himself and his sons against whoever opposed the crown of France. Charles gathered a great host and with the aid of his nobles entered Burgundy, wreaking vengeance for Gerard’s crimes. Since it was known that Duke Namo and Solomon were kept in prison at Tremogna, he struck camp there and besieged the town. Gerard, on his part, assembled his army and one night attacked the camp on the side kept by the King of Hungary. In the course of the night, he killed three thousand Christians and robbed their tents, that is whatever wealth they contained. When help for the camp arrived, Gerard retreated to one of his castles. He and his nobles repeatedly made such sorties.

Charles stayed with his army at Tremogna for four months, since he had no success. Then he gave order to assault the town with many engines, and in that battle eight thousand Christians died.

Charles had the town surrounded by ditches and stockades, and stayed for six more months, until it surrendered because of hunger.

Gerard made many attacks upon Charles' camp, but he was not strong enough to prevail against him. Charles took the city of Tremogna and forced a treaty for the surrender of the prisoners, and thus regained Duke Namor and Solomon. Charles wanted to destroy the city, but Duke Namor opposed this. In that city's prison a little boy was discovered, the son of Bernard of Mongrana, whose name was Aymeric. Charles took him to Paris with him and had him nursed back to health. To conclude the war with Gerard, a truce of ten years was concluded, with the condition that neither party would enter the other's territory. Charles made Aymeric Count of Berry, and he was called Aymeric the Unlucky, since he had no inheritance, for Gerard had taken it all.

At the time of this conflict, Marsilius and his brothers were setting out from Spain, and when they were in Gascony, about to enter France, learned of the war that had broken out between Charles and Gerard. They therefore turned back. But when the truce had been concluded, Pope Leo came to Paris. Charles, upon his return, bestowed the whole province of Marsa upon Ogier the Dane, and he was called the Lord of Lunismarsa. After that return, Charles prepared to be crowned and to be married to Galeana and to have Ogier baptized.

51

When the treaty with Gerard of the Thicket had been concluded, Charles returned to Paris and the Council ordained the ceremony of Charles' coronation, that is the placing of the crown upon his head. They sent throughout the country to have a great court proclaimed. Pope Leo had come. The great celebration that was held for the Pope cannot be described. When all the nobility had arrived, the Pope with his own hand baptized Galeana and Ogier the Dane, and on the third day

Charles was crowned king of the whole realm of France and of all the dominions that Pepin had ruled. His name and surname were reaffirmed, and he was thenceforth called King Charlemagne. Also crowned were Solomon of Brittany and Otho of England and Gotteboeuf, King of Frisia⁴². Charles, moreover, created many dukes and counts. Then all his lords swore upon his hand, and he reaffirmed all their signories. After all these ceremonies, he dubbed a thousand knights. Then he wedded Galeana as his lawful wife, and enjoyed her body in holy matrimony⁴³. The whole country feasted and rejoiced at Charles' coronation. With Charles' return, his entire realm and all the other countries returned to quiet and good order, and the Pope went back to Rome and left the Western region at peace.

Young Roland

52-53: *Roland's Birth*

One year after Charlemagne's coronation, a great court convened, as was the custom, and the nobility arrived to pay their respects to the crown with many noblewomen and fine ladies. The celebrations lasted for many days. One day, a great crowd of nobles with their wives and ladies were gathered in the great hall of the royal palace and dancing to the sound of numerous instruments. Among them was Miles of Angrant, Bernard of Clairmont's son. He was the most distinguished nobleman in that hall. He took Bertha by the hand and they began to dance together. She glanced around now and then at all the other lords, but none of them was as sprightly and striking as he, and she began to be in love with him. Whenever it happened that Miles looked at her, their eyes met, so that both soon came to realize that they loved each other. While dancing, they smiled and spoke a

⁴² He is earlier (*Reali* VI.9) called King of Bohemia.

⁴³ Galeana is still a virgin. Charlemagne had sworn (Chapter []) not to touch her until after his return to his own country and coronation as King of France.

few short words to each other, so that Miles began to sigh heavily for love. They grew to love each other violently, but confined their behavior to acts of honest love, so that no one should take notice; and for almost a whole year no one realized that they were in love.

The first man to notice it was Charles, who however was so fond of Miles that he said nothing to him, though he loved as much as before. However, he ordered a better guard of chambermaids and gentlewoman for Bertha and kept her more closely confined than was his wont. Not that he suspected anything, but he was thinking of having her married.

For this reason the two were unable to see each other, and this, far from making their love go away, so much increased it that Bertha with her own hand wrote a letter to Miles and sent it to him by her confidential waiting woman, in which she told him to come and talk to her at a window that faced the king's garden, and because the window was a little high, she gave careful instructions about everything. When Miles had received and read this letter, he was so delighted and so overcome by blind love, that he gave no thought to either Charles or shame or death. He went up at midnight, carrying a rope ladder, and spoke with Bertha. The window was barred and he could not enter, but they agreed that Miles should dress himself as a veiled widow, and that he should change his clothes in the house of a lady who had served Bertha while she was in kept under arrest. And so Miles departed.

On the next day he came to that lady's house and bribed her with money; he did not, however, tell her where he intended to go, for she would then never have agreed to do it. Bertha, at the appointed hour, sent one of her maids to him, saying to her: "Go to such and such a place and bring me the veiled woman whom you will find there. Moreover, since she is young and a widow, bring her in secret and in a decent manner." The maid went there, found the disguised Miles, and believed

that he was a woman. Miles did not say a word to her, since she asked no questions, and went to the palace. When he came to Bertha, it was near evening. The other ladies asked the maid whom she had brought there, and she answered: "This is a good young woman who often visited Bertha when Lanfroy and Ulric kept her in confinement, while Charles was banished." When he had entered, Bertha embraced him and said: "Welcome, dear sister. Praised by God that I can remedy your poverty and repay you for the services you did me while I was without my brother and kept in prison." Then she took him by the hand and led him to her chamber, dismissing all the others except the woman who had carried the letter, whom she swore to secrecy.

That night Miles slept in her bed and they used each other carnally, giving and receiving great pleasure all night, in tight embraces and countless loving kisses. They continued in this manner for almost a year, so that no one suspected. Since this was the case, she was six months pregnant by the beginning of the next year.

It happened that while Charles was holding a great feast and summoned her to come to the banquet, she pretended to be ill. Charles sent two expert physicians to her, and they at once saw that she was pregnant. They were extremely troubled and baffled by the discovery, and to look into it more clearly, remained suspended for two days. Since they could not agree about what to do, they kept the matter hidden. In the end they decided to tell King Charles about it, and so they did.

53

When King Charles heard the doctors say that Bertha was pregnant, he was greatly troubled and sighed, filled with shame. He went to see his sister, drew her secretly apart and threatened her with death. She threw herself on her knees at his feet and implored his mercy. Charles wanted to know by whom she was pregnant, though he knew all too well. When he heard it from her mouth, he

commanded that Miles of Angrant be seized and thrown into prison, and that she be confined in a tower dungeon.

Then he sent for Duke Namo, who enjoyed his complete confidence, and, weeping and sighing, related the whole matter to him. Duke Namo felt very sorry for him and shared Charles' sorrow. Then he said: "My lord, such are the griefs that the world bestows, for it does not wish that we should be happy in this our life. You have gained this great estate by the grace of God; now it must be seen how you conduct yourself. The virtue of a worldly ruler is not known, if he always enjoys happiness, but only when he is tried by ill fortune. Therefore let us take the least dangerous course we can. Miles is clearly of your own lineage, a duke, and the son of a duke. And he is the most valiant of all his brothers. I beg you to give her to him as his wife." Charles replied: "I would sooner consent to return to the exile into which my treacherous brothers have sent me. No, I am of a mind to put them both to death. But first I want to talk with Bernard and his sons."

He instantly sent for Bernard of Clairmont, and when he arrived, told him how things stood. Bernard was more eager than Charles that his son should die, saying that none of his house had ever been a traitor, and that he did not desire this crime to go unpunished. They decided to have both the lovers put to death, and all Miles' brothers agreed. But the Duke spoke privately to Charles, giving many reasons why such an act would be his undoing. At last, Duke Namo, unable to bend him to his will, seized an opportunity one night to go to the prison and freed Miles. He also brought Bertha out of the tower in a way that Charles knew nothing of it. He sent them to his palace, summoned judges, notaries and witnesses, and had Miles married to Bertha. He kept the matter hidden for three days before Charles learned of it. When he did, he was extremely angry with the Duke. But the Duke had acted like a good friend who, foreseeing danger to his master, saved him from a path that he refused to abandon. And he did better than that, for when Charles later

pardoned Bertha, he added, to make all men love Charles the better, that he had sent the two away with Charles' consent.

But now Charles outlawed Miles from all lands in Charles' possession and power, and sent to Pope Leo to have him excommunicated. The excommunication hurt Miles worse than the banishment, for no man would harbor him. Bertha too was banished on pain of burning, as well as excommunicated. And Bernard and his sons were more violently opposed to Miles, and uttered loudly menaced him, than Charles. Charles seized Angrant and stripped Miles of all his lands.

Miles and Bertha, deprived of any dwelling place by the excommunication (it had been proclaimed throughout Christendom), crossed into Italy, determined to go to Rome. When they arrived eight leagues from Rome at a city called Sutri, Miles was penniless, with nothing left to live on, and out of necessity sold his horses and weapons. He decided to settle in Sutri, for he saw that no one knew him there. Yet, since Sutri lay on the main road, he feared being recognized. He found a cavern in a solitary place one mile from Sutri, and inside that cavern there was a hollow used as a stable. Miles stopped to dwell in that cave, fetched straw and hay to it, dressed himself like a pilgrim and began to live by begging. One day, two months later, when Miles had gone to the city to beg, Bertha gave birth to a boy child. When Bertha, lying on the straw bed, had delivered him, she swaddled him as best she could and laid him down by her side in the straw.

Meanwhile Miles returned from the city. As he came to the cave entrance, the babe, wrapped roundabout in swaddling cloths, rolled from the straw and moved right up to the entrance of the cave. When Miles saw him rolling in this manner, he halted, and when the infant stopped rolling, he began to weep. Miles picked him up, cradled him on his arm, and brought him back to his mother, speaking these words: "Ah, my son! in what poverty do I see you born, not by any sin of yours, but

by my fault and your mother's!" Weeping, he handed him to his mother, and she placed him by her side. For eight days Miles nursed Bertha and the boy, until Bertha could rise and tend to the boy. Miles went begging to feed Bertha and the baby and himself. After the eight days had passed, Miles said to Bertha: "What name shall we give our son?" Bertha replied: "Whatever name you please." Said Miles: "The first time I laid eyes on him, I saw him *rolling*, and in French, when they mean to say 'roll', they say '*roolar*'.⁴⁴ Therefore," (said Miles) "in remembrance thereof, I wish the boy to be named as I first saw him, that is *Rooland*."

On the following morning, Miles carried him to Sutri. He found two poor men to sponsor his baptism, had him Christened, and he was baptized for love of God and given the name Rooland. He was a little cross-eyed, had a fierce aspect, but was endowed with great virtue, courteous, generous, extremely strong of limb, honest, and a virgin until death. He was a man utterly without fear, a virtue possessed by no other Frenchman.

Miles lived with Bertha in that place until Roland had completed his fifth year. He was already walking to the city by himself, begging for the love of God, and already knew how to shoulder his sack and bottle; he begged alms for himself and for his mother. He went clad in a garment of coarse woolen cloth that had been given him for the love of God. His mother Bertha and his father Miles dressed in like manner, to do penance for the sin they had committed while conquered by love.

54-56: ***Sir Misadventure*** [summary]

Ashamed to remain inactive and obscure, Miles left his family to venture abroad. He first came to the court of Rambald, Duke of Calabria, at Reggio. Rambald had three sons: Bertram, his first-born; Milo, a bastard; and Richier, then aged eight. Miles was engaged as a fencing master to the elder two.

⁴⁴ The pun (for once) works better in English than in the original, making the French reference somewhat nugatory. The double "o" in the name Rooland disappears after this chapter.

News arrived that King Anglant of Africa was preparing for a war of conquest in Asia, and Miles set out to enlist under him, calling himself Sir Misadventure⁴⁵. Upon arrival in Africa, he learned that Anglant's two sons were already in Asia--Trojan in Persia, and Almont in Assyria and Media—but that Anglant had meanwhile himself been attacked by his old rival, King Salatiel. Salatiel had captured two of Anglant's nephews, Aspinar and Doranius and Anglant's chief champion Balant was about to pursue him with a large army. Balant encountered Miles at Arganor and engaged the so-called Sir Luckless. When, at leave-taking, Balant commended his young son to Anglant's care, Miles burst into tears. Asked the reason, replied: "I weep because I have left a young son at home whom (I fear) I shall never see again."

King Salatiel was assisted by Argoriant, a terrifying giant from the Atlas mountains. When battle was joined, Sir Misadventure killed Argoriant at the first onslaught, but was surrounded by Salatiel's men until Balant came to his rescue. When Salatiel learned that he had slain Argoriant, he lost heart and surrendered. On condition of fealty and submission, Anglant restored him to his throne.

Anglant in person then led the army into Asia. Among his commanders were Balant, Salatiel, Bramant's surviving son, Triamedes, and Ulien of Sarza,, as well as the supposed Sir Misadventure. During the first battle with the Sultan of Persia, Miles defeated and killed the Sultan's champion, Manador, and rescued both Salatiel and Anglant. When Balant killed the Sultan himself, victory was secure.

Tidings now arrived from Anglant's two sons: Trojan had taken all of Turkey, Media and Assyria and his army was now engaged in Greater Armenia; Almont had crossed the Taurus Mountains and was marching through Persia on his way to India, but a great horde of Tartars and Indians was advancing to meet him. Anglant therefore decided to move to Almont's assistance.

Anglant's and Almont's armies joined up and, upon crossing the Araxes River, engaged the Tartars and Indians. In that terrible battle, two-hundred-and-fifty thousand men died, but the issue remained doubtful. After a lag of two months, the two forces met again near Lake Arias⁴⁶ outside the city of Sotira.. They agreed to resolve the conflict by single combat. Almont, acting as Anglant's champion, killed four challengers and imprisoned a fifth. At this, the enemy surrendered, and thus all Asia became subject to King Anglant of Africa. Upon his return, Anglant named Trojan King of Asia and rewarded Balant with the crowns of Scandia and Nobirro.

Roland and Charlemagne

Charlemagne Made Emperor

57

When these events were taking place among the infidels, King Charles had already ruled France for twelve years. It was now decided to hold a great council in Rome, since the Emperor Constantine

⁴⁵ Sir Misadventure: orig. *Sventura* GLOS

⁴⁶ A lake named Arias and a city named Sotira are mentioned as early as Herodotus. They perhaps refer to modern Lake Urmi and the nearby city of Kapustan in Armenia, near the Iranian border.

had died (that is, Constantine III, who became emperor after Pepin's death.) There Charlemagne was elected Emperor of Rome by Pope Leo and the College of Cardinals. When he received the news of his election, he accepted and determined to journey to Rome to accept the rule of the empire simply as a nobleman elect, for he did not wish to be named full emperor until he had succeeded in making Gerard of the Thicket, Duke of Burgundy, submit to him.⁴⁷

He therefore gave command that all Christian barons subject to the crown of France should present themselves at his court the following spring. At the appointed time, they gathered in Paris and Charles held the most magnificent court ever assembled in Paris. Charles made such huge gifts of cities and castles, of arms and horses, of lordships, of gold and of silver, of garments and jewels, that his fame spread throughout the world. (That courtly magnificence cost King Anglant dearly.) All the nobles present swore to hold their lands subject to him and performed their oaths of fealty. Charles asked them to prepare to accompany him to Rome in the following spring, and they all professed themselves eager to go wherever he wished. When the celebrations were finished, they returned to their lands.

Departing from Paris at that time there was a minstrel, and he went abroad, as minstrels do, and came to Spain. There he heard that King Anglant was returning to Africa after his conquest of all Asia. Therefore that minstrel crossed from Spain to Africa to see him. It was this minstrel who was

⁴⁷ The contortions of Andrea's Italian here defy exact rendering: "[Carlo] diliberò andare a Roma e di pigliare il titolo dello imperio come nobile eletto, perché non voleva fare imperadore insino a tanto ch'egli non facea ubidire Gherardo da Fratta." The general sense, however, is clear: Charles has become emperor *de iure* by election, but cannot claim the title *de facto* until he has brought his recalcitrant subject Gerard to heel. See Chapter [] below.

the cause of King Anglant's crossing into Italy with his son Almont, as our chronicle will presently relate.⁴⁸

The Boyhood of Young Roland

58

Six years after Miles' departure, the unfortunate Bertha, whom remained at Sutri where Miles had left her with Young Roland, was still living on the alms that her son begged for her. She had grown very infirm with age, which could hardly be disputed. In Sutri there dwelt a nobleman who was vice-regent and appointed ruler on behalf of the Romans. His name was Lucius Albinus and he had a son named Rainier. That boy was four years older than Young Roland.

Since there many game contests among the boys in Sutri, sometimes with stones, sometimes with sticks, Young Roland at times found himself taking part in these. Overcome by youthful folly he joined in these games and the group on whose side he fought always won, for in every scuffle he fought more fiercely than any of the others, to the astonishment of all. Let the contest be what it will, with stones, or with sticks, or in wrestling, or in boxing, the rest of the boys ever fled before him. In wrestling he overthrew many that were older than he, and if any younger boy offered to fight him, he refused. Sometimes, being provoked, he beat boys who were far older than himself. People in Sutri marveled greatly at his tremendous strength, for he was only eleven years old.

One spring, a great boxing competition commenced among the boys of Sutri, and it was fought out between various districts of the city. There were many districts that sometimes lost and sometimes won. Some there were that never lost because of their strong position; and some there were that

⁴⁸ This passage suggests that Andrea already had the plot (or even the text) of *L'Aspramonte* fixed in his mind—one of several cogent reason to consider *L'Aspramonte* as the intended Book Seven of *Reali*.

lost every time and were invariably mocked by the other boys. There was one district of the town called Saint Peter Enthroned, inhabited by poor people. Because the boys in it were few, they lost every time. These boys agreed among themselves to ask Young Roland to join them. They gathered for the boxing contest and the scuffle began. Orlando knew little about the game and took many blows to his face, but however many assailed him, he attacked them and knocked them down, so that all fled before him. At this, the other side were discomfited and complained of foul play. The boys on Orlando's side taught him how to fight without knocking men down, and those he learned the skill of boxing.

A year had passed in these contests. The next year, when Orlando was twelve, the contest resumed and Orlando joined with the boys of Saint Peter Enthroned, for he had been named their chief, and begged many alms with them for the love of God.

59

A neighborhood of Sutri called Borgolungo contained many boys and they always defeated another neighborhood, where there were many merchants. These combined with those of Saint Peter Enthroned and began to defeat all their neighboring districts. Every time they won, they cried out: "Long live Young Roland!" One day, when they had won in many appointed places, they agreed to an arena near the main square. There all the boys of the region divided into two camps and began a boxing match. On one side, Young Roland was captain, and on the other, Rainier, son of Lucius Albinus. Now, as the great scuffle began, Roland came to face Rainier. Orlando recognized him and looked at him, but those of his party cried out to Young Orlando to attack him. Then Orlando grappled with him and threw him to the ground, and the others of his party were routed and ran in flight from him, who was winning and chasing them from the place where the fight took place.

Young Roland turned back and Rainier faced him. Coming up to him, he said, ‘Who has appointed you captain to oppose me?’ and lifted his fist and gave him a blow. Orlando struck him in the face and knocked him back, threw him to the ground and showered him with blows from his fist, and nobody came to his aid.

That evening Rainier returned to his father, utterly beaten, and made a great outcry. The next day his father ordered Young Roland to be seized and brought to him. In the evening Young Roland returned to his mother, his eyes blackened with blows, and she asked him what had happened. He told her what he had done at the boxing contest and related what Rainier had done and what he had done to him. Bertha began to weep, begging him nevermore to fight with Rainier, saying: “His father could do you harm, for he is master here.”

On the next morning Young Roland went begging in Sutri, and Lucius Albinus’ servant took him and brought him before Lucius. Young Roland had more than a hundred boys at his back. Lucius asked him why he had beaten his son Rainier. Young Roland recounted the whole boxing contest, and how Rainier had struck him first. When Lucius heard this account, he called for his son and said to him: “Well, you miserable rascal, what of last night? Did you lie to me?” He told them to let Young Roland go and make peace, and had bread, wine and meat given to Young Roland. He returned to Bertha and told her everything. At this she felt more joy than she had earlier felt sorrow.

It came to pass that Young Roland was so loved by the boys of the city, that he received more generous alms than ever before, until, at every festival where a crowd of boys was present, Young Roland was made captain and they all cried out: “Long live the excellent Young Roland!” The time was near at hand for the great feast day of the city of Sutri, and in a shortly all the boys gathered in the main square, more than a hundred of them, with Young Roland in their midst, and cried out:

“Long live Young Roland!” They were eager to proclaim him lord of the feast that lay ahead of them.

60

As Young Roland stood amid this crowd of boys and they wished to proclaim him lord of the feast, one boy, the son of a merchant of clothing, said to the other boys: “By my faith, what a disgrace it would be to us to make Young Roland our lord, who walks about in clothes so tattered and poor. And we are supposed to be on holiday!” The others replied that he spoke truly. So they agreed that four of them should go and beg money for the love of God to clothe Young Roland. The boys gave four silver pieces here and five there, and in two day’s space almost two golden ducats’ worth of Roman coin was collected. They divided the money in four parts and used one to buy a yard and a half for cloth and made the purchase. Two parts of it went for white cloth, and another for red cloth. Those two colors stood for two virtues that reigned supreme in Young Roland, that is perfect chastity and charity. They had a garment quartered in white and red fashioned for Young Roland. The portion near his right arm was white, and the one near his left was red; and the portion near his left flank was red, and the one near his right flank, white. When he had received these garments, they acclaimed him King of the Boys during the festival.

Orlando was greatly pleased. He returned to Bertha, his mother, and she too was delighted by this. She remembered the man who fathered him, burst into tears, and said: “Young Roland, my dear son, may God grant you good fortune, and the grace to return to Clairmont!” Young Roland did not understand her words. At the festival, he was much honored by the boys, and all through the feast, he was also much honored and loved by the youth of the surrounding countryside. All who knew him wished him well. And while he continued in this way, he always wore this quartered

garment, declaring that God and the spirit of purity had bestowed it on him, and that is why he desired to wear it.

Charlemagne in Sutri

61

At that time Charlemagne, having been chosen emperor after the death of Constantine III, assembled all his nobles. Among them were the following: Duke Namon of Bavaria, King Solomon of Brittany, King Gotteboeuf of Frisia, King Druon of Bohemia, Bernard of Clairmont, Morand of Riviera, Ogier the Dane, Agnentin, the Marquis Berlingher, as well as Huon the Less, Ganelon of Poitiers, William of Maganza, Guinam of Bayonne, all of whom Charles had pardoned. Charles had long sought to make peace with Gerard of the Thicket, but without success. They therefore concluded a five years' truce between them.

Then Charles, with thirty thousand knights and the abovementioned lords departed and came to Italy. This was in the year of Our Lord 779. He passed through Lombardy, Romagna, and the Marches and arrived in Rome. He stayed in Rome for forty days and received the title of Emperor, although he did not take the crown, for he was of a mind to subjugate Gerard of the Thicket first. He left Rome to return to France, and on the first day after leaving Rome came to lodge in the city of Sutri eight leagues distant from Rome. That night King Charles grew ill disposed, wherefore his physicians desired him to take medicine. He decided to stay at Sutri for six days, and all his gentry were lodged in or near the city.

62

While Charles was staying at Sutri, he continued to hold lavish court and it was ever his custom that whatever food was left over from Charles table should be given to the poor for the love of God. It happened that on the first morning some of it was still left over, since there were few paupers present, but he ordered a proclamation to be made in the surroundings and on the next morning there was a great crowd of poor people.

That morning Young Roland came to the city and, seeing so many folk both armed and unarmed, began to wonder. He asked some whom he knew who these people were and was told: "A great ruler, named Charlemagne, has arrived. He is King of France and Emperor of Rome." Young Roland asked what an emperor was, and was told the truth of it: he heard that the Emperor was the defender of the Christian faith, and that all rulers were bound to obey him and the Pope, for the sake of the welfare of Christendom and of peace in all the provinces and cities and peoples of the world. Soon after, when Young Roland beheld the armor on the backs of these armed men, he stood gazing, saying to himself: "Oh my God, how grand I would be if I also could bear such arms!"

As he went begging through one of the neighborhoods he was told to go to court, since bread and wine and meat were being distributed there. He went to court, but arrived so late that there were no alms left. Then he saw a ruffian who had taken enough for four men. Young Roland said to him: "You should not have so much when I have nothing." The scurvy fellow replied: "If you did not get anything, the fault was yours. You should have come on time, as I did." Said Young Roland: "The mere fact that I have come too late gives you no right to my share. Therefore, since you have too much, give me some." Said the scoundrel: "I would sooner throw it to a dog." Young Roland grew angry and rushed at him, throwing him to the ground, and took away half of his share.

A circle of nobles and courtiers had formed around them. They burst into the loudest laughter in the world, seeing such a young page beating such a great ruffian, and kept encouraging Young Roland to thrash him. After that they gave him a goodly share of bread and wine and meat. He returned to Bertha and told her how many people there were at Sutri. "They say," he continued, "that it is Charlemagne of France." When Bertha heard this, she trembled all over for fear and said to Young Roland: "My dear son, don't ever go to that court again." He answered, "How is that, mother? Other paupers go there; why do you forbid me to go?" She replied: "I fear that Charles will do you harm." He answered: "I'm not afraid of him."

That evening he returned to court. Wherever he saw any of those rogues who took more than was reasonable, Young Roland snatched it away from them and gave it to needier paupers and to boys who had been unable to get anything. Many of the courtiers grew fond of him, but the rogues wished him dead.

63

On the following day, Charles stayed longer at table than was his wont, and the paupers stood about, waiting. Young Roland had come and was waiting also. He found himself surrounded by many others and heard talk of the emperor's high dignity. Among other things, one man was saying: "When the Emperor is seated at table, and the first dish of meat is set before him, if a poor man seizes the meat even as it arrives at the board, no man may say anything against it, for the sake of the Emperor's dignity." When Young Roland heard this, he waited quietly, and when he heard the trumpets sound, went up the stairs. The porter would not let him pass to enter the hall and they began to quarrel until Young Roland broke his head open. The nobles laughed at this and taunted the porter, and another porter was sent for.

Orlando hid in a corner of the hall, and when King Charles, Orlando kept a watchful eye on him and on all that was happening. When he saw the food brought in and saw the taster assay it, he leapt forward and seized the first bowl that was set before Charles, filled with capons and divers other meats. The bowl was of gold-plated silver, so that it looked like gold, and its bottom was marked with Charles' coat-of-arms. When Orlando seized that bowl, the nobleman who carved before Charles was about to strike Young Roland, but Charles, observing the boy's daring, said to his servant: "Do not do this. Let him go." Charles was so pleased that he laughed at the eagerness with which Young Roland snatched up the bowl, for he spilled some of the broth that it contained on his breast.

When Young Roland had gone, Charles exclaimed: "Do you see how much courage that boy has shown? And he is still such a baby!" As he was laughing with his nobles, Charles was told of the quarrel he had begun with some ruffians, and how he had broke open the porter's head, and how he had taken the food from some scoundrels and given it to the poor who were unable to step up. Said King Charles, "That boy is surely descended from a noble father," and asked some men of the city whose son he was. None knew how to answer him, and a worthy citizen of Sutri said: "Your Sacred Majesty, about twelve years ago there arrived here a soldier whose looks and bearing proclaimed him a man of parts. He came with his wife, who was pregnant and they settled in this region. The woman gave birth to this boy in nearby cave. Nothing has been seen of the soldier for six years now. Either he left out of despair, or else he died. But this boy has always gone begging, and sometimes he does so in his mother's company." He also spoke at length of the contests he had waged with the other boys, and of how they had fashioned him a garment quartered red and white.

Young Roland, with the bowl and the meat, returned to his mother, who saw the coat-of-arms and at once recognized it. She cried out: "Where did you get this thing?" Young Roland told her the

news that he had heard. Bertha, to instill him with fear, began to say that if he returned there, this Charles would have him seized and thrown into prison, and that he would have him hanged as a thief; and she begged him not to go back there. He said to her: "I will never go back there." And that day he did not return to the city.

64

Because of the delight that King Charles felt when Young Roland snatched the bowl, he laughingly commanded that he should be allowed to enter at any time. On the next morning, Young Roland returned to the city to beg, and could get no alms. Everyone told him: "Go to court." So he went to court. When the time came, he entered the hall and arrived there before Charles sat down at table and waited in a corner.

Many men saw him and whispered to each other: "He is getting ready to filch." One said: "He's was bred from a nest as a burglar." Another: "He'll live long enough to hang from a gibbet."⁴⁹

Everybody had his say. When the food arrived, he did as he had done the day before and snatched the bowl. One of the nobles stood in his way as he fled, but he gave him a shove so that he fell down and carried off the dish with the meat.

Seeing the boy's great daring and great strength, Charles said, in the presence of all his nobles: "That boy must indeed be the son of some poor man of noble birth, and this event is no less than a portent of great things to come." A little later he said: "Last night a strange vision appeared to me. I dreamt that we were on the battlefield against numerous beasts, and it seemed to me that our side was losing the battle. Then a dragon wound about my hands and stripped me of all my armor, and

⁴⁹ Andrea conveys the courtier's supercilious tone by the insertion of a French phrase: "*Egli sarà ancora 'impendu' per la gola.*"

was about to devour me. At this, a lion cub leapt from a cave in a forest and killed the serpent and freed me and then turned victoriously toward my troops.” At these words a great murmur rose from his barons. Many said: “An emperor’s words and an emperor’s dreams are never without great significance.” At these words, Charles rose from the table and went to his chamber. After he had eaten, he sent for Duke Namor, King Solomon, and brave Ogier the Dane.

65

When Charles was in the chamber with his three barons, he said to them: “My lords and brothers, surely the portent of this boy which has been manifested to me in this city is not without mysterious meaning, for the vision I had last night is partly in accordance with that boy. You know, as Lucan has written, that Caesar had a dream in which he lay with his mother, and that Philip of Macedonia dreamt that a serpent slept with his wife Olympia, which signified the coming of Alexander; and Saints Peter and Paul appeared in a vision to Constantine. Such visions are always mighty prophecies of the future. I therefore I am rapt in that dream when a lion leapt from a cavern in the woods. That boy too lives in a cave in the woods. We know not what may happen in the times to come. I will ask you to go tomorrow morning, all three of you, without any other company, directly to that boy after he carries of the bowl with the meat. Find out where he goes and who he is, in a manner that the secret remains unknown to all others. That is why I urge you to take none else along with you.” They promised to do so.

Once more the porter was ordered to let Young Roland into the hall. Duke Namor, Solomon and Ogier commanded three of their servants to wait at the foot of the stairs with three horses, saddled and ready to be mounted. In the morning they went to Charles with their spurs on their feet, their swords tied to their horses’ saddles, and nobody was aware of it.

Young Roland returned to his mother with the bowl and the meat, and when she saw that other bowl, she began to weep and said: “Alas, my son, you will yet be the death of me. I did me no good to implore you not to go to court. Alas, my son, why does it please you to kill me? For if Charles finds me, he will murder me.” Young Roland promised her never to go back there and stayed with his mother all the rest of the day, and until the third hour the next morning. Then he left for Sutri, and his mother began to weep and begged him not to go to court. He said: “Mother, I will not go there.” Then he entered the city and went all through it, and could find no alms. Everyone said to him: “Go to court.” So he, getting no alms, went to court. Many thieving scoundrels, seeing him, abused him and felt sharp envy of him. When the trumpets sounded, Young Roland went into the hall and hid among the crowd.

66

When Young Roland came to hall and stood before Charles, the above said lords, namely Namor, Solomon and Ogier, were there. The meal was carried in, by special order, on two huge platters. Young Roland ran up and snatched up one of the platters, and as he took it Charles made an ugly and spiteful face at him and loudly cleared his throat, thinking to make him afraid. Young Roland let go of the platter, grasped Charles by the beard, and said: “What is the matter with you?” And the look which Young Roland cast on Charles was steadier than that which Charles cast on him. Then he let go of Charles, snatched the platter, and began to flee.

Duke Namor took up a golden cup, brimful with wine, which Charles had in front of him, and said: “Take it, boy, so that you may have something to drink.⁵⁰” (Namor did this so that Roland would not run.) Young Roland took it, went down the stairs and fled. But because the cup was filled with

⁵⁰ Namor, too, speaks partly in French: “*Tiene, valletto, che voi ‘aviate da boyre’.*”

wine, he could not run without spilling the wine. Namo and his companions mounted their horses and rode after him. When Young Roland saw that the wine was holding him up, he poured it out and began to run. The three noblemen kept pace with him.

Charles stayed behind in the hall, somewhat troubled by the act that Young Roland had performed, and also by the vision that had appeared in his dream. He said to himself, "Such are the portents that were shown to Caesar and to King Philip of Macedon and to Alexander when they were close to death," and he called to mind the bird that laid the egg in King Philip's lap, and the messenger who brought the letter to the Emperor Julius Caesar.

67

Roland carried the carried the platter toward the room where Bertha was waiting, descended along the path, and entered the room as usual. When Bertha saw the wine cup, she began to cry and said: "Woe is me, my son; you have disobeyed me! Where did you get this golden cup? Why do you wish for my death?" Young Roland told her how he had taken away the platter, and of how Charles had behaved toward him. "And there was somebody standing next to him who gave me this cup, filled with wine." He told he was not afraid of that man Charles, "for I pulled his beard. If he offers harm me, I'll give him a taste of my stick." And he ran to take up a club that he had hidden in the cave. As boys will, Young Roland cared not a whit for Charles, or for himself, or for others.

At this moment the three nobles arrived at the cave and dismounted. Duke Namo drew his sword and descended along the path. As he arrived at the cavern's hollow, he shouted: "Who is in there?" When Bertha saw him, she recognized him instantly and fled to a corner of the cavern. Young Roland moved to pick up his club, but his mother would not let him and threw her arms around . Young Roland said to the Duke: "What are you doing in our cave?" Bertha struck him on the

mouth and told him to be silent. The Duke stepped forward a little and said: “Who are you, who live like peaces in forest hollows and caves?”

At this moment, Solomon and Ogier arrived, and Bertha recognized all three. Then she broke out in constant wails, seeing that she could not escape, while they stared at her and once more asked who she was. She cast herself at the Duke’s feet, threw up her arms in the sign of the cross, and begged for mercy. She was wearing a garment of coarse cloth, all tattered and torn, with her flesh showing through in divers places. None of them recognized her, and yet they felt pity at her tears. They asked: “Who are you, woman?” She replied in great shame: “I am the unfortunate Bertha, daughter to King Pepin, sister to King Charles, wife to Duke Miles of Angrant; and this is his son and mine.”

When the barons heard these words, they all knelt down weeping before her and asked her what had happened to Miles of Angrant. She told them how he had left her like a desperate man, since no man would have anything to do with him because of his excommunication; she related how she had given birth to this boy in this cave, and why he was named Roland, and that the boy was five years old when Miles left. There was none of the three who did not weep bitterly, and she pleaded them for the love of God to say nothing to Charles. Young Roland, too, wept because he saw his mother weep.

Then the three lords drew apart to talk together, and decided to help her in any way possible, and that Charles should pardon her for the sake of this young fellow. All three swore to be her and Young Roland’s champions and defenders, and in this manner gave comfort to her. Then all three agreed to go to Sutri. They asked some of the citizens to bring regal attire to Bertha, along with some of the best women in Sutri, and she was reclothed and adorned like a queen. Young Roland

stared at her lost in wonder; then he said, “Mother, you are a beautiful woman. Now, don’t cry!” and embraced her. The men and women who had arrived marveled to see it all. Duke Namor and his companions went from there to the emperor’s presence. Young Roland would wear nothing except his red-and-white quartered garb, which he possessed to signify the purity of his spirit.

68

When the three lords Namor, Solomon, and Ogier, returned to Charles, they found him still at table. They knelt down on the ground before him and Duke Namor, in the name of all three, said: “Most sacred emperor, we have performed your commandment, and in recompense thereof all three of us beg a boon that will redound greatly to the honor of your person and to the benefit of your crown.” Charles was astonished and looked them in the face, saying: “Are you in jest or in earnest?” Solomon and Ogier affirmed that what Ogier had said was indeed in earnest, and added: “My lord, we are your faithful servants, we beg you: bestow upon us freely the boon that we ask.” “Upon my faith,” said Charles, “I have total confidence in you and will deny you nothing. I promise you, by my life and by this crown” (and here he touched his crown with his hand) “and by the faith I swore to the apostolic see in Rome, when by your virtue I placed this crown on my head, that whatever it is possible for me to grant (and you once indeed placed it there), if you sincerely ask for the wellbeing of the crown of the French realm and of my dear wife Galeana.” He bade them rise, and when they had risen, Duke Namor said: “The boon which we ask of you is this: that you pardon Miles of Angraint and your sister Bertha, for any harm or offence and ill will that has occurred in the past. Know too that his poor young man who has thrice seized your food is indeed the son of Duke Miles and your sister. He is surely that lion cub of whom you have dreamt who will some day preserve you from great danger.”

Charles completely changed countenance and then drew himself up to his full height and said: "If I had suspected this, I would never have granted you this boon. But since I now see that the thing is done, I shall confirm it." He gave a sigh and then said: "That boy shall not be Miles' son, but my own. I therefore desire him for my son. But you have tricked me; nevertheless I shall do as you ask." Then he made these three lords mount their horses, and they sent many a pack horse for the women who had come to Bertha in order to provide her with an escort. Report of all this had already spread through the city.

69

As the cry went up through the city of Sutri that Orlando was Miles of Angrant's son and that Young Roland's mother Bertha was Charles' sister, all the people of the city ran to see Bertha and Young Roland. All the following went to see him: Bernard of Clairmont, Aymon of Dordogne, Bevis of Agrismont, Namo, Solomon, Ogier, Agnentin, the Marquis Berlingher, Gryphon, Ganelon, William and Guinam. They wished to dress Young Roland in precious garments, but he wanted nothing but his red-and-white-quartered garment, which he had since boyhood. He was placed upon a steed and, for fear of losing his mother, kept ever by her side. In great honor, they turned toward Sutri. They dismounted at the palace where Charles was waiting and were brought into the hall. Namo, Solomon and Ogier conducted them before Charles, and she threw herself weeping at his feet while Young Roland stood surrounded by the nobles. Bertha asked for mercy and forgiveness from Charles. Charles could not restrain his wrath and raised his right foot, given her such a heavy kick in her chest that she fell backwards. At this, Young Roland turned around to the seneschal in the hall, who had a baton in his hand, and by sheer force threw him to the ground and seized the baton from him. He was about to run up behind Charles to beat him over the head with that baton and the nobles with difficulty restrained him. Duke Namo, Solomon and Ogier drew

their swords, and instantly five hundred swords in the hall leapt from their scabbards. Had not Bertha fallen to her knees once more and cried out, “Dearest brother, you are in the right. Look at me, take what revenge you please on me,” the affair would have resulted in terrible harm, because of the promise that Charles had given to the three lords. Bertha, after she had cried, “Wreak all our revenge on me!” continued: “Dear brother, at least let this young boy be commended to you, and, if it be possible, forgive me for love of him.” Then Charles was overcome and began to weep, and grew ashamed to have broken his promise by what he had done. He embraced Bertha and kissed her on her face and pardoned her. At this, the whole uproar grew still and all things were at peace. Charles pardoned Miles of Angrant; the three lords called for paper and it was proclaimed throughout the city and made known to all the court, and Charles wrote to the Shepherd at Rome to make it known that Miles of Angrant’s banishment was void and he was once more in the communion of the faithful. Much feasting and rejoicing now commenced. Charles accepted Young Roland as his adoptive son and at once gave order to leave Sutri with his nobles. He turned back toward France with Bertha and Young Roland, ever desiring to have Young Roland near him, and he loved him as dearly as if he had been born a son of his own body. He could not have loved him better. They crossed Tuscany and Lombardy and the Alps and reached France, where there was a great celebration at his return and at the return of Bertha and of Miles, who had been released from banishment and readmitted into the communion of the Faith.

Sir Roland, Paladin of France

70

When King Charles arrived in France in the city of Paris, there was much rejoicing at his return, and about Young Roland and Bertha, and about Miles who had been recalled from exile and released

from excommunication. Charles had it proclaimed by decree that Miles was back in the fold, and that his son, Young Roland, had been found again, and that Charles had pardoned him and restored all his lands to Young Roland, whom Charles created Count of Angrant and Marquis of Brava. Bertha accepted the rule on Young Roland's behalf.

Charles had a son by Galeana who was named Charlot II, and he turned out to have a suspicious nature and took great delight in making people angry, and was exceedingly prone to wrath. For that reason he was little loved by his subjects in the realm. Young Roland was his opposite, and was therefore universally loved.

He was generous, courteous and humble, ever willing to be of service, an exceedingly pleasant and convincing speaker, so that whoever spoke with him left him in contentment. He frequently besought the emperor's favor on behalf of others, and because of his virtue, Charles never denied any boon that he requested, and every praised him in whatever he undertook. He maintained Charles' honor, and was much loved therefore, and much talked of throughout the realm. He kept himself chaste at all times and procured dowries for many young women. Charles loved him so much that he cherished him as his adoptive son, and called him son as often as he could. Therefore it was commonly said that Young Roland was indeed Charles' son, though he was a son through honest love, rather than through original sin. And the king loved him for his virtue and because he saw him as valiant in body and soul.

Charles had many enemies and was hated by many, so that he always kept a bodyguard of five hundred armed men. Young Roland by his virtue made peace with the greater part or almost all of Charles' enemies, and Charles was much feared by virtue of Young Roland. Roland was the most

feared man of his time, and he was appointed Gonfaliere of Holy Church by the Church's Pastor, and Captain of Christ, and Senator of Rome. Charles called him the Falcon of Christendom.

ANDREA DA BARBARINO, *ASPRAMONT* (*L'ASPRAMONTE*)

BOOK ONE: *RICHIER OF REGGIO AND GALIZIELLA*

Preparations in Africa

Minstrel Mischief

1

At that same time, King Anglant of Africa, after conquering all Asia and Africa, returned to Africa, to a city called Arganor, where his sons King Troyan and Almont, along with forty-four crowned kings, were present. At that festival, Anglant bestowed upon Troyan the crown of Asia, and upon one of his lords, called Balant the Turk, the crowns of Scandia and Nobiro. He made them master of many realms, and crowned many other barons kings of their lands. Forty-four kings swore fealty to him, and in addition he created four-hundred dukes. Just think how great the number of other lords there present must have been!

King Balant had an eighteen-year-old son, the most esteemed in the whole court. He was the queen's champion and reputed to be her lover. He was created Court Seneschal and was greatly beloved by all. Many jousts and tourneys were held to celebrate Anglant's great conquest. Miles of Angrant, Orlando's father, had taken part in all or most of it. At Arganor he was already known as a Christian, though not as a duke. While this most royal feast was held at Arganor, there occurred in their midst a new disgrace and adversity, as all too often a little spark will ignite a great conflagration, and as by a tiny movement Fortune will shake the estates of this world and cast down its lords from a great height into a profound depth.

2

At the height of the triumph and gaiety at King Anglant's court, it happened that certain minstrels gathering in the high hall of the chief palace were speaking among themselves in this manner: "By Mahomet, there is not a nobler and more puissant lord in the world than King Anglant!" and many applauded these words. But one of the minstrels, who had been at King Charlemagne's court, said: "King Anglant is indeed the greatest lord in the world and commands the greatest number of barons; but there is a Christian king named Charlemagne who is far nobler, far greater, and far more magnificent than King Anglant. He does not command so many barons, but those that he commands are of greater worthiness." The other minstrels began to beset him with cuffs and blows and bitter words. And seeing him thus manhandled, one of the court seneschals, who had heard his words, had him seized from among the other minstrels and brought to him, intending to have him hanged, showering him with continuous blows. As they were getting ready take him down the stairs, they were met by one of King Anglant's nephews, whose name was Triamides. He was the son of King Bramant, whom Charlemagne had slain in Spain. When he saw them thus abusing the man, he approached them and asked the reason and was told of it. Triamides said to them, "You have done ill," and denounced those who had played the bully, saying: "Whatever man receives courtesy is obliged to praise the man who has proffered it; and it is a signal honor for Anglant, our lord, that every lord should be extolled in his house." He made them release the man, and that minstrel gave many thanks for the grace he had received.

3

The envy and hatred among the minstrels grew from bad to worse, since their kind is altogether of little worth, and they are vessels of mutual envy. There is a natural reason for this, since men who feel little virtue in their own souls take refuge in a womanish disposition, which ever believes that the world owes it something. Of such a sort are ignorant clowns, who sweat for gain, and

trumpeters and drummers and their ilk--jugglers and dancers on ropes (that is, beneath awnings), and pipers. People should take note that all riffraff of this kind have more envy and hate in their hearts than any other sort of men, and know only three regular habits: drunkenness, lechery, and dicing.

One of these minstrels, seeing how Triamides had freed that other minstrel, went to young Troyan, Anglant's oldest son, who was very proud. He told him of all that had happened, adding much that was not true. Troyan sent for the other minstrel and asked him about the matter. The wretched clown believed that Troyan would behave in the same manner as Triamides, and told him exactly what he had said in the hall. King Troyan, proud man that he was, having a silver basin by his side, threw it at his face, breaking his forehead wide open, and rushed to the wall of the room to snatch a mace with which to kill him. The minstrel took flight and ran to the great hall, where King Anglant was in session. In his mind, he was saying: "I'm a dead man, and there's no remedy for my case. But I will say something that will give me the justice of revenge."

He arrived where many lords were seated. King Anglant saw him and began to laugh, thinking he had been squabbling with the other minstrels: "What has happened here?" he asked, laughing in great merriment. The minstrel, who expected death at King Troyan's hands, threw himself at King Anglant's feet, and cried: "It was your son, King Troyan, who has beaten me and done me wrong, since I am of low degree, and a wolf may indeed strike at a poor lamb; but he would not in this manner strike at Charlemagne, whom I praised--that same Charlemagne who killed King Bramant, his uncle and your brother, and who also overthrew Polynor. But let him strike at the likes of me, who have no power to gainsay him." He was speaking like a desperate man, believing himself already dead: "But you, my lord, who are master here, do not strike at those who have come from foreign parts to serve you, or at those who are not bound to you by law; rather, if a man of theirs do

not please you, send him packing. This will better become your honor, especially by the praise the man will bestow you to some great lord elsewhere.”

4

When King Anglant heard these words, he went out on a balcony and sighed. All the barons look upon one another and whispered. Almont and Triamides and Balant approached King Anglant and he returned to the minstrel, asking him what lordship was Charlemagne's. The minstrel told him, and at this all the barons present offered their defiance.

When Miles of Angrant heard this discussion, he took his leave from the barons, without however revealing who he was. Three days later he left Arganor, crossed into Sicily, and from Sicily to Calabria, and returned to Reggio where he rejoined Bertram and Richier and told them all that had happened at King Anglant's court, and how Anglant had sworn the destruction of Charles of France, and said: “I fear that they will begin by passing through these parts.”

Richier told him: “We will receive them on our lances' points, for I am old enough to bear arms.” They did not know, however, that he was Miles of Angrant, but they knew that he had been at their court three years earlier before crossing into Africa, and that he had taught them to fence.

While he was at the court of Reggio, word came that Charlemagne had found Bertha and young Roland, and that he had pardoned Miles of Angrant. Then Miles lifted his hands heavenward and praised God. Richier, who was present, said: “Sir Misfortune, why do you praise God in this manner?” Sir Misfortune (this is what Miles of Angrant was calling himself) said: “Because now I can make known that I my exile is over. Formerly, my liege lord had me outlawed, and he has now readmitted me. Know then that I am Miles of Angrant, the son of Bernard of Clairmont.” When they heard who he was, they grievously regretted not to have recognized him earlier, so that they treated him with great honor. So much did they honor him, that they sent to their father Rambald

(who was Duke of Reggio and master of the greater part of Apulia) to ask him to let Miles stay and to make him a partaker of his rule.

Miles desired nothing of the sort, but gave many thanks for the offer, saying: "It seems a thousand years since I have seen my little Roland." He took leave, but Duke Rambald gave him many gifts and a group of knights for an escort.

He arrived at Rome and sought out his brother, Pope Leo, son of Bernard of Clairmont, who blessed him and sent him to Paris, accompanied by many Roman knights. There, presenting himself before Charlemagne, he knelt and asked his pardon. Charles pardoned him, married him once more to Bertha, and ordained a great feast in Paris and throughout the realm. He also restored to him the lordship of his whole domain.

When Miles saw young Roland, he very nearly fainted for joy. Weeping, he told him how he had reared him from childhood; there was none present who did not weep also. He also told him the cause and motive why he had given him the name of Roland, since he had seen him rolling downhill in his cradle. Then he related where he had been and in what lands, and of the great conquests of King Anglant, and of the words the minstrel had spoken. He advised Charles to keep good watch on the borders of Spain and in its seaports.

For that reason, King Charles ordered all the ports to be heavily guarded, and sent spies into many parts to discover if the Saracens were moving anywhere by land or by sea. In many border regions, he doubled the garrisons of his men.

Subrin's Mission

5

The story now returns to King Anglant and the minstrel. That minstrel mentioned earlier was never seen again. Meanwhile King Anglant made all his barons swear obedience, and said: "Five years from now I shall send for you, and then it shall be seen who loves my estate." And so the barons departed for their countries.

The next day King Anglant called a privy Latin interpreter of his, whose name was Subrin, and said: "You know I have favored you ever since you were a little boy, and you have been the most faithful of my servants. It now behooves you to go on a secret mission for me, and take good care that none but you and I know of it." Subrin kissed his hands, touched his lips for secrecy, and swore by all the gods to be faithful to his commands to the death. Anglant said to him: "Go hence in secret to Rome, and (I command you) take none with you either of mine or of yours. Go inquiring through all the provinces of Italy, of Germany, of Hungary, of Bohemia, of Burgundy, of France, of England, and into every Christian domain, and above all through the domain of Charlemagne in France. Come back as soon as you can, so that, when you have come back, we too may make passage. I will expect you in seven years. You will so deserve of me thereby that you and your kin will be rich forever." He gave him enormous wealth for his expenses and jewels beyond measure.

Subrin left Africa, crossed into Sicily, pretending to be a Christian (for he knew many languages) and came to Rome. He traveled all through Italy, except for Apulia and Calabria; and then he passed through Hungary, Germany, Flanders, Brittany, England, Ireland, Gascony, Burgundy, Savoy, and Provence. He learned of the hostility between Charlemagne and Gerard of the Thicket, and of the great hatred they between them. Thinking of Gerard's power, he said to himself: "If there were peace made between them, my lord would have great trouble in conquering those Christians."

Then he went to Paris and stayed for a year with one of the servants at Charlemagne's court, and came to know all the lords, from the greatest to the least. He recognized Miles of Angrant, but Miles did not recognize him, though he feared greatly that he might. At the end of the year, he departed from there and went to Spain, to King Galafron, and informed him how King Anglant was desirous to conquer Rome and all lands of Christian faith in revenge for King Bramant, and prayed him to seek King Anglant's pardon. Hearing his words, King Galafron asked Subrin to commend him to King Anglant, promising his help and that of his sons and of all Spain.

Subrin departed, promising to beg for his pardon from King Anglant, and to send him word of the answer. He embarked and, after sailing for many days, arrived in Arganor, where he found a great number of ships of every kind and a great mass of armed men. Six years and six months had passed from the day that Subrin left King Anglant until the day of his return. King Anglant meanwhile had been amassing money and arms, horses and men and warlike equipment to prepare for the passage. He was waiting for Subrin, and almost all his barons had arrived with all their forces, awaiting the time of departure.

6

Upon arrival, Subrin made his appearance at Anglant's court. Anglant, overjoyed to see him, rose from his seat and took some steps toward him. All the barons rose also and embraced him, asking his news. He replied that the news was good. King Anglant took his hand and Subrin knelt before him. The king bade him rise.

Then Subrin said: "My lord, I have been in Italy and at Rome. I have seen Pope Leo, son of Bernard of Clairmont. I have gone through Tuscany and Lombardy; traveled in Hungary and Bohemia, and in Germany, both high and low; I saw Bavaria and Brabant, Nizimbors and

Brandenburg , Flanders, and Cologne, the Island of England, and low-lying Frisia, Brittany, Cibilcalia, Maganza, Burgundy, Savoy, and Provence.

Thereafter, I went to France, served for a year at Charles's court, and came to know all his barons quite well: King Arnaut, King Philip, King Gotteboeuf, King Otho, King Salomon, Duke Namor, Bernard of Clairmont, Bevis, Amon, Gerard, Otho and the sons of Miles. I saw the Marquis Berlingher, and Anguentin and Hewett and Ansewig of Brittany, as well as Ganelon of Maganza, Gryphon, Guinam, and William, and Florbe of Bordeaux. I saw the renegade Danish Ogier (who so much despised our faith that has himself styled "the Dane"). And (by Mahomet!) I saw that Sir Misadventure who went with you to Asia. By Jupiter, he is related by marriage to Charlemagne, and his real name is Miles of Angrant, but he had been banished.

At last I saw Burgundy and Languedoc and Bellandes and Vienne, of which Gerard of the Thicket is lord. And I saw Clare and Bussy, his nephews, and Rainier, Arnaut, Guiscard and Miles, his sons. This Gerard is a deadly enemy to Charles; if he were to become Charles's friend, you would have great trouble in conquering the Christians." All this he spoke, except that he could give little account of Apulia and Calabria, for he had not gone there.

King Anglant summoned him to his chamber and asked him of the condition of the Christians. Subrin told him: "King Anglant, you will have great trouble in conquering them, because they are brave people and well armed, better than any in the world. But I think that your best hope lies in this war by Gerard of the Thicket against King Charles. If he is reconciled to Charles, your venture is dubious." Anglant said to him: "Act in a manner that gives good comfort to our lords in this enterprise." And so they returned to the hall.

Back in the hall, Subrin gave his opinion in such a manner that all the lords cried out to King Anglant to move against the Christians, threatening Charlemagne and all Christians, swearing to feed their horses at the altar of St. Peter's in Rome, and to turn St. Peter's into a temple of their god Mahomet. Therefore a most solemn feast was readied, with jousts and tourneys, and sacrifices to their gods, especially to Mahomet and Apollyon and Termagant and Jupiter, who were the four gods of Anglant. King Anglant had idols of them made of massive gold, to which Anglant and Almont held in great adoration and whom they worshiped above all their other gods. On the same day, they gave order throughout the city to make sacrifice of bulls and sheep. Many jousts and tourneys were had in Arganor and throughout Africa and Asia. Even as far as India, sacrifices and feasts were held at the same time, and they prayed to their gods for victory.

Galaziella

8

While these feasts were held at Arganor, many great lords arrived there, and one who then came was called Mattafellon. He made a gift to Almont of a very fierce and mighty steed whom they called Briador. It was of the race of Bucephalus, but had no horn on its forehead. It was the most powerful horse that could be found in the world at that time. At the same time there also arrived Galiziella, King Anglant's daughter (she was illegitimate, however). She came from the kingdom of Amazonia with a hundred ladies-in-waiting. King Anglant and Almont feasted and honored her greatly.

On the first day of the joust, King Anglant gave order that none but the jousters should enter the lists on horseback. Many events must here go unmentioned. However, at the outset of the joust neither Almont nor Troyan entered the contest. Anglant and the queen, along with Almont and Troyan sat to look on in various places.

Now while Almont was sitting on a balcony with his queen, and Galiziella was sitting near them on another balcony, she began to sigh at every blow in the lists. Almont saw this and called out to her, saying: "Dear sister, if you had armor, I believe that you would yourself enter the lists to joust."

Galiziella replied: "You speak truly, and I believe I would give a good account of myself." "By my faith," said Almont, "I shall arm you with my own hands." He had them bring a very fine and beautiful suit of armor, and accoutered her in knightly fashion, with two golden images of Mahound, one on the front and one on the back of her surcoat, which otherwise was pure white. It made the queen smile to see it.

When she was armed, Almont had a fine steed brought for her and she, without being recognized, proceeded to the lists in armor and on horseback, so that she seemed a very knight. With her first thrust, she unhorsed Moadas, and with her second Thoas, who were both descended from Achilles. Then she overthrew Hector, son of Lampal. Among all of Anglant's men, only four were found whom she did not unhorse, and these were Triamis, Ulieno, Maldachin and Balant. None could say who this knight was, and when King Anglant asked who it was, none knew how to tell him. Almont and the queen marveled at her valor. Praising her, Almont cried out: "What a joy it must be for King Anglant to have so brave a daughter! In faith, I shall give her greater honor than ever." And he asked the queen, though the lady was a bastard, to honor her like her own daughter.

Meanwhile Galiziella left the lists and returned where Almont had prepared a place of her to disarm. Almont disarmed her with his own hands and then brought her to the queen's chamber.

9

When Galiziella appeared before the queen, the queen embraced her and had her clad in royal garments, saying: "Oh brave Galiziella, from this hour onward I want you to think yourself as my daughter, and I swear to you that after we return from France (which by the grace of our gods we

will conquer), I will bestow a crown upon you.” King Almont said: “Dear sister, your valor has made me enamored with your person. By my faith, if Mahomet gives me the victory in my enterprise, you shall wear the crown of two realms, so that you will be able to claim the noblest lord in the world for your husband. Yet do I pray you to take no husband unless you find one who can unhorse you, since it is considered disgraceful for a woman to take a husband weaker than herself. Therefore, if there is any baron who can overthrow you, he shall be your husband.” Then Galiziella promised him and swore never to take a husband unless she found a knight who could unhorse her. Almont then brought her to his father Anglant and told him that the knight who had won the tourney had been Galiziella. King Anglant did not believe him, and would not have believed had he she not also won the sword-fencing tourney, for which Almont loaned her his horse Briador. When King Anglant saw such great valor in her, he promised her two further realms for dowry, saying: “When we return, I will make the most valiant knight in the world your husband.” She was praised as the bravest woman in the world, and stood in high grace with her father and the queen and her brothers, and obtained whatever favor she might request.

10

At that time, King Galafron of Spain, in response to a letter from Subrin, came to King Anglant, praying Anglant’s mercy and swearing to risk his country and his sons in the enterprise. He was paid little respect because of King Bramant’s death. Seeing that he had little chance of peace with King Anglant, he took counsel with Subrin, and Subrin advised him to turn to Galiziella, who could command whatever grace she wished from King Anglant.

King Galafron went to her and presented her with a sword that had belonged to Pulinor and afterwards to Mainet (that is, young Charlemagne). With that sword Charles had slain King Bramant. It was called Durandel and it was the most invincible sword that ever existed. For love of

that sword Galiziella in her womanly heart took pity on King Galafron, and prevailed with King Anglant to bestow pardon upon King Galafron, who swore to assist King Anglant with all his power against King Charles, in revenge for his daughter Galeana, whom Charles had taken against his will when he returned to France. Thereupon he took his leave from King Anglant and returned to Spain, promising to fortify his country with supplies, men and weapons against the Christians, and delighted to have made peace.

11

After Galafron's departure, King Anglant gave command for all men to embark on the sea within eight days. All made ready their weapons, their camping gear and pavilions, their standards and banner, their armor and horses and forage, and loaded them on the ships.

Galiziella at that time made a present to Almont of Durandel, that is, of the sword that King Galafron of Spain had given here, so that now Almont had both the best sword and the best horse in the world. For this reason, Troyan grew very angry with Galiziella.

Soon thereafter King Anglant commanded Almont to depart with whatever men he pleased and to sail toward the shores of Italy and to make camp in Apulia or Calabria to see where the main Saracen host might best and most advantageously encamp, and where most harm might be inflicted on the Christians.

At Almont's departure all the lords present took an oath on his sword to wage war for the conquest of Europe against Charles, King of France, and against the Church of Rome. A little after, another oath was sworn by four of the barons, that is, King Almont, Triamides, King Ulieno and King Balant: all together, bound by a sacred vow, they swore to destroy Charles and to crown Almont king of all Europe. Four days after these oaths, King Almont sailed away in a great armada of ships,

with two-hundred thousand Saracens aboard. He sailed towards Italy and arrived there. At his departure a soothsayer had told him that he would conquer all of Europe.

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The Fall of Reggio

The Capture of Galiziella

31

The news of Almont's overthrow arrived at the queen's tent, and the queen was much grieved by it. Then Galiziella said to the queen: "I would certainly like to go and make trial of this Christian in my own person, and if Mahomet gives me the victory, I will bring him here to prison." The queen said: "If you avenge your brother, I will make you the most honored queen in all Africa next to myself." Galiziella armed herself like a knight and went to the field by the gate used for sallying from the city, and stayed unrecognized among the knights, waiting for Richier to attack the camp. Every evening she returned to the queen, and early the next morning armed cap-a-pie and went to her watch. She made this journey for eight days. On the ninth day, Richier assaulted the camp in his wonted manner, at about the third hour, accompanied by a thousand knights, for Rambald saw that the city was more tightly beleaguered and was anxious lest they should cut off the city's supplies. Richier had Bertram and Miles at his back, with two thousand knights each, and the cry of "To arms!" was raised. Thereupon Galaziella leapt instantly upon her horse and sped toward the Christians with a huge lance in her hand and a sword at her side. She ran at Richier and was the first in the field. They gave each other tremendous blows with their lances. She made Richier bend grievously in the saddle, thrust through his shield and broke her lance. Richier, however, hurtled her by sheer force from her horse to the earth. As she struck the ground, the laces of her helmet burst and the helmet

itself fell from her head. Her locks fell loose and spread over her armor. She instantly leapt up with sword in hand, and used her shield to ward off blows. The Christian knights formed a circle around her, trying hard to put her to death. Richier, who had received such a hard blow, stood marveling; and, wishing to know who she was, turned his horse about and saw the damsel perform feats deeds of arms in the midst of so many armed men. Once more he marveled, and seeing those loosened tresses, cried out to his knights: "Stand back!" and then asked the lady to surrender. She asked him who he was, and when she heard his name, surrendered to him. He asked for Bertram, his elder brother, and said to him: "Go take this damsel into the city, and see to it that she suffer no villainy from any man until I return." Bertram took her in to his father, and they asked her who she was. She replied that she King Almont's daughter, and that she had come armed to avenge her brother Almont. The duchess and Rambald had her change into rich clothes, and when she entered the hall she was so beautiful that Bertram, afire with love, knelt without shame before his father and asked him to give her to him for a wife. Rambald said: "My son, you know that she is not mine to give, but belongs to your brother Richier. If he, upon his return, grants her to you, I shall be content." The devil, who is ever in readiness, entered Bertram's mind and he at once began to hate his brother because of this damsel. Meanwhile, Richier was wreaking great havoc in the field, he and Miles, but could not make too much headway. Soon they returned into the city and went to disarm. Then they went to attend their father in the usual manner.

32

When Richier came into the presence of his father Rambald, Bertram knelt to his father, saying: "Our father, behold here Richier who has returned, and therefore I pray you to give me the fair Galiziella for my wife." His father replied: "Very well, as long as Richier is content." They asked him whether he was and he answered: "I consider this a favor and am content indeed, if he is."

Then Rambald had the duchess and Galiziella summoned, and said that he wished to give Gabriella as a spouse to his elder son, Bertram. She replied: "If Bertram asks and desires me to be his wife, let him arm himself, and I too will arm, and we will break a lance in the lists. If he overthrows me, I shall be content to become his wife; but if I overthrow him, I will refuse, for I do not wish to be married to a man who cannot chastise me. You know very well that this would not be reasonable. But Richier has overthrown me, and if he wants me, I am content, for he is able to chastise me." Bertram did not wish to fight, because he had heard Richier say that he had never suffered a harder blow than the one that Galiziella had given him. Thus Bertram did not get her for a wife.

Then Richier asked his father for her, and his wish was granted. On the next morning he had her baptized and gave her the name of Constance. Yet she continued to be called Galiziella. Returning to the palace, he married her in Christian fashion, and a great feast was held in the city. On the third night, she conceived two children. One was a boy and the other, a girl, according to some accounts; but our author does not mention children, though he says that she was pregnant when the city was lost. Bertram secretly hated Richier and desired his death like the traitor and patricide and cursed fratricide that he was. Richier was not aware of this and trusted him more than can be told, not thinking that he would betray him as he did.

Betrayal and Tragedy

33

King Anglant, during his siege of the city of Reggio, hemmed it in more and more each day. The whole realm of Apulia and Calabria became his prey, and its villages burnt and destroyed. The Saracens laid waste that whole region of Italy. King Anglant knew that extremely high mountains rose between his camp and Rome and held counsel with his lords, deciding for the security of his camp which lay high up in the Aspramont (that is to say, the Calabrian alps) a fortress should be

erected by the pass, so that no help should arrive from Rome unless the camp knew of it beforehand. He was also urgently counseled to send an embassy to Charles, King of France, and Balant was chosen as the message-bearer, and he set out in mid-March or early April. Having given these commands, King Anglant had a ban proclaimed to the effect that whoever would bring him Richier, alive or dead, should gain the kingship of Apulia and Calabria. He sent ten thousand craftsmen and laborer to Aspramont, with an escort of sixty thousand knights. In the narrowest pass of that mountain range, they erected a huge tower-fortress with a great circuit of walls attached to it that surrounded the entire peak on which the tower stood. That wall was three miles around, so that a huge army could be lodged inside it to guard the passes and to give battle to the Christians.

34

King Anglant had Galiziella sent for but could not get her back. That winter was very harsh. Many times, by day or by night, did Richier attack the camp. Six months had passed since Galiziella grew with child, it being the month of March when spring began to rise and the sun to enter the sign of Aries, and the traitor Bertram, who for love of Galiziella was ever plotting to have Richier killed, thought of nothing else day and night. It happened that, for the ease of the guardsmen who were continually stationed by the three brothers, they divided the night watch into three groups, and one would call the next. The evening watch would take over from the day watch, the day watch from the midnight watch, and the midnight watch from the evening watch, and thus they would relieve one another to lessen their labors. They kept watch in this manner for most of the winter. On the fourteenth of March, it was Bertram's turn to command the midnight watch, and he, tempted by the demon, said to his guardsmen: "I want to go outside; keep good watch," and took two men with him. When he was outside the wall, he made one of them stay a little way from the other and killed them both, for none of them could not see what the other was doing. Then he went to the Saracen

camp. The guards arrested him and he asked to be brought to King Anglant. He said to King Anglant: “My lord, if you will give me a present of my asking—and it shall be an easy thing for you—I will give you the city of Reggio.” Anglant asked who he was, and he told him. When Anglant knew his identity, he said: “Say what gift would please you, for, if the thing be lawful, I will give it to you.” Then the traitor replied: “I want you daughter Galiziella for my wife, who is now the wife of my brother Richier.” King Anglant stood for a while in thought, and then said that he was satisfied. Then the traitor asked to become lord of his father’s kingdom, and this too King Anglant granted him. Bertram said, “Tomorrow night the first watch is mine, and on the next night, I have the day watch. I will then be able to procure you entrance,” and the treason was sworn to by all the sacraments. He promised upon oath to give him the city, and King Anglant to give him the kingdom and Galaziella. Finally Bertram said: “Make your men give me ten pack-horses laden with weapons and provisions and clothing. After I cross the river, let them raise the alarm behind me;” and he told him who he had killed his two squires. “It will appear that you have killed them.” King Anglant assented, and when he had crossed the river, they raised the alarm. The traitor reached the gate, drove the pack-horses inside, told the guard that his two companions had been slain by the Saracens, and gave the greater part of his booty to those who stood watch with him. There was much talk in the city of the prize that Bertram had taken.

35

When morning had come, King Anglant assembled all the commanders of his host and said to them: “Dearest brothers, by the grace of Mahomet you chose me for your emperor and made me lord of Asia and Africa. Seven years have passed since we have with great pains mustered and assembled this host, and all through this spring we have been strongly encamped by this city, which still defends itself. I see no way of taking it by force of arms. Now if we lose so much time in

conquering these other parts, when shall we conquer Rome and Paris, which are held in such great estimation, while this town is hardly esteemed at all? Therefore, this very night one from this city has come to me who has earlier been one of our captives, and his name is Bertram.” Then he told them of the whole agreement he had reached with Bertram. All present applauded the plan and wanted it put in effect, except King Almont, who said that it would bring great shame on them. However, he did not wish to contradict what pleased his father. And perhaps he consented because of the way in which Richier had shamed him by thrice overthrowing him.. So the former prepared for entering the city as the traitor had counseled them in despite of his father and out of the envy he felt for his brothers.

36

When the next day and night had passed, Bertram took up the evening watch, and since that evening was not so apt, he waited for the next night watch to relieve that of the day. When Richier, whose turn it was for the second watch, had completed it, he called for Bertram and went to sleep. When Richier was in bed, Galiziella kissed him and said, “May God protect us, for I have had a dream!” and continued: “I dreamt that a flame came toward me through the air, and it was driven by a strong wind, and it burnt down your whole kingdom. It began with Reggio, and it seemed to issue from your mother’s womb, and it burned all of you. God keep us from treason!” Richier answered: “You women are ever swayed by your suspicions and dreams! Now let me sleep.” And within a short time he fell into a slumber. But Galiziella could not sleep, ever brooding about that vision. The traitor Bertram, once on watch, redoubled all the guards, for he had been told of some commotion in the camp, where they were waiting for the traitor to bring about the promised and sworn treason.

37

After Bertram had made the rounds of the rear walls, calling out to each watch, he turned to the gate where the most numerous guard was assembled and said to the guardsmen: "I have a desire to go forth to see what this commotion among our enemies may mean." At this point one of the townsmen (his name was Lothair), seeing Bertram's whole countenance change, became suspicious and said: "Bertram, what need is there for you to go forth into danger, since you are now in a safe place? By God, watch what you are doing. Consider your ancient father and your native land!" Bertram answered: "What makes you speak these words? Who should have more love for the city than I, who expect to have its rule after my father's death? Tend to your watch, and don't trouble your mind about other things." Lothair was silent and Bertram left the city with three servants. When he reached the vanguard of the camp, he had them kill all three, and went from there to King Anglant, who was waiting for him and received him with great honor, embracing him and making many promises. Meanwhile that townsman, Lothair, went to the bedchamber of Miles, the bastard, and told him how Bertram had gone forth, and that it made him suspicious, remembering that he hated Richier. Miles replied to him in a threatening voice: "What, do you call my brother a traitor? Take yourself hence!" Lothair departed, greatly afraid, and returned to his watch. Nevertheless, Miles, thinking of these words of his, was unable to sleep, and lay awake more than an hour brooding on that speech. At last he called a servant and said to him: "Go to such-and-such a gate" (and he gave its name) "and find out what Bertram is doing, and whether he has returned, and what kind of watch is being kept." The servant departed and turned his steps toward the gate.

38

In the meantime the traitor had gone to King Anglant's tent, as has been told above, and King Anglant showed him great honor. Anglant did not know that Galiziella had been baptized. Bertram once more swore to the pact and then said: "Give me some pack-mules, but command their drivers

to be valiant men, fully armed and able to hold the gate, for it is guarded by three hundred armed guardsmen. They must hold it until your troops come to their aid.” King Anglant gave order accordingly. He also ordained for the first division twenty thousand of the choicest nobility of his army. The first man who boasted to go with the pack-mules was Goreas; after him came Hector, son of Lampal; the third was Maldachin, the fourth Balant, the fifth Lampal, the sixth Ulien, the seventh Triamides, the eighth Calinder, the ninth Moas, the tenth Mattafellon, the eleventh Asperas, the twelfth Sinagon. These twelve went alongside the pack animals, on foot, in armor but without helmets and shields. Those who led the ranks behind them were: first the Lord Mustapha, second Alicard, third Danflor, fourth Candor of Cyprus, fifth King Dalfren. And these were charged with bringing along horses and armor (that is to day helmets and shields) for the first twelve. The traitor said: “I shall go before you to the gate, and I shall say that I have found some pack-animals, and I shall have some of these armed men with me. We shall take along the pack-animals and will drive those men in front of me like prisoners.” In this manner he came to the gate. Miles’ servant arrived at the gate he entered by, and when he saw Bertram, he stayed for not a word, but went back to Miles, his master. The traitor brought some thirty with him, and they led the pack-mules, so that it seemed that Bertram had also take then mule-drivers. But when they were inside, and those twelve stopped above the gate, Bertram was the first to cry: “Long live King Anglant! Death to the traitor Richier!” Those pagan kings took their swords in hand and killed many of the watch. The alarm went up, and the first rank began to move as commanded and furiously crossed the stream and galloped toward the gate. They entered it to assist the first twelve kings and killed all the guards. These guards offered little defense, beside themselves with astonishment at seeing their own commander on the opposing side. Great was the noise and outcry in that quarter of the city of Reggio.

At that moment, the servant reached Miles' chamber and told him of his mission even as the cry arose, saying: "Bertram has returned." Miles, hearing the noise, asked him: "What noise is that?" The servant replied: "I don't know, but I did see Bertram." Miles said: "Go back there and find out what noise this is." The servant came running toward the gate, and when he saw the enemy inside and heard the cry, "Long live King Anglant," there was the traitor atop the gate and he was hurling the guardsmen from the walls to the ground below because they were defending the gate. The messenger returned to Miles and found him in arms, and said with a shout: "Alas, my lord, you have been betrayed by Bertram. He has seized the gate, and already a great number of Saracen troops are inside." In great fury, Miles descended from the palaces and leapt on his horse to succor the gate. In his haste he did not remember Richier, thinking that Richier was already at the battle. Mounted on his horse, he rode toward the gate, speaking comfort to the citizens. Great was the cry of the city dwellers and of the poor women and their fathers and children and brothers. Ah, how many wretches women, naked or in their shifts, ran to the windows, weeping, trembling with fright! The wailing resounded throughout the city; many called for death and for many this seemed better than to fall into the hands of Saracen African dogs. Miles rode toward that gate, shouting to the citizens: "Onward, bravely! Defend yourselves to the death! Follow me, so that we may gallantly defend ourselves," and many citizens followed him. But when he arrived at the gate and so many troops inside, he said: "Woe is me! Why did I not believe Lothair, who told me nothing but the truth, as I now see? But since I am brought to this pass, I care not whether I live or die." He lowered his lance and burst through the enemy ranks and encountered Goreas who had mounted his steed, and the Mustapha, and Asperas, and Sinagon. Already King Almont had arrived in the city with another host. Miles overthrew Goreas and Sinagon and many others. Almont saw him by the light of a great many torches. He spurred his horse toward Miles, grasping his sword in both hands. The blow fell short and split the head of his horse. Miles' horse fell forward dead amid the press of

Saracens and brave Miles dropped helplessly to the earth next to Sinagon. He tried to stand up, but Sinagon, who was behind him, thrust the point of his sword under his hauberk right through his body, so that it issued from his throat. Because of that fall by Miles, many of those who were with him were slain. With Miles dead, the Saracens took courage and ran throughout the city slaying the Christians. Men and women they put to the sword. O wretched mothers who saw their children and husbands murdered! Traversing the ground, they reached the palace, and by the time Galiziella heard the noise, more than thirty-thousand Saracens were already inside.

40

Galiziella, wide awake, since she had been unable to sleep because of the vision she had seen, heard the outcry when the Saracens reached the courtyard and exclaimed: "Virgin Mary, help us!" Richier, who was sleeping (for he had kept the second watch), awoke at that cry and said to Galiziella: "What's the matter with you?" She said: "Ah me! I hear a great shout!" and rose to open a window. When she had opened the window, she heard the cry: "Long live King Anglant!" and said: "Alas, my lord, for the enemy is in the courtyard. They have seized the country." Richier at once hurled himself to the foot of the bed, and while he began to arm, the traitor Bertram was entering the palace with many Saracens, with purpose to kill Richier. When they reached the chamber door, they pushed it to the ground, crying, "Death to the traitor Richier, for he shall have little joy of Galiziella!" and tried to enter. But brave Galiziella took up her sword and made for the door, and as the first of them entered, she parted his head from his body, and in like manner killed the second, and the third, and the fourth. Thereupon they began to thrust their lance point through the doorway, but she hacked them off. Meanwhile Richier armed, and in his haste fastened his rear hauberk with only one clasp. With his helmet on his head, he hurled himself among those lances in the door with sword in hand, killing one of them here and another there. When the traitor saw this,

he did not have the courage to wait for him, but ran down the stairs. Richier pursued him through the hall, slashing away, and killed more than thirty of them. He snatched his shield back up, ran to the stable, mounted his horse, and rode into the courtyard, but saw none of his people there. Then he sounded his horn, and at that sound some five hundred gathered with him. He shouted good comfort to them and sped toward the Saracens, who, when they heard his horn, had retreated from him. He overthrew the Mustapha, Clarel, and King Ulien, and burst his lance. He drew his sword, and those overthrown kings could barely get away. By the force of his arms, he pursued all the Saracens in the courtyard with most bitter blows, making them turn to flight toward the gate by which they had entered. Then he returned once again to the courtyard.

41

Richier, having reentered the yard, sounded his horn once more. Already a rumor spread among the Christians that Richier had gained control of the courtyard, and therefore everyman was hurrying thither. By what was told later, he found himself there with seven thousand armed men. When he asked where his brother Miles was, one of them said to him, weeping: "I while ago he rode to defend the gate and was killed." When Richier heard that Miles was dead, he said: "No I care not whether I live or die," and overcome with grief sped toward the foes along that street that led to the gate where Miles had been slain. Although it was now close to dawn, the moon had already set and the night was dark. When Richier's voice was heard, many torches were fixed to the windows, and he broke through the enemies like a lion, putting them some to flight and killing others, crying: "Where are you, Almont, you traitor?" His sword was instantly known, as he shouted: "Almont, what happened to your false promise? For you promised me that, if I overthrew you, you would return to Africa with your army, and with all these men here. But you shall not gain this city so lightly." Already Richier had overthrown a thousand knights and left the street behind him full of

corpses, while all fled before him. And many, hearing Richier coming, fled through the gate.

Among them was the traitor Bertram, for he believed that Richier was taking back the city. Almont, seeing his men in flight, and unable to turn them back by killing or beating or threatening them, grew greatly troubled, and cried out: "From whom do you flee? Who is it that pursues you?"

Encountering King Dalfre, he asked why there was such a flight. Dalfren answered: "It that devil Richier, against whose blows there is no help. No armor is proof against his sword." Then Almont lamented greatly.

42

Having heard from King Dalfren how his men were fleeing from Richier's great prowess, Almont turned sorrowfully away into street that crossed the one where Richier was coming. In a short while, Richier arrived to confront him with his sword. Almont, hearing him approach, seized a lance and, when Richier had passed the crossing, Almont leapt out of his street and made at Richier from behind. He put his lance in rest, arrived at Richier's back and thrust the lance through the half-fastened hauberk. It passed all the way through his chest and hurled his lifeless body to earth from his horse. At his death, a great outcry arose. The pagans returned toward the courtyard, and Bertram, who was already outside the city, hearing the sound of Saracens calling to each other returned inside. King Almont made some kings whom he trusted dismount, and made them withdraw the lance head through the wound that Richier had received and thrust it back from the other side, so that it would seem that he had been killed from the front, and not from the back. For he had great fear of being shamed. But he was not secret enough to hide the evidence, and the matter came to be known to many and soon spread through the city of Reggio. So died brave

Richier of Reggio, who counted twenty-two years at his death. He died in the year of Our Lord Jesus Christ 783, on the fifteenth of March.⁵¹

With Richier dead, there was no more help for the people of the city. The traitor ran to the courtyard. They found that Galiziella had shut herself into the palace and was defending herself with the aid of certain others. She incessantly prayed to God to save her Richier from death. It was already day when Bertram arrived in the courtyard, and those inside the palace called out to him: “O you traitor, who have done treason to your country and to yourself!” Almont arrived in the courtyard, with twenty-two crowned kings, and had proclaimed that none should set fire to any houses in any part of the city on pain of hanging. Then he commanded those in the palace to yield. But Galaziella would not surrender the palace. The parricide traitor piled evil upon evil, for he had them carry the bodies of Richier and Miles into the courtyard below the palace, and said: “Hear, Galiziella, now I am indeed revenged on him who deprived me of your beautiful body.” When Galiziella saw Richier dead, she cried out: “Aye me! Now I no longer want to live. Go take the palace now and everything in it.” And she descended, opened the palace gate, and fell in a faint upon Richier’s body. When she could rise again, she looked at Bertram and said to him, crying out: “O you traitor, what have you done? How could the devil has so much power to bring to pass so much evil in you? You have killed yourself, and your father, and your brothers, and your city, and your countrymen and your homeland, which was expecting your rule. O you traitor, you were a lord, and now you are a slave. Do you think that my father, King Anglant, will ever trust you, who have betrayed your country and destroyed all your blood? Is there anyone who will trust you now, traitor that you are?” Then Bertram realized that she was speaking the truth, and because of the shame that he felt, withdrew. Galiziella asked the Saracens who had killed her lord; she was

⁵¹ To provide an exact date, as here, is unusual, if not unprecedented, in medieval romance. See also note 18, above.

answered that her brother Almont had killed him, and learned that he had slain him from behind.

At that moment Almont arrived.

43

When Galiziella saw King Almont, she said to him: "O King Almont, is this the fame that will spread about your noble person? Ah how much honor it would have been for you not to have slain this knight! It shall always be a disgrace to you to have traitorously taken from him his life and his city." Almont commanded her to be silent, and had her taken up from Richier's body. Bertram, to outdo himself in evil, went up to the palace and, stirred up by the demon of Hell, seized his father Rambald and brought him before King Almont, asking King Almont to graciously pardon him. King Almont said: "This was not part of our agreement, and I do not wish you to outdo yourself in evil." Then he asked Rambald if he would renounce his faith and worship Mahomet. Rambald replied: "I love my death more than my life, and I would sooner die than deny the Creator of heaven and earth." Then Almont had his head cut off and his body, along with those of his sons, that is, of Richier and Miles, conveyed to a room above the courtyard. He had them laid on a carpet, the father in the middle, with the sons on each side, and called Bertram, and said to him, almost weeping: "Ah, Bertram, what stroke of fortune has it been that has caused the death of these two gallant youths and their venerable father? Ah, Bertram, you traitor, who will ever be able to trust you, who have betrayed your father and yourself, and then your country? You were a lord, and now you have become a slave." Bertram went out pained by much sorrow, thinking of what he had done. Galiziella was once more brought to King Almont, and he sent her to King Anglant, who spoke very villainously to her when he learned that she was baptized and commanded that she be burned alive and her ashes strewn to the wind. But the lords who were with him urged him to send her back to King Almont, to deal with her at his will, since she had spoken many ill words to him.

Meanwhile Bertram appeared once more before King Anglant, and when Galiziella saw him, she flew at him, calling him a traitor to his country: “How do you dare to come barefaced before so much royal magnificence as my father King Anglant and such a noble gathering of barons, and not be ashamed?” And many said: “She speaks truly.” But the traitor knelt before King Anglant and requested the promised reward. King Anglant replied: “I will gladly give it to him, for he is in the right.” He commanded one of his barons to take Galiziella on his behalf to King Almont inside the city, and then Bertram, “and tell him to keep the promise that he has made to him. And let him get ready a chamber for myself and the queen.”

44

When the messenger sent with Bertram and Galiziella came before King Almont, he told him in secret that he should have Galiziella burned on King Anglant’s behalf, since she had renounced Mahomet. King Almont said: “Sister, King Anglant has sent me word to have you burned.” Galiziella replied: “Brother, you know very well that you gave command to Arganor that I should never take a husband unless he could defeat me. That man defeated me, and it was no shame to you that a knight should be my husband who was the best knight in the world.” Almont commanded a great pyre be erected in the square, and this was quickly done. When the fire was lit, Almont called for Bertram and said to him: “My father has sent to me to say that I fulfill his promise to you, and I therefore wish to perform it for you.” He made him marry Galiziella and gave him the scepter of the realm. Then he said to him: “Bertram, you have betrayed your blood. If you could, what would you do to me?” and turned his back on him. When Almont turned about, Bertram was seized and thrown in that fire. It is also said that Galiziella was thrown into that fire; but some say that Almont had another woman cast in to the flames and secretly sent Galiziella aboard a ship and had her

thrown into prison. Others say⁵² that she had a boy child and a girl. King Anglant went to live in the city of Reggio with his queen and with many barons and all the gentlewomen who were with his army.

BOOK TWO: *GERARD OF THE THICKET*

Balant

Balant at Charlemagne's Court

1

Our author tells next, in the second book of King Anglant, how King Almont met in counsel with his father King Anglant and all the kings of his host and composed a message that Balant was to deliver. He was commanded to depart and go to Charlemagne in France. So Balant girded his sword and put a golden ring upon his finger that the queen had given him. He swore that he would not desist until he had killed a great French lord and a hundred Christians with him. Balant commended Goreas to King Anglant, and therefore King Anglant made him commander of the whole army. His father Balant was pleased at this and, having taken the letter and gotten by heart all that he was to say, left Reggio and departed toward Aspramont joined by a huge force that was stationed in the fort of Aspramont. Then he made his way to Rome and saw Pope Leo, marveling at the greatness that Rome had once possessed. Then he left Rome and passed through Tuscany, Lombardy and Piedmont, and made great haste to reach Paris, so as to get there by Pentecost, for he had heard people at Rome tell of the magnificent feast that was held at Paris. King Charles had

⁵² This account is the one taken up in later Italian epic, including Boiardo's and Ariosto's, whose characters, Ruggiero and Marfisa, are the twin children of Richier and Galiziella.

commanded all the Christian nobles to attend him there. At the feast he dubbed many knights and endowed many cities and castles, and created many dukes and counts, and made presents of many horses and weapons and garments, of money, gold and silver. All the nobles of the Christian faith swore fealty to King Charles, and proclaimed their cities and realms subject to him. He was at peace with all of them. All of them promised to execute all his commands with all their might by land or by sea, except Duke Gerard of the Thicket, lord of Burgundy, Savoy, the Dauphinée, Languedoc and many other lands. He was an enemy to Charlemagne and refused to obey the crown nor the pope nor the Empire of Rome. He was a very proud man, and he had four valiant sons and two grandsons. King Charlemagne was holding his feast with jousts and tournaments, and that feast lasted for many days and was nearing its end. In remembrance of the day of Pentecost many lords were gathered at court to dine with King Charles—kings, dukes, princes, marquises and counts—so that never before had there been seen in France so great a gathering of nobles as was that day assembled in the great hall of the palace to dine with King Charles in commemoration of the day, in celebration of their departure and their return home. Together with the emperor, they had heard mass that morning in the church of Saint Dennis, and were just returned. The tables were in readiness for their banquet. King Charles took the royal chair, and all the nobles were seated around him according to their degree, and great was the press of eminent folk, all gentlemen, knights and squires at the hall's entry. Then it was said that a stranger, in full armor, had arrived and dismounted by the royal hitching stone, where none but kings and dukes ever dismounted, and that he had tidings to deliver. King Charles waited to learn who this was and what his tidings might be.

2

While Charlemagne sat calmly like this, Balant arrived in the courtyard, armed and mounted on a great steed, dismounted at the royal hitching stone, tied his horse to one of its iron rings, took his

shield from his neck and left it hanging from the horse's saddle-bow, and left a squire who came with him with the horses. Balant's mount was thin from the journey and very huge. Because of its beauty many gentlemen gathered around it and, gaping with astonishment, praised the horse's looks, for it was of enormous height. They also praised Balant's looks, who was tall and whose skin was so tanned that it was almost black. He was muscular and big-limbed and had a fierce glance. With his helmet slung at his back, he ascended the stairs, and it could be seen by his fine appearance that his first business was with King Charles, for in its magnificence it was like that of the Lord Charles himself. Without fear, he began to speak:

3

“May that Mahomet who saves and upholds the Saracens, who speeds the clouds in the sky and gives us birth and makes fruitful the earth for our nourishment, save and uphold King Anglant and his son King Almont, and King Ulien, Triamides, Sinagon and Goreas, Asperas, Maldachin and Armagon, Lampal and Dalfren, Danebrun, Moisas, Salatiel, Piliagis, King Troyan, Almont's brother, and Pantalis and Balant and Candor and King Salvel, and the Mustapha, Butor, Alicard and Danflor, Florio, Mordan and Moas, and Galeras and Thoas and King Mattafellon and King Ferrin of Ulivant, and the empress, wife to Anglant, and all the Saracen faithful from East to West; and may be cast down and confound you, wicked king, with all those of your Christian faith—wicked king, unworthy of a crown. Our emperor King Anglant sends me to you to announce your destruction, for you have caused us great trouble to come here from such a far country because you have not delivered your bill of surrender to King Anglant. Know then, you and all the other lords here, that when I parted from King Anglant, I put on my finger this ring that the high queen presented to me, and swore upon this ring and my sword that I would kill with my own hands a great French lord, along with a hundred Christians, before this ring leaves my finger.” King Charlemagne replied: “You are

too full of spite.” Balant Replied: “Charles, King of France, listen to my words. Three parts of the world are inhabited by human kind: the first is Asia, and of that part King Anglant has crowned Troyan, his eldest son, king; the second is Africa, and of that King Anglant has reserved the crown for himself; the third part is Europe, and this is the one you inhabit, and Anglant has sworn to bestow its crown upon his son Almont, who is the most puissant knight in the world. He has sworn it, and he will send you to feed with the beasts of Africa if you do not come to him to beg his mercy for your great fault. I want you to know of the numerous realms and races which Anglant rules. First Greater India, and it consists of twelve kingdoms: the first is called Sinestrane, followed by Arcarea, Ariarcana, Carcerion, Ramerica, Corobana, Meduria, Arcasan, Indicar, Calcitrica, Daona on the so-called Daonam river, and Bardaora. Then westward from the river Indus there are Persia, Arabia, Syria, Media, Turkey, Armenia, Alba Bianca, Tartary, all Romania, and the greater part of the empire of Constantinople. Then toward Lybia there is Lesser India, Egypt, Libya itself and the Morea. In Africa: Numidia, Mauritania, Lusitania, Atlas and Morocco; and across the sea in Europe, Granada, Portugal, Pharaon, Castile, Aragon, Galicia, Asturia, Navarre—in fact, all of Spain. What, then, can you do? Therefore listen to my counsel and act like a wise man.” King Charlemagne replied: “I shall take counsel from my nobles. But tell me, vassal, what is your name?” Balant replied: “I am called Balant the Turk, and my lord King Anglant knighted me and bestowed two realms upon me. I also want you to know that King Anglant has crossed the sea with seven-hundred-thousand Saracens, and has taken the city of Reggio, which shall be a safe haven for his whole navy. He has with him thirty-three crowned kings: consider how many other lords this might mean. Moreover, he is awaiting his son Troyan, who shall cross into the West with three-hundred-thousand Saracens, along with many kings from Africa and Spain. You do not have enough power to hold out against King Anglant, and many are the reasons to make you bow to him and pay him tribute and declare that you derive your lordship from him. That this is the truth I intend to prove it

by force of arms upon whatever greatest champion there may be found. If I make him yield, he shall come with me to my lord and beg his mercy. My lord is so gracious that he will pardon you your ignorance, and give you a great realm, and verily you might call yourself a lucky king if he pardons your stupidity and decides not to make you, without sending you any messenger, to come to him before him, after what you have done, with ring about your neck. There is still time for you to make amends, and for the Christian part of the world, which is Europe, not to be devastated. If you do not believe me, take up this letter which King Anglant sends you.” Turning to Charlemagne, Balant added: “You do not deserve that I put it in your hands; but I will throw to you as to a minor vassal, and as a lord throws a bread crust to his dog.” And so he threw the letter into his lap. The great and wise Charlemagne took up the letter and handed it to one of his chaplains, an abbot who was wont to say mass to King Charlemagne, and was a gentleman, saying: “Read it so that all may hear.”

4

When the abbot had unsealed the letter, he at first read it in silence, the better to get the sense of it, and while he was reading, understanding the menaces and great power of King Anglant, he grew so afraid that he felt faint and his hands began to shake, and he wept, and the letter fell from his hands. Then Archbishop Turpin of Mongran rose to his feet, sensing the abbot’s cowardice, and said to Balant: “Ah message, what terror do you contain to make this priest tremble? His only terror is of having to part with his treasure. But, by my faith, Charles alone has treasure enough to buy all Africa with money. With the permission of the holy emperor, let me read this letter; as for you, caitiff priest, get you hence, sing your masses and guard your treasure, for Charles has no need of your gold nor your silver.” The abbot departed in annoyance, after replying to Turpin: “Too harshly have you chided me! Verily King Charles is at fault for not taking counsel with so wise a man as you

are, archbishop. But it shall be seen in good time who is valiant.” Then King Charles said: “Keep still, my lords, and let the letter that King Anglant has sent me be read.” At these words all the nobles fell silent, attending Turpin’s reading of the letter. He first read it in silence and then aloud. Its words were in the manner following:

5

“To the least of our vassals, Charles, King of France, we write: Much has the sea of Africa risen since our navy with my son Almont and thirty-two crowned kings and seven-hundred-thousand Saracens in the service of myself, King Anglant, ruler of the two largest parts of the world, that is to say Asia and Africa, and by virtue of Mahomet, who speeds the African winds, has reached the lighthouse of Messina. All the powers of Apulia and Calabria have submitted to our dominion, and we have taken the city of Reggio. We command you, Charles, on pain of your life to come to us with our servant Balant to surrender the lordship of Europe and to crown my son Almont king over all men of Christian faith. If you fail to do so, I shall cut your head from your shoulders with my own hands, and shall deal worse with you than Alexander did with Porus, King of India; or I shall shackle you in chains, as did Nebuchadnezzar to Jehoachin, King of Jerusalem.” At this point Balant flushed with great daring and arrogance, seeing many faces grow pale at the proposal, said: “King Charles, foolish will be the counsel that you follow unless it be to surrender your person to my master, King Anglant.” Turpin continued: “Moreover, King Anglant sends word here that he will have all the Christians slaughtered and their cities destroyed unless they renounce the Christian faith, reminding us (as he says here) that ‘my son Troyan will come by way of Spain with King Galafron, and he leads twelve crowned kings, and three-hundred-thousand Saracens. They will make a greater massacre of Christians than Vespasian did of Jews, or Alexander of Phoenicians, if they do not submit.’” And so he finished reading the letter.

When Turpin had finished reading, Balant once again began to speak: “King Charles, submit to my master and come to place your neck beneath his sword, for even if became a flying falcon, you would not be able to escape him. Know that our vanguard alone is more numerous than all the forces you could raise, for it consists of a hundred-thousand armed men and three crowned kings. Using only these, my master shall be victorious as far as Brabant. I swear to you by Mahomet that, if I can find you in the field, I will cut your head from your breast with my own sword;” and, having spoken these bitter words to Charles, he reached for his sword and drew it more than two spans from its sheath. Therefore Charles could not remain patient and drew a dagger, pointing it at Balant, crying out in a loud voice: “Kill this dog of a traitor!” At this a hundred swords were drawn to slay Balant. Then the wise Duke of Bavaria rose upright and said: “O sacred majesty, for God’s sake, let no such evil discredit your crown!” Seeing many men risen to attack Balant, he embraced him and covered him with his cloak. Then all drew back, and Charlemagne cried out to Balant: “Hear me, impudent vassal: by that God in Whom I rest all my hopes, I shall, within three months from this day, be in Aspramont to face that dog Anglant, your master.” Balant replied: “Ah, King Charles, how little discretion you show if you believe you can offer resistance to King Anglant!” Hardly had the affair quieted down, when Balant once more began to praise King Anglant and to insult King Charlemagne, saying: “King Charles, there is no ambassador who could give the least annoyance to King Anglant. But you make a good show of your wrath, for we shall leave you neither city nor castle nor dwelling place, and we will undo your whole lineage, and all the nobles who follow you. You have dared to order the death of King Anglant’s ambassador; but, by Mahomet, you shall have a taste of my sword.” With this, he drew his sword and strode toward Charlemagne to strike his head. Duke Namo put his arms around him once more, and already the

assembled nobility had drawn their swords to strike him dead. Only with great difficulty did Duke Namo get him away, for the king was much enraged against Balant. The Ogier the Dane rose to his feet. He went to kneel to King Charles, and on his knees spoke the following words:

7

Ogier the Dane spoke: "O sacred Emperor, give me leave by your grace to knock down the arrogance of this blackguard who has so badly defamed you noble people. If you do not grant me this grace, I shall never more lay down my head in any of your lands or lodgings; and if you grant it, and I do not prove him a recreant, have me hanged by my neck, for he is not an ambassador, but a wicked spy. For if he were a gentleman, he should have spoken in gentle words of the honor and embassy of King Anglant, who is the king of the parts of the East. It must not be believed that King Anglant, so noble a man and so great a lord, should have sent so proud and foolish a man as this, in saying that you should surrender like a rebel and defeated king. How much stupidity has reigned in his words! He says he has sworn to kill a Frenchman; but if God grants me combat with him, he shall never carry back any tidings, or if does carry them back, he shall bring such news to King Anglant as will humble his pride, nor do I believe that he awaits your power." King Charles said to Ogier: "By my faith, you speak truly. I intend for the battle to go ahead." But then the wise Duke Namo spoke up, saying: "By my faith and by the love I bear to the crown, I will say (insofar as it is my power) that this battle should not take place. Rather I desire that he should be sent back safe and sound to his master, King Anglant. You will be praised by all the rulers of the world." Ogier was much vexed by these words; nonetheless he stayed silent for a while, but then said to the duke: "My lord Duke Namo, you are too anxious for honor of this court. Well do I know that you do this so that I may not have its honor." Duke Namo answered: "Ogier the Dane, do not talk in this manner, for I am not acting for the reasons you claim, but only to safeguard the honor of our lord, considering that no offense should be offered to any herald for the message he speaks." King

Balant took great pleasure in the wise words that Duke Namor spoke and in the fair reply he gave to Ogier the Dane. Balant looked at him sharply to remember him. King Charles pardoned Balant, and at once called for water to wash his hands, since he desired to eat. The pagan desired to take his leave so as to go on his voyage and return to his lord King Anglant in the city of Reggio.

8

Duke Namor, like a man intent on his master's honor, seeing that King Anglant's messenger wished to be gone, considered that he had not yet received an answer, and that it was to Charles's credit to let him depart in this manner. He took Balant by the hand and said to him: "Brother Balant, it is the custom of this court that no messenger who comes to our lord King Charles should depart on the same day as his arrival. Stay therefore to behold our festivities until tomorrow, and then you may be on your way, if it please you. As for me, I shall, on Charles's behalf, give you presents of horses and gold and silver and many kingly garments and jewels. And the horses shall be better than those you brought with you, for yours are worn out by the journey." Balant replied: "False Christian, you think you can deceive me by your flatteries. I have not come for your gold or your silver or your garments or your horses; rather I have come to bear an embassy for my lord King Anglant, and to deliver his letter. But if I find you in Aspramont, I shall be able to give you a thousand horses, and gold and silver and pearls and jewels." But the wise duke knew so well how to beseech him that he mollified him and brought him to his chamber, made him disarm, re clothed him in royal garments, and bid him be his guest and to have his horses and squires at command. Then he brought him up into the hall before King Charles, and set him in a seat directly across from King Charles. The duke himself sat down some eight arms' lengths by Charles's side, so that Charles could readily talk with him and ask for tidings.

9

After water for their hands had been brought to Balant and the Duke of Bavaria, Balant, seated at table directly across from Charles, looked about and saw countless noblemen throughout the hall, and marveled greatly. King Solomon of Brittany carved before Charles and was his cup-bearer, and King Druon directed the serving of the meats. At a nearby table sat King Philip of Hungary and King Gotteboeuf of Bohemia, and at various other tables there sat many kings, dukes, princes, marquises, and lords. A huge multitude of young gentlemen were waiting on the tables. The whole nobility was present, except Miles of Angrant who had been granted leave to depart on the preceding day and had gone to Brava on some of Charlemagne's affairs. There was such a mass of gold and silver in the cups, basins and utensils, and such grand and rich ornament of gold and silver throughout the hall, that Balant grew greatly astonished, and said to himself that he had never seen such splendor. Among other causes of wonder was the great multitude of nobility that Balant beheld, the greater part of them young warriors well prepared for battle. He said that Charles himself was a very fierce king and a young one, for not one of his hairs had changed color yet. He was in the prime of life. Balant guessed that King Charles might be some forty years old; and he was so pleasant and familiar with his lords, so jocular and laughing when he spoke that Balant sighed, remembering what ferocity he had shown at Balant's arrival, and said to himself: "Verily, this king is what a king ought to be, bright with his friends but gloomy with his enemies," for he always showed himself terrible when displeased, and wicked men were hateful to him. And, not to mention the ornate table furniture, Balant saw many of the serving men with ornate armor on their backs, that is of enamel chased with gold and silver. Guarding the hall on two sides were three thousand warriors, armed to the teeth, so that any man could feel safe in the emperor's presence. And above all Balant was pleased by the suits of armor that were so shining and beautiful to the sight, and by the great honor and reverence that was bestowed to Charlemagne, and by how human and mild and pleasant he was to every man, and gave every man contentment. Balant said to himself: "Alas, my lord King

Anglant, you have sworn to conquer all Europe, but you do not know the people you are dealing with. By Mahomet, the King of France exceeds in honorable worth all the rest of the world.” Then he said: “If Charles had no other nobles nor other treasure than I behold here and now, I would still be a heavy task for Anglant to conquer even one province of Europa.” He overheard many men speaking, and they were saying: “Praised be Our Lord Jesus Christ for sending us the Saracens, to make us learn warlike exploits.” And the older men among them were saying: “What grace Jesus Christ has shown us, that by doing battle against the Saracens, we can redeem our souls! Doing this will provoke a general pardon to save us.” Then Balant examined his memory and bethought him of what he had heard in Syria, that is in the city of Jerusalem—that the Christian faith was the best and truest faith, and he began to doubt his own faith in Mahomet, saying: “What folly it is to believe in enchantments! I swear by my soul that, when this war is over, I will have myself baptized. But I would not for all the gold in the worldly do so now, for the simple reason that I will not betray my lord.”

10

While Balant was eating and dwelling upon these thoughts, King Charlemagne, seated across from him, called to him and said: “Balant, what are you thinking? Do you really believe that your lord Anglant intends the destruction of the Christian faith?” Balant replied: “Yes, by my faith; without a doubt, King Anglant will this very summer seize all Apulia and Calabria, and Rome, and Lombardy; and in less than three months Almont will be crowned King of all Europe in the city of Rome.” Charlemagne laughed thereat, and then said to Balant: “By my faith in God, I would deem it a great shame to me if King Anglant crossed the heights of Aspramont before I do battle with him. Therefore tell your master that I have no wish to be called king if four months pass before I make him yield, or three months before I arrive in Aspramont with my banners flying above my assembled army.” Balant replied, laughing: “O King Charles, what is this you say? It has already

taken King Anglant seven years to assemble this army of his, and he has with him thirty-two crowned kings and more than three-hundred dukes who await coronation when Almont seizes the crown of Europe; for, even if none are there but Almont and Ulien of Sarsi and Triamides and Maldachin, you could not withstand so much as our vanguard; and even if you turned into a peregrine falcon, you could not escape from King Almont's hands. I want you to know that King Troyan is coming westward with twelve kings and three-hundred thousand Saracens, and that all Spain is in accord with King Anglant. However, come and make an agreement with King Anglant, since he has sworn to conquer the whole world, since Alexander was once its master and King Anglant is of his royal lineage, and of the parentage of King Nettenabo of Egypt, and therefore the succession belongs to him. He is already obeyed by all those of Eastern Rome; the emperor of Constantinople has sent him ships and troops." Said King Charlemagne: "Tell me, Balant, what kind of man is King Anglant? How does he deal with his nobles?" Balant replied, "King Anglant is without flaw. He does not know how to make a petty gift, but ever gives presents of enormous wealth, and he does not abandon the advice of his nobles, but is never angry at it. He is gracious to every man, except to those who flee from the battle. Yet he readily pardons all those who sue for grace; he despises treason and arrogance, and is most generous in his person. For their champion all the Saracens have named Almont, who makes the whole world tremble." From all these words King Charles gathered that King Anglant and all the others reposed all their hope in Almont. Then King Charles inquired whether Anglant was old or young, short or tall. Balant replied that he was tall of stature and that he was sixty years of age, and was in good health and very puissant in arms. Then he said, "King Almont is the man by whom all Europe will be conquered." Charlemagne answered: "You might find it an easy matter to conquer Europe, but you shall go hence, and we shall stay here to guard Europe and our lands, which we will defend honorably. But tell me, Balant, upon your faith, do you think that King Anglant, when he hears of our coming, will wait to do

battle?” Then Balant grew somewhat angry and said: “Almont and Ulien and myself alone shall wait for you and your whole Christian army. You will come to die in Aspramont at our hands.” After these words, all rose from their seats, since the meal was done, and Balant asked leave of Charles to depart. Charles said to Balant that he wished to send some additional words to King Almont, and that he would send for him to deliver the message. Then he gave him into Duke Namo’s care. The wise duke brought him to his palace, had him mount a horse, and took him to see the whole city. The also went to see Saint Dennis, and in the evening he supped with Duke Namo in his chamber. The slept together, and when they were abed they began to converse about faith in Christ and faith in Mahomet. The wise duke was learned and a great friend of God, knew all the laws, and both the Old and New Testaments, and began to preach to Balant as related in the next chapter.

11

After Namo and Balant had lain down, King Balant, to learn what the faith of Christians was, began by saying: “Duke Namo, surely your Christian faith is false, and faith in Mahomet is the true faith. Whoever does not believe in Mahomet cannot be saved and is damned.” With this he began to exhort the duke to adore Mahomet and Apollyon, and told him that King Anglant would make him a great lord for the sake of his learning. “He will make you his counselor.” The duke, like a wise man, stayed silent and listened to all this, and then answered him: “King Balant, I shall neither abuse your faith nor praise my own. I only wish you to judge for yourself, when I have told you how our faith took its origin.” And he began with the beginning of creation, how God made the world and all the animals, and the heavens and the sun and the stars and the planets; how he parted the light from the darkness, and made the fishes in the sea, and on the sixth day created man, called Adam, and then made him sleep and from his rib created the lady Eve, and how he commanded them not to eat the fruit of the Tree of Good and Evil; and how they were naked, and how the devil deceived them, and they were driven from Paradise; how the world endured until Noah’s ark; how God

destroyed the world by water, that is covered it with the waters of the deluge, in punishment for the great sinfulness that was on earth; how Noah, by God's command, made the ark, in which he escaped with three of his sons and their wives and his own, and with all the animals with which he reseeded the earth. That was the First Age, which lasted from Adam to Noah. Then he spoke of the time from Noah to the patriarch Abraham, and from Abraham to David, and from David to the Babylonian exile, and from the Babylonian exile to Jesus Christ—of all the prophets and patriarchs and lawgivers, kings, psalmists and holy judges who were perfect friends of God. And he spoke of many prophecies, and of how Jesus Christ was made human flesh in the Virgin, and how he preached the Faith, and of the great miracles he performed. How, to redeem human kind, he willingly suffered his death and passion; and how he descended to Limbo and freed all the souls that should be saved; and how he rose on the third day and appeared to Mary Magdalene and his twelve apostles; and how, according to the prophecies, he would come to judge the good and the bad, and would summon the good into the kingdom of eternal life and the bad in to the abyss of Hell.

Blessed will be those who have performed his commandments. Balant said: "Ah, Duke Namor, I promise you that, once I have performed my embassy, I shall become a Christian and be baptized, so much, dear duke, have you made me in love with the Christian faith." Shortly thereafter the new day dawned and Balant arose to be on his way, and the duke rose to do him honor.

12

Balant, having risen, called for his armor and donned it, and he was already half-converted by the wise duke's words. When he was armed and about to mount his horse, duke Namor presented him with many horses, many weapons, and many garments, and much gold and silver and many jewels, birds of prey—falcons and ospreys and gyrfalcons and hawks—and dogs of all kinds for birding and hunting, and many servants skilled in the manage of horse and whatever else Balant might command. Balant thanked the duke heartily, but would not take anything. When he was armed, he

called for his own horse and made it take him to the royal palace, and went to King Charles to obtain his leave. King Charles once more promised that he would be in Aspramont three months hence to confront King Anglant and Almont, and that he would send messages to reply to any whatever further messages were sent him, and gave license to depart to Balant, who went to mount his horse and at parting said to Duke Namor: “By my faith, let me come to shame and dishonor if I do not turn Christian for love of you,” and grasped him by the hand. The other bowed and said, “I commend you to God.” Then Balant turned his horse toward Italy and rode for many days until he reached Aspramont and lodged in the tower-fortress that King Anglant had caused to be built. On the next morning he rode toward Reggio and found King Anglant outside the city taking his pleasure near the royal tent under the shade of some trees, with many of his nobles.

Balant Returns to Reggio

13

As Balant approached the army, there was a great noise of rejoicing at his return throughout the camp. He, riding towards Reggio through the middle of the host, found king Anglant in the shadow of some trees near the royal tent, with many nobles around him. When Balant saw him, he left his saddle, and Hector, son of Lampal, held his stirrups while Butor, the seneschal, seized the bridle of his horse. Balant made haste and arrived at King Anglant’s feet, threw himself upon his knees, kissed his feet and greeted him in the name of Mahomet and Apollyon and Jupiter and Termagant, saying that he trusted that these gods would overthrow Charlemagne, king of France, and all his people, and declared: “My lord, I come from France and I have been in the fair city of Paris. O my lord, what hardship I have endured on mountains and valleys and rivers and in the snows of the Alps! I have stood before Charles and put your letter into his hands. I have never seen a fiercer man, nor a fiercer king. He has so numerous and so handsome a following of lords that its equal

cannot be found in all the world, and they desire nothing so much as to give battle and to fight.

They gave little heed to my threats, but Charles answered that in three months he would be here in Aspramont with his whole power of nobles to fight with you. Ah, King Anglant, a mighty labor it will be for you to oppose Charlemagne, so beautiful and so well armed are the Christians who follow him. Little do they esteem you and your people. You may be sure that if Charles fights with us man to man, that is equally matched, our power will be as nothing against him. Know also that there is not a man alive in the world who, looking Charlemagne in the face, would not tremble with fear, so fierce is his glance. He asked me if I believed that you would await him and if I thought that you would flee with all the army in your camp. To which I answered that Almont and Ulian and myself alone with our vanguard would await Charles and his whole Christian army. But he gave little heed to my words, and as little to your letter.” Balant added: “My lord, King Anglant, give me leave to go to my tent to eat, for I have not eaten for a long while. When I have eaten, I shall return to say more, for there is much left for me to say of the embassy, because of the many things that befell me.”

14

Balant had hardly finished the above words when Triamides, who was on to King Bramant, rose to his feet and turned to Balant, saying: “Evil betide the man who trust messages that betray their lord! King Balant, if King Charles of France has given you some of his gold and silver, all too faithfully do you serve him now. Why not be ambassador to King Anglant and then praise Charlemagne, our enemy?” Balant answered: “Evil betide the man who wants to serve Charles! But do you know what I want to say to you? King Triamides, I bring you nothing but the truth, but you do not believe me. I say that Charles had them offer me many horses and many weapons and much treasure, gold and silver, and so many jewels as to outvalue the whole kingdom of which I wear the crown. And I, because of my fidelity to my lord, would accept nothing. But if you do not believe what I say, you

will see the effect when Charles arrives in Aspramont, where, to prove each of you wrong, I desire to be the first to ride against Charles. Then it will be apparent whether I love Charles or my lord King Anglant.” Then King Moisas rose to his feet and said: “King Balant, did Charles say he would come to keel before King Anglant with his neck in fetters, or did he say that he would flee from the kingdom of France?” Balant replied, “By my faith, Charles is not a man or a king to surrender so readily, and it shall befall that who dares meet him when he sees him armed in the field shall instantly wish himself in Africa or in Syria. But three months will not go by before you will see him arrive in Aspramont. Then it will be seen which of us Saracens is valiant.” Then he turned to King Anglant and said: “Give me leave to go eat, and I will quickly return to you.” King Anglant gave him leave and he went to his tent among his own folk, where there was great feasting and rejoicing.

15

When Balant by leave of King Anglant had permission to go, King Moisas, King Danebrun and King Lampel, and his son Hector, and Triamides remained with King Anglant. One said to another: “Today Balant has returned, and he says that he has endured much toil.” The other said: “He surely has received much treasure from King Charles, since he speaks dishonorably of our side. But, by Mahomet, he is worthy of the stake or some more cruel death.” King Anglant went thence with his barons to his tent, where Balant was much criticized and maligned. It was said that he had betrayed King Anglant and had turned Christian. Meanwhile Balant had arrived at his tent, put off his armor, and sat down to eat; and many gentlemen served at his table. After he had eaten, he put on a garment of the French fashion, and shod himself in like manner, and so with all the rest of his apparel, so that he looked just like a French noble. He put a golden chain about his neck, mounted an ambling palfrey, and came to court. There he dismounted and appeared before King Anglant and all his nobles. Many more lords and kings had arrived there to hear of Balant’ embassy. Almont and Goreas were there also. When Balant arrived, all fell silent. Balant gave a handsome and

honorable salute and then said: “Your highness, King Anglant, hear now and understand the rest of my embassy.” King Anglant said: “Balant, do not make long words about it. But tell me, by your faith: did you see Charles?” “Yes, by Mahomet,” Balant replied: “I saw him all too well, with more than a thousand of his barons, all eager for battle. Little do they heed the threats of others. They said to Charles that our coming is for them a full pardon by the Christian faith. Of my threats they said that I was no noble, but rabble⁵³. Mad in my eyes seemed any man who could behold Charlemagne and feel no awe, so magnificent is he and so noble and great a king, a terror to his enemies, a joy to his friends, and a pleasing speaker.”

16

Enraged by the words that Balant was speaking, Anglant leapt to his feet and said: “Balant, I have raised you since you were a little infant, and because of your virtue have made you a knight and bestowed two realms upon you and placed a crown on your head, and have always placed my trust in you. You know that seven years have passed since this host was gathered, and on my behalf and to be advised in this war I have sent you to Charles, king of France, my principal enemy. His money and his gold have now so corrupted you. He has given you so much that you have become his vassal and you have betrayed all my secrets to him, and all my affairs of state. For this reason you have merited the cruelest death.” Balant upon hearing these words rose angrily to his feet and turned to Anglant, saying: “Hear me, most noble King Anglant: all that you have said, of rearing me up and making me a knight and giving me realms and crowning me and settling me in marriage, all this is true. Moreover you presented me with *Trenzadia*, my excellent sword. Of all this I am aware, but I would remind you—I do not say this in your reproof—that there is not man in all this army who has served you so faithfully as Balant, whoever he be, whether in Asia, Africa and Europe. And if you have forgotten my services, I will recall some of them to your mind. You will remember that

⁵³ My translation attempts (somewhat clumsily) to render the word-play “*non barone, ma . . . briccone*”.

not long ago I returned from the East and won four battles for you in which I overcame King Pilinas and King Amidas and king Urial of the White Hair, and subjected all their provinces and territories to your crown by the might of my sword. What man is there who could say that this is not true? I surrendered all their treasure to you, and more than one-hundred-thousand shields from their territories are with you in the field. Moreover you should recall Manador the Giant, the Sultan's nephew, against whom we waged a great battle in which we were beaten and you were taken. Mandor seized you and carried you off, and all men abandoned you. I myself was wounded by two lance-thrusts, yet this did not prevent me from aiding you. I struck Manador with my right hand and helped you back on your horse, and by this act your person and your people were rescued. Soon after I cut off the Sultan's head and received many wounds. You made one of your relatives Sultan, and for three months I was in disgrace. Did you remember this when you said that you loved me more than any of your kin and that you were never out of my counsel?"

17

Another king, whose name was Salatiel, rose then and said: "King Anglant, you have summoned us and assembled this army for your protection. Well have I heard the accusations that King Balant has leveled against you. By my faith, if he served you in the past, he has amply vitiated all his former services by this journey. For he has put so much fear into this army that, were it not for the sea, all our men would already have fled. Evil betides the lord who makes his servant too great! For this Alexander lost his life, by making his kinsman great, and the same befell Darius, King of Persia. This man loves Christians better than Saracens. He has deserved death for the treason he has committed against you." When Balant heard him, he rose to his feet and said: "King Anglant, I marvel greatly that you should give ear to this King Salatiel. For ten years he warred against you in Africa, and you sent me against him in battle. I fought with him and captured him as a wretched vassal and later presented him to you. You pardoned him, though he should have been chained up

like a mastiff. Have you forgotten that he stabbed to death two of your nephews, the sons of King Jamburel, named Durante and Ospinel? If he would gainsay this, let him take up arms, and if I do not dash out his brains, have me tied to a horse's tail." King Anglant turned to Balant and said: "Stop talking of the past." Then Triamedes rose to his feet and said: "King Anglant, Balant, serving Charles, believes you to be lost. But, if there is the slightest fear in you, bestow France and Charles' territory upon me, and leave your African troops under my command. I will conquer Apulia and Calabria, and by next summer will capture Rome, tear down the churches of Saint Peter and Saint Paul and erect a temple to Mahomet and Termagant in their place. I will march into Lombardy, come to France, seize Charles and bring him captive to you like a wretched vassal. And I will wreak such justice upon Balant as will make small and great men marvel." When Balant heard him, he rose and said: "Your highness, King Anglant: grant me the combat against Triamedes, and if I do not prove him a recreant, have me hanged by the neck like a traitor. But I shall prove him a liar, for I never was a traitor." There followed more harsh words between the two, Balant and Triamedes, but King Anglant would not grant them trial by combat. Balant said: "Triamedes, son of King Bramant, who was once called King Candio, do you not remember that, when Brunor was bringing you, dragging you by the nosepiece of your helmet, I give him such a blow that he fell senseless from his horse and we would have killed him had his people not come to his rescue? Yet I captured his splendid horse and gave it to you, and took away his sword, which is now belongs to my son Goreas. Back then you vowed that you would never gainsay me, and now you have broken your sacred vow, and ill repaid my service. You will not believe the truth of what I say, but, by Mahound, four months will not pass before you behold Charlemagne in Aspramont. Then you will see that I have not betrayed King Anglant, and then my words will be believed." At last King Anglant rose and said: "My lords, I no longer believe that Balant has betrayed me or rebelled against Mahound."

But he could not silence his crew, for Lampal rose to his feet and said: “King Anglant, what Balant says cannot be true, since you have infinite numbers of men and have sent Troyan, your son, to the other side of France. If Charles moves from Paris he will be pursued by Troyan, and if they hear of such multitudes the city will not be able to withstand them and they will all fall into our hands.

There is no doubt that we, in a short time, will seize all of France and prove Balant a liar, who has taken service with Charles.” Balant said: “At this time one may give comfort to Anglant by your words, King Lampart, you old man; but, by my faith, by your own power you could not conquer even one wretched castle for my lord, King Anglant. But have you forgotten the time when King Florians of Roscia deprived you of your realm, and my lord sent you aid, a hundred thousand men, and I was their commander, and we besieged Florians’ son, and when his father came to aid him, I stood in his way so that he became my prisoner and surrendered your kingdom back to you? You cannot deny this, for there are fifty-thousand of his men in this very camp to aid King Anglant.”

Then he turned to King Anglant and said: “My lord king, how many services I have rendered to your crown! For all of them I am ill repaid at this moment. How many embassies I have performed on your behalf! I have ventured my body in seven battles, so that you gained a realm by the least of them, and I can show you many wounds on my body. Out of these realms, you have two-hundred-thousand fighting men here by the Lighthouse of Messina. And the reward you give me for this is that you suffer those whom I have made submit to you to offer me outrages, and you have never caught me in a lie. Would to Mahound that what I say were a lie! But you shall see it proved in fact. There is not a man in this host, from Almont on down, whom, if he said the contrary, I would not defy to combat, to prove that all I say about the actions of France is true.”

19

Now Almont rose to his feet and said: “Anglant, my dear father, Balant was never found to undertake anything in opposition to your lordship, and therefore I much marvel, Triamides, that you

have become so bold as to ask for the realm of France, which you have all sworn to render to me, and which was promised me. Seven years have passed since this army was assembled and began to gather for this conquest. If Balant went to France, I believe that Charles told him much more than he says, and Balant is not a liar. But I do not believe that Charles has enough treasure to show to Balant as to cause him, by that demonstration, to inspire our army with fear. King Moisas, King Salatiel, and Lampal and Triamides and all who have talked against Balant have done so out of envy.” Then Goreas rose to his feet, who was Balant’ son and the camp seneschal, and a favorite of King Anglant’s wife, the queen. He knelt to the king and said: “Your Sacred Majesty, I have suffered too much offence in standing here listening to knavery and knavish words, so that every man might think me a coward and of small account. But, in the presence of King Anglant and Almont, I intend to prove by trial of arms, upon any man who desires the combat, that my father never once thought of a crime or of treason against you.” At this, Anglant commanded all to be silent, and none to speak any more of this matter on pain of his life, and he bade all those who held land to attend him at a general council.

20

The next morning all the kings and lords of the army assembled before King Anglant. Their first decision was that troops should be sent to guard the passes of Aspramont against King Charles, should he come as Balant had said. It was also decided that King Almont should ride out with a hundred-thousand Saracens to lay waste and plunder Apulia and Calabria, both on the plains and on the mountains, and also that King Anglant with the other lords should reoccupy Reggio against Charles’s arrival. Almont took with him Hector, son of Lampal, and many other lords, and he took with him four golden idols, of Mahound and Termagant and Great Jupiter and Apollyon, as well as the royal standards, and at his departure he foraged and robbed a great quantity of provisions and sent it to the camp, and took and pulled down many castles and killed many Christians and cut off

the heads of many nobles. The first time he turned back and came back to the tower, rich with prey and prisoners, he found Charles already arrived in Aspramont, by which Almont sustained much damage and shame, as this history will declare in good time. Now it turns back to Charlemagne, Emperor of Rome and King of France.

Namo

Gerard of the Thicket's Defiance

21

When Balant had departed from Paris, King Charles gave command unto all his nobles to assemble before him on the next day, and they did so. The archbishop of Paris, having consulted with Charles and speaking on his behalf, addressed them as follows: "Most noble kings, dukes, counts and lords, many reasons do you have to be thankful to God for, for he has sent you the power of the infidels since you are full of sin and this shall be a general pardon. Whoever desires the salvation of his soul shall march against the Saracen dogs. In addition, doing so shall be a cause of perpetual fame and honor, both for you and your posterity. You know what your emperor Charles has vowed, to wit: that three months from now he would be in Aspramont. You should now be solicitous for three reasons: first, to increase the honor of our lord Charles be sustained; second, to assure that the Saracens advance no farther, since the more Christian territory they acquire, the more Christians they slay; and third, to show them that we have no fear of them. And it will a great cause of dismay to them when they hear that succor has arrived so swiftly. The remission will be for both sin and punishment, and blessed will be the soul of whoever dies killing these Saracen dogs, and rich will be whoever remains alive by the great booty he shall earn. For God's sake, be eager, for time is short." Then Charles gave all of them leave to return to their lands, bidding them to be in

Aspramont within the appointed three-month term. He ordered a proclamation that all men in his own territories should depart for their own lands, and in three months time be at Rome with all their forces. He also made proclamation throughout the Christian world of the remission of sin and punishment for any who went with Charlemagne against the Saracens. And so every man departed and returned to his own land.

22

Charles was very glad that King Anglant's messenger had arrived at court during festival time, so that his nobles had seen and heard him. And, after dismissing his nobles, had a proclamation made that any knight who lacked armor or a steed should present himself to Charles and he would provided with horse and weapons and money, so that none would be prevented from going by poverty. He thus encouraged all his nobles to come, and said to all that whoever did not come would be proclaimed a traitor, but he and his issue. He quickly had many messages and sealed letters prepared and sent them to those who had not been in Paris during the ambassador's visit, promising every man who bravely fought against the enemy in Aspramont cities and castles, possessions and gold upon his return. Also, he at once had many letters written and sealed. He dispatched one ambassador to the island of England, to King Otho upon whom he had bestowed its rule. The ambassador traveled to Harfleur, crossed the sea to England and, after arriving at Hampton, proceeded to London and presented his letter to the king. He, when he had read the letter, very graciously answered that he would come to the aid of his liege-lord Charles. He had many ships outfitted, created ten-thousand knights, left England and made his way toward France. So great was the treasure he brought with him, of vessels of gold and silver and of gold and silver money that it was counted a marvel and gave great comfort to Charles and all the Christians—and there was wealth even greater that remained unseen and of which many had no suspicion. He had five thousand crossbow archers in his host, each of whom brought along two horses and two suits

of armor, and more jewelry in gold and silver than could be believed. Throughout his progress toward the city he issued proclamations that poor knights unprovided with armor or horses should come with him to Paris and they would be armed and mounted. When he presented himself in Paris, Charles gave him signal honors and was much heartened by his arrival. That king had in his court one of his sons, whose name was Astolph, whom Charles retained as the companion of his nephew, young Roland.

23

After the embassy to England, Charlemagne set another to King Druon in Lower Frigia⁵⁴ and desired him to come to avenge the outrage which King Anglant had committed in Italy (that is, in Apulia and Calabria) by taking Reggio, killing countless Christians, and to have an indulgence of sin and punishment proclaimed throughout his lands. The messenger departed for Frigia and delivered his embassy in Carcasson. The king was much pleased by Charles's request, uttered many threats against Anglant, granted six thousand knights to support Charles, and came himself to Paris. The Charles sent word into Hungary to King Philip the Elder, who gladly received the messenger and his letter, saying: "Anglant was ill advised to come against my lord and grandson Charles, the son of my daughter. I will grant him fifteen thousand knights to assist him." Then he made his way toward Italy to join King Charlemagne in Rome, and brought one of his sons along to bear his arms. King Charles sent into every part of Christendom with requests and commands, here for fighting-men, here for weapons, and there for money, according to the ability of the country to furnish them. He assembled a great army, and immediately received much aid from kings, dukes, counts, marquises

⁵⁴ The place name here used (*Bassa Frigia*) is puzzling. *Frigia* could mean either Phrygia (out of the question in this context) or Frisia (possible, though *Reali VI* locates it in Ireland and makes Gotteboeuf, not Druon, its king). The current passage further complicates the question by naming Carcassonne (in southern France!) as Druon's capital.

and lords, who will be mentioned at his departure from Rome, when they departed thence to go to Aspramont.

24

Having sent many ambassadors, Charles summoned Archbishop Turpin and said to him: "Noble Archbishop, I pray you and entrust you with a great need of mine, for I bestow more hope in you than in any other ambassador. Go hence into Burgundy to Duke Gerard of the Thicket, who (as you know) is so haughty than none other would dare come to him. But since you are related to him and a churchman, he will not deal with you as with others. Ask him to come to our aid, since, if King Anglant should chase us from the field, it is plain that no other lord will oppose King Anglant. Therefore let him bethink himself and come to our aid and his own. Tell him how King Anglant has taken Reggio across from the Lighthouse of Messina, and has vowed to sack Rome this very summer." Turpin replied: "I shall go, but at great peril, since Gerard is extremely proud and has four sons and two grandsons. Nor will he hold his lands either from you or any other man."

Charles said: "My dear Archbishop, Gerard's exploits are too well known to be mentioned, for you know that we are well aware of Gerard's pride. But in these straits we must not call to mind our old enmity. For God's sake, think of reminding Gerard of the Christian Faith. He is very powerful, and if he joins this enterprise, he could be the cause for saving all Christendom. If he does not come, he will be destroyed in any case; for, if King Anglant defeats me, he will defeat him; and if I defeat King Anglant, let Gerard not think that I will refrain from revenge, since he will remain an enemy of all Christendom. But if he comes to Aspramont, all our enmity shall be forgotten." Turpin answered; "I shall be your ambassador." Then Charles added: "My dear Archbishop, let me pray you to have young Roland, Miles of Angrant's son, and his cousin Astolph, the King of England's son, kept in prison at Lyon or some other place, along with Namo of Bavaria's two sons, Otho and Berlingher, for our host has no need of children." Turpin replied: "Your Sacred Majesty, leave it to me, I shall

put them into prison in Lyon under heavy guard.” The next morning he took his leave and Charles ordered Young Roland, Astolph, Otho and Berlingher to go with Turpin and they obeyed, not knowing where they were going. The archbishop brought them to Lyon and had them placed into a tower of the palace, attended by two guards, and gave command that, no matter what they might ask, to be staid there unless Charles failed to return from Aspramont, and that they should never be released from the tower so as not to come back to Charles. When he had given these order, departed from Lyon and traveled towards Duke Gerard’s territory to perform King Charles’s embassy.

25

Leaving Lyon behind, he rode towards Vienne and, arriving in a few days, learned that Gerard was there. So he rode into the court, dismounted, ascended the stairs, but found the great hall locked, since Gerard was about to dine, it being the supper hour. Turpin knocked, and the porter would not open to him, but then Turpin gave him three pieces of gold, and he allowed him to go inside. Turpin went up to Duke Gerard in his archbishop’s attire; all the gentry yielded place to him, and he bestowed his bishop’s blessing. Arriving at Gerard’s table, he said: “May the true God, who made Adam and Eve and the whole world, save and guard Gerard and all his company. I bring you a thousand greetings and blessings from Charlemagne, King of France, who sends to you to inform you that King Anglant and his son Almont, with thirty-two crowned kings, have crossed the sea, arrived in Italy, in Apulia and Calabria, and taken the city of Reggio Calabria. Their numbers are so great that Charles has not the power to oppose them except with the aid of your person and your dominion. Therefore he prays you to march together with him to Aspramont to oppose King Anglant and King Almont. All his hopes repose in you. Therefore come to his support and bear yourself like a valiant lord.”

When Gerard heard Turpin's words, he waxed wondrous wrath and proud and began to speak: "You son of a whore, how do you dare mention, in my presence, a man like him, the son of a puny dwarf, who cannot even compare with his father? Were it not that you are in a degree my kinsman, I would have your tongue torn from your throat. If Charles wants to do battle, what need has he to go to Aspramont? For I, with my army, will pitch my camp in France, and he'll have enough battle with me; but perhaps he has no mind to fight me." Turpin said: "O Gerard, you threaten and carp at Charlemagne, but if you saw him in arms in the field, you would not have the daring to speak against him, and you would make him laugh to hear you speak. You do evil to abuse so noble a lord." Then Gerard seized a knife from the table and angrily flung it at Turpin, hoping to strike his breast. But Turpin ducked and the knife missed him and stuck in the wall. Then Turpin said: "Ah, you villain!" and put his hand to his waist, thinking in his anger to grasp his sword. But, not finding it there, he said to Gerard: "Gerard, you have done evil to move your hands to try to kill me. If death does not take me, I will some day make you remember what you have tried to do to me. If I return to my lord, whom not even Balant, the messenger of King Anglant, could threaten sufficiently to trouble him—and you have tried to wound with your knife not a Saracen, but a holy archbishop, backed by the sacraments of God—I shall tell him what you have done to me. He will leave you neither city nor castle. Also I shall accuse you to the Holy Father, who will excommunicate you by the Cross." Gerard replied: "Sir Archbishop, there are four cities in Christendom which cannot be constrained: one is Constantinople, another is Rome, the third is this city, and the fourth is Toulouse. I therefore fear neither Charles nor the Pope of Rome. I shall have no need to go to the Vatican to get priests to say masses. The lands I hold are all my own, and I care no whit for either Pope or Emperor." Then Turpin said: "Tell me then: from whom do you hold these lands?" Gerard replied: "From Almighty God and none other." Turpin replied: "If that

is so, you should defend the Christian faith against King Anglant who is destroying it. But what answer to you want me to report to my lord. Will you come to Aspramont against King Anglant or not?" Then Gerard made no answer, and Turpin grew sad thereat and said: "O Gerard, know for certain that, if you do not come to Aspramont, you needs will shortly have a master, for two reasons: first, if King Anglant defeats Charles, you will not be able to endure against him; and second, if Charles returns victorious, all Christians will anathematize you as a perfidious Saracen." Gerard said: "Archbishop, you have made me so angry that, were you not my kinsman, by my faith, I would have you hanged by your throat. Get you hence." And he grew very red in the face, adding: "Go, return to the traitor Charles." At last Turpin said: "I will leave here, and you shall be the cause of making widows of a hundred thousand women and orphans of their children. God and my lord Charlemagne will make you pay for it! From this day forth, call me nothing if not your enemy." Saying so, he turned on his heels and left the hall. At this, Lord Clare and Lord Bussy tried to do honor to him; however, Turpin would accept nothing in that court, but mounted his horse and left Vienne with his retinue.

27

Turpin rode day after day until he reached Orleans and found assembled there Frenchmen and Flemings, Hungarians and Germans, Picards, Frosonians, Gascons and Provençals, and men of every land--kings and dukes and counts and great lords. He straightway proceeded to Paris, and found that King Charles had already left and troops from every country were following him. Turpin did not rest at Paris but went directly to Charlemagne. When he reached him and dismounted at his tent, he found Charlemagne with his guard three thousand knights and countless other lords in attendance on every side. When Charles saw Turpin, he asked him: "What will Gerard do? Will he come to Aspramont?" Turpin answered, "May God protect you from his hands, my lord! He is the greatest and worst enemy that you have," and recounted to him his entire embassy. King Charles

said: "If God gives me victory, verily at my return I shall not be subject to any lord on earth, nor shall I have any peer among Christians except the Pope of Rome. Then shall he see whether all Christian lords should not be subject to the Emperor, and whether Gerard's pride shall be of more avail than the judgment of the France and of all other Christians." And he rode forth, passed through Lombardy, and came by way of Tuscany to Rome.

28

Let us leave Charlemagne in Rome and turn to young Roland and Otho and Berlingher, who had been left in prison at Lyon, and who had already heard from their guardians how Charles had left Paris and was going to Aspramont and first to Rome. One morning they saw King Solomon passing by Lyon with eight thousand knights, riding at Charles's rear towards Rome. While the four youths were imprisoned in that tower, they recognized King Solomon's banners. Young Roland said: "By my faith: those troops are following Charles to Aspramont, and we are detained in prison. But if I were able to escape from this prison, I too would go there." Astolph replied: "Why then don't we overpower our guard and flee?" And Otho and Berlingher said so likewise. They agreed to steal a table knife and to pry off some of the beams that buttressed their tower and to carve a club for each of them. After they had asked for their meal and the servant asked for the knife, they said that he had not given them one. That day they fashioned a club for each of them and in the evening, when they asked for their food and the servant entered, young Roland struck him on the head, and so did the others, and they slew him and fled the city. All day long and through the following night they traveled, so that they caught up with King Solomon's troop. Without being recognized, young Roland engaged a Breton lad to carry his helmet, lance and shield, and the others did likewise, but, after crossing the Alps and reaching Lombardy, they were recognized and presented to King Solomon of Brittany. He, when they stood before him, spoke harsh words to them to inspire them with fear, and then said that he intended to send them back. Then Astolph said: "Why not hang

young Roland, who was the first to attack the guard.” “And you were the second,” young Orlando added. Solomon said: “I have decided to send you to Lyon; or would you prefer Paris?” Young Roland answered: “Faith, if I could, I would escape and come with the others to Aspramont.” Solomon said: “Ah, squint-eye! Well do I see that if I sent you back, you would not go. But I will send you to Charles, who will have you hanged.” Saying so, he had them well horsed, commanded a hundred knights to keep them under close guard, and had them lodged in his own tent. When he reached Charlemagne, so as not to be under suspicion, he surrendered the four youngsters to him. Charlemagne took their coming very ill, threatening them exceedingly. But when he spoke of sending them back, young Roland said he would escape. Thereupon Charlemagne decided to keep him by his side, so that he might kill Almont with his club. Thus it was that their coming was the work of God. So, as Charlemagne entered Rome, there was great feasting and joy throughout Italy for Charlemagne’s succor. He remained in Rome for five days, and on the sixth desired to hear mass with the Holy Father. He made rich offerings and made a bequest of a hundred ounces of gold and a rich altarpiece. Having heard mass, he mounted and rode out toward Calabria. At Rome there was a great gathering of Roman cavalry and infantry, and of huge crowds who had come for the salvation of their souls. At this, Charlemagne was much comforted, who saw that the Christians were more eager than might be believed; and he saw great help arriving from every direction. Charles was moved to tears when he saw such fair multitudes ready for death. Nonetheless he dubbed many knights from foreign lands during that voyage, who had come of their own will to lend aid to the Christian faith.

29

At Charlemagne’s arrival in the Aspramont mountains, our author takes leave of him and returns to Duke Gerard of the Thicket, who, fired by wrath and full of wicked thoughts, sent for all his subject lords after Turpin’s departure. When they stood before him, assembled in council in the great hall,

with his wife Ermeline by him (he had his grandson Clare and Arnaut and Rainier to his right, and to his left Duchess Ermeline with Lord Clare's brother Bussy and his sons Guiscard and Miles, with all the other barons gathered around), he spoke these words: "My lords, Charles has sent for help from me as though I were a vassal of his. The time has come for my revenge. This is why I have sent for you." Then he called his grandsons and sons and said to them: "Those possessions which we hold we hold neither from the Pope nor from the Emperor, but from God alone. Charles holds the kingdom of France like a tyrant and a usurper and a thief. It is therefore my will that our men should seize the whole realm of France." When his lady heard him speak these words, she would let him say no more, but exclaimed: "Oh my lord, I thought you had convened these nobles to go in help of the Christian religion. What words are these that you are speaking?" Gerard replied: "I would sooner die than go in aid of Charles. But let him fight and kill Saracens. What I want to do is ride into the realm of France, burning and destroying. Let us take the kingdom of France from Charles."

30

Then the duchess rose to her feet, full of confidence for having borne four sons and beloved by all, and turning to Gerard spoke in this fashion: "My dear Duke Gerard, when will you mend your sinful ways? Do you not remember when you had Duke Helenor in prison while you were in pursuit of his two sons, and you caused him to be slain, blaming his sons so that they became as outlaws in the world? Others hold their territory on whom you bestowed it. How will God ever pardon this sin in you if now what there is need you do not go into combat for love of Him? And if they defeat Charles, what defense can you make against King Anglant? And if Charles is victorious and returns, do you think to rest in peace? For all Christians will be your enemies. For the love of God, do not commit such folly, so that God may not grow angry with you and our children. Oh Gerard, how many sins weigh down your person! Do you not remember the year when you took me to wife,

when I was thirty years old and you had the Duke of Zelonia hanged and his two sons beheaded and did likewise to two other sons of his? And those men have their territory to whom you bestowed it. And you never confessed it. Now tell me: when will you repent and mend your ways? Never, it seems to me, so much has the demon of Hell prevailed upon you. Will you not remember your ancestry, none of whom was ever a traitor? You were the good Duke Guerrin's son, who was Sinibald's son, and he was Bevis of Hampton's. Do you not know that all creatures obey Charlemagne, since God has ordained that there be one emperor in command of the Christian religion, to defend it from the hands of the Saracen dogs, who are now coming to destroy it, along with all of you men here, and you yourself and your children?" Gerard said: "I have sworn by the sacrament, and therefore I will not go." When the lady heard this, she said: "I will return to my own country, which my father has left me, and which is mine by ownership, not by dowry. I shall raise a force of five thousand knights and go, for the salvation of my soul, to Aspramont with Charles to defend the Christian faith. If any of my sons will follow me, he shall be heir to my patrimony." Then Gerard proclaimed an end of the council, and every man left his court for the day. On the following knight, the Duchess slept with Duke Gerard, and so greatly implored him with tears and sighs that Duke Gerard, conquered by her tears, promised to go to Aspramont against King Anglant, though not with King Charles. Yet would he send two of his sons to Charles, to be dubbed knights. And in the morning, recalling his council, he went to the hall before his assembled barons.

31

When Duke Gerard had arrived in the hall, he addressed all his barons, saying: "The evening's anger should be checked till morning. As for me, I will say this: considering the peril in which we stand, it behooves us to go to Aspramont in aid of our emperor. For, if he were driven from the field, all our lands and our women and our children would be enslaved by the Saracens, a thing displeasing to

God. Therefore I desire a third of you to remain, and the other two thirds to go with me. Since time is short, let each man provide himself and return promptly. I assure all of you that at my return I will give such proper payment as will be merited, for I shall see then what man I should reward.”

The he gave them all leave to go, and in a few days they returned to court with countless followers, so that thirty-thousand knights were found with Duke Gerard. He took fifteen thousand of these to accompany him, sent another five thousand with his two sons to Charles to be knighted; and left ten-thousand to guard his lands. When he had all his lords before him, he called his grandsons, Lord Clare and Lord Bussy, and dubbed them knights with his own hands, giving them armor and horses, and endowing them with their lands. To Lord Clare he gave seven cities in Germany in his possession, as well as nearly a hundred castles, and created him Duke. And he made him swear to true knighthood, according to the laws of chivalry, to rescue and aid widows and orphans, and ever to rescue and aid virtuous men, and to spread the Christian faith, and to root out false and evil and vicious men, and Lord Clare swore to all this. Then he called his brother Bussy, girt on his sword, and dubbed him knight, and after his brother endowed him in this manner: first he gave his father’s sword to him, and then four cities (they were Longodania, Gozenisi, Osterena and Navaretta), and then a gentle bride, whose name was Diazena. (There was later a great quarrel over her between Bussy and the Duke of Lorraine, whom Bussy slew in Paris, so that Charlemagne’s scepter was bloodied by the murder.) Gerard bestowed armor and horses upon him. Then he called Rainier and Arnaut, knighted them, and commanded that Guiscard and Miles should remain with their mother Ermeline, and that the duchess should take them to Charles, to be knighted and endowed with domains. To Rainier he gave Lausanne and Auvergne, and to Arnaut he gave Bellandes on the Rhone. Then, having order his wife to take these other two youngsters, he went on his way with his fifteen thousand, and reached Tuscany four days after Charles. Then, on the fifth day after Charles’s arrival in Rome, Gerard passed along the Tuscan shore, not stopping in Rome, and arrived in

Aspramont a day before Charles. Later he sent his wife and his sons—that is Guiscard and Miles—with an escort of five thousand back from the camp, as the story will recount in due course.

Namo's Embassy to Anglant

32-33: *Charlemagne Arrives in Aspramont* [summary]

On the sixth day after his arrival in Rome, Charlemagne began moving his army toward Aspramont. His commanders included six crowned kings and many dukes and counts. Among the commanders of his vanguard of sixty-thousand men were Fulk, Seneschal of France and the queen's nephew, as well as Ambuin, Bernard, Duke Angelin, Solomon, Otho, Sanguin, Huon the Small, Gilfroy of Anjou and Quentin the Short. His bodyguard included the Duke of Tarascon, Druon of Auvergne, Arnaut of Vendome, Joncar of Nevers and Samson of Piron. His rear-guard of thirty-thousand knights was led by the kings of Noalta and Berbanço as well as six counts. In the main body of the army rode Miles of Angrant, Amon of Dordogne, Bevis of Agrimont, King Otho of England, Namu of Bavaria, Ogier the Dane, the Marquis Berlingher, Richier, son of Duke Rinaldo of Pavia, the King of Pavia, King Philip of Hungary, Ganelon and Gryphon. A finer host of Christian knights was never seen. As the approached Aspramont, astonished at the great height of the mountains, they met many Christians fleeing from Almont's murderous Saracens. Charles reassured them and they agreed to act as his guides through the hostile territory.

The army arrived at a river running between two mountains and made camp there, while the vanguard moved to the entry of the valley. Charles pitched his pavilion near a fountain and assembled his council of war, asking them to choose an envoy to be dispatched to Anglant. Ogier the Dane, Falco the Seneschal, Gilfroy Graymantle, and Langoin of Gascony all offered to go, but Charles refused them since they seemed too valuable to risk. At last Richier, a young knight of Pavia who had been raised in the court of Namu of Bavaria, rose to his feet, saying: "Sire, if you want a poor knight, I am he; yet I am nobly born, for my father was a duke." Charles accepted his offer. After the emperor had drawn up his letter to Anglant, Richier returned to take it from him and receive his blessing. But then Namu of Bavaria interfered.

Namu's Embassy to Anglant

34: Namu at Council

34

Duke Namu rose to his feet and said: "O sacred Emperor, you have been ill advised, for I know Richier and I do not believe that there is in this whole army a better lance than his, nor a more valorous squire. He should be cherished, and, if you act by my advice, this embassy should not be performed by him." When Charles heard him, he said: "Sir Duke, I am pleased to be advised by

you. Bethink yourself of whom we should send instead.” Then Duke Namor replied: “I know no man who has rendered you better service than I, and who might be better qualified than I for this embassy.” Charles cried out: “Dear Duke, don’t think of it. For if we should lose you, we will never get back to France. I would rather lose half this army than your person.” Duke Namor replied: “By God’s grace I shall go and return safe and sound. I am not yet so old as to be unable to ride and to perform feats of arms. What man can do better than lies in his power? Your crown and my own person have ever been the same cause for me. You wear the crown, and I have ever been a master like you and even more than you, thanks to God’s goodness and your grace.” Charles sobbed, greatly moved, and shed some tears. Then Richier said: “My Lord Emperor, Namor has nourished me at his court from my earliest childhood. I shall never carry a herald’s baton against his wishes.” Then Charles blessed him and said: “You do well, my son, and you shall not lose your reward.” Then Duke Namor took up the letter, and Charles, weeping, gave him his blessing, saying: “Have no worry about the powers of your embassy, for whatever you shall decide will be obeyed by me and all the others,” and dismissed him. Namor took his leave of all the rest and there was none who did not weep for fear of losing him. The duke returned to his tent, armed, mounted his good steed Morel, and at his departure all the nobles and the entire army wept and commended him to God and prayed for his safety.

Namor’s Journey

35

Duke Namor rode toward Aspramont, and he went alone, without companions, so as not to seem more cowardly than Balant, who had come to Paris with only one horse. All day long he did nothing but ascend slopes of extreme steepness. He passed wide valleys and at last lost the right

way, for toward evening the weather grew troubled and a heavy rainfall descended on his back, followed by a terrible burst of hail. All the mountains were covered with snow, and the rain and hail melted the snow, so that the roads were awash with water. Toward evening, the Duke arrived at a stream, and was unable to cross it because of the great downpour. He rode toward a great valley; when he arrived there, the river seemed somewhat broader, so that he set about fording it. The water was so deep that his horse had to swim, and often both the horse and the duke went under. Finally they reached the shore, dripping in streams. He dismounted and went on foot, arguing with himself and often remembering Charles. His horse trembled all over, and it continued to rain. The duke found a high, overhanging cliff, and he retired into a cavern to escape the rain. He did not stay long, for the rush of water from above descended so that he had to leave that place. Seeing that his horse was shaking all over, he feared it would perish of cold, he mounted it, commended himself to God, and began once again to ascend the mountainside. It cannot be told what hardship he suffered, and because he had lost his way, he did not see the tower-fortress that Almont had erected. Riding along a path that he discovered, he arrived beneath a cavern in a great mountain cliff and there lodged for the night. Let every man imagine what rest and comfort he found there! In the morning he found a valley where the road was all flooded, since the rocks that had been dislodged from the mountain on either side had dammed up the valley's outlet and made a little lake. The duke needs had to climb with great effort toward the mountain's top. The effort and the slipperiness nearly made him faint away. At last he tied up his horse in a small copse of trees, and it was hidden under its branches. But the duke moved away from the trees because of the water that dripping from them. Then a huge bird, driven by hunger, struck him and, as a goshawk carries off a partridge, so that bird flew off with him. But being unable to lift him long, because of the weight of his armor, it flew from that mountain top to another and there put down the duke at its feet. By the duke's guess it had carried him some four hundred steps. After it had put him down, it came

through the air to seize him again. The duke pulled his sword and cut off its foot immediately near the knee. The bird, feeling the pain, flew away and the duke took that claw and returned to his horse. He carried that claw with him all day. Many men say that this bird was a gryphon, because the claw is to this very day preserved in the church of Saint-Denis near Paris. Riding all day, he lodged for the night in another cave, and said: "If my lord has to cross these mountains with his army, Anglant can rest secure." All that night he was unable to sleep. His horse was faint with hunger, and he grew more concerned for his horse than for himself. In that cavern where he spent the night a she-bear had given birth to cubs, and all night long she paced about crying and roaring. Namo commended himself to God, afraid of the beasts because the darkness of the place in which he lay, and all night he had enough to do tending his Morel, whose teeth were chattering because of the cold. In the morning, the bear attacked, and it was larger than a great ox. The duke was frightened by it. The bear reared upon its hind legs, then the duke with sword in hand assailed it and cut off one of its paws, so that it ran away roaring loudly. At this, two other bears assaulted the duke, and he killed one of them and the other fled. The duke took the bear's paw and the gryphon's and hid them in a large cave, in order to find them again at his return and to bring them to Charles. But when he came back, he did not take the same way. Yet were these paws found later by some Christian folk and presented to Charles, so that all the duke had said was proven to be true. Now the duke made his way through Calabria toward Reggio.

36

Duke Namo was riding through Calabria and soon the city of Reggio came in view and he saw the tents and the ships by the Lighthouse of Messina, and countless banners and pennants. It seemed like such a multitude that he thought no greater could be found anywhere in the world. They were just holding a festival in honor of Mahomet, and in the course of it, the host cried out at frequent

intervals, so that the echoes filled earth and sky and sea. At this Namo said, “Go help me, for I greatly fear I shall never return to my lord.” He prayed to God to defend the Christian people and to destroy those Saracen dogs. They were holding that feast in honor of their gods for having safely landed in Italia and escaped the dangers of the sea. Note that on that day a year had passed since their arrival in Italy, and the next year had already begun, since they needed nine months to capture the city of Reggio.

As the sage Duke was about to descend the slopes of Aspramont, he saw the Lighthouse, the ships, the tents, the banners, and the huge multitudes. He cursed King Anglant then for having gathered so many armed men and ships. Among the latter he saw an enormous vessel that seemed completely fashioned of gold, so that it shone in the sun. This was the ship that had brought King Anglant and his queen. Its captain was a count named Galerant of Dalmatia. (King Anglant had promised to crown him king after conquering France and Germany.)

Nearby there was a similar ship that transported the four idols of massive gold, that is Mahomet, Termagant, Apollyon and Jupiter, in whom King Anglant reposed all his hope. Until then, King Anglant had usually visited them aboard this ship; but when he later had a great golden Mahound carried to the city of Reggio, and placed in one of Duke Ramald’s chapels, he no longer went to worship aboard the ship. King Almont also had the four massive idols themselves carried to Aspramont, where he eventually lost them, as the story will relate. The two kings who held Jerusalem, Moadant and Moadas, King of Judea and Syria, were in charge of the idol that had been brought to Reggio.

There was at that time a great scarcity of bread and other victuals in the camp, wherefore King Almont took great trouble to send for camp provisions throughout Apulia and Calabria, and

dispatched many and commanded many to dispatch others, for he was well advised that these things were needful for his army.

37-38:**Gorant** [summary]

The Saracen spy, Subrin⁵⁵, who had been concealed at Charlemagne's camp, was just then returning to King Anglant. He reported that Charles himself was approaching with a fearfully large army. Anglant was secretly afraid at the news, but showed no outward sign of it. He assembled his nobles and addressed them as follows:

"My lords, we have come to conquer all Christendom. King Charles has arrived in Aspramont to bar our way. It is therefore my will that one of us ride out to discover the number and quality of these Christians." Ulien, Salatiel, Moadas, and Triamides declared themselves ready, but Anglant refused them all. At last Gorant, Balant's young son, offered to go, provided he be given the splendid white stallion that Jesuant had brought from India, and the great sword that his father Balant had taken from the giant Brunor. Gorant was King Anglant's seneschal and the queen's lover. His offer was accepted and he rode forth on his mission.

A Roadside Encounter

39

Gorant was riding toward Aspramont on his dappled white horse, in the best of cheer and in love, for the queen had bestowed a look of favor on him. He was rich, nobly-born and courteous, beautiful in face and attire, a good chess player, a brave fighter and a pleasant speaker. That is why the queen was in love with him. Riding toward the mountains, he arrived where Namo of Bavaria was coming down in the other direction.

When each saw the other, they drew closer and met. Then Duke Namo said: "God save you, sir knight!" and continued: "For heaven's sake, gentle sir, have pity on your horse; for if you manage him as you have done hitherto, you shall shortly ruin him on the rough roads of Aspramont."

Gorant replied: "Sir knight, are you a Christian? Or if not, of what race?" Duke Namo said: "What is it to you?" Said Gorant: "King Anglant has bidden me to inquire about it, and that is why I ask."

⁵⁵ Subrin: The original reads *Saladin*, surely a scribal error.

The Duke countered: “Who are you then? And what is your business here?” “By my faith,” said Gorant, “I say that you shall first tell me who you are and what your business is.” The Duke answered: “Know then that I am an envoy from Charlemagne, who has sent me to King Anglant to find out on what pretext he has attacked and wasted his lands, and to discover whether he has fled from hence or is waiting for battle; for indeed our people are much afraid that Anglant may have run away.”

Gorant’s answer was: “Well then, I am one of King Anglant’s men, and you shall find him in that great pavilion yonder.” He pointed it out with his finger before continuing, “He has not fled; rather, he is coming to look for your king.” Not pausing, he added with an evil grace: “It behooves you, false Christian, to let me have this horse of yours, so that I may give it to Almont, who is the best rider in the world. You must needs continue your journey from here on foot.” Duke Namor answered: “By my faith, you speak like a churl. Nonetheless, if you wait here until I have completed my embassy to King Anglant, I will give you the horse, and no sooner.” Gorant cried: “Faith, you shall not ride for one more pace on his back. Dismount at once!” Duke Namor said: “You speak villainy and not like a gentleman. Either wait until I have finished my embassy, or else give me your own dapple, and I will give you my black stallion. May God strike me dead if I yield him on any other terms, unless he be taken from me by force. But I scarcely think (please God!) that a single knight will force me to lose him.”

Namor in Reggio

40-42: Arrival [summary]

At this they both reached for their swords. In the fierce contest that followed, Gorant received a blow from Namor that left him half stunned. “Are all you Christians so strong,” he asked when he recovered. “I cannot tell you that,” Namor replied, “but perhaps you are not facing the least of them.” Namor was glad that he had not killed Gorant, for he feared that this would prevent him from accomplishing his mission. At last they agreed to defer their duel until both

had completed their assigned tasks. They exchanged oaths to return to the duel later and together rode back toward Reggio.

Along the way, Namor questioned Gorant about his mission. "I am sent to discover the strength of the Christian forces," Gorant said. "I can tell you that," Namor answered; "there are sixty thousand in our vanguard and a hundred thousand in our rear. The number of our center is greater than I can reckon. That is the truth and I swear on my honor to repeat it to Anglant." (In fact, the Christian center consisted of only a few Apulian and Calabrian troops. But Namor truly did not know how many these were, but allowed Gorant to understand that they were beyond count.) Before long, they reached Anglant's pavilion, where Gorant treated Namor with great honor and told the king of their encounter.

While a great number of Anglant's nobles gathered around, Namor, not waiting to be lodged for the night, Namor demanded to be heard at once. Anglant gave him leave and Namor asked him, with a smile: "King Anglant, have you sworn to destroy my lord Charles." "I have indeed," answered Anglant, "and I will make him die a cruel death." "You have had foolish council," said Namor; "now listen to me: There is One God in Three Persons. He made the sky, the earth, the planets, the stars, the fishes, the beasts, and the sun and moon. He bade the earth to be fruitful and fashioned man in His image and likeness. He sent the Flood and preserved Noah by means of the ark. In time, He assumed human form for the salvation of mankind, was crucified, and went back to His Father. His name was Jesus Christ of Nazareth, by Whose grace we are Christians. Charlemagne, King of France and Emperor of Rome, maintains these truths, along with all his vassal lords, united in subjection to the Holy Church of Rome. He will defeat you, you wicked king unworthy of your crown! He will utterly destroy you, you miscreant dog! I myself have vowed to bring him your head." At this he drew his sword and a hundred other swords leapt from their scabbards. Balant now intervened, saying: "Brave Christian, it would be a shame to slay you here. Give me your sword and put yourself in my safe-keeping." Namor saw that he had no choice and handed over his sword. Anglant was still determined to have Namor executed, but Balant said: "I spoke many a provoking word when I went on my embassy to Charles, and was treated honorably. Let not his messenger now be slain." Anglant relented and released Namor into Balant's keeping. Balant took him to his tent, had him disarm and sumptuously clothed. They then both returned to the king's pavilion and Namor, given full license to deliver his embassy, resumed as follows:

Namor's Defiance

43

"Hear me, King Anglant: my lord Charles sends word to you by me that you have been ill advised to attack his lands and to murder his subjects. He bids me ask whether you will await him on the field of battle or flee from this place. Be advised that the greatest fear of Christians is that you may run away. If Charles had consulted the wishes of his army, he would now be here himself. But Charles is most careful of the welfare of his people and does not wish them to tire themselves. Therefore he sends me to say to you that, if you await him, he would not desist from proving his worth against

you even if you offered him the whole world. If you await him, you shall fare like Goliath the Philistine against God's chosen people, and your own people shall fare like the people who followed Pharaoh into the Red Sea. Woe unto you, you pagans, who have set foot upon Italian soil to die, and who desire to fatten the mountain slopes of Aspramont with your blood! Far better would it be for you to save your souls, to undergo baptism, and to convert to faith in Christ. And you, King Anglant, let not avarice be your undoing. Remember that Roman named Crassus who came once to Palermo, and who had molten gold poured down his throat because he was possessed by so much avarice. Do not believe, in your arrogance, that you can overcome Charles. If you want treasure, turn Christian; Charles will give you treasure aplenty." Anglant answered: "I do not ask for treasure. I ask that he himself renounce his false creed and come to believe in Mahomet. Unless he does so, I will feed him to the dogs. He could not escape our hands even if he could fly." Duke Nammo replied, as if in jest: "King Anglant, God may put him in your reach soon enough! By my faith, you shall not see one month pass by before you see him come in arms against you. Then you can threaten him yourself. Charles is not a man to fear threats. When you see him coming, not a Saracen in your camp but will tremble with fear." These words greatly annoyed King Anglant, wherefore he sent for the messenger whom he had dispatched to France to spy out Charles' strength, whose name was Subrin the Whitehaired, and said to the Duke: "You think we are unaware of what Charles can do? I want you to see now whether we know or not."

44-50: The Embassy Concluded

When Subrin was brought in, he described what he had seen in France and dwelled upon Charles's chief weakness, the enmity of Gerard of the Thicket. He went on to suggest killing Nammo on the spot. At this Balant rose and swore to defend his guest. "Charles treated me with the honor due to an ambassador, no matter how much I threatened," he said; "shame on us if we maltreat his envoy." Anglant answered: "Let him deliver his message. I swear he shall not be harmed." Then Duke Nammo said: "Appoint the day of battle, and I vow that if you do not find Charles ready, I myself will surrender France and all Christendom." Anglant answered: "Look at the size of my forces. I have seven armies, of which the smallest contains a hundred thousand Saracens, enough to defeat you all. Let Charles surrender to me, for France belongs through my descent from Alexander the Great, son of Philip of Macedon." Nammo did not

answer this but said: "Here is a letter that fully declares the will of my liege. Take it and read." And the letter was read aloud in the presence of all the nobles. In it, Charles reaffirmed all that Namo had said, adding that he had come within three months time as promised, and that he now demanded battle. "Before the snow melts," he concluded, "we will come face to face at Reggio."

Namo again sought to dissuade Anglant from war, but in the end a place and day of battle was agreed. It was to take place on a field at the foot of the Aspramont mountains on the second day of November. (Later events, however, were to hasten the day.) Then Anglant once more dismissed Namo into Balant's custody.

While at supper, Balant told Namo of his intention to become a Christian when all was over; he could not do so now without treason, since he had sworn allegiance during Anglant's lifetime.

Later that evening, the queen sent for Namo. She greeted him graciously and invited him into her rich pavilion. There she seated him on a rich carpet and looked at him attentively, while a damsel played the harp and sang of the loves of Paris and Helen, and of Tristram and Iseult, "Are all the Christian knights," she asked, "as handsome as you?" "I cannot say," said he; "but surely there are some who are stronger and better looking." "Are you married?" she continued. He said he was not. Then she warmly pressed his hands and handed him a ring, saying: "Guard this well, for it has wondrous powers. I am giving it to you so that I can say, when I return home, that I have a Christian knight and lover. If I could believe that you loved me as much as I love you, your image would never leave my heart." He was much moved by this, and she gave him leave to go. Then she fainted, so much in love was she.

On the next morning, Balant offered Namo splendid gifts of treasure and horses, but he courteously refused them all. However, he accepted, as a gift for Charles, along with Balant's promise to be baptized, the splendid white steed that Gorant had ridden at their meeting, along with a silver saddle and caparisons of white silk and a little Moorish stable-boy. Balant and Namo rode out of camp with a splendid escort of four hundred knights. They ascended the Aspramont and were lodged that night in Almont's tower-fortress. (Almont himself was absent foraging) On the next day, Namo presented Balant with a little silver crucifix and hung it about his neck, saying: "While you wear this, no evil spirit can harm you." Balant accepted it and hid it under his shirt. They were already within sight of the Christian vanguard, when they said goodbye. Balant turned back and Namo rode on toward Charles's camp.

Namo was joyfully welcomed back by Charlemagne, who gratefully accepted the horse sent by Balant. Then Namo told him at length all that had befallen him, and counseled him to beware above all of Almont. He was the Saracens' best hope; if he could be killed, they would be panic-stricken. On the next day, Charles ordered his army in four ranks and the whole host began moving into the mountains. At day's end, they encamped by a river one league's distance from Almont's tower-fort. All around them, the countryside lay devastated, and all its people had either fled or been killed. Charles wept to see it.

Gerard of the Thicket in Aspramont

A Raid on Almont's Baggage Train

After camp had been made, ten thousand armed knights set out on the following night to reconnoiter the Saracen enemy. The commanders who went forth were the following: Huon the Less, Marquis Berlingher, Gilfroy Graymantle, the vassal Richier, the lord of Anjou, Aguentin of Normandy, and several others. They crossed a mountain range and, as they drew close to the tower fortress, kept to its left and lay on guard.

That morning Almont was returning toward the tower. He had gone pillaging throughout Calabria, razing many castles, cutting off the many men's heads, and many women's breasts. He was now turning back toward the tower with a great booty of cattle, captives, and wealth. When the watch grew aware of his coming, they made ready to attack him.

Then Huon spoke, saying: "My lords, God has granted our wish." Almont had with him four idols of solid gold and his royal banners, as well as many Christian who had renounced their faith to avoid death. Those ten thousand heard of his coming, and Huon was encouraged by the news. (They had it from some Christians who had escaped from those Saracens.) Huon, making it known to all his companions and giving them good cheer, posted lookouts on the hill tops. When the sun rose, a great baggage train appeared in a valley between some mountains. It held the booty of supplies that Almont had foraged.

Huon now made eight hundred bowmen sally out, and these captured the entire train. It was undefended because the three thousand archers that guarded it, suspecting nothing, had ridden ahead, and most of them were shooting only for sport. So the eight hundred took the whole train.

At last the alarm was sounded among the Saracens and their archers cried out with one voice and assailed those eight hundred. But a band of some five hundred Christian knights bore down upon

them and made great slaughter of these Saracen archers, until the train could be brought to safety in the mountains where the Christians would not lose it.

52

While these things were happening and the baggage train was brought to safety, King Almont who rode at the rear, on an ambling mule, with a goshawk on his wrist, reached a hilltop and was about to let fly his goshawk because some of his dogs had caught the scent of partridges. As Almont turned down into a valley, he caught sight of the Charles' tents and banners some two leagues toward the valley's end. Almont called out to Sinagon and said: "By my faith, these are not our people!" Even as he was pointing at that gathering, he heard the noise of the attack on his own men.

At this, Almont handed his goshawk to a squire and turned sown another valley whence the noise was coming. He saw his men half out of their mind with panic, and one of them told him: "Our baggage train is lost." Amont dismounted from his mule, armed and leapt upon a great stallion. This was not, however, his superb horse Briador, for he had left him at the tower so as not to ruin him on the mountain terrain.

While he was riding down into the vale, he saw Marquis Berlingher with two thousand knights come into view. Beholding so many excellent weapons, so many pennants, so many handsome steeds, and seeing the Marquis so well appointed that his armor blazed in the light, he called one of his interpreters (his name was Butran, and said to him: "Hurry to that troop that is descending from yonder hill, and tell that knight who is so well armed to come before and to yield me that armor and that horse, and that I will make him a rich man if he renounces his God. That way he need not expect death at my hands. For if I defeat him, I will cut off the heads of all his men."

Butran rode off while Almont was saying, "Praised by the divine Mahomet, who has given me more than I prayed for. Mahomet has destined all these arms for me!" (He meant the arms of the Christians.) When Butran came up to Marquis Berlingher, he asked if he might speak freely, and was given assurances. Then Butran said: "Sir knight, King Almont sends me to you to bid you come to him at once, to surrender your arms and horse. If not, have no doubt that he will kill you, for though Almont scorns to do battle with you, he is determined to bestow all your arms upon his princes and his king." The Marquis replied: "I know by report that he is the most valiant man of your faith, but tell him that our arms are not to be had except at sword point. Tell him this also: it *his* wealth and *his* head that we are determined to present to our own King Charles of France."

53-56: **A Skirmish** [summary]

Battle was joined. Almont drew Durandel from its scabbard and began a tremendous slaughter of the outnumbered Christians. But Berlingher rallied them until they penetrated almost to Almont's banners, which were guarded by Lampal's son Hector. Meanwhile, Huon heard the noise of the battle and, with three thousand knights under Aguentin, Gilfroy and other great nobles, sped to Berlingher's aid. The Christians fought so gallantly that even Almont was astonished, saying: "These are not like the men of Syria or India. Balant has spoken truly of them. What need has King Anglant of this realm? If all the other Christians are of such mettle, we shall never see Africa again. We have done ill to come to this country!"

Almont nonetheless rushed furiously into the fight, killing the Viscount of Belgium and four other great knights, yet his men grew more and more frightened, especially after Huon's arrival. Seeing his banners endangered, Almont rode toward them, cutting down three more great Christian champions along the way.

The commander of the Christian vanguard, Solomon of Brittany, now heard of the encounter and dispatched ten thousand knights toward it, while from another direction Richier brought in his troops and aids Huon's attack on the Saracen banner guard. Among them were a troop of Amazons led by Thoas. Huon overthrew and killed him, while Richier and the Marquis Berlingher did the same to Hector.

When he saw his Saracens beginning to panic, Almont threw himself into battle like a desperate man. Meanwhile Richier and his companions saw the great cart that carried the idols of Mahomet, Termagant, Jupiter and Apollyon, and overwhelmed and massacred the pagans who guarded it. Seeing that all was lost, Almont turned to flight. He was coming to a river bank when a troop from his tower fortress rode up to assist him, but it was too late; they fled in panic when Richier and Huon came in view. Almont, cornered with the river behind him, forced his horse to leap into the rushing waves. Richier, seeing him swimming there, hurled his lance, and inflicted a ghastly wound on Almont's chest. Had his aimed been aimed a little lower, Anglant would have lost a son then and there.

The Christians were now masters of the field. Far from it, the dispirited Saracens dragged the wounded Almont from the stream and brought him back to the fortress. He cursed them for their faint courage and for the loss of the sacred images. That night, between the pain of his wound and his shame at losing the idols, he slept little.

The Christians returned to camp with the captured treasure. In the morning they brought the four golden idols and all the captured riches as a gift to Charles. The king wept for joy and thanked God for the victory. Then, looking at the idols and all the other wealth, he said: "My brothers and sons, it would displease God if I were so avaricious as to claim all this gold. But let you, who have shed your blood for it, divide it among you." He only retained the enemy banners, but commanded that the idols be carried through the camp, kicked and dragged through the mud, and spat upon by all the whores of the army, and then broken up and molten, the gold to be shared by the Christian knights, along with the other captured treasure. And so it was done, to delight the Christians and to spite the Saracens.

The Capture of Almont's Tower

57

Here our author returns to Duke Gerard of the Thicket, who had crossed the Italian sea to Rome and entered Apulia. He found guides who led him into Aspramont in a manner that King Charles was unaware of his coming. He learned how King Almont had overrun all Calabria and sought an encounter with him, following for several days upon his traces. When he learned that he had returned to the tower-fortress that he had built in Aspramont, Gerard followed him there. Gerard had fifteen thousand knights with him, as well his two sons and two of his nephews.

When Gerard was three leagues from the tower, he was told how close he was to Almont's fort; he therefore commanded to pitch camp at nightfall. (This was the evening of the same day when Almont had been defeated.) He divided his battle order in three divisions. The first, with a vanguard of two thousand, he gave to his son Arnaut and commanded him, at daybreak the next morning, to hasten toward the fort to draw out the enemy. At the same time he put the second division under the command of Rainier, his oldest son, and of Miles of Zamora, with eight thousand knights, and bade them to position in an ambush near the fort and to surround the enemy, if they could, and to put them all to the sword. "And if you see many folk issuing against you, draw back

gradually while continuing battle, drawing them as far away from the fort as you can. Take care that you do not fail to perform my commands, for, by my faith, I will have any man who falls short hanged as a traitor. But if my plan succeeds, you will all be rich. I reserve nothing for myself but the walls of the castle; all the rest shall be yours. Consider that Charles is only two leagues away from here. When he hears that we have captured Almont's tower, all the other Frenchmen will feel shamed, and the whole glory of the victory will be bestowed upon us."

Then he summoned his two nephews, Lord Clare and Bussy and said to them: "You, with five thousand knights, shall come with me. Before daybreak, we shall go to post ourselves in ambush on the other side of the fort, for I am informed that there is a broad, heavily forested valley there. I have good guides to show us the way."

So they set out. Two miles from the fort, with these five thousand, he crossed a river and entered a valley full of trees. The way into it was so difficult that they had to dismount and leave their horses at the foot of the hill where the tower stood, with a guard of a thousand knights and some local guides, who kept them on short bridles, so that they would make no noise. Then they climbed uphill through some thickets of thorns, until they were nearly a stone's throw from the circuit of the walls. There they awaited the coming of day. Directly across from them stood a hill where Gerard had stationed three men with three red shields, so that, as soon as they should see the whole garrison issuing from the fort, they would signal with these shields. The knights who came with Gerard cursed the difficulty of the passage, for all their surcoats were ripped in the course of it.

58

At sunrise in the morning, Almont rose and, as soon as he was dressed, went into the courtyard. The horn from the top the tower sounded the alarm and all Almont's men ran to arms. There was a

great noise near the circuit of the walls: so many weapons, so many banners, so many horses, so many lances and shields and helmets resounded that it seemed the world was coming to an end. This was Arnaut who had hurried up to the bridge across the river and had slain a number of Saracens.

Then Almont in a rage donned his armor and mounted on horseback with ten thousand Saracens. As soon as he had issued from the fortress, there were more than ten million who came out with him and they confronted Arnaut. He engaged them in a great battle and thrice pushed them all the way back to the river, but when the others saw such a huge crowd, they retreated. Then Rainier and Miles surrounded them and would soon all have been slain, had not Almont come to their aid.

Almont entered the battle, slaying huge numbers. Then the Christians were not able to proceed as they earlier believed they could, but, confronted with Almont, united in a single force. The Saracens did likewise. Arnaut, Rainier and Miles engaged in furious combat and forced the Saracens back toward the stream. Almont, seeing that troop, began to cry out to those inside the tower to join the battle. Then the entire garrison issued forth with banners spread. Fifty thousand Saracens confronted Ten thousand Christians. The latter began to yield ground, retreating toward the bridge as they had been ordered. There, about two miles from the tower, Almont engaged them when his men saw the pennants and banners of the Christians. At this point the Christians lost four hundred knights, and Almont's daring and wrath made them doubt the outcome. He displayed such force, that no armor could withstand his sword. All his men ran up at the noise, believing that the Christians had been routed and abandoning the tower so that no more than thirty men remained inside.

Then those who had been posted on the hillock displayed their three red shields, so that Gerard's brigade saw them and with lowered lances ascended toward the tower. Lord Clare was hastening in front of them all and, arriving at the well at which these people drew water, found two Saracens with pails to carry water and slew them both. Lord Clare and his brother Lord Bussy arrived at a run by a little gate from which people went to the well. They stopped there for a moment until Gerard and many others caught up with them, and then rushed inside. Some of those who had remained there saw them and began to cry out, but their cries were of little avail. Lord Clare ran up into the tower hall, where he found twenty armed men blocking his path. But he and his brother Bussy took courage and put them all to the sword, and thus took possession of the entire fortress. Gerard had his own banner raised atop the tower, that is a golden gryphon in a field of silver, and they threw Almont's ensigns to the ground. Arnaut and Rainier saw this, and so did the Saracens, who were very grieved by the sight, especially Almont and Sinagon and the others, as well as Danebrun, the queen's brother.

Almont called out to them and, in sorrow, pointed at Gerard's insignia atop the tower, complaining bitterly: "Fortune is beginning to strike at me and has turned against me. Woe is me!" (said Almont), "Mohammed has abandoned me," and grieved bitterly with his uncle Danebrun.

Then, full of rage, he grasped his sword with both hands and entered battle like a dragon. He struck Miles, son of Bernard of Zamora, and cleft his head in twain, and he slew Hewett of Belland and Arcaud of Anjou, the son of Count Germinius.

When Rainier saw him inflict so much damage, he took up a lance and ran at Almont, bitterly wounding him, and broke the lance on his back. Almont was holding Durandel in both hands and made to strike Rainier upon the helmet, but he was riding so fast that he struck a little behind the

saddle, cutting the horse in two. Had he been able to strike another blow, Oliver and Alda would have been fatherless. There was a great fight at Rainier's rescue, in which sixty Christian knights were slain, but by sheer force they provided him with another horse.

The Christians praised Almont greatly for his knightly prowess. They said that, if Almont were a Christian, there would be no braver fighter in all of France. Almont was much grieved by Rainier's rescue and by the loss of his tower. He stood firm in the middle of the Christian field, and (may God confound him for it!) made a great massacre of Christian knights. No matter where he struck, he opened the ranks of the Christian knights, like a lion among lesser beasts. Whoever found himself faced with him avoided him. Nonetheless his own men were fleeing everywhere through the mountains and the plains.

Then Almont left the battle and fled toward Calabria. Rejoined by many of his men, he had the horn sounded to summon his uncle Danebrun. At that sound, some turned back for shame and boldly resumed battle,, so that the Christians received much harm and would have fared worse, had not Gerard, once in possession of the tower, commanded Lord Clare and Lord Bussy at once to return to their horses, accompanied by two thousand mounted knights. There were still a thousand horses left, so that three thousand knights mounted and crossed the river.

Then was Almont in great danger. Hearing the noise, he turned back toward the river, sheathed his sword and grasped a lance. He stormed toward those three thousand and, when he encountered Lord Clare, exchanged blows with him. Lord Clare nearly fell down, but Almont was thrown to the ground from his horse, but before Lord Clare could ride back toward him, remounted and took flight with his men, for he was aware of the danger in delay. The mountains and plains resounded with cries. Ah, what numbers of horses went galloping riderless up and down, fleeing in every

direction! Almont descended into a very narrow valley with five thousand of his knights, so that the Christians abandoned the pursuit and turned back. They gained great wealth from the pagan treasury, and then they came to lodge in the tower with Gerard, who was much delighted by the victory he had won, crying shame on Charles and his followers.

BOOK THREE: *ROLAND*

Charlemagne and Gerard Reconciled

Almont's Grief

1

Next, in his third book, our author tells how king Almont during his retreat encamped with five thousand Saracens on the summit of a hill, for his greater safety, without tents and with few companions, unprovided with luggage and supplies. He dismounted and roared like a lion. Doffing his helmet, he walked a little hither and thither and then sat down on a great rock, put one knee upon the other and rested his chin upon his arm and sighed. His men gathered in a circle around him and said: "Our lord, what shall we do now? Here there is nothing to live on. For God's sake, let us turn back to Reggio at your father's, who will avenge us."

Almont angrily replied: "O false men of mine, you recreant folk, I it by through your fault and by your cowardice that we have lost my father's four idols and my banners and my fortress tower. You used to say that you would first die in Africa rather than turn your backs, and yesterday morning fewer than ten thousand of Christian knights defeated a hundred thousand African knights. Ah, you cowards of little worth, you were wont to greatly curse Balant and to say he did not speak truly, and

now so few men have made you flee and die. Woe is me! How many in Africa will eat my bread and drink my wine, and I do not even have a little water! Oh you noble African damsels, who used to give me so much pleasure, you may now be sure never to see me again. And on top of it all, these men urge me to flee.” Then he said: “I would sooner suffer death than to return to my father without avenging the harm that I have had suffered from the Christians.” Having spoken these words, he summoned an interpreter of his, whose name was Butran.

2: *Almont Summons Help* [summary]

Almont dispatched Butran to Goras, instructing him to come with as many reinforcements as possible to come to his assistance, without, however, apprising Anglant of the situation. When the messenger arrived, Balant was present and secretly rejoiced that his predictions had come true. Goras set out, along with Balant, the Emir, Triamides, Mattafellon, Salatiel, Thoas, Cando, Moas, Lampal, Galerant, Margon, Asperant and many others to relieve Anglant. As Balant approached Aspramont, an advance guard of twenty thousand archers under Alibrun preceded him and caught up with Almont.

Preparations for Battle

3

From afar off, Almont saw the banners of his people advance. He mounted his steed and rode out to meet them. When he was seen, they all saluted him. After Balant and Gorant had ridden up, Almont said to Balant: “Your prediction about me has proven true.” Thereupon they exchanged many words, bemoaning King Almont’s bad fortune.

Meanwhile all the other kings and princes rode up with their bands and arrived where Almont was standing. He began to tell them of all the misfortunes that had befallen him, of the raids he had performed in Calabria, and of how he had gained much prey but was defeated and lost his four idols and was overcome, and how his horse had fallen beneath a spear thrust by the river, and how the Christians had overrun the tower on the preceding morning—“unsuspecting of their treachery, I lost

the tower to them”—and how they came by secret ways—“not even my hunting dogs could hear them come”—and how one of their knights had felled him in the middle of the field—“and therefore I sent for you, so that you may avenge me.”

Then they all cried out: “Even as you have spoken, so shall your revenge be accomplished. Death to Charles and his Christian followers!” Almont said: “Dearest brethren, how much sorrow I carry in my heart, considering that my father, King Anglant, sent me to this tower with a hundred thousand men. And of all the treasure that I brought with me, not enough is left me to feed a goshawk! My brave seneschal, Hector, son of Lampal, has been killed, and my banners have been lost, along with my four idols, Mahound and Termagant, Apollyon and Great Jupiter.”

Once more, all cried out: “Ride out, Almont, so that before the morrow is done, we may surrender Charles into your hands, and all your idols and banners.” And they said that they would deal worse with the Christians than Sampson with the Philistines, or Vespasian with the Jews, or Agamemnon and the other Greeks with the Trojans. Then Almont said: “The Christians are valiant men at arms, and the whole fault for the defeat was mine, since I did not listen to any man’s counsel, but insisted on following my own head. Badly have I fared. But I could not have suspected even a bird to have arrived from the place whence those came who deprived me of the tower that my father Anglant had me erect. All this has given me ample cause not to undertake anything without advice.”

Then he called Gorant and said to him: “Have my tent erected on this little hill, and I require that my banners remain here with a hundred thousand for your rear guard.” Thereupon he took ten thousand knights from the division of Amirant and Arcalia, and likewise from the third, the fourth and the fifth, so that in the end the army consisted of a hundred thousand. He put Margon and Aspernant in charge of this force, commanding them not to enter into battle unless he sent for

them, and admonishing each of them that this constituted the fortress and rallying place for the whole army. Then he ordered each to return to his banners, and to follow the orders that had been issued. Almont was filled with great good cheer and said to Balant: "When I feel myself seated on this horse, mounted in its saddle, I do not fear the whole world, for I am in possession of the best horse and the best sword." Balant replied: "Ah, my lord Almont, it shall soon be seen who has a good horse, and a good sword, and a good heart to perform feats of arms."

4

As soon as Almont had ordered his battle ranks, Balant began to move. They proceeded toward the tower, so that Gerard of the Thicket's people saw the dust rising and the banners. Gerard was soon apprised of the fact, and he at once summoned his barons and instructed them in how best to proceed. He had his entire force get ready in arms, but commanded that none should enter battle unless first commanded to do so. Many armed men issued outside the walls into some of the meadows.

That morning King Solomon had sent out a thousand knights on reconnoissance, and these saw the tower from afar. They believed that those who held the fortress were Saracens, and as they were looking toward the tower, they saw all the forces that were marching toward it. They therefore returned to King Solomon who had command of the vanguard of sixty thousand. Hearing the news, he at once ordered all his men to arms.

Then Huon the Less said: "O noble King Solomon, we might be waiting too long to send word to Charles to tell him to come to this battle. Let us at least send him word that the Saracens are banding together." Solomon answered: "Sir Duke, why not perform this errand yourself." "By my

faith,” answered Hugh, “I would not do so if you offered me the rule of all Europe, even if I met my death in Aspramont, for they would say that I had gone out of fear.”

Solomon then called young Meschin Aymeric, count of Berry, Gerard of the Thicket’s nephew (he was later called Aymeric of Narbonne, and asked him to go and tell Charles. He replied: “By my faith, I will not do so; but when I have fought until I am near death, that is when I shall go. My shield and my lance and my spear are strong, so that none shall esteem me a coward who leaves the field to go on an embassy.” Next Solomon called upon Gilfroy Greymantle to go and he too replied: “By my faith, I shall not; I want to make trial of the enemy first.” Then Solomon summoned Anthelm the Red, and he would not go. Next he summoned Berard of Vilmer, and he replied like the others—and so much the worse, that they began to quarrel over it. Then an archbishop intervened and said: “My lords, leave off this dispute, for I myself shall go, since I do not know how to fight.” So the embassy was bestowed upon him and he departed from them.

5

As that archbishop left the army, he did not stop giving his horse the spurs until he arrived at Charlemagne’s pavilion amid the host. He found him spreading certain banners, and as he drew near him gladly leapt from his horse. As soon as Charles saw the archbishop, he asked t what tidings he was bringing, since his mount seemed so winded. He answered: “The news are not good.” “What do you mean?” said Charles; “what are Solomon and Hugh doing?” The archbishop answered; “The Saracens are advancing with banners spread, and there are so many that the earth seems to tremble.” King Charles smiled at this and said: “These tidings are good, and we shall ride out bravely to meet them,” and ordered the alarm to be sounded.

Four hundred trumpet then sounded the call to battle. The whole army thundered through the mountains and the valleys and the plains. Now who could say how many flags, how many pennants, how many suits of armor, how many steeds appeared there? The great lords joined with the men of their domains beneath their banners, awaiting the emperor's commands and battle plan. The brave and bold knights were rejoicing, and the worthless and cowardly ones shivered with fear.

The valiant King Charlemagne, finding many barons gathered about him, called a nobleman whose name was Ogier the Dane and entrusted him with the Oriflamme, exhorting him to guard it well.

Ogier handed it to a valiant knight of Lusignan whose name was Phaon. He conveyed to the center of Ogier the Dane's contingent. Charles left young Roland, Astolph, Otho, Berlingher and Angelet behind in his pavilion, and ordered them not to leave it. Then he prepared to move. He called Ogier and Duke Namon of Bavaria and many princes and dukes to join him and, mounted on their steeds, they rode as far as the vanguard to have a look at the Saracens.

As they were riding up to the summit of a mount, they first saw the tower, and Charlemagne prayed to God to keep him from obstacles. As they passed through a wide valley, they arrived one mile from the tower, and the whole army was coming in good order behind them. Salmon, with his whole vanguard of sixty thousand was with Charles. And when they had come so close to the tower, Charles saw how well armed the force outside the fortress was. He wondered that the Saracens should be so well armed and suspected some kind of ambush. Those inside the fort, seeing Charles approaching, crowded to see him coming.

Then Charles called Duke Namon and Ogier, along with Flamingon of Maganza and the Marquis Berlingher, and said: "Go and see what folk these are, and whether they are ambassadors, and what

they are looking for.” They spurred their horses and set off toward the coast, armed cap a pie, with their lances held high.

6

When Duke Gerard saw these four riding toward him, he called his sons, Arnaut and Rainier and his nephews, Lord Clare and Lord Bussy, and said to them: “If you can unhorse these four, you will gain great honor in the French court. Therefore ride out against them.”

They set off and, hugging the shore, encountered them. Lord Clare rode at Ogier the Dane. Both one and the other fell, along with his horse, drew their swords and ran to do combat. Flamingon rode against Lord Bussy, and both of them also fell and at once turned to fight with their swords. Bussy first wounded the Count in the shoulder, whereby he caused him so much pain that during the whole rest of the war in Aspramont he was unable to don armor. (That wound later became the cause of a great war in France, in which many lords and noble men were killed, Lord Bussy among them.) Duke Namor rode at Rainier and unhorsed him. The Marquis Berlingher met Arnaut and both fell from their mounts. All that joust happened in the same instant. Leaping to their feet, they assailed each other with swords. Of all eight of them, only Namor remained in the saddle, and he dismounted to fight with Rainier. The adversaries made bitter proof of each other, exchanging mighty blows. One side cried: “Mountjoy Saint Dennis! Long live Charlemagne!” and the other, “Mountjoy Saint Dennis! Long live Gerard of Burgundy!”

At this, Ogier, hearing these words, halted and said: “Sir knight, what is your name?” The other answered: “My name is Clare, son of Duke Miles the German, and that man over there is my

brother Bussy, and these others are the two sons of my uncle, Gerard of the Thicket. We have come to Aspramont to defend the Christian Faith.” Then Ogier said: “And I am Ogier the Dane, a knight of Charlemagne’s.” At once, they all cast their swords to the ground, embraced, and asked each other’s pardon. Namo did likewise, and so did the Marquis, Rainier and Arnaut. But Flamingon, when he understood who they were, mounted his horse without a word to Bussy, and returned, wounded as he was, to the camp. From this action much harm ensued later on.

King Charles, beholding their celebration, rode up to them, as did Solomon, King Otho, Miles of Angrant, and many other lords, along with Turpin. When he understood who they were and that Gerard had come to his aid, he no longer worried about either King Anglant or his son Almont. From the other side, Gerard and many of his lords galloped toward them.

Gerard dismounted when he saw Charles, and Charles too dismounted to show his respect for the old Duke. Each walked on foot a good distance toward the other.

7

Fortune, ever ready to cast down the world’s estates, though sometimes disposed to exalt them, nonetheless, as is her wont, is ever ready to make them fall by many strange causes.

In that place there was, between Charles and Duke Gerard, a certain trench that the water had cut in the ground. The duke was hastening to cross it on foot since Charles had not yet reached him. He had almost crossed it, when Charles met him at the edge of the trench and was bending down to embrace Gerard. Gerard rose to embrace Charles. Charles was much taller than Gerard, so that it was necessary for him to bend down. He already stood lower than Gerard, so that the cap that Charles wore on his head fell from his head. Gerard picked it up and put it back on Charles’s head.

As soon as he had placed it back on King Charles's head, he bowed before Charles and then took him by the hand.

Then the noble Archbishop Turpin quietly summoned witnesses and wrote a testimonial to the effect that Gerard of the Thicket had advanced fifteen steps more toward Charlemagne than Charlemagne had toward him, and that Gerard, like a vassal, had picked up the Emperor Charles' cap and had bowed to him like a subject. Indeed, as the proverb has it,

“Let him whose neighbor spoils for a fight
be on his guard both day and night.”

The archbishop did this to repay Gerard for the knife he had thrown to kill him. Be aware then, O reader, what this signifies: If Charlemagne went to war against Gerard, he could not do so unless it were proved that Gerard had once been his subject. Turpin demonstrated that, on this occasion, Gerard was a vassal, and therefore was obliged to do homage to Charlemagne. He reminded all the barons of France of this fact.

8

When Gerard had bowed to King Charles, they took each other's hands and each asked the other to declare his whole intention. Gerard declared how many people he had brought and how he had captured the tower from King Almont. King Charles thanked him heartily and asked for his aid, since the enemy was approaching and their banners could be seen advancing. Then Charles armed himself and mounted his horse.

Charles's armor was the most splendid in the world. On his surcoat he wore, both front and back, the imperial eagle, and all the rest was embroidered with golden lilies, as was the coverlet of his horse. Then he took up a lance, rode a little ahead, and then returned to Gerard, who marveled at

the fierce appearance of Charlemagne and of the wonderful horse beneath him. This was completely white, like an ermine. It was the same horse that Balant the Turk had brought him.

Charles said: "My noble duke, King Anglant has arrived to destroy our Faith, and has already seized a large part of Calabria. However, if God will guard me against death, not two months shall pass before I slay him with my own hands, even as I slew his brother Bramant in the kingdom of Spain."

Gerard answered; "May God protect this Christian people of yours, for whose weal we have assembled so many good knights. And yet, my lord Charles, you can see the Saracens coming down from yonder hill. They are coming toward you. Therefore do you and your people first issue against them. These are Almont's bands. Let God cast them down and confound them, for he is the fiercest Saracen on earth." Charles replied: "Even so, let God destroy him."

By then had the Holy Father, that is, the Pope of Rome, come alongside them, who spoke the following words: "Most noble lords, I cannot preach a long sermon to you. God sent his only-begotten Son for our salvation, and He was willing to die to redeem us and made us heirs to two things: one of them is the earth, and the other is Heaven. We must therefore be ready to defend it against these Saracen dogs. Whoever dies in this battle can be certain of attaining the realm of eternal life, and all those who survive, having bravely defended Christ's Church, will be sure of infinite riches and the infinite love of all members of the Christian faith. Those who, by their cowardice, have not come to this war may well be called cursed and miserable. Let Christ be in your hearts. Christ suffered pain and death for us; we must now bravely fight for Him. He will always be with us in battle." Then he made the sign of the cross and blessed them.

Presently all Gerard's men departed, and he went with them back to the tower. Charles had his battle divisions drawn up, summoned all his barons into his presence and assigned them their ranks.

9-10: *The First Day of Battle* [summary]

Charlemagne's army comprised one hundred sixty thousand men, ranked in seven divisions: the first under Gilfroy, Aguentin of Normandy, Solomon and Galeran; the second under Miles of Angrant, Guy of Gascony and Berlingher; the third under Desiderius of Pavia, Namon and Richier; the fourth under Otho and Guy of Estivers; the fifth under the King of Frisia, Thierry of Ardennes, Duke Amon and Bevis of Agrevas; the sixth under Druon, Philip of Hungary, Gilfroy of the White Hair], and Ganelon. Charles himself, with Ogier the Dane, led the seventh division. After a short rallying speech by Charles, who wept for pity at the coming slaughter, the battle began as his first division engaged the first division of the Saracens, under Balant accompanied by three other dukes.

After Balant slew Baldwin the Joyous, while his three co-commanders are killed, the main forces joined in the fight. When the majority of the Christians were repulsed, Charles sent Philip of Hungary to their relief, but Philip is killed by Balant. At this point, Gerard of the Thicket entered the fray, with Lord Clare and Lord Bussy, crying: "Have no fear of their great numbers, for they are like sheep and we are like lions." They fight continued until nightfall. Almont had not yet personally entered it, but stood in readiness and now ordered Gorant to launch an assault in the morning.

Balant Vindicated

11

At the end of the day, both sides encamped along the mountainside and the hilltops. That night the wounded were badly off. Nothing separated the two armies but the narrow plain of a valley, hence none of the Christians ventured even to eat a slice of bread and all kept their horses by the bridle.

Balant told Almont how the battle had fared, and when he heard it, Almont said: "I have been badly advised to undertake this enterprise." Balant answered: "Now shall the courage of those be seen who called me a traitor for telling the truth. Where now are those who bragged that they would seize the whole realm of Europe, Rome and France? At this point they could not even seize the abandoned peaks of Aspramont. By Mahomet, here it shall be seen whether I told the truth or lied." (All the while the Christians were observing close watch. Gerard encamped along one bank, keeping his men helmeted all night long, with their horses close to hand.) Now, as Almont was parleying with Balant, he said: "We have lost all four of our idols. If we do not retake them tomorrow, they will never be retaken." Balant answered, "Pray let us say no more of this," and Almont wept

considering his ill fortune. Balant said to him: “My lord, a valiant man should show no signs of grief, for, if you your men saw this, they would all flee for terror. Now that we have come to this pass, let us fight to the death, for I told you the truth and you did not believe me.”

While they were talking like this, the day dawned. Almont and Balant went to a place from which they could see the Christian forces which were already preparing to resume battle. Balant pointed them out to Almont, who said: “Woe is me! Would it were Mahomet’s will for Charles to send a single baron against me, so that this war may be brought to an end by single combat between us two! How it grieves me that so many men will go to their deaths for us. I pray you, Balant, that it be your pleasure to deliver this message to King Charles. I his champion should defeat me, King Anglant and I, and Ulieno and Calinder, with our whole army, will return to Arganor and nevermore wage war in Europe.” Balant replied: “My lord Almont, look at the Christians beginning to march toward us. This will make it unsafe for me to go. Moreover, even if I were secure, the Christian knights are so eager to fight us that they would not consent to let Charles send a single champion to battle. But verily I say to you that today will show plainly who acts the part of a brave man, and what prowess is theirs who boasted, to spite me, that they would so easily conquer Rome and Paris. They said I was a renegade to Mohammed. Now it shall be seen whether I spoke folly or truth. These are not the nobles whom we encountered in Russia or in Turkey or in Syria or in Persia. They are surer in their faith and better armed, and the outcome will show them so. Yet am I Balant, who shall never fail you even to the death.”

Christian Victory

12-14: The Second Day of Battle

Almont began the charge and cut down Count Antelm of Maine, the brothers Guerrin and Thierry of Brittany, and many others, while Galeran, Briadas and Lampal killed Hugh the Little and two other Frankish Lords. Then

Gorant, with his shield carrying a device of three silver horns on a black ground, rushed into the fray. Charles was withholding the bulk of his army and now sent them into battle one by one, beginning with the division under Ogier the Dane, Miles of Angrant and Buy of Burgundy. Ogier was astonished when Almont unhorsed him, crying: "This is not a man but a devil." With some difficulty the other Christians rescued him. Charles then sent in his third division under Desiderius. Once more Gerard of the Thicket intervened to assist Charles's forces. Clare and Busy bore down from their hill, but are overwhelmed by superior numbers. Gerard himself was unhorsed and knelt down desperately on the battlefield to pray: "My lord Jesus, how can Thy people defend themselves without Thy help?" Charles dispatched further divisions under Namor, Richier, Otho and Guy of Estivers. But Otho was killed by Almont, and Guy by Triamedes, and when their bodies were brought to Charles, he was greatly grieved and also knelt to pray: "O Creator of Heaven and Earth, turn Thy eyes upon your beleaguered Christians and lend them Thy aid. My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou gavest me this people to govern. I cannot defend them against the enemies of Thy faith without Thy help. Ah my Lord, have mercy upon them and, if they suffered so much on account of my sins, kill me, the sinner, and not so many others." Even as he prayed, another dead champion, Guarnier of Oriens was carried in.

Charlemagne Enters Battle

15

As Charles was offering this prayer to God, behold Ogier the Dane arrived. His whole armor was tented and slashed and his horse was wounded. He said to Charles: "My lord, we have captured Butran, Almont's and Anglant's interpreter. He has told us that Almont is here without his father, and that he would rather have both his eyes put out than let Anglant hear of this battle. My lord, now send all your ranks out into the field, and send word back to the tents immediately that neither knight nor cook nor butler nor servant remain behind. Let him who has no horse mount a mule, and him who has no mule mount an ass, so that our numbers seem as huge as possible."

Charles at once did so and at once sent into battle the King of Frisia, Amon, Bevis of Agrevas, Gilfroy the Whitehaired, and Count Ganelon, and all the other lords. They charged from various directions, and the pagans began to have the worse of the battle. Having dispatched these troops, Charles himself rode into battle, with many lords crowding around him. Now began the destruction of the pagans.

Death of Miles

As Charlemagne with sixty thousand Christians was riding into the perilous fight, they assaulted the Saracens from three sides: twenty thousand with Charles, twenty thousand from the direction of the tower, and twenty thousand further down on the right flank. This encouraged those who were already in the battle. First Aguentin took up a stout lance and as he saw Charles wounding a crowned king named Moadas, rode past Charles and killed the man on the spot. Charles exclaimed: “God bless you!” but Almont, who witnessed this, blasphemed and, like a man desperate, grasped his sword, ran at Aguentin and split his head in two. A great noise rose thereat. Almont was causing huge losses among our Christian bands. Meanwhile, Charles was told of Aguentin’s death. He wept bitterly and loudly cursed Almont and his tribe, for Aguentin had reconquered the kingdom of France for love of him.⁵⁶ Then Charlemagne himself entered the fight. Now who could describe the great slaughter that now commenced, with such violence that all the Saracens were driven from the valley? They were perforce obliged to retreat to a mountaintop and, had not Candor of Cyprus arrived with his fifth division of fifty thousand Saracens, Almont would that evening have lost his tents. But night fell, wherefore every man rested in place, except Gerard, who, having caught sight of Almont’s banners, decided to follow them secretly by night, and to attack the banners on the following morning. He privily sent word of it to Charles, who prayed to God to aid him in conquering the banners. Charles informed Namor, Ogier and King Solomon of the fact, and thus they kept good watch all night long.

When morning dawned, a terrible battle commenced. At the first sortie, Almont slew Angerlis of Agremont. Thereupon Miles of Angrant struck him with his lance. Almont was about to fall, but his cousin Triamides wounded Miles in the side, thrusting the lance through his body as he passed

⁵⁶ Reconquered the kingdom of France for love of him: see *Reali* VI.33ff.

him. He had not quite fallen, when Almont struck him with his sword, and therefore it was said that Almont slew him. So died Miles of Angrant, young Roland's father. There was a great outcry at his death in the Christian camp, and his body was brought where other dead lords lay. Charles wept bitterly for him.

Gerard Captures Almont's Banner Train

17

When Gerard had seen Almont's banner train, he gathered his forces in the evening and sent word to Charles that he wished to approach these banners by night and would bravely offer battle. He gave orders accordingly, first sending for four guides from the countryside, and then summoning Lord Clare and Lord Bussy. He gave them four thousand knights and ordered them to position themselves on a hill that overlooked Almont's banners. In this manner they approached by night, without being discovered. Gerard moved nearby and then went to join his two nephews, remaining with them until daybreak. He had constant news from Charles about the battle in which Almont had greatly discomfited the Christians. The whole army was in battle order.

It was the third hour when Gerard exhorted his troops, saying: " My dear sons and nephews and other lords, keep in mind that we have nor city nor castle nor dwelling nearby which can be defended except by our swords. If these men wins the field, we are all dead men, for we have such a long way to retreat that we shall all be killed. Then they will seize all our territories, and will defile our wives and children and villainously make slaves of them. This must not happen, for God's sake. Therefore fight bravely. We are close to Almont's banner train, which is poorly guarded. We shall easily conquer them and seize King Almont. Charles meanwhile is staying in the field and only waits for us to cast these banners to the ground. As soon as he hears the noise, he give order for attack.

Onward then! Let us repay God for what He has given us. He died for us, and we shall die for Him.” Then he said, “Forward march!” to Lord Clare and to his brother Bussy, and they advanced with lowered lances.

18

Lord Clare and Bussy, with four thousand men, moved onward and, riding toward the banners, came to an incline. Upon reaching a hilltop, they had but a little way to go to the banner train. At that point, the banner guards sounded the alarm and ran to arms. Having thrown on his armor, King Mattafellon moved against them with a great number. When he had come up to Lord Clare, they charged each other with their lances. Clare thrust clean through his body and cast him from his steed, leaving him dead on the ground. At this the Saracens were greatly dismayed, yet so great was the multitude sent from Asperant and Margon that Bussy and Lord Clare were forced to give way.

Gerard came to their aid, and his two sons entered the fight. There were eight thousand Christian knights and Gerard, though he was an old man, fought very bravely, crying out to his men: “Lay on, men of Burgundy!” Ten thousand Saracens were killed at that point. Bussy, Clare, Arnaut and Rainier occupied the hilltop, ever gaining ground in the direction of the banners. It was a mighty and perilous battle.

Then Maron said to his brother Asperant: “By my faith, see how close to us the French have advanced! By sheer force they have reached Almont’s banners. Balant spoke truly: these French Christians are mighty warriors. If we do not get out of here, we are all dead men. Almont has acted badly to fight the French without King Anglant. Since has so little care for us, why should we care for him?” And Asperant said: “Indeed I intend to get away from here.”

In full armor, they mounted their horses and heartened their knights, who were trembling with fear. They sent a great number into battle and, as soon as they had dispatched them, moved off through a valley and fled, without striking a blow, abandoning their lord's banners. Indeed, had they stood firm on their hilltop, Gerard could never have captured the banners. As they were fleeing, Asperant said: "Anglant did ill not to believe the prophet who told him, at Almont's departure from Reggio, that, if he sent him out, he would never see him again." Margon replied: "The harm is his own doing. I care not, so long as we get away from them." And so, by galloping through a forest, they saved their skins.

Meanwhile the news spread through the field that Maron and Asperant had taken flight. Therefore all the Saracens began to flee, so that Gerard reached the banners, where he found twenty thousand dead Saracens. King Almont's banners were thrown to the ground. Duke Gerard said: "I know not what Charles may be doing; for, if the battle were up to me, I would by now have defeated the whole army." All gave praise to Gerard, and only two thousand of his knights had fallen in that fight. Then Gerard dispatched two knights to Charles, dragging two of Almont's banner behind them. They rode over the mountains and plains to find Charles.

When Duke Gerard had dismounted and disarmed near the banner train, he had a fainting spell and would have fallen, had not his nephews and some other barons held him up. They carried him hither and thither until he returned to his senses, urged his folk to be of good cheer, and inquired whether his messengers had gone to Charles. He was told that they had.

Almont as yet knew nothing of this. (Bitterly was he destined to grieve, once he found out.) He had secretly sent King Salatiel followed by sixty thousand men, most of whom were archers, to attack the Christian rear.

19-21: **Battle Rejoined** [summary]

At dawn, both Charlemagne and Almont convened councils of war and urged an all-or-nothing battle. Neither had yet heard of the capture of Almont's banner train. In the desperate battle that follows, Triamides kills Miles of Maine, but is himself killed by Miles' brother, Berlingher; and Richier cuts down King Baldras and Candor, King of Cyprus. As the melee continued, the Christian were steadily gaining ground. On a hill overlooking the fight, the Pope could be seen blessing the army of the Faithful. (21) When Almont entered the fight in person, he killed Galeran of Alinflor and Morand of Gascony, yet could do little to stanch the Christian advance. He retreated to a hilltop for a bitter colloquy with Balant, who once more reminded him of his embassy and the truth of his estimate of the Franks. "Nonetheless, I hope you will stay with me to the death," said Almont. Balant promised that he would. Then they returned to the fray. Almont killed Antonio of Salzire and Rainier of Oriens with many others. On the Christian side, King Solomon overthrew and killed the Emir of Numidia.

Rout of the Saracens

22

While Almont was engaged in battle with Charles, Gerard of the Thicket had conquered his banners. The latter, after taking some refreshment and rest, said to Lord Clare and Lord Bussy: "Get on your horses, with your helmets on your heads, and take five thousand knights to assist our Emperor Charlemagne in the battle. I will presently come to join you and the whole honor of the battle will be ours. We may even be able to capture Almont and Anglant." And so they set off.

At that point, a founded knight approached King Almont and, upon reaching him, cried: "Ah, my lord, it is sad news I am bringing." Almont, who sat talking to Balant at the time, was saying: "We shall send for our banner guard, which contains Asperant and Margon and Mattafellon. With those hundred thousand d, we will crush the whole Christian army." That was when the above said servant rode up and told him how the standards had been lost. Almont said to him: "Miserable wretch, how could they be lost, since Margon, Asperant and the bravest knights of all Africa were with them?" The messenger replied: "By Mohammed, my lord, I speak truth. These two kings have betrayed you and have fled. An old duke with some thirty thousand men (that was our estimate of their number, and their armor seemed too strong for us to break) arrived and killed half of our

people, all through the fault of your two kings, who fled without even breaking a lance.” Almont, much grieved, vowed to the gods that, if he returned to Reggio, he would cut them to pieces with his own hands.

That same day, in the course of the battle, Almont had ordered a brigade toward a valley under the command of King Salatiel, who was a most deadly archer. Almont now summoned him and urged him into the fight. That man now began a fearsome attack, wreaking great slaughter among the Christians.

24

King Charles was very wroth with his lords, seeing them killed in this manner. He called Namor, Ogier, King Solomon, King Desiderius, the Vassal Richier, and Fulk, and said to them: “How many knights are guarding our banners?” They replied: “My lord, by our faith, there are few good knights among them, and their whole number is some thirty thousand.” “Ah!” said Ogier then, “have no fear, for they will put up a valiant defense.”

The enemy assault abated somewhat at that point, and while they were speaking about the disposition of the army, behold a knight, bathed in sweat, came riding through the plain, whose shield and armor and helmet was all battered, and he was dragging a great banner along the ground behind him. He saluted King Charles, saying: “God bless King Charles and all his lords!” Charles replied: “You come in good time, dear vassal. What tidings do you bring?” The knight replied: “Gerard, Duke of Burgundy, sends you a thousand greetings and informs you that he has captured King Almont’s banners, and that Almont now has no other forces at his command than those you have at hand here. You may do battle against them without fear, for, if Almont loses this hill, he has no other resource.” King Charles said: “My noble servant, tell me truly: Is the good Duke Gerard

still alive?” “In faith, sire, he is alive and well, and he has crushed the Saracen banner guard. That is why he sent me to you. This banner that I am here dragging along the ground is the royal ensign of Anglant and Almont..” King Charles said: “I do not know you. What is your name?” “In faith,” he replied, “I am called Langier, and I am a German.” Charles answered, much delighted: “Go then and return word on my behalf to Duke Gerard that what he suggests shall be done quickly. Tell him also on my behalf that, had he delayed longer in coming to Aspramont, none of us would ever have returned to France. Immediately after the battle, I shall reward you in a way that will content you.”

The messenger departed and Charlemagne, after a parley with his barons, decided to launch a general assault. At that point Ansewig and Uldefroy rode up. (They were sons of Bernard of Clairmont, but illegitimate. He had eight sons in all, of whom six were legitimate—Bevis of Agrimon, Amon of Dordogne, King Otho of England, Miles of Angrant, Pope Leo, and Gerard of Roussillon. The other two, that is Ansewig and Uldefroy, were bastards.) These two now presented themselves to Charles, accompanied by all the lesser folk of the army—knights, squires, cooks, butlers, horses, mules, and countless beasts of burden. They were displaying so many banners that the whole rest of the army had not half the number. Seeing them, and encouraged by the news from Gerard, Charles had good hope of victory. Then Bernard’s two sons told him that their detachment contained forty thousand knights of good quality, and these now came forward. Therefore King Charles ordered them to get ready for combat.

25

King Charles, delighted by the news from Gerard and by the reinforcements, now ordered Ogier with his twenty thousand knights to occupy the summit of the hill, sending Gerard of Roussillon, Bevis of Agrimont, and Gilfroy Greymantle to accompany them. At the same time, he said to Duke

Namo: “Do you, O wise duke, proceed on foot to the bottom of the valley, taking with you all the Germans, with King Solomon and King Desiderius. From there, assault the hill in a flanking move from beneath. I myself, with the whole remainder of our people, will give battle directly ahead, but will not move until Ogier has reached the summit and you have struck below. Then will I strike with all the rest.” They at once moved toward their positions as commanded.

Ogier galloped toward the summit, and not two hours passed before everyone signaled that they had encountered the enemy. Then Charles began to move with all his banners flying, amid the noise of so many trumpets and so many knights in armor trimmed with gold and silver, that all the mountains of Aspramont gave back their sound and luster, even as Ogier arrived at the hilltop almost face to face with the Saracens. When these saw so many coming, with the Christian attacking of three sides, they pointed them out to each other and said: “Verily, Balant reported the truth.” They saw where Charlemagne rode, who seemed in all parts furnished with silver and gold, and they saw so much armor and so many pennants and banners, that the valley and the plains seemed covered with them, and they saw, riding behind Charles, the rearguard of all the rest of the army, splendid to the view, though it contained more banners than men.

The Saracens could not withstand Charles’s charge. Ogier encountered the King of Russia, struck off his head, and cast him dead to the ground. Charles, fighting with his sword, encountered King Arcalias and thrust him through. Gilfroy Greymantle slew King Lampal. Almont, seeing his men everywhere in flight, took up his horn and blew it so loudly that it resounded through the mountains and valleys, yet no man returned to the fight. Then Almont turned to Balant and said: “Alas, Balant, what will happen to us?” Balant answered: “My lord, the man who sees his imminent peril and does not avoid it is worthy to be despised. As regards the present situation, there is no safety in it for either you or me. Therefore let us both seek the best way to be gone.”

Then the banners of the host were abandoned. Many, indeed most of the army, ran toward the troops that Almont had entrusted to Asperant and Margon. Upon arrival, they found the Christians there, that is Gerard's men, who put them all to the sword. No other cause contributed more to the great defeat of the Saracens.

Almont was bellowing like a bull, and in the company of Balant, Sinagon and Gorant made his way up to a mountain pass. From there they saw the hill where Almont had left his banners, and beheld their men being cut down by Clare's and Bussy's bands, along with Arnaut's and Rainier's five thousand. Then Balant cried out in a loud voice: "Ah, King Anglant! Ah, King Almont! Where now are those who called me a traitor? Now take the measure, O Almont, of Margon's and Asperant's faith; now take the measure of Triamides' courage and of Salatiel's threats! Ah Sinagon, are you leaving now because Balant was a traitor to King Anglant and Almont? Which of you now has more gashes in his armor? Now I see no way in which we may ever return to Reggio. Where now, O King Almont, are these braggarts?" Almont wept and said: "Alas, Balant, you are in the right; but too late have I learned so." Once more he halted and sounded his horn to rally his army; but none arrived at his summons. Almont said to Balant: "By Mohammed, if you go back into battle with me and we escape, I promise to give you four African kingdoms." "In faith," Balant replied, "I see so many Christians everywhere that, if I returned to battle, I cannot imagine how we might escape their hands."

Almont considered this. He saw Christian knights behind him and on every side, in the valleys and the plains and the mountains; indeed, he seemed almost surrounded, for Charlemagne's host was at his back and sides, and he had Gerard's forces in front of him. Almont realized that Balant spoke truly, and so he, Balant, Sinagon, and Gorant began to give spur to their steeds. Yet, of their four

mounts, three could scarcely move, so worn were they by battle fatigue. Each of the men had taken up a lance as he took flight

Almont, Charlemagne, and Roland

26-29: The Situation

26

So King Almont fleeing with lance in hand, and Balant, Sinagon and Gorant were with him. Almont called on Mohammed and his other gods, saying: "Woe is may, who never fled defeated from the field except from these Christian men! O Mars, god of battle, send a thunderbolt from the skies to destroy me! O you perfect weapons, ill bestowed upon me, coward and recreant knight that I am! For if I had been a knight as good as my weapons, I would have conquered all of Europe as far as Brabant." Amid such laments, they rode along a mountainside.

Meanwhile Ogier the Dane and his men reached the hilltop, casting down banners and pennants. Charles arrived from the other side. Soon Duke Namon of Bavaria and many other lords joined them. Charles asked some Saracens where Almont had gone and was told that he had fled almost alone up into the mountains. King Charles spurred his horse, determined to pursue him even to Reggio, so as to kill him in vengeance for the barons that Almont had slain. Ogier the Dane and Duke Namon of Bavaria perceived his intention and, each bearing a lance, rode off behind him.

When they had left, young Roland, Miles of Angrart's son, arrived on a mule, accompanied by Namon's sons, Astolph, Otho and Berlingher, along with the above said rearguard, unprovided with armor and mounted, for the most part, on mules and pack animals. None of the four young men wore armor. Young Roland inquired where Charles was and was told how he had ridden off into

the mountains in pursuit of Almont. That brave young Roland spurred his mule in the direction of Charlemagne. Astolph, Otho and Berlingher set off behind him, but did not spur their miles as hard as young Roland, but slowed their pace after the victory. Ogier and Namo caught up with Charles.

At that point, Sinagon, Almont's tutor, fell behind because his horse was winded. Almont said to Balant: "Sinagon's horse cannot come. Let us turn back toward the three knights yonder. Perhaps we shall be able to seize one of their horses." Balant answered: "By my faith, my lord, do not do so. For if you are recognized, no gold in the world will ransom you." At this point, Sinagon's horse collapsed, and Ogier rode up to Sinagon and cut his head from his chest as he was trying to get up. So died Sinagon, Almont's tutor, and Ogier sheathed his sword and once more seized his lance.

27

When Almont saw Sinagon decapitated, he grasped his shield in fury and put his lance in rest. He turned his horse around and rode toward Duke Namo. The duke struck him but inflicted no damage, but Almont cast him from his horse to the ground completely stunned. Ogier the Dane once more grasped his lance and charged Gorant the Seneschal, whose lance shattered, but the Dane thrust his through his opponent's breast and hurled him dead from his horse.

When Almont saw his seneschal slain, he was greatly enraged. Drawing Durandel, he rode at Ogier and raised his sword in both hands. If Ogier's steed had not risen on its hind legs so that it reared almost erect in front of Almont's, that blow would have been Ogier's death. Instead, it struck the horse and cast it dead to the ground. Ogier, having fallen to the ground, rose again and valiantly drew his own sword.

Charles rode at Balant, who was shouting: “O Christian traitors, I was ready to be baptized and you have killed my son!” and with that cry struck Charles with his lance and bent him backwards. But valiant Charles hurled him to the ground.

Almont would have turned against Charles, but the Christians, who had witnessed the joust, now ran up the hill and from the mountainside, so that Almont realized that if he stayed, he would be slain or taken. He turned his horse in flight and in a short time it flew far ahead of the other horses, so swiftly did it carry its master. In those days, there was no better horse to be found in all the world. The Saracen’s called it Briador.⁵⁷

Almont from thence skirted the mountainside and, descending from its height into a valley, crossed it and began to ascend another mountain. King Charles, seeing him in flight, was aware that this was Almont and swore by God not to leave him until he had slain him to avenge his barons. He spurred his horse, took up his lance, and rode off in that direction.

At this moment, Balant, who had been cast down, ran to recapture his horse and was about to get back in the saddle. Duke Namor, seeing this, rode toward Balant and would not let him remount. They began a bitter fight and battered and slashed each other’s armor to pieces. Ogier the Dane saw this and ran toward Balant in aid of the Duke. When Balant saw him coming, he cried out in a loud voice to the Duke, not knowing him to be Duke Namor: “O Christian knight, what would you gain by killing me? I desire to convert to your faith. If the Duke of Bavaria had been the one to find me, he would have spared my life.” The Duke said: “Who are you, Sir knight?” He answered; “I am Balant, the ambassador who came to France.” Ogier was on the point of wounding Balant when Namor cried: “Leave off, brother, for I am as bounden to this man as to anyone in the world.

⁵⁷ Briador: this horse, later named Veliantin, is destined to become Roland’s.

Indeed, this is Balant, who saved my life when I carried King Charles' embassy to King Anglant. He did me great honor and took me to see the queen and gave me generous presents on the morning of my departure." Ogier said: "Is this the man, then, who brought his white steed to Charles?" "Yes," said Namó.

28

While Ogier, Namó and Balant were talking, young Roland, King Charles's nephew, rode up on his mule, which could scarcely walk, so winded was it and so bloodied by the spurs that Roland had applied. As he came nearby, he saw Duke Namó's black stallion grazing. Roland got off his mule and seized the steed, mounted it, and galloped off in pursuit of King Charles.

Duke Namó asked Balant whether he wished to be baptized. He replied: "My lord duke, have mercy on me! I would not be considered a traitor to the Emir Anglant, wherefore I beg you to let me return to him to give me license, and then I will return to be baptized." Ogier said: "You speak like a madman, since there is no escape for you. A man who falls into another's power is not at liberty. Leave the whole responsibility for this to me."

Balant wept, remembering King Anglant, who had nourished him and raised him, and dubbed him knight and made him king. Then he said: "So Fortune rules the affairs of this world. However, I will never draw sword against my liege." Namó said: "Because you once saved my life, I will give you half my kingdom and make a one of Charlemagne's counselors." Balant thanked him and said: "I will give loyal counsel."

Thus conversing, they approached Gorant's body. As they came upon it, Balant lamented loudly and reminded the Duke how Gorant had served him earlier. While these words were exchanged

between them, Duke Name saw Almont ascending a mountainside. He was riding swiftly some two miles away. After speaking words of comfort to Balant, the Duke asked him: "Who is that knight riding over there on such a mighty stallion?" and pointed him out with his finger.

Balant said: "That is none other than Almont, King Anglant's son. He is the best knight in all the world, and he never lost any fight he fought man to man. In a single day, he once overthrew two giants and three crowned kings. He is headed for Reggio, where his father Anglant resides. He is the flower of all Heathendom, and he will return to fight you, and you will not, I think, be able to withstand him."

While they were gazing in his direction, Almont surmounted a hill and rode away toward a wide valley that was called Pine Valley because of the large number of pine trees that grew in it, so that Balant could no longer see him. But he saw another knight ascending the incline behind Almont. Balant asked Namo who this was, and he told him that it was Charlemagne. "By my faith," said Balant, "Charles is ill advised to pursue the bravest champion in the world, for if he becomes aware of him, you will lose your Emperor. Therefore, if you love him, ride after him, for what Charles is doing here is not wisdom, rather it is folly to pursue that man all by oneself." At this, Ogier and Namo were exceedingly dismayed, for Namo could not see his black stallion, and Ogier the Dane had no horse, since Almont had killed his.

29

Namo and Ogier wept fearing for Charlemagne and began to call for horses to some knight, asking them to keep Balant safe and free from harm by other Christians in the army. Balant was eager to help them, since he was well aware of Almont's strength. Before long, some Christians nearby came

up. Duke Namo commanded Balant to be brought to his tent and then he and the Dane mounted and with lances in hand hastened after King Charles.

King Almont, having surmounted the hilltop, descended into a great valley. He was saying to himself: "O wretched Fortune, of how much you have robbed me in a short time. Not three days hence, countless kings and countless Saracens were subject to me, and now I have not so much as a squire. Woe is me! Where have I left all these lords? Where are Triamides, Balant, Sinagon, Balant, Lampal, Candor, Salatiel and all the rest?" And with these, he slumped forward, with his chest on his saddlebow, calling for death or for a bolt from heaven to kill him. At last he said to himself: "If Mahomet grant me the grace of returning to Reggio, I shall bring Ulien, King Moas, King Aliadas, and Calinder,, Alicard, Danflor, Pantaleon, Sinador, and the valiant Maldachin, with many other lords, who shall come to fight the Christians and avenge me."

Riding along in this manner, he looked upon his lance and his shield and his other weapons and exclaimed: "O most noble arms, how despicable a knight now wears you? O most noble steed, who is it that now rides you? The most wretched knight in the world. O most noble ladies of Africa, Almont has been a recreant in battle and is no longer worthy of your love. Woe is me! Balant, where have I left you. Alas, Balant, when you returned they called you a traitor to me; and now it may be said that I have betrayed you. Alas, my dear Gorant, how many battles you have won! Ah woe, what gladness will I bring to your camp? A curse on you, Margon and Asperant, you traitors. If I ever return to Reggio, I will cut you to pieces with my own hands. You called Balant a traitor for bringing me true tidings about the Christians, and you yourself have betrayed me like cowards. O you false kings, how could you contemplate so great a betrayal?"

Almont heard the birds singing in the branches of the forest, and chided them for their song, saying that his nature had become unworthy to hear such gentle melodies, and through his cowardice had lost the honor of all music by creatures, whether rational or irrational, calling himself an outcast of Fate. And still Charles was not yet in view.

Anglant's Dream

30

Our author writes that on the same day as Almont's flight, King Anglant, with his queen, had gone to bed in the city of Reggio. Having taken some refreshment and solace, he fell asleep and beheld a vision. He seemed to be in a flowery meadow and Almont was with him, when a leopard rushed from a forest, attacked Almont, wounded him, and seized him by his hair. It was about to present him to his father Anglant, when a young lion issued from the wood, killed Almont and chased the leopard away. King Anglant cried out in his dream, and this awakened him. Terror-struck he at once sent for his diviners and asked them about this dream. They answered that dreams are vanities and that this one had been caused by his fear for his son, signifying that Almont had that day fallen into Christian hands. Leaving them, King Anglant went to kneel before an image of Mohammed, and begged the gods to help his son, and continued to be greatly worried about him.

The Fight at Saint Sylvester's Well

31

Almont was entering Pine Valley, upbraiding Mahound for letting him leave the field in such an ignoble way. Though Almont had some wounds on his body, they were not grave, and there was no part of his body that was not covered with Christian blood. He exclaimed: "Ah, King Anglant,

where have you sent me? For three days now I have eaten nothing but three apples, and those Candor gave me. Ah Almont, you wretch, whither are you fleeing?” (So he said to himself.) “Ah oh, Mohammed, why have you abandoned me? Moreover, I pity this horse of mine, for three days have passed and he has had fodder only twice. Ah, you good and perfect beast, how do you entrust yourself to so poor and wretched a knight?” While, speaking thus to himself, he was riding along, he discovered a fountain amidst the valley, which was about ten miles from the field of battle. Almont grew very glad and dismounted by fountain’s side, unaware that any Christians were following him. Over the fountain, a pine tree rose on one side, and olive tree on the other. This fountain was named Saint Sylvester’s Well, after the saint who dwelt in these mountains in the days of the Emperor Constantine, before Constantine was baptized. He had constructed this fountain and planted this pine and this olive tree.

Meanwhile, Charles had lost sight of Almont amid the trees, the hillsides and the turnings of the valley. He began to implore God’s grace to help him reach his enemy, so that he might not return to kill more Christian nobles. Charles said: “Unless I catch him, I shall ever after be plunged into sadness and sorrow over the death of those my barons who were slain by his hands.”

32

Almont had dismounted and tethered his horse to the olive tree. He now took his shield from his neck and his helmet from his head and propped his lance against the pine tree. Then he washed his hands, wetted his face and drank a little of the water. He sat down on the fountain’s rim and, reflecting on his misfortune, spoke the following words: “O noble fountain, that holds such sweet water, it would well befit you that no knight as wretched than I should drink from you ever again. Yet, if I return to Reggio, I will return and fall upon those Christians to accomplish my revenge.

Afterwards, to repay the honor you now do me, I will have you rimmed and covered with silver and give you spigots of solid gold. O fountain, you do not know my grief, for this morning I had two hundred thousand followers, and now I have not one lowly vassal. Verily, Mahound, you have shamed me before the King of France! I well remember that, when I was ten years old, a soothsayer told me that I would not be killed by any sword or any iron, yet did I flee from battle like a coward.”

Almont lingered in this place, for it was rather delightful. Because the day was very hot, he took off his hauberk. When he was somewhat refreshed, he was just deciding to rearm when Charles arrived where he lay. When King Charles saw him, he cried out in a loud voice: “Aha, you overweening serpent, I have you now!”

When Almont heard these words, he grew pale with fear, since he was unarmed. But then Charles said: “Saracen knight, put on your armor and mount your horse, for we Christians have a custom that, when we find a knight without armor, we let him arm. Anyone who strikes at him before that is deemed a caitiff.” Almont blessed, first Mahomet and then the Christian law which commanded this custom, and began to put on his armor.

33

Almont armed amid many misgivings but, seeing that Charles did not attack, was greatly comforted. He put on his helmet and his hauberk and his shield. When he had finished arming, he mounted his horse, reached for his lance, and said: “Sir knight, by my faith, you seem of very gentle condition not to have attacked me when you found me unarmed. To repay you, I desire you to accompany to my father, King Anglant, who will present you with lands vaster than King Charlemagne’s. But tell me, what is your country? Are you French or Norman or English? For, upon my faith, I have never

seen a knight better armed than you. The trim of your helmet⁵⁸ alone is worth a whole city. I ask for nothing but this armor of yours. Therefore, if you will not come with me, get off your horse, give me that armor, and I will spare your life.”

Charles answered: “It would have been easier for you to defeat me. But, upon my faith, before you get that armor, you shall discover whether Joyous can cut. Know that I am Charles, King of France, to whose court you sent Balant with his threats. I vowed to him that three months should not pass until I came to find you. Does it seem to you that I been as good as my word? Therefore defend yourself, you had better.”

Said Almont, looking up to the heavens: “Ah, Mohammed, wonderful is the grace you have bestowed upon me, to let me avenge my dead nobles upon this man!” and he continued: “Are you the great Charles, then? Well, tell me, Charles: do you know who I am? Know therefore that, if I were master of those lands which I have sworn to conquer even now, I would not be content until I had bathed my sword in your blood. I would not have you ransomed for all the gold in the world. If I do not kill you with my own hands, I will kill myself. You acted like a fool, to follow me with your people from so far away. Once I have killed you, I will go from here to Reggio and lead out such multitudes that I will subjugate all Christendom, and sell its people throughout the world more dearly than Vespasian did the Jews.”

Charles answered: “You have good cause to say so, since the Christians have inflicted so much damage on you and your people. But I will have you thrown into my dungeon with a chain around your neck, and inflict upon you as many torments as will please the French.” Almont laughed at this under his helmet and presently replied: “The lands that you hold belonged to Alexander, and I am of

⁵⁸ your helmet: This is Bramante’s enchanted helmet, conquered by young Charlemagne in Spain (see: *Reali*, VI.27)

his lineage. Therefore their rule is due to me.” Charles said: “Little does it cost you to claim it in words.” At this answer, Almont grew enraged and defied Charles. They then took up their positions.

34

Having claimed their ground, the two valiant lords struck each other so mightily with their lances that they pierced each other’s shields and some of their armor. The lances shattered and both riders and steeds fell to the ground. Almont rose and drew Durandel, even as Charles drew Joyous, and they began so terrifying a battle that it was a marvel. It lasted for a long while, so that both were bathed in sweat. Neither had the advantage of the other. They dented the shields on their arms, slashed their armor, and wounded each other in many places, until both bled terribly. Almont saw Charles’s splendid armor and was filled with desire for it. He especially coveted his helmet, since no sword could ever pierce it. He was burning with wrath and powerful in body, and Charles was a wily and practiced swordsman. One of them invoked Jesus Christ, and the other, Mahound or Termagant.

Almont now sensed himself wounded in several places, and it seemed to him that Charles had suffered fewer wounds than himself, wherefore he exclaimed: “Ah, Mohammed, how is it that this man’s helmet cannot be pierced?” He stared at the edge of his sword and cried: “Ah, good sword of mine, how is it that I have become so worthless a knight in wielding you that Charles has endured so long, and has battered me so sorely? The soothsayer deceived me who said that I would overcome Charles and be myself overcome by another man. I declare there has never been a man more valorous than this Charles.” Charles, too, said that Almont was the bravest knight in the world. Each of them praised the other. Almont felt a great desire for Charlemagne’s helmet, telling himself

that it was dearer to him than a hundred castles. Because of their great exhaustion in the first encounter, they now drew back somewhat to catch their breaths a little. Both had lost much blood in that first onset.

35

As these noble men were separating, Almont began to speak: "What shall we do now? O Charles, King of the French, greatly have you beset me, me and my horse. Though it is very true that he has not been unsaddled for three days and has had forage only twice, I am nevertheless ashamed that you have so long held out against me. But I shall soon put you to death and go to Reggio, where many crowned kings are waiting. I shall return against the French and, if I can meet them in the field, they will certainly be destroyed. Afterward I will conquer everything even as far as Brabant." King Charles answered: "O Almont, do not think to conquer so many realms, for you have conquered all those that were destined for you in your lifetime." Almont was not so much troubled by Charles's words as by the blood that he was losing, which covered his whole body, down to his spurs. Charles was similarly bleeding.

36

When Almont saw himself so bloodied, he was overcome by great fury and passion and said to Charles: "King of the Franks, for the courtesy you have shown me in letting me arm, I shall spare your life and present you with many African kingdoms, provided you surrender." Charles replied: "I little think that you will be free to return to Africa." Said Almont: "You place your confidence in your armor which is enchanted. But, truly, the blood that you have drawn from me shall quickly be the cause of your death. Therefore defend yourself, for you shall find it a heavy test." With this, he rushed at Charles with such desperation and rage, redoubling blow upon blow both right and left,

with never a pause between blows, that he seemed a very devil. Charles could not wound Almont, but was barely able ward off his blows. He let himself lose much ground as he drew back, thinking first to tire him out and then to strike. After Almont had given countless blows (he had burst Charles's shield and much of his armor, but could do no damage to his helmet), he too drew back a little and said: "In truth, the man who gave you this helmet must have held you very dear. Surely this is the helmet forged by Solomon the Wise, son of David." Said Charles: "You speak truly. It is the helmet that once belonged to your uncle, King Bramant." Almont answered: "You cursed Christian, is this the helmet for which my father was reproached by the minstrel? By Mohammed, it shall not long be yours." "Ah," said Charles, "you will see to that, will you?" Almont cried out: "O divine Mahound, why must I endure so much in opposing this enemy of your faith?" and then drew his sword and threw himself at Charles.

Now who could describe the fierceness and cruelty of this assault? Charles was already wounded in several places and now, enraged like a desperate man, hurled himself toward Almont, grasping Joyous with both hands. But at the end of that sally, Charles had the worst of it. Drawing back a little, Almont said: "O Christian King, too long, in faith, have you endured against me; but verily, you shall at last find your death by this sword, which also was Bramant's once and was given him by Pulinor." Charles made no answer and began to pray to God to help him, for he realized Almont's superior fierceness and power, so that he had begun to fear his blows. As they continued to fight, Almont struck a heavy blow upon his helmet, followed by sword thrusts at his chest, so that Charles was close to falling. Then Charles devoutly commended his soul to God. He had lost his shield, and his whole armor was slashed and broken, except for his helmet, all of whose ornaments had been disfigured by Almont's blows. All the same, both fighters were very exhausted. Almont

thought that there was no valor in the whole world to match that of Charlemagne, the king of the Christians, and Charles thought also that in all Christendom there was no man to match Almont.

As they had thus battered each other in the fight, Charles lost a great deal of blood. Now, as they closed in upon each other, Charles was not striking as mightily as was his wont, and Almont seemed not to have lost his vigor. He now grasped the aventail⁵⁹ of Charles's helmet and, pulling at it, burst the straps and drew the helmet from his head. Charlemagne stood helmetless and shieldless and realized the great peril in which he stood. He was aware that, if he drew away from the pagan, he was a dead man. It then occurred to him that, if he grappled with him, this might be his salvation. He therefore grasped him around the waist with both arms and pulled with all his might, so that he fell backwards, with Almont atop him. Almont was much taller than Charles so that Charles's head came up to his chest. Charles held him so tightly that Almont could not get between his chest and the ground, but struck him on the head with the sword pommel, saying: "It was a poor decision of yours not to yield yourself to my mercy." Having him thus in his power, Almont continued: "O Charlemagne, surrender to me, since for the knightly courtesy that you have shown me I shall still spare your life." Charles answered: "I pray for life to none but Jesus Christ. As for you, do me only one favor: give me enough time to offer a little prayer to my God." Almont said: "So help me Mohammed, I am content." Charles prayed to God and commended his soul to Him with many tears, beseeching Him not to regard his sins (for he was a sinner), but to protect the other Christians who would fall into the hands of this dragon and perish, if he perished here. Hardly had he finished this prayer, when young Roland, son of Miles, rode up on Duke Namo of Bavaria's black stallion, wearing no armor and weaponless, and saw Charlemagne thus prostrate beneath Almont.

37

⁵⁹ aventail: orig. *camaglio*, technical term for the chain-mail hood and neckpiece worn beneath the helmet.

When young Roland arrived at Saint Sylvester's Well and saw so many shattered lances and pieces of armor, with Charlemagne in such dire peril, he at once leapt from his horse and picked a the largest broken lance shaft he could see on the ground. As he approached the two, Charles saw him. Charles felt greater grief than for himself to see young Roland arrive unarmed at this juncture. He wept for young Roland and commended him to God. Said Almont: "O Charles, King of France, is this your only succor? By my faith, your life is at an end, for if there were a hundred such, I would not esteem them so much as one wretched servant." At these words, young Roland struck Almont's helmet with such a mighty blow that he stunned him utterly. Now Almont was afraid and reached for his sword to strike at young Roland, but Charles held him tight. Roland drew back a little and then approached to give him another blow. But Almont was guarding himself with his sword, so that Roland's blow landed on Almont's wrist and struck the sword from Almont's hand and threw it a spear's length away from him. Almont struggled to get free of Charles to reach the blade and Roland shouted: "Hold him fast, my lord, for he has lost his sword." And then, wielding the spear shaft with both hands, he struck so many blows upon his helmet that his brains issued from his mouth. Charles would not have seen it if blood had not spurted from Almont's visor and wetted all of Charles's face. Then Charles twisted him upon his back.

I have read in another book that Almont let go his sword and that young Roland picked and lifted it in both hands to strike Almont, but Charles cried out: "Do not strike, my son, for you will kill us both." But it seems more likely to me that he killed him with the spear shaft.

Then Roland unlaced his helmet and cut off his head with the sword. So died Almont, son of King Anglant, who was one of the three bravest and most valiant Saracens that ever lived, and he was the best of the three. The second was Theobald of Arabia, and the third was Saladin, Sultan of Babylon and of Egyptian Cairo.

When King Almont was killed by young Roland's hands, Charlemagne considered it a miracle of God in response to the prayer that he had offered, since young Roland had never born arms, and since he had arrived on Duke Namó's horse. He said: "You are God's knight, for it is by a divine miracle that, of so many warriors, you have been chosen to deliver the crowned head of the Christian empire from woeful death."

Young Roland, with the impetuosity of youth, scarcely heeded Charles's words, but ran to fetch the horse that had been Almont's, picked up his sword, and laid its scabbard next to his dead body. As he did so, he saw a beautiful horn made of ivory and covered with gold ornaments. This, too, he picked up and hung around his neck. He tied the sword to the saddlebow of the horse, which was called Briador by the pagans, but which from this moment on changed its name and was called Veliantin by the Christians.

Roland did all this while Charles looked on. At this point, Ogier the Dane and Duke Namó of Bavaria arrived and, seeing Charles, dismounted and ran up to him. They knelt down and looked at him, with all his armor shattered and bloodied. Charles rose to his feet and pointed out Almont, saying: "But for young Roland, this Saracen would have killed me. Never was there a lord abler in body than this man." Duke Namó said: "We have captured Balant, the man who came to France as an envoy and brought you your white steed. When he saw you following this Saracen, he said it was madness in you to pursue him and that we should fare the worse for it, for Ogier had no horse and Roland had taken mine, so that we could not follow you." "By my faith," said Charles, "I swore that, unless I caught up with him, I would follow him even to Reggio, and there plant my banner to

avenge my nobles whom this cursed devil has killed. Yet would he have killed me, but for young Roland.”

Then all three of them turned to young Roland and he knelt at Duke Namo’s feet to beg his pardon for having taken his horse. The duke had already doffed his helmet. He now embraced him and kissed him, saying: “I forgive you for everything. You have done nothing to displease me. May God bless you.”

Then Charles, standing near Almont’s body, said: “By my faith, I would pay the price of three cities to have as much strength as this man. For not three years shall pass before I will launch an attack against King Marsilius in Spain.” Presently he said: “I desire young Roland to have his horse, his sword and his horn.” The Duke and Ogier answered: “By Our Lady in Heaven, he has well deserved them.” Said Charles: “Let us carry this body beneath those trees over there;” and they bore it from the road and placed it under some trees, covered it with his shield and did not strip a single part of his armor. Then, since it was already evening, they remounted their horses to rejoin the army.

As they were riding back toward the camp, they were talking of the danger which Charles had passed, and he spoke with great respect of Almont’s knightly prowess, lamenting the fact that Almont had not been baptized. In time they reached the host, which had been plunged into great sorrow for Charles, Duke Namo, Ogier, and Orlando, fearing that they would not be found and were either dead or taken. Now, that their return was reported, the whole army was thrown into great rejoicing and celebration.

Charlemagne took lodging in Almont’s pavilion. An archbishop blessed the tent with words of the Holy Father, and all the camp’s physicians arrived to examine Charles’s wounds. They all said that

he would soon be healed and that he had suffered more buffets than wounds. He was treated so expertly that he was hale and well within a few days. One day afterward, Balant was presented to him. Charles did him much honor and created him one of his counselors, as Duke Namor had promised.

39: *Aftermath* [summary]

Gerard of the Thicket, who had not taken off his armor for two days and two nights (a notable feat at his age), at last disarmed and readied his army in the tower fortress to join with Charles's forces. Several days passed while both Gerard and Charles celebrated the victory, tended their wounded and buried their dead.

Roland Dubbed Knight

Balant Becomes Charlemagne's Counselor

51

At the same time when King Anglant made ready and departed from Reggio, Charlemagne (as told above) went to Almont's pavilion and lodged there and had his wounds tended. He was assured by his physicians that he would quickly heal. Then they all dined in great good cheer. Likewise did Gerard in the tower fort, with his sons and nephews. That night they stayed there and slept until daybreak.

In the morning, Charles, though still somewhat smarting from his wounds, sat on his throne in the royal pavilion which had once been Almont's. That pavilion (says our author) had walls of four different hues. The first was blue, and here was depicted the story of Jason. The next was all white, and here were shown all the mighty deeds of Hector and Achilles, how Achilles slew him, and how he was afterwards killed in the temple by Paris. The third was of gold. Here there was the story of Paris, his upbringing and his rape of Helen. The fourth was all scarlet red, and here was shown their

story of their god, Mahomet, and how when he was at the point of death, he regretted the evil of his life and wanted to show the Saracens that they should have themselves baptized, and washed himself with water, but could not speak. Even now the Saracens have a custom of washing themselves when they are about to die, saying that Mohammed did so as an example to them, yet know nothing of the baptism of Jesus Christ. Yet did Mahomet go to the devil, for he repented too late and died in despair when he saw that he was not understood. That was the pavilion in which Charles sat that morning.

52

On the morning following the victory, Charles sat on his throne in the pavilion which had been Almont's, and King Balant came before him with Duke Namo of Bavaria, knelt down at Charlemagne's feet, and said: "O most noble king, let me be baptized, and then I shall give you counsel to your advantage." Then did the king take him by the hand and sent news of this fact to the Pope. The Pope, overjoyed, rushed to Charles's pavilion and Balant knelt at his feet, weeping, begging for Holy Baptism. The Pope blessed him, sent for a little basin of water, and baptized Balant with his own hands.

Charles was his godfather, along with Duke Namo, and named him Veltachin. Then Charles put new garments on him and promised to endow him with a domain as soon as he came to France, and named him to his counsel. When Balant was baptized, there no finer knight in the whole army, nor a wiser, nor a braver. He said to Charles: "My lord, it was no treason in me to renounce Mohammed and believe in Jesus Christ. King Anglant cannot claim that I have betrayed him, for I am your prisoner. But be of good cheer. Now that Almont is dead, I care little for the rest. Nonetheless there is still King Ulien, son of King Salicoran of Sarsis. I tell you that, as soon as King

Anglant knows of the defeat, he will advance. He already has twenty kings, a hundred dukes and many nobles at his command, along with two hundred thousand Saracen troops, and those of the other two hundred thousand who have fled and will return to fight. I am sure they will attack. Therefore put your army in order.” Charles answered: “By my faith, we shall go to find them even in Reggio, if they do not come against us within three days from now.”

On the morning of the following day, Balant was the first to see King Anglant’s host arriving. He told King Charles and took him to see how they fell like a shadow upon the land seaward. Like fish when they are in love and darken all the water, so King Anglant’s host darkened all the ground. That is how numerous they were. Charles said: “By my faith, we shall go to meet them and put them all to the sword, like wild beasts.”

53

Charles was astonished when Balant pointed at Anglant’s army near Reggio and then at Messina Lighthouse, crowded with ships whose sails seemed like castles, so huge were they. When Charles asked him what things these were, Balant said that they were the navy that had brought Anglant from Africa, and of the great preparations he had made, and of how he had sent Troyan westward with three hundred thousand Saracens. “And yet there are, in this army here, some brave lords: Ulien and Aliadas, very near Almont.” Charles exclaimed, “Balant, upon my faith, Almont was a valiant knight. If he had possessed my armor, no man in the world would be of his quality. I have made proof of it.” Soon after, Charles said to the Holy Father: “It behooves you to go to Duke Gerard of the Thicket, for he will come sooner for love of you than of any other person. Tell him to come speak with me, and that I have a desire to seek his counsel, since the Saracens are advancing from Reggio.” “Gladly,” the Pope replied.

The Holy Father left Charlemagne's council and rode toward Gerard's tower, with four archbishops of the court and many other clergymen. When he was taken to the tower, he found, pitched outside it, the tent where Gerard lodged, with Gerard himself at table, eating. The Holy Father made the sign of the Cross and blessed him, and Gerard rose to his feet. The Pope asked him to be seated; then sat down likewise and delivered Charlemagne's message about how the Saracens were moving from Reggio. "Noble duke," he said, "the Holy Christian Faith is lost, unless it is defended." Gerard answered: "O Holy Father, cursed be the man who refuses to defend it; let him die (say I) with all of his lineage."

When he had eaten, he instantly mounted and, along with the Holy Father, made his way to the pavilion where Charles was waiting. Lord Clare, Lord Bussy, Arnaut and Rainier accompanied Gerard. Having dismounted, they entered the pavilion which had been Almont's, and Charles received them with great honor. After he had embraced Gerard, they left the pavilion. There was much talk between them, and Charles said to Duke Gerard: "You should have been a crowned king." Gerard replied that a king's responsibilities were too heavy: "And I am a sinner too readily made angry. It is a king's duty to be temperate, to love his true friends, and to maintain great temperance."

The Pope interrupted their talk and began to point toward the city of Reggio, saying: "My lords, the Saracens are beginning to come into view. Over there is the Lighthouse of Messina, where so many ships of our foes lie at anchor." All paid close heed.

Then Veltachin Balant was summoned and he pointed out everything in turn with his finger, for none knew the place better than he. While he was pointing toward the city, he said that the queen

resided there with twenty-two attendant queens. “And over there is the Lighthouse, and those white things are sails. Of those two large vessels that shine like burnished gold, the one is Anglant’s royal ship, and the other is the ship aboard which they offer sacrifice to the gods. Its sails are of silken cloth, and the cordage that hoists them is similarly of silk. Atop each of their masts stands a Mahound of fine gold.”

Then he showed them the army crowding against the mountains. It seemed like a cloud covering the earth, with no end in sight. Then he rehearsed the names of all the kings and lords who accompanied King Anglant, and how Ulien was the best champion in the army, and Aliadis next him, and Maldachin third.

Having showed them all this, he said: “My lord Charles, prepare your battle ranks, so that the pagans may not find you in disorder.” Charles clapped him on the shoulder and said: “If God gives me the grace of returning to France, my homeland, I will make you lord of so many lands that you will be forever content.” Balant gave him many thanks. Then Gerard, who saw the Saracens approaching and forming in battalions, turned to speak to Charles.

55-56: Charlemagne’s Proclamation [summary]

He advised Charlemagne to issue the following proclamation: “Let any man, be he rich or poor, young or old, who will fight bravely in this battle, step forward. I will knight him and if he prove his mettle, I will, upon my return in France, endow him with an ample domain.” Gerard then rode back to his tower, and Charles ordered the proclamation that Gerard had advised. Countless men sprang forward to embrace the offer.

Charles, seeing the multitude, withdrew to his pavilion and wept with grief, for he remembered his great losses in the last battle and considered how many were doomed to die in the next. But Duke Namor admonished him, saying his tears would spread fear among his people. At that moment, young Roland, who was lodged in a tent nearby with his cousin Astolph and with Namor’s nephews, Otho and Berlingher, and with Angelet of Brittany, said to his companions: “You have heard the cry go up. Let us ask Charles to knight us. If he will not, let us go to Gerard of the Thicket.” Duke Namor and Ogier the Dane were still with Charles, urging him to stand by his proclamation, when Roland came in.

Roland Demands a Knighthood

57

As soon as young Roland entered the pavilion, he took Duke Namor by the hand and said: "Lord Duke, what is it that Charles means to do? Does he want us to remain forever imprisoned? There is no man in the army so poor but that, if he desires arms, Charles will furnish him with them. But not us. Therefore, if Charles is not willing to arm us, we will go to Duke Gerard and ask him to employ us. For I have no desire to continue living like a sluggard. Until now he has employed me like a wretched vassal, and I have been riding a mule. But now that I have a good horse, I have no wish to squander more of my time." Ogier, who standing nearby, answered: "My sweet young Roland, you shall have armor and a horse and whatever you like. Leave it to us to speak for you." Then Ogier and Namor went in to the king, and young Roland entered behind them. Ogier said: "Sire, here is young Roland with his companions, and he begs you to employ them; otherwise they will go elsewhere." "So help me God," said Charles, "I shall not, for they are too young." Young Roland rejoined: "By my faith, let us go to Duke Gerard." "Ah!" said Charles; "I want you to wait until we return to Paris. On Ascension Day I will knight you, and then we will take an oath to go to war against Marsilius, King of Spain." "By my faith," said young Roland, "I will not. If you will grant our desire, we will serve you no longer from this day forth." But for Duke Namor, he would have rushed away, but Duke Namor reasoned with him and he stayed. The Duke whispered to young Roland: "My son, it is because he loves you so much that he fears for you. That is why he wants to knight you in Paris." Young Roland replied: "We want to serve God now when there is opportunity." And a blush was reddening his whole face. He was growing angry.

58

Charles knew full well that Roland was angry. So he called him back and said: “My dear nephew, do not vex yourself, for I will knight you right after dinner. I will dower you more richly than ever I dowered knight, and afterwards shall make a knight of whomever you desire. I will give you the sword that used to belong to Almont, who caused me so much travail, and whom you slew with the spear shaft. And because you are my nephew and of the noblest blood in all Christendom, I will give you other gifts aplenty.” Young Roland knelt down and kissed his feet. A shout of great joy arose when it became known that young Roland would be knighted. Charles continued: “You are of the noble blood of Clairmont, and of my own through your mother, my sister. Therefore I believe that no other knight shows fairer future promise.” Then Charles commanded many chests of weapons and harness be readied outside the tent for the knighting. He ordered his own royal pavilion to be erected, and Almont’s to be utterly destroyed. They went to sack it, for they had no desire, should any mischance befall, that the pagans be possessed of those riches. Meanwhile Duke Gerard returned to his own encampment and commanded the pavilions that he had seized from Margon and Asperant to be pulled down and destroyed, along with the banners that had been Almont’s. He had them ripped and divided among his men. When this was done, he addressed his whole army in the following manner:

59: ***Preparations for the Ceremony*** [summary]

He told them that, since they were outnumbered by the Saracens, he was willing to knight and equip any man who pledged to fight to his best ability. Over a thousand stepped forward and Gerard dubbed them all and endowed them with sufficient armor and weapons. That day, Gerard’s two sons, Miles and Guiscard also arrived, escorted by Duke Antelm the Red. Gerard sent to Charles to be knighted. Charlemagne himself bade Solomon and Namo to invest young Roland in his customary colors of quartered red and white, and his companions all in white. All thus stood in readiness for the rite.

Roland Knighted

60

Charles called young Roland before him and then took the sword Durandel and struck him on the shoulder. In the presence of all the lords and dukes there, he said: “Good sword, how many of my nobles have you taken from me, and how many noble knights have you slain! Charles, called Mainet, was your master before King Almont; but it did not please God that I should remain your master. By the strange workings of Fortune you came into the hands of the bravest warrior in the world. But now I, by the grace of Jesus Christ, bestow upon a champion who shall be an even stronger and braver warrior.” He then turned to young Roland⁶⁰ and presented him with that sword, saying: “You are entitled to this sword because you are of good descent, from Clairmont on your father’s side, and from the Royal House of France on your mother’s. I hereby knight you and create you Count of Angrant, Marquis of Brava, Falcon of Christendom, and Senator of Rome. I proclaim you God’s Champion, Gonfaliere of Holy Church, and heir-apparent to the crowns of France, Spain, and Aragon.” Then he gave him Briador, that splendid steed which had been King Almont’s and which was now called Veliantin, as well as the horn that had belonged to Almont. Finally he girt the sword to his left side. Ogier the Dane tied on one of his spurs, Morand the other, and Namor of Bavaria slung the shield upon his neck. Young Roland was resplendent in most noble armor, as were Otho, Berlingher, Astolph, and Angelet of Brittany. Charlemagne knighted them all. When Roland received the final mark of knighthood, that is the gauntlet blow, four hundred trumpets resounded and the whole army cried: “Mountjoy Saint-Denis! Long live Charlemagne and our champion Roland!” (It seemed a most propitious omen that the whole Christian host joined in that cry.) Roland kissed Charlemagne’s feet and Charlemagne gave him his blessing.

⁶⁰ This is the last time that the hero is named *Orlandino* (Young Roland); hereafter he is invariably called *Orlando*.

Then Roland mounted his horse and received the salute of many lances. Presently he rode back to Charlemagne. The king had already summoned Astolph, son of Otho, king of England. He now girded him with the sword that had once been King Sinador's until Charles's father Pepin conquered it in Gascony, and created him Duke of England, promising to crown him at Roland's coronation. Then he knighted Otho and Berlingher and Angelet the Breton and many other nobles. There were four thousand new knights altogether. He said to them: "My lords, I have endowed you and knighted you. Now I give you my nephew Roland for your captain, and Ogier the Dane for your preceptor. I command you, Roland, and all the rest of you, never to stray from Ogier the Dane's orders, for he is very seasoned in battle and knows how to conduct one." As he made the sign of the cross over them, the tears came into his eyes as he saw before him such a multitude of knights whose death was close at hand. Then Gerard's sons stepped forward, and Roland and his companions departed and encamped on a hillside.

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Roland in Battle

Preliminaries

67

King Charlemagne sent word to Duke Gerard that Anglant had dispatched two ambassadors and that he did not wish to reply to them without his advice. Gerard mounted at once and came to Charles's pavilion. He heard the ambassadors and then they withdrew into the tent. Gerard said: "How arrogant these Saracens are! Upon my faith, Charles, if you proceed by my lights, I would send him his son Almont's head with his arm and right shoulder. That would humble their pride."

All present approved Gerard's counsel. Charles then called Ogier the Dane, Richier the Vassal, and Bernard of Vienne and told them: "Take five hundred knights and ride at once to Pine Valley where we have left Almont's body. Bring my his head with his arm and right shoulder, together with the ring that he wore on his finger and the helmet on his head." The armed, mounted and went where Charles had commanded and brought back the those limbs as Charles had ordered.

Then Charles summoned the two ambassadors and told them: "Your tribute is ready." He had Almont placed in a rich chest covered with silk, with the helmet on his head, and accompanied by a scroll that declared who he was and how he had been killed by a page. He was placed on a packhorse. Five hundred Saracen prisoners were found, and each was given a banner to carry on the lance he carried. Charlemagne said to the two ambassadors: "Take this tribute to King Anglant, and see to it, for my honor's sake, that all the kings in your army be present to see it."

(Another book that I have read says that Charles showed Almont's body to the two ambassadors and told them from his own lips that a young boy had killed him with a spear shaft, and that they should go to proclaim it to the whole host. But this seems to me less likely.)

Having loaded the packhorse they rode back with those five hundred to King Anglant's camp. Charles told them that they could not get back the idols, since all of them had been broken up, and beaten down and scattered through the camp. At this, Ulien issued a challenge to fight the two best knights of the army, but King Charles said: "Sir Knight, it would be most dangerous to fight single-handedly with two." King Ulien and Calinder departed from Charles. Then four hundred trumpets sounded the call to battle, so that all Aspramont reechoed the sound.

As the two ambassadors were riding a way, Calinder said: "In faith, Ulien, I fear that this tribute may be a jest. Look how all the Christians gather to do battle, and how everything seems prepared for a fight. May Mahound grant that this be no false tribute." Ulien answered: "We shall see about this when we reach Emir Anglant." As they arrived at the ranks commanded by Maldachin, Buterant, and Caruel, they made much of the tribute and continued on their way with those three kings.

When they came up to the ranks of Maderant, Alicard and Danflor, they did likewise, and reached those of Aliadas, and then those of Passamont, Artoas and Florion; and then, of Dalfren, Pantaleaon and Asmagon; and finally those of Calinder himself and of the Emir of Syria and Abilant, with the ones of Alchin and the Mustapha. All of these had come to see the tribute that they had gathered. They found Anglant by his pavilion.

When King Anglant saw this, he hurried toward them smiling and said: "Welcome back, Ulien and Calinder. What will Charles do? Will he come to us, or does he send us the tribute?" Ulien answered: "He is indeed sending you tribute, but we do know what it is that he sends in this chest. He made us swear not to open it until we reached you. He said that he brought nor falcons nor hawks nor kestrels, much less greyhounds, from France, but that he brought lances, swords, and armor. He said he would not come to see you on foot to avoid shaming the Empire of Rome. And yet, by Mahound, he has few men, though they are all in armor." Calinder added: "My lord, have this chest broken open, for it seems to me, judging by Charles's word, that he is making fools of us. He says you were mad to trespass into his lands."

Anglant, surrounded by such a crowd of kings and dukes (for a huge crowd has come to see and hear) had the drapery removed and the chest forced upon. When he saw head and arm of his son, he fell down upon the chest half beside himself.

Presently a huge noise of lament rose as Almont's death became known throughout the host. All the terrified Saracens would have deserted their banners, but for their fear of their lord. Anglant, recovering, lamented loudly. Ulien and Calinder swore to be revenged against Charles, proclaiming that he had betrayed them, and all the others swore to Charles's death in vengeance for Almont.

King Anglant cried out: "O my son, the man who overcame you, if you fought man to man, had greater prowess than Hector of Troy. But in truth there must have been more than ten to overcome you. Now I see that Balant, Margon and Asperant have conspired to sell you to Charles to make the Christian faith triumph. Now your enemies and mine are happy. O brave Almont, my sweet son, you have died through of your great audacity in not letting me know how things stood with you. Shame kept you from letting Gorant tell me of your need. O Balant, Margon, and Asperant, you traitors, how you have laid low and destroyed our faith! Nobody except Alibrun told me the truth, and he has born witness to it in death."

Then all the barons cried: "King Anglant, make haste toward Aspramont. Let us avenge him!" Anglant commanded the head, along with those limbs, to be embalmed so that they would be preserved, and ordered it to be placed aboard a frigate and conveyed to Africa. So it was done; that same day the frigate that bore it sailed forth.

69

King Anglant sent off these remains and then ordered all the leaders to return to their troops. He urged them to avenge Almont, who had been their champion, and then gave the signal for battle. Each of them turned back to encourage his troops. Who now could describe the noise that then arose, of shouts and of horns, of tabors, castanets and kettledrums?

On the other side, Charlemagne, as soon as he had dismissed Anglant's two emissaries, ordered the first rank to advance toward the Saracens. Therefore Roland and Ogier moved step by step toward the right Saracen flank reached their ranks just as that uproar began.

At this point, the Apostolic Father of Rome summoned Archbishop Engelmaier of Germany and said to him: "Sir Archbishop, take this cross and carry it in advance of the ranks, so that it may serve as the Christian banner." The archbishop replied: "Holy Father, though I am wearing armor, command me rather to a sing mass or matins. For I am mounted on this steed to escape the Saracen advance." The pope told him: "You are behaving like a coward." Then he called the Abbot of Saint Giles of Provence to carry it. "By my faith," said the abbot, "I shall not do so, for I am in armor for fear of their arrows." Then he called another bishop, but no man was willing to carry it. At last he chanced upon Archbishop Turpin of Rana. The Holy Father hailed him, saying: "Whence do you come, sir?" Turpin answered: "I am from Lyon and an archbishop. Turpin of Rana is my name, bishop of Saint Martin. Lyon is mine by inheritance, but I have bestowed it upon my first cousin Walter. I am of the Mongrana bloodline." The Apostolic Father then said: "Turpin, you derive from a mighty lineage. Therefore I give you this cross, which will make you the most revered priest in the world after myself. Bear it in front of the ranks, so that God may grant them victory." "Gladly," said Turpin, "and may God be my aid." He dismounted and the Pope gave him his blessing. Then Turpin said: "I take up this ensign on condition that, if any knight, squire or noble ever avert his face from it to flee from the Saracens and I do not kill him with my own hands, let no mass or holy office be said for me, for such a man shall be considered an enemy of the Christian faith, as though he belonged to an African people." He added: "If you, Holy Father, do not grant me this boon, take up the cross yourself, for I will not otherwise carry it." Then the Pope embraced him and said: "Blessed be he who begot you and she who conceived you and carried you in her

womb. In God's name, take off your helmet, so that I may look upon you for a little while." Turpin doffed his helmet and the Pope dubbed him Knight of God; he also had a charter drawn up granting Turpin's conditions. Then he gave him the holy cross, along with five hundred armed knights. With that honor guard, Turpin rode toward Ogier the Dane's banners.

The Three Saints

70

As Turpin rode along, the whole army did reverence to the cross, dismounting from their horses. After Turpin reached Ogier's and Roland's division, they moved on for a short distance until they reached a hillside from which they could see the Saracens coming and halted. Roland and his four thousand were at their head.

As their banners came to rest, three knights appeared in the plain, with shining white surcoats over their armor. None knew who they were. (As our history recounts, these were three saints, miraculously sent by God for the defense of the Christian faith.) When Ogier saw these three knights, he rode toward them and asked whether they were French or English. The first replied: "Ogier, I shall tell you who we are, but you must say nothing of it until the battle is done. I am Saint George, and this is Saint Demetrius, and the third man here is Saint Mercury."⁶¹ Ogier leapt from his horse and implored the three saints' pardon. Saint George granted him pardon and Ogier remounted his horse. Then Saint George said: "I have been entrusted with the first blow in this battle, and I shall bestow it upon Roland, to dub him Knight of God." At this point, Ogier saw the Saracens advance. His courage had grown because of these saints and he readily gave the signal for

⁶¹ George . . . Demetrius . . . Mercury: The list of names varies from account to account, including *Li Fatti di Spagna*, chapter 25 (*q.v.*), which features four rather than three saints

battle. The Saracens came down from a mountainside into the plain and poured into a valley against the Christians. Then Roland and his band braced themselves and it is easy to believe, since they were all young and untried in battle, that they grew somewhat anxious. The timorous blood of boyhood began to course through their veins. Then Saint George left his companions and approached Roland.

At this moment, King Maldachin was speaking to a huge African, named Argalias. . . .⁶² Maldachin had heard a soothsayer say: “Whoever strikes the first blow will cause his side to win the battle.” That African was considered the mightiest man in the Saracen army (though his intellect was not so sharp), and thus Maldachin sent him forth. He was strongly armed and in stature like a giant, and moved with the speed of a desperate man. Had God not interposed His hand, no man in the Christian army could have withstood him. That man, at Maldachin’s command, now advanced and was the first of the Saracens to arrive.

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When the Saracen began to move, Roland saw him. His stature seemed so immense that he began to feel timorous as a boy. Then Saint George shouted at Roland’s right: “Put you lance in rest and ride at him. Pay no heed to his size.” These words encouraged Roland. He grasped his shield, gave spur to his horse, and put his lance in rest.

Ah, Thou True God! what human tongue could speak, what pen could write the outcry that arose from the multitude on either side at this charge, to make even the bravest tremble with fear? The peaks, the hillsides, the valleys of Aspramont all resounded; countless instruments failed the breaths of those who blew them, and at the noise many knights fell from their mounts, and many

⁶² named Argalias . . . : Maldachin’s speech to Argalias is missing in the manuscript.

others dropped their weapons. And ever the Saint kept shouting: "Ride bravely, for God's cross will aid you."

Roland, however, did not know who it was who was thus exhorting him. Nonetheless, he encountered the Saracen, who broke his lance against him. But Roland thrust his own through his body and out his back, felling him dead to the ground. After this blow, he charged the enemy ranks, drew his sword, and killed many Saracens. Then did Maldachine stand in wonder, remembering the soothsayer. Roland veered around, sheathed his sword, and snatched up another lance. Taking cover under his shield, he charged forward, and made his way toward the Saracen banner.

Now you shall hear of a miracle that God wrought to terrify the Saracens, and good cause had they to fear the utmost. When Roland had turned, he grasped his lance and gave spur to Veliantin, who chomped the bit and began to gallop with desperate speed. Then Maldachin began to charge at Roland.

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The great force of these two noble barons shook the ground. Maldachin struck Roland but could not dislodge him from the saddle, but Roland cast him to the ground. Since he had not lost his spear, he put it back in rest and overthrew Buterant, and after him Caruel, amid the Saracen formation. He then tried to turn his horse back, but could not, so that it carried him from that first formation into the second, where he overthrew Maderas, Danflor and Alicard. Still the impetus of his steed carried him forward from that second rank into the third. Roland tried with all his might to rein in his horse, but could not. Now Ulien and Aliadas were coming at him, and Roland thrust them to the ground, horses and all, passing through that rank as well. At the noise that arose from this third rank, those in the fourth leapt into the saddle and grasped their lances. Dire fear spread

through the ranks that Roland had passed, and a great outcry arose from them: “Alas, Mohammed, what people are these whom we have come to fight? If the other Christian knights act like him, we are all dead men.” In the fourth rank, Roland overthrew Artoan, Passamont, and Florion, and, passing from the fourth to the fifth, Asmagon, Dalfren, and Pantaleon. His horse continued to hurtle him forward, into the sixth, where he overthrew Abliant, the Almansor, and Calinder, and still his horse’s speed carried him through that rank into the seventh, where overthrew the Mustapha and Alchin. At this there rose another cry from the host. Roland had overthrown all these whom our author mentions by name, yet he and his horse also overthrew more than two hundred of whom no mention is made. Roland afterwards said that often intended to cast down his lance, but could not do so.

As Roland was amid the Mustapha’s formation, that is, the seventh, the noise was great. King Anglant, hearing the noise, came out of his pavilion and, when he saw that knight, all by himself, coming from afar, ordered his knights to charge him. He himself, alongside King Ferrin of Oliphant, mounted. They encountered Roland, who overthrew them both.

Now Anglant recognized the horse that had belonged to his son Almont. As he rose to his feet, he saw Roland riding away. Anglant said: “O noble steed, what barbarous folk is mastering you! O noble steed, every man gladly returns to his homeland, and you are carrying your rider toward Reggio, where you were wont to be mastered. Go on then, and may Mahound come to your aid! Well may he fare who shall master you then. But you are not bringing back the man whom you have carried into Aspramont.”

Anglant returned to his lodgings, much vexed at being overthrown. Roland had passed through the whole host and three miles beyond. He was carried through a great forest and arrived at a small

meadow. His horse stopped in the midst of the great forest, Roland pricked him with the spurs to make him go on, and could not move him. While he was straining to move his horse, he saw three knights, armed head to foot, riding towards him with sword in hand. They were shouting: "False Christian, surrender!" Roland threw down his lance to draw his sword, but could not dislodge it from the scabbard

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Until this moment, Roland had felt no fear, but when he saw these he was deadly afraid. Unable to move his horse, he tried to dismount and could not move from the saddle. He tried to draw his sword and could not get it out of the scabbard. Now one of these three struck him a great blow on the helmet and cried: "Surrender, Christian knight!" and the second did likewise, and so did the third. Roland cried out: "Have mercy on my soul, O Jesus Christ, and be mindful of Charlemagne, that he may not be defeated!" and tried hard to defend himself, but was unable to move. Roland thought he was under an enchantment and signed his face with the cross. Then the three laughed for joy and said: "Sir knight, surrender yourself to Christ, and swear fealty to us for Him, for we are three saints sent by God to defend Christendom." Then did Roland leave his saddle and fall on his knees. They too dismounted, took his helmet from his head, and dubbed him Knight of Jesus Christ, and each granted him a boon. Saint George granted him the grace of never finding a knight who would overcome him. (Some say he also granted him the grace of never losing any blood.) Saint Demetrius granted him the grace of never dying unless he asked for death. Saint Mercury granted him the grace of not dying incommunicate if he was truly repentant. (Some say that also granted him the grace of being undefeated in battle for three days. But I have not found this in my book.) Each of them confirmed him as God's Knight. Then they laced his helmet back upon his head, helped him back on his horse, and said: "Return freely along the road you have come by.

Have no fear, for we shall always be with you.” Roland gave them hearty thanks, once more grasped his shield, resheathed his sword, put his lance in rest, and rode back toward the Saracens.

When Anglant saw him returning, and rode toward him. Then one of the three saints rode before him and the other two behind him, and by their power brought him through that formation. He made his way back through all the others and rejoined his own men. During his return, he had merely broken his lance, and he was holding his sword in his hand. There was great rejoicing at his coming, for a rumor of his death had already spread through the army, and the Christians had lost many men to Maldachin. King Anglant betook himself to Alicard’s division to urge the Saracens into battle.

74-81: *The Battle Continues* [summary]

Upon returning to battle, Roland was attacked by Maldachin. He was very much afraid of him, but Saint George cheered him to stand his ground until he kills Maldachin by cleaving in two from head to saddle. The terrified infidels began to flee as Astolph, Berlingher, Otho and Angelet entered the fray. Buterant nearly killed Astolph, but was killed when Ogier came to the rescue. The pagan first rank gave way, but Anglant sent in the second rank under Maderas’ command. Though the Christians stood firm, their advance was thwarted.

Seeing their peril, Charles sent in Ansewig of Brittany with his five thousand. In addition, Gerard’s men, led by Clare and Bussy. Once more the Saracens began to flee, and once more their rout was halted, this time by Danflor and Alicard. At this point, Gerard of the Thicket entered in person. The Duke of Nador and Alterachin, Ulien’s nephew, then fell to the Christians, and now Ulien himself, sounding his horn, led a fierce countercharge.

Ulien immediately cut down Clare’s cousin, Walter of San Romano; then brought his banner guard into the fight. (The device on his banner was a black dragon led on a scarlet chain by a maiden. It signified Ulien’s love for the fair Calindes. Much did that love cost the Christians.) During this charge he slew Morand of Riviera. The Christians wavered even more when Aliadas joined him. This caused Charles to send in Desiderius of Pavia, Solomon, Thierry and Ganelon. On the pagan side, Ulien, together with Aliadas and his son Maladin, fought mightily and were soon joined by Alicard, Danflor, and Caruel. The battle hung in the balance until Duke Namo was sent in by Charles, who, with Roland and Ogier, finally made the pagans turn in flight.

With three of the pagan ranks routed, the fourth attacked under Florion, Passamont and Artoan. Many Christians fell to their charge, including Guiscard of Natuel, Rambaud of Lorraine, Thierry of Brois, Guy of Pavia and Angeliers of Unismars. Charles sent in the Marquis Berlingher next, and in the desperate struggle that followed, King Artoan falls to Lord Clare and King Florion to Orlando, and Ulien at last withdrew, shouting: “Ab Fortune, none can resist you. In this short while you have taken from us all that spent so much time and toil to conquer!” Then nightfall ended the first day of battle.

As the second day dawned, Anglant sent out his fifth rank under Pantaleon, Asmagon and Dalfren. Fugitives from the other ranks were still hurrying toward them, but some of them, seeing help on the way, turned back to the fight. Among the noble Christians who met their deaths then were Gilfroy Grey mantle, Samson of Normandy, Manfred of Laldeonis. But when Astolph mortally wounded Aliadas, the Christians launched a countercharge in which Lord Clare struck down Pantaleon, Roland beheaded Dalfren, and Ogier the Dane dispatched Asmagon with a sword-thrust through the teeth. Anglant sent in the sixth rank under Calinder, Abilas and the Almansor of India. He said to Abilas: "I have raised you from infancy. I have given you a noble wife, daughter to Bramant and sister to Triamides. I have crowned you king of two realms. Now let us see how you thank me." That man rode out and immediately killed Guyon of Navarre (that former Saracen whom Ogier caused to be baptized). In response, Charles dispatched King Druon, Hubert of Anjou, Duke Aymon, Gryphon and Hugh. The battle that then began was fiercer than the one the Greeks fought at Troy. The three saints were everywhere present and the Christians steadily gained ground.

As the sun declined toward the southwest, Lord Bussy saw Ulien draw part on a little hill to survey the field. Bussy immediately challenged him and as he turned, others rode up on both sides to engage. Gerard and his kin performed great feats of valor, though Astolph twice needed to be rescued. (The first time, when Alicard unhorsed him, Roland helped him back on his steed, saying: "You are none too steady in the saddle, cousin." Astolph was somewhat angry at this.) Meanwhile Anglant had sent out his seventh and last rank of picked men under Alchin and the Mustapha. They launched a two-pronged attack, from both the Saracen camp and the Vale of Pines. With Alicard still confronting them, the Christians were no beset on three sides.

Never had there been a more terrible battle. The ground was covered with dead bodies and the rivers ran blood. Seventy thousand Christians were facing three hundred thousand Saracens. Even Roland blanched, but the three saints cried to him with one voice: "Have no fear, O champion of God. We shall win this battle." Then did the pagan numbers seem paltry to Roland and he attacked with all his strength. Yet were the Christians hard beset and only the great deeds of Roland, Clare, Ogier, Angelet, Solomon and Richier held them together. Here and there they were beginning to flee.

When Charles saw this, he commanded Fulk of Normandy to take up the Oriflamme and, amid a great noise of trumpet, himself rode into the fight. His charge somewhat rallied the Christian host. He overthrew the Almansor of India and killed him. Then he drew Joyous and hurled himself into midst of the fight, under a rain of lances and arrows. Seeing him in such danger, the Christians began to falter again, but Roland cried: "By the God who made me, if any man dares to flee, I shall make a corpse of him." This turned the tide. Seeing the Oriflamme, the Christians to a man rushed forward bravely and the Saracens gave ground everywhere. Gerard and his kinsmen took possession of the hilltop; Charles commanded the mountainside beneath; Desiderius, with Namo, Druon, Orlando and Ugier were in control of the whole valley. In vain did Ulien sound his horn to hold the pagans; they were running away on every side. At last he, too, with Alicard and Maladin, fled across a river and through a swamp beyond it.

The Mustapha Plots Treason

82

While the Saracens were in flight, Ulien, Alicard and Maladin reached King Anglant's pavilion. They each saluted him in turn, but he answered none but Ulien, to whom he said: "My nephew Ulien, you

once asked me for a boon, which was the land of France, and I promised you should have it after Almont's death. But I now recognize that you have not deserved it, nor any of you other knights, coward that you are, who have abandoned my army and fled from battle. But the Christians do not flee, frightened by neither shouts nor threats. You and the rest have caused Almont's death. You advised me in Africa to make passage hither; all of you seized France and Flanders in words. Now, when there is need of you, you abandon the battle. No realm is ever conquered by flight." As he spoke, Calinder, Danflor, Abilant and Alchin also arrived. When Ulien had heard Anglant tell him to he would go to sleep and take refresh himself somewhat and then rearm, Ulien replied: "My lord, I do not say this to contradict you, but in all Africa and Syria there is not a man (not excepting your own lineage) who has served you as well as I. Because of me, you hold Damascus and all Syria, and Arabia, and Media, and Armenia. I have lost much of my blood on your behalf, and I loved Almont better than any other man. Never once have I harbored a villainous thought against you."

While Anglant was thus remonstrating with Ulien, a knight came before the king who was wounded and whose whole armor was hacked and splintered. He said: "King Anglant, give me some of your men to lead into battle. You have abandoned me and not sent me the help I needed." King Anglant said: "In faith, I do not know you." He replied, saying: "The Saracens call me Aliadas. The Christians are valiant men." When Anglant understood that this was Aliadas, he was plunged into utmost sorrow and said: "O noble king, once in Africa I crowned Almont and Lampal's son Hector, and you were the third on that same day!" That King Aliadas had been wounded in battle by Astolph of England and left for dead. He was then carried like a dead man from the field. Now he fell dead at King Anglant's feet.

Then Anglant pleaded and commanded all to return to battle. He sent Ulien back to the fight with twenty thousand, and Calinder with another twenty thousand. Then he summoned Alicard and

Danflor and gave them ten thousand each, and asked them both to return into battle, and then sent for Asmagon, gave him ten thousand knights, and told him to accompany them. He said to them all: "Fight bravely, for I have sent for forty thousand reinforcements to the Mustapha. These will be at the Christian rear, and I shall now send them twenty thousand more. Victory will be ours before nightfall." He then summoned one of the Mustapha's sons, gave him the twenty thousand knights, and said: "Go to your father and tell him to attack the Christian rear, and we shall engage them here." He departed and went to his father. When the Mustapha saw his son (he had four of them), he called him aside and said: "My dear son, King Anglant little cares for us. He wants to send us to our deaths by making us attack Charles' army. When we attack and he flees, we will be at the mercy of the Christian swords and will all be killed. Before this happens, let us first do to him what he wants to do to us. We have more than one reason for this. He has killed your cousins and my nephews, Asperant and Margon. Therefore let us go to Reggio and let the Christians cut him to pieces. Almont is dead, and we will make ourselves masters of Africa." Having said this, he began to move across the plain shoreward and made his way toward Reggio. He rode all day before arriving there.

83-91: *The Third Day of Battle* [summary]

The Mustapha gained admission into Reggio by means of a lie: he gave out that Anglant was victorious and had entrusted the city to him. Once entered, the Mustapha's army turned on the garrison that Anglant had left behind and slaughtered most of them. They then burnt and sacked the city. Only the queen escaped by taking refuge in a tower near the harbor. The treacherous Mustapha then sailed back to Africa and, since it was poorly defended, seized its rule.

Anglant, who as yet knew nothing of the Mustapha's desertion, now ordered the third day of battle to begin. At first the Christians had the advantage. Arnaut killed Asmagon and Roland killed Abilant. As the Saracens lost ground, Anglant was confident that the Mustapha would soon come to their aid. Presently he learned of the Mustapha's treason. Yet he ordered Ulien to launch a full-scale attack. Several prominent Christians were slain (among them Gerard's relative, Aymeric of Vienne, and Morand's cousin Manfred) and many others were grievously wounded.

Charlemagne himself now entered the fight, but the outlook remained bleak. Presently a messenger informed him that reinforcements under Hubert of Gascony and William of Scotland had just arrived at the Christian camp. Sending Solomon to fetch them into combat at once, Charles resumed battle with a will. He killed Maladin, and Ogier killed Argalias. But most of Christians still remained helpless against the murderous Ulien. Then Solomon brought in the fresh Gascon and Scottish troops.

At Solomon's arrival, Charles ordered Fulk to lead on with the Oriflamme and attacked. The destruction of the Saracens was now at hand. On the other side of the battle, Gerard saw the Oriflamme advance in triumph and grew envious of Charles's success. He called Lord Clare and said to him: "Never come before me again until you have brought me Anglant's head. Roland, who is a mere boy, killed Almont with a spear shaft. Now all the honor shall be his, unless we can do something on our part." Then he himself rushed into battle with his Burgundians. The Saracens began to panic. Alicard and Danflor on one side, and Calindres and Albin on the other fled toward Anglant's tent. Only Ulien stood firm, but could do nothing against the Christian onslaught.

Ogier encountered Roland in the fight and said to him: "If we last two hours more, the day is ours. But stay by my side, for even a rout can be perilous." Roland replied: "Keep watch over yourself, and I will keep watch over me. Let's go kill these Saracens and stop this idle talk." As Anglant sent in more men under Salindras and Cordoan, Roland turned to Astolph, Otho, Berlingher and Angelet, saying: "See how the Duke of Burgundy is fighting over there. If we do nothing, all the honor of the battle will be his, and we shall be shamed." Seeing the dragon banner of Anglant's forces, they attacked them. Angelet killed Calinder, Otho killed Salindras, Roland killed Cordoan, and Astolph killed an emir. The rest of the Saracens fled in terror. In another part of the field, Ulien sent Alicard into an attack of Fulk's Oriflamme guard, during which Alicard slew Hugh, the Seneschal. Roland, witnessing this from afar, sped in his direction and stretched Alicard dead on the ground.

When Florindo and Albin brought news of this to Anglant, he first sent out King Emanuel with ten thousand men. Emanuel did much damage and slew Walter of Savoy, but was cut down by Ogier. Albin, who rode with him fell to Astolph's lance, and Salindras to Richier's sword. King Anglant was thus forced to go into battle himself, with his whole remaining force, which still numbered a hundred thousand. Seeing that huge number, Charles prudently withdrew somewhat and concentrated his ranks, and Gerard of the Thicket did likewise. He turned to Lord Clare, saying: "Remember what I told you!" and then addressed his troops: "Have at them, my brave Burgundians! Let us repay our debt to God."

Anglant himself left his banners behind on a hill and descended into the valley to lead his hundred thousand. Now the battle cries resounded: "Mounjoy Saint-Denis! Long live Charlemagne!" from the Christians, and "Tabir Mohammed! Long live Anglant!" from the pagans. A terrible slaughter began. On one side, Charles's men with the Oriflamme once more advanced so strongly that Gerard, seeing this, grew envious. He decided to charge up the hill to capture Anglant's banners. Not even Ulien could stop him. Before long, Anglant looked behind him and saw his own red dragon banner pulled to the ground. He tried to turn back, but was unable to break through the Christian ranks. Gerard meanwhile sent his men back down to assist Charles, but said to Lord Clare: "Remember Anglant!" Meanwhile, Ulien, Danflor and Florindo were battling Charlemagne's troops. Danflor struck down Namo's son, Berlingher. Thinking he had killed him, Namo charged toward him, but Richier reached him first, cut him down and helped Berlingher get free. Anglant saw his Saracens flee on all sides and wished to attack the Oriflamme himself, but Ferrin of Oliphant persuaded him not to risk his person. Instead, Anglant sent out the great archer, Maldras of Turkey. Maldras, seeing Charles, aimed a poisoned arrow at him. The arrow missed Charles but struck his horse, which fell dead. Upon seeing Charles fall, Anglant rejoiced and promised to make Maldras a king at his return. Just then Roland came storming through thick ranks of pagans and with his sword cleft Maldras down to the chest.

Another mount for Charles was quickly found and the rout of the Saracens continued. (Among the Christians who fought with distinction was Ganelon of Maganza.) As the pagan army began to scatter in flight, Ferrin persuaded Anglant to retreat to higher ground. Elsewhere, even Ulien tried to retreat, but his way was blocked by Richier the Vassal. They exchanged formal challenges and fought a fierce duel in which Ulien was killed. At his death, Ulien's horse bolted and could not be caught. It arrived near Almont, covered with blood. The king collapsed with sorrow at the sight, but Ferrin held him up, saying: "Look, my lord, the Christians are advancing against us. For God's sake, let us get away from here."

Almont and the remainder of his army now occupied a hilltop. Charles was charging up the hill from one side, and Gerard, from the other. As he met Charles's attack, Ferrin was killed by Solomon. Almont, seeing his last champion cut down, began to flee downhill. He still had twenty thousand men. Lord Clare noticed his flight and, remembering Gerard's command, went in pursuit. At the same moment Roland reached the top of the hill. Seeing Clare following Anglant, he too followed, but took a path that, he thought, would take him ahead of them. Gerard, fearing for Clare's safety, also decided to follow, taking Bussy and some five thousand men with him.

Meanwhile, Anglant had reached a little valley. He now rallied his troops, saying: "The Christians are scattered and busy with pillage. It will now be easy to take them." Lord Clare, seeing them turn back in his direction, grew afraid of their numbers. He would have fled, but, seeing Roland coming toward him from the side, grew ashamed, put his lance in rest, and charged the pagans. Roland said to himself: "It will be my eternal shame if I do not help this man." He, too, put his lance in rest and charged.

Had not Gerard arrived at this moment, they would both have perished. But the Burgundians attacked bravely. Bussy killed Carsalins of Albania; Roland killed Gurondalis; Clare killed Sinagar of Morocco. Then Ogier, who was looking for Roland, also arrived, with Namor and Astolph. Anglant, in a desperate last stand, killed Walter of Lyon and overthrew Gerard's son Miles and Otho, although these two recovered. Finally, Druon and Desiderius arrived to swell the Christian force. Seeing himself thus outnumbered, Anglant slipped away alone through a valley, while all his men were being put to the sword by the Christians. As Anglant began to ride up a nearby mountainside, Clare once more caught sight of him and followed, and Roland followed him. Not far behind them came the main body of Charles's army. Balant was with them and, when he beheld his old liege in flight, was overcome with pity and rode to meet him, so that he arrived at almost the same moment as Lord Clare.

Anglant's Death

92

King Anglant left the battle, filled with grief, rage, and worry. He intended to make his way to Reggio to find his navy. (The Mustapha had sacked the city of Reggio and burnt it to the ground.) Now, as he was descending from his hill, Lord Clare was behind him, loudly shouting: "Sir knight, you who display that red dragon in a silver field, turn back toward me, if you are a gentleman!"

Anglant turned around and saw Clare riding alone. Said Anglant: "By my faith, sir knight, you will regret having followed me so far from your people! Are you a knight or a noble?" Lord Clare replied: "I am the son of a duke and the nephew of another. I hail from Burgundy and Gerard is my uncle." Even as he was speaking, Roland came riding up and said: "O noble Lord Clare, this quarrel is mine, since it was I who slew Anglant's son."

Charles in the meantime had given order for his tents to be raised and pitched where King Anglant's stood, and for those of the pagans to be pulled down. Then he ordered Fulk to pursue King Anglant, together with those Christians who were already in chase of him, and he obeyed.

The story returns to Lord Clare and Roland, and to Anglant who now found himself caught between the lion's paws. Roland was saying that the quarrel was his and Clare would not allow this, since he had arrived first. But when Anglant heard that it was Roland who had killed Almont, he insisted on fighting with him. When Clare would not permit it, Anglant said: "Then, in faith, I will fight you both."

The first turn in combat was Lord Clare's. They struck each other with their lances and, having broken them, went to swords. After just two blows, Lord Clare killed Anglant's horse beneath him. So they dismounted, each grasping his sword. (Malpesant was the name of Anglant's sword.) As they were turning toward each other and about to close in, Balant arrived. Seeing King Anglant, he drew near to him and said in the African tongue: "O noble king of the Orient, for God's sake, be pleased to turn to the Christian faith. Almont is dead, and so are Ulien and Calinder and all your men. Surrender to Charles and do not insist on dying such a hard death. Charlemagne is a gracious and courteous lord. In God's name, be pleased to surrender to him."

Lord Clare, hearing these words, refrained from more blows to let him be baptized. Anglant asked Balant who he was, and he replied: "I am Balant, who has so well serve you in Aspramont. My horse was killed beneath me and I was taken prisoner. The Christians have spared my life if I accepted baptism. I have renounced Mohammed and been baptized. If you, my lord, do likewise, your life will be spared." Said King Anglant: "You have acted like the traitor that you are. Are you Balant, then? The man whom I raised from infancy, and made knight, and endowed with the crowns of Armenia and Condras, and whose son Gorant I appointed commander of all my troops? In my present need you have requited me as Antipater⁶³ requited my ancestor Alexander. You and Margon and Asperant have sold my son to Charles. Get out of my sight, traitor!" Balant answered; "My lord, be pleased to accept baptism, for I shall give you certain proof that I never betrayed you. Do not insist on death. Charlemagne will soon be here, with all the brave Christians. The Christian faith never lies, for it is the true faith."

Balant kept imploring him and, seeing that his prayers were of no avail, said to King Anglant: "Since you will not convert to faith in Christ, you will die like a wild beast." These words filled Anglant with fury, and he rushed at Balant with his sword. He aimed a blow at him that, had it reached its mark, would have cut him in half. But Balant had no wish to turn upon his lord, and thus he ran away. The blow landed on the ground and the sword's point struck a stone, so that the sword broke in half. Almont ran to his dead horse, snatched up an axe, turned back upon Lord Clare, and began a bitter battle.

Roland, witnessing this perilous combat, prayed God to help Lord Clare. Meanwhile many Burgundians had begun to arrive. At this point, Roland left the place.

⁶³ Antipater: Chief advisor to Alexander the Great and, after his death, ruler of Macedon. According to one legend, Antipater poisoned his benefactor Alexander to gain the crown.

One of Gerard's interpreters had come up. Lord Clare had several times asked Anglant to surrender to Duke Gerard, but he had not understood him. Now Lord Clare asked the interpreter to call on him to surrender, since Lord Clare dearly desired to bring him to Gerard alive. So that interpreter said in the African language: "O Saracen prince, surrender to this knight and you shall save your life. If you do not surrender, you shall die and be dragged all through the camp, and your body shall be burnt and your ashes scattered to the winds." Anglant, mistaking him for Balant, said: "Ah, Balant, you traitor! Are you still telling me to surrender! Take this blow from my axe." The interpreter answered: "You speak my name in error. You call me Balant of Scandia and Armenia; but I am an Englishman, a poor soldier. I know how to speak African because I was once taken prisoner and lived in Africa for eight years before I escaped. Choose now: either surrender or defend yourself." Anglant then began to curse the Christian faith and all you worshipped by it.

When Lord Clare heard him blaspheming (after the interpreter had told him), he bitterly assailed him and gave him a great blow on the helmet. King Anglant struck him just as harshly. Clare threw away his shield, grasped his sword with both hands, and heaved at Anglant, striking off part of his helmet. Anglant also grasped his axe in both hands to strike at Clare, but the blow missed and the king fell forward to the ground upon his knees. Then Clare thrust at him from the side with the point of his sword and pierced his loins. King Anglant fell, and Lord Clare pulled off his helmet and cut his head from his shoulders. He then mounted his horse and carried the head to his uncle Gerard, as he had been commanded.

Gerard's Rivalry Revives

Roland Lost and Found

93

While Lord Clare was in combat with Anglant, as told above, Charles had his own tents brought and erected in place of King Anglant's. He inquired after his barons, and behold Astolph, Otho, Berlingher, and Angelet returned. Learning that they did not know where Roland was, Charlemagne was much grieved. He had him sought for throughout the camp, but he was nowhere to be found.

Duke Gerard came to Charlemagne. Their two camps close together, and still neither Lord Clare nor Roland were found. The victory thus seemed a paltry and sorrowful affair, and was much grief at the loss of both, especially of Roland. Two thousand knights left their tents in search of them. Gerard had two reasons for sorrow: one was the loss of his nephew, the other that Roland received more honor than Lord Clare.

While all were thus grieving, Ogier the Dane returned. Charles, not seeing Roland with him, gave Ogier many harsh words. Hearing these words, Ogier left his tent in tears. Despite its victory, the army was in a very troubled state. Presently a number of knights arrived in haste at the pavilion and brought news that Roland was coming back. He had been seen near the edge of the camp. Charles, hearing that he was on his way, was extremely delighted.

Ogier went to meet Roland on the way and told him of the harsh words he had received from Charles. Roland laughed at this but, but when he entered his uncle Charles's tent, greatly rebuked him, saying that he had no better baron at his court than Ogier, and that he could bear witness to this himself, for he had seen proof.

When Gerard saw that Roland was back but did not see his nephew, he left without a word to Charles, mounted his horse and took the road toward Reggio. Charles did not take his departure kindly.

While riding toward Reggio, Gerard met Balant who brought him news of his nephew. Then Gerard, professing himself greatly obliged to Balant, said: "Roland shall not garner all the honors." He had not gone much farther when he came upon Clare himself, carrying King Anglant's head. Lord Clare was accompanied by three hundred knights. Gerard said: "My dear nephew, were it not for this glorious deed of yours, no Burgundian should ever again have find either praised or honor at Charles' court. All the glory would have gone to that bastard, Roland." This said, he added that he had no wish encamp with Charlemagne, but would lodge with his own men in the city of Reggio. He ordered Bussy, Arnaut, and Rainier to proceed thither with four thousand men, and they did so. Upon arriving at Reggio, they entered without hindrance and found not a soul in the city. All the Saracens had fled by sea, and many of their sails could still be seen. Duke Gerard took the place without striking a blow.

When the reached the royal palace, they found most of King Anglant's treasure. The duke commanded Anglant's body to be carried into the city and had a stone sepulcher prepared for it, so that it should always be remembered. Then he gave orders that whatever pagans could still be found be killed if they refused to be baptized. He also ordained the burial of those men of his who had died in battle. Those of noble blood were brought into Reggio and interred on holy ground in churches. He ordered the rebuilding of a monastery that the pagans had destroyed, where many could bury their dead to their greater honor. He told Lord Clare, Arnaut, Rainier and Guerrin to go on the next morning to Charlemagne and to take to him thirty mules laden with provision, along with Anglant's head. They were to declare, on Gerard's behalf, that this was not to be considered a

sign of either homage or fealty. And all that he ordered was quickly performed. On the next morning the four were on horseback and riding toward King Charles's camp.

94: **Charles Receives Gerard's Gifts** [summary]

Charles also gave orders for the burial of the fallen. The bodies of the noblest born were sent to Rome. The spoils were distributed and the Pope celebrated a mass of thanksgiving during which he proclaimed a plenary indulgence. While Charles sat at banquet, Lord Clare arrived with his embassy. He presented Gerard's gifts, and clearly stated his proviso: "This is neither homage nor tribute, for we hold our title from neither Pope nor Emperor." King Charles answered: "Christendom is much beholden to Gerard. He is the noblest duke in the world." But inwardly he said to himself: "If ever we return to France, either shall the empire be subject to Gerard, or Gerard to the empire." Anglant's head was given to Turpin to be embalmed. After receiving courteous honors and gifts, Clare and his comrades returned to Reggio.

The Surrender of Anglant's Queen

95

When these four barons arrived at Reggio, they entered by the gate next to the tower where Anglant's former queen was staying. She was standing on a balcony of the tower and saw Lord Clare passing with his companions. She cried out to him in Latin, saying: "Gentle sir, by your God, hearken to my words." Lord Clare halted and she asked him whether he was French or German or Burgundian. He replied: "From Burgundy." Then she said: "I am a queen, wife to King Anglant. Upon your faith, tell me what has happened to my husband." Lord Clare replied: "By the oath of chivalry that binds me, I shall tell you the truth. Your husband is dead, and I have even now come from bringing his head to Charlemagne, King of the Christians. Almont, too, has been dead for five days, and all his Saracens are also dead." Then the queen said: "I surrender to you and beg that you have me baptized. I also beseech you to do me no dishonor, and to give me something to eat. For two days now I have been confined to this tower because of a traitor king who fled his duty in the field, despoiled this city, and burnt most of the ships. We women took refuge in this tower, which also contains the greater part of Anglant's treasure." Hearing these words, Lord Clare said:

“My lady, I am obliged to deliver a message on Charles’ behalf to my lord. After I have completed my embassy, I will deliver you from this tower.”

He remounted his horse, rode up to the palace and found Gerard about to eat. Lord Clare delivered his message and declared how Charles had offered in any campaign by Gerard to conquer a city or country. “There was never,” he said, “so noble a king as King Charlemagne,” and praised Charles to skies. Arnaut and Rainier did likewise, and Gerard granted that they spoke truly. Then he said to Lord Clare: “Sit down and eat.” At this Lord Clare began to smile, and Gerard said: “What jest is this that you men have in hand?” Arnaut said: “It is that Lord Clare shall prove a go-between.” Gerard smiled and said: “What does this mean, nephew?” The Lord Clare said: “There is a tower full of Saracen ladies. One of them called to me and told me she was King Anglant’s wife. She said she desired to be baptized and commended herself to me very urgently. Do want me to bring her into your presence?” Gerard answered: “In faith, yes. If they let themselves be baptized, we will get them husbands; if they refuse baptism, they shall all be beheaded.”

Thereupon Clare went in person to the queen and called to her, saying: “Your majesty, what is your intention?” She answered, saying: “To do whatever you command, for you are not the Mustapha, but seem a gentleman in all your actions. Alas for me!” the queen continued; “on my wedding day to King Anglant, a hundred queens were my servants, and now in this tower I have a great treasure and would give it all for a crust of bread! Have mercy on me, O most gentle knight! I freely surrender to you, along with all these other ladies. We all desire to be baptized in the faith of Jesus Christ. For God’s sake, do not treat us with cruelty.” Lord Clare replied: “Come down in safety, for you shall be shown every honor and courtesy.” She descended from her tower with all the others. Twenty-two of them were queens, and the other forty were all duchesses and princesses, wives of the great lords who died in the battle of Aspramont.

96-99: *Flor and Florissa*

Gerard treated the queen and her ladies with much honor. She surrendered the tower treasure to him. It was so rich that Gerard at once thought: "Now I have the means to destroy Charles and to drive him from France." He let slip some words that showed how deep a grudge he still held against the emperor.

That day the Pope was visiting Reggio and was requested to baptize the ladies. In answer to his queries, Almont's queen said that her father was King Gulias of Damascus, Lord of Syria, Armenia, and Persia, and that she had secretly desired baptism ever since she heard of the Christian faith in Jerusalem. Thereupon the Pope made her renounce Mohammed and baptized her under the Christian name of Florissa. After the ceremony, the arrival of Prince Flor of Hungary was announced. Charlemagne had promised to crown him, since his father had just been killed in Aspramont. At the first sight of Florissa, Flor fell in love with her and was betrothed to her that very day.

Charlemagne now decreed that none of his subjects should leave Calabria without his permission until he himself did so. Four days later he sent Druon to Reggio to summon the Pope and Gerard to council. They agreed readily to come. Meanwhile Charles had been assessing his losses. He discovered that eighty-five thousand men had fallen in this war, and felt much impoverished by this great loss of men. He ordered the Pope to hold a great mass in memory of these dead at the Calabrian abbey of Saint-Simon.

When Gerard arrived at Charles's camp, with Flor and Florissa, all were astonished by his riches and her beauty. She was greeted courteously by Duke Namo, who reminded her that he was the ambassador who had come to Anglant and whom Balant had so courteously entertained. She was then presented to Charles, who was delighted to hear of her betrothal to Flor. They were just sitting down to supper, when she recognized Balant. "Are you baptized, too, then?" she cried; and he replied: "I am sorry I waited so long, for if I had not, neither my son nor many of my people would have been slain." After the banquet, Charlemagne crowned Flor as King of Hungary and confirmed Florissa as his queen.

On the morrow, the coronation and marriage were celebrated with great solemnity. All Florissa's attendant ladies were given husbands, and Flor was amply endowed with land and honors by both Charlemagne and Duke Gerard. Afterwards, Charlemagne confirmed Gerard son Guiscard as Lord of Apulia and Calabria and appointed him his counselor and cupbearer. He also confirmed Gerard's younger son, Miles, as Lord of Taranto and of all lands between Otranto and Brindisi. He concluded by amply endowing countless gentlemen who had served him in the war and then gave them leave to return to their own domains.

Departure from Aspramont

100

Charles and the Pope, with many of the great lords, remained in the camp. They were gathered in Charles's pavilion, when Duke Gerard turned to Charles and declared in the presence of all: "Most mighty and puissant Lord Charles, from the day that arrived to oppose King Anglant until now, we have acknowledged you as master and, by your grace, you have done me great honor. But from now

on I only wish you as the greatest of my friends. I well know that all the nobles in the world ought to kneel to you and render you homage as their emperor and universal lord, but my ancestors never did homage to any man in the world, nor held their lands from anyone but God. I therefore have no wish to disgrace my lineage, but desire to maintain and honor their custom.” Charles answered: “We do not require this of you. You are the best duke in Christendom.” But in his heart, Charles was saying: “If ever I return to France, this insult shall be dealt with in a different manner; but now is not the time to give a different answer.”

Then Gerard showed great amity to Flor of Hungary, who was his nephew, the son of his sister, and Charles’s cousin on his mother’s side. Flor then prayed Charles for leave to depart with his queen. The queen also requested that Charles grant her the boon of letting Balant Veltachin accompany her husband. King Charles was very pleased to do so and said to Balant: “I commend this young king to you. See that you counsel him well.” He endowed Balant with the domain of a great duke who had died in Aspramont, and he thanked Charles heartily and took his leave.

No sooner had the King of Hungary departed, when a messenger came to Gerard of the Thicket with the tidings that Saracens had appeared in Provence and throughout Burgundy in such great multitudes that they covered all the mountains and plains. (This was the army of Troyan, King Anglant’s son.) If he did come at once to its help, Vienne would shortly be lost. When Gerard heard this news, he told the messenger to say nothing, for he did not wish Charles to know of this.

101

At the arrival of the news from Burgundy, Gerard forbade the messenger to speak of it. He did so because of a sudden thought: if Charles came to defend his lands, he would be able to say that, because he had saved them, men would think that he should receive homage. But when Lord Clare

heard of Gerard's command, he said to him: "My lord, it might be better if we confided in Charles. He will come to our aid with the power of France." Gerard said: "You son of a strumpet, if you are afraid, go turn priest and sing masses, for you are not Miles of Mongrana's son!" Lord Clare was ashamed and fell silent. He ordered all his belongings to be packed and rode out in haste to joint King Flor of Hungary. He said nothing to Charlemagne when he took his leave.

But Arnaut, Gerard's eldest son, while Gerard was taking his leave from Charles, spoke secretly with Duke Namon and told him the bad news about Troyan, who was burning all Burgundy, and about Gerard's refusal to talk of it to Charles, and what he had said to Lord Clare. He asked Namon to beseech Charlemagne to guard against anger against Gerard, but to have pity on his family, swearing that if Gerard should die, they would never disobey Charles's commands. "But now," he said, "while he is still alive, it would not be honorable to do so."

Charles granted Gerard leave to go. Then he himself ordered his carriages and tents to be packed for departure on the following morning. Gerard had left two thousand knights at Reggio, under a viceroy, telling him to hold the city on behalf of his son Miles until he returned from France. He told him to seize the rule of all the surrounding territory. Then he rode off after Flor, and Charles remained in Aspramont ready to set out at dawn.

102

When Gerard had left, Duke Namon took Charlemagne apart and told him what Gerard's son Arnaut had said. Charles sighed and was overcome with pity for Gerard's sons and nephews. He said: "Were it not for this tenderness that seizes me, I would let the Africans destroy and cut them to pieces." "Ah!" said Namon, "let not so many Christians perish on account of one man. We shall go, not for love of him, but for the love of God and of the other Christians." Then Charles ordered his

horses to be saddled, and that day set out toward Rome, commanding Fulk to ride with the baggage train, and he did so. So now the whole army was setting out and crossing the peaks of Aspramont. Gerard meanwhile had joined Flor of Hungary. Together they passed through Rome and Tuscany. Upon arriving in Lombardy, Gerard announced that Troyan had arrived in Burgundy, but the news had already spread throughout Tuscany and Lombardy. He asked the King of Hungary to help in his defense. King Flor replied: "My noble duke, does Charles know of this?" and he answered: "I would sooner lose all my possessions than send to Charles for help." The King did not reply discourteously, but declared that Charles was the noblest king in the world, and urgently besought him to turn to him in his need. When Gerard grew angry at this, he promised to come to the aid of his men and then took leave and made his way toward Hungary. Gerard went toward Piedmont, crossing the Alps, and continued until he entered Vienne.

Charlemagne remained in Rome for three days with the Holy Father. Then he left, crossed Tuscany and Lombardy, and reached France by a secure route. He at once commanded that an army be mustered, and ordered those he had nearest him to march against Troyan, son of King Anglant of Africa, who was now in Burgundy.

The Battle of Vienne

103-104: Troyan Attacks [summary]

Troyan was Anglant's eldest son, but by a different mother than Almont. Unlike Almont, he was a man full of wrath and arrogance and devoid of religion, a treacherous friend and a vicious enemy. His forces included eight crowned kings: his chief commander Pantalis, Nabur of Egypt, Manador of Thrace, Armagot of Atlas, Mordant, Alfagon, Buteran, and Calisar, Salatiel's brother, a deadly archer. After crossing into Spain, four more monarchs, sent by Galafron, joined him: Marsilius, Balugant, Falseron, and the King of Granada. Altogether, Troyan's army numbered some three hundred thousand. (The King of Portugal, with a hundred thousand more, intended to come also, but had embarked on an attempt to invade England. Bad weather drove back his fleet, and by the time he reached Spain, Troyan was already dead.) Troyan's army captured Aigues-Mortes, crossed the Rhone, burnt and

pillaged Provence and Savoy, and encamped near Vienne, waiting Anglant's arrival from the other direction. When Gerard entered Vienne, he had only ten thousand men.

At his arrival, Gerard gave his son Clare harsh words for taking refuge behind the walls without striking a blow. He himself then sallied out and attacked the Saracen vanguard, inflicting huge damage until Nabur of Egypt and Manador of Thrace arrived with huge numbers. Gerard was soon surrounded and would have perished, but for the timely arrival of Clare and Bussy. The skirmish becomes even fiercer, and Troyan sends in Armagot and Mordan. Mordan is overthrown and killed by Clare and Gerard, forgetting his earlier insults, cries out: "Blessed be he who begot you! Blessed by you, Clare, who eat my bread and drink my wine!" But then the number of pagans kept growing and Gerard was at last unhorsed and rescued by his son with great difficulty. The Burgundians were forced to withdraw behind the walls. The sally had cost them three thousand men, and many cursed Gerard and his pride for causing their deaths.

Gerard Refuses to Send for Charlemagne

105

When Gerard and his sons had reentered Vienne, Gerard felt so much wrath at having been unhorsed that he burst with it. Nor was he as ill-tempered at his overthrow as he was at Clare's bravery which had gotten him away. He railed against his sons, calling them bastards, sons of whores and no sons of his own. But Clare remonstrated with him in gentle words and begged him, for God's sake, to send to Charlemagne for aid. "You went to Aspramont to help him;" he said; "let him now come to help you." Gerard answered: "What, can you not hear your heart tell you that you can defend yourself without Charles? If he comes to help us, he will require from us the same homage as from his other vassals. By my faith, he shall never have homage from Duke Gerard! I would sooner let all Burgundy be burnt and all my sons be killed, before I ever pay homage to any man, so long as I live." That night he sent secret messages throughout Burgundy, and to his territories and friends in Provence, Bellandes, Savoy, Maganza, Lausanne, and Germany—to all accept King Charles, beseeching some and commanding others to help him. The story now turns back to King Charles.

106-109: Clare's Challenge [summary]

Charlemagne had no sooner returned to Paris than he assembled an army of eighty thousand to relieve Gerard at Vienne. His commanders were Roland, Ogier the Dane, Astolph, Namo with his two sons, Solomon, Agnelet, Berlingher, Richier the Vassal, Fulk of Auvergne with his son Answig. King Flor arrived in Paris from Hungary and joined the army, bringing Balant with him. Charlemagne set out and presently encamped near Vienne. Troyan still believed that the Christians whom he faced had fled from Almont in Aspramont. Seeing this new army arrive, he now consulted his soothsayers. Whether out of fear or ignorance, the soothsayers told him that these, too, were fugitives from Anglant.

The watch at Vienna were puzzled as the Saracen army regrouped on the other side of the Rhone, but then caught sight of Roland's banners in the distance and recognized them. They rushed to Gerard with the good news, but he burst out: "What is Charles doing in my lands?" Then he turned upon Lord Clare: "Fool," said he, "your rejoice at Roland's coming. He will do battle with Troyan, and his victory will disgrace you forever. Go celebrate that!" Hearing this, Clare called for his arms, rode out of the city, in full sight of both the Saracen's army and Charlemagne's. He then sounded his horn and challenged Troyan to single combat. When an interpreter appeared to ask him who he was, he answered: "Tell your king that I am Lord Clare, nephew to Duke Gerard of the Thicket. Tell him that I slew King Anglant with my own hands."

The interpreter carried the challenge to Troyan. Troyan turned to Pentalis and said: "That man is boasting to make me afraid," and Pentalis answered: "By now King Anglant will have taken Rome and is marching on France. These Christians are desperate and in retreat from him." Then Troyan armed and rode out to face Clare. He was terrifying to behold and all the Christian wept with fear for Clare's safety. Gerard, too, began to tremble for his son. Meanwhile, Pentalis ranged the Saracens in five great squadrons, ready to descend upon the Christians after Troyan had done with Clare.

The Duel Begins

110

When Troyan came up to Lord Clare, he said: "May Mahound confound you, you false Christian, who seek to frighten me with words. You sent word to me that you killed King Anglant with your own hands. By Mahomet, I shall cut out that tongue of yours for uttering such bitter words, for you are coward and wretched recreants who fled King Anglant and my brother Almont." Lord Clare replied: "What I have said is the unvarnished truth. Your brother Almont was slain by a young boy who was not yet fourteen years old. He is the captain in that first rank that you see yonder, and he even now carries the sword and the horn that belonged to your brother, and bestrides his horse called Briador (though the Christians now call it Veglantin). I am here to fight you before you fall

into his hands, so that he may not kill you before I do.” Troyan answered: “By my faith, you are in haste to get me killed. But I intend to prove that you are a liar.” Then he summoned one of his soothsayers and said to him: “This Christian here says that he has slain Anglant and that a boy has slain Almont.” Yes,” cried Clare, “and he unarmed but for the shaft of a lance.” The soothsayer stood like a dead man. Troyan said: “Speak up, at once.” At last the soothsayer said: “Anglant and Almont and Triamides and Gorant are dead, and so are all those who accompanied your father, except the Mustapha and Balant.” Troyan would let him speak no more but rode toward him and gave him a blow with his gauntlet that shattered his skull and stretched him dead on the ground. He said, “You did not foresee rightly this time.” Then he turned to Clare and said: “You killed them by treachery, but I shall wreak a bitter vengeance. And I will not fight you alone. Go bring that other one, who slew Almont, for I will fight you both at once.” Clare answered: “On your guard, for you have to fight me first.” And so, defying each other, they took their ground and exchanged terrible lance thrusts. Each broke the other’s shield and both were somewhat shaken in the saddle, but there was little vantage on either side. Their lances shattered and their horses charged past each other. Then, drawing their swords, they returned to combat. Said Troyan: “I will not use my lance shaft to kill you. I would not like that knight over there to take fright and run.”

111-112: A Pact [summary]

They resumed their combat and fought for a long time. It soon appeared that Troyan was stronger and that Clare was tiring. During a pause in the fight Clare told Troyan once more of Almont’s death at Roland’s hands. “Where were Maldachin and Ulien and Aliadas when he died?” asked Troyan, and Clare told him that they were at Reggio at the time. He continued by telling him of his own fight with Anglant, and of Balant’s conversion and the queen’s. Troyan said: “Even if it took twenty men to kill Almont, I will be avenged on them all.” He attacked Clare once more, and Clare grew ever weaker. Then Troyan thought, “If I kill this knight, I will be unable to avenge Almont. But if I come to terms with him, he might bring that other knight to me, and then I can kill them both and become master of all France.”

As the sun sank westward, Troyan said to Clare: “You would be dead long ago if I did not fear that that knight over there who killed Almont would escape me. If you promise to come tomorrow and bring him with you, I will let you return to the city.” Clare knew that he was having the worst of the battle, and agreed to come back the next morning

with Roland. Thus they agreed. Upon returning to his camp, Troyan told his companions that he was certain that Almont had been slain by treachery, and the morrow would bring his chance for revenge. "Once we win this war, I promise you I will deal worse with Charles than my father did with Asperant and Margon. Those two kings, along with Balant, sold my father and brother to the Christians." As he was talking, some messengers arrived and told him how the Mustapha had deserted Anglant and was now seizing territory in Africa. They brought a plea from the lord of Barbary asking Troyan to come at once to the defense of Africa. Troyan announced that he would come, but not before he had avenged his father and brother.

Troyan's Death

113

Clare returned to Vienne and Gerardo himself helped to disarm him. He asked whether he was wounded in any place and Clare said he was not, but was very tired. He said: "Gerard, what travail I have undergone today! This is not Almont, whom I overthrew with my lance. This is not Anglant, whom I killed. Rather he seems the devil himself, for he takes no notice of anyone's blows, and he never tires." Gerard said: "Dear Clare, why do you not remain inside the city, and I shall go out into battle against Troyan." When Clare heard this, he was overcome by anger, so that he said: "God has put that thought in your heart, so that you may have proof whether I speak the truth or lie." And he was unwilling to tell him of the promise he had given Troyan.

After he had eaten, he left the hall and called his brother Bussy and said to him: "My dear brother, Gerardo, that desperate dog, seeks only my death. I have fought all day long, as you have seen. I know very well that Troyan would have killed me, had I not promised to bring Roland along to the fight. I intend to go King Charles' camp. He has more pity on us than Gerard. If I were not a knight pledged to Gerard, I would never return to him. But I shall return so that I may not be thought disloyal. I have made a promise and I must keep it. Therefore I ask you to help me get away in a manner that no man shall discover." Bussy wept and said: "My dear brother, you speak the truth. Gerard cares little for us. But he is an old man, and when the time comes, we shall

becomes Charles' men. Therefore I beg you now not to abandon your father, for this would shame you. But pay no attention to his words."

Clare told him once more why he wished to go, and Bussy helped him arm at all points. When he was armed, Bussy mounted his horse and went together with him to the gate, which was heavily guarded, and ordered it opened. Clare rode out with lance in hand. Bussy did not leave the gate, but waited there for his return.

114

Clare's departure caused Bussy much anxiety. Clare himself rode toward Charles' camp, and the watch rode toward him. When they discovered who it was who paid them such a great honor, they wondered why he was alone. He went from there to Roland's tent. Roland embraced him when he arrived and asked the reason for his coming. Clare told him of the whole matter. The Roland replied: "I shall not come without Charles' permission." He armed, mounted his horse, and they went to Charles' tent. He was very surprised when he saw Lord Clare. Clare bowed to him and then told him the reason for his coming. Charles at once replied: "I would not be pleasing to God for me to send Roland into the hands of a man who hates me more than Troyan, my enemy. Were it not for my love of you, of Bussy, of Arnaut, and your brothers, I would never have moved a foot to succor the proudest old man in the world." Clare said: "I does not befit me replay by speaking ill of the man who has made me his knight. But I beg you to let Roland come with me. If Gerard dares to bestow so much as an evil glance on Roland, I swear by that God who was crucified for our salvation that I will cut off his head with this sword, with never a thought that he made me his knight. However, my lord, send him under my protection, for if we defeat that Saracen we need have little thought for what comes after." Roland knelt and begged Charles to let him go. Charles

did not wish to consent, but Roland spoke with such angry vehemence that he gave him leave. He urgently bade Clare to take care of him. Then they returned to Roland's troop. He left Astolph in his stead to command his twenty thousand and six hundred men, and then they left for Vienne. They slept but little until daybreak.

115

The light of the sun had not yet appeared when the two knights, Clare and Roland, rose. While they were arming, no man came near them, but when they were armed, Gerard arrive, not knowing that Roland was there. When he saw him, he was astonished and embraced him, saying: "Welcome, O flower of chivalry of the world! What brings you to Vienne?" Roland answered: "My love for your ancient lineage and my hatred for the Saracens." Said Gerard: "There was no need for you to come to fight the Saracens. Go back to Charles and let me finish this war myself." Roland replied: "Noble duke, do you not see that the Saracens have five great ranks ready for combat? You came to our aid in Aspramont. How could you think that Charles, hearing of your war, would not come to help you as you came to help him? I therefore desire to give us your permission and blessing to fight that demon, Troyan." Then he told him the reason for his coming and of the pact that the enemy had required. Gerard therefore gave Roland his blessing, but would not give it to Clare. Thereupon Clare said in anger that he little cared for his blessing, and they went, in full armor, to mount their steeds and proceeded to the field with lances at rest. Upon their arrival there, Roland sounded his horn.

When Troyan heard that horn, he said: "That is surely the horn which was Almont's." He armed, mounted his horse, and proceeded into battle. When he arrived, he said: "Is this the boy who killed my brother Almont?" and Roland said that he was. "And I hope to do the same to you." Troyan

laughed and said: “By your sworn knighthood, do me a favor. Let me see your face.” Roland replied: “How can one enemy trust another?” Then Troyan swore a sacred oath and they trusted him, whereupon Troyan lifted his visor and the two Christians did likewise. When Roland saw how young Roland was, he said: “By Mahomet, you must have found Almont sleeping and unarmed, and thus killed him.” He conceived a greater hatred for Roland than for Clare, since Clare had killed Anglant in combat.

There was a little hill that rose between the camps of Charles and the Saracens near a river that was called Diven and on one side of Vienne through the Dauphinée and into the Rhone near Orange. On the side of this hill the above said three knights met for combat. Troyan defied both the others. Roland wished to fight him alone, but Troyan said that this would shame him. In the end, they agreed that Clare would fight first.

They took their positions and then charged heavily with their lances, with neither gaining the advantage. When they had broken their lances, they proceeded to fight with their swords and began to hack each other’s armor in a cruel assault. Having struck some blows, Clare threw away his shield, grasped his sword with both hands, and heaved a great blow at Troyan. Troyan shifted his shield upon his back and also seized his sword in both hands, and hurled himself at Clare like a desperate man. He delivered such a mighty blow upon his helmet that sparks filled the air. At this great blow, Lord Clare nearly swooned in the saddle and seemed like a dead man as his steed bore him away. Duke Gerard began to say: “Christ, why have you abandoned me? Do you not remember how I went to Aspramont in your service?”

Roland marveled hugely at Troyan's great prowess and prayed God to save Lord Clare from death. Troyan, seeing Lord Clare thus born away, waited no longer, but turned upon Roland. When Roland saw him coming, he cast down his lance, drew his sword to confront him, and spurred on his horse. For a while they lunged and slashed at one another, turned their steeds by the force of their spurs, and closed in upon each other with piercing sword blows.

Meanwhile Clare recovered, but thought it unknighly to attack Troyan. The Saracens would have come to Troyan's aid, but he had given commands that none should dare to do so. He fought more bitterly against Troyan than against Lord Clare, and struck him so heavy a blow that Veliantin bore him away stunned. Now Troyan turned to Clare, shouting: "Recreant knight, why did you not come to the aid of your friend?" and charged him, and Clare charged back. They engaged with their swords. After just a few blows, Troyan once more struck Clare senseless, and once more turned upon Roland. However, Roland asked for a short parley and Troyan said: "As you wish."

"Ah, valiant King Troyan," said Roland, "great is your prowess, but I will not fight any more unless you swear to me upon your faith not to take up another quarrel until either you or I have completely fallen." Troyan answered: "I agree, by Mohammed." Thus they swore and then they assailed each other and began the bitterest fight that was ever fought between two knights, either at that time or in all of Charles' days.

While they were fighting, Clare, who witnessed such valor in Roland, began to say to himself: "If that man survives, he will become the best knight in the world and snatch the honor from every other knight alive." He began to hate him and would gladly have seen him slain, so that the glory of knighthood would remain his own. Meanwhile, continuing the fight, the two champions were utterly shattering each other's armor.

When they had fought a good while, Charles and Duke Namo of Bavaria arrived alongside Roland's band. As he witnessed the combat, Charles grew afraid for Roland and commanded Richier the Vassal to ride out to help Roland. Richier put spur to his horse, rode off, and charged wrathfully at Troyan. Troyan saw him coming and said to Roland. "That knight is coming to strike me." Then Roland spurred his horse toward Richier, who stopped and said: "Count Roland, Charles has sent me to help you." At this point, King Pentalis began to move from Troyan's camp, but Troyan ordered him back to the ranks. Roland said to Richier: "If you go any further, you shall fight with me." Richier halted, and Roland returned to face Troyan, and they recommenced their combat.

117

Who now could describe how terribly they assaulted each other? One reason was that Troyan sheathed his sword and took up an iron mace, with which he greatly troubled Roland and utterly shattered and splintered his shield. It happened that, while their horses were facing each other, Roland turned the head of his horse at Troyan's right flank, and while his horse executed the turn, lifted his sword to strike the mace from Troyan's grasp. The blow was so great that it cut the mace in half and struck the head of Troyan's horse, so that it fell dead beneath him. He sprang from his saddle, drew his sword against Roland and ran to plunge it into Veglantin. But Roland too leapt from his saddle and ran toward Troyan. When Troyan reached Roland, he cried out: "You caitiff knight, why have you killed my horse?" Roland smiled and said: "Upon my faith, King Troyan, I meant your horse no harm, but intended to cut through your mace. But if you die, you need not trouble yourself about your horse; and if you defeat me, take Veglantin. He once belonged to Almont and is better than yours." Then Troyan struck Roland such a mighty blow on the head that he forced him to the ground on one knee. Troyan raised his sword to give him another blow. He was moving toward him so furiously that more than half the blade fell just behind Roland's helmet.

And as he launched his sword with such violence, Roland raised his own sword and Troyan's joined hands came down on Durandel's blade, which they both cut off and the fists fell to the ground, still clenching the sword. Yet had it struck Roland's helmet and completely stunned him.

Troyan, seeing that his hands had been cut off, uttered a great roar, threw himself upon Roland, and grappled him with the stumps of his arms, drawing him to his chest and intending to drag him to the river to hurl himself into it and drown together with Roland.

Clare did not move, but Richier called out to him: "How dishonored you shall be if you do not rescue Roland!" Then Clare grew ashamed and gave spur to his horse, and Richier did likewise. But Richier threw down his lance and drew his sword. A young knight named Answig had come with Roland's troop, and he, along with them, rode at Troyan. Richier arrived first and gave him such a heavy blow in his helmet that Troyan dropped Roland. Then Answig, who was running up with sword in hand, arrived and, while Troyan was bending forward, aimed his sword at his neck and cut off his head. (All the Burgundian books say that it was Lord Clare who struck off that head, but the French ones say it was Answig of Auvergne.) So died Troyan, King Anglant's son. Now the great battle begins.

118-121: Victory at Vienne

The field grew covered with corpses as Nabur of Egypt launched a furious offensive. Even Roland was unhorsed, although his Veliantin was recovered through the bravery of Clare, Answig and Astolph, Roland then went to fetch his companions, intending to attack the enemy's flank. On his way he encountered Gerard, who said to him: "Do not think that Charles' help will force us to do homage to him." "The emperor has no need of your homage," Roland replied; "we are only here to defend our fellow Christians." Shortly after, Pantalis entered the fray and killed, one after another, Roland's cupbearer, Guy of Avignon, Baldwin of Angrant, and finally Angelet of Brittany.

The fall of these three heroes heartened the Saracens so much, that the Christians were unable to recover the bodies. But Roland, Richier and Answig charged into the pagan ranks. Roland killed Nabur, Answig killed Nabur's nephew Alipandor, and Richier killed the Emir of Aragon.

Charles then ordered in his second division, under Flor, Salomon and Balant, who pushed the Saracens back, so the only Pentalis, Buterant, and Manador of Thrace held the field. Buterant recognized Balant and charged him, crying: "Death to the traitor!" He unhorsed him, but Roland came to the rescue. After Balant recovered, he charged back at Buterant, crying: "Traitor, you have twice been my prisoner. Each time you swore an oath never to seek my harm. You shall harm me no more;" and with a great slashing blow, he severed his head from his body.

When his body was carried to Marsilius, the pagans cried out: "Since Balant has taken baptism out of fear, and Almont, Anglant, and Troyan are all dead, we are undone." Charles now dispatched further reinforcements under Namu and Ogier, and sent for the rear-guard under Fulk to join them. The Saracens began to flee on all sides.

Nevertheless, King Armagot of Atlas killed Namu's brother-in-law, William of Bavaria, and Pentalis killed King Flor of Hungary and wounded Namu's son Otbo. Roland asked Balant: "Who is that knight bearing a golden lion on a white field who is wreaking so much damage?" "I know him well," said Balant; "he is Pentalis of Pamphilia, who conquered Turkey for Anglant. Were it not for his pride, he would be one of the finest knights alive."

Roland vowed that he himself would be the man to kill Pentalis. The situation now was this: On one side of the field, Gerard, badly outnumbered, was facing the three Spanish kings, Marsilius, Balugant and Falseron. On the other, Charles, was on the attack with Ogier and the rest, with the Oriflamme borne before them. Here Ogier overthrew Manador of Thrace, and Charles killed Alfagon of Africa. On Gerard's side, Arnaut nearly captured Marsilius, but he was rescued by Calisar and then pushed Gerard's forces to the foot of the walls of Vienne. At this point Roland found Pentalis and pressed him so hard that he retreated.. Marsilius and the other two kings, who saw this, also withdrew, while Gerard sounded the alarm for pursuit. Pentalis saw their banners fall, and fled toward the river, cursing Mahound. Roland noticed him and pursued. As they disappeared from view, Gerard's men overran Marsilius' camp, capturing much booty.

Marsilius himself crossed the Rhone and took the way toward Aragon. Charles meanwhile joined Gerard. As the victorious troops gathered around, only Roland was found missing. From Balant, the last man to have spoken with him, Charles gathered that he was following Pentalis. He sent a large troop under Astolph, Ogier and Richier to find him. It was already near sunset when they set out.

The Death of Pentalis

122

The story now returns to Roland who was riding in pursuit of Pentalis. He reached Pentalis as he was about to cross the river Diven. Roland came up to him and cried: "You cursed Saracen, who have killed so many of my knights, you are at the point of death." When Pentalis saw that Roland was alone, he replied: "If I have killed too many of yours, I shall, by Mohammed, add you to the number of the dead." He drew his sword and moved toward Roland, and bitterly struck at him when he reached him. Roland had thrown his lance to the ground and drew Durandel, giving him

bitter blows as well. Now a harsh contest began between the two and they fought for a long while. Then Roland drew back a little, astonished at Pantalis' prowess, and Pantalis, equally astonished at Roland's, demanded: "Sir knight, what are you, French or Burgundian?" Roland replied: "I am nephew to King Charles of France. My name is Roland, Count of Angrant." "Are you then," said Pantalis, "that same Roland who, as Troyan has told me, slew Almont when you found him asleep? Accursed Christian, it was great folly in you to follow me so far from your people. Perhaps you thought to find me sleeping, tired out in combat." Roland answered him: "I had neither armor nor sword when I killed Almont. Now see whether he was sleeping, for he was holding the very sword with which I shall presently cut your head from your shoulders." Pantalis spurred his horse in a rage and struck Roland above his visor. Roland shifted his shield upon his back and spurred Veliantin toward Pantalis. Pantalis' horse turned to the rear, so that the point of Roland's sword pierced its saddle and killed the horse. He at once dismounted and they continued the combat on foot. Already the sun was in decline, and still the two knights were fighting. At this, Ogier the Dane rode up and leapt quickly from his horse with sword in hand to kill Pantalis, but Roland shouted: "Lay off, Ogier, unless you want to fight with me." So Ogier halted, while Roland cried out to Pantalis: "Surrender and turn Christian. If you do not, your death is near." Pantalis in his wrath gave Orlando such a mighty blow that Roland was struck senseless. Pantalis heaved another blow equally mighty, so that Roland was about to fall and hastened to strike once more. But Roland withstood these sword blows and regained his senses, much enraged. By that time a circle of more than a hundred knights had arrived to join Ogier the Dane. Roland struck a two-handed blow upon Pantalis' helmet, so powerful that it stunned him and gave his body a half turn. Then Roland, whose sword was raised in the air, hit him across his visor, severed it, and slashed sideways beneath his eyes the whole breadth of his face, so that the top of his skull and his eyes and his hair were left hanging.

So died Pantis of Pamphilia. Roland cut the severed skull from the helmet and remounted his horse. Pantis' body was stripped and cast into the river.

Roland returned to the army and his deed was joyfully celebrated, but Gerard was stifled with wrath and said: "Roland may have killed Pantis, but it was Lord Clare who killed Troyan." There was much dispute in the royal pavilion about Troyan's death. Many said: "If Roland had not cut off his hands, he would not have died." And Gerard said: "If Roland had not been rescued, Troyan would have drowned him."

Gerard, Clare, Roland

A Fragile Peace with Gerard

123

As Namo was listening to this debate, he said to Charles: "It would increase the honor of the crown to celebrate the victory." Just then Roland dismounted and entered the pavilion. All the lords rose from their seats except Gerard. Roland presented Charles with Pantis' head, and Charles said: "O noble knight, you began our triumph over Anglant, and now you have finished it. You are the man who sustains our faith and who brings love and glory to the crown of France." Gerard now said: "O noble Lord Clare, you are the man who brings love and glory to the dukedom of Burgundy." All the same he said to Roland: "You are very welcome." Afterwards he spoke as follows: "Your majesty, King of France, now that Roland is back, give me leave to go and rest in my own country, which I hold unbecomingly to any man." With this, he left, mounted his horse and returned to Vienne, where there was much rejoicing over the victory that had been gained.

Charles remained in his tent while all the camp was feasting, all but the Bretons who were mourning Angelet. In the morning, Gerard would not come back to the camp until Duke Namor told him that Charles was asking to see him in his pavilion and urged him so strongly to come that he left the city. He came fully armed, with his nephews and sons, and they were graciously received. When they had all sat down, with the great barons all around them, each party was relieved and glad to see the other, and Charles humbly directed the following words at Gerard: "My noble duke, it is said that the salvation of Christendom is all your doing, and that it is because of you that we were able to claim victory in Aspramont. We are assured that you have behaved better than you can say. One thing we can maintain: that you did not promise to come to Aspramont, but to wage war in France. But you have done the contrary, by helping us and making peace in France. You well know that that God's law has granted the Pope supreme power on earth, and after him, for temporal rule, has established the empire, which all men must duly obey for the betterment of human nature. Therefore, even supposing that I may not deserve it, this crown all Christendom has nevertheless granted to me, wherefore all men are obliged to obey me. Now I do not ask Gerard for gold or silver or any other wealth. I merely beseech you, to prevent scandal and discord, to come for love of me and at my once a year to Paris. If you cannot come yourself, let one of your sons or one of your nephews or one of your other relatives take your place and present himself in your stead. And I desire that you, for love of me, when you go hawking cast one bird for me⁶⁴, be it falcon, or hawk, or kestrel. I care not what kind of bird it is, so long as you say: "This cast is for Charles."

124

After Gerard had listened to Charles' words, he replied: "I could not have spoken more handsomely in praise of myself than you have done. Yet nothing will make me do as you ask, for I have clear

⁶⁴ Cast one bird for me: The action requested is a purely symbolic gesture of fealty.

documents that relate how Pepin, your father, enfranchised Bevis of Hampton and the Pope of Rome, and attested their charters and privileges with his own seal. Since the Emperor has granted my freedom, along with that of all Bevis' descendants, what reason is there for us to pay you homage, who have never bowed to you any more than you to us, to be beholden to you?" Gerard had scarcely formed these words, when Archbishop Turpin leapt to his feet and said: "Gerard, you are beholden to Charles for good cause, for look I have a documents that show how you bowed to Charles in Aspramont and acknowledged him like a vassal when his cap fell from his head on the day when Clare and Bussy and Arnaut and Rainier jousted with Duke Namor and Ogier and Flamingon, Count of Maganza, and the Marquis Berlingher. You picked up that cap and placed it back on Charles' head. Later, like a subject, you presented him with Anglant's head and most of his spoils." At this Gerard could not contain himself, but said in rage: "You treacherous priest, you can neither produce a charter nor be a witness in any matter, for you were driven from your own household like a traitor, and therefore should not be believed. It was through your cowardice that you turned priest. Go sing your masses and leave other affairs to your betters." Turpin drew himself up and said he desired to prove by force of arms, upon any challenger so ever, that Gerard should give tribute to Charles. He said: "Let all here present bear witness that I, of my own free will, surrendered my patrimony to my blood cousin, so as not to contradict my father's vow, for he vowed that, if ever he bore a son, he would make him a cleric or a priest. I did not act contrary to reason as you do, who deny being subject to the empire." Gerard answered: "You false priest, I shall not fight you, but I shall send one of my servants against you, and that will be my nephew Clare—against you or whoever maintains that I owe homage to Charles or any man."

At these words a great babble of 'yes' and 'no' arose, and little was lacking for Roland and Clare to challenge each other over the matter, had not their words been cut short by Duke Namor, who

prevailed upon Charles to turn to Gerard and say: "Noble Duke, let us put an end to these words, for I have no wish to go to war with you." Like a proud man, Gerard answered: "You would not dare." Charles put on a smiling outward face at this, but inwardly he grew more indignant with Gerard. Had it not been for his respect for Namó's honor, these words would have broken the peace. Nonetheless he conquered his anger. Gerard and Charles rose and embraced, and were much pleased at their accord. Gerard invited Charles to dine in Vienne, and Charles went there with a hundred lords, surrounded by kings, dukes, counts, princes and marquises. Never was merrier company seen than that which entered Vienne that morning. The whole host rejoiced and feasted. The honor that Gerard bestowed upon the Emperor cannot be told, and it would take a long time to describe their great splendor.

Oliver and Alda

125

While Charles sat at table in the great hall of the palace at Vienne, with Gerard at another table facing the king, a young page, some fifteen years old, entered the hall who was so handsome and so beautifully attired that all the nobility turned to gaze on him. He was carrying a golden dish lifted high in his hand in which rested a roasted and crowned peacock, with its tail spread out. He knelt to Charles and then drew back a little. Charles said: "My noble duke, who is this young fellow?" and Gerard replied: "This is my son Rainier's son. He is fourteen years old, or a little more." When they had almost finished dining, one of that boy's sisters, accompanied by the duchess and her mother and that same youth, arrived in the hall, playing sweetly upon a harp. Charles and Gerard had risen and were sitting next to each other. When Charles saw that youth and the maiden, he asked after his

name and hers. Gerard replied: “He is called Oliver, for he was born in these parts.”⁶⁵ The lady is known as fair Alda.”

Alda was then twelve years old. When she came before Charles, she made a curtsy of such grace that Charles smiled and blessed her. Then he kissed her forehead, and did likewise to all the ladies of the nobles present and bestowed some jewels upon them all.

Roland, seeing Alda’s loveliness, was inflamed with love for her, and could not take his eyes from her. Yet he greatly feared that Charles would see it, so that he often lowered his gaze to the ground. He was so struck by love for Alda that he stood like a man bereft of his senses. There was none present who did not see this, except the maiden herself.

When the banquet was over, the ladies departed. Charles took his leave and Gerard and his sons accompanied Charles to camp. On the next morning, the camp was lifted and the army turned back toward France. Gerard kept company with the king for five leagues and at their parting, Charles professed himself much beholden to Gerard, and Gerard to Charles. Gerard returned to Vienne, and Charles, to France. The Burgundians loudly praised Charles as a great king.

Bussy in Paris

126

When Charles came back to Paris, there was much feasting and rejoicing at his return and about the victory. The Christians were saying that the war was over, now that Troyan and Pantis were dead. To commemorate the victory over the infidels, Charles made many family alliances. Among these,

⁶⁵ For he was born in these parts: Andrea seems to be reaching for some kind of untranslatable eponym or word-play on ‘Vie-nne’ and ‘Uli-vie-ri’.

he gave his sister, Lady Bertha, to Ganelon of Poitiers. She was Roland's mother and the wife of Miles of Angrant, who had died at Aspramont. He bestowed Namor of Bavaria's daughter Ermelin upon Ogier the Dane. A great court was held at Paris, and countless princes and lords were invited to the royal feast.

When the invitation reached Gerard, he was loath to accept, but Lord Clare said: "My lord, it seems to me that, to maintain our honor, one of the six of us should attend that feast." Gerard answered, "Let this be decided among you, but not on my account." Then they held a meeting with Arnaut and his brothers and decided among them that Lord Bussy, Clare's brother, should attend. He readied five hundred knights with golden spurs and five hundred steeds and much treasure, and departed, with the Duke's leave, from Vienne. Clare instructed him carefully to win the love of Charles and Roland, and in the affairs and good customs of court, and in how, above all, to advance Gerard's honor. He promised to obey and the brothers parted, weeping, commending each other to God. Lord Clare turned back to Vienne, and Bussy went on toward Paris.

Roland learned of his coming and rode to meet him half way. So did Astolph, Otho, Berlingher and many other nobles. They presented him to Charles, who received him and all the lords with him most honorably, for their love of Charles and Roland, though he reserved the greatest honors for Roland. It is impossible to describe how lavish and rich that feast was. Ogier betrothed his lady and led her away, and Ganelon betrothed Lady Bertha and led her away, and there were countless jousts and tournaments.

127-128: *The Murder of Lord Bussy* [summary]

While the feast continued, Count Flamingon of Maganza arrived. He had been with Charles in Aspramont and was one of the four knights whom Charles had sent to Almont's tower-fort. Unaware that Gerard had taken the tower,

they fought with four of Gerard's kinsmen. One of these was Lord Bussy and he had wounded Flamingon⁶⁶. Still burning with shame at this defeat, Flamingon now saw that Bussy had come to Paris unarmed and poorly attended. He secretly conferred with his own men, proposing to be avenged by murdering Bussy. They at first opposed his suggestion. "If we kill Bussy," they said, "the quarrel between Charles and Gerard of the Thicket will erupt into open war, and we shall find ourselves fighting Charles." Flamingon answered: "The manner of Bussy's death need never be known," and thus persuaded them to prepare an ambush in a forest near Troyes on the Burgundian border.

Bussy meanwhile took leave from Charles, once more begging him to forget Gerald's insults and assuring him of his own and Lord Clare's good will. Charles embraced him tenderly and bade him goodbye. Roland, Namor, Ogier, Ganelon, Astolph and many other barons escorted him for half a day. They dined at one of Roland's castles and then parted. Roland and the rest rode back to Paris; Bussy continued toward Burgundy.

Lord Bussy had received some fine hawks and hounds as parting gifts from Duke Namor. When he arrived in Champagne, he prepared to go hunting in the forest of Troyes. Spies reported his movements to Flamingon who armed a huge company and prepared the ambush. Suspecting nothing, Bussy, a falcon on his wrist, was riding with his small escort, when they were suddenly surrounded and attacked. Hopelessly outnumbered, Bussy fought bravely, but was cut down. All his companions and all his horses, his hawks, and his hounds, were butchered also, and buried along with their weapons into a deep ditch, with a great pile of tree trunks atop, so that there should be no sign of the deed. Only two creatures escaped alive: a greyhound of Duke Namor's and Lord Bussy's own hunting brach. The greyhound, bleeding from a wound in its haunch, found its way back to Paris. The brach scented out where her master was buried and lay down there and would not move from the spot.

War with Gerard

The War Begins

129

After Bussy's death, letters were dispatched into several regions to await his coming. When he failed to arrive, dispatches reached Gerard day after day that Bussy had not come. After some time had passed, Gerard wondered why he did not return and sent a messenger to King Charles in Paris to ask Charles why he had not send back his nephew. Charles heard out that messenger, and answered that he was astonished, for twenty days had already passed since Bussy had left Paris. The messenger hastened back to Duke Gerard. When he had told of his mission, all were seized with wonder, whereupon Gerard summoned Lord Clare and said: "Charles has had your brother

⁶⁶ Wounded Flamingon: For an account of this fight, see III.5-6 above.

murdered because I refused to render him homage. Arm and go to Paris and tell Charles to give me back my nephew, for I fear that to force us to do him homage he has killed or imprisoned him. Remember, he is your brother.” Clare was much grieved at this and knew not what to do. He was nearly beside himself, thinking: “What could have happened to my brother?” He recalled many of the men who had been with him and sent for their servants. Presently he learned that Bussy had lodged at Troyes in Champagne. He was the more aggrieved by this. He was assured of the honors that Charles had bestowed upon him and of his departure. Clare therefore left Vienne and rode toward Troyes in Champagne, taking with him a thousand armed knights. After his departure, Gerard sent another four thousand to follow him.

Lord Clare arrived in Bellande, rode off the next morning toward Troyes in Champagne, and entered the forest. As he was passing through the forest, some of his men discovered Bussy’s brach, who would have died of hunger, had she not dug up the flesh of some horses with her paws and thus nourished herself. As soon as she was found, the news was brought to Clare. He was cheered by this and said: “He must be in this forest to take some sport.” But when he sounded his horn, and no one answered, he began to search the woods. Finding not a soul, Clare was greatly puzzled, saying, “Perhaps this little brach is lost,” and made his way toward Troyes in Champagne. As he was about to leave the forest, the brach turned back and refused to come when called. Clare, seeing this, began to follow the dog and she ran back to lie down above the ditch where her master was. Then Lord Clare had the tree trunks cleared and the ditch dug up, where he found Bussy, all battered and broken. Nearly dead with grief, he fell upon the corpse. His lords and companions raised him from that body so that its great stench would not kill him. They went back to Bellandes, bearing all those dead bodies with them. Lord Clare was inconsolable. Not knowing whom to

accuse of the deed, he had the body embalmed against corruption and to stop the deadly stench, and then ordered it brought to Duke Gerard.

130

When Bussy's body arrived at Vienna, it was presented to Duke Gerard amid great sadness. When he saw it, he lamented loudly and cried out like a madman: "Charles has done this to spite me, and that bastard Orlando has done it out of envy. He would have dealt likewise with his brother Clare, if he had been the one to go." A few days before the feast of Saint Denis, he sent word to find a time and a way of wreaking vengeance. He sent him three thousand knights, first keeping five thousand about him, well armed and horsed.

Meanwhile the news of how Bussy's body had been found reached Charles' ears, Wherefore he sent some men to that forest the better to know the truth, and he sent to Troyes in Champaign. Many knights came to the place where he died and sought all through the forest. While they were thus riding to search the place, a scrap from a liveried surcoat was found impaled on a thorn tree. It was no more than a span in breadth, but its device was recognized as that of Count Flamingon of Valagna, of the House of Maganza. It was brought to King Charles. It also happened that one of Count Manfred's servants arrived at court, dressed in black. Duke Namo and Ogier the Dane found a way to draw him apart quietly and by means of many threats came to know the whole matter. At that very time, Charles' men returned and brought the above said surcoat. By these two signs it became apparent who had slain Bussy, wherefore many of the Maganza men were arrested and imprisoned, and many others ran away. Roland swore he would kill Count Flamingon and sent a messenger to Duke Gerard to inform him who had slain Bussy and to urge him to muster all his

power and attack the Maganzas on one side. He himself and Charles rode out with a great army to wreak heavy vengeance.

When Gerard had read the letter he, like an obstinate man more disposed to evil than to good, answered the messenger pleasantly enough saying he would do everything in his power to destroy the traitorous Count Flamingo and so sent the messenger back to Charles and Roland. He himself sent through all his lands and, within ten days, mustered fifteen thousand knights. He came to Bellandes, where Clare was staying, and brought his four sons with him.

Charles meanwhile left Paris with his banners spread, and encamped with fifty thousand knights. He brought his host to Count Flamingon's city, called Velagna, determined to lay hands on the said count.

131

King Charles encamped at Velagna, and Gerard heard of this. He therefore summoned Clare and his four sons and said to them: "Dearest sons, you know that, when that traitor Charles assumed the rule, he killed Guerrin, my brother and your uncle. Now he has caused the death of my nephew Bussy and intends us to join his army so that he can kill us all and to seize the rule of Burgundy to bestow it upon that bastard, Roland, the same man who showed so much hatred for you, Clare, and for Bussy in Aspramont and in the fight with Troyan that he is seeking nothing less than your death. They have laid the blame on Count Flamingon, whose family have ever been our friends. I have therefore decided, since we seize neither Charles nor Roland, that we go to Paris and, if we are able to enter the city, to set it on fire and burn it down. We shall put its men and women to the sword, so that our vengeance for Bussy shall be forever remembered. After we have done this, we shall despoil and sack all Charles' realm during our return to Burgundy." Clare wept at this and said:

“Dear brother of mine, how much evil is brewing to cause your death!” Yet he put in effect what Gerard had said.

Departing from Bellandes, they came toward Paris, passed like friends through the countryside during the feast of Saint Dennis, and made a show of heading toward the saint’s shrine. Then they seized much wealth and slaughtered many citizens of Paris, men and women and children. Never until that day had so much cruelty been wrought in the realm of France. On their own doorsteps, pregnant women were killed and their wombs slashed open, and countless prisoners were taken and outrages committed. Had the queen not taken thought that very morning to go to Saint Dennis, she would have fallen into their hands. All the same, more than twelve thousand citizen and two thousand women were slain, and many others taken to Burgundy. The brothels of every Burgundian town filled up with Parisian women.

132

After the destruction and massacre of Saint Dennis’ Day, the queen sent messengers in haste to inform Charles and Roland of the monstrous evil that the Burgundians had wrought. When Charles heard of the great crime that Gerard had committed, his sorrow was so strong that he all but fell from his horse, for the messenger reached him just as he was preparing to lay siege to Velagna. He heaved three great sighs and withdrew to his tent in terrible grief. When presently Roland, Ogier and Astolph arrived and asked Charles for the cause of his distress, he handed them the messenger’s letter. As soon as Roland finished reading it, he cried out like a desperate man: “Let the camp at Maganza be struck and let us be off to chasten the pride of Gerard of the Thicket, that renegade dog!” The whole army was full of sorrow at the dolorous tidings.

Charles concluded a peace with Count Flamingon and the Maganzas and turned back toward Paris. He sent writs throughout Christendom proclaiming the great crime of which Gerard, Duke of Burgundy, was guilty, and he dispatched Turpin to Pope Leo in Rome, to have Gerard placed under the ban of the Cross and excommunicated as a heretic and enemy of the Christian faith, until he came to Charlemagne's court to kneel at Charles' feet, with a rope around his neck, and confessed his guilt, made amends for all the damage that he had caused, and rendered homage and tribute to the King of France. These were the matters he sent him to declare to Leo who then was Pope. Pope Leo prepared other writs in support of Charles, obliging all Christians to obey the Emperor Charlemagne and to aid him in the destruction of Gerard of the Thicket.

When Gerard heard that he was excommunicate, he caused the hospitals and monasteries and churches to be stripped of all their wealth, and demanded that their priests say masses, killing many of those who refused to do so. He mustered a huge force and declared war against all the French territories. He let it be cried abroad that Charles had caused Bussy's murder out of envy, that he was not Pepin's trueborn son and meant to bastardize the Royal House of France, that Roland was the intended heir after Charles' death, that the Burgundian line had never been bastardized, and that whatever Charles undertook against Gerard was caused by his greed for gold and for silver. He also accused him of countless other things.

133-136: **Lasona** [summary]

Charles now gathered his great retainers, including King Flor of Hungary (who brought Balant with him), Solomon of Brittany, Namo of Bavaria, and Ogier the Dane. Led by Roland and the Emperor, the combined armies marched under the Oriflamme toward Burgundy. Upon arrival, Charles did not allow pillage, for he had no wish to destroy the lovely countryside, but was intent on marching through Savoy to descend upon Gerard at Vienne.

Gerard learned of the advance of the imperial armies and moved his own forces toward them. He pitched his camp on the Savoy side of the river Arar, destroyed the bridge which there crossed the river, and awaited Charles. The emperor's army arrived and found itself unable to cross. Farther upstream on the Savoy side stood the city of

Lasona⁶⁷ with a strongly garrisoned castle (called Castle Zeno). Below that castle, another bridge crossed the river, leading to a little fort on the French side. Gerard now plotted a doubly treacherous stratagem.

The commander of the guard at Castle Zeno was a poor vassal of Gerard's named Lothair of Mount Jura. Gerard instructed him to pretend to betray Castle Zeno in exchange for a bribe. Lothair dispatched a secret messenger to Charles, naming his price for admitting some eight thousand men to the castle, from which, he said, they might easily take the city. Charles accepted the offer without suspicion. That same evening, he summoned Roland, Ugier, Salomon, Namo, Richier, Richard of Normandy and Balant and commanded them to bring the eight thousand to the castle by night. Balant, however, opposed the plan. When he warned Charles of the danger, Ogier the Dane accused him of disobeying the emperor's orders out of fear. The two lords fell to quarreling until, stung into rage by Ogier's accusations, Balant asked Charles' leave to go back to Paris. Charles let him go. He left the camp but did not return to Paris. Rather, he secretly contrived to cross the river and joined Gerard's side. Delighted with his new ally, Gerard ordered Lord Clare and his four sons to lie in ambush with Balant at Castle Zeno.

Charles knew nothing of this. At nightfall, Ogier and the rest rode silently toward Lasona. They were readily admitted over the bridge, but, no sooner on the other side, were assailed on three sides by the waiting ambush. A fierce combat began. Ogier came to blows with Balant, mistaking him for Clare, while Balant mistook him for Roland. But when Balant learned the name of his foe, he cried out: "You traitor. Know that I am Balant, whose son you killed in Aspramont!" Ogier replied: "It is the habit of traitors to accuse others of treason. I vow that you shall now find little joy in your betrayal." He then rushed upon Balant and shortly slew him.

Meanwhile, Lord Clare slew Robert of Normandy and came to blows with Richier the Vassal. "Who are you?" Clare demanded. Richier replied: "I am Richier, one of Roland's newly formed company." Said Clare: "Your death now shall repay Roland for murdering my brother Bussy." Said Richier: "I see you are of the same mind as you were when Troyan dragged Roland toward the river. But I shall now show you that Roland was never a traitor." The desperate combat that followed ended when Clare's sword split Richier's skull.

The French now retreated across the bridge. Only Ogier stayed behind to hold back the pursuers. Clare came to face him and demanded his name. Hearing it, he said: "Most noble Ogier, flee now, for if Gerard arrives, I will be powerless to save you." The Dane answered: "What man are you, who thus saves my life?" and Clare told him. The day was dawning just then, and Ogier fled back to Charles. Of his eight thousand men, only three thousand returned alive. Clare returned to Gerard, who took great joy in the harm that he had caused.

Charles was much grieved to learn of Balant's betrayal, and even more so by Richier's and Richard's deaths. He was now determined to cross the river, and sent Roland with a large force downstream toward the broken bridge. Gerard learned of his intention, lifted camp and returned to Vienne. Meanwhile, Charles had the bridge speedily repaired, crossed the river, and captured the city of Lasona. He had the treacherous Lothair hanged and then moved his army toward the Dauphinée. He crossed the Dorin and the Limen rivers, taking many castles along the way, and at last arrived at Vienne and laid siege to it.

Gerard was astonished at the speed of Charles' arrival. He had expected him to waste much time in plundering Burgundy. Learning how Charles had spared the country, he grew somewhat abashed and grudgingly admitted: "Charles has a great soul." He now realized that he could not long withstand a siege by Charles. He therefore sent

⁶⁷ Arar . . . Lasona: Neither the river nor the city are easily located on a modern map. Andrea's description suggests that 'Arar' is another name for the Rhone between Lake Geneva and Lyon. The name 'Lasona' is perhaps a deformation of 'Saone.'

an embassy to propose that the war be settled by single combat. Charles, who knew that Lord Clare was the only great champion left to Gerard, said: "We would be prepared determine this by combat of one against one, or ten against ten, or a hundred against a hundred. But we are no longer disposed merely to ask for homage. The time for pardoning Gerard's arrogance has passed. The crimes he committed at Paris prove him a renegade and a heretic and an enemy of all Christendom. We will not desist until we have entered the city and have him at our mercy, to cast him out like a Saracen dog." This was the answer he sent back to Gerard.

Clare's Duel with Roland

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When the messenger reached Gerard and told him of his embassy, and of what Charles had said to him, Gerard erupted in vile curses, reviling Charles and Roland. He at once summoned his sons and Clare and said: "You see how God and Fortune are against us by making that bastard Charles our lord, whose father no one knows. He calls himself Pepin's son, but I know the truth: he is the son of one of Pepin's herdsmen and hunters, with whom his mother stayed for a long time in the Maine Woods. He murdered Lanfroy and Ulrich, who were Pepin's sons. I therefore have sent my message to him to tell him that this war should be concluded by two champions. I am certain that on his side no knight fit for this combat but that bastard, Roland, nor on our side any but you, my dear nephew Clare. There is more than one reason that obliges you to take him on: to avenge your brother, and to deliver the realm of Burgundy, if God grants you the victory. I hardly think that it can escape you, since you fight for justice. After you have defeated Roland, who will dare take up arms against you? Moreover, you will thereby easily carry off the crown of France for your own head."

At this, Lord Clare replied: "O most noble father to all our race, what a most solemn grace it would be for me (if only I could be sure that all future war might cease with me) to die while seeking vengeance for my brother! But oh, our father, it is no light matter to conquer the realm of France, nor can battle with Roland be sought without misgivings. He is God's Knight and blameless of all

villainy. While we were fighting in Aspramont, we knew this for a truth, for three saints were ever in his company. Therefore let it be your pleasure to find another way of concluding peace; for if I lose, you will surely be unable to hold out against Charles; and if I win and am disgraced by Roland's death, there will never be peace between the French and the Burgundians. For God's sake, let peace be found by other means. It is better to endure a petty wrong than to seek vengeance." When Gerard heard these words, he turned on Clare in rage and pride, like a rabid dog, and said: "Never were you a son to my brother Miles, who at no time refused battle to any man in the world! I am ashamed to have sullied my hands by dueling such a wretched coward a knight. Until this hour, I considered you my nephew. From now on, I will not acknowledge you in my lineage." And with this, the council was ended.

Lord Clare returned to his palace and remained all day long in thought, and all the following night. Just as dawn was breaking, he called some of his servants, bade them saddle his war horse, mounted it like a desperate man, and rode toward Charles' camp to please his uncle Gerard. As the daylight brightened, he sounded his horn and demanded battle.

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When Charles heard that Lord Clare had come to offer combat, he convened all his nobles and told them how Gerard had sent offers of defiance and the reply he had given him. "He therefore has sent his nephew with a demand for battle. He is a proud man, and if we do not answer it, he will grow prouder still and our honor will be laid low. He needs must therefore be answered. Now which of you, to gain honor and glory, shall go against this dog of a heretic, the enemy of our Faith and of the Crown of France?" The nobles had taken their seats and none of them rose. These barons were considering many things: first, his great parentage; second, Gerard's pride; third, that

they were after all Christians; fourth, the great enmity a man would bring upon himself by giving a sign of opposing him; and fifth, they considered Lord Clare's prowess.

Charles, seeing that none of them rose and revolving these matters in his heart like wise man, turned to Roland and said: "My noble nephew, upon whom I have placed all my hopes, you, along with me, have been wrongly blamed for Bussy's death. You needs must now prove by force of arms how falsely we are accused." Roland rose straightway and went to kiss Charles' feet. He gave him thanks for the great honor and at once cried out: "Let my arms be brought!" He armed in Charles' own pavilion. Many lords, Charles among them, helped to put on his armor, and there was not one of them who did not regret this combat, except for the Maganza traitors, especially those who were most concerned in the matter. Once armed, Roland mounted his horse, slung his shield over his arm, put his lance in rest, gave spur to Veliantin, and rode into the field against Lord Clare.

139

When Roland reached Lord Clare, he was about to greet him, but Clare put his lance in rest and took the field. When Roland saw this, he put his own lance in rest and they rode at each other and exchanged several thrusts. Their lances fell in splinters and they, drawing their swords, rode to strike and gave each other most cruel blows.

Meanwhile Duke Gerard, having heard that Clare had ridden into battle, climbed a tower above the gate to see the fight and, bethinking himself, began to say: "O Christ, do Thou help my nephew against that bastard Roland. Forget not my services. Thou knowest I came to Aspramont for love of Thee." He prayed to God like a desperate man. Think, reader, how his prayers were heard.

The two knight exchanged not a word and slashed at each other so fiercely that all who saw them prayed to God to save them and to make peace among them. The first sally lasted until the third hour, then they took a brief repose, and still neither spoke to the other. Then they began the battle afresh, completely shattering their shields, their helmets and their harness. Thus they and their horses grew utterly breathless as they fought until evening, and still they did not speak. Because of their great exhaustion, they once more ceased to fight, and walked their horses up and down to keep them winded. They did so for more than an hour, and then once more charged each other. It was clear that neither had the advantage in the fight. When one was two lance-lengths from the other, Roland asked for a hearing and Clare halted. Said Roland: "My dearest brother, what iniquity has made Fortune sow so much ill will between us? Truly, through no fault of mine. You have accused me of killing your brother, whom I loved as much as myself. We know by many signs that it was Count Flamingon who killed him, in revenge for the wounds that your brother gave him in Aspramont." Said Lord Clare: "Roland, you traitor, it is a wicked excuse you offer here, for it was your uncle who had him murdered. But this sword shall wreak vengeance for him upon you." He spurred his horse and struck Roland a blow so great that it stunned him, but Roland struck back with equal might, and each smote at the other in full rage. Their battle lasted until after sunset. Then Roland asked for an end to the combat, without making him vow to return the next day. Roland said to Lord Clare: "I beg you for God's sake never to return to this fight." Clare made no answer and rode back to Vienne, and Roland rode back to Charles' pavilion.

140

King Charles helped disarm Roland with his own hands, questioning him at length about the fight. Roland highly praised Lord Clare as a valiant knight, telling Charles how he had talked with him, what answer he had given, and how he had begged him not to return to the combat. Charles wept

with compassion and said: “O cursed demon, whose guile has led on and forced Duke Gerard to do so much harm!” He offered much encouragement to Roland and, having dined, retired to rest.

Lord Clare returned to his palace in Vienne, and Gerard came to visit him. He too disarmed him with his own hands and asked how he had fared with that bastard Roland. In answer, Lord Clare said, “My lord duke, do not speak ill of the best knight in the world!” and told him what Roland had said. But Gerard said: “Do not believe him, for he would beguile you even as he did Bussy.” That evening, few words passed between them. On the next morning, the duke helped arm him and sent him out with better armor than the last, and greatly encouraged him in the fight to avenge his brother Bussy. When Clare reached the field, he sounded his horn and demanded battle.

141

Charles heard the sound of the horn. Seeing that Roland had not risen, he at once went to call him and said: “Clare has returned to the field.” Said Roland: “I have no wish to arm.” This made Charles sorrowful and he said: “O my son, full of virtue, none her will go if you do not.” He succeeded in beseeching him so urgently that Charles armed, mounted his horse, having changed some of his arms and his surcoat, and rode into battle.

When he came up to Lord Clare, he saluted him, but he did not reply, except to defy him. They occupied their ground and broke their lances as they had before. Gerard summoned nine armed men to watch the battle with him. He frequently asked them which of the two had the advantage, and they answered him according to their opinions. The two knights went to swordplay and bitterly struck each other, slashing their armors. Some say that Roland was very reluctant to strike at Clare, and that in the second and third assault he gave him many blows with the flat of his sword and begged him to be pleased to make peace.

When evening came, Clare replied to Roland: "You ask me to make peace, but I cannot do so, for my uncle Gerard will not leave me alone and would despoil me of all my lands." Roland said: "To keep him from taking away your lands, we will drive him out of Burgundy." Lord Clare answered: "Alas, Count Roland, I will be called a traitor, even as you are throughout Burgundy. They say you killed my brother Bussy out of envy." Roland replied: "By the sacrament of baptism, by my oath of knighthood, and by the three saints who were my companions in Aspramont, I never felt any hatred or envy against Bussy. God be my witness, if either I or my uncle Charles ever wished him harm. But you committed a great sin by slaughtering so many Christians between Saint Dennis and the gates of Paris, more than two thousand women and twelve thousand men, not to speak of children trampled under your horses, and even pregnant women, not counting those whom you brought to shame in Burgundy. Not even the Saracen dogs ever practiced such cruelty." Said Don Clare: "The fault for all this lies with Gerard. But I am bound oppose you or Charles to avenge Bussy." Then they resumed combat and neither had the vantage that day any more than the day before.

Near evening Gerard asked those whom he had with him which of them they thought had the worst of the battle, and one of them said: "My noble Lord Duke, I am very sorry for Lord Clare, for he is in great danger, and I greatly fear Roland's valor." Gerard had him thrown from the tower, and therefore the other eight said only what they thought would please him.

At the end of the day, Roland and Lord Clare left the field. Roland repeatedly besought him not to return to battle on the morrow. One rode back to Vienne and the other to his tent. The second day's combat was ended.

Roland came back to the tent of King Charles, who helped him off with his armor and asked him how he thought he had fared in his fight with Lord Clare. Roland answered: "My liege, Clare is the best knight in the world, and I fear that the end of this battle will be my death." He urgently besought Charles that it would be better to make peace with Gerard, or that another champion to fight Lord Clare should be found.

When he finished disarming Roland, the King thought hard about these words of his. He understood that Roland's nobility made him sorry to be the cause of Lord Clare's death. Charles loved Roland all the better for this, and he parted from him in tears, but did not otherwise discover his mind. He returned weeping to his tent and regretted the battle. He revolved many things in his mind, whether he could conclude such a peace with honor and, considering Gerard's unruly willfulness, he knew neither what nor how to think.

He summoned Duke Namor and the Dane and Solomon, and weeping recounted what Roland had told him. In response, among other words there spoken, Duke Namor said: "My liege, we know that Lord Clare's mind is of such a nature that, if he deems to have the advantage, he is unable to bridle himself. If those who are enemy to our faith are not punished now for their evil-doing, their punishment will come too late. Remember how Turpin was received when he carried your embassy, and how long I was imprisoned when I went to Tremogna, and the proud words that Gerard spoke in Aspramont, and Lord Clare's envy, when he saw Roland almost drowned by Troyan and did not help him. Remember above all the cruelty committed in Paris. Now they have wrought a twofold treachery at Lasona, by which my brave Richier met his death, along with Richard of Normandy. For this alone they deserve to be destroyed. Call for me tomorrow when Roland is arming. If he will not ride into battle, one of my sons will do so." Ogier's answer was: "I will take this battle upon myself." Charles heard these words and knew that Duke Namor was in the right with regard to

Richier the Vassal's death, and therefore said nothing more. With Roland, Charles pleaded that the things he had to do were needful.

Lord Clare returned to the city of Vienne, where he was tenderly received by the Duke. After he had helped him off with his armor, he asked him about the fight, and how he felt in his heart told he would fare. Lord Clare answered him in the following manner: "Ah, my dear father, no man can guess at future matters except by certain signs in the present; but, according to what I can understand about the fight, I am doubtful, for I never once saw Roland dismayed, though he kept begging me not to come back into battle." To this, Gerard replied: "O nephew of mine, you simpleton. Do you not see that Roland seeks peace for fear of you? If any part of you is ruled by fear, I will send my sons. But we are assuming that this is your fight because of your brother's death." (As for me, who write this down, I deem that the only reason that Gerard acted like this was so that his sons would remain heirs to the whole dukedom of Burgundy. In his mind, Bussy's death led to the effect he wished for, if he had not later shown himself as cruel to his sons as he did.)⁶⁸

Lord Clare suffered the words of his uncle in patience. Throughout night he rested amid many tangled thoughts. In the morning he called some of his friends and asked them to help him arm. He also asked them, if Gerard should come, to beg him to make peace. While he was arming, Gerard entered, and these friends of Clare's urged him for peace. He grew furious at them, threatening them with death, and cried out to his nephew: "Go, get yourself back home, and pay court to the girls!" These words angered Lord Clare, and he replied: "The knighthood that you bestowed upon me must needs cost me my life, but I would die in despair, did I not trust that my shameful death will be avenged, and avenged by the judgment of heaven!" Grasping his sword, he ordered him to

⁶⁸ This kind of authorial digression is unusual, in fact without precedent, in Andrea's work. The Italian is thorny: *Quanto che io scrittore, giudico che Gherardo non faceva questo se no perché e' suoi figlioli rimanessino reda di tuto el ducato di Borgogna e ch'egli avessi a mente la morte di Buoso per fenire all'effetoo di quello ch'egli aveva nell'animo, se al dreito non avessi mostrato contro a' figliuoli la crudeltà che mostrò.*

leave the room, whereat Gerard grew afraid of Clare's fury and angrily went out. Clare finished arming and said to those who were helping him: "My fear of betraying my knighthood makes me go into battle." Half despairing, he mounted his horse and left the city. There was no man or woman in Vienne who did not weep and commend him to God. He arrived on the field, blew his horn and demanded battle.

That sound greatly troubled Roland. He was angry at Lord Clare and said to himself: "Alas, Roland, what will you do? You know that you will be the victor, but what honor, what glorious prize will you gain by Lord Clare's death? The damage to our faith will be greater than the honor for you. Yet fight you must if you would not lose your honor. O most noble Bussy, you are free of all worldly troubles, but your death has brought us dire travail." With these words he rose from his bed and dressed. Then Charles came in to him and said: "My dear nephew, Lord Clare has arrived on the field." Roland made no answer and walked up and down in the tent, sighing. Charles said: "My dear son, why will you give me no answer?" Roland replied: "My lord, if I make no answer, I have good reason, and Lord Clare has good reason for not loving Gerard, since the two of you are the cause of our deaths." At this, Duke Namor, Solomon, and Ogier the Dane came in, and the same words passed that Duke Namor had employed earlier, so that Roland grew resentful of Lord Clare and, fired by wrath, called for his armor, put it on, mounted Veliantin, and rode into the field where Lord Clare was waiting.

143⁶⁹

When the two knights, Roland and Lord Clare, had returned to the field, Roland saluted Clare and he replied. As they had done before, they exchanged a few charges with the lance and, when their

⁶⁹ The opening lines of this chapter and of the next are missing in the MSS.

lances shattered, went to swords. They gave such cruel battle that all who watched trembled with fear, considering the peril into which these two were venturing. When the first assault was done, they rested.

Now Roland began to speak: "O noble Lord Clare, why is Fortune intent on visiting so much harm upon us as to make us want to kill each other?" Lord Clare replied: "It is by doing of mine, but in my uncle's cause, as well as by your own fault." Roland answered: "By my faith, Lord Clare, if you would be guided by my counsel, I could leave Charles and you could leave Gerard and let them finish this war between them." Lord Clare thought over Roland's words and the words that Gerard had spoken to him. He feared that Roland intended to betray him. Roland continued: "We can conquer cities and lands in another country. Ah, for God's sake, be not pleased that one of us should remain dead on the field." Thereupon Lord Clare said: "If I were to abandon my uncle in this war, I should be forever shamed. Truly, swords decide this matter." With this, he rushed at Roland with great fury and they resumed a combat more terrible than before, breaking and slashing each other's armor and shields.

That day, Gerard did not go to his tower, but climbed to the top of his palace where he could see the whole battle. Many said that he was alone and had brought with him a crucifix as tall as a man which he kept by his side. At every blow that the two knights gave each other, Gerard threatened the crucified Savior and reminded Him that he had gone to Aspramont for Him.

The two battling knights struck out at each other bitterly, and until the ninth hour neither had the advantage. At that hour, when the second onslaught was finished, Roland once more pleaded as mentioned before. Roland felt more pity for Lord Clare than for himself, but the other always answered that nothing would make him abandon Gerard. After the ninth hour had passed, they

launched two other assaults, during which Lord Clare lost much blood and began steadily to have the worst of the fight. Roland, when these two charges were done, prayed and conjured him to be pleased to leave Gerard, and he would leave Charles. But Lord Clare, who had grown desperate, was overtaken by wrath, threw away his shield, grasped his sword in both hands and struck Roland with diverse heavy blows. Roland warded them all, so that Lord Clare believed that his victory was near. He piled rage upon rage and so violently slashed his enemy's mail coat that Roland understood that Clare indeed sought his death.

Therefore Roland hurled away his shattered shield, grasped Durandel in both hands, and struck Lord Clare so mightily upon the helmet that he clove his face through the middle, down to the neck. Lord Clare fell lifeless from his horse to the ground. So died the most valiant Lord Clare, son of Miles of Mongrana, by fault of that desperate man, Gerard of the Thicket.

144

Lord Clare was dead. When Gerard saw him falling from his horse, he lifted his hands in a foul gesture toward the heavens and renounced God. Then he took up the crucifix by his side and broke it into splinters and destroyed it utterly.

Roland, seeing Lord Clare fall, leapt from his horse and made a great moan over his body, calling to mind the battles they had together fought in Aspramont against the Saracens, and loudly lamented the shame of this battle.

Charles sent Ogier, Solomon of Brittany, and the Duke of Bavaria to Roland. They found him in tears by the body and forced him to remount his horse. There was not one of them who did not weep at Roland's words. He commanded that Lord Clare's body be covered with silk drapery, and

had it carried to the gate of Vienne on a sumptuous bier. The citizens, with Gerard's permission, carried it amid great lamentation to the church of Saint Anthony of Vienne, and there gave it burial. Roland returned to his tent. As he entered, he found Count Flamingon, who was very pleased at Lord Clare's death.

In a rage, Roland drew his sword against him, shouting, "You traitor, do you smile at our misfortune, of which you yourself are the cause?" and cut his head from his shoulders. None of the Maganzas present dared say a word, and none of the others did anything but praise Roland's actions. That evening Roland went to bed full of grief, and Charles rejoiced in his victory.

Gerard and His Sons

145-146: ***Gerard's Alliance with Marsilius*** [summary]

That night, Duke Gerard secretly left Vienne. He made his way to King Marsilius of Spain and asked him to become his ally against Charles. Meanwhile, Gerard's sons surrendered Vienne to Charles, who graciously left the city in their charge and returned to Paris. When their father, accompanied by Marsilius' armies, arrived to reclaim his possessions, they sent a message to Charles, who decided at once to come to their aid.

Gerard Seeks the Death of His Own Sons

When Marsilius heard of Charlemagne's coming, he gathered his barons to council and asked what they advised him to do. Pantaleon suggested immediate battle. Marsilius replied; "When King Anglant's son Troyan was in these parts with King Pantalis, we lost the battle. Duke Gerard answered: "You did so thanks to me and my nephew Lord Clare. But now there is neither Gerard nor Lord Clare. I now insist on being the first to attack Charles and that bastard Roland." Because of these words, battle was decided upon. Gerard now said: "I will die in despair unless I first have my four sons hanged on the gallows." He called for his armor and armed, carrying a white shield with the following device: Our Lady hanging from one foot with her child in her arms. He bore the

same device on his helmet, like a desperate renegade dog. Then he rode toward Vienne to demand battle.

When his sons heard their father calling for battle, they took counsel together. Arnaut said that it seemed to him unwise to respond, but rather to wait for Charles. Rainier answered that they would be shamed if they did not answer the challenge, and would lose their honor. Guiscard said he wanted to be the first to strike him, not as a father, but as a deadly foe. Miles said that if he could not be the first, he would be the second. But then their mother came in and implored them not to ride against their renegade father until Charles' arrival, for she feared Gerard's cruelty. However, she could not change their minds.

Guiscard armed and rode into the field against his wrathful father. They took up their positions and struck each other mightily with their lances. Guiscard's steed fell beneath him and Gerard had him taken back to his tent. Then Miles took the field and unhorsed his father a thrust, and his father unhorsed him. They fought on foot and Miles surrendered, and his father sent him to his tent. Then Rainier rode into the lists, and him too he had taken to his tent. Shortly afterward, he unhorsed Arnaut. When he had taken all four, he returned to his tent and had them disarmed. He had a gibbet erected at the foot of the gate and had them taken there ready to be hanged. He demanded the surrender of the city, otherwise he would hang them. The answer he received was: "They are your sons. If you hang them, the damage is yours."

Gerard had Ermeline, his wife and their mother, summoned. Pointing at them, she answered: "These are as much of your blood as of mine. You begot them. Do what you please with them, for I do not wish a hundred thousand to perish for the sake of four."

Gerard ordered them to be hanged and would have done so, had not Marsilius commanded him to desist until the battle with Charles was done. Therefore he had them conveyed to King Marsilius' tent and put them under heavy guard. Presently he gave commands for the order of battle.

*148-150: **Gerard Captured** [summary]*

Presently the battle commenced. Ogier the Dane fought several combats with Gerard, but moderated the violence of his blows, not wishing to strike the sacred image on Gerard's shield. But Ogier finally succeeded in taking Gerard prisoner and brought him to Charlemagne's tent.

Victory and Truce

151

As Roland was riding through the field of battle, he saw King Pantaleon who carried a red shield charged with a great black scorpion. He immediately turned toward him, crying: "Defend yourself, Sir Knight, who have caused the death of so many of my people." They began a most cruel combat. Already nightfall was making it difficult to fight. At last, after they had exchanged many blows, Roland cut through both his helmet and his head, down to the collarbone, and this put an end to the battle.

Both armies retreated to their banners. Roland returned to the royal pavilion, where he found Gerard as a prisoner. Roland wished his head to be struck off in revenge for Sir Clare, but Duke Namor advised the lesser evil of keeping him imprisoned. Thus it was decided, and he was kept under strong guard.

While Charles was about to dine, King Balugant, Marsilius' brother, arrived, along with King Mazzelegis. They had been sent as ambassadors by King Marsilius. Charles was astonished when

they saluted him in royal fashion and told him that Marsilius was keeping Duke Gerard's four sons as prisoners and would surrender them to the king in exchange for peace.

When Charles heard these tidings, he said to Gerard: "You cursed renegade, have you nothing to say to me?" He answered: "I am sorry that I did not hang them with my own hands, for, if they had not betrayed me, I would have driven you from the realm of France." Then the ambassadors related how Gerard had tried to hang them and King Marsilius had saved them.

For this reason a peace was concluded. On the next day, Gerard's four sons were surrendered to Charles. The Saracens were given leave to depart without battle, and Marsilius swore to pay Charles a tribute of ten thousand *écus* each year (meaning those gold coins that are called *écus*⁷⁰). He was granted leave by Charles and returned to Spain. Charles entered Vienne and bestowed its rule upon Rainier, Arnaut, Guiscard and Miles, ordering Duke Gerard to be brought before Pope Leo in Rome, and so it was done.

The Pope had the soles of his feet examined to see whether he bore the mark of the fiery cross⁷¹. Since he did not, he had him prayed over until he converted. The Pope had him buried up to his neck and kept in this condition for a day. Then he had him dug up again and rebaptized, naming him Melioranus⁷². But this did the opposite, for it made him worse rather than better. Since he seemed sincere in his repentance, the Pope once again gave him his blessing, reendowed him with the lordship of Burgundy, and sent him back to Charles. Charles confirmed what the Pope had done. (The Pope in those days was Leo, Bernard of Clairmont's son and Roland's bodily uncle.)

⁷⁰ *Écus*: an anachronism, since the first *écu* was not minted until 1336. The coin enjoyed common currency in Andrea's Florence.

⁷¹ Fiery cross: Heretics who irrevocably repudiated their faith supposedly bore this mark, and thus could not be saved from the stake. The omitted chapter 146 makes it clear that Gerard refused this mark out of prudence rather than scruple.

⁷² Melioranus: orig. *Migliorano*, literally "Betterman"

King Charles made Gerard grant pardon to his sons and swear perpetual homage to the crown of France. Thus he returned to his realm, which he did not long enjoy because of his wickedness, for, having once done evil, he went on from bad to worse.

Roland and Oliver

152

When Duke Melioran had returned to his dominion, he lived in small contentment, but like the desperate man he was. His sons had little traffic with him, fearing his wrath. He cursed them a hundred times every day, and he reposed his only hope in Rainier's son, whose name was Oliver and in his sister, was called Fair Alda. These two were all Gerardo's pleasure and delight. When Oliver had reached his sixteenth year, Gerard began to speak to him of the wars that Charles had waged against him, and of how the realm of Burgundy needed freedom, and how Charles, King of France, had murdered Guerrin and Orlando had out of envy caused Lord Bussy's death and then fought and killed Lord Clare. He said so much to Oliver that he made him hate his father and uncle and brought him to the point of planning vengeance against Roland and Charles. He prevailed on him to go with ten thousand knights and to ride to Paris to burn, destroy and kill.

He did so and took many spoils. Then he returned to Vienne and they made ready all their lands with soldiers and weapons. But when Arnaut, Guiscard, and Miles heard of the ravages that Oliver had caused, they fled from Vienne and went to Lasona, despoiling many towns to oppose Gerard. Rainier, however, did not leave Vienne.

King Charles, to redress his injuries, decided to destroy Gerard altogether. He mustered a great army and marched to Lasona, where he was graciously received. From Lasona, he moved to Vienne

and pitched camp around the city. Gerard made Oliver his heir and commander of all his army, dubbing him knight and creating him marquis. He entrusted him with his royal banner, which displayed a silver gryphon on a red ground. The protection of Vienne was entirely entrusted to Oliver.

153

When Charles had laid siege to the city of Vienne, he tried very hard to encompass it completely. On the third day, Oliver, being a very young man, summoned to his mind many past events. As his resentment of Roland was constantly fed by Gerard, he grew extremely wrathful. On the third day after the army had surrounded Vienne, he armed from head to foot and came to Duke Pelioratus⁷³, telling him that he desired more than anything else to fight with Roland. Gerard greatly urged him on. Oliver mounted his steed, shouldered his shield, and put his lance in rest.

When Oliver's father saw him mounted and ready to do combat with Roland, he ran up to him, seized the reins of his horse, and began to beg him to dismount, refusing to let him ride out. But Gerard made him let go of the reins. Then Rainier drew his sword against Gerard, calling him a renegade, since he had caused the death of so many of his own blood, like an enemy to God and His saints. Had the barons not been nearby, they would have come to blows. And so Oliver rode into the field and sounded his horn, demanding combat with Roland.

When Charles heard that sound and Oliver's challenge, he gathered his barons and asked them what they deemed good to do. Meanwhile Roland called for combat, armed, rode into the field and saluted Oliver. Oliver replied: "If there were good reason, I should answer 'Welcome'; but I have

⁷³ Pelioratus: orig. *Peggiorato* ("the Man Made Worse"), a wordplay on *Melioratus* (*Megliorato*, "The Man Made Better"), Gerard's new baptismal name.

no reason to say so, therefore be on your guard against me as against a mortal enemy.” Roland made ready to reply, but Oliver took up his position. Roland needs had to fight.

They took their distance from each other and charged with their lances. Neither had the advantage. Their lances broken, they turned to strike with their swords. Oliver struck a blow on Roland’s helmet so mighty that sparks filled the air, and Roland struck him on the visor and nearly broke the helmet. Oliver, feeling Roland’s blow, thought that he had used his whole strength. He shifted his shield upon his back and struck Roland a two-handed blow. The blow was heavy and the marquis’ sword shattered in the middle. When Roland saw this, he began to laugh and said: “Oliver, you noble youth, you see that you are left without a sword. It would not please God if you received further harm at my hands, for after all you have done, we are certain that this depends on you. But be you pleased to come to King Charles, and he will endow you with a greater dominion than Gerard’s. You are very young. Do not believe Gerard, for he has forsaken god. You will find your uncle Arnaut in the camp among Charles’ counselors, as well a Guiscard and Miles. I do not ask you to yield yourself as a prisoner, but as a brother, and I promise to make you a member of my brigade and company, second only to me.” Oliver replied: “Count Roland, if, as people say, you are a gentleman, you will see that I have broken my sword. There is little honor in killing a defenseless man. Let me go back to Vienne for another sword.” Roland answered: “By my faith, I will not injure you for all the wealth in the world. It is completely up to you whether you go or stay. But I strongly urge you: do not believe that mad old man, who seeks nothing less than your death.”

Oliver thanked him heartily and returned to Vienne.

Roland had begged him so urgently not to return to the fight, that he now believed he would not return. Therefore he went back to his tent where he gave great praise to Oliver as a courteous and valiant knight. During the following night, when he remembered the love he had bestowed on

Oliver's beautiful sister Alda, he thought as follows: "If Oliver tells his mother of the great courtesy that I have shown him, Alda will surely be very glad of it, and turn her love a little toward me."

Amid these thoughts, Roland, love-struck for the fair Alda, fell asleep until the next day.

154

When Oliver had come back to Vienne, he presented himself with his broken sword before Gerard, and told him how it had shattered at his second blow, and how Roland had courteously allowed him to return. "But if I had a good sword, I would, by God, accomplish your revenge." The renegade gave no thought to Roland's noble nature, but had the following report spread throughout Vienne: "If his sword had not broken in Oliver's hands, Roland would now be a dead man." This report was believed throughout the city, except by Oliver's father, who what manner of man Roland was. He now went to plead with his son not to return to the fight, but Oliver would not listen to him.

Gerard had the whole country searched for a good sword, and a Jew came to Gerard and said: "There is, in my house, a good sword, very large and beautiful. We have had it for a long time, and we do not know whence it came into our house." Gerard had him bring it, and, after he read certain letters on its blade, it was recognized as the sword which once belonged to Sir Lancelot of the Lake. It was called Castigafolla later belonged to Bevis of Hampton while he lived and was called Clarenza.⁷⁴ Gerard renamed it Hautclaire, had it beautified with new ornaments, and girt it on Oliver, saying: "Be true and valiant as were those who bore it before."

Girt with it and full of good cheer, Oliver on the next morning armed, mounted his horse, and went to call for battle. When Roland heard that he had returned, he was very sorry. Nonetheless, he too armed and, upon arriving for the combat, saluted Roland. Oliver defied him and they took up their

⁷⁴ Clarenza: see *Reali* IV.15.

positions. They exchanged two might thrusts with their lances. As they were coming to swords, Roland said to Oliver: "Why do you insist on believing that renegade, Gerard?" Oliver made no answer and gave him a great blow with Hautclair. Roland, who had drawn Durandel, struck his helmet with the flat of his blade and Oliver, little concerned by that blow, cried out: "Roland, today I do not bear a sword that will break. Therefore defend yourself, for today Lord Clair and Bussy will be avenged upon you." Still Roland begged him not to let the battle take place, but Oliver gave him another blow that stunned all his senses.

Now Roland grew somewhat angry, seeing that nothing could make Oliver listen. He gave him a blow on his crest, so cast the whole silver gryphon to the ground, and knocked the teeth in his jaws together. Oliver, feeling that blow, said to himself: "That was a blow unlike the last." He shifted his shield to his shoulders and struck Roland another terrible blow. Roland struck back, but not with all his power, for he hesitated to kill him, saying to himself: "If I make him die, I shall never enjoy fair Alda's love." They exchanged three assaults that day, during which Roland kept begging Oliver to make peace, and Oliver would consent to nothing.

As the day was ending, they agreed to leave off the combat. Roland said: "Oliver, for God's sake, do not return to this fight. Rather, let us make peace and I promise to be allied to you by marriage. I will crown fair Alda queen of all Spain, and you shall be captain of my company." Oliver replied: "My grandfather will never give her to you." Roland answered; "I granted you a favor yesterday. If you are as courteous a knight as you say, grant me one tomorrow." Said Oliver: "I will grant you any favor except one: that the fight be finished by one of our deaths, if no other accord can be reached." Said Roland: "I will not ask to cancel the fight; all I ask is that you bring Alda up to the high terrace of that garden by the gate, so that she can watch our battle. If then I die at your hands,

I shall die content.” “By my faith,” said Oliver, “it shall be done.” Thus they parted, swearing to return to battle in the morning.

Oliver went back to Vienne, all battered and spent, and Roland came back to his tent, his whole mind on the pact he had made with Oliver. All night his thoughts revolved on matters concerning fair Alda. He searched countless ways that might allow him to make peace with honor and take her to wife, and he prayed God to let Oliver make peace, afraid that he might have to kill him. His shamefastness would not let him mention any of this to either Charles or any other person.

155

In the evening, Oliver, all battered and spent from the toil of Battle, returned to the city and told Gerard what he had promised Roland. Thereupon Gerard ordered a fragrant bath to be prepared for Oliver, and the, before Oliver went to sleep, Gerard sent for Oliver’s father to tell him about that promise to Roland. These two and Oliver deliberated on what to do about fair Alda. They appointed Rainier, with two thousand knights, to act as her escort. On the following morning, Oliver armed and came into the field in the usual way, and Rainier brought Alda, accompanied by many ladies, into the garden in keeping with the promise made to Roland. But Rainier wept continuously, fearing that Roland that would finish the fight. It was rumored that no man could hold out in battle with Roland for more than three days, and this rumor made Rainier afraid. Inside the garden there was a small plot on high ground, from which Charles’ whole camp could be seen. There the ladies sat down, with a canopy over their heads, to watch the fight. Oliver sounded his horn and called for battle. Roland armed and rode close to the garden, so that he saw the ladies and the many armed men guarding them. He greeted Oliver, and that morning Oliver answered him courteously. Roland began to beseech him to leave the fight and to make peace between them.

Oliver answered: "I cannot make peace without the consent of my grandfather, therefore this battle must be the end of one of us." Then they defied each other, and Roland, as he was taking his position, thought of his love for Alda and began to sigh, saying: "If I kill Oliver, Alda will never love me; but if I do not fight, it will be said that I am acting out of fear or cowardice." He entered the lists, and they charged each other with lances at rest.

156

As the two knights entered the lists, all the walls of the city were crowded with people. Gerard was ready near the jousting field, attended by many knights, and all Charles' host approached to watch them and the ladies that were seen nearby. Astolph, Otho and Berlingher stood near with many armed men on horseback, fearing that the ladies' presence was Gerard's doing and a sign of his malice or deceit.

The two knights broke their lances and, drawing their swords, began a most bitter battle. Roland kept holding his strength and gently besought Oliver to put an end to the fight. Oliver, thinking that Roland was doing his utmost, believed that he would be the victor.

When the third hour had passed, they put an end to their first assault. Roland once more besought him, but Oliver fought was all the more determined to fight. They commenced the second assault, which lasted a great while, until the ninth hour well into the evening. All who watched the battle believed that Roland was having the worst of it, except Rainier, who was watching, well aware of Roland's true strength. As evening approached, Charles declared that Oliver was a better knight than Lord Clare.

Meanwhile Roland turned to Oliver and said: “My noble lord, I can last no longer, since you have cut away most of my armor, and my flatteries have been of no avail. I must now perforce show myself threatening. Therefore, let us now make peace, else you must better defend yourself than you have so far.” This made Oliver angry and he said: “Out on you, you bastard whoreson! Do you think you can defeat me by fear?” He grasped his sword with both hands and struck Roland with such force that he made him bend over.

Roland, full of wrath, threw down his shield and struck Oliver a two-handed blow so fierce that it cut and cleft the crown of his helmet. The sword descended at the side of the crown and burst the shoulder mail and continued to deep down into the flesh of his flank, so that Oliver was stunned, for he had never before received such a blow. His father Rainier fainted at this point.

Oliver raised his sword again and struck back at Roland in bitter revenge, but Roland gave him another blow like the first. That cruel blow struck the middle of his helmet with such force, that Oliver fell back senseless in the saddle. It was plain now that Roland had up to this point held back. When Roland saw Oliver thus lifeless, he immediately thought: “Now I shall never have Alda,” and the thought made him decide to take her by force. He turned Veliantin toward the garden and made him jump the moat that surrounded it.

The knights saw him coming and raised many lances against him, but his good armor protected him, and his good horse by sheer force burst through their midst. He reached the place where Alda stood, seized her by the arm, and forced her into the saddle in front of him. The knights no longer dared to strike at him, and she, her hair all disheveled, cried out: “Roland, you disloyal traitor, what audacity do you use against a poor woman?” Roland forced a path out of the garden and would have carried off Alda, had not Oliver recovered and realized what was happening as he saw Roland

turn out of the garden. Already Astolph and his company were on the move to succor Roland, but when they saw him outside the garden, with none but Oliver riding against him, they halted and stayed to watch. Oliver shouted to him and thereby made him stop. He put Alda down on the ground, and Oliver gave him a mighty blow. Roland, between the blow and his fear that his lady would be taken from him, seized Durandel in both hands and rushed at him with a force and fury that would have slain, not just one Oliver, but three of them, one after the other.

At this point there shone out a miraculous splendor and a hand grasped the sword in mid-air, while these words rang out: “Do not do this, Roland, for it is not pleasing to God. Rather curb your rage. And do you, Oliver, at God’s commandment, give him your sister to wife. Make peace between you, so that you may conquer the pilgrims’ Highway of Saint James.”

Hearing these words, both of them dropped their swords to the ground, dismounted, and embraced each other with great tenderness. They swore brotherhood, along with the holy conquest. Then both went back to pick up their swords, and removed the helmets from their heads. Roland turned to fair Alda and said: “My lady, pardon me if I have offended you.” Alda knelt down and said: “Whatever pleases God must please me also. You are my master by divine command, and I accept.”

Orlando grasped Oliver’s hand. They both bowed to each other and each gave the other precedence. Roland remounted his steed and returned to his people. He came to the royal pavilion and recounted that peace had been concluded, and how. At this the whole camp feasted, waiting for confirmation from the city.

When Roland parted from Oliver, Alda recomposed her hair and was placed on a palfrey. Oliver remounted his steed and rode back into the city. When he stood before Gerard, he revealed how things stood. Gerard was very grieved at the news; nonetheless, he put on a cheerful mien and pretended to be glad. This made Oliver trust him and he sent word to Roland that Gerard was delighted. That day nothing else followed; already signs of peace were seen on both sides. Gerard sent back an answer, saying that he wished to prepare some festive display, and that he would soon do whatever pleased Charles. Along with this, he issued a pardon to his sons and they returned to Vienne.

It happened that three days later King Charles was pleased to go unarmed into Vienne, fearing no molestation. Gerard saw this and, by making two thousand knights issue from two gates, had Charles surrounded and forcibly taking into Vienne. Count Ganelon and King Solomon of Brittany were captured alongside him.

When the news spread through the camp, Roland angrily ordered the camp to come to order and sent letters throughout the realm, raising so large a force of men that in less than a month three hundred thousand Christians gathered for him around Vienne. Duke Namo went into close counsel with Roland and they determined to send ambassadors to Gerard, after first asking him for safe conduct. After they had received that safe-conduct, he sent for them. That night he had gallows erected on the walls and announced that he intended to have Charles hanged. However, when Oliver heard of it, he armed and put many of his friends under arms, saying that he would never permit it.

Gerard heard of this in the morning, and became aware that he had acted badly. Nevertheless, he awaited Roland's ambassador, who was the Duke of Bavaria. When he arrived in the hall, he

kneeled to Gerard, who made him remain on his knees for more than an hour. Then he told him: "I will have both you and Charles hanged on a pair of gallows." Duke Namor answered: "Make sure that I do not see Charles' death before my own." Gerard laughed at this. Then he bade him rise and said: "I desire Roland to be betrothed to Alda before you return to Paris." Duke Namor promised him all this. Then Gerard said: "What I have done was meant to show Charles that I do not hate him as much as he believes. Indeed, I have him at my disposal, and could put him to death, if I wanted."

Then he had Charles released from prison and told Duke Namor to send for Roland. He, however, refused to go without a safe-conduct, until Oliver said, "I will go myself," and mounted his horse unarmed. As he was leaving, he had the gallows thrown into the outside moat. When he arrived at the pavilion, he told Roland all that had passed.

Roland trusted Oliver and came with him, where there was great rejoicing. After they entered the city, many of the barons in the camp entered likewise. Roland betrothed Alda, swearing not to lie carnally with her in marriage until he crowned her queen of Spain. A three-day festival was held then, and after those three days, Charles craved leave to depart. He left in anger for the injuries he had suffered, and Roland remained to escort Alda, with twenty thousand and six hundred men.

Charles had hardly left when Gerard tried to kill Roland, but his sons with one accord arrested him and confined him in the dungeon of a tower, where he ended his life in despair. Roland led out fair Alda and Oliver went with him.

A great feast was held in Paris at this and throughout the realm of France. Then Charles pardoned Gerard's sons and bestowed the rule of the Dauphinée and a part of Burgundy upon Oliver. He

also created twelve Paladins of France⁷⁵. Roland was the first, and Oliver the second. Astolph was third, and Turpin's cousin Walter fourth; Turpin himself was fifth. The sixth was Engler of Bordeaux, son of King Yvo, followed by the Duke Namor of Bavaria's four sons, whose names were Otho, Berlingher, Gawain and Gavor. In addition he named one of Ganelon's sons, called Baldwin as well as Angelinus of Bayonne. All these were enrolled in Roland's band and swore to defend all Christendom and the Holy Faith, and to conquer and increase the lands of the faithful. They all vowed to follow Roland into any part of the world against the Saracens. Astolph and Angelinus swore to wear no crown until Roland himself was crowned. In Paris and throughout the realm of France, indeed throughout all Christendom, a great feast was held to celebrate this new company. The Pope of Rome confirmed and blessed that company and they were called the Twelve Peers of France. At Pentecost, all the nobles swore to go with Roland to conquer the crown of Spain.

158

When the feast at Paris and throughout the realm of France was ended, Charles made two Gerard of the Thicket's sons, Arnaut and Rainier, his counselors, alongside Duke Namor, King Solomon, Ganelon of Poitiers, Ogier the Dane, Gerard of Roussillon, Aymon of Dordogne, Aymeric (who was later called Aymeric of Narbonne), and King Yvo of Bordeaux. King Flor of Hungary was also in his counsel, but stayed little at Paris. Finally, there was another counselor, King Goteboeuf of Lower Frisia⁷⁶. These were the members of Charlemagne's Council of Twelve.

159

⁷⁵ Paladins of France: The number and membership of this group varies considerably from source to source. Andrea's list overlaps with the one in the *Chanson de Roland* in only seven names: Roland, Oliver, Otho [Otton], Berlingher [Berengier], Gawain [Ivon], Gavor [Ivoire] and Engler [Engelier]. Sometimes also (as for instance in *I Fatti de Spagna*) there seems to be a distinction between the 'Paladins' (Roland is always one of these) and the 'Twelve Peers' (treated as a *comitatus* under Roland's command). See also n. [152] below.

⁷⁶ Lower Frisia: In earlier chapters, Goteboeuf is more frequently called King of Bohemia.

In those days Gerard of the Thickets son Guiscard, with his brother Miles, set out after their father Gerard's death and seized the lordship of Apulia. Guiscard assumed the rule of Apulia from Reggio to Gaeta, and Miles that of Otranto to Manfredonia. He called himself Prince of Taranto, and was not content with this, wherever he was for a long time imprisoned at Durazzo, as is told in the book *Meschin of Durazzo*⁷⁷, which concerns his son. Here end all the stories regarding Aspramont and Gerard of the Thicket.

⁷⁷ *Meschin of Durazzo*: This is a puff for Andrea's long romance, *Guerrin Meschin*, which enjoyed a popularity rivaling that of the *Reali*.

Anonymous, **THE EXPLOITS IN SPAIN** (*LI FATTI DI SPAGNA*)

Prelude to War

Charlemagne's Council

1

One morning, while Charlemagne was holding court in his royal chapel,⁷⁸ he began to speak, carrying a taper in one hand, with all his barons assembled before him, in the following manner. Placing his hand below his throat and sighing heavily, he said: "My lords, by the true God, I must tell you of a great miracle that He has shown me: For three nights now a pilgrim appeared to me in my chamber, menacing me, making me realize that I must go and conquer the Highway of Saint James from the people who do not believe the Faith of Jesus Christ or His Mother. He pointed out the road to me. It happened for three nights, one after the other, so that I scarcely slept at all. And thus I was put in mind of what I had indeed promised Jesus Christ and His Mother and Saint James of Vienne⁷⁹ after our war with Gerard of the Thicket was concluded and fair Alda was espoused to Count Roland; and indeed you all vowed that, if God gave us a happy victory, to crown Count Roland king of all Spain. Until now I had forgotten this, but I have no wish for my words to be given the lie. By my title of Emperor, which I hold from the see of Rome, I shall never desist from going to Galicia, until I have conquered to Highway of Saint James. I require you all to contribute to this victory, for I will put all my treasure and all my belongings into this venture: I myself shall fight with my own sword, and do so more gladly than when I returned to my dominions after being

⁷⁸ In his royal chapel: *in la sova capella Domino*. The manuscript reading is puzzling, but the reference seems to be to the imperial chapel at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle).

⁷⁹ Saint James of Vienne: Either a slip or a scribal error. The saint particularly worshiped in Vienne is Saint Anthony Abbot (see *Aspramont*, III.144)

cast out of France through the great envy of others.” Here Charles said no more, and he had finished his oration. “Now let my knights stand up, and let each declare his will.”

2

When Charles’ nobles understood his wishes, most showed themselves strongly displeased at leaving their children and wives to set out to conquer the realm of Spain and the Highway of Saint James. Wherefore there first rose a baron whose name was Galles of Normandy. There was no wiser man at Charles’ court. “By my faith, my lords,” said Galles, “it is not reasonable for the lord of a realm (be he king or marquis) to launch himself, for a dream that has befallen him, toward pitfalls that he will be unable to escape without much sweat and danger, to become a jest to his enemies. So help me God, it would seem to me (if I did not know better) that the wicked demon takes a man to a great height in order to lead him to the castle of Hell. As the saying goes: ‘He who wants it all, loses all himself.’ Surely you are acquainted with the men of Galicia, and those of Spain, Castile and Aragon. They do not easily give up what is theirs except by selling it dearly with their swords, lances and arrows. Too late in your life do you think of destroying their religion; therefore, so please you (if you will be governed by my counsel) leave the conquest of the Highway of Saint James to your children. Do not undertake a thing that you cannot bring to an end.”

3

At these words Count Roland leapt to his feet and said: “So help me God, you have made a fine speech, Giles, you and those who are of your mind; though every man who speaks his mind need not be blamed for it. Know now, Sir Galles,” Roland continued, “that we are aware (be not wroth at my saying so) how you and your lineage have never loved our liege’s honor. You never loved him, who has been ill repaid for ever creating you duke or naming you to a council as high as this.

Verily you have no sense of the benefits you have received from either God or King Charles, since you no longer recall how ten years have already passed since you turned pagan and abandoned all here present, and the poor orphans throughout this countryside. Now your great sins lie heavily upon you, and the devil shall have you in hell, both body and soul. Consider this, at the present moment, and do not meddle with times to come. I will say this much: I advise you to be the first to enter Spain, and not to be tempted to say anything more, for your wickedness shall be of no help to you. It is better to be silent” (said Roland) “than to speak evil. My lords and nobles,” Roland continued, “you will remember that great treachery that Marsilius so often used in the past, though he vowed fealty and honor beneath the walls of Vienne, in the days when Gerard of the Thicket summoned him to destroy Christendom. You all know and are aware of it. You should never forget that great outrage, for he would not have hesitated to destroy and kill us all. Now the moment and the opportunity has arrived to be revenged against the pagans, and I myself stand ready to be the first to go with my twenty-thousand and six hundred and sixty six knights⁸⁰. If you act as you have been found to act in other times, you need have little fear that castles or fortresses or walled ramparts will hold out against us. If what I have said makes you hesitate, let the best of you sift out this matter together.” At this proposal, while the court sat greatly wondering at Roland’s words, a knight rose to his feet.

4

It was Richard of Normandy who rose to his feet and all heard his words gladly, for he was a wise knight and of excellent understanding: “You have fully heard the words of Miles of Angrart’s son, namely Roland, who complains of Marsilius, brother of Balugant. He broke his promise to Charles

⁸⁰ Twenty-thousand and six hundred and sixty six knights: *Aspramonte* gives the number 20,600 for the count of Roland’s honor-guard (see III.56 and elsewhere). The *Fatti* introduces this somewhat quibbling refinement.

and to all of you--he gave it, as you well know, at Vienne--of yearly tribute of gold and silver coin. From the first year onward, he paid nothing, which shows that men in Aragon and Spain, where he resides, hold Charles and all of you in great mock and scorn. Therefore you can conclude with certainty that the Saracen people offer a strong threat to us. If you long allow them this respite, they will show their teeth when you are defenseless front or rear. If a man is afraid that a fire will burn down his house, he must needs extinguish it before it does greater damage. That is what I say regarding Marsilius of Spain. Therefore, my lords, I would urge you to remember how much wealth and gold Roland was able to offer from his cities—that is from Clairmont and Blaye and Angrant--wherefore you should hold him in honor from this hour onward. I know not what more to say, for I have talked too long already. As for myself and my men and my people, I hereby pledge myself to Roland, and all of you should, so please you, do likewise. Then we shall go to conquer Spain and the Highway of the Holy Apostle James. As for any man who would say that my words have been wicked or false, I here maintain that he is a traitor and recreant knight.”

When he had ended his oration, the good duke took his seat among the other knights and nobles.

5

Gryphon's son Ganelon rose to his feet, whose wisdom could persuade many whenever he pleased. He had risen as soon as Roland, made very fearful by his speech, for he had no desire for the entry into Spain. He said: “My lords, to commence a war as suddenly as Richard has advised seems to me a great folly, and will not be to the honor of any here present. I say that it would be better for Charles to send ambassadors to him to demand the rich tribute, for I believe that he will know to do his best to comply with every wish of my great lord Charles. If he refuses, we shall still try force to persuade him to yield what he denies us. None could blame us for that. But if we begin the war, it

will long continue and (by my head) will last so long that those who desire it most shall have more than enough of it. Let any wise knight answer this, for who knows at this moment to gainsay my words?" Count Ganelon sat down, and Solomon of Brittany rose immediately after him.

6

He said: "My lords, one thing that Count Ganelon has said is true. If indeed we could obtain the tribute we require from King Marsilius by right reason, I do not think any man here would be discontented. But he himself has forgotten the voice of reason; hence, an embassy to Marsilius seems to me the height of folly. He remains so obstinately proud that he will think in his heart that we are sending to defy him. He will thus be able to make preparations and protect his lands. I advise, on the contrary, that we send out no man who might, between the months of May and April, give him the time to fortify his walls and towers. Let set out for to Spain before Marsilius knows of it and let us send no one to give him notice of our coming. When we are in Spain, we will visit upon his territories such great harm and damage that we will bring him to heel. Let whoever wants to go on this venture in Spain call it God's grace granting him just vengeance. And let whoever does not want to go stay at home. Indeed, we have three reasons that oblige us to heed Roland's call: the first is the honor of God; the second is Charles and his legitimate claim to dominion; and the third, is what seems to me Marsilius' obstinacy and pride. Charles shall benefit by the upholding of his honor; and we shall benefit by the great glory of the enterprise. This is what I ask of everyone, and for this reason, to show my good will, I offer ten thousand Breton knights to serve from beginning to end in the invasion of Spain. I have no wish to say anything more at this moment. Let us hear what others have to offer to match this." There good King Solomon resumed his seat.

7

Now Duke Namo of Bavaria stood up, who in those days was the warrior most esteemed for sage council at Charles' court. He began to speak in the following manner: "I approve and confirm King Solomon's words. We must suffer no delay in wreaking vengeance; and we must, for the salvation of our souls, honor the promise that Roland and all of us made at Vienne. Let us now cease to talk about the offer that Roland has made of his treasure. At this point it is our duty to render him stout aid, since he desires to be the first to enter Spain, for the salvation of our souls, and to conquer the Highway of Saint James, which we are now unable to enter because the Saracens have barred it and make whoever treads on it pay dearly.

"Let us therefore go to Paris and there assemble our hosts. Let us gather mighty provisions for our entry into Spain, and do it so secretly that no man shall know what direction we mean to take. We should also send word to the good Ogier the Dane to proceed to the border and stand watch, at the first mountain pass into Navarre, lest the Saracens inflict some heavy damage on us. Do you, Roland, with your two thousand two-hundred and sixty-six soldiers of the Church, go there also. I shall, for the salvation of my soul and to win Charles the crown of Spain, add ten thousand of my own knights to your company. If there is any man here who would gainsay my words, let him rise and speak."

8: **Preparations** [summary]

None else rose to speak and the plan for the Spanish war was approved. Galleh knelt to beg Roland's pardon and Roland, at Oliver's urging, granted it. Many lords pledged troops and wealth, and even Ganelon offered twenty thousand knights for the campaign. Charles called for his notaries to record all their pledges. The whole court then moved to Paris, where preparations continued, though all were pledged to secrecy about their goal. Roland and Oliver, with their 20,666 fighters traveled to Rome where the Pope approved and blessed their venture. Ogier the Dane, with six thousand knight, occupied a post near the Navarrese passes but took care to offend no one and to let merchants traffic freely across the border. Nevertheless Marsilius grew wary. He summoned his council to Saragossa to discuss the matter. None of his barons could guess at Charlemagne's intention, but his chief advisor, Braus Johaus of Cordes, reassured him: Charles, he said, might be reading for war elsewhere, but seemed no threat to Spain.

Marsilius' Embassy

9

King Marsilius left his council and betook himself to one of his gardens, a very delightful place planted with verdant trees, in which there stood a silver basin. Marsilius was much versed in the arts of astrology and necromancy, and had caused the vessel's rim to be inscribed round about in the Saracen manner with all the kingdoms, lands and cities from East to West. Next to the basin, stood the carving of a lighted torch. Whenever there was war, this basin turned in the direction of the fighting. Now Marsilius, by his magic art, spun the vessel three times, and it turned to show Spain. When Marsilius saw this, his countenance grew pale with fear at the thought of war.

At last his heart persuaded him that it was great folly in him to trust his magic art, and that he would do better to learn the truth by messages. He summoned one of his wisest chancellors and made him compose a letter in the Latin tongue. Then he called for two of the best knights in his retinue and said to them: "Take this letter to the Emperor of France, and come back to tell me how he receives it." These two knights left on the next morning and rode with great speed through shrubs, valleys and forests until they reached Paris. Outside the city they found a huge gathering, with tents and pavilions, for Roland and his knights had that very day arrived from Rome, to bring the Pope's greetings to the Emperor and all his barons.

Thereupon the two messengers mounted the palace stairs, where they found a great assembly of princes and marquises. They saluted Charles most courteously in the Christian tongue and presented him with the letter on Marsilius' behalf. The emperor took it from them without a frown, called for his chancellor, Gaylord of Tourenne, saying, "Break the seal of this letter," and then, "Read the letter in a loud voice so that all may hear." The chancellor took the letter from him at

once, forced the seal, and said: "Hear me, my lords, for this letter seems no trifling message." Then he read the letter that follows hereafter.

10

"We, Marsilius, by the grace of God Lord of Spain, Cantabria, Southern Navarre and Aragon, who stand in fear of no man, to you, Charles, Lord of France and Germany, Emperor of Rome, whom none (as we deem) exceeds in greatness: We send our greetings to your realm in sincerest love and with the best intentions, devoid of all malice.

We have heard and understood that some of your people, with a great armed power, have approached Navarre, but we do not know whether they intend peace or war. We have also learned that you have sent letters and charters to all subjects in your lands, which seems to us like a preparation for war.

We are therefore greatly alarmed, for we do not know your intentions. It is no marvel that we should be alarmed, for as a lion among all other beasts, so are you among rulers. Therefore we request you by this letter to send us word whither you intend to go, for we will then provide you with numerous men furnished with lances and arrows, though not to any purpose that we consider unwise.

If, however, you fail to tell us where you mean to go, we shall not be so fainthearted as to leave our domains unprotected, or to omit sending for help into the lands of all our friends, who can easily furnish us with a hundred thousand knights. We desire you to be well aware of one thing else: Your destination might be one that we cannot permit; but if so, it would be better, for both you and us, to put us on notice to be on our guard against you. We will credit such a message from you more

surely than from any man living. Do this, and we will honor you as befits an emperor and any of your other kings. As long as you send somebody to offer open defiance, no man can afterwards impugn your honor.” And so the letter ended.

11

When Charles had heard King Marsilius’ message, he pondered a response in his heart, and then said to the envoys: “Tell your king on my behalf that I shall not cease to capture castles, villages and valleys in preparation for whatever he might do. In short, I answer that the time for our revenge is near. Let him who has offered me insult or injury not sleep, for Charles will awaken before long.” And here our emperor said no more.

“Sire,” said the messengers, “does this mean that you defy us? We beg you to tell us plainly whether you a coming against us.” The emperor replied: “I have given you my answer. I would have you know that you have long acted like vicious wolves, who always devour all beasts but those that resist them. You have been too savage in the destruction and slaughter of Christians. I mean to act in accordance with the faith in that glorious Father who was nailed to the cross for us. As for the arrogant Saracens, though I have long left them alone, I intend their destruction. Therefore, if your king sees clearly, I answer that to be on good watch has ever been the best first course.”

Ferrau

12-15: Ferrau in Lazara [summary]

Knowing that they could receive no clearer reply, the messengers posted back to Saragossa. Marsilius had already heard of Charles’ further preparations, and received his messengers’ report with much anxiety, since he felt ill furnished to withstand an attack. He then convened a council of all his friends. At the council, his chief ally, the Caliph, angrily told him: “My dear kinsman, you have done ill to trust in magic rather than chivalry. It is great folly to forget the strength of one’s enemies. You have wasted too much time ignoring Charles’ power, and he now rouses his folk against you. I told you a year ago to invade France and lay waste to his territories. It is now too late for this; but for the

present I advise you to dispatch ten or fifteen thousand knights to Lazara in Navarre. Meanwhile we can gather our forces for the coming battle against our enemies, may Mahound confound them!" Marsilius agreed and summoned his nephew, the giant Ferrau. He put him in command of fifteen thousand knights and ordered him to occupy Lazara, but to offer no battle against the Christians except in defense of the city.

Ferrau led his army to Lazara. Soon afterwards four thousand of them went pillaging across the French border, seizing much cattle and prey. When Ogier the Dane discovered this, he sent word to Charlemagne to bring up his entire army. Charles at once put the host in readiness and commanded Basin of Longies to ride ahead with an advance guard to let Ogier know that he would soon arrive. On the morning before his own departure, Charles appointed Answig of Maganza regent of France during his absence. Then he sent letters for assistance to Flor of Hungary and Desiderius of Pavia.

Charlemagne's Army Arrives in Navarre

16

He also caused a letter to be written to the good King of England, telling him to keep good watch against the Saracens beyond the sea, and that he needed no other aid from him. Intent on marching to Spain into King Marsilius' lands, King Charles rose one Wednesday when mass was being sung, and the queen was in prayer below praying to Christ for his happy return. The queen said to him: "I will ask you a boon, for I well know that you desire to venture abroad, where you will find much resistance from Spain and Aragon, for they will not yield so easily as you hope. I ask you to have all their wives and women sent to all your nobility, so that they shall have no excuse to return to their countries." The emperor replied: "My lady, I promise you that if I stay long in the land of the Saracens, I will send for you and the other ladies and wives of my nobles." Then the queen said: "My lord, I ask you one other thing. Since you desire to ride out over so many plains and mountains and valleys, carry the banner of St. Michael before you." The queen bowed and curtsied to him and went down from her palace to the court, where he was expecting his barons. Charles crossed himself with a cheerful countenance, and then mounted his horse with his nephew Roland, the seneschal of his host, who was in full armor and carried a great staff in the manner of a seneschal. He led his whole army out of the city, disposed in proper ranks, in the order in which they would

ride against the enemy. He ordered the cymbals and trumpets and tambours to sound, and the ladies and maidens of the city stood by their windows to see the host marching in file through the gate. The gonfalons and royal banner were unfurled toward Spain. The ladies and maidens cried wept loudly, for they would never forget their gaieties and dances, and they prayed to God in the Highest to protect their friends and relatives.

Charles rode with his army. Never was there seen a fairer host or a better armed. Caesar, the Emperor of Rome, who ruled the whole world, never had a better. Making a show of clashing and jousting, that army galloped through the plain, their lances raised high and threatening Spain. Never was there seen an army so well furnished with means to endure a long campaign. They did not make many days' stay. For five days that army sped onward, and so arrived near Blaye. There they found Ogier, who rode toward them to greet them with great honor. No sooner had he seen Roland, than he told him that Ferrau had arrived in the region and had commenced the great war. Roland said to him: "Tell me, Ogier, have you ever seen this Ferrau?" Ogier answered: "I have never laid eyes on him, but I am eager to see him. If he is as they say, there was never seen a pagan as strong so huge as he. A horse can scarce carry him, and he truly seems to be descended from Goliath, whom the boy David slew with three pebbles." Then Roland said: "I swear to God, however strong and huge he may be, I will teach him a lesson (if my mind does not deceive me) and make him regret to have begun this war."

17: ***The French Cross the Frontier*** [summary]

At dawn the next day, Ogier's forces set out under the Oriflamme and crossed the passes into Spain. Roland's company rode ahead, raiding and pillaging the countryside. In the course of the night following, Namo set out with the main host and arrived beneath Lazara. Ferrau had not expected the French to move so speedily, but quickly mustered a force of ten thousand knights for the defense of the city. He himself, the lord of vast domains, was of giant stature, some fourteen cubits tall, with powerful thighs and hands. His fingers extended for a whole span, and his eyes were a span apart. He was blond-haired and exceedingly strong and brave.

Ferrau Arms

18

Ferrau put on his armor, which was carried to him by two Saracens named Braités and Brion. His shin-guards were of steel and his spurs were golden. His hauberk was so hard that neither sword nor arrow could pierce it. He had conquered it beyond the seas when he slew the Emir Solomon, who had cast his father Falseron into prison. That Ferrau also had his skin enchanted, so that neither sword nor iron point could cut it, except at his navel. He was thus so strongly armed that he feared no man. All the rest of the armor he wore made him appear like the splendid lord that he was.

When he had donned his hauberk, he threw over it a surcoat of golden mail. Then he took up a sword that Marsilius had given him. It was so long that no other man could wield it. Finally he put on the helmet that he had conquered in the Valley of Jehosaphat by killing King Jostant in combat. For a crest that helmet bore a silver hawk with a quail in its talons. When he put it upon his head, it seemed to fly through the air. After he had finished arming, two fierce Saracens brought his mace, which consisted of three great balls of lead wrapped in bands of steel. Then his great steed was led in, clad in a purple coverlet, a gift of love from the King of Carthage.

Ferrau now mounted, grasping a shield entirely covered with ivory. He had his banner, which bore an image of Mohammed, unfurled, and commanded the city gate to be opened. Then he led out his troops, riding ahead of them all.

Now Ogier pointed him out to the French and said: "Can you see the man, Ferrau, the great pagan?" Roland, Oliver and the rest rode up quickly to see the great lord. The Saracen stopped in

the shadow of a pine tree and called to three of his knights. The first was called Natasard of Mosun, the second Naboradais, and the third Joserin. He bade them bear the following message to Charles: that he greatly wonder at their coming, since Spain had given no provocation. He said that, if Charles was willing to send his champions into the field, "I am prepared to do man-to-man combat with Roland and Oliver, as soon as they cross the bridge. If I can trust my mace, I shall kill some of your best knights."

The three messengers rode toward Charles' army, and Ogier and all the rest came to see them. Roland himself came, and greatly marveled at Ferrau, for he had never in his life seen a bigger man. Gerard of Roussillon rode out to meet the messengers, saying, "What is it you want, gentlemen?" and when the messengers replied, "We are Ferrau's envoys," he conducted them to the Emperor.

19-22: *Ferrau Captures Ten Peers*⁸¹ of France [summary]

Nabordais refused to greet Charles and said: "In invading us, you have acted more wickedly than Alexander against Nicholas or Paris against Menelaus. You will be punished and destroyed." Charles was silent for a long time; then he said: "We fear no man. Your king has long withheld the tribute he owes me, and has broken his promise to make Roland heir to the Spanish crown. We are here to demand our rights." Oliver added: "If your master is what he pretends, we are ready to fight him man to man." Nabordais answered: "We have come for nothing else. Let Roland come to fight Ferrau. If he is overthrown, you must return to France; if he wins, Marsilius is the loser and your road into Spain is clear." Oliver said he was ready, as did Roland. Astolph rose and put his hand around Roland's neck and said to the ambassadors: "This knight is the rightful king of Spain, and if your lord faces him in battle, it would be better for him never to have been born." The envoys said that Ferrau would do battle with any or all of the twelve peers of France and were given leave to depart.

Lazara was situated on the banks of a deep river which was crossed by a great stone bridge. On the yonder side of this bridge Charlemagne's army now gathered and the twelve peers stepped forward, with Ogier bearing the Oriflamme. Ferrau stood on the walls, accompanied by his tutor, King Sinagon, and crowned with a diadem of pearls. Seeing the twelve peers, he was eager to do battle with them.

On the following morning, he went to pray for victory. Then he armed and rode out on a gigantic courser, a gift from the Sultan of Persia. He sounded his horn and demanded battle. Ogier, who had fought with him in the past, grew hesitant, until Astolph of England said to him: "Why are you not riding out to answer the call?" Angrily, Ogier gave spur to his horse and rode toward the bridge. "I know you," cried Ferrau; "we have fought before and I unhorsed

⁸¹ Peers: in *Fatti*, the term 'Paladin' is rarely used and applied exclusively to Roland, his companions are more commonly called the 'Twelve Peers [or Twelve Barons] of France'. Their list overlaps but does not exactly coincide with that of Andrea's Paladins. See n. [143] above.

you.” Ogier controlled his rage, and defied him to the death. In the battle that followed, Ogier was overthrown and brought as a prisoner into the city. Now Richard of Normandy begged Charlemagne for the honor of the next fight. The emperor consented, and Turpin gave him his blessing. But Richard fared no better and was captured also. Thus the first day ended. On the next morning, Ferrau once more rode out. The brothers Angelin and Angolier of Bordeaux now rode against him and they too went down in defeat. Namor’s four sons, Gawain, Gavor, Otho and Berlingher fought next and suffered the same fate. By the day’s end, Ferrau had captured over one hundred and sixty of the best Christian knights.

On the third day, Charlemagne, hearing Ferrau sound his horn, cried out: “This is a devil from hell sent out to destroy us.” Oliver heard him, rushed forward and demanded the next encounter. Ferrau was much impressed with Oliver’s strength and valor, but in the end Oliver fared no better than the rest. Of the Twelve Peers of France, nine were now in fetters, along with many other Christian knights. Astolph of England seemed next in line, but when he came face to face with Ferrau, he handed him his sword, saying: “It is not to you I surrender, but to the best man in the world, whom you will face tomorrow.” “What do you mean?” said Ferrau, and Astolph answered: “It is Roland in whom I trust so much that I leave myself in your hands until tomorrow.” “If you are wrong,” Ferrau answered, “I will have you hanged on the gallows.” “I have no fear of that,” said Astolph and was taken away to prison. When Astolph joined the other prisoners, he told them that Ferrau would either hang them all or have them taken to Marsilius. That evening, Ferrau entertained his captives at supper. All the other Peers were seated honorably at the high table, except Astolph who ate with the lesser gentry. When supper was over, Ferrau mockingly asked Astolph how he was doing. “Very well,” answered Astolph with a smile, “for I found Oliver and my other friends in prison.” And thus all went to sleep.

Roland and Ferrau

23

The story now relates that in the morning, when Ferrau had risen, knowing that he was to joust with the best knight in the world, rejoiced and prayed to Mohammed to give him the power and skill to defeat Count Roland. At once he donned his best armor. Tied to his saddle-bow he carried a great iron mace of three balls of lead, each of immense weight, hanging from three iron chains. His sword, his shield, and his lance were of the best, and he was clad in excellent armor. He came to the bridge, demanding battle with Count Roland.

Roland, hearing the sound of his horn, at once armed head to foot, mounted his horse, and came to Charlemagne’s pavilion. He dismounted and received the gage of battle. Then Archbishop Turpin came to say mass, and he received the archbishop’s blessing. He remounted, took his leave of

Charles and the other lords and promptly rode to the bridge of the contest. The two knights defied each other, and each took the field at his pleasure. When Charles saw them ready to strike, he took his cloak and raised it over his eyes so that he might not see his nephew Roland fall. As they rushed together, the knight struck each other such mighty blows that their lances shattered. Neither could dislodge the other from the saddle, and when Charles discovered that Roland had not fallen, he was very glad.

Now a heated battle begun. Roland grasped his sword Durandel, that very excellent sword which once was Hector's of Troy, and was first to strike Ferrau with a mighty blow that made him bend low in the saddle. Ferrau reached for his mace and aimed a blow at Roland. Roland, seeing him coming against him, made to escape the mace by turning his head aside, so that Ferrau killed his horse. At this, Roland nimbly dismounted and cried out to Ferrau. "Do you dismount also, else I will kill your horse." Then Ferrau answered: "I shall do nothing of the sort, for it is not wise for a knight to dismount if his horse is good." The battle grew very heated and lasted until vespers, and neither prevailed against the other. Now Ferrau began to speak: "Do you return, if you will, to your host, and I will go back to the city. We can continue and finish our battle in the morning." "Very well," said Roland.

Thereupon Roland went back to the camp, and Ferrau, seeing him do so, at once dismounted and turned toward the city. Sinagon came to meet him and asked whether Roland was as good a knight as men said. "Certainly," said Ferrau; "I have never fought a better man." Then Ferrau went to take his repose among the prisoners. When Astolph saw Ferrau, he said to him, "Where is your captive?" and Ferrau answered, "We have not yet finished our battle."

Duke Namor, seeing Roland returning alone, came toward him to question him regarding Ferrau's prowess, and so did Charles and the other lords. Roland answered: "We have to finish our battle in the morning." They went to supper and then took their repose. In the morning the knight made ready for the second battle.

24

At daybreak the next morning, Count Roland, who had been up since midnight to worship and beseech Christ and his Mother (as was ever the custom of this holy and just warrior), called for his servants and bade them make haste to ready his arms and his horse Veliantin. That horse understood human speech and Roland had conquered it from a mighty Saracen warrior whose name was Clarel.

Once armed, Roland mounted his steed and came to Charlemagne's tent, where many crowned kings, princes, counts and marquises were gathered. Duke Namor of Bavaria, Charlemagne's counselor, was there, as were Astolph's father, Duke Otho of England, and Solomon of Brittany, and countless other knights from Germany, France, Picardy, Burgundy, Gascony, and Flanders, all desirous to witness Count Roland's combat with Ferrau. They all besought Christ to aid Count Roland, for they well knew that if Roland lost the fight, they would all be made to renounce their faith in Christ, for fear of the Saracen sword.

As soon as Roland had heard mass and received Archbishop Turpin's benediction, he mounted Veliantin and took his leave from Charles and the other nobles, who all wept fearing that he would lose the battle. Roland galloped toward the bridge and the giant came out against him. Veliantin, when he beheld how huge he was, gave a loud neigh of fear, but Roland said: "Have no fear, for Christ will be our aid." He crossed the bridge and there found Ferrau armed and on horseback.

The two knights saluted each other very courteously. Ferrau, seeing how gallantly Roland was riding, spoke as follows: “Sir Roland, if you agree to renounce your God and to believe in Mohammed, I will make you lord of many cities and castles and give you much gold and silver.” Then Roland answered: “Your god is not worth a groat, but if you agree to believe in Christ and His Mother, we will make truce, and you shall be given many cities and lands by our emperor.” The two knights could reach no agreement, and therefore defied each other to the death. Charles and his barons, seeing Roland and Ferrau measure the distance for a bout with lances, began to pray God to help Count Roland.

As the two knight rode at each other, each dug his spurs half-way into the flanks of his horse, and struck the other with such tremendous force that their lances shattered and the broken shafts flew far afield. Neither of them budged from the saddle and they sped past each other and turned. Roland instantly seized his sword and Ferrau his mace. Roland, seeing the mace in Ferrau’s hands, thought to himself, “I am unwilling that Ferrau should strike down so good a mount as Veliantin,” and leapt from his horse as nimbly as a bird. When Ferrau saw Roland dismounted, he said: “Sir knight, it seems to me you have behaved like a traitor, for what you have does not befit a good knight.” Roland answered: “Know that I intend no treachery. I merely wished to avoid your killing so excellent a steed as my Veliantin. But I must tell you that, unless you dismount yourself, I will kill your horse.” Ferrau replied: “Not so, for it seems foolish to me to get down when I am well mounted.” When the knights had come to this, Roland stepped back a little, raised his hands for a great blow and killed Ferrau’s steed. (He greatly prized that horse, for he was unable to find any other strong enough to carry him because of his great size and weight.)

Both Ferrau and Roland were now on foot. Roland grasped his sword and Ferrau his mace. Now a bitter and cruel battle commenced between the two knights. Roland made a great leap toward

Ferrau and gave him so heavy a sword blow that he made him bow down. Receiving that blow, Ferrau grasped his mace, lifted it high to strike Roland to give him a mighty blow. Roland saw the mace descending on his head, and leapt aside so that it could not touch him. In encounter after encounter among the two knights, Roland would never let the mace touch him, for if any of the lead balls had landed on him, he would have died at the first blow. Roland then saw that he could not escape the mace and determined to cut its chains with his sword. Once more Ferrau raised the mace to strike at Roland, and Roland, well covered by his shield, grasped Durandel and, seeing the mace in the air, stepped beneath it, and lifted high his sword. As the mace was descending on Roland, he (as please Christ) cut all three of its chains. Yet Roland could not prevent one of its leaden balls from falling on his back near his shoulder and giving him so mighty a jolt that he willy-nilly fell to the ground. But the blow did him no other hurt, so that he quickly rose up again with sword in hand.

When Ferrau saw that his mace chains were cut, he struck out at Roland's shield with the mace shaft, which was of iron, and felled him to the earth. Once more Roland leapt up and struck a blow at Ferrau. Ferrau now reached for his sword, ran at Roland and gave him a blow strong enough to make him bow down. But Roland quickly righted himself and struck Ferrau upon the helmet so grievously that he too bent down to the ground. So the two kept on fighting with sword in hand blow after blow. At last the hour of vespers arrived, when the knights grew wearied by the battle they had fought together. They both drew back, sheathed their swords and put the bridge between them to take some rest. The two knights rested in this manner, and Ferrau said: "If it please you, go back to your army to repose, and I shall return to the city." Roland answered: "I am well pleased to do so, if you promise to return to battle in the morning and from then on never finished until one of us remains dead on the field." Ferrau replied: "I gladly agree." Then Roland seized Veliantin's bridle and returned on foot to the host; Ferrau went back on foot, since Roland had slain his horse.

Upon entering the city of Lazara, Ferrau was met by his man Sinagon and they proceeded to the palace where the prisoners were kept. There Astolph rose to say: "Sir Ferrau, where is your captive? Why have you not brought him to town to imprison him?" Ferrau began to talk with the other lords that were seated with him at table. Ferrau sat at table with the prisoners, except Astolph, who sat on the ground beneath the table like a clown .

As Roland was crossing the bridge, Charles with many of his lords was coming to meet him and said: "Tell me, my good nephew, do you think you will overcome that fierce Saracen? He seems too strong to me." Roland answered not a word, and hung his head somewhat, for he could not think of an answer regarding the Saracen's power, and his great size and valor. After a short while, Charles spoke again: "Tell me about this giant, my dear nephew. Is he really so strong?" Then Roland replied: "Your majesty, I will tell you this: if I should happen to lose this fight, you must needs return to France rather than face Ferrau's power. But I firmly promise you that when we return to the field tomorrow, one of us shall die. I shall never return to the host unless I kill this man or he is brought to believe in Christ and the Virgin Mary." After these words, they had the tables put up and went in to eat. Then they all took their repose, and the Emperor sighed heavily, remembering the words that his nephew Roland had spoken.

25

In the morning, after Roland had risen, he commanded his arms to be brought to him. His hauberk, which had been fashioned for Hector of Troy, was made in the following manner: Its center shone with a magic light like a crystal, and never was there seen a lovelier. He placed it on his shoulders. Then King Thierry of Arden⁸² led out his horse Veliantin, Count Bon of Frisia readied his shield and

⁸² Thierry of Arden: orig. *Therix de Herdengia*. This person appears in no other text. The Italian scholar Catalani suggests that Herdengia refers to the Monastery of Ardenga in Valdombrone, rather than to Arden

lance, and King Solomon of Brittany brought him his helmet. These three lords acted as squires to Count Roland, the best knight who ever lived. Thus armed, he came to the Emperor Charles' pavilion just as Archbishop Turpin was preparing to say mass. Roland dismounted, knelt at the altar and staid there until he received benediction. Then he rose and knelt to the emperor who thrice made the sign of the cross over him and said: "I commend you to Christ and his mother, my dear nephew. May they grant you the grace to kill that terrible Saracen." Roland rose to his feet, and Thierry helped him onto his horse. Roland leapt into the saddle without delay, and took his leave from Charles and the other barons, who were all weeping for love of him. Then Roland rode toward the bridge, saying the following prayer: "I beseech Thee, Christ on high, to grant peace to Christendom by Thy grace, and to grant to Charles the power to conquer the Saracens, that they may come to believe in Thy Faith. And do Thou grant me the power to prevail, if such is Thy pleasure." This was Roland's prayer whenever he besought Christ's aid. I desire you to know that Roland, from the day when he killed Lord Clare, Gerard of the Thicket's nephew, always wore an iron cord for penance and for the love of Christ, and that he always uttered the aforesaid prayer.

Roland rode up to the bridge and dismounted, since Ferrau had not yet arrived. Roland took his lance in hand and thrust five times at a great block of marble, making five gashes more than a span wide. Then he awaited Ferrau on foot. Meanwhile Charles bade thirty thousand Christians to arm in order to lend aid to Roland if there was need.

Before daybreak, while Ferrau lay asleep, a vision appeared to him: He saw a falcon descend from the sky that struck at his heart and pierced his breast. He awoke from this dream full of fear, all in a sweat because of the apparition in his dream. At once he called for his tutor Sinagon and told him of the dream he had dreamt. Sinagon was much troubled by it, since Ferrau was to ride out into battle with Roland. Sinagon said: "I beg you to leave this battle with Roland to me, for I will

manage to bring it to a successful issue.” Then Ferrau answered: “I will not leave off fighting Roland for all the Marsilius’ wealth, for if I win, I will be able to say that I have defeated the best knight in the world.” He had his armor made ready, armed up to the hauberk, and then himself but on that hauberk, made of tempered Cappadocian leather, exceedingly strong and studded with precious jewels. Then he took up his shield and lance and left the city on foot, for he could not find a horse strong enough to carry him, since Roland had killed his own during their second battle. Behind him came Sinagon with four thousand Saracens, to help him at need, for the dream that had visited Ferrau made them very fearful.

As soon as Ferrau entered the field near Roland, the knight defied each other to the death. They fought on foot. Both drew their swords and launched a mighty onslaught. Ferrau drew near to Roland and gave him a terrible blow that made him bow to the ground. Count Roland rose up at once, took tight cover under his shield, and seized Durandel in both hands. He struck at Ferrau and gave him a blow that sent him sprawling. Ferrau rose in a rage.

From assault to assault, the knightly combat continued until the third hour, and neither could prevail over the other. Now Ferrau stepped back and lifted the visor of his helmet, and Roland did likewise. The knights menaced each other with death, and then Ferrau sheathed his sword, picked up a great rock and turned to hurl it at Roland. Roland would not have met it for all the wealth of the King of Portugal, so that he moved toward the city to escape it. At this, Ferrau cried out: “Where are you going, Roland? Do you mean to storm a city so well guarded by countless barons. I doubt that you will be able to take it. But what are you doing? You shall not do with me as did Alexander the Great, who faced a rain of rocks and lances rather let any man believe that he could flee.” Roland, who understood that Ferrau was calling him a coward, stepped forward, with his sword on guard. Then Ferrau hurled the rock at Roland, but Roland did not wait for it, but jumped

aside so that the stone did him no hurt. Then Roland picked up another and hurled it at Ferrau.

Their stones were hurled with enough force to make them fly a mile.

The fierce battle between the two barons continued so long, that it lasted until the ninth hour.

Marsilius' nephew grew very faint and tired by the blows that Roland had given him, and Roland felt all his limbs grow weak, while his mail shirt dripped with sweat, but neither pierced the other's flesh.

Roland cursed Spain and Marsilius' other possessions. Ferrau said: "Give me a little rest, if you please." Roland replied: "This is my answer: have yourself baptized this evening, else I will cut off your head with this sword."

The pagan laughed, and began to shake his head; then the two knights drew apart, and each took off his helmet to rest. Roland began to pray: "Glorious Father, of the line of David, begotten on Thy Mother who bore Thee as a virgin, bestow upon me the grace of conquering this giant and making him turn to Thy faith."

Both men sat down in the shadow of a tree and rested, and Roland said no more. While Ferrau was sitting on a stone and pondering how he might make Roland turn to the pagan faith, for he had never encountered so valiant a man, he grew sleepy. He put the left side of his face to the ground and soon began to snore loudly, for his head lay uncomfortably. Count Roland, full of courtesy, took up a great boulder and placed it under Ferrau's head. He could easily have killed him, if he pleased, but would not have done so for all the world.

Then Roland turned away and, tired as he was, lay down to sleep. Meanwhile Ferrau grew awake and began to say: "Out on it, Mohammed! if Roland had wished, he could easily have killed me!" Looking at the ground next to him, he saw a great boulder and realized what Roland might have

done, so that he said in his heart: "If I could bring that Roland into fellowship with me, I would never find any man to oppose me."

Ferrau rose and laced on his helmet. Roland did likewise. Then Ferrau said: "Wait a while, for I cannot help wishing to say a few words to you. If it please you, I will have Marsilius pardon you. I will give you my sister to wife, whom no woman in the world exceeds in beauty. She is descended from kings and queens, and a niece of Marsilius and Balugant, both crowned kings. I will bestow half my realm upon you, retaining only the other half to satisfy my honor." Roland laughed at this and said: "I pray you, do not jest with me. But if it please you, I have a great desire to honor you above all other men, excepting Charles and Oliver, if you agree to be baptized and turn to God and believe in the Holy Trinity." Ferrau replied: "If you can tell me what thing this Trinity is and what power your Christ has, I might be willing to convert." This made Roland very happy. "You say you wish to know what God is, and the Trinity. God is all things and in all time, and He knows the whole destiny of mankind. All things descend from Him and His glory." Said Ferrau: "You say that God made all things. I shall believe in the gospel, so that there will be no further need for us to fight." Roland answered: "I am happy that you are acting like a reformed sinner when he is asked to repent, and that you are ready to believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. May God have mercy on you." "What!" said Ferrau; "are there three gods?" Roland replied that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one, and made manifest in a single will. Said Ferrau: "If you can show me how three can be one, I will renounce Mohammed and Termagant."

Roland answered: "It rather pleases me that you desire to hear me speak. The Divinity is like a candle: to give light, three things must be in readiness, the fire, the wax and the wick. If one of these three is absent, it is not a candle and it yields no more light than a stick. If the wax is without a wick, it will not burn; if the wick is without wax, it will not last. Yet it appears as a single thing, and if any

one of these three things are absent, it is not a candle. If you take your shield, which I have pierced in so many places, and raise it up to the sun, covering all but three openings, you will see a sun through each of the three; if you cover two of them, these two will become one through the third. That is how it is with the Trinity, inasmuch as God is Father and Son and Holy Spirit, for they are all one Being and one Will. This is how I explain to you what the Trinity is.” Roland was silent and said no more.

Then Ferrau raised his head and said: “Tell me, Roland, that Christ of yours, who let himself be crucified to save you from Hell, what was he?” Roland answered: “The Son of the Living God was born of a young virgin without fleshly sin, and allowed Himself to be crucified to redeem us from the torments of Hell.” “How is it,” said Ferrau, “that you call him Son of the Living God, if he could not save the human race from the devil without letting himself be crucified?” Said Roland: “Indeed He could have done so, if it had pleased Him; but He wished to fulfill the sayings of the holy prophets, who had foretold that the world must be saved by the Son of God and by his crucifixion, to redeem the holy prophets and the other righteous patriarchs who were in Limbo. These also were saved by him.”

So the two knights discussed the Christian Faith, but to no avail for Roland. Ferrau rose, fastened his helmet on his head, and Roland did likewise. Ferrau said: “Were it not that I would be rebuked by all my relations, who would think that it was fear that made me yield to the son of Miles of Angrant, I would be baptized and believe in Christ and his Mother.” To this, Roland replied: “If you allow yourself to be baptized and to believe in Christ, I will yield to you, and I declare before you and God that I will let you take me wherever you wish. Thus you can be sure and ask Charles for baptism without loss of honor, and it will be to your great glory.” Then Ferrau answered: “This fight has long endured. I intend to bring it to an end. Either I will cut off your head and your bloody

arm, or the door shall stand open to what you ask.” Roland said: “I think you must be the devil, for I am unable to pierce your flesh, and I suspect that you are enchanted by a demon and by necromancy, against the law of God.” Ferrau made answer, with a little laugh. “Sir Roland,” said Ferrau, “I know well that you are annoyed. I am neither a devil nor a man fashioned in jest. If you please to hear, I will tell you how I have been enchanted. I was born under the planet Vacabias (so our ancient Saracen forebears named it) and any man who is born under its influence is enchanted. But when these children are born, a little flesh must be taken from their waist near the navel, and this is where they are not enchanted. But for all that I do not fear you, for my waist near the navel is protected by triple plates of steel, and my hauberk covers them.

Roland was very glad to hear this and said to himself: “I will make you regret these words.”

Thereupon Count Roland said: “Now I will tell you how I am enchanted. When I was in Aspromont, battling my ‘Ptolemy of Egypt’ (that is, Anglant’s army), alone, beneath a mountain, I fought sword in hand with ten thousand Saracens, so that I could not defend myself. Against these, Christ graciously willed to come to my aid. I looked up and saw four armored knight descending from the mountain, all garbed in white, and these were four captains. These four knights saved me from death and killed all those pagans. After that great battle, they dubbed me knight. One of them was Saint George, the second Saint Maurice, the third Saint Dennis, and the fourth Saint Vitalis.⁸³ Saint George gave me the accolade, Saint Maurice girded on my sword, Saint Dennis tied my spurs, and Saint Vitalis gave me his blessing, so that I should never vainly shed my blood in battle.”

Thus vaunting of their enchantments, they lowered the visors of their helmets and put their hands to their swords. Ferrau aimed a mighty blow at Roland, and struck with such force that it laid Roland

⁸³ Saint George . . . Saint Vitalis: The list of saints, it will be noted, differs from the one given in *Aspromonte* (III.70)

senseless on the ground. Seeing that Roland had fainted, he took away his sword, seized the knight beneath the arm, and thus carried the unconscious Roland toward the city. As Ferrau was walking, Roland regained his senses, and struck Ferrau in the forehead. He struck him such a mighty blow with his fist that he stunned him and stretched him flat on the ground. Now Roland took away his sword and withdrew. He waited until Ferrau rose again. He could easily have killed him, had he pleased.

After the time it might take to walk a half a league, Ferrau rose again. When he saw Roland, he was astonished that he had not killed him. He seized back his sword and gave Roland a blow so hard that it hurled him to the ground, but the Count quickly rose again, grasped his own sword and slashed low on the savage Saracen's shield so that the blade sheared away a quarter of it. Then Ferrau exclaimed: "Ah, divine Mahound! What a perfect knight this is! I would rather conquer him than all of Barbary." To Roland, Ferrau said: "If you surrender to Mahound, we will make an alliance with you and I will have you crowned King of Barbary, Turkey, Nonca, and India. I shall make you the greatest king in the world. We shall never find any man to gainsay anything we wish to do." Roland answers: "Surrender to Christ and take holy baptism. Afterwards we shall venture out and cause these provinces to be baptized." Ferrau answered that he would not.

Roland, seeing that he could by no means overcome the Saracen, now remembered in his heart what Ferrau had told him, namely that the middle of his navel was not charmed. He lifted himself somewhat by stepping on a small ridge, so that Ferrau stood somewhat lower, and when Roland saw he stood high enough to hit his navel, he seized Durandel with both hands in great fury and plunged it into Ferrau, loudly crying: "Surrender to Christ!" As pleased Christ, the sword passed through the midst of Ferrau's navel, piercing all three of the steel plates, and entered his body for more than a span. After this great blow, Ferrau fell to the ground and cried out: "Ah, Count Roland, strike no

more, for I want to say a few words to you.” Roland, seeing that Ferrau could not save himself, began to praise Christ.

Then Ferrau said: “Lord Count, I am about to die and, because of your goodness and nobility, I have no wish that you should die also. Look down into that valley. There Sinagon lies in ambush with ten thousand Saracens, ready to aid me at need. Be on your guard against him, for he is a fine knight-at-arms. I also advise you that, when you enter Lazara, you will find one of my sisters, who is very evil-minded and governed by a demon. She has sharp claws like a lion. If she seizes you, you are lost. Therefore take my surcoat and throw it over your own shoulders, so that she may take you for me and run up to congratulate you. Then reach for your sword and cut off her head, wicked woman that she is. Thus only can you escape her. I also beg you, O noble knight, not to strip me of my weapons until after you have baptized me.” At this, Roland was wondrous glad. He took of his helmet, ran down under the bridge, brought back the helmet filled with water, and baptized Ferrau. When he was baptized, Roland drew out his sword, and Ferrau passed from this life.⁸⁴

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⁸⁴ Ferrau’s baptism and death bear a striking resemblance to Clorinda’s in Tasso’s *Gerusalemme Liberata* (Canto XII). Perhaps *I Fatti* was a distant source (though probably an indirect one) for Tasso’s poem.

Mecca and Jerusalem

Dionysia

30

When morning dawned and the day grew clear, and the birds began to sing very sweetly, Roland rose with his men. The twelve Peers counseled him to return to Charles' camp, and soon all of Roland's men made ready, took leave of Felides and Dardanis and took the road toward Pamplona.

Ganelon and his brother, Duke Andrew, were saying: "Your majesty, Charlemagne, will you not bethink yourself of Roland? We have told you before that Roland, believing that we had lost the battle, was going into France to seize the crown and make himself King of France. He thought you had perished with your whole army. Now, hearing that we have won the battle, he has marched on the city of Napal and conquered all of it to make you believe that he has not been a traitor." Charles was greatly angered and swore by God that he would have Roland and all his men hanged.

Presently one of Roland's spies informed him that Charles was threatening to have him hanged. Roland was greatly angered, and, as he approached the host, commanded all his men to hold their swords and weapons in readiness. He formed them all in battle order, and rode toward the host, where no man dared to take up arms. Roland ordered all his man to kill anyone who offered resistance. He rode past the ranks and arrived at his tent, where he and his followers disarmed.

Then Roland and the Twelve Peers of France prepared to go to Charles' pavilion. When they had arrived, Roland knelt to Charles, and presented him with the four keys to Napal and its territory. Charles said: "Ill met, you bastard son of a strumpet. You deserted the field and left me in battle in order to have yourself crowned over my kingdom. The curse of God upon you, you bastard!"

Roland rose, furious at the insults that Charles had spoken. Then Charles threatened to have him arrested. He drew the gauntlet from his left hand (it was covered with rubies, diamonds and other precious stones of great price) and threw it so vehemently at Roland's face that it made three drops of blood issue from his nose. Roland reached for Durandel and lunged at Charles, but Ogier held the Count back, and gripped him so strongly that he could not harm Charles. He would have killed him. Then Ogier spoke: "Ah, sainted Knight of Divine Justice, be pleased to withhold your sword, I beg you. When you pass into the next world, what would Christ say, if you kill a man as just as Charles, our liege." At this the Count was somewhat touched with pity. He rushed angrily from Charles' pavilion to his own tent, saying in his heart: "Charles has abused me for crimes of which I am blameless. I vow to Christ that I shall go so far away that Charles will regret the words that he has spoken."

Evening fell and all men went to rest, very ill at ease because they saw that the Count was angry. At midnight, Roland rose, armed from head to foot, seized a horse at random, mounted it, and rode off all alone toward Navarre. Traveling all day, he came in the evening to wondrous fountain in Spain. Near it stood four statues of bronze who unceasingly struck it with iron rods; an old man stood facing them, with another iron rod in his hand. Whenever he chanced to think that one of the statues had stopped striking, he would give it a blow with his rod. These statues made such a loud noise that no animal was bold enough to drink from that fountain.

When Roland arrived he greatly wondered and could scarcely stop watching these statues. Roland had taken neither food nor drink that day. He dismounted, tethered his horse and let it graze in the field. Then Roland said: "By Our Lady, never since Christ took human shape was there seen such a strong enchantment. When Christ was in the world, preaching the Christian Faith and working

great miracles, he undid all such enchantments; it is my duty to undo this one.” Then Roland reached for Durandel and cut off the old man’s grey beard. In an instant all the statues vanished.

That night, Roland slept by the fountain. When morning rose, he armed and mounted his steed, very thoughtful and ill at ease. He would have turned back, but was ashamed to do so. Roland rode for two days without meeting a soul. On the third day he reached the seashore, very hungry and thirsty. As he arrived there, he saw two robbers from the land of Palastres running toward him, followed by five more robbers, so that there were seven. The master of these robbers was called Baldor of Pallestres, and he cried out to him: “Sir knight, give me your armor and horse at once, else you are a dead man.” Roland reached for his sword and slew Baldor, and in the same instant leapt from his horse and killed all the rest of the seven. For two years they had been thieves on this coast, despoiling whoever passed through the region.

Roland stayed near the shore and soon saw a great ship with a great sail coming toward him. He took his sword and waved it and began shouting to the sailors in the ship, and they at once came to land. The knight said, “Tell me, good mariners, what country are you coming from?” The sailors answered: “We are from Persia, for Machidant, King of Jerusalem and Syria, has attacked the Sultan of Persia. They have fought many battles, and already more than a hundred thousand Saracens on both sides have died.” All the while the sailors were looking at the knight, who seemed so handsome and comely. At last their captain said: “And you, where do you come from?” Roland answered: “I am a poor squire from Napal. A few days ago I made my escape from Charles’ nephew, Roland. He captured the city of Napal and its surroundings and caused all the people to be baptized. He also slew Ferrau. Charles is besieging Pamplona and has fought a great battle with Malzarisse’s army. More than sixty thousand Saracens died there, and every part of Navarre and Spain has been laid waste. While I was escaping from Napal, I met a Christian, whom I killed and

whose armor and horse I took. I left that city because I refused to be baptized.” The sailors said to him: “What shall we call you?” Roland replied: “I call myself Lionas of Napal, and I will gladly go where such mighty war is being waged as you sailors report.” The sailors said: “We will gladly take you anywhere you ask.” The ship’s captain said: “Lionas, come on board, if you wish, and I will take you to Persia. From there you can go wherever you want.” Roland gladly heard the captain’s words. He took his horse and boarded the ship. It greatly pleased him to hear that the Saracens were waging war against each other.

They hoisted sail and began to pass over the high seas toward Persia. The captain had food and drink brought to Roland, which greatly restored him. After Roland had eaten, he stayed on the ship for several days. The captain, observing how well-formed and courteous the knight was, proclaimed Roland master of them all, saying: “Lionas, ask whatever you please, and it shall be done.” “A thousand thanks,” said Roland.

Now Roland sailed night and day with these mariners for three months. They sailed until they arrived at Machidant’s city in Persia. When Roland saw its many fortifications, he said: “Tell me, captain, what it is this place that have we come to?” He answered; “This is Machidant’s city.” Then Roland gazed toward the mountains and saw tents and pavilions, with more than two thousand Saracens. Said Roland: “Whose men are these?” The captain answered: “These belong to Machidant, King of Jerusalem. He is at war with the Sultan of Persia, who is trying to carry off his daughter, named Dionysia, the most beautiful woman in the world.”

At this point, Roland leapt to land from the ship, in full armor, and behaving like the paladin he was. He vaulted into the saddle and galloped off toward the host. The paladin rode until he came to a pavilion in which many lords were gathered at council. On one side stood the Sultan, with his

twenty-two-year-old son Samsonet, and his eighteen-year-old daughter Dionysia, attended by many other barons and knights. Facing them stood Machidant with one of his nephews (his name was Pelleas, a mighty knight-at-arms); and next them, a king whose name was Florentius, who carried a mighty mace and was almost as huge as Ferrau. There were many other barons who tried to advise them to come to an agreement, for they had heard reports that the Emperor Charles had entered Spain with a large army to fight against Marsilius and Balugant, and was everywhere laying waste the Spanish countryside.

The Sultan was saying: "Now listen to me, Machidant. I have discovered that Charles has arrived in Spain, with a great number of Christians, meaning to conquer Marsilius and all Navarre, and to have all Spain baptized. I would have you consider that, if Charles conquers Spain, he will cross the sea and conquer all of Barbary. I therefore tell you that it would be best to go out together and aid Marsilius against the Christians." Machidant's nephew Pelleas replied: "We shall never go together unless you give your daughter in marriage to Machidant." Then Dionysia spoke: "My dear father, how can you consent to make me marry an old man of eighty? I vow by our god Termagant that I shall never yield to him so long as I live. I am a young woman of eighteen, and this wedding is against all reason." Pelleas then answered: "What, you impudent whore, would you dare insult an eminent lord like Machadant? I swear by our high god Mohammed I will have you burned alive." And he continued to speak many churlish words to her. Samsonet, her brother, dared say nothing for fear of Pelleas, who was as strong a knight among the Saracens as Roland was among the Christians. Thus neither side could agree with the other. But Pelleas could not be opposed, so direly had Machidant attacked and besieged the Sultan. Already the war had lasted three years and more than a hundred thousand Saracens on each side had died in it.

While Roland was listening to this parley, he said in his heart: "O Christ, never let the Saracens resolve this ugly quarrel and help Marsilius against the Christians. Before I leave Persia, let me sow such discord between them that more than three thousand Saracens shall die." With this, Roland entered the pavilion where they were gathered and called a squire apart, saying: "Tell me, good fellow, which one is the Sultan? I wish to tell him something, for I come from far away." Samsonet, who had overheard the knight's words, said: "What is your pleasure?" Roland replied: "I want to talk to the Sultan and give him some unexpected tidings." So Samsonet took the stranger by the hand and brought him to the Sultan.

When the Sultan saw the knight, he asked: "Where do you come from?" Roland answered: "I am a farmer from the city of Napal, and a poor vassal." "What's this?" said the Sultan; "you seem like a knight to me." Roland replied: "Not many days ago Roland, Charles' nephew, made me flee from Napol because I refused to be baptized. As I was leaving the city, I met a Christian and gave him a thrust of the dagger so that I killed him and took his arms and his horse. I must inform you that Roland has conquered Lazara, and killed Ferrau with his sword, and had all parts of Napal baptized."

Upon hearing this news, all the Saracens were much troubled and said: "It would be well if we set out together to aid Marsilius." Said Machidant to the Sultan: "If you give me your daughter to wife, we can make peace, and then we will succor King Marsilius." The Sultan replied: "Gladly would I give her to you, and half of my realm to boot." But Dionysia said: "I vow to Mahound that I will not marry a man of eighty like Machidant, so long as I live." Pelleas, enraged, cried out: "What a stubborn whore you are! But for my fear of giving offence to Machidant, I would cast you into a raging fire with my own hands." Then Roland said: "It is not the custom of knighthood to insult a lady as you have, you villainous churl!" Pelleas said: "Are you offering to defend that strumpet?"

Roland answered: "I will gladly defend her in man-to-man battle against any many willing." Said Pelleas: "What honor can I gain fighting a peasant?" Said Roland: "That will I show you with sword in hand in any manner you please." Then Pelleas swore by Mahound that he would before nightfall prove his valor against the stranger.

A great noise arose all around from both sides, and all rose to their feet in consternation. Machidant with his men returned to his army, and the Sultan with his men returned to the city, saying to Roland; "Stranger, will you come to Mecca⁸⁵ with me?" But Roland swore to Mahound that he would neither eat nor drink until he had exchanged sword-blows with Pelleas. The stranger armed head to foot, laced on his helmet, took up a huge lance and remained alone in the field. Pelleas, seeing the stranger, also made haste to put on his armor and to seize a great lance. Both knights took their positions, and Dionysia, when she saw Roland about to do battle on her behalf, stood on the city walls praying to Mahound to aid the daring stranger.

When the knights drew near each other, each took his distance at pleasure. Now they took aim at each other, and when they met, their lances struck so cruelly that both their steeds bowed to the ground and their lances flew in splinters. They both gave spur to their horses and grasped their swords. Roland said in his heart: "If I draw Durandel, the Saracens might recognize it" (and indeed they would have.) So Roland rode off some distance from the camp into a valley and Pelleas rode after him. Then Roland drew his sword and gave Pelleas so heavy a blow that it made him slum over his saddlebow. Another blow was so heavy that one of his feet left the stirrup, making Pelleas' horse gallop half a league before he could return his foot to the stirrup. He said he had never received a blow as heavy as each of these two from any other knight, and was much amazed at that peasant's strength. Roland rode off and entered the city, where Samsonet and Dionysia entertained

⁸⁵ Mecca: Our author erroneously identifies Mecca as Machidant's capital.

him with great joy and told him: “Perhaps our lord Mahound sent this peasant to defend us against Pelleas.”

When Pelleas saw Roland riding toward the city, he began to ride back to the host. Machidant saw him coming and said: “What have you done to this insolent peasant?” Pelleas replied: “In all my life I have never received two such blows as in this encounter.” Machidant answered: “Have no fear, for when you ride out to battle in the morning, you will surely kill him.” Pelleas replied: “I will do so, if it please Mahound. But I vow that in the morning I will go to the city, in contempt and spite of the Sultan and Samsonet, and take that whore to throw her into a blazing fire. Then I will kill that proud churl and destroy all the men in his realm.”

31: **Bucephalus** [summary]

Pelleas, after the battle, began to suspect that this stranger was not the peasant that he claimed to be, but rather some great prince. In the morning, he armed and rode secretly into the city. He went straight to the palace and forcibly carried off Dionysia, vowing to have her burned at the stake. Roland pursued and challenged him. Over Machidant's objection that a crowned king may not with honor fight a peasant, Pelleas agreed to a duel in five days' time.

Roland did not have a good warhorse, for he had left Veliantin at Pamplona. Hearing of this, the Sultan offered him the fierce stallion Bucephalus, provided he could break him to the saddle. (That horse had already killed five squires who tried to tame him.) All watched in astonishment as Roland overmastered that fiery steed.

Pelleas

32

Now the tale relates that Roland on the fourth day prepared himself knowing that he must that morning go into battle. All that time Dionysia knelt in prayer to Mahound, beseeching him to grant the peasant the victory over Pelleas and to free her from Machidant's hands. When morning arrived, Roland armed, put that hauberk on his shoulders that had once belonged to Hector of Troy, laced his helmet upon his head, and leapt on Bucephalus' back without using the stirrups. When the

Saracens saw him so nimble, they all cried out, "Hurray, long live our brave peasant!" Roland smiled a little at this.

When he was armed, Roland rode out of the city and went to the field ordained for battle. All the people of the city were standing on the walls to watch the fight. Samsonet and Dionysia climbed a high tower to witness the peasant's prowess. When Pelleas saw that Roland had arrived in the field before him, he said: "Surely this must be a knight of high degree. He does not look like a farm laborer to me; rather I think him to be the son of some king or baron." Then he had his arms made ready and put them on, throwing over all his armor a coverlet studded with precious stones of great price. On his head he wore a crown of pearls over his hair, which was very long and as white as snow. On its headpiece his horse bore a little golden dragon, its head studded with three carbuncle. His shield likewise displayed a dragon. The Saracen wore so much gold and so many jewels, that they outweighed a whole castle in value. When he was thus garbed, he prayed to Mahound to grant him victory over the peasant, took his leave from Machidant and the other lords. They all wept with fear of the peasant, afraid that he would kill him.

No sooner had Pelleas arrived on the field, than both the knights seized a mighty lance and as they drew near each other, pointed it toward each other's helmets, threatening death. Then they knights defied each other and both took up their positions at pleasure. As their horses cantered in mid-career, they both gave them the spur. When they meet these knight struck each other with such immeasurable force, that their lances burst. Neither one nor the other moved from the saddle any more than two great towers. As the horses wheeled back, they once more gave them the spur. Roland thought inwardly, "If I draw Durandel and the Saracens recognize me, I will never in my life accomplish my desire, and they might drive me out of this region." Roland therefore turned his horse about and sped toward the mountains, and Pelleas rode off after him.

When Dionysia saw that Roland was in flight, she cried: "Alas, wretched churl, if I see your members mangled, you shall never in your life reenter this city." Meanwhile Roland had ridden so far from the host that none could see him. Now he turned his horse around and said: "You do not know me. I swear to Christ and the Virgin Mary to make you regret this ride." Meanwhile Pelleas had close enough to Roland to give him a blow on his helmet, which bent Roland a little over his saddlebow. Then Pelleas said: "I pray you to tell me your name and your country. I think you are a Christian, for I heard you cry out to Christ and his Mother." "You speak truly," said Roland; "I am a Christian and the Emperor Charles' nephew. They call me Roland the Paladin." With this he laid his hands on Durandel.

When Pelleas heard that this was Roland, he began to take flight over the fields. But Roland dug his spurs into Bucephalus and shouted: "Traitor, you cannot escape me." Roland drew near him and struck him with Durandel between his shoulders and his head, giving him a blow so strong and heavy that it severed his head. Then he picked up the head by the hair and rode back across the field. He had seized Pelleas' sword, and girt it next to Durandel. He presented Pelleas' head to the princess, and when she saw that Pelleas was dead, she could not have been happier. She gave great praise to Roland, saying: "Welcome to the man who has freed me from Pelleas."

Machidant, seeing that Pelleas was not pursuing Roland, cried: "Ah, treacherous churl, you have killed my nephew. May Mahound curse you!" He leapt upon his horse and soon saw Pelleas' body lying headless in the field.

On the next morning Machidant, after he had risen, summoned Florentius and said to him: "I hereby make you captain of two thousand Saracens to keep good watch until my return, for I intend to go Jerusalem and carry the news of Pelleas' death to my nephew, his brother Polynor, my

nephew, so that he may come to avenge Pelleas' murder." Then Machidant, accompanied by some Saracens, mounted to horse and set out for Jerusalem. Florentius remained behind to command the army near the city of Mecca, greatly troubled by Pelleas' death.

33-34: **Polynor** [summary]

Machadant, taking with him a casket containing Pelleas' headless body, reached a harbor and set sail for Jerusalem. At Mecca, the Sultan appointed Roland High Constable in command of a choice regiment of twenty-thousand to defend the city against Florentius.

News reached Charlemagne's queen in Paris that Roland had left the camp at Pamplona, no one knew whither. She summoned Roland's cousins, Hugh of Floranid] and Answig the Strong, gave them twenty-thousand knights, and sent them forth to seek Roland throughout the world.

Machidant arrived in Jerusalem with Pelleas' body. When Polynor opened the casket, he exclaimed: "Where is his head?" and Machidant told him that a peasant who had slain Pelleas had presented his head to Dionysia. Polynor refused believe that any peasant could overcome his brother in fair fight, but agreed to muster an army of sixty-thousand to march on Mecca against the Sultan and his guest.

Meanwhile, Roland and Samsonet were defending the city against Florentius. In his heart, Roland was saying: "May it please God to have the Saracens kill one another. I care not which side wins or loses. Either outcome will lessen the number of pagans." Presently Samsonet came to tell him of Polynor's arrival with a large army. Roland armed immediately and ordered Samsonet to wait until the next morning before offering battle. However, Samsonet sallied out that same day, without Roland's knowledge, against Polynor's vanguard. His surprise attack at first wrought havoc among them, but when they regrouped, Samsonet, badly outnumbered, found himself unhorsed and surrounded. News of his desperate state reached Roland, who at once rode out and relieved him. The tide turned against the Saracen guard, but just then Polynor rode up with his main force. He and Roland exchanged challenges. Since night was falling, they agreed to put off their combat until the morning.

Victory at Mecca

35

At daybreak the next morning, Roland had his armor made ready and prayed to Christ to give him the victory over the Saracen. He armed from head to foot, led out Bucephalus and leapt upon his back without using the stirrups. Samsonet prayed to Mahound to grant victory to the High Contestable, and so did all the other barons. Dionysia embraced Roland and bade him fight bravely.

Thus armed, Roland made his way toward the field. When he arrived there, the Sultan commanded twenty thousand knights to stand ready to lend him armed assistance, should the need arise.

Meanwhile Polynor also armed and prayed Mahound to grant him vengeance for his brother. Then the two knights came to the appointed battle ground. Machadant and his men were armed and they all prayed to Mahound to let Polynor avenge his brother. Both knights lifted their lances threatening death. Offering their defiance, they inquired about their positions, and Roland said to Polynor:

“Take your stand wherever you will.” They rode some distance from each other, turned about and gave spur, riding as fast as their horses could carry them. At the encounter, they exchanged mighty lance blows, and the spear points hit home with such force that both horses’ were thrown backward. They quickly recovered and rode past each other for a bowshot’s length. When the knights turned their horses back, Polynor drew his sword and struck Roland a heavy blow that bent him back in his saddle. At this, Roland laid hands on the sword he had taken from Pelleas. When Polynor saw his brother’s sword, he knew it very well. Roland struck so hard that the blow, though Polynor fended it with his buckler, bent him back over the croup of his mount. Polynor righted himself like an angry dragon and struck back heavily with his sword. The battle continued thus for two hours. Then Roland grew angry, shifted his shield upon his back, rose in his stirrups and struck Polynor so hard that Pelleas’ sword shattered. When Roland saw that his sword was broken, he rode away toward the shore and Polynor sped in pursuit. When Roland knew that he was far from the camp, he grasped Durandel and turned his horse back to face Polynor. He then gave him so mighty a blow that it cleft his head down to the teeth. Polynor tumbled from his horse. Roland then called up the Sultan and Samsonet, and when Samsonet saw that Polynor was dead, he leapt from his horse and kneeled to Roland. Roland dubbed Polynor knight even as he stood over Polynor’s body, and was delighted to do so. Dionysia then approached Roland and said: “May the Divine Mahound bless

you, for I am the most fortunately rescued maiden in the world.” The Sultan also greatly rejoiced and said: “I no longer fear Machadant one whit, now that both Pelleas and Polydor are dead. They were the strongest knights in the world, excepting only Charlemagne’s nephew.”

When Machadant saw that Polynor was dead, he had his ship put in readiness, saying. “We can make no longer stay here, now that Polynor has been killed,” and fled toward the sea with some of his companions. The Constable, seeing Machadant in flight, put thirty-thousand armed men in readiness and attacked Machadant’s host. The Sultan attacked from another side, accompanied by Samsonet. When King Florentius, who carried that huge mace, learned of this, he armed and, riding at the head of his army, began a great slaughter of the Sultan’s men, for no knight could resist the great mace in his hand. Soon he was covered with the blood of the Sultan’s men, who all fled before him.

Roland saw this and dismounted, saying: “I would not have this Saracen kill this horse of mine for all the world, though it is not Veliantin whom I now bestride.” He left his horse and sped toward Florentius in great leaps. When Florentius saw him, he said: “Wretched churl, you shall not escape me, for I shall now avenge the deaths of Pelleas and Polynor.”

Roland said nothing and at once struck Florentius on the helmet, bending him to the ground. Florentius righted himself in a great rage, and lifted his mace over the Constable’s head. Roland saw the mace falling and jumped backward to avoid the blow, for any one of its leaden balls would have killed him. Florentius had heaved his mace with such force that two of the balls were buried more than a span deep in the ground. Now Roland struck at his side with Durandel, and that blow was so grievous that it pierced three of his ribs and entered his bowels. Florentius, feeling the blow, fell to the ground, and Roland thrust Durandel between his neck and shoulder and so slew him.

Roland leapt into the saddle and rode toward Florentius' army to do battle, but they all gave way to him and fled. Samsonet, when he saw that Florentius was dead, took great courage and fought so that no knight could withstand him, everywhere trampling down the Saracens. Great was the battle and the slaughter then waged. Lances and arrows and stones were seen flying and death was everywhere. Roland rushed into the press of Saracens, bursting through their thickest ranks, and none withstand the knight's great blows. Roland cried: "Ah, Christ, grant me the grace to conquer Machidant's army, so that I may go on to Jerusalem to conquer the Great Sepulcher and free the way for pilgrims." He cleared his path with Durandel and fought so well that all before him or took to flight. The Sultan and Samsonet pursued them all the way to the seashore. Seeing them coming, they all cried out: "We surrender; take our swords. Our lord Machadant has failed." Roland rode forward and blew his horn so loudly that they all fell back at the sound. Then Roland ordered all Machadant's men to disarm, and his command was obeyed. The High Constable rode back in great triumph and had all the prisoners conducted to his tent, with great feasting and rejoicing in the Sultan's camp. Dionysia rode out from the city, accompanied by a crowd of matrons and maidens, and knelt to the Constable. He took Dionysia by the hand, raised her up, and said: "Welcome, gentle princess."

The celebration of their great victory held by Samsonet and the Constable lasted for ten days. On the eleventh, Roland said to the Sultan: "Now that Divine Mahound has graciously given us the victory, I would be greatly to your profit and glory to go to Jerusalem and there besiege Machadant and his son Liadras, and to lay waste to all his lands." (Roland said this because he meant to conquer the Holy Sepulcher.) The Sultan replied: "You counsel me well, Sir High Constable." He at once bade a great navy made ready to sail for Jerusalem, loading it with enough provisions to last six months.

On the twelfth day, the Sultan said to Roland: "I shall put ten thousand knights under your command. If you want more, take them. On Samsonet, I will bestow fifteen thousand. I myself will take sixty thousand to form the rear of host." When his whole army was disposed in this manner, they embarked and sailed and came to land one league from Jerusalem. There they made camp with the whole host. So that great army encamped day after day at Jerusalem, fighting mighty battles.

One day, Roland said to Samsonet: "What mountain is this that rises near the city?" Samsonet answered: "This is the mountain where the prophet of the Christians was crucified; it is called Mount Calvary." Roland said: "In the morning, please take me to the place where that prophet of the Christians was crucified, for I have heard that he was a holy man and a just." Evening fell, and every man went to rest in his tent.

36

After Roland had risen in the morning, he put on a good hauberk, slung Durandel to his side, and mounted his steed. Samsonet had just arrived, and he said to him: "I desire to go to that mountain, for I wish to see where that good prophet of the Christians was crucified." The two knights mounted and took their way toward Jerusalem. When they arrived at the mountain, Roland said to Samsonet: "Wait for me here, while I go up the mountain." Roland dismounted and left his horse with Samsonet. Then he made his way up the mountain and looked about. Near the summit, he saw many whores, of the kind who had dwelt there ever since the prophet had died. Roland asked what kind of women these were and was told the truth. Then Roland commanded them to be gone at once and never to return. From that time onward, none of them continued to live there.

The knight remounted and saw the place where the prophet was crucified. He knelt down, drew his sword Durandel, thrust its point into the ground, weeping, and prayed fervently. This is what Roland said: “O Christ, born in Bethany⁸⁶, I beseech Thee in Thy goodness to bestow your grace upon King Charles and grant him victory over the pagan people. And do Thou help me in my need. I beseech Thee also, O Virgin Mary, by the Cross which your Son bore at his passion up to Mount Cavalry, where I stand at this moment.” Weeping still, Roland continued: “Ah, Jesus Christ, King of Glory, lend me the grace to conquer that strong Machadant and his son Liodras, and to redeem the Holy Sepulcher, so that pilgrims and palmers may freely visit it to accomplish their penance.”

When Roland had finished his prayer, he took Durandel, put it back in its sheath, and returned to Samsonet who had long waited for him, not knowing where he was. Samsonet was exceedingly afraid and looked toward the mountain to see Roland coming. When he did, he gave thank to his Divine Mahound. When Roland came up to Samsonet, they both rejoiced exceedingly, mounted their steeds and rode toward the camp where they had left the Sultan. There they stayed for many days, waging battle day after day.

37: **Hugh and Answig in Jerusalem** [summary]

Meanwhile Hugh and his brother crossed the sea and came to Bethany, a Christian city in Palestine, ruled by a Patriarch and guarded by a force of Templars. As the fleet approached Hugh caused all sails, shields and banners to display Roland's four-quartered device. Seeing this the Patriarch thought: "Surely Charles is crossing the sea to Jerusalem, and sending his nephew Roland ahead." But Hugh soon told him: "I am not Roland, but his cousin Hugh, who has been sent by the Queen of France to find him." The Patriarch then told him about the peasant champion's exploits in the war between Machidant and the Sultan, and Hugh began to suspect that this was Roland.

Machidant meanwhile heard of the arrival of a French fleet and took it for Roland's. He dispatched his son Liodras to Bethany to request Roland to defend Jerusalem and assist him against the slayer of his son. (In fact, he meant to lure him into the city to kill him.) Liadrax was unwilling to be the bearer of treacherous message. He agreed to go, but vowed he would never lead Roland into a trap.

⁸⁶ Bethany: Here and elsewhere, the author confuses or conflates Bethany with Bethlehem.

Liadras arrived at Bethany and soon learned that the visitor was Hugh, not Roland. Nevertheless, he delivered his embassy. Both Hugh and Answig replied that they would gladly come to relieve Jerusalem. Since Bethany is only two leagues from Jerusalem, Hugh and Answig arrived speedily. They were received and given command of half the city, which displayed Roland's three-quartered device. Machidant's banners flew over the other half.

Outside the walls, when Roland rose in the morning, he saw his own banners displayed on the walls. He sent Samsonet to demand man-to-man combat with the chief Christian knight. Hugh accepted the challenge. In the joust that followed, Hugh overthrew Samsonet and accept his surrender on condition that he would fetch the killer of Pelleas and Polynor to face him in battle. "Are you Roland, then?" said Samsonet. "I am not he," said Hugh, "but his cousin Hugh, sent through the world to look for him."

Samsonet brought these tidings back to Roland, and Roland smiled but rode out against Hugh. In the combat that followed, Roland struck at Hugh with Durandel, saying: "Do you know this sword?" "Alas, you villain," Hugh replied, "you have murdered Count Roland." Roland replied, "You lie in your throat, for I killed him in battle." Their fight continued, but Roland used only the flat of his sword. The duel lasted till evening, when Roland lifted his visor and said: "Don't you recognize me, cousin?" Hugh went to embrace him, but Roland whispered: "I must not be recognize. I must tell you that, if you go to the city tonight, Machadant will try to murder you and all your men. But while you are in battle, do you secretly open a gate and I will help you punish his treachery." Then they both swore to return to battle in the morning.

Hugh told his brother Answig of Machadant's plot. They secretly armed and lay in readiness. At midnight, Machadant said to his son Liadris: "Go you into the Christian quarters on one side, and I will come on the other." Liadrix answered: "I will do as you command, but I vow by Mabound to commit no treason against Count Roland." Then they both attacked and the Christians offered a valiant defense. Roland heard the noise of battle and said to Samsonet, "The time has come." As Roland was waiting for Hugh to open the gate, Hugh came face to face with Machadant and slew him. Now Liadris cried out, "False Christian, you have killed my father. I will make you regret this." Hugh thought he could not in honor open the gate to Roland until he had shown his full valor. He therefore continued fighting until more than ten thousand of his company lay dead. Answig also fought on, but, realizing the overwhelming odds, opened the gate for Roland. The supposed Constable rushed in and the Saracens of Jerusalem fled before him in panic. Hugh, still in combat with Liadras, saw him coming and cried out: "Surrender, Liadras, for all your men are dead." "I shall surrender to no man," said Liadras, "except it be Roland." Roland now advanced and took up the fight, sparing his blows, for he could easily have killed him. At last, he struck him down and said: "Surrender to this sword of mine called Durandel." Liadras grew pale at this and Roland continued: "I am Count Roland. Surrender to me." At this Liadras took his own sword by the point and offered it to Roland, saying: "I gladly yield, noble knight, for I wish to turn Christian." Samsonet then, finding that his Constable was none other than Roland, knelt also and asked to be baptized.

Presently they were joined by the Sultan and his daughter. He had heard the tidings. Dionysia, fresh as a rose, knelt to Roland. The Sultan said that they both desired baptism, and that he would bestow Dionysia on Answig. "I will have no husband," said Dionysia, "except the finest flower of knighthood in the world." Roland smiled to hear this and said: "I will have no wife except Oliver of Vienne's sister, the fairest lady in France." When Dionysia knew that Roland was promised to another woman, she said: "I will do as you please." So she and her father and her brother, together with all the citizens of Jerusalem, were baptized by the Patriarch of Bethany; later all Syria, Persia and Babylon also converted for love of Roland. On the twelfth day, Dionysia and Answig were married amid great rejoicing.

The Return to Pamplona

Island Shipwreck

38

While Roland abiding as you have heard, he had a great vessel prepared to go to sea, for he desired to go to Pamplona to see Charles. Samsonet and Liadras told Roland that they wished to go with him to Charles, which gave Roland much contentment and joy, for they were the sons of crowned kings. Roland prayed to Christ to grant him the grace of leading both these knights to Charles. Soon Roland told Hugh, Samsonet and Liadras that they would set out for Pamplona on the next morning. He summoned the Patriarch and told him: "I commend Answig to your care; never in your life abandon him." Roland crowned Answig king of all Syria.

When morning arrived, Roland armed from head to foot. Hugh, Samsonet and Liadras prepared to embark, along with many other barons, hermits and pilgrims who wished to go with Roland to see his Christian countrymen. Roland boarded the ship with his company and the many other lords, took his leave from the Sultan, and urgently commended the fair Dionysia to the Patriarch. The mariners pushed off from shore and entered the great sea with a good wind behind them. While Roland and his companions were sailing over the sea, they endured much pain and hardship day and night, for one morning the air grew so troubled that the sea was tossed by a great tempest and wind and water swept over them. The spars of the masts fell into the sea and the whole ship was so battered that they were driven violently against an island. As pleased Christ, Roland, Hugh, Samsonet, and Liadras jumped from the ship with all their horses and arms, but most of the other lords in the ship went to the bottom of the sea.

When Roland hand the three barons in his company stood on the shore of that dangerous island, they could go neither forward nor backward, for the island was densely forested, overgrown with ash trees, acacias and poplars, so it could not be traveled on horseback. Before long the knights began to complain of their great hunger. Liadras said: “Ah Divine Mahound, what a villain I was to renounce you for that prophet who let himself be crucified by the Jews! Where now are the dainties that I used to eat, where is the fine bed on which I was wont to lie?” Liadras was lamenting in this manner, and Samsonet tired to console him, saying: “My brother, be of good cheer. Do you not see that Count Roland is with us? Have you no hope that Christ will aid us?” Liadras answered; “if the count has as much power as you say, why is not saying a prayer to bring us help?”

Then Roland moved away from the knights until they could see him, dismounted and knelt in prayer, beseeching Christ to grant him the grace of leading Liadras and Samsonet to Charles, and to allow him to cross the island with his companions. At Roland’s mighty prayer, the center of the island opened and showed a path along which the knights could in a group leading across it. Then Roland leapt to horse, called to his companions, and said: “Now let us ride, for Jesus Christ has manifested us a great miracle. See how the island has parted in the middle?” Liadras said to Count Roland: “Ah, noble baron, servant of Christ, forgive me if I have offended against you.”

So the knights mounted: Hugh of Floraville rode ahead, with Samsonet and Liadras behind him, while Roland remained on watch against any savage beasts that might annoy or attack them. The knights were riding as you have heard, and as they were riding the island forests closed behind them. They knights rode until the reached the tip of the island. Roland looked ahead and saw a mountain too high for any man to pass. None but savage beasts dwelt upon it. When the knights came up to that mountain, they could go neither forward no backward, for the island was deserted. The knights made stay here unwillingly, for when they looked behind they saw the island desert, and when they

looked ahead they saw the high mountain. The knights felt so hungry that they could barely stand, since they had not eaten in two days. Thereupon Liadras began to say to Count Roland: “Ah, sir knight, you made me renounce my god and believe in yours; then you brought me to this pass when I know not in what part of the world I am, and my great hunger is trampling me down.” Liadras complained bitterly to Roland, and once again Samsonet besought him to trust in Jesus Christ and to stay firm in the Christian faith. Roland was very angry that Liadras would not listen and was did not stay true to the baptism that he had received.

He once more rode off some distance from the knights, knelt down to pray and said: “Thou glorious Christ in Heaven, born in the city of Bethany, give me the power by your grace to lead Samsonet and Liadras to Charles, and let me pass over this great mountain with my companions.” Roland wept while he prayed in this manner, because Liadras was not a firm believer in Jesus Christ.

Hear now of the great miracles that befell the knights because of Count Roland’s prayer: the mountain opened at its center, showing a plane along which the four knights could ride in a group. The knights mounted at once. Hugh rode in front, with Samsonet and Liadras behind him, while the Count remained on watch against savage beasts that might attack the knights. As the knights were crossing the mountain, it closed behind them. As they continued riding, Count Roland gave thanks to Christ for the great miracle that he had shown them. The knights suffered so much pain and trouble beyond all words because of their great hunger.

The barons rode on until they came, on the other side of the mountain, to a great forest, and continued riding for two leagues. Roland looked ahead and saw thirty lions charging from a forest thicket. At their head came a huge lion, with a crown of hair upon his head, and that lion was completely white. At once Roland moved in front of his companions, leapt from his horse, and fell

to his knees before the great lion, praying to him with hands joined: "Ah, gentle beast, I beg you, for love of that crown of hair you bear on your head, return to your forest, and let us go upon our way."

At this, the lion lifted his paw and placed it upon Roland's head. Roland did not move. The lion stood there while a man might walk half a league, with his paw on Roland's head; then he withdrew, turned his face toward the forest, and began to move off into his thicket followed by the other lions. Roland rose, leapt to his horse, and said to his companions: "Now let us ride and be on our way."

Having no choice, the knights continued where fortune led them. At last the four companions reached an enchanted wood. Roland looked ahead and saw the bodies of four giants: the first was cleft sideways through his waist; the second was cleft from head to foot; the third bore a cut all the way down his back; and the fourth had his entrails trailing from his belly. When Roland beheld these gaping wounds, he vowed to God that he would neither eat nor drink until he had discovered who had bestowed these great blows.

The companions rode on for two leagues. They soon they saw seven more giants ahead, each of whom grasped an immense tree, so that they seemed like a forest. The knights stopped and Samsonet put his lance in rest, put spur to his horse, and charged, striking one of the giants in the midst of his chest. The lance pierced the giant's breast and its point emerged more than a palm's breadth from his back. The giant fell dead to the ground. Samsonet returned to his companions, and Liadras charged the second giant, pierced his chest with his lance, and hurled him dead to the ground. Liadras made to ride back, and as he was doing so, another one of the giants raised his tree-trunk and struck him so hard from behind that both he and his horse fell dead in a heap. Hugh then ran at the third giant, and his lance-thrust hurled him dead to the ground. Roland put his lance in rest and struck down the fourth giant, stretching him dead on the grass. Then he grasped Durandel and cleft the fifth giant's head down to the teeth, killing him. Samsonet ran at the sixth giant,

striking a blow with his sword that beheaded and killed him. Hugh of Floraville rode at the seventh giant, aiming his sword between his head and his shoulders, and cut off his head. So fell the last giant.

When the giants were dead, Roland saw that Liadras was dead. He began to weep bitterly with his companions, and besought Christ to reveal to him whether he was pleased to redeem Liadras' soul, for he dearly desired his salvation. Now, while the knights were standing over Liadras' body, Roland looked up and saw two lions approaching them from the forest. Roland stepped back, and both the lions began to claw the earth with their front-paws. They dug a great pit for Liadras' body. Roland, seeing these two lions, said that they had been sent by Christ. He knelt to them in great joy and reverence. Then Roland rose up, took Liadras' sword and tied it by his left side, and removed his spurs, for he had come from Jerusalem. Roland told his companions that Liadras' soul was certainly saved, since these lions had been sent by Christ. Then the knights wept in sorrow for love of Liadras, who had been a most excellent knight-at-arms. They lifted the body and placed it in the pit that the lions had made. Then the lions departed, roaring, into the forest.

The three companions mounted and began to ascend a hillside, still bitterly weeping for Liadras' death. As they descended the slope, Roland saw a castle. It was ruined and the countryside lay waste, for the giants had long ago utterly ravaged it. Roland rode ahead of his companions and saw a fountain near the castle. A beautiful tree rose above it, bearing dark red fruit. Roland dismounted near the fountain and was about to drink, when the air resounded with a voice that cried:

“Champion of Christ, do not drink this water; it is poisoned, for in the waters of this well there dwells a viper.” Roland, because of his great thirst, commended his soul to Christ, and thrice made the holy sign of the cross over the fountain. At once its waters grew wholesome and Roland drank.

While the knights were standing by the fountain, one of the fruits fell from the tree and Samsonet picked it up to eat it. As soon as he tasted it, he feared that it was mortally envenomed and threw it away. The knights made stay there and Samsonet and Hugh went to sleep near the fountain. When Roland saw that his companions were asleep, he made the sign of the Cross over them and commended them to Christ. At Roland's prayer, a falcon with feathers of gold descended from the sky and sat in the tree watch over the knights.

Roland mounted and rode across a low slope. In the valley he saw a castle and began to give thanks to Christ. He dismounted and called out for the castellan. Inside that castle there dwelt a hermit named Samson. He had lived there for sixty years, serving Christ. Every day the angel Gabriel brought him a loaf of bread and a piece of fruit. Long ago, he had been one of Charles' knights, but Charles had banished him from his realm, because he had killed a knight in the emperor's presence. Samson thereupon became a hermit in this region to do penance.

The hermit Samson, hearing himself summoned, came to a window and called: "Ah, you cursed giants, do you still go unpunished? Not two days have passed since I killed four of you in this valley. Do you think you can go wherever you please? Know that I long ago killed more than ten thousand of you." Roland called back: "O holy hermit, I am neither a Saracen nor a highwayman, but a Christian servant of Christ. I beseech you, give me a piece of your bread." The hermit answered: "You lie in your throat and in your teeth. There have never been any Christians in these parts, but if you call me into the field, I shall make you rue your words." Roland answered: "I swear on the hilt of my sword that I am a Christian. Not many days ago I served in Charlemagne's host near Pamplona. Know that Roland crossed the great sea and conquered Syria, Persia and Babylon, and caused more than a hundred thousand Saracens to be baptized. He left Charles because Charles

struck his face with a gauntlet, making three drops of blood issue from his nostrils. This was the cause that made Roland abandon Charles and undertake the conquests of which I have spoken.”

Then the hermit said: “I shall soon know whether you are a Christian.” He seized a crucifix that the angel Gabriel had given him long ago, and said: “If you are a Christian, hold this crucifix in your hand; if you are not, bring it back to the castle and I will kill you.” (He had vowed to God that he would thus deal with any unchristian who entered the castle). “As you please,” said Roland.

The hermit took the crucifix and threw it toward Roland. Roland opened his palm and the crucifix flew into his hand. When the hermit saw this, he said: “Please tell me: who are you and whence do you come?” Roland replied: “My name is Roland, nephew to the Emperor of Rome.” At this Samson ran down from the castle and opened the gate. (It had a wooden drawbridge suspended by chains). He took Roland by the hand and led him inside the castle, giving him a very joyful welcome. Roland told him how he had been in Syria and conquered Jerusalem and caused a monastery to be erected on Mount Calvary in honor of the Holy Sepulcher and as a destination for pilgrims.

Presently Roland said: “Let me have some of your bread, for I am very hungry.” Said the hermit: “I don’t have a crust of bread, for though the angel Gabriel brought me what I needed every day, I have not eaten more than a slice each day for seven years, and during those seven at herbs from these meadows. It has been seven years since the angel Gabriel has carried me bread to sustain me.” Then Roland said: “Please say a prayer to Christ to tell him I must eat, for I am very hungry.” The hermit and Roland at once knelt in prayer to Christ to send them some bread. The angel Gabriel answered them: “Rise, holy knights of Christ, for I will bring you what you need.” The angel continued to the hermit: “Holy hermit, Christ sends to tell you that you must eat of this bread for

penance, for this very day Christ will receive your soul. You must confess your sins to Roland, for he is a righteous man.” The hermit replied: “Since it pleases Christ, I will do so, though I am unwilling to die just yet. Who, from this day forth, will punished the wicked giants?”

Then the knights rose and partook of the bread, and in Roland’s mind, it seemed that he had eaten choicest food and meat. When the knights had eaten, the hermit knelt to Roland and made his confession, and said: “When I have passed from this world, open this tomb and put my body inside it.” “I will gladly obey your command,” said Roland, and asked the hermit to intercede for him with the Savior when he stood before Christ.

So the hermit passed from this world, and the glorious God in heaven received his soul. Roland buried the hermit’s body, took up the crucifix, and prayed to the angel Gabriel to reveal his future until he had to die. The angel Gabriel answered: “It is Christ’s pleasure that you shall leave this life at the end of seven years, more or less. Know that I shall from this day forward always be at your left shoulder and never leave you until your death.” Roland replied: “I am well pleased with the company that Christ sends me.” Yet again, the angel spoke to him: “Now ride swiftly to Charles’ host at Pamplona, for if you delay but ten days, Charles army will perish; Malzarisse of Pamplona has prepared engines by which, if you do not arrive in ten days, all your people will be destroyed. Moreover, I shall give you greater certainty about your death: when you cut one man on one horse into four pieces with one stroke of Durandel, that will be the time when you must leave this world.”

Then Count Roland went to horse, took the crucifix that the holy hermit had given him, tied it to his saddle, and spurred his horse toward the mountainside. He arrived at the fountain and saw the golden-winged falcon perched on the tree. It had kept his companions safe and whole. As soon as they rose, the falcon left the tree and shook it so that several fruit dropped. Samsonet picked them

up and saw that they had turned vermilion and began to eat that fruit because of his great hunger. When he had eaten of that fruit, he was as well sated as if he had eaten meat and choicest viands. Then both Roland and Hugh ate of it at pleasure.

As Roland rode away from the mountain, after leaving the hermit, he looked behind him to see the hermit's castle. Where that castle had stood, he saw the place utterly deserted, as if nothing had ever stood there. Roland greatly wondered at this. When the three friends had eaten of that fruit, they were all sated as though they had eaten meat and choice viands. Then the three companions mounted and rode off to rejoin Charles' army. Let us leave Roland and his friends, for we must tell of other tidings.

Saracen Schemes, Maganza Treachery

39

The tale relates that, while Charles was staying near Pamplona, Answig of Maganza, Ganelon's brother, heard that Roland had left Charles' host and had himself crowned king of France. He had the roads, passes and paths blocked, so that no food or provender could reach Charles' army. Because of this, there was a famine in the camp of Charles' knights so dire, that they nearly died of hunger for lack of provisions.

Just at that time, as God pleased, Roland and his companions, on the seventh day, came to a noble fountain. They dismounted, unbridled their horses to let them graze in the meadow, and sat down by near the fountain. While the knights were thus resting, the falcon that was Roland's when he left the army, came flying up. Roland's falconer, because of his great hunger, had let it fly to seize some wild creature, so that he might eat. That falconer's name was Rambault .

Hardly had Rambault launched the falcon, when that falcon rose into the sky as was his wont, and Rambault followed it with a stick through the countryside, shaking the bushes here and there and making a great noise. The falcon rose high in the air and Count Roland, who was sitting by the fountain, saw it and knew it for his own. He rose, put a leather glove upon his left hand, and loudly called to the falcon. The falcon at once knew the voice of his master, swooped down and perched on Count Roland's fist.

Rambault, seeing the falcon swoop and not continue to soar in the usual manner, was very angry and rode up to the place where he had seen the falcon descend. Rambault rode following the sound of the falcon's bells until he entered the forest and arrived at a beautiful meadow. He looked ahead and saw a knight with a falcon on his wrist. He rode another bowshot's length and recognized the son of Duke Miles of Angrant. Rambault spoke not a word, but at once rode off to Charles' pavilion.

When Charles saw Rambault without his falcon, he said: "Ah, impudent traitor, what have you done with my nephew's falcon? If you have lost that falcon, I swear to God to have you hanged by the neck." Rambault replied: "I have no fear, for that falcon rests on the fist of knight who will easily defend him and me. What I mean is: Roland and two of his companions is nearby, not two leagues away." Charles answered: "If things are not as you say, I swear to God that I shall make you die an evil death."

Duke Namor, who was present, without a moment's delay mounted to horse, inquiring where Count Roland could be found. Namor rode to the fountain and saw the knight with a falcon on his wrist. He threw himself from his horse, knelt to Roland and kissed his feet. Then Count Roland bent down and raised up Duke Namor, and the two barons greeted each other heartily. Roland called out

to Duke Namor and said: "Tell me, what has happened to the Twelve Peers of France, and to the soldiers of the Church that the Pope kept under my command?" Duke Namor replied: "After you left the army, they took the road to Rome, and not one of them stayed in the camp." Then Samsonet said to Roland: "Who is this noble who seems of such high degree?" Roland answered: "This is Duke Namor of Bavaria." Then Duke Namor questioned Roland as follows: "Who is that young knight with you?" Roland answered: "He is the Sultan's son, whom I had baptized." Samsonet knelt to Duke Namor, and the Duke to Samsonet, and the two knights embraced with great joy and contentment.

Then Roland told Duke Namor how he had caused Syria, Persia, and Babylon to be baptized, and had founded a monastery on Mount Calvary in honor of the Holy Sepulcher; how he had met Samson the Hermit, who had given him a crucifix from the angel Gabriel; and how, when departing with his companions, he had looked behind and seen nothing at all, and how the castle had been destroyed.

While these knights were gathered as I have told you, Oliver, Ogier the Dane, and Astolph of England arrived. They all knelt to Count Roland and showed him great reverence. The Twelve Peers came to look upon their commander, and every man gave great honor to Samsonet, all kneeling at his feet. While they were gathered as you have heard, Namor related how Count Roland had been for seven years in the land of the Saracens and had caused more than ten thousand Saracens to be baptized. You must know that Charles had been at Pamplona for two years before Roland's departure, so that it is clear that nine years had passed since Charles began to besiege Malzarisse and his son Isolier at Pamplona.

As the knights were conversing, Charles himself arrived with a great following. When Roland saw Charles, he stepped from the company of knights and knelt in the road at half a bowshot's distance from Charles. Here Charles dismounted, took his nephew in his arms, and said: "Ah, how I have missed you, dear nephew! For since you have left, neither food nor provender has reached me from France, and a great hunger pursues me from all directions." Hearing this, Roland smiled a little. Charles then said to him: "Who is that young man with you?" Roland replied: "This is the Sultan's son, and he is called Samsonet." Then Charles said, "You are very welcome, Samsonet, my son," and kissed his face. All showed honor and gladness to Samsonet, and there was much rejoicing at Roland's return throughout the camp.

Then King Charles mounted his horse with all his nobility, and made Samsonet ride alongside himself, doing him great honor. Duke Name rode next, between Roland and Oliver. Said Duke Namon to Roland: "Noble Count, I beg you to give me a boon." Roland answered: "Ask what you please, and it shall be done." Said Duke Namon: "I ask you, by the love of your knighthood, to let me have that crucifix that the hermit gave you." Then Roland took the crucifix and gave it to Duke Name, but somewhat grudgingly, for it was very dear to Roland. However, he did not wish to rebuff him, for he was his friend and a knight of high standing.

Charles rode until he arrived most joyfully at his army. Meanwhile evening was falling, and the tables were put up for supper. Astolph said, "By Our Lady, the tables are set and there is nothing to eat," whereat Roland smiled a little, put his hand in his pocket, and took out a little of the bread that Hermit Samson had given him. He distributed it, giving every knight of high degree a little, and they all ate gladly, and when they were finished, it seemed to them that they had eaten meat and choice viands, and a great many knights ate their fill of that bread. Night was approaching, and they all went to repose in their tents.

As you have heard, Roland, along with Samsonet, remained with the Twelve Peers. When the ten days had elapsed, Roland put on his hauberk, took up all his weapons, mounted Veliantin and rode from the camp all by himself. As Roland was riding near Pamplona, he saw, half a bowshot away, a beautiful garden. Roland looked at the city from all sides, seeing how strong and beautiful it was. Then he saw, in one corner of the forest, a beautiful lady gathering roses and flowers. When Roland rode into the midst of the garden and approached her, she rose and said: "Alas, sir knight, are you not of Charles' Christian camp, who will this very night be utterly ruined, for our lord Malzarasse has prepared the means to destroy them at midnight?" Roland answered: "By our god Mahound, I am well pleased that Charles and his people will be destroyed. Then he turned to his stallion and rode of toward the host. As he was looking back, he saw that the lady had gone he knew not whither. She was completely dressed in white. Roland, greatly marveling at the lady's vanishing, crossed himself. You must know that this lady was the angel Gabriel who brought a message to Roland. Roland rode off and came to his camp. All that day, he said nothing to anyone. When evening arrived, Roland said to Charles: "It is now necessary for us to withdraw our army to that steep mountainside yonder." Charles listened to him and said: "Roland, my dear nephew, I shall do whatever you please." He therefore had all the instruments sounded to rouse the camp, and trumpets, drums and cymbals rang out so loudly that those in the city heard them. Then the Dane took up the Oriflamme, rode up the slope and fixed upon a tall tree. Roland rode up and down the camp, ordering all men up the high mountainside.

Those in the city, hearing the sound of so many instruments, began to shout: "Wait until midnight, when we will turn this merriness to sorrow!" As all Charles' forces had with to the mountains, the sound of the instruments ceased, for everyone had taken higher ground. When midnight drew near,

Malzarisse, Isoler and Corsabrin of Carthage told the engineers who had prepared their machines to put them into action. Then the engineers took the ropes they had rigged and caused the beams in the mines beneath the camp to fall, and the whole campground began to collapse into the water with a great crash, forming a huge lake, very deep. Ships are still sailing there, for that great lake has been there ever since.

The night passed and day began to dawn, when Malgarisse thought that the men of Charles' camp had all been killed. Isoler climbed the walls to see the great flood, and discovered countless banners and flags flying on the mountainside, and Charles' whole army waiting there. He cried out to Malzarisse: "Ah, divine Mahound, I think that the demon of hell has befriended Charles and warned him." In the manner that you have heard, Charles was now on the high mountain, all his men suffering greatly from hunger.

Answig of Maganza, to whom Charles had entrusted the crown at his departure, saying, "I leave my kingdom in your care; see that you honor my queen and do everything needful and reasonable," and who soon discovered that Roland had left Charles' camp, now (if God did not prevent it) thought to lay shame on Charles' queen, for he intended to take her to wife and to exile Charles from all France. Roland knew this state of affairs all too well, for his genie⁸⁷ told him of all Answig's actions. Roland asked the genie: "Can you inform Charles of all that Answig has done?" "Gladly," the genie replied, and sped away from Roland, rousing a storm at his departure that shook the tent posts and lances and awnings and bent the horses' knees to the ground. "My God," said Charlemagne, "this storm is so violent, could Malgarisse wreak greater damage?" The genie came to Charles' tent, and in the first hour of his repose, while all others were asleep, cried out to him: "Charles, Charles,

⁸⁷ His genie: A part of the story here somewhat clumsily makes up for an earlier omission. In related texts, such as the *Entrée di Spagna*, Roland, while at the enchanted fountain, uses a book of necromancy given him by the Sultan to conjure up a genie and learns of Answig's plot.

Charles. If you delay three days, our queen will bring you to shame, for Answig will make her his wife, and possess her in wedlock that very night.” Charles answered: “What must I do?” The genie answered: “If you promise not to mention God’s name, I will carry you to Paris in half an hour and help you prevent this marriage.” Charles said: “I would be glad to do so.” So Charles mounted the genie’s back, and the genie rose into the air and sped to Paris. As the genie flew above the royal courtyard, Charles looked down and recognized one of his squires. He said, “Thank God, and the genie instantly dropped him, but from very high up, since he was already descending to put Charles down. Charles suffered a small hurt in his left leg, but then rose in some discomfort and made for the palace.

When he arrived in the hall, he saw it illuminated by great torches and lamps, for all men were gathered to see Answig go to bed with the queen. Now Charles took his seat on the royal throne, even as he used to sit while he was in Paris. He looked around and saw the court seneschal, whose name was Algiron, son to King Solomon of Brittany’s brother Guy. (His mother was Fierapas, sister to Fierabras.)⁸⁸ He was one of two brothers; the other was named Baldwin. These two boys were twenty years old. You must know that they were born in Africa and could speak Syrian in the Saracen manner.

When Charles sat down on the throne, all men began to stare. “Who is this old man?” they whispered to one another. Presently an old man arrived who had once been Charles’ servant. He recognized that this old man was Charles and instantly rushed through the hall, fell at Charles’ feet and kissed them, saying: “Pardon, your Majesty; I knew nothing of all this.” Charles answered: “Ah, wicked traitor, how could you act with such perfidy?” Then Algiron fell at Charles’ feet, along with

⁸⁸ Salomon’s nephews, Algiron and Baldwin, with their parents, are major characters in two Carolingian romances, *Guy of Bourgogne* and *Fierabras*.

many nobles, all begging pardon. They said that Answig had told them that Charles, and Roland and Oliver, and the Twelve Peers of France, had all been killed.

The news reached the queen, who was keeping her chamber, much grieved by the thought that Charles and Roland were dead. Now the queen came before Charles. She rushed through the midst of the hall and cried: "Welcome, my lord." Charles berated her harshly for sending him no provisions for seven years. (Answig, when he learned of Charles' arrival, had fled the palace.)

Charles said to Algiron: "I will leave my kingdom and queen under your protection." Algiron said to Charles: "I will do whatever you command." He asked him how King Solomon of Brittany was faring, and about the Twelve Peers of France. Charles told him the news regarding Roland, how he had visited the Saracen lands and returned to Pamplona.

Then he said to him: "I can make no longer stay, for I must return to my army." He told him how the genie had carried him to Paris, then he took his leave from all, made his way to a chamber near which the genie had left him, and mounted the genie's back. The genie rose into the air and carried Charles to his army before midnight, so that none in the camp, except Roland, knew of it. Charles went to bed and slept until the third hour the next morning, for the night had tired him. In the morning, after the third hour had struck, Charles rose, looking very worn. This made his nobles wonder and they said: "Has our lord Charles been in some kind of battle of which he does not speak?"

Roland soon arrived at Charles tent. Charles told Roland to approach and confided all that had happened. He said that he knew all too well (and Roland vowed it to God) that the Maganzas must be punished for their treason, if ever he returned to France. Let us now leave off Charles and speak of other matters.

41: **Deceit and Counterdeceit** [summary]

The queen, who now regretted withholding her help from Charles, sent for Algiron and Baldwin. She supplied them with enough of her own treasure to gather an army of twenty-thousand from France, Germany, Normandy, Brittany, and Brabant. They were to bring these to Charles' camp at Pamplona.

Answig discovered this plan and dispatched five thousand to Aragon. There, by treacherously displaying the royal standard of the Oriflamme, he seized the border fortress of Monpaslere, and slaughtered the guard that Charles had posted there. Meanwhile, Answig and Baldwin succeeded in raising a large force, many of whose men had fathers and brothers already encamped at Pamplona.

By then, queen had discovered Answig's treachery. She therefore sent Algiron and Baldwin to besiege Monpaslere. They decided to repay Answig's deceit by a similar ruse. Displaying the Maganza banner, they pretended to be Ganelon's brother Andrew and his son Melchion, sent out to Answig's assistance. Answig, taken in by the ruse, rode out to meet them and was killed by Algiron and the fortress retaken. During the following days, Algiron and Baldwin laid waste to much Maganza territory.

At length, Algiron and Baldwin moved toward Navarre. When Charlemagne's host came into view, it was gathered on the mountainside, rather encamped near Pamplona. At first, the two brothers mistook it for a Saracen host and nearly offered battle, but at the last moment Algiron and Namor recognized each other, and the forces joyfully joined.

Algiron and Baldwin now vowed that they would yield Pamplona into Charles' hands. This was their plan: Baldwin was to take his force to the gates of Pamplona, pretending to be the Mustapha of Cordoba leading a relief force. When the gates were opened, he was to take possession of the gate and wait for Algiron's troops and the Twelve Peers before entering the city. The first part of the plan succeeded. Thirty thousand Saracens issued from the city, were surrounded and slain. But the city, under Malzarisse's and Isoler's command, remained untaken and five thousand Christians perished in the encounter.

Pamplona, Estella, Lucerna⁸⁹42: **Roland in Rome and Lombardy** [summary]

The Pope had learned of Roland's return and now wrote to him to come to Rome and reassume command the twenty-thousand soldiers of the Church who had fled there after his departure from Charles. When Roland received the Pope's letter, he set out with the Twelve Peers, leaving Algiron and Baldwin as commanders in his place. Roland and the Peers arrived at Rome and stayed for a month, amid great festivities. Then they took their leave and rode out with their twenty thousand. In Lombardy, they were gladly received by King Desiderius. He offered to join them, with ten thousand additional troops, most of them foot soldiers. Roland gladly accepted. Within a month Desiderius's force was ready and they all crossed into Provence. Six days later they reached Charles at Pamplona.

⁸⁹ Lucerna: It is tempting to identify this city as the modern Puente la Reina, but several details argue against it. I have therefore retained the original name. Pamplona and Estella are, of course, actual places. Estella's magnificent Palacio de los Reyes de Navarra features a fine early sculpture depicting Roland's battle with Ferrau.

The Capture of Pamplona

43

When the Lombards had all arrived at the camp, the French and German troops all made mock of them. They said they were trifling men and of little account, for more than ten thousand of them were foot soldiers. Day after day, there were noisy scuffles with the Lombards. King Desiderius saw how Charles' men were offering insults to the Lombards. He summoned Roland and told him: "My lord Count, you have made me come to Navarre, and I have come in your service, not in the service of Charles or any other knight or baron in the world. Do you see how these French are deriding and insulting my people? I swear to God I shall return to Lombardy and never go anywhere in service of Charles or any other knight or nobleman whatever, for I am not subject to any lord in the world, nor to any king or emperor." Roland, seeing that King Desiderius was angry, said: "Why not take your people to the other side of Pamplona and make camp there. If ever any French or Germans come into your camp there to cause a disturbance, I swear by the Divine Majesty that you need have no fear of any man if you cut them all down with your swords." The king, understanding Roland's good will, removed his camp one league from Charles', so that neither side could see the other. In this manner, both armies were stationed.

One day, more than ten thousand Frenchmen went to the Lombard army and began to cause a great stir. King Desiderius and his men armed and slew more than eight thousand of these French, and the others escaped, thanks to the speed of their horses. When Roland heard the news of what the Lombards had done, he laughed and said: "Now go and quarrel with the Lombards, who have done well to punish you!" Then those who had gotten away, angered by this, swore that they would be

avenged against those Lombards by any means possible. Yet they all feared the Lombards, because Roland loved King Desiderius, a man of great power and esteem.

One day, Desiderius, encamped as you have heard, summoned sixteen of the best and wisest Lombard lords in his company and told them: “My lords, you well know that Charles has now been at Pamplona for ten years, without being able to take it. It is my intention, before three days have passed, to seize the whole city, for we shall offer battle and conquer it to your great glory.” The Lombards made careful plans for taking Pamplona. They fashioned ladders and boarding planks to ascend the walls, and at the outset of the second day, soon after midnight, they put more than five thousand knights in full armor, along with some of the boldest infantry. Another five thousand, armed with bows and crossbows, stood ready behind them, ready to offer fierce battle. They all drew secretly up to the city, without being either seen or heard. Then King Desiderius took a tall ladder, placed in the moat near the wall, and climbed it with his sixteen barons. As soon as Desiderius reached the top of the wall, he seized one of the guards and hurled him down into the moat.

Meanwhile Isoler was making the rounds inside the walls, encouraging the watch. When he came near the Lombards, he cried out: “Keep good watch!” Desiderius replied: “Long live Lord Malzarisse!” Isoler passed on to call to the next watch. At once the Lombards put more ladders to the walls, so that more than five thousand climbed up. Then Desiderius, with his five thousand knights, climbed from the other side of the wall and barred the city gate. King Desiderius had the draw bridge raised, so that no man could enter.

When day dawned, the Lombards raised their banners and pennants on the walls, displaying the Lombard device of the red cross. Malzarisse, Isoler and Corsabrin soon saw this and hastened to

the central square to defend it. King Desiderius, when he had secured the gate, also hurried toward the square with his men, crying: "Death to the cursed Saracen race!" So great was the valor of the Lombards, that they gained the square despite all resistance, killing countless Saracens. Malzarisse, seeing that he could not hold the city, fled to the fortress, along with sixty of his strongest knights, while the Lombards occupied every quarter of the city.

Charles, meanwhile, hearing the loud noise that came from the city, mounted his horse and rode toward the it, accompanied Roland and the Twelve Peers of France. Charles looked up and saw the Lombard banners flying on the walls of Pamplona. He exclaimed: "Holy Mary, for ten years I have lain near Pamplona, unable to conquer it. Not two months have passed since Desiderius arrived at Pamplona, and he has conquered it in such a short time. And the French go about deriding the Lombards, who are such excellent people!" Charles rode on with his company, and when they arrived under the gate, Charles called out to the guard, saying: "Open up!" The guard replied: "I wouldn't think of doing so, for King Desiderius has not yet returned from the square." Not long after, Desiderius rode up with some two hundred knights (he had left the others at the fortress where Malzariss and his company were holding out) and climbed the gate tower. When Charles saw him, he said: "Ah, noble King of Lombardy, have them open the gate for me!" "Indeed, I shall not," said Desiderius; "for it is I who have conquered the city, and I want it for myself and my people." At this Roland said, with a little smile: "Ah, noble king, have the gate opened to me, in token of the good company we have kept together." Then Desiderius answered: "For your sake, noble Count, I shall do whatever you please." Desiderius climbed down from the tower, ordered the gate to be opened, and said: "I should like to make a pact with you: let the city's treasure to go to me and my people." "Make any conditions you please," said Roland.

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Roncesvalles

Ganelon Turns Traitor

46

Our story now relates that Charles, after he witnessed this great miracle manifested to him by Christ while staying with his men in the great valley beneath Lucerna, began to render thanks to the whole heavenly court. He then crossed the high slope into the great valley of Roncesvalles. He gathered his whole army in that valley, in a great woodland of fruit-bearing trees called Roncesvalles Forest. Charles' men took fruit from these trees and made wine of them. They rested there for ten days. On the morning of the eleventh, Charles summoned Roland and the Twelve Peers of France, along with many other nobles, and said to them: "Sixteen years have gone by since we first left France and entered Spain to conquer the Highway of Saint James of Galicia. We have conquered many towns, cities and castles, and cause more than two hundred thousand Saracens to be baptized. It is my advice that we now march on Saragossa. There we shall find Marsilius with his whole army, and give battle to him to force him to take holy baptism. Thus we shall be able to return to France with great honor."

Ganelon of Maganza, who was lord of all Flanders, now said: "Your majesty, we find ourselves in this valley and have scanty provisions. To go and seek out Marsilius would be too toilsome, for we must cross exceedingly high mountains and many dangerous passes. After we cross them, Marsilius will be able to occupy all these passes with twenty thousand knights, so that we will never be able to go back alive, and thus will all be killed. If you follow my counsel, we should send an embassy to Marsilius urging him to renounce Mahound and all his gods, since they are possessed by the devil.

He may thus give us some kind of favorable answer, and if Marsilius is baptized, we will have conquered all of Spain.”

When Ganelon had spoken these words, all present assented to them. Then Charles said: “Who shall be our messenger to carry this embassy to Marsilius?” At once Algiron’s brother Baldwin rose to his feet and said: “Your majesty, so please you, I shall go to Marsilius in Saragossa and tell him on your behalf to renounce Mahound and take whole baptism. I shall also tell him to send the unpaid tribute of twenty-two years to your nephew Roland. If he refuses, I shall tell him to be on his guard against you. Unless he give me a favorable answer, we shall pull his crown from his head and bestow it on Count Roland.” Then Charles said: “I am very well pleased.” So Baldwin took up his armor, shield and lance, mounted his horse, and took his leave from Charles and the assembled nobles. He crossed the high mountains. Charles commended him to God, for he had in former days sent more than ten nobles to Marsilius, who had killed them all; therefore Charles feared for Baldwin.

Baldwin rode swiftly until he arrived near Saragossa. He saw that more than four hundred⁹⁰ Saracens kept watch around the city. As Baldwin was entering the city, those Saracens said to each other, “Thus must be a messenger from the Christians,” and hurried toward him in wonder. Baldwin rode on until he reached the great square inside the city. Amid this square, he saw a high pine tree, with a clear fountain beneath it. Next to that fountain stood a canopy⁹¹ all of gold and fine silk, studded with countless precious stones. Marsilius and his nobles were assembled under

⁹⁰ More than four hundred: This number (it occurs twice in the chapter) is rather small, given the hyperbolic counts in tens or hundreds of thousands elsewhere in the narrative. In the manuscript, numbers are generally written in modified Roman form (e.g. “xx^m” for “twenty thousand”). The number of Saracens here appears as “cccc.” Could this be a scribal slip for “cccc^m”? Perhaps. On the other hand, at the end of the chapter the size of Marsilius’ *entire* army is given as “ccc^m”; moreover, a city garrison of nearly half a million seems excessive by any standard.

⁹¹ Canopy: orig. *paviglione*. I have elsewhere translated this as ‘pavilion’ or ‘tent’, but the context here suggests something more like a large baldachin or awning

this canopy because of the great heat, for it was the month of June. Baldwin quickly proceeded toward the canopy and found Marsilius seated on a throne covered with cloth-of-gold and fine jewels. When Baldwin saw Marsilius he was undismayed and, though blushing like a rose, rode boldly up to Marsilius, saying: "I bring you a message from Charles, Emperor of Rome. He demands that you renounce Mahound and all the other idols you worship, for they are not worth a goat. You should believe in Jesus Christ and take holy baptism. Moreover, I say to you on Roland's behalf that you must send him the tribute due for twenty-two years. If you refuse, I say to you: be on your guard against Joyous, Charles' sword."

When Marsilius had heard this embassy, he cried out in a loud voice: "Seize that wretched Christian churl, for I swear by our god Mahound to have him hanged in contempt of Charles and his barons." In an instance Baldwin was surrounded by more than four hundred Saracens. When Baldwin, who was on horseback and in full armor, saw what was happening, he lowered his lance, and thrust through a count, felling him dead to the ground. Then he laid hand on his sword and struck out so fiercely both left and right, that he killed more than twenty Saracens. But the Saracen press was so large that they assaulted the knight and gave him four deadly wounds. When Baldwin saw that he could not defend himself from that infidel crowd, he turned his horse about, rode straight at Marsilius, bent down, and snatched the crown from his head. He then gave spur to his horse and, despite all the Saracens, rode out of the city so badly wounded that his blood was covering all his armor. The good knight sped on until he reached Charles' tent. When Charles saw Baldwin, he leapt up and rushed out. Baldwin handed him Marsilius' crown and said: "Charles, why wait here with your army, when Marsilius is nearby at the city of Saragossa with more than three hundred thousand Saracens? You will be unable to defend against him if he marches on you with his whole host. I have delivered your embassy to Marsilius, and found him more insolent than a bear or a

serpent. He says that he shall never while he lives send tribute to Roland, maintaining that he is no vassal of yours.” Having spoken these words, Baldwin fell dead from his horse at Charles’ feet.

Let us now leave this knight and speak of other matters.

47

The story now tells, following what Archbishop Turpin had written, that Charles, while lodged in the great vale of Roncesvalles, spent many days there after Baldwin’s death during which no news of Marsilius came to the army. When almost a month had passed, Charles assembled the Twelve Peers of France and all his nobles, and said: “It seems to me that we must send another embassy to Marsilius to ask him to yield the tribute and to renounce Mahound and Apollyon. Otherwise we shall go to Saragossa.” Thereupon Ganelon of Maganza replied, saying: “Your majesty, a brave and wise knight must be found to deliver your message.” At this, Roland rose to his feet and spoke in the following manner: “Your majesty, at this pass there can be found no man more suitable to deliver your embassy than Ganelon, for he is a prudent knight, a master of this kind of thing.” When Ganelon heard Roland, he made no answer, for he was loath to go, since Marsilius had killed most of the knights whom Charles had sent as ambassadors. Charles then said: “Who will be the knight to bear our message to Marsilius?” No one answered, except Roland, who said: “The cleverest knight in our army is undoubtedly Ganelon of Maganza.”

Once more Ganelon made no answer. Then Charles said: “It is our pleasure that you, Count Ganelon, should take the following message to Marsilius: Let him know that we have crowned Count Roland king of Spain and of all his lands and castles. Let him send the twenty-two years’ tribute to Roland. Let him renounce Mahound and Apollyon, with all his other gods, and take holy baptisms and believe in Christ and his mother, the Virgin Mary. Unless he does this, we shall come

to Saragossa and kill him and all his men.” Ganelon replied, “Your majesty, I shall do whatever you command.” At once he armed, mounted in the saddle, and took the letters from the emperor. He did not, however, do this willingly. He soon crossed the great woodland of fruit trees and then the mountains until he found the road to Saragossa.

It was the hour of the first sleep, and the moon shone fair and clear. As Ganelon was riding with an ill will, he saw a knight riding through the forest and heading toward Saragossa. He was called King Blanzardine of Valnoir, one of King Marsilius’ counselors. As Blanzardine rode behind him, he overheard some words that Ganelon was saying against Roland, such as, “You are sending me to Saragossa to cause my death and to let Marsilius hang me. I swear to God that, before I return to the army, I shall tell such a tale that you will not see its end in your lifetime.” Ganelon rode on without taking note of Blanzardine, nor Blanzardine of him, but all along Ganelon went on complaining of Roland. At last, a little after midnight, Blanzardine, who had taken all these words to heart, drew near to Ganelon and said: “Sir knight, after all you have said, I can promise to have Marsilius make you king of all France. It is up to you whether Marsilius remains lord, or whether he will be undone and deprived of his kingdom. You can easily see how little Charles and his nephew Roland love you, since they send you to King Marsilius on an embassy that in times past has made so many of Charles’ ambassadors die.” Ganelon replied, “You speak truly, sir knight. But I swear to God that I will cause the destruction of Charles and all his army.” Then Blanzardine answered: “Who are you, sir knight, and what is your name?” Said Ganelon: “I am called Ganelon of Maganza, Charlemagne’s cousin; wife is Roland’s mother.” Blanzardine answered: “I have often heard you named as a great lord of cities and castles, and possessed of great wealth. But I assure you that Charles must wish you ill to send you into such great danger.”

After these words were spoken, Ganelon took leave of Blanzardine and soon after daybreak found himself near the city of Saragossa. There he saw many tents, barracks and pavilions spread throughout the plain. Presently Ganelon entered the city, somewhat ashamed of the words he had spoken to King Blanzandrine, for he somewhat loved the emperor Charles. Ganelon rode on until he arrived in the square where Marsilius was sitting under his canopy. Ganelon at once dismounted and cried out in a loud voice: "What, is that you, Marsilius, resting under that canopy?" When he knew that his voice was heard, Ganelon continued: "I come from Charles, who has sent me to tell you to renounce Mahound and Apollyon and to believe in Christ and the Virgin Mary, his mother. Moreover I tell you that you must send the twenty-two years' tribute to Roland. If you do not, he will ride against Saragossa with all his host."

Then Marsilius, in a great rage, cried in a loud voice: "Slay that traitor, for I swear by Mahound to make him die an evil death." At once Ganelon drew his sword and withdrew to a corner of the square. More than three hundred knights surrounded Ganelon and assailed him for a long time. Meanwhile Blanzardine had arrived in the square; he now cried out in a loud voice: "Ah, King Marsilius, do not kill this knight. By means of him you will either retain your rule or be undone, for he is Charles' cousin and the lord of many cities and castles." Thereupon Blanzardine recounted to Marsilius all that he had said to Ganelon the night before.

At this Marsilius at once pressed forward and commanded that none should give offense to Count Ganelon, and all his men at once drew apart. Marsilius took Ganelon's hand, and presently Blanzardine said: "Sir knight, will you bear witness to what you said last night?" Ganelon answered: "I will not, for I am one of Count Roland's knights." Then Blanzardine said: "Do not let yourself be killed for such a worthless cause. Can you not see that Charles sent you on this embassy to kill you?"

Meanwhile Bradamant, growing aware of the long dispute, came down from the palace and took Ganelon by the hand. (Bradamant, you must know, was Marsilius' wife, and Gaidamont was his daughter.) Then Bradamant led Ganelon to a fair lodging in the palace and said: "Ah, gentle knight, I am overcome with love for you, for you seem to me a man of nobility and high estate." Presently Bradamant began kissing Ganelon, and he turned redder than dragon's blood, while she kept saying: "Ah, noble knight, I see that because of you I will either remain a queen or be deprived of my realm. I beg you not to love another any better than he loves you. Can you not see clearly that Charles has sent you out to die? I beg, by my love, do whatever Marsilius and King Blanzardine counsel. I shall ever be your lady and your friend, and I can help you gain the loveliest woman in the world." Ganelon, seeing how beautiful the lady was, was suddenly smitten with love for her and said: "I want to do whatever pleases you." Then Bradamant once more kissed him, giving many thanks, and took his hand while they descended the palace stairs.

King Marsilius and Blanzardine, seeing Bradamant coming down from the palace with Ganelon and smiling, were exceedingly comforted. Marsilius stepped forward and took Ganelon's hand, and Bradamant said: "Marsilius, you must love Ganelon better than the eyes in your head." Soon Marsilius went back under his canopy with Ganelon and said to him: "Ah, Ganelon. How can you love Charles with a sincere heart, since he sends you here to Saragossa to die?" Then Ganelon said: "Whatever I do must be decided in a place where no man in the world, but only the birds in the air, can see me. There we will make plans about what to do." Said Marsilius: "Have no fear on that account, for I possess a treeless plain, some nine leagues wide, with a fine pine tree at its center and a beautiful fountain beneath it. There let us go at our pleasure, and there take counsel, so that none can hear or see us."

At once Marsilius, Ganelon and Blanzandrine mounted to horse and rode out until they arrived in the field with the pine tree. Then they sat down beneath that pine, and Marsilius began to speak: “Count Ganelon, how can we manage things so that Roland and Oliver, with the Twelve Peers of France and the knights of the Church, shall die? For if these are dead, I do not fear Charles one whit.” Ganelon replied: “I shall bear your embassy to Charles, saying that you are ready to renounce Mahound and Apollyon and to believe in the faith of Christ; also that you were willing to take the crown from your head and put it on Roland’s, to make him king of all Spain. Once I have delivered this message, I shall work things so that Roland will remain in the Vale of Roncesvalles with his three thousand knights, while Charles and his army ride back to Saint-Jean-Pie-de-Port. Before Charles has crossed the mountains, I desire you to send plenteous victuals and wine to Roland’s and Oliver’s camp, as a token of peace, along with some beautiful women, so that Roland’s and Oliver’s knights may drink and eat at pleasure after the great famine that they have suffered. The plenteous meal they partake will make them want to dally and take their pleasure with your women. That night, while they are all sated and dulled, as soon as midnight has passed, do you with your army ride down into the Vale of Roncesvalles where Roland is lodged, and take Count Roland and his knights in their beds, along with the Twelve Peers of France; then do with them what you will. As soon as Roland and the Twelve Peers of France are dead, Charles and his army will not be worth a goat, and you can take your vengeance upon Charles at will.

“Moreover,” Ganelon continued, “to make Charles believe what I say, I desire you to send him twelve hostages. Let the first be your own son; the second Blanzardine’s, who is present here; the third, Balugant’s; the fourth, the Caliph’s; the fifth, Algaris’s of Seville; the sixth, Grandonio’s of Valnoir; the seventh the son of Mustapha the White; the eighth, of Mustapha the Black; the ninth, of the Old Man of the Mountain; the tenth, Turchin’s of Turcullosa; the eleventh, King Stramasis’s;

and the twelfth, the son of King Alfaris of Lanova. Your tribute shall be of the following kind: six mules laden with fine gold, thirty greyhounds, thirty whippets, thirty young maidens, thirty falcons, thirty sperhawks, and thirty pages to care for the birds. In this manner, once Charles sees the twelve hostages and this manner of tribute, he will trust my whole embassy.

To this Marsilius replied, saying: "Alas, by Mahound, it seem to me great foolishness to put our sons in Charles' hands, for he may kill them." King Blanzardine answered him, saying: "Alas, my lord Marsilius, better that Charles should have our sons in his power than for him to chase us from Spain, for after that Charles would be able to go on to Granada and from there to Africa." Marsilius then agreed to Ganelon's counsel.

Ganelon now said: "I want to promise me a boon before I leave." Said Marsilius: "I swear by Mahound that I shall do for you whatever you may ask." Ganelon answered: "The first favor I ask is that, once Charles and Roland are dead, you bestow the crown of France on me. The second is that you spare one of my sons, who is in the valley with Roland, and let no man harm him. For a signal, I shall make him mount a white horse, so that all may know him." Marsilius promised to do all these things. Their counsel over, all three of them mounted and rode back through the countryside toward Saragossa.

Hear now of the four miracles wrought by Christ in answer to this great betrayal. The first was of a great rock beneath that pine, which rose and turned, and make such a mighty noise that it seemed like a lightning bolt striking the earth from the sky. Blanzardine was turning back toward the great portent that Christ was manifesting at the betrayal, for he well understood it. But he said nothing and quickly lifted his cloak and threw it over Ganelon, saying: "Ride, for evening approaches." The second miracle was that the pine split through its center and fell. The third was that the fountain

went dry, so that no drop of water remained in it. The fourth was that the grass throughout the plain dried up and turned to hay. From that time onward, all the fields on that plain were arid. Marsilius and Blanzardine saw this and whispered to each other, so that Ganelon could not hear: “Perhaps Ganelon’s treachery was caused by Mahound’s will, judging by the great signs that our gods here made manifest to us.” They secretly thought that, if Ganelon were aware of these portents, he would not perform his treachery.

Soon the three lords entered the city. They were greeted with much feasting and joy in the square and went up into Marsilius’ canopy. Then Marsilius sat down on his crown of fine gold and pearls, embroidered with images of Mohammed and precious stones, and covered with embroidery of silken lions. Ganelon was seated next to them, on a golden throne decorated with silver gryphons. As they sat thus, King Blanzardine began to speak of great ventures as follows: “It seems to me that Charles is doing much ill by seeking to destroy Marsilius, who is his friend, and that he should rather assist him against any other man who molests him. And you, Count Ganelon, he has sent her so that Marsilius may kill you. You therefore owe him little love.” Then Ganelon said: “You speak truly, noble king, for he never showed love to any friend or kinsman of his.”

When the tables were spread and the three lords came to dine, there were no more than two serving men. As soon as these servants had brought in the dishes, they left. When the lords had eaten, the rose from the table, and Marsilius took Ganelon by one hand, and Blanzardine took him by the other, and conducted him to a splendid chamber in the palace. Bradamant gave splendid entertainment to Ganelon, and soon each of them went to bed for the time for rest had arrived.

Early in the next morning, Marsilius rose and summoned the twelve lords whose sons were to be sent as hostages. He told them of the whole affair, and of the treachery that Ganelon was planning

against Charles. The barons replied that they agreed, and Marsilius and his barons that night did not go to bed, but had the tribute and hostages made ready that Ganelon was to bring to Charles.

Thus the barons were employed until morning. At dawn, Ganelon rose and Bradamant took him by the hand and drew him apart, saying: "I pray you, noble count, to be mindful of my love when you reach Charles' camp, for I shall always be your lady wherever you may go." Ganelon rendered her a thousand thanks.

Meanwhile the tribute was readied. Ganelon armed from head to foot and mounted his horse. Marsilius provided him with a large retinue to lead the horses and the mules laden with gold. The thirty pages carried their thirty falcons, and the thirty maidens their sperehawks. Ganelon sent all these folk ahead, while he remained in the rear with the twelve hostages. (The oldest of these hostages was nine years old, and the oldest, twelve.) He took leave of Marsilius and the other lords and rode off toward Charles' army.

There, while waiting with his men in the valley, Charles wondered why long Ganelon was tarrying so long, and said to himself: "Ah, please God that Ganelon be planning no treachery, for he is much accustomed to such strange deeds." Roland, too, felt his heart misgive him and thought: "It is nearly seven years now since the angel foretold me that I would still live for seven years, more or less, as God pleased. I see that the end of my life is near, for Ganelon is staying too long with Marsilius. I suspect he may be preparing some plot with intent to kill me."

Meanwhile Ganelon reached Charles' host along with the great tribute. All the French pressed toward Ganelon to behold the great tribute and the twelve hostages, all sons of crowned kings, whom Count Ganelon was leading. Ganelon himself rode at the rear, with the great tribute, until he

arrived at Charles' pavilion, where Roland and the Twelve Paladins⁹² of France were waiting, strongly fearing that Ganelon had acted treacherously. When Ganelon saw Charles and his barons, he dismounted, knelt to Charles, and began to speak: "God save you, your majesty. I have performed you embassy to Marsilius. He is desirous to renounce Mahound and Apollyon and to believe in the faith of Jesus Christ. Moreover, I will tell you that he with his own hands will take the crown from his head and put it on the head of your nephew Roland, making him king of all Spain. In token whereof he sends you six mules laden with fine gold, thirty greyhounds, thirty whippets, thirty coursers, thirty nubile maidens, thirty falcons, and thirty sperhawks, with thirty pages to tend them. He sends all this things by way of three years' tribute."

After a while, Charles said: "Ah, Count Ganelon, do not let yourself be deceived by that crowd of infidels into betraying me!" To this, Ganelon replied; "My lord, God will never allow me to consider any treason by which either you, your majesty, or my son-in-law Roland might come to harm. Do you not see these twelve hostages, all sons of crowned kings? Do you think that Marsilius, if he were unwilling to make peace with you, would have sent twelve hostages of such high rank as these?" He continued; "The first is son to Marsilius; the second, to King Blanzardine; the third to Balugant; the fourth, to the Caliph; the fifth to Algaris of Seville; the sixth, to Grandoino; the seventh, to Mustapha the White; the eighth to Mustapha the Black; the ninth to the Old Man of the Mountain; the tenth, to Turchino of Turcullosa; the eleventh, to King Stramaris; and the twelfth, to Alfaris of Nona. Thus you may readily believe that he desires fair peace and loving friendship with you."

⁹² Paladins: this word is here used for the first time in *I Fatti*; previously the author has spoken of them as the Twelve Peers or Twelve Barons. See note [] to *Aspramonte*, above.

When Charles beheld the twelve hostages, of such high rank, he was utterly reassured and the other barons began to rejoice. But nothing could reassure Count Roland, holy baron that he was, because the angel had told him, when he stayed with Samson the Hermit in Syria, that he would not escape death in seven years' time. Knowing that he was at the end of those seven years, he said in his heart: "Certainly Ganelon must have plotted some treachery to encompass my death." And because of this thought, the Paladin Roland's mind could find no peace.

All the other barons rejoiced heartily. Then Ganelon said to Charles: "Ah, your majesty, I have determined with King Marsilius that you, with your army, should turn back, cross the high range of Lucerna, and proceed from there to Saint-Jean-pied-de-Port. There stay until Marsilius and his nobles arrive in the Vale of Roncesvalles, whither he will proceed unarmed with all his men to take holy baptism, and to bestow his crown, with his own hands, upon your nephew Roland. For my part, I would advise you to make Roland and the Twelve Peers of France, with their three thousand men, stay in the Vale of Roncesvalles and keep good watch. If Marsilius should break his promise, they will be well able to defend the valley, for if we lose it, we will be unable to turn back through the mountains and the rough roads and passes all around us. I would have you know that if Marsilius enters that valley with his army, we will never be able to defeat him so long as we live. Therefore take my advice: leave Roland there, with the Twelve Peers of France and the three thousand knights."

Charles answered: "I should like to leave Roland in the valley with better guard." He at once called for Roland and the Twelve Peers, saying: "Dear nephew, I desire you to stay in the valley with the Twelve Peers of France and those of your banner guard, so that if Marsilius breaks his promise . . .⁹³" Said Roland: "I shall do whatever you please." Then Roland mounted Veliantin and gathered his

⁹³ His promise . . . :The sentence is incomplete in the manuscript.

whole troop in one corner of the camp. Seven crowned kings were among them, as was Desiderius of Pavia, all under his command. Charles and his army moved toward the wide riverbank near Lucerna, the Dane lifting the Oriflamme and riding with it ahead of Charles' host, until they reached the stone bridge. There they fixed the Oriflamme to a high tree, and there Charles' army made camp. Ganelon had left his white horse (it was called Ferrant) behind for his son, so that Marsilius' men, when the cruel combat began, would recognize him, since he remained with Roland.

In the manner that you have heard, Charles left his nephew Roland, and Roland remained in the Vale of Roncesvalles. Since Roland strongly suspected Ganelon's treachery, he said to Walter of Lyon: "Take three thousand knights and go to Savra. Keep good watch there, so that Marsilius may not assail us unexpectedly." So Walter, with three thousand knights, made his way to Savra. He made one of his men climb a tree and said to him: "Keep a good lookout in every direction, especially toward Saragossa. If you see any standards or banners, let me know at once." Thus Roland stayed in the field with the other barons, sighing heavily, for he remembered the words that the angel had spoken to him.

Let us now turn back to Marsilius. He had a great store of victuals made ready, along with five thousand young maidens and a great quantity of good wine, and sent them to Roland's troop at Roncesvalles. When the French saw the food, they all helped themselves freely, here to a woman, here to bread, here to wine and here to meat. All that day Roland's men grew merry with much song and feasting. As the day waned and evening approached, Roland's men were all very tired because of the great quantity of food and drink that they had taken. Sated as they were, and having drunk at will, they took their pleasure with the women sent by Marsilius, and then went to bed and slept so that no man could wake them. When the first hour of sleep had passed, Marsilius readied his forces. He summoned the other eleven barons whose sons he had sent as hostages to Charles

and spoke to them thus: "I require twelve barons to combat the Twelve Peers of France." At once a Saracen rose to his feet. His name was Malzaroth, and he said to Marsilius: "It is my wish that no man but I should offer combat with Roland, and I swear by Mahound that I shall seek him on the field and shall not leave him until I either kill him or bring him to you as a prisoner." Thereupon Marsilius said: "Malzaroth, Malzaroth, if you see Roland in the field, you will wish yourself at home!"

The second who rose was Algaris of Seville, who said: "I know Roland's strength all too well, but I swear by Mahound that I shall never leave the Vale of Roncesvalles until I see Roland dead." The third was Turquin of Turcullosa, a giant of a man, who said: "If I encounter Roland in the field, I shall give him a buffet with my war-club so that he shall never live to fight again." Once more Marsilius said: "Little do you know the prowess of the Paladin Roland. He has fought countless giants and knight of great renown, and has ever been the victor."

The fourth who rose was the Old Man of the Mountain. He carried a shield in which three faceted stones were set. Any knight who looked upon these three stones grew immediately weak and drowsy. To him Marsilius said: "Sir knight, do you believe that Roland can escape so many good knights as are gathered here?" "I say," said the Old Man of the Mountain, "that even if Hector of Troy and Roland were both in the field, I should fight with them." Marsilius said: "Perhaps you are ready to fight because of the good shield that you carry."

One by one all twelve⁹⁴ barons rose, boasting that they would fight Roland or the Twelve Peers of France. Marsilius answered them all by pointing to the valor of Roland and the Twelve Peers. Then Marsilius assembled his army and said: "You, Falsiron, take a hundred thousand knights and ride toward Savra, that fortress built by Charles. Remember your son Ferrau, who died not long ago by

⁹⁴ Twelve: This should read 'eleven'. The author forgets what he remembered a little earlier—that Marsilius himself is one of the twelve.

Count Roland's hands. There begin a great assault and battle with the Christians." Then Marsilius summoned Grandonio of Valnoir and said: "Take another hundred thousand knights and let them assault Roland's host from the other side. As soon as you arrive in the valley, have your men cry out 'Death! Death to Charlemagne and his nephew Roland, and to all the rest of his men!' Then begin a fierce battle, for you shall find all the French and the others sleeping. You will be able to wreak great damage before Roland has time to arm." Grandonio answered: "I shall gladly do so, for love of my nephew Ferrau." When Marsilius has thus ordered all his forces, he said: "I myself shall remain here, with a hundred thousand knights, alongside Blanzardine and the other barons. All of them shall follow at your rear." And Marsilius spoke at great length to hearten his knights for the combat.

Roland's Last Stand

48

When Marsilius had put all his battle plans in order, he led his army out of Saragossa, with many standards and banners flying. Falsiron took his men on the road to Savra. Grandoino rode in another direction, his men closing ranks behind countless pennants and banners. Behind them all rode Marsilius and his host. The day had not yet dawned.

Roland, however, had not gone to sleep, for he was in prayer to Christ. As the Paladin was praying, Falsiron and his army arrived, with a great outcry and noise. Walter of Lyon grew aware of it and called out to his troop, who were all asleep. In a trice all Walter's men were armed, and said to each other: "Alas, noble knight, here we are staying at Savra with three thousand knights, but it would be better to send word of this to Roland's tent." Walter replied: "I shall not do so, for I intend to ride out into battle against the Saracens, after this deadly betrayal by Ganelon." At once Walter charged

out from Savra with his men and hurled himself, ahead of them all, among the Saracens with sword in hand, breaking their ranks with a great outcry, and the three thousand Christians followed hard behind him.

Meanwhile Oliver of Viana had hastily armed and rode to Roland's tent. Roland was already on Veliantin's back, and he said to him: "Ah, noble count, do you not hear the great clash between Walter and the Saracens? What monstrous treachery has Ganelon wrought here! I beg you to sound your horn. Perhaps God will be pleased to make Charles hear it, to let him send succor in this deadly battle." Roland quickly dismounted from Veliantin, tightened its straps and bridles firmly, and then leapt back in the saddle.

Meanwhile, as Walter was among the Saracens, all his men were killed in less than an hour. Ten thousand of the Saracens also died. Walter, wounded all over and covered with Saracen blood, sheathed his sword, seized his saddlebow with both hands, dug his spurs into his horse, and despite the Saracens broke through the battle line and rode to Roland's tent. He told him everything that had happened and of the death of all his companions. Then good Walter fell dead from his horse.

For the second time now, Oliver begged Roland to sound his horn and he refused. As Oliver was standing as you have heard, Grandoino arrived, loudly crying out: "Death! Death to Charlemagne and all Christians!" For the third time now did Oliver urge Roland to sound his horn, but Roland said: "If you are afraid, Oliver, take flight." Oliver answered: "My dear count, I am not saying this because I fear for myself, but only so that we may not be shamed. The damage will be worse if we do not prevent it." As they were thus standing in parley, the pagan Malzaroth came on with all his Saracen troop, crying: "Where are you hiding, Count Roland? Where have you fled?" All this while, Grandonio's troops were bearing down on the Christian forces. More than three thousand

Christians were killed before daybreak and before they could arm, for they were all drowsy after eating too much during the previous evening.

Now day brightened and the Christians hurriedly armed as best they could. Malzaroth was riding hither and thither, shouting: “Death! Death to Count Roland!” and adding: “Have you run away?” Oliver, hearing his voice, said: “Ah, noble count, do you not hear the words of that pagan?” Roland answered: “I have been hearing them all too clearly for some time.” Then Roland hurtled off in Malzaroth’s direction, displaying his checkered red and white⁹⁵ pennant. When Malzaroth saw that checkered flag, he indeed wished he had stayed at home. Now Roland put his lance in rest and charged at Malzaroth, and Malzaroth at him. They struck each other with tremendous force, so that Malzaroth’s lance flew in splinters. But Roland suffered no harm, and the blow he gave was so strong that it overthrew his enemy, horse and all. Roland, seizing Durandel, leapt from Veliantin and went up to Malzaroth. Malzaroth said: “Why should you kill me? It will be scant vengeance for the treachery that Ganelon has set in motion against Charles.” Then Roland struck him a blow that sent his head flying in the middle of the road. Roland instantly leapt upon Veliantin and rode off in the direction of the loudest tumult.

Now Oliver whispered to his horse, “My good steed Brunel, if you do not overtake Roland, I shall take my sword and cut your head off.” With this, Oliver sped off toward the great press of Saracens. Oliver did this because Roland would not sound his horn, and because he had taunted him with being afraid. Oliver at last arrived all by himself amidst the thickest press of Saracens. He rode at a great count with his lance and stretched him and his horse dead in the grass. So far ahead did Oliver speed, with sword in hand, that he advanced more than two bowshots’ lengths among the

⁹⁵ [red and white]: My insertion. Roland’s colors are not mentioned in here, but the word ‘*quartere*’ clearly implies his well-known device. See *Reali* VI.63 *passim*.

Saracens. He saw a count riding under a banner, gave spur to his good horse, and charged him so hard that one slash of his blade split his head down to the teeth and laid him dead on the ground. But now more than three thousand Saracens surrounded Oliver by main force. Brandishing his blade, he struck down one of them.

Meanwhile Roland, who was fighting alongside the Twelve Peers of France and the soldiers of the Church, wielding Durandel, threw himself among the Saracens, none of whom could endure against him. The Twelve Peers of France with the soldiers of the Church followed hard upon him, slaying Saracens on every hillside and valley. Now Roland looked ahead and could not see Oliver. "Ah, God," said Roland, "I fear that, after of the reproof I gave him, he has thrust himself so far forward that he may never come back!" At this, Roland hurled himself like a madman through the greatest press of the Saracens. As he gained a little height, he saw a great crush of Saracens fighting with Oliver. He at once galloped thither brandishing his sword which was all purple with Saracen blood, killing men left and right, and instantly cut a wide path through the Saracens. When Roland saw how well Oliver was fighting, he said: "May God bless you and guard you from death. You are certainly the best knight in the world." Just then Oliver was striking out hard at a knight with Hautclair and cleft him down to the whites of his teeth.

Meanwhile the Saracens, seeing Roland, retreated somewhat and Oliver charged in their midst. Here Marsilius' brother Falsiron attacked the Christians with a hundred thousand Saracens who shouted: "Death! Death to Roland and his men!" Falsiron met one Christian knight head on and threw him dead to the ground. Then he thrust forward, killing all along, first one, then a second, a third and a fourth of those whom met him. Here a mighty battle between Saracens and Christians ensued, amid loud cries and noise. How many heads and hands and feet were here falling upon the field, how many lances flying in splinters! Falsiron fought so fiercely with his sword, that he was completely

covered in Christian blood, wherefore the Christians retreated from his great power. All of them were loudly crying out: "Help us, Oliver, for we have great need of your succor. Save us from the hands of this accursed Saracen!"

Oliver saw how terribly Falsiron was thinning the Christian ranks. He drew back a little and sheathed Hautclair. Then he took up a strong lance and sped in Falsiron's direction. He couched his lance and galloped toward Falsiron as fast as his horse could carry him. His onslaught was so strong that the lance thrust through the midst of Falsiron's shield, pierced his iron mail and all through his body, and hurled him from his horse.

When the Christians saw that Oliver had slain that perfidious Saracen, Falsiron, that all began to cry out: "*Vivat!* Long live our brave lord Oliver!" and charged the Saracens, fighting bravely. In that skirmish in which Falsiron fell, more than ten thousand Saracens were killed. So great was the might of the Christians, that the Saracens began to flee down the valley. Therefore Falsiron's companion, Sinagon, a crowned king and a man of great strength, with twenty thousand Saracens, joined by the fugitives whom he turned back, entered among the Christians. No man could resist Sinagon and those pagans, to whom he cried out as he fought among the Christian ranks: "Fight bravely, Saracens, to avenge the death of your lord Falsiron!"

As Sinagon was offering strong combat, with his blade stained scarlet, the French began to shout: "Help us now, Oliver. Do you not see that faithless Saracen who is making such terrible slaughter among your Christians?" Oliver, hearing them, once more sheathed his sword, took up a huge, iron-tipped lance, and struck Sinagon in the chest, pierced his hauberk, and felled him dead to the ground. Now all the Christians cried out: "Long live brave Oliver!" Oliver rode on, grasped his sword, and fought so that no baron could withstand him.

Now Stramaris and Alfaris, two crowned kings, with twenty-thousand Saracens, gave rein and attacked the Christians from the other side, making the plain resound with such a thunderous noise that they seemed like bears and lions, or like dragons descending from the sky. Roland, with the Twelve Peers of France, at once turned to face these troops. Both side couched great lances and charged each other man to man. At their first encounter, more than ten thousand Saracens, and more than two thousand Christians, fell dead. Roland threw himself in the densest press which (he saw) gladly made way. Any man he struck had no need to await another blow.⁹⁶ As Roland was looking ahead, he caught sight of Alfaris, who was making a terrible slaughter of Christians. At once he seized Durandel and struck him so hard that he cleft his helmet and neck guard down to his shoulders. Meanwhile Richard of Normandy thrust at Stramaris with such force that he pierced his body. He at once fell dead to the ground. When the Christians saw that these two barons were dead, they all charged the Saracen host, crying out: "Death! Death to the cursed Saracen people!"

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Then the Old Man of the Mountain charged, who bore three precious stones in his shield, fashioned by enchantment. Any baron who looked upon them became at once dull and weak by virtue of these stones. He bore down upon the Christians so that all of them fled from him, gladly giving way, and the Old Man pushed still further ahead into the ranks of the soldiers of the Church, killing Christians.

Astolph of England grew aware of this and took in hand a great lance with a sharp iron tip. He turned upon that worst of pagans with lance in rest. As soon as Astolph came near that knight, intending to strike him, he looked upon that shield and at once became like a blind man. Astolph

⁹⁶ The bracketed phrase completes a lacuna in the manuscript.

turned back, scarce knowing where he was, by the strong power of the enchantment. As he was turning, the Old Man hurled at him a javelin that he held in his hands and pierced him from back to front. Feeling himself struck by this very grievous blow, Astolph fell dead from his horse. Yet further did the Old Man of the Mountain advance with sword in hand, striking at the Christians who to a man fled before him.

Then Archbishop Turpin grew aware of this fact and leaned down to pick up a tremendous lance that he belonged to Saracen count whom he had slain. He put the visor over his eyes and closed his eyes so as not to look upon the shield, and galloped ahead as fast as his horse could carry him. As pleased God, he struck the Old Man straight upon his shield, passed through it and the hauberk, and stretched him dead from his horse. As soon as the Old Man lay dead, the Archbishop leapt from his horse, picked up the shield, threw it upon his shoulders and attacked the Saracens.

When those miscreants saw that the Old Man was dead, they all took to flight, with the Archbishop charging them from behind. Roland was looking on and, seeing how well the Archbishop was fighting, cried out: "Ah, Turpin! What a fine knight you are!"

Meanwhile Grandonio with the fifty thousand knights that he had in his command entered the valley and attacked the Christians from one side with sword in hand, crying out arrogantly in a loud voice: "Die, die, accursed Christian soldiers! Never shall you return to France, never conquer the kingdom of Spain! Roland, with all his companions, will be slain." Grandonia sped with lance in hand toward Count Roland, who was slaying a Saracen with every blow, but on the way Grandonio encountered Angelin of Bordeaux and pierced him with his lance from behind. So cruel was that blow that the lance passed all through Angelin's body to strike his brother. At once both these brothers, who had been Roland's companions, fell dead.

Then Roland looked behind him and, seeing these two brothers lie dead, said: “Ah, you strong fiend, what power that knight possesses! I swear to God I will avenge the death of these two knights before he can strike any others.” Roland turned Veliantin toward Grandonio and Grandonio took flight through the field, for he well knew how Roland could strike. Grandonia drew near the great slope whence Marsilius and his host were waiting to descend into the valley to give deadly battle. Then Roland said to his horse: “Ah, good Veliantin, do not let that knight escape who has killed two such fine knights.” At this, Veliantin sped so swiftly that his body scarcely touched the ground and took his way toward Grandonio. Roland quickly struck a backhanded blow, sending Durandel beneath his helmet so that his severed his head and sent it flying to the ground.

Then he looked ahead and caught sight of a banner all of cloth-of-gold with an image of Mahomet. He looked at it carefully and made out three knights beneath that banner. One of the was Marsilius, the second was Samuel, and the third, Blanchardin. Right behind them followed fifty thousand knights, at whose head rode a renegade dog who had renounced the Faith to become one of Marsilius’ bondsmen

Roland rode straight toward that bondsman, who recognized him all too well and cried out: “Alas, do not kill me, noble Count!” Then Roland said: “Show me where Marsilius is and I will spare your life.” The bondsman answered: “He the man who is standing beneath that banner.” Roland at once rode away from the bondsman and rode toward Marsilius. Now Roland cried out, grasping Durandel: “Which of you is Marsilius?” Marsilius answered: “I am he.” Roland said: “I am Roland, the man who must be crowned King of Spain.” Here Marsilius grew utterly bewildered, and his son Samuel pressed in front of his father to defend him from death. Then Roland struck at Samuel with his sword so it split his head down to his shoulders. So heavy was the blow that the sword descended upon Marsilius’ shield and cut through it and through his arm. Marsilius suffered such

great pain that he fell from his horse. When Blanchardin saw that mighty blow, he began to flee through the plain, and Roland pursued him and gave him a blow that struck him on the helmet and split him in two. So immeasurably strong was that blow, that it also split the horse through the middle and made the sword touch the ground.. In this manner Roland made four quarters of one man and one horse, who were divided into four pieces.

50

When Roland realized the great and measureless blow that he had struck, he said: “Ah, Christ, I see all too clearly that all your prophecies will be fulfilled, and that he who does not believe in you is mad indeed. Well do I remember the announcement by your angel, and well do I see that I am now near death.”

While Roland remained as you have heard, he looked up and saw Turpin coming down from the mountain, wounded with five mortal wounds. Turpin, as he descended, looked over the field and saw neither Christian nor Saracen. He sighed heavily, nearly dying for grief, for he thought that Roland, too, was dead. But looking ahead, he saw Roland, who was staying the shade beneath a little tree. Now Turpin spurred his horse and rode until he approached Roland, who was in the saddle near a pine tree, in great pain and torment. The ninth hour had already passed, and it was almost vespers. Now Turpin said to Roland: “How goes it with you, noble lord?” Roland said: “I think my death is near, and I suffer so great a thirst that I can scarcely endure it. I therefore beg you to take my horn and go to the fountain to fetch me some water, for I am nearly spent by my great thirst.”

Eagerly did Turpin then take Roland’s horn and run to the fountain, which was two bowshots nearby. Turpin looked into the fountain and saw it filled with countless arms, heads and legs of men, and its water was as red as blood. So Turpin turned back and told Roland that he could not

have no water, since the fountain was full of dead men's limbs and purple blood. Then Roland said to Turpin: "Go back and fetch me this water, and take no heed of the limbs and the blood, for my thirst is so great that I can scarcely endure it." Once more Turin went back, and as he was on his way, an armed knight appeared to him and said: "Where are you going, Christian?" Turpin answered: "I am going to fetch water, for Roland wants to drink." That knight replied: "Go back whence you came, for Roland is dead and has no need of drink." Hearing this, Turpin quickly turned his horse around, for he desired to see Roland before he died. When Roland saw Turpin returning without water, he said to him: "Why are you not bringing me water?" Turpin answered: "Alas, my lord, a knight whom I encountered told me that you were dead!" Roland said: "Go back once more to the fountain, for that knight you met must be the devil. Do not believe anything he tells you." Once more, for the third time, Turpin turned back, but as he came midway, he dropped dead from his horse.

When Roland saw that Turpin was dead, he dismounted and began to thank God. He ran to the bishop and commended his soul to God. He picked up Turpin's body and carried it beneath a tree, near Oliver's body. Then he rode away, looking for the bodies of the French paladins. Soon he found Astolph, and laid him under the tree near the others. And he did likewise until he had found all the bodies of the dead paladins, and laid them all near each other. Having done this, Roland hurled himself upon these bodies, making great plaints and lamentations over his dead companions.

Now as Roland was feeling such great sorrow, he turned to his horse to mount him. He put his hands on Veglantín's croup and Veglantín drew back and gave a great neigh, raised his fore-hooves and put them upon Count Roland's shoulders, as if he wished to kiss him. Having done this, Veglantín moved backward, and in this manner Roland went following him. He seized him by the bridle, attempting to mount, but Veglantín once more drew back, put his fore-hooves on his

shoulders and for the second time sought to kiss him. “Oh God!” said Roland; “what miracles and omens are these that my horse is showing me, for never in my life did it make such signs to me?” Once again Roland turned and for the third time sought to mount him, and once again the horse put his feet on his shoulders and for the third time kissed Roland. This done, Veglantine drew back and fell dead to the ground.

Now, when Roland saw that his horse was dead, he was struck by great grief, saying: “Now the time has come to fight no more; now all my battles are at an end.” He took up his horn, saying: “Alas, my good horn, who sorrowfully you lose your master, for from this time forth he will sound you no longer.” With this, Roland sat down and said: “I wish Charles to know of my death, and of the treason of the traitor Ganelon, who has sold the twelve Peers of France to Marsilius of Spain.”

Now Roland began to sound his horn with all his strength, even as Charles, who was encamped at Saint-Jean-Pie-de-Mont, was getting ready to return to France, because Ganelon was saying to him: “Charles, Charles, I have come to tell you that we may return to France, since Marsilius is about to be baptized with all his people. Do you not hear the great joy that causes Roland to sound his horn so loudly?”

Meanwhile Roland stopped sounding the horn for a little while, and then he once more took up his horn and sounded it a second time, so loudly that all the horses in Charles’ camp fell to their knees. At this, Charles said: “Ah, God, how little this horn call pleases me, for it seems not to call out in joy, but to announce a cruel battle.” Once more Ganelon said: “Ah, your sacred majesty, know you not that Roland always sounds his horn in celebration?” Charles answered: “Ganelon, Ganelon, I greatly fear that you have committed a heinous treason against us and against your son-in-law Roland.”

At this, Roland blew on his horn for the third time, and so desperately that the upper part of the horn split for more than a palm's length, and a vein in Roland's body burst so that blood issued from his nose and his mouth. And now Roland ceased to blow. Hearing this, Charles commanded Ganelon to be seized and Ganelon was put in chains.

Now that Roland had broken his horn, he seized Durandel and said: "Ah, good sword, how many Saracens and pagans you have forced to take holy baptism! Yet I have no desire that the Saracens should have you in their power." And he seized Durandel in both hands to break it, and struck it mightily against a rock, but the rock fell in splinters.

When Roland saw that he could not shatter the sword in this manner, he placed its point upon the rock, with the pommel against his breast, and thrust his body forward so strongly that the sword bent until the point touched the hilt. Then Roland sat down on the rock, grasped the sword's tip in one hand and the hilt in the other, and put it on his knees to break it. He could very well have broken it in this manner, but a voice spoke from the sky, and it was an angel who said: "Ah, gentle knight, servant of Christ, do not break this sword, for there shall come a Christian knight⁹⁷ who will once again carry it and use it to the great harm of the Saracens. I tell you this in the name of Christ that it pleases Him that you to come up into His heavenly kingdom." When Oliver heard the angel's voice, he instantly fell to the ground and began to pray. He placed Durandel and the horn beneath his arm and raised his face to the East, with his hands lifted to heaven, praying Christ to save his soul from the hands of the devil. Then all the veins of his body burst, and his soul left his body. It was carried to heaven by the angels amid loud singing.

⁹⁷ The fate of Durandel after Roland's death varies from source to source. In the *Chanson de Roland*, Charlemagne bestows the sword on the French champion who battles with Balugant; in other texts, it disappears into a stream or fountain. The Italian romances closest to Andrea bring it into the possession of either Ogier the Dane or William of Orange.

Andrea da Barberino, *LINEAGE OF THE NOBLE HOUSES OF FRANCE*⁹⁸

The Emperor Constantine was of ancient Greek descent⁹⁹, and his father was of noble blood. But the family had declined so far and grown so poor that his grandfather worked as a farmer.

Constantine grew into a valiant man-at-arms in the times of the Emperor Diocletian. He fought for the emperor in Spain, France and England, and was named Emperor of the Transalpine Regions.

During his time, three other emperors were chosen: one was Licinius, his brother-in-law; the second was Constantius¹⁰⁰; and the third, Galerius. But Constantine defeated them in battle; Galerius was slain in Rome and Constantius in Friuli (both he and one of his sons), and Licinius (who had married Constantine's sister Constantia) was slain in Armenia. Constantine reigned as emperor for thirty-one years; he became emperor in the year of Our Lord 310, and lived for sixty-six years in this world. He left behind him three sons.

Constantius Flovus was the first, emperor for nine years, and he begat King Florellus of France and King Floris of Arden.

Floris of Arden begat Leo and Lionel, and a daughter named Uliana. His sons left no heirs.

Florellus of France begat Floravant, and Floravant begat Octavian of the Lion and Gisbert Boldface.

Gisbert, King of France, begat King Michael, and King Michael begat King Angelus, and King Angelus begat King Pepin, and King Pepin begat Charlemagne, Lanfroy and Ulric, but not by the same mother.

⁹⁸ This genealogical chapter presents a textual problem. In the Florentine MS (and the first printed edition) it forms the concluding Chapter 71 of Book Six; in the Bodleian MS it appears as Chapter 10 at the end of Book Five. I have placed it separately here by way of epilogue. For clarification of the main lines of descent, the reader is referred to the "Genealogical Tables".

⁹⁹ Of ancient Greek descent: an error. Constantine was, in fact, born in Dacia (present day Romania).

¹⁰⁰ The name is probably an error for Constantine II, killed in AD 340 by his brother Constantius at the Battle of Aquileia.

Charlemagne begat Charlot, who begat King Louis and many daughters, both legitimate and bastard.

King Louis begat Charles Martel and some daughters.

Charles Martel begat King Lothair and the Duke, along with some daughters, among whom was Sophia, wife of Sanguin.

THIS WAS THE LINEAGE OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF FRANCE.

*

Octavian of the Lion, Floravant's other son, begat Beviset, Guy and Florel. Neither Guy nor Florel left heirs, since their lives were short. Beviset begat Duke Guy of Hampton, and Duke Guy begat Bevis of Hampton. Bevis begat Guy and Sinibald and King William of England, and many others. We make mention of only these three for the sake of the descendants that sprang from them.

King William left no heirs behind him at his death.

Guy begat Clairmont and Bernard. Clairmont had no heirs, but he erected a castle which was called Clairmont.

Bernard begat six legitimate sons and two bastards. The oldest of the legitimate ones was called Duke Aymon of Dordogne, the second Bevis of Agrismont, the third Gerard of Roussillon the fourth Pope Leo, the fifth King Otho of England, and the sixth Miles of Angrant. The two bastards were Ansewig and Eulfloy.

Duke Aymon begat Alard, Reynaud, Guiscard and Richardet. Reynaud is said to have begotten two legitimate sons and two bastards. The first of the former was Yvo, the second Aymonet¹⁰¹. The bastards were these: Guy the Wild and Dudonel of Mombello.

Bevis of Agrismont begat Maugris and Vivian of the Mace.

¹⁰¹ Yvo . . . Aymonet: orig. *Ivone* . . . *Amonetto*

Gerard of Roussillon begat Huon and Answig the Strong.

King Otho of England begat Astolph, and Astolph begat Otho of Altieri, a valiant man but a bastard.

Miles of Angrant begat Roland the Paladin, Senator of Rome, Marquis of Brava, Count of Angrant, and Gonfaliere of Holy Church, Falcon of Christendom.

THIS RACE IS CALLED THE HOUSE OF CLAIRMONT.

*

It is recorded that Answig the Strong, son of Gerard of Roussillon, begat Count Hewellyn of the Gauntlet, who was also called Hewellyn of Walfried, and who begat Bosolin of Walfried. This Bosolin begat Raymond of Velagna and Rainier of the Lion. Raymond begat Raymondin and Guerchier. These also are of the House of Clairmont.

Sinibald, the second son of Bevis of Hampton, begat Guerrin, and Guerrin begat four sons: the first was Gerard of the Thicket, and others were Bernard of Trismons, Miles the German and Guerrin of Vienne. He was called Guerrin because he was born after his father's death.

Gerard of the Thicket begat Rainier of Vienna, Arnaut of Bellandes, Guiscard of Apulia, and Miles of Taranto.

Bernard begat Aymeric of Narbonne, and Aymeric begat Bernard of Busbante, Bevis of Gromansis, Arnaut of the Gironde, Guerrin of Ansedonia, Namier of Spain, William of Orange, Ghibellin of Lanfernac, and a daughter.

Bernard, the oldest son of Aymeric, begat Bertram and Timonier.

Bevis begat Guy and Richard.

Guy begat poor Aveggiù.

Arnaut, the third son of Aymeric, begat Guy and Vivian Hawk-Face

Guerrin, the fourth son of Aymeric, began Vivian of the Silver and Guiscard the Proud.

Namier, the fifth son of Aymeric, begat Walter and Berlingher and three others not worth mentioning.

William, the sixth son of Aymeric, left no heirs nor ever had children.

Ghibellin, the seventh son of Aymeric, begat ten sons: Nameringuet, Miles, Anternac, Ferrin, Rainier, Hewett, Dennis, Alorin, Parisin and Artiald.

Miles, the third son of Guerrin of Burgundy, called Miles the German, begat Lord Clare and Lord Bussy.

Guerrin's fourth son, called Guerrin like his father, begat Huon, and Huon begat Bussy of Auvergne, and Bussy begat Count Huon, who went down to Hell at the command of Charles Martel and returned alive.¹⁰²

THIS RACE IS CALLED THE HOUSE OF MONGRANA.

*

As for the Royal House of Britain, after the death of King Arthur, England was ruled by Britonant and King Cordonas.

Cordonas begat Angelier, Angelier begat Salamier, Salamier begat Codonas, Codonas begat Salard, Salard begat Eripes, Eripes begat Ansewig, Ansewig begat King Solomon and Eripes, Solomon begat Lyonesse (who, however, was called Achiron, because of his skill in archery). Eripes begat Answig, who became king of Spain. This Answig begat Johans and Guy, as well as a bastard named Thierry.

¹⁰² His deeds furnish the plot of Andrea's eponymous romance.

THIS WAS THE HOUSE OF BRITAIN, AND THEY WERE VALIANT PRINCES AND LORDS.

*

Of Theobald of Lima and the daughter of King Floris of Arden was born Hewett, and Hewett begat Sinibald of Castle Saint-Simon.

Sinibald begat Thierry, and Thierry begat Sicurans, King of Hungary (many called him Coverans, but his true name was Sicurans). He begat King Philip, Hewett and Manabello. King Philip begat Philip II and Bertha of the Great Foot. But Bertha was the first-born.

Hewett begat Thierry of Arden, Morand of Riviera, Walfred of Mountjoy and Bernard of Mont-Flery

THIS IS CALLED THE HOUSE OF SAINT-SIMON.

*

THE HOUSE OF CANTERBURY begins with Gilfroy of Sauterne who fought alongside Flovus in the Battle of Germany, as is related in Chapter 25 of the First Book.

Gilfroy of Sauterne begat Thierry the Gentle; Thierry begat Richard of Canterbury, and Richard begat Minon, and Minon begat Richard of Saint Michael's Field.

*

Constantine's father Constantius had another son before Constantine whose name was Licinius like his son-in-law, and this Licinius begat Sanguin, and Sanguin begat Maganza and another Sanguin, and that Sanguin begat Aldwig, Aldwig begat Rainier, Rainier begat Dudon of Maganza, Dudon begat Gailon, and Gailon begat Richard of Norgala, William of Provence, Pinard, Ptolemy, Gryphon of Poitiers and Guinam of Bayonne. Gryphon begat Ganelon of Poitiers and many others. One

need not make a long and tedious list of them, since Ganelon's five sons had more than sixty sons, both legitimate and bastard.

THESE ARE CALLED THE HOUSE OF MAGANZA

AND THEY MULTIPLIED AS BAD WEEDS MUST NEEDS MULTIPLY.

AMEN.