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THE
CHURCH DELIVERED

EPIC POEM,
IN TWENTY-FOUR BOOKS.

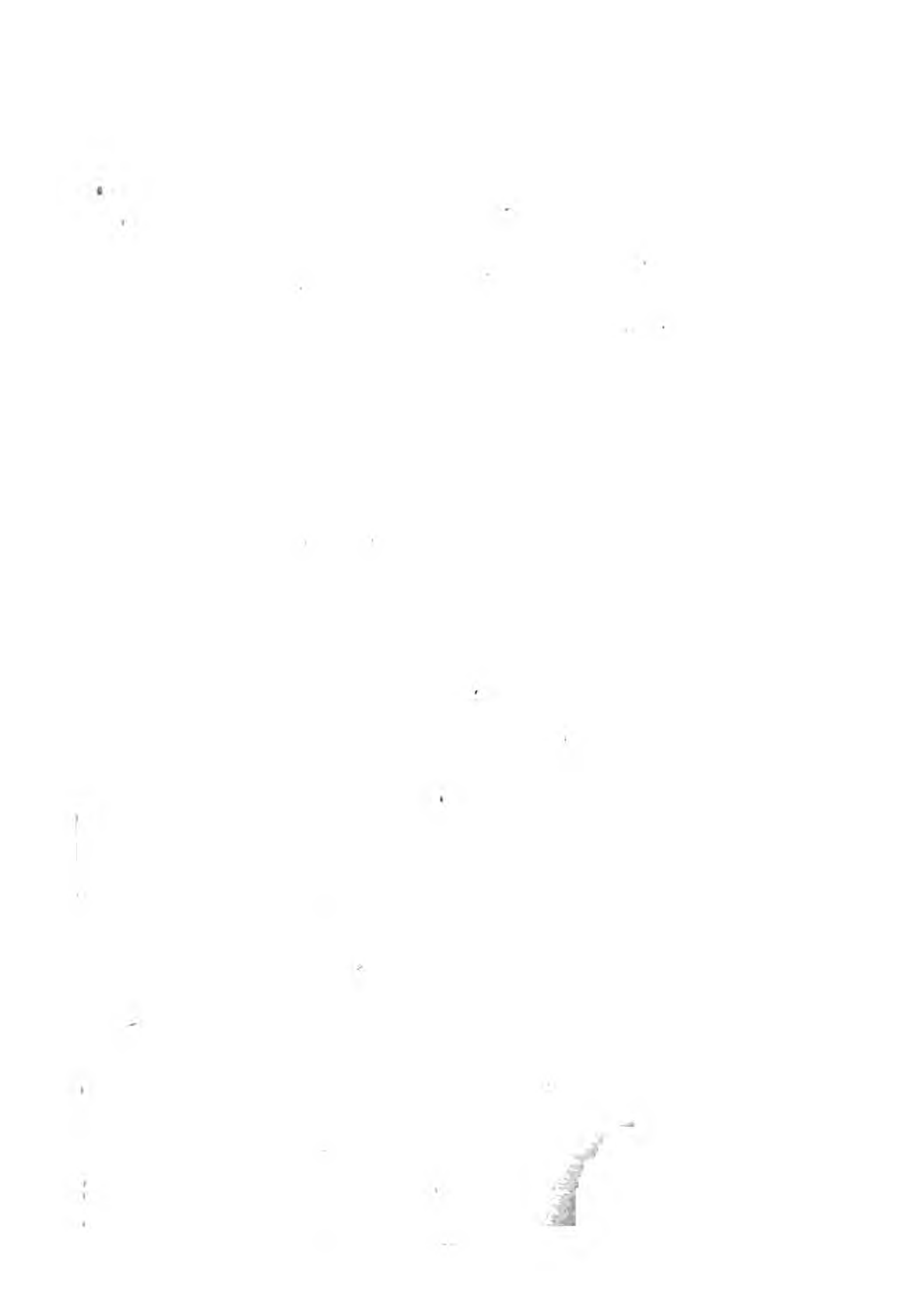
BY
LOUIS BONAPARTE
Of the Institute of France, &c.

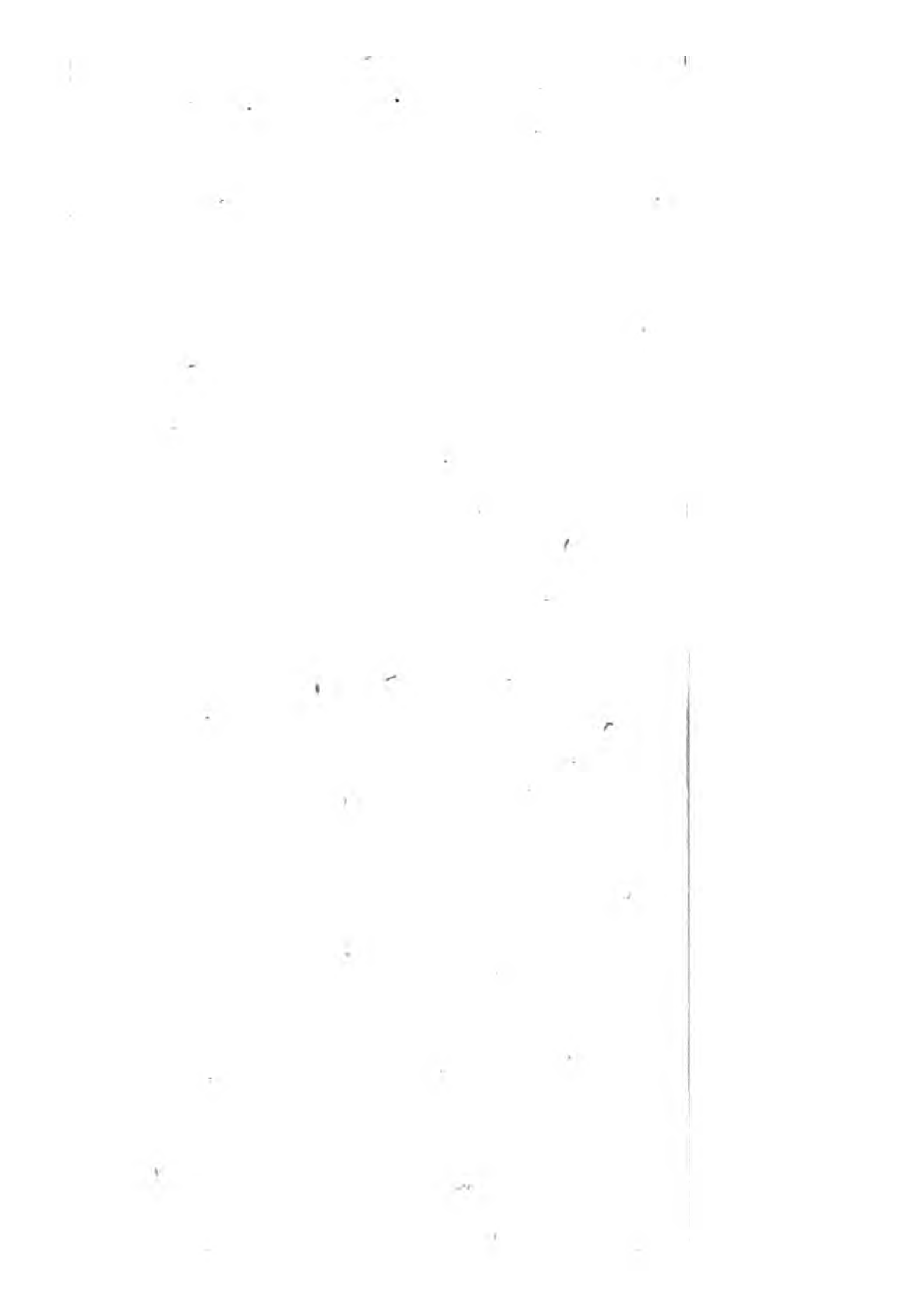
TRANSLATED
BY THE REV. S. BUTLER, D. D.
AND
REV. FRANCIS HODGSON, A. M.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:
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Stephen Emmons. 1826

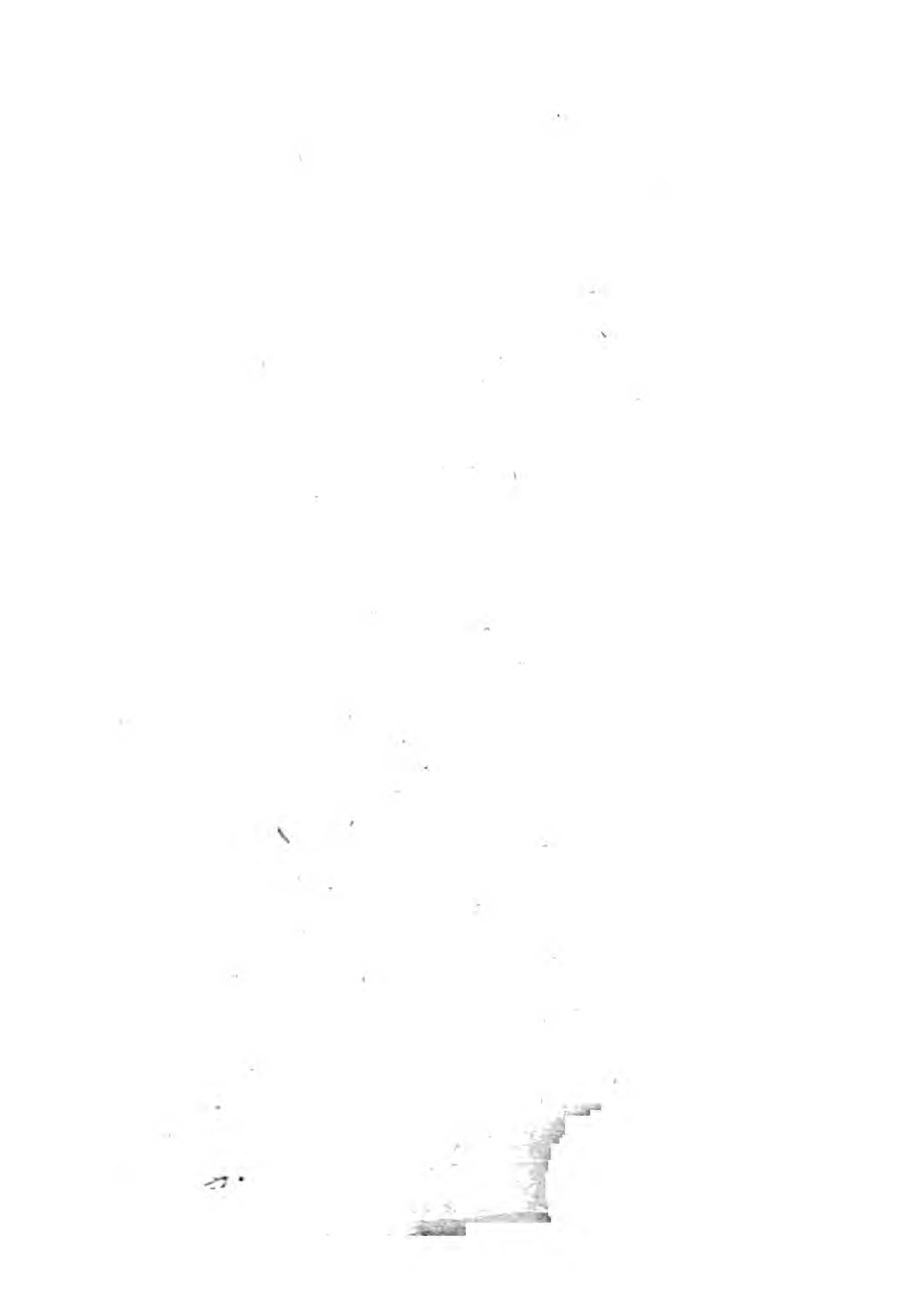
CHARLEMAGNE;
OR THE
CHURCH DELIVERED.

VOL. I.

A









Lucien Bonaparte
Membre de l'Institut de France

CHARLEMAGNE;
OR THE
CHURCH DELIVERED.

AN
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IN TWENTY-FOUR BOOKS.

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TO HIS HOLINESS
POPE PIUS VII.

MOST HOLY FATHER,

AFTER four years of captivity, Providence again brings me to the feet of your holiness. During these years of trial, I have completed the long poem, the first cantos of which you deigned to receive so graciously. My residence at Rome for so many years has made my sentiments sufficiently known to your holiness; your remembrance of us, and your inestimable letters, supported myself, my wife, and children, in adversity, even when our hope of seeing you again seemed lost forever.

Restored now to our asylum, under your paternal protection, what do we not owe you? By allowing me to speak of the kindnesses with which you have loaded us for ten years, and by deigning to receive this dedication, your holiness adds, if possible, to my debt of gratitude. Permit me, then, holy father, to renew my vows of fidelity and devotion, which can only end with my life, and to kiss your feet, while I fervently implore your holy benediction.

Your holiness's

Most faithful and devoted

Son in Jesus Christ,

LUCIEN BONAPARTE.

ROME, May, 1814.

Restored

A 2

1871



PREFACE.

HISTORICAL FACTS ON WHICH THE POEM OF CHARLEMAGNE IS FOUNDED.

1st. **I**N the eighth century the emperors of Constantinople had lost nearly the whole of their power in Italy, where they continued to possess but a few provinces at the extremity of the kingdom of Naples. King Luitprand had deprived them of the Pentapolis, and of the Exarchate of Ravenna. The Exarchate of Ravenna consisted of several cities, of which Ravenna, Adria, Ferrara, Imola, Faenza, Forlì, &c. were the principal. The Pentapolis comprehended Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Senecaglia, and Ancona. In this revolution the city of Rome, finding itself happy under the paternal authority of its pontiffs, refused to acknowledge any other sovereign. But the Lombards pretended to inherit, by right of conquest from the emperors of Constantinople, and laid claim to Rome. Pope Gregory III, requested the assistance of Charles Martel, prince and duke of the Franks, who, having destroyed the Saracens at the battle of Poitiers, was looked upon as the champion of Christianity. The menaces of Charles Martel put a stop to the enterprises of Luitprand.

2d. Astolph, successor to Luitprand, renewed his pretensions to Rome, and laid siege to it. Pope Stephen III, sought an asylum with Pepin, the son of Charles Martel, and king of France. Pepin assembled a parliament, in which war was declared against the Lombards. He twice passed the Alps in person, and defeated Astolph: he then made that celebrated donation to the church of St. Peter, of the Exarchate and the Pentapolis, which he had just compelled the Lombards to give up to him. Thus the temporal power of the popes, which sprang from the free suffrage of the Romans, was aggrandised and confirmed by Charles Martel and Pepin.

3d. On the death of Astolph, the pope and the king of France united, in order to procure the crown of Lombardy for Dair, hoping that the new king, being indebted to them for

his elevation, would suffer the Church and Italy to remain in peace. No sooner, however, had Pepin closed his eyes, than Didier thought the moment favourable for reviving the pretensions of Lombardy to Rome. He had already made every preparation for a war more terrible than any which had gone before. The Greek emperors Leo IV, and Constantine his son, had successively embraced the heresy of the iconoclasts, or image-breakers, and had been excommunicated from the bosom of the church. Didier entered into alliance with Constantine, and gave two of his daughters in marriage, one to Tassillon, duke of Bavaria, the most powerful prince in Germany, and the other to Ezelin, duke of Benevent and Salerno, who reigned over the greatest part of those provinces which now constitute the kingdom of Naples. Nothing further remained in order to insure his complete success against Rome, than to close the passage of the Alps against the French, who had been accustomed to traverse them, in their expeditions to assist the Holy See. Didier hoped to attain this object by allying himself with Charlemagne, the eldest son of Pepin, and he offered to this prince Hermengarde, or Armelia, his third daughter. Charles accepted this offer, and, in order to marry Hermengarde, abandoned his lawful wife, whom he had taken during the lifetime of his father. Pope Adrian condemned this scandalous conduct: but Charles persisted in his error, and Didier, believing himself sure of the neutrality of France, hastened his preparations against Rome, and invaded the duchy of Spoleto. At this period the action of the poem commences, being one year after the marriage of Didier's daughter.

4th. Charles Martel and Pepin were continually embroiled with the princes of Aquitain, who, being descendants of Clovis by Aribert, the brother of king Dagobert, had preserved some pretensions to the crown. Eudes, duke of Aquitain, had originally been engaged in warfare against the Saracens, but eventually united himself with them, by giving his daughter Lampagie to one of their chiefs, named Munuzza. Eudes left three sons, Hunaud, duke of Aquitain, Hattan, count of Poitiers, and Remistan, duke of Gascony. Hunaud having been conquered by Charles Martel, assumed the monastic habit, and left his province to his son Vaiffre. The latter, in conjunction with his uncle Remistan, availed himself of every opportunity, when Pepin was engaged in distant expeditions, to make irruptions upon the territories of France. Four times had Pepin,

hastening from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, repulsed Vaifre, and deprived him of part of his dominions. Remistan abandoned his nephew, and submitted to Pepin, who gave him back Gascony. But Vaifre revolting a fifth time, Remistan again entered into league with him. Pepin, irritated at this obstinate perverseness, took Remistan prisoner, on whom he inflicted capital punishment for his breach of faith, defeated Vaifre in a great battle, and drove him from city to city. At length the Aquitanians, wearied with the war, deposed their duke, and Aquitain was united to France. Loup or Theodebert, the son of Remistan, and Gaifre, the son of Vaifre, by doing homage, preserved a part of their provinces, but still nourished invincible hatred against the sons of Pepin. Being masters of the passage of the Pyrenees, and frequently in alliance with the Saracens, they kept up an intelligence with all the enemies of France. It is of these two princes that mention is made in the poem. The famous Roland perished at Roncesvalles, through their treachery.

5th. Pepin, at his decease, had divided his dominions between his two sons, Charles and Carloman. The two brothers united their troops, in order to quell the new troubles which had arisen in Aquitain: but their misunderstanding broke out on this occasion. Carloman withdrew from the field of battle; the discord between the two brothers seemed ready to blaze out and involve all France, when Carloman died in 771, in the flower of his age, leaving two infant children, Siagre and Pepin, under the guardianship of their mother Gerberge, or Laurentia. The nobles of Austrasia, dreading a minority, offered the crown to Charles, who accepted it to the detriment of his nephews. The widow of Carloman, seeing her sons dethroned, became alarmed for their safety, and fled with them into Italy. Siagre, the eldest of them, was afterwards bishop of Nice, and it is supposed that Pepin likewise was invested with ecclesiastical dignities.

6th. In the division which Pepin made of his dominions between his two sons, Charles and Carloman, it is not exactly known whether Charles was king of Neustria, or of Austrasia. Eginhard, and the continuator of Fredegarius, both contemporary writers, formally contradict each other on this point. I have embraced the opinion of Eginhard, who gives Neustria to Charles, and Austrasia to Carloman: but it is evident that these two denominations did not bear the same precise signification

as under the first race. Charles, under the title of king of Neustria, possessed all the provinces to the north of the Loire, whilst Carloman had all those to the south, under the title of king of Austrasia. Carloman doubtless had Soissons, where he was crowned, and some cantons of Neustria, in his division; as Charles likewise had, on his side, some cantons in Austrasia and in Aquitain, where he carried on a war against the revolvers during the life of Carloman. But these mingled possessions did not prevent the two brothers from taking their titles according to the greater number of provinces which constituted their divisions. This question, however, is of little importance, as Carloman died three years after, and Charles then reunited the whole monarchy.

In order to gain more ample information of the events which preceded and accompanied the destruction of the kingdom of the Lombards, it is necessary to have recourse to the history of Charlemagne. It scarcely need be observed, that the epic is not subservient to chronological order. I have interwoven in my composition the wars of Charles against the Huns and the Saxons, though they did not take place till several years after. I have also blended into one the two expeditions of Charles into Italy, though according to history there was an interval of twenty-six years between them. The first of these expeditions ended with the ruin of the Lombards, and the second with the revival of the western empire.

The decision of Boileau, when he pronounces the Christian religion to be little adapted to epic poetry, has always appeared to me unjust, and more worthy the author of the Satires, than of the Art of Poetry; for it is more likely to discourage poets, than to light them on the road which they ought to pursue. For the very reason that pagan mythology is more varied, it seems to me to be less dramatic, and less adapted to the epic, than the true religion. Light poetry is fond of a multiplicity of accessories, but exalted poetry, the object of which is to elevate man above himself, ought to prefer the unity of an affecting and sublime moral, to the frivolous variety of certain ornaments and allegories, which frequently derive their existence from the suppositions of commentators.

The critic Clement, in his seventh letter to Voltaire, has some profound reflections on the Christian epic, which we seek in vain in Boileau. "Without doubt," he observes, "the

intervention of God, of angels, and saints, ought not to be employed to enliven our poetry, as Homer employed Mars, Juno, Vulcan, Venus and her cestus. The marvellous of our religion, which tends only to grandeur and sublimity, ought not to be prodigally introduced, and indeed cannot be employed with too much caution and judgment; but in our system, as in that of the ancients, the marvellous ought to animate the whole poem: the poet who calls himself inspired, and who ought to be so, should be seized, if I may so express it, with a divine spirit like the ancient prophets; so that he may read in Heaven the decrees of Providence; may see the chain which links the events of this world to the divine will, and the supernatural agents which direct and influence mankind. The entire action of the poem ought to be connected with the marvellous: so that Heaven should decree, and mankind conduct themselves accordingly. From the beginning to the end we should see the supernatural agents give an impulse to the actors, and man every where under the direction of God." The Pagans had not this moral greatness, this unity of intervention; and in this respect the epic suits better with our religion than with their mythology. Homer, and all his imitators, had their gods for all the virtues and all the vices, and have availed themselves of this multitude of deities to embellish, and often to enliven, the action of their poems. This was the best advantage which the Pagans could derive from their mythology, but we need not envy them their motley deities. Let us reject the cold timidity of those scholars who would confine our epic machinery to Discord, Love, Superstition, or Religion. To contend with the ancients, let us not reduce our miraculous agents to the level of human nature, but raise our heroes to the divine; an object, doubtless, far more worthy great and exalted poetry, and which Cicero reproaches Homer for not having attained. Let us make use of our marvellous to dignify the action, and animate it with a divine fire; but let us reject all fairy dreams, and all details unworthy the majesty of our religion. Boileau has well observed, that gaudy ornaments suit not our marvellous, and that misplaced details may give it the air of fable. But surely he has forgotten our sacred books and Athaliah, when he determined the miraculous in our religion to be unpoetical. Faithful to his natural satire, he would only see foolish poets, who furnished him with materials for ridicule; and nothing but that infatuation could have prevented him from exploring, with his

unerring taste and penetrating judgment, the question of the fitness of the Christian miraculots for epic poetry. To what then must we attribute the superiority of the Pagan above the modern epic? The superior beauties of the Pagan epic consist neither in the wranglings of Olympus, nor in that sublimity of arithmetic, which, in order to express the rapidity of the gods, or their voice or stature, compares them by multiplication with the rapidity, the voice, or stature of men; nor in the stratagems and petty attentions of the gods against the warriors whom they oppose, or for those whom they favour. The admirable beauties of Virgil, and especially of Homer, consist in sublime traits taken from nature, in finished pictures, in public and private misfortunes, in virtues, vices, crimes, and grand images; to present all which in the most striking and advantageous light, the unity of our marvellous seems to offer more resources than a mythology full of immoralities and contradictions. The advantage the ancients have over us is only in their poetry, and without doubt this advantage will be long, perhaps forever, in favour of the nation which has produced Homer, that mighty genius, who, even to those who can only read him in translations, leaves all other poets so far behind him.

I have preferred stanzas to the ordinary versification, because the epic, like the ode, supposes the poet to sing; and nothing appeared to me so contrary to this supposition as the uniformity of our Alexandrine verse. This metre, which is so well suited to our tragedies, because tragedy is declamatory, appears to me hostile to the ode and epic, because these are lyrical. Almost all the Italian poets have preferred cross rhymes to simple versification, although their language offers more *inversions* and more melody than our own. Dante, Tasso, and Ariosto, have compensated by their *terza* and *octava rima* for the inferiority of the Italian, compared with the Greek and Latin prosody. These fine geniuses perceived, that not having the same variety, nor the same precision in their long and short syllables, they must invent another metre in order to contend with Homer and Virgil. The modern poets, who, forgetting the different genius of the languages, have wished to subject the epic to simple versification, have contended with too much disadvantage against the ancients. True it is that Homer and Virgil have written in simple verse, but the uniformity of simple Greek and Latin verse is only apparent; the different combinations of long and short vary every verse, and there results

from this variety a melody of which our simple verses are not susceptible. Thus our Alexandrines resemble to the eye the heroic verse of the ancients, but to the ear the case is quite different. But since it is the ear, and not the eye, which must be satisfied, it is better to change the form of the lines, and endeavour to reach the metrical harmony of the ancients. To effect this, we must supply our want of Greek and Latin prosody from other resources, such as rhyme and regular stanzas, which by their repose at marked intervals, form an agreeable cadence to the ear. The poets who have had the art to create these new resources, in defect of long and short syllables, have produced the same effect with a less powerful instrument, and the octaves of Tasso are sung in Italy as the Iliad and Odyssey were sung in Greece. But why is our heroic verse so monotonous? Because it has neither a varied cadence in the syllables, like the Greek and Latin, nor an uniform cadence in the regularity of its repose, like the Italian octaves: deprived of the harmony resulting from either of these, it no longer appears inspired, or composed for the lyre; and the epic, which speaks instead of singing, must surely lose a great part of its charms.

I cannot finish this article without speaking of the system which some wish to raise in favour of our prosody. The abbes d'Olivet, le Batteaux, and Mr. Domergue, resting on the authority of Theodore Beza, and reviving the principles of our ancient poets Jodelle, Baif, &c. have endeavoured to fix rules for distinguishing our long and short syllables, and entreat us to continue their researches. Heaven defend us from them! For the result of their labours, could they ever arrive at the end of them, would be to give us a new poetical language, according to which Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire, would become barbarians. Grammarians, when they follow the traces of our great poets, ought to employ themselves in clearing the doubts which remain in our grammars, instead of bewildering themselves in a Greco-latin system of accentuated syllables. Our language is too rich in chefs-d'œuvres for us to wish it changed, rather may it become perfect. Let us leave to the ancients their prosody, and let us endeavour to supply the want of it by that which is conformable to the genius of our language.

I tried every sort of stanza before I fixed on any, and I have adopted that which appeared to me to unite most advantageously a division favourable to harmony, with the regular uniformity necessary in great works. The octaves of Tasso and Ari-

osto would be too short, and their triple rhymes too laborious, in a language where rhyme is already loaded with too many fetters. As it was necessary either to terminate all my strophes by the same kind of rhymes, or to commence them all by rhymes of the same kind as the last verse of the strophe preceding, I have preferred this last method, because a variety in the cadence of the strophes appeared to me essential.

As to the orthography, I have scrupulously followed that of the last Dictionary of the Academy, except in two instances. 1. The terminations in *ais*, instead of *ois*, which Voltaire introduced, appear to me to be now sanctioned by custom. 2. In the terminations in *ant* and *ent* I have preserved the *t*, because it appeared to me reasonable that the words which had the *t* in the singular should preserve it in the plural.

This work was commenced ten years since on the mountains of Tusculum, near Rome, where I had retired after having quitted public affairs; it was continued at Malta, and finished in England during my captivity.

PREFACE

OF THE TRANSLATOR.

THE circumstances under which the translation of Charlemagne has been completed, render it necessary that I should trouble the reader with a short explanation.

It was originally intended that the work should have been translated, subject to my inspection and revisal, by the rev. John Maunde, whom I introduced to the prince of Canino, at Christmas 1811, for that purpose. But my amiable and lamented friend, who had an intimate knowledge of the French language, and a considerable share of poetical feeling, had translated, though not perfectly finished, only six cantos, when, in April 1813, he fell a victim to that lingering disease, the seeds of which he probably bore in his constitution even before the commencement of his labours, and the effects of which contributed to impair his spirits, and materially retard the progress of the work. He had indeed, even in the last stage of his malady, attempted the seventh and eighth cantos, but left them in such a state as to be useless to his successors, which, in fact, they would have been to himself. They were his last efforts; the faint struggles of a generous mind sinking under bodily and mental suffering.

During the lifetime of Mr. Maunde, with a view to expedite the progress of the translation, and to express my sense of the merits of the original, I had, at the request of the prince of Canino, undertaken and completed the translation of two cantos, the 18th and 19th. After his death, the engagements which originally prevented my undertaking the entire translation, precluded also my completion of it, and I was so happy as to introduce Mr. Hodgson, the well known translator of Juvenal, to be my coadjutor in the work; undertaking myself to revise and complete the six cantos translated by Mr. Maunde, and to translate the 7th, 8th, 15th, and 16th, in addition to the two I had already translated. Thus I became responsible for one half

xvi PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR.

the work, and my much respected friend and coadjutor Mr. Hodgson for the other.

I soon found, however, that the numerous alterations made, and continually making, by the author in the original (among which was the addition of no less than 160 lines, forming the opening of the third canto), and the perpetual variation of lines and half lines, added to the corrections necessary for the improvement of Mr. Maunde's translation, had occasioned me, in fact, a much more laborious and unpleasant task than if I had undertaken the translation of the six first cantos anew. And the consequence of these alterations has been that I have not found it possible to preserve a tenth, perhaps I might safely say a twentieth part, of the original translation. Having made this statement, I have only to beg the indulgence of the public for the imperfections which still exist.

I wish to remark, however, that had I found leisure to undertake the translation originally, I should have made Dryden my model rather than Pope. For particular reasons I wished Mr. Maunde to follow the latter, and having translated two cantos in his lifetime, when I calculated on his concluding the rest, I did not think it convenient to change my style in the remainder of the cantos which have fallen to my share. I have also, in compliance with the wish of the author, and my own persuasion that no deviation from the original could be an improvement, sometimes sacrificed embellishment to fidelity, and have endeavoured to present the English reader with as close a version as possible of the original. Though translated into the common English heroic measure, I have printed the translation in stanzas, like the original; thinking that what was lost in the exact uniformity of the page would be more than compensated by what was gained in facility of reference, and wishing to give every candid critic the opportunity of comparing the French and English with the least trouble and inconvenience. To such judges I submit the work, certainly not without anxiety, but with the hope that they will excuse some defects of the translation from the circumstances under which it was undertaken, and forget many more in the beauties of the original.

SAMUEL BUTLER.

Shrewsbury, January 23, 1815.

The following catalogue is subjoined by the translator, which as it exhibits at one view the principal characters mentioned in the poem, will probably be found useful to the reader.

Charlemagne, son of Pepin, grandson of Charles Martel, king of the Franks.

Principal paladins or knights of Charlemagne.

Roland, son of Milo and a sister of Charlemagne, count of Angers. The Orlando of Ariosto.

Oliver and Roger, friends of Roland.

Isolier, chief of Corsica, friend of Carloman, and protector of his widow and children.

Egbert, the heptarch of Wessex, afterwards the first king of England.

Montclar, count of Narbonne, husband of Orinda.

Alphonso, prince of Asturia, a descendant of Pelagius.

Egobard, count of Poitiers, grand-master of the knights.

Eginhard, in love with Emma, daughter of Charlemagne.

Ogier, a Danish knight.

Fulrad.

Henry, duke of Friuli.

Sigeric.

Theuderic.

Thierri, lord of Isere.

Godfrey, count of Bouillon, ancestor of the celebrated Godfrey of Tasso.

Archambaud.

Montmorenci, three brothers, Henry, Lysoi, Aimon.

Zeno, exiled doge of Venice.

Pisano, friend of Zeno.

Visige, a knight of Aquitain.

Isambard.

Richard, son of Aimon of Clermont.

xviii **PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS**

Renaud, brother of Richard.

Ranier.

Baldwin.

Childebert.

Geilon, a knight of Neustria.

Angibert, also celebrated as a poet.

Clothaire, a knight of Bretagne.

Grimoald, brother of Egobard.

Berenger.

Raimond.

Gui-dumas.

Omfroi.

(The rest being of less note, and only incidentally mentioned,
are omitted.)

Other characters introduced.

Adrian I, the pope.

Adelard, nephew of Charles Martel, abbot of Mount-Cassin.

Carloman the elder, son of Charles Martel, a monk of Mount-Cassin.

Siagre, **Pepin**, children, sons of Carloman the younger (the deceased brother of Charlemagne) and Laurentia.

Heral, king of the Suevi, father of Adelinde the wife of Charlemagne.

Utric, son of Heral, brother of Adelinde.

Mainfroi, count of Provence, father of Laurentia the widow of Carloman.

Melanic, lord of Sere.

Wilfrid, bishop of Spoleto.

Rachis, a former king of the Lombards, who resigned his crown and became a monk of Mount-Cassin.

Dragon, prince of Friuli, also a monk of Mount-Cassin.

Ruffinus, count of Tusculum.

Arpinus, a knight of Tusculum, friend of Ruffinus.

Colonna and **Ursino**, Roman knights.

Gonsalvo, duke of Toscanella, minister of pope Adrian.

Maximus, a knight of Spoleto.

Female characters introduced.

Adelinde, daughter of Heral, king of the Suevi, the lawful wife of Charlemagne, but repudiated by him at the opening of the poem, for Armelia, daughter of Didier, king of the Lombards.

Emma, daughter of Charlemagne and Adelinde.

Laurentia, daughter of Mainfroi, count of Provence, widow of Carloman, the younger brother of Charlemagne, and mother of Siagre and Pepin.

Gisella, sister to Charlemagne, betrothed to Adalgise, son of Didier.

Orinda, sister and heiress of Matran, the Moorish chief of Narbonne.

The following characters are in hostility against Charlemagne.

Didier, king of the Lombards, elected through the interest of Pepin and pope Stephen III.

Adalgise, son of Didier, in love with Gisella, sister of Charlemagne.

Witikind, king of the Saxons.

Rodmir, son of Witikind, betrothed to Armelia, daughter of Didier, but disappointed in his marriage by her union with Charlemagne.

Longin, titular exarch of Ravenna, ambassador from Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the son of Leo IV and Irene, emperor of the east, to Didier.

Almanzor, son of the viceroy Abderama, chief of Biscay, and leader of the Moorish army.

Marsilius, descendant of Mahomet and Fatima, Moorish chief of Arragon.

Theodebert, duke of Gascony.

Itier, minister of Theodebert.

Gaiffre, duke of Aquitain, a descendant of Clovis.

Tassillon, duke of Bavaria, married to Alfride a sister of Armelia.

Ezelin, duke of Salernum and Beneventum, married to another sister of Armelia.

Theudon, king of the Huns.

Timantius and *Aripert*, counsellors of Didier.

Gannelon, count of Mentz.

Ormez, arch-druid, and priest of Irmensul, the god of the Saxons and northern tribes.

Abderama, sole survivor of the race of Ommius, and founder of the Califat of the West at Cordova.

Romuald, usurper of Ravenna.

Albion, a Saxon knight, so called from his victories in England.

Edgar, prince of Scandinavia.

xx **PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS, &c.**

Meledin, a Marcomannic knight.

Eric and *Altimer*, Hunnish chiefs.

(A few minor characters are omitted.)

Female characters introduced.

Armelia, daughter of Didier, espoused by Charlemagne to the prejudice of his lawful wife, at the commencement of the poem.

Alfride, sister to Armelia, married to Tassillon, duke of Bavaria.

Eudisia, daughter of Constantine, emperor of the east.

Characters mentioned in the poem, but dead before its commencement.

Charles Martel, the famous duke and prince of France, father of Pepin.

Pepin, king of France, father of Charlemagne and Carloman.
Carloman, younger brother of Charlemagne, king of Austrasia, married to *Laurentia*, daughter of Mainfroi, count of Nice, by whom he left two sons, who were carried by their mother to Rome for protection, when Charlemagne accepted the crown of Austrasia to their prejudice.

Abderama, viceroy of Spain, conquered by Charles Martel at the famous battle of Tours.

Alboin, founder of the kingdom of the Lombards.

Astolph, king of the Lombards, succeeded by Didier.

Remistan, father of Theodebert, duke of Gascony, beheaded for treason.

The other persons mentioned in the poem, either occupy an inferior place, or are only incidentally introduced, so as to supersede the necessity of recapitulating them in this catalogue. The miraculous agency is conducted by the Virgin and ministry of saints and angels on the one hand, and by Satan, under the character of Irmensul, the god of the Saxons and northern hordes, and the artifices of his priests, especially the arch-druid Ormez, on the other.

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO I.

**FROM THE FIRST DAY TILL THE MIDDLE OF THE
SEVENTH.**

Translated by Dr. Butler.

ARGUMENT.

Union of the Lombards and the Greeks under the walls of Spoleto. Sacrilege committed at Spoleto. Flight of the Catholics towards Rome. The church of St. Peter; sacred tapestries; the ceremony of pouring ashes. Paradise; the oracle of the Most High.

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO I.

I.

DAUGHTER of Heaven, O Muse, descend and sing
The high achievements of the Christian king,
The conqueror of himself, the paynim's rod,
Who saved from impious rage the ark of God.
Guiding against the sacred walls in vain
Full twenty kings with all their martial train,
The accursed archangel rears his rebel brow:
To the Frank sword Heaven bids the guilty bow.
Eternal Rome's profaners to repel,
Charles flies, and dissipates the league of Hell.

II.

Who broke the world's repose? 'twas Didier's deed:
He in Rome's conquest watchful to succeed,
At the dark hour has seized Spoleto's gates, (1)
And there the Greek's confederate host awaits.
Lo! downward rolling from the mountain's height,
A cloud of dust involves the plains in night;
Poured from the opening hills, with measured tread
Ten thousand Greeks advance, by Longin led:
Longin, whose mind, all malice, craft, and gloom,
Of Rome and Lombardy projects the doom.

III.

Forsaking Thurium and its fruitful lands,(2)
 He bears Byzantium's treaty in his hands.
 A Saxon hero at his side proceeds,
 Destined to drench with blood the Roman meads:
 By love provoked, athirst with vengeful flame,
 The son of Witikind to Didier came,(3)
 The gallant Rodmir: from his earliest youth
 He loved Armelia, and had pledged his truth;
 But war and vengeance now his soul engage,
 And Charles he curses with a rival's rage.

IV.

Fast by the walls, the Grecian warriors place
 Their tents, and compass all the city's space:
 A broken image, which their ensigns raise,
 Their impious tenets and their creed betrays:(4)
 Fear-struck, the Latins view the sudden horde
 Of threatening heretics around them poured!
 And sacred horror reigns in every breast,
 Though silence holds them, at the foe's behest:
 While Didier tells, to shame, to honour lost,
 Byzantium's league through all the Lombard host.

V.

Entering the town with Rodmir, Longin seeks
 The royal presence, and admitted speaks:
 "Sire! since complete success has crowned my pains,
 "My zeal presents the harvest of its gains:
 "Well pleased, Augustus to thy wish inclines;(5)
 "Ravenna, Rome and Italy resigns:
 "Thy son Adalgise, first in Lombard fame,
 "His sister's hand may from his bounty claim,
 "And, with Eudisia, and the nuptial crown,
 "The name of Cæsar, and the consul's gown.

VI.

" More powerful succours yet shalt thou receive:
 " Himself, if need, Byzantium's shores will leave,
 " To scourge a nation by his soul abhorred,
 " And bend the aspiring pontiff to thy sword:
 " Thy liege, thy simple homage, duly paid,
 " Alone shall recompense his zealous aid!
 " To thee he yields the exarch's sovereign right;
 " Then, prince, with him in lasting league unite!
 " Scorn the weak Vatican! its statutes spurn,
 " And cease to reverence what thou may'st o'erturn.

VII.

" To thee no dread of warfare France can bring,
 " For Cæsar knows thy daughter rules her king:
 " Against Armelia, and her splendid ties,(6)
 " Fear-fraught and vain, shall Adrian's curses rise:
 " Rome knows thy projects: why should'st thou delay?
 " Rome and her idol, in the front of day,
 " Boldly assail; and soon thine arms may gain,
 " While Pepin's bands in thoughtless ease remain,
 " The lofty capitol; and Tiber's tide,
 " Beneath thy sway, may, like Ticinus, glide."(7)

VIII.

He spoke, and Rodmir rose: " Ye warriors, say,
 " Can Pepin's son your generous souls dismay?
 " What though he dare invade with menace vain
 " These Alpine barriers of the Lombard's reign,
 " And here molest us; do our soldiers lack
 " Or strength, or prowess, to repel the attack?
 " Full oft this vaunted prince, this Charles has viewed
 " His boldest warriors o'er our forests strewed!
 " To thee, and Cæsar, are our faulchions due;
 " And perish France, if France the war renew!

B

IX.

" Heed not his wrath: 'mid Aquitania's lands,
 " Gaiffre repressed the progress of his bands;(8)
 " And oft, before the bold Tassillon's might,
 " Bavaria's plains have seen their dastard flight:
 " 'These haughty paladins, assailed of late
 " By love or war, have dimmed their brighter fate
 " No more their deeds and high renown accord,
 " See Renaud sunk beneath my conquering sword;
 " See Roland, vanquished by a female's charms,
 " Quit for a frenzied love the risk of arms.

X.

" Well o'er such peers may Charles dominion claim
 " Who, 'mid the transports of a recent flame,
 " With ruthless hand o'erwhelms his faithful spouse
 " Tramples on honour, on his marriage-vows,
 " And while thy daughter sits upon his throne,
 " Adeline, of lineage high-born as thine own,(9)
 " His lawful queen, abandoned and betrayed,
 " Unpitied pines beneath a cloister's shade:
 " Just Heaven avert the bodings of my mind,
 " And may Armelia happier fortune find!

XI.

" Gods! I forgive you all my former woes,
 " If through my wrongs Armelia find repose!
 " But I know Charles: and some untoward fate
 " Seems yet these recent nuptials to await.
 " And where the pressing need, that bade you seek
 " This wayward monarch's friendship, false and weak:
 " Far better 'twere, indifferent, though we gained
 " His love or hatred, both to have disdained,
 " Marched on to Rome, and crushed with vigorous
 'blow
 " Her pride, and laid her meddling pontiff low.

XII.

" No more let idle fears our deeds protract;
 "'Tis time, like warriors, that we think and act:
 " No more to vain discussions let us yield,
 " But rouse at once the carnage of the field:
 " Farewell to weakness! see our arms advance
 " Upon the Tiber's flood: Charles rules in France,
 " But Rome is Cæsar's: and should Charles despise
 " The threatened risk, and thwart our just emprise,
 " If for his aid the usurper priest should call—
 " Charles and the Church—together let them fall."

XIII.

With daring outrage thus, in wrathful mood,
 Rodmir the monarch of the Franks pursued.
 Of calmer strain, while Peace her shelter lends
 Didier still hopes to reach his treacherous ends.
 France yet dismays him: through his troubled soul
 Conflicting thoughts in dark succession roll.
 Far from all eyes, as died the daylight's glare,
 He calls the faithful partner of his care:
 From three past reigns with sage experience stored,
 Timantius hears the secrets of his lord.

XIV.

" Rodmir and Longin wish my bannered train,
 " By morning's dawn, to fill the Roman plain:
 " Vain eloquence! I dare not yet approve
 " The wild advice of Rodmir's hapless love:
 " In Pepin's son, by hostile rage misled,
 " He views the husband of Armelia's bed.
 " If to the policy of youth I yield,
 " That seeks a rival lover in the field,
 " Soon o'er our heads the dreadful storm might burst!
 " Heroic counsel often is the worst.

XV.

"Hate for the Latins though the exarch feel,(10)
 "Towards us I doubt his friendship and his zeal.
 "What though his bands may yet, with valour true,
 "Fulfil the achievements from their promise due;
 "Yet have the Greeks, where'er or when besought,
 "Mistrust, in concert with alliance, brought:
 "Prepared for either side with two-edged blade,
 "Weak is their hold, and perilous their aid.
 "We take their succours; but, with forecast wise,
 "Keep on their dark designs our steadfast eyes.

XVI.

"Not yet the clarion sounds the battle hour!
 "To brave the Franks demands a mightier power:
 "'Tis ours the specious ambush to prepare,
 "And tempt our foe, until he reach the snare.
 "Haste, trusty messenger! thy zeal increase,
 "And speed to Pepin's son the words of peace:
 "Say, that of old by Lombard monarchs swayed,
 "To them Spoleto bounden homage paid;
 "Say, though his warriors in her walls remain,
 "Didier but seeks his ancient right again.

XVII.

"If recent ties to Greece thy sovereign bind,
 "Do thou excuse and specious reason find.
 "From Charles's brow, where doubtings love to dwell,
 "Aim thou each dark suspicion to dispel.
 "'Gainst Adrian chiefly let thine art be shown:
 "My child shall back thy reasonings with her own.
 "Meantime our instant orders are disposed,
 "That every avenue to Rome be closed:
 "Each Alpine pass is guarded by our host,
 "Our numerous vessels cover all the coast:
 "Thus hemmed around, no hopes can Rome retain,
 "That Charles should hear, though she may still complain."

XVIII.

Joined to these words, more surely to ensnare,
A treacherous scroll his guilty hands prepare:
For yet, ere siege to Rome he rashly lay,
Lingering in peace awhile would Didier stay,
Till the sage envoy of his realm shall bring
From France the latest counsels of her king.
But scarce Timantius from the gates withdrew
Ere sudden rage through Longin's cohorts flew:
Against Spoleto, with unbridled speed,
Madly they rush; and, goaded to the deed,
By dark suggestions of some fiend accurst,
The rampart gates with cries of fury burst.

XIX.

All fly before them: shrieks of fear and wo
Spread through the streets and gather as they go.
Against our temples borne with frantic heat,
The Greeks pollute them to their last retreat:
Each sainted image through the domes divine,
Torn by their impious boldness from its shrine,
Is dashed to earth; the fragments scattered round,
Along the consecrated marble sound.
To Heaven's high vault Spoleto's groans arise:
Her pastor's blood the hallowed pavement dies.

XX.

Spirit of Heaven, may thy celestial rays
My soul inflame, and animate my lays!
Descend, blest Spirit! Let thine accents speak
The unhallowed outrage of the daring Greek!
In Wilfrid's trust, Wilfrid with virtues graced
Worthy his God, Spoleto's see was placed.
The poor, the dying, Wilfrid's presence blessed;
No sufferer groaned, but Wilfrid brought him rest:
Before his soothing voice while terror fled,
The sainted man, in misery's humble shed,
To all the wretched would at once supply
The gifts of earth, and treasures of the sky.

XXI.

Wilfrid alone had dared, when Didier's band
 Spoleto seized, before their chief to stand:
 His prayers, his vows, his looks of heavenly peace
 Bade, for a while, the woes of conquest cease:
 The monarch's wrath was chained! subdued he stood,
 And checked, with instant voice, the work of blood.
 By Wilfrid's saint-like virtues awed, he felt
 To milder thoughts his rugged nature melt.
 Even the wild soldiers, by his accents swayed,
 Forgot their fierceness, and his voice obeyed:
 The gentle pastor, thus to all endeared,
 Victors and vanquished equally revered.

XXII.

Amidst his flock, on sacrifice intent,
 Wilfrid his brow before the altar bent.
 Lost in the sacred rite his senses lie:
 He hears no hostile step, no threatening cry,
 Full in the centre of the altar reared,
 A heavenly image on the cross appeared:
 'Tis Christ, who suffering, dying for mankind,
 Calms the just vengeance of the Eternal Mind!
 The Grecians, wildly shouting at the sight,
 Assail the altar 'mid the sacred rite,

XXIII.

Already now the altar steps are gained;
 The yielding cross is by their touch profaned,
 When Wilfrid sees! With sudden haste he trode
 Before the image of the Son of God,
 Shielding the form revered! Inspired, he cries;
 "What horrid sight appals mine anguished eyes?
 "Miscreants, away!" His brow, in awe sedate,
 His hoary locks, his firm and fearless gait,
 His mournful accents, suddenly impart
 An icy terror to each soldier's heart.

XXIV.

Confused they stop: aghast, o'erwhelmed with shame,
 And murmuring, to the temple gate they came.
 Between the portals fixed a warrior stands,
 Of visage all unknown, and checks the bands.
 Dark o'er his armour floats his troubled hair,
 With Hell's own fire his lurid features glare.
 His unsheathed scymitar against the Greeks
 Waves broad and bright; and, sudden, as he speaks,
 Their flight is turned; their transient awe expires;
 They breathe the bloody rage himself inspires.

XXV.

"—Is this your courage? from yon cross profane,
 " Proscribed by Cæsar, can your zeal refrain?
 " Thus, Greeks, by insolence and outcries scared,
 " Have ye that clamorous dotard's idol spared?
 " Not so should Cæsar be obeyed! For know,
 " Where'er your hands those rites accurst o'erthrow,
 " That pictured canvass to the dust debase,
 " And sculptured idols of the Latin race,
 " Know, that when thus employed, to you is given
 " To exert the vengeance of insulted Heaven!
 " Of late, like you, Irene was misled:(11)
 " Irene lives, Byzantium's scorn and dread.

XXVI.

" Greeks! to the altar back with me! let all
 " Yield to your might, and at your bidding fall.
 " Be from its hold yon impious image torn,
 " Condemned by Cæsar, his and Reason's scorn!"
 Thus spoke the stranger; and his accents dart
 Through every breast the fury of his heart:
 A lengthening shout beneath the trembling vault
 Resounds dreadful, as, with wild assault,
 Around their feeble prey the cohorts rush,
 O'erwhelm the saint, and to the pavement crush:
 Clasp his Saviour's form with strict embrace,
 He falls, the victim of this tiger-race.

XXVII.

With blood the altar swims: the miscreant bands
 Seize, break the cross, and wrench it from his hands:
 Gasping his last, those reverend hands are spread
 To bless his murderers: while his drooping head
 Half opes the heavy lids, his closing eyes
 Cast their dim glances upwards to the skies:
 " God! may my blood appease thy wrathful mind!
 " Pardon the Greeks! may Rome deliverance find!
 " Forgive, O Lord——" His soul, already blest,
 Has gained the mansions where the faithful rest.

XXVIII.

The astonished Lombards at the first alarms
 Of holy Wilfrid's murder rush to arms.
 With thousand cries, that to its inmost seat
 The palace shake, tumultuously they meet.
 Didier is roused, and hastens to restrain
 The bold irruption of the foreign train:
 His son pursues his steps with eager stride:
 His thronging peers are gathered at his side.
 Longin himself the daring outrage blames,
 He seeks the monarch and his succour claims:
 Adalgise far before the warriors speeds,
 With swift advance, and to the temple leads.

XXIX.

Sole, of his royal stem the latest flower,
 This youthful prince reveres the Eternal Power,
 Bears in a parent's crime no filial part;
 But spurns the fatal compact from his heart.
 True to his kindred, to his country's law,
 From his firm faith disdaining to withdraw,
 Byzantium's rites with dread his soul inspire,
 Yet reverence leads him with a guilty sire;
 Chained to his yoke, he seems, in silent wo,
 To claim that pity which the skies bestow.

XXX.

Love in Adalgise's breast has fixed his sting;
 Gisella, sister to the Christian king,
 Promised by Pepin to his chaste desires,
 Reigns o'er his soul, and burns with equal fires.
 The knight in useless expectation stays
 To gain that blessing which would crown his days:
 Dark policy devotes each future year
 To bands of which he shudders but to hear;
 Eudisia's bands; yet nothing can control
 His pristine flame: hope cheers the hero's soul.

XXXI.

Fired by the treachery of the Greeks, in wrath
 He comes, and 'mid the assassins breaks his path:
 Scared at his looks, the bands with sudden flight
 Recoil, and lo! the altar strikes his sight!
 Stretched on the marble, with the reeking blade
 Still in his heart, the sainted priest is laid:
 The hero charges, armed with ponderous spear,
 The savage troops, and thunders on their rear:
 Driven by his threatening voice, in panic dread
 The miscreant horde before his arm has fled.

XXXII.

Nor Longin's self can curb his fierce career—
 Full on the Greek he bends his brow severe:
 But Didier comes—At once the father's frown
 Checks the rash youth and chains his fury down.
 The homicides retreat from Didier's view;
 Swift from Spoleto hastes their impious crew,
 Like arid chaff that through the wintry skies
 Chased by the breeze, disperses as it flies.
 Onwards they speed, and seek with headlong flight
 Their camp again, pursued by wild affright.

XXXIII.

At length, by darkness from alarm secure,
 The Latin temple smokes with incense pure;
 The priests collect the fragments, which bestrew
 The sacred marble, and with tears bedew:
 Deep groans arise: thrice does the altar nod,
 As thrice again they lift the imaged God!
 Thrice swerves the cross, as tho' the blood-drenched
 fane
 It wished to quit; and Wilfrid seems again
 To live! he points the path with trembling hand,
 That leads where Rome's eternal ramparts stand.

XXXIV.

As o'er each breast a holy horror comes,
 A voice reechoes through the sacred domes;
 "Christians! to Rome depart with fearless speed,
 "For Heaven's own angel shall your path precede:
 "Fly from these precincts, and in flight convey
 "Each hallowed image, with yourselves, away:
 "The Almighty Spirit from the Lombard's side
 "Is gone: their chief with miscreants is allied!
 "Safe in Rome's bulwarks wait, till aid is sent
 "From him ye serve, your Lord Omnipotent."

XXXV.

The obedient Latins seek, with pious care,
 The scattered fragments, and together bear:
 High o'er them all, upon a car displayed,
 A sacred charge, their prelate's corse is laid.
 Veiled by Night's blackening gloom, now doubly dark,
 God's holy servants on their course embark:
 Far from their temple, silent now and slow,
 Across the plains and rebel camp they go:
 In vain the Greeks around the mountains lie;
 Sleep lulls their tents, and sealed is every eye.

XXXVI.

With ceaseless march proceeds the solemn train,
 Till Terni's hospitable land they gain,(12)
 What time the shepherds, as the star of day
 Beams through the firmament its earliest ray,
 Back to the mountain sides their flocks attend,
 And busy labourers to the plains descend:
 Aghast with sudden horror, they descry
 The blood-stained fragments, and to meet them fly.
 And, while to Heaven the suppliant eye they raise,
 Join their deep sorrows to the funeral lays.

XXXVII.

From town, from village, and from hamlet, crowd
 The afflicted Latins: execrations loud,
 'Gainst Wilfrid's murderers, issue from the throng,
 While the priests bear the images along:
 The weeping tribes, deserting their abodes,
 Swell at each step, and cover all the roads.
 On the fourth morning, as approaching near,
 The Christians see the sacred city rear
 Its massy dome triumphant o'er the plains,
 They bless the God o'er Heaven and Earth who reigns.

XXXVIII.

Report already had outstript their pace,
 And told their coming: in a moment's space,
 Beneath her seven fam'd hills, the city swarms
 With holy banners, and with hallowed forms:
 At news of Wilfrid's fate, the tribes of Rome
 O'erflow the passage to Saint-Peter's dome:
 The troubled crowd, whom restless fear confounds,
 With loud commotion shake the rampart-bounds:
 Here vestal maids, devoted to their God,
 And monks, who long in solitude have trod,
 Prelates and pastors, ranged in due array,
 Their sacred banners on their march display.

XXXIX.

Deep lamentations mingle with their prayer;
 Didier is near, and Rome is in despair!
 The heavenly images, now dearer found
 From Grecian hate, with flowery wreaths are bound:
 The crowd divides, and through its parted mass
 God's holy servants to the temple pass:
 With onward march they seek the brazen gate,
 With look dejected, and with step sedate:
 The throng, like billows, rushing on apace,
 Break, close, and inundate the sacred place.

XL.

Here Christ's apostles sleep: around their tomb,(13)
 Lamps, which, with constant beam, disperse the gloom,
 Raised on a hundred pilasters of gold,
 Shed deathless lustre o'er their mortal mold:
 Here ceaseless gifts successive pilgrims bear:
 Here agates diapered, and marbles rare,
 With costly brightness, near each other shine,
 And vie to deck the sepulchre divine:
 The master-works of genius and of art,
 Condemned of old to bear an impious part,
 In rites, where gods fictitious were adored,
 Now grace the dwelling of the living Lord.

XLI.

Beneath the nave, and seated to the right,
 A statue lifts the keys of Heaven to sight:
 The Christians here, as still with eager speed,
 And constant flow, they rapidly succeed,
 With reverence bend, and pray, with heart-felt grief,
 And suppliant knee, the Omnipotent's relief:
 Or, warmed with ecstasy of zeal, salute
 Their primal guide, and kiss the brazen foot:
 The metal worn, where lips devout have pressed,
 Of Latin fervour bears the pious test.(14)

XLII.

A countless throng, that came with tardier pace,
 In vain would pierce the temple's crowded space:
 Forced from the gates, their backward course they held,
 Like the vexed sea, by ebbing tides repelled,
 With murmurs deep: when lo! a sudden sound
 Of heavenly symphony is heard around!
 And where the Vatican its courts expands,
 In distant view God's earthly vicar stands!(15)
 Silent at once, and prostrate on the ground,
 Lowly the Christians fall in prayer profound:
 With eye on Heaven, the sovereign priest descends,
 While his raised hand the sacred host extends.

XLIII.

The attendant priests, attired in bright array,
 With solemn step precede the pontiff's way:
 Around them rolled, in odoriferous clouds,
 The rising incense all the pastor shrouds:
 Yet from the sparkling globe, whose round enshrines
 The hallowed host, a piercing lustre shines:
 As in deep mass the holy perfume streams,
 Through the thick vapour dart the fitting beams!
 Less pure, and less divine, the orb of day
 Breaks through the clouds with his triumphant ray;
 Athwart their shade in mid career he flies,
 Lucid, though veiled, and reigns throughout the skies.

XLIV.

This solemn day the assembled Christians see
 On the rich walls that wonderous tapestry,(16)
 Where cloistered maids with holy hands have wrought
 The far-famed deeds with which our faith is fraught.
 The Labarum here, in sign of heavenly aid,(17)
 Above his standards, high in air displayed
 Appears, and bids Maxentius' conqueror hail
 The scroll: "Beneath this sign shalt thou prevail!"
 Scarcely the token Constantine descries,
 Ere instant victory to his standard flies!

The Church's tyrant in the Tiber's way
Sinks with his boasted glories to the grave.

XLV.

To Peter's sainted hands, on Jordan's sides,
Here Christ the keys of Paradise confides;(18)
While farther on, in striking form designed,
The scourge of earth, the abhorrence of mankind,(19)
Pointing to Leo's town with threatening mien,
The stern subduer, Attila, is seen!
Lowering and dark, where'er his standards sweep,
Havock and death their dreadful progress keep!
Born to destroy, although the will of Heaven
Has, for a season, in its anger given
The world to bow beneath his iron rod,
Take comfort, mortals, he defies his God!

XLVI.

Defies his God! on what shall he rely?
Who touch the sacred ark shall surely die!
Here Leo quits, while priests and sires surround
The pontiff's path, the sacred city's bound:
Right on the conqueror spurs his fiery steed,
Nor heeds the pastor's voice, nor reins his speed,
Proud in his might: when, lo! the skies are riven
With swift disruption, and the sword of Heaven
Strikes the destroyer! All thy future state,
Fierce Attila, is stamp'd with blackest fate.

XLVII.

One brilliant web, above the rest perceived,
Though from the needle scarcely yet achieved,
Shows where on Pepin's head, that lowly bends,
The glorious empire of the Franks descends:
Where Stephen's self, who crossed the mountain's
height
To consecrate his brows, performs the rite:
The God of hosts, his fealty to repay,
Martel's descendants calls o'er France to sway:

Charles, Carloman, elect patricians, both
Take from the pontiff's hand the accustomed oath.

XLVIII.

Sworn 'gainst all foes the Romans to defend,
And o'er the Latin church their guard extend,
How shall the sons forget the sire's design,
Nor stain the lustre of their royal line?
The years of Carloman in early life
Were closed, his infant sons, his widowed wife,
Wronged by their vassals, quit his late domains,
And Charles their vast inheritance obtains; (20)
Terrestrial bliss no more Laurentia hopes!
Rome to the noble wreck her bosom opes.

XLIX.

Silent she steps amid the passing train;
Her sons the consecrated lights sustain.
Bright robes of purple starred with lilies fair,
Long locks, with clasps adorned, their birth declare:
Worked on the shining tissue, as they trace
The unknown features of their father's face,
Each, though unconscious of the form he views,
Yet smiles with pleasure on its dazzling hues!
Laurentia sees, and wrung with double wo,
'Neath the dark veil unseen her sorrows flow.

L.

Slowly she follows in the pontiff's train,
Till the bright portals of the dome they gain.
There, as with elevated voice he sings
The song of mercy, back the temple flings
A thousand notes, responsive to his own,
And plaintive vows, that seek the Almighty's throne.
Through the deep vault resound the mournful strains,
Till hushed the prayer, and solemn silence reigns:
Dark clouds of incense fill the sacred place,
As now the pontiff gains the altar's base.

LI.

The host now placed within its sacred shrine,
 All looks in reverence to the ground incline,
 While lowly kneeling thus the pastor prayed:
 " Virgin divine, with thy propitious aid
 " Our vows support: let thy maternal breast,
 " Sacred receptacle of hope and rest,
 " Ope to thy children on this fatal day!
 " O may thy sons escape the Lombard's sway!
 " Oft when thou plead'st for man the Godhead spares,
 " And justice melts to mercy at thy prayers.
 " Grant, if again to save the Latian land,
 " A bleeding sacrifice our God demand,
 " Grant that on me the voice of Heaven may call,
 " And, mine the lot, like Wilfrid let me fall."

LII.

He spoke: and prostrate to the earth he bows;
 And from the triple circlet bares his brows;
 When on the steps, o'er which the throne ascends,
 An infant comes, and towards the altar bends;
 The temple's child; to him is given to bear
 The ashes o'er the pontiff's hoary hair:
 Proud, that so young he fills the sacred place,
 His mien is solemn, and assured his pace,
 His hands in full-pressed flakes the embers shed,
 That hide the pastor's consecrated head.

LIII.

All now, by Adrian's pure example swayed,
 Implore the Virgin-mother's gracious aid,
 And, poured in sign of lowliness and wo,
 Swift showers of ashes through the temple flow:
 While scarcely some repress the struggling sigh,
 Loud and aloft is heard the wailing cry
 Of other's grief, as with their tears they steep
 The sacred tomb, in which the martyrs sleep:
 When through the void of air, with uproar torn,
 Sudden and wild, a mingled noise is borne,

Harsh as the shock when clashing arms engage:
 "No more, O Christians, dread the pagan's rage!"

LIV.

Descend, celestial spirit! and inspire
 My voice with strength, and fill me with thy fire!
 Ope to my view the sky's ethereal vault!
 Upon thy wings my feeble thoughts exalt,
 And let a mortal dare of Heaven to speak!
 When Night her mantle furls, and Morning's break
 Brings the first lustre of the sparkling day,
 Faint shine the stars and dimly fade away.
 Thus if athwart the air a single beam
 From Heaven's bright sphere with vivid fire should
 gleam,
 All pale the sun would grow, his glories fail,
 Eclipsed and hid beneath a golden veil!

LV.

In countless circles ranged, the choirs divine
 Burning with flames of heavenly ardour shine;
 Michael, destroying angel, he who drove
 baleful sedition from the realms above,
 O'er all preeminent is seen to bear
 His flaming falchion, deeped upon the air:
 His eye triumphant, in each glance, displays
 The dreadful menace of the lightning's blaze:
 Tremble, ye wicked, at his wrath dismayed!
 O'er your heads he wave the brandished blade,
 Swift will it fall, resistless in descent,
 And crush your pride: escape it, and repent.

LVI.

Next to the vanquisher of Hell in place,
 Gabriel appears, the minister of grace:
 Whose charge, denied forever to the bad,
 Still to the virtuous brings a presage glad:
 Even now he seems, bent towards the living Lord,
 Intent to hear the irrevocable word,



While his broad wings, with sparkling hues that glow,
 Round the blest place a shadowy covering throw.
 Watchful and fixt he stands, with instant flight
 Prepared to cleave the radiant spheres of light.

LVII.

Around Saint Peter, to whose hands belong
 The keys of Heaven, the saints, the apostles throng:
 O'er death triumphant, 'mid these hallowed seats,
 Wilfrid above, the fervent prayer completes,
 That from his pastoral lips was heard to flow,
 At life's departure, in the world below.
 Can death corporeal hurt the Christian soul?
 It frees the just from sorrowful control:
 Life's but an exile, pilgrimage, or chain,
 And death to him the source of endless gain.

LVIII.

Those virgins blest, to God in wedlock bound,
 Bearing the palm-branch, and with garlands crowned,
 Follow the sacred martyrs; o'er the rest,
 In bright pre-eminence of beauty drest,
 Are those, who once by persecution driven
 In youthful bloom to tortures dire were given.
 Where, where is now the sackcloth and the chain,
 Where does the trace of transient pangs remain?
 In these blest seats their earthly charms assume
 The purer tint of Heaven's immortal bloom:
 For God, most High, their vestal bosoms prove
 The sacred warmth of everlasting love.

LIX.

The poor man here, who, to his woes resigned,
 His wants subdued, and ne'er from good declined,
 In purple clad, a splendid seat obtains,
 And reaps the recompense of earthly pains,
 Placed near his cherished benefactor still.
 Our wants and sufferings in this world of ill,

Thanks to the God of peace and mercy, lead
More sure than glory to the immortal meed.
The poor and meek may raise to Heaven his eyes,
And claim his Christian birthright in the skies.

LX.

Those princes, heroes, who with valiant hand
The cross protected, and their native land,
Who, self-devoted in the public cause,
Defended Heaven, their country, and their laws,
Now to the splendour of a single day,
That crowned their zeal with its triumphant ray,
Unite those brighter glories, which arise
From life eternal, granted in the skies:
Safe are the laurel wreaths, that grace their heads,
From envy now! no storm their glory dreads!

LXI.

At distance placed below that awful shrine
Where dwells the fulness of the power divine,
A group of heavenly seers, arrayed in light,
Appears presented to my wondering sight:
These are the patriarchs, all, to whom of old
The law supreme was granted to unfold:
Even here, though more remotely placed in Heaven,
The eternal presence to their view is given:
The sire of men his numerous sons inspects,
And pensive counts the few, whom God elects:
Moses is near, whose looks at once embrace
The wandering tribes of Israel's scattered race.

LXII.

Here too the Hebrew prophets, as they stand,
Each with the sacred volume in his hand,
The semblance keep, as though they told again
To Sion's tyrants the prophetic strain:
One towards the confines of eternal light
Apart, is seen incessantly to write!



Elias writes upon his iron roll(21)
 The sinful deeds of every human soul:
 Its awful page the Almighty wrath shall sway,
 When Joshaphat's dark valley shall survey
 The sons of Adam, summoned from the tomb,
 To wait their dread irrevocable doom.

LXIII.

The hand of death availed not to efface
 Ahab's great prophet from the living race.
 Rapt from our earth to the celestial sphere
 He darts his piercing eye with glance severe,
 Solemn and stern, on every mortal deed.
 Yet ere eternity to time succeed,
 Ere the last days and world's appointed end,
 Elias shall from Heaven again descend,
 Through waves of air, to this our mortal scene;
 Till by the monster hideous and unclean,
 Subdued at length, and sunk beneath his blows,
 His death announce the universal close.

LXIV.

His present glories from his virtues flow!
 To him the anchorets of the cloister owe
 Their rise, and still the Cenobite repeats
 The patriarch's prayers, on Carmel's mountain-
 seats:(22)
 What time the crying accents of distress
 Implored his succour from his wild recess,
 His voice prophetic on the guilty head
 In terrors poured, and struck with awful dread
 The tyrant ravisher of Naboth's field:(23)
 And erst, as Christ, in essence full revealed,
 Elias called to Tabor's mystic height,
 And placed him near, the witness of his might,
 Elias yet shall come, in season due,
 The attendant witness of his vengeance too.

LXV.

Conqueror of Hell, when he, the incarnate God
Above the dark abyss triumphant rode,
He sought to free the virtuous of mankind,
Who came to being, when the world was blind:
With Israel's sires he bade these sages rise
And follow him from darkness to the skies.
What though in error plunged, they ne'er explored
The law commanded by the living Lord,
Their hearts were christian, and celestial love
Has deigned to call them to the realms above.

LXVI.

With them the incarnate God to light conveyed
Those infants all, whom death's relentless blade
Had swept untimely from the earth away,
When first their eyes were opened on the day;
Who ne'er had known a mother's smiling face,
Her soothing accents and her fond embrace.
Charged with his precious spoil, in upward flight
The Lord victorious sought the starry height:
When first these objects of his tender love
Raised by her son to those blest seats above,
This infant host, had met his Mother's sight,
Her soul was thrilled with fondness and delight.

LXVII.

With all her features, as on earth they shone,
Exalted high, upon a golden throne,
In flowing veil, with transport I survey
The Virgin, moved to pain, as mortals pray!
O'er her pure brow a blushing hue is spread:
Her bosom palpitates with holy dread:
Touched, as her faithful people's cries she hears,
Her eyes, that speak a mother's fondest fears,
Turn towards her son: While the celestial band
Dwell on her voice, inimitably bland.

LXVIII.

" Oh! thou, my father, God, forgive my wo:
 " I fear for Rome: I dread her impious foe:
 " Lo! Pepin's race, whom ease and softness charm,
 " The Church abandons to the oppressor's arm:
 " Hear, God all-powerful, nor disdain to throw
 " A glance of thine upon the world below:
 " In Nazareth's name, oh! listen to my prayer:
 " Oh! by this breast, so blessed as to bear
 " Thine only Son; where he vouchsafed to take
 " The form of man, oh! for this bosom's sake,
 " Check the wild Lombards' inroad, nor allow
 " My sons beneath their impious yoke to bow."

LXIX.

She spoke: from each celestial voice, the sound
 Of gentle sorrow breathed in murmurs round:
 So sighs the harp, when zephyrs softly blow:
 For not in Heaven are heard those cries of wo,
 From souls celestial: cries, which anguish wrests,
 In this abode of wo, from mortal breasts:
 From the world's passions, pains, and griefs secure,
 Theirs the mild pleasure of affection pure:
 Their trouble still exceeds all earthly joys,
 And scarcely grief itself their bliss alloys.

LXX.

On them is seen eternally to beam
 The radiant aspect of the Power Supreme
 Who rules the worlds; and through the mass profound
 Of light, that compasses the Godhead round,
 They only pierce: with holy awe possess
 My troubled spirit sinks within my breast.
 'Mid boundless space, the Eternal and his throne,
 Lost in the distance, from my sight are flown!
 Oh! God of Israel, let my rash desires
 Forgiveness meet: oh! moderate thy fires!
 Vouchsafe at least to suffer, that mine eye
 Through mystic shades thy presence may descry.

LXXI.

In idle songs Apollo's sons have praised
 The Gods fantastic, which their hands have raised:
 Have traced the sable brow, beneath whose nod
 The poles are shaken: but Jehoyah, God,
 To saints alone his face divine displays,
 Too dazzling bright for man's enfeebled gaze.
 What do I say? a fire celestial cheers
 My renovated voice, and God appears!
 God even to me descending from his might,
 Beneath a mortal symbol strikes my sight!

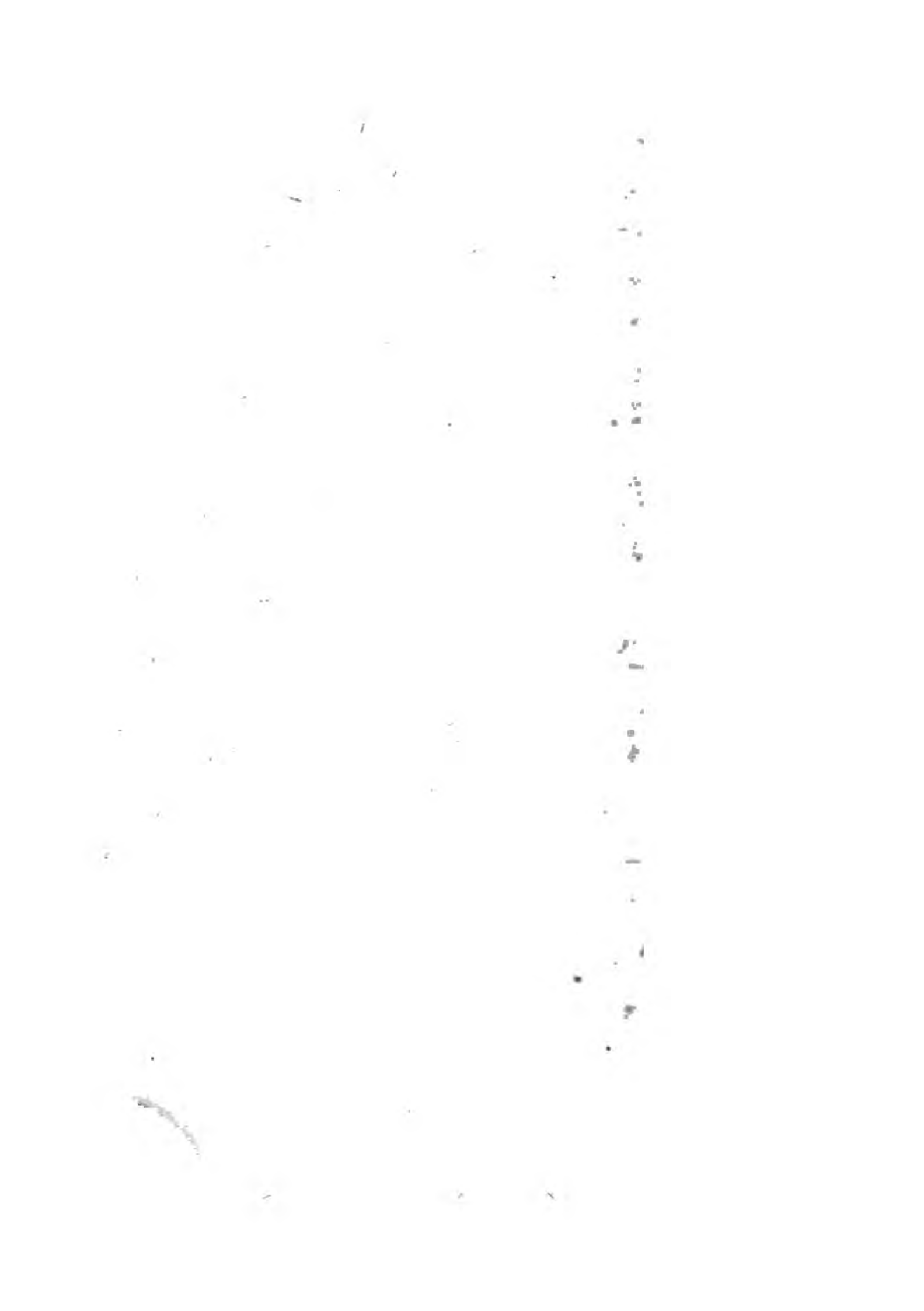
LXXII.

Type of the Trinity, and God alone,
 Sudden a flaming triangle is shown,(24)
 Which, glittering like the star, whose piercing light
 Breaks through the blackness of the gloomy night,
 Rests on a cloud of gold! before its fires,
 All pallid grown, the beam of Heaven retires:
 In one sole essence joined, and yet apart,
 Three rays united their effulgence dart
 From that bright triangle: the heavenly blaze,
 Reflected, round the Virgin-mother plays:
 Inspired with sacred love, with dazzled eye,
 In silence deep the prostrate angels lie.

LXXIII.

The Godhead speaks; and Heaven's remotest bound
 Hath heard his voice, and vibrates to the sound:
 "AGAINST THE CHURCH, WEAK MAN SHALL NE'ER
 PREVAIL,
 "AGAINST THE CHURCH THE GATES OF HELL SHALL
 FAIL."

His voice the sadness of the sky dispels,
 And wide in Heaven the hymn of triumph swells.
 Hope animates the pontiff's breast anew,
 He rises, and the astonished people view
 Celestial fires in dazzling lustre gleam
 Shot from his triple crown, with triple beam.



CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO II.

END OF THE SEVENTH DAY.

Translated by Dr. Butler.

VOL. I.

0

ARGUMENT.

**Festival of the field of May; Egbert king of England;
Alphonso of Asturia. Orinda and Monclar. Tri-
umph of Armelia. Frenzy of the paladin Roland.**

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO II.

I.

THUS was impiety's o'erthrow designed;
While lost to Rome, the Church, and all mankind,
Dissembling still the scandal of her sway,
Charles to Armelia's love abandoned lay.
Thy pious harmony awhile suspend,
O Muse! and let thy tuneful course descend.
The fatal power of female charms to sing,
And trace the weakness of Lutetia's king.
For whom prepared this pomp of triumph say?
For whom, in Paris' walls this proud array?

II.

Each heavenly sign had marked the sun's career,
Since that sad day, when France with grief and fear
Her sovereign saw his bands of marriage spurn;
Charles now would solemnize its dire return.
The stately coursers by the winding Seine
With echoing footsteps beat the boundless plain:
The warrior cohorts, clad in arms of brass,
Quit the vast ramparts glistening as they pass;
And knights, well tried in deeds of prowess, bear
Their countless banners waving through the air.

III.

Roused by the clarion's call, with break of day
 The Franks are hastening to the field of May.(1)
 Pitched in the centre of the martial bands
 The bright pavilion of their monarch stands;
 Where raised on purple ground, and wrought in gold,
 The mimic bees their sparkling wings unfold:
 Chiefs, paladins, renowned for valiant deed,
 Brave peers, and vassal kings in turn proceed
 Towards Charles's tent: ranged on the outward bound,
 The solid foot, and fiery horse are found:
 While from the distant throng a thousand cries
 Of clamorous joy re-echo to the skies.

IV.

To shed a signal lustre o'er the morn,
 Three youthful strangers to the camp are borne,
 Now to be honoured, from the monarch's hand,
 With the proud badge of his chivalric band:
 All three disarmed; the gathering crowds inquire
 The name of each, his country and his sire.
 Egbert the heptarch first is seen, whose sway
 The western realms of Albion's isle obey:(2)
 Albion, whose kingdom shall hereafter own
 The prince's power, and bow to him alone.

V.

Saved by the generous monarch from his foes,
 England to Charles this youthful warrior owes;
 By whose brave deeds the wild disorders known
 In that old heptarchy, were all o'erthrown;
 And still did Egbert's emulative view
 The high exploits of royal Charles pursue.
 Oh! would that peace, as in that monarch's reign,
 Joined France with England, mighty on the main!
 For their blest union let our prayers appeal!
 For that alone the suffering world can heal.

VI.

The second place Pelagius' grandson fills:(3)
 For fifteen years, amongst Asturia's hills,
 Hid from the Moors had young Alphonso lain,
 And taught the Christian power to live again:
 Before an infant's voice, and spirit bold,
 Driven for a season from their mountain-hold,
 These hated tyrants of Iberia's lands
 Felt their loose sceptre tremble in their hands:
 But when Alphonso's valour could no more
 'Gainst numbers stand, his zeal, his vows he bore
 To the Frank monarch: of Asturia's race
 Two thousand followers shared in his disgrace.

VII.

Monclar of Narbonne third! the hands of Love
 For Monclar's brow the laurel garland wove;
 Of high-born lineage he received his birth,
 Where Garonne's waters wash the fruitful earth.
 The Moors had late his native land subdued,
 And bowed it to their yoke: but soon pursued,
 Nor daring now to stand the doubtful cast
 Of offered battle, they the mountains passed:
 One Moorish prince, in Narbonne's walls enclosed,
 Three years alone all Pepin's power opposed.

VIII.

Matran the prince's name; his high career
 Death checked, and brought him to an early bier.
 Then showed the Saracens how firmly stood
 The love they nourished for their sovereign's blood:
 Though wild ambition filled each Emir's breast
 Sole Matrau's sister Matran's throne possest.
 Then grew the scanty realm: to winning charms
 Orinda joined the mightiness of arms:
 Her looks, her beauties taught each breast to yield:
 Her arm alike spread terror in the field.

IX.

Through youth's first season as Orinda grew,
 Still from the bands of Hymen she withdrew:
 Toledo's sovereign by her worth subdued,
 Issem, the royal maid in marriage wooed:
 Shame from rejection in his bosom burned,
 And haughty tenderness to fury turned:
 While Matran's sister, meriting to prove
 Paternal succour from the realms above,
 Was heaven-ordained to pay her bridal vows
 To a Frank warrior, and a Christian spouse:
 In vain seeks Issem, stung by hopeless love,
 With oaths or threats Orinda's soul to move.
 Scorning the frenzy of his jealous mind,
 She braved the Franks, and Issem's power combined.

X.

'Twas then that Monclar's early valour came
 To the first proof of arms: his youthful flame
 Even in this dawning spring-tide of his day,
 Already formed the army's hope and stay:
 By the fierce impulse of his valour swayed,
 Provoked to wrath by the resistance made,
 One day towards Narbonne's walls the warrior flew,
 And cried: "Pursue! ye Franks, my steps pursue!"
 The camp is roused: the rushing troops exalt
 The frequent ladder and the walls assault:
 The blade of slaughter that before them sweeps,
 'Midst thousand infidels its harvest reaps.

XI.

With voice and gesture as his bands he cheered,
 Monclar his banner on the walls has reared:
 Eager, alone, the portals to unbar,
 And call within his partners of the war,
 The bulwark's height he measures with his eyes,
 And then through thousand darts impetuous flies:
 Swift as an arrow, cross the rampart's bound
 He springs, he falls, he rises from the ground:

Then onward, reckless of his foes, he flies,
Nor heeds their swords, their numbers, or their cries.

XII.

With swift approach he gains the iron gate,
And shakes with nervous arm its massive weight:
Orinda sees; his daring soul admires,
And at her word the Moorish host retires.
Lowering her sword, yet fierce and prompt for fight
She steps before them towards the Christian knight.
Less fierce, less prompt, before the hunter flies
The lioness, and all his darts defies.
"Yield, Christian, yield," the youthful queen exclaims,
"What bootless rage thy generous soul inflames?
"Thy single arm avails not, let me save
"Thy life, and in a foe respect the brave."

XIII.

She spoke, and bared her brow: her tresses rolled
Loose from her casque, and flowed in waves of gold:
Her softening looks, that on the Christian rest,
Even now commence the conquest of his breast:
All speechless Monclar stands: a gentler fire
Succeeds to wrath, and love has conquered ire:
A moment's space has taught the flame to grow!
The glance, the features of his blooming foe
Unnerve his troubled soul: with eye that bends
On her alone, her footsteps he attends.

XIV.

Meantime the Christian warriors, from the wall
Repulsed, deplore the gallant Monclar's fall:
In Narbonne's palace more propitious fate
Yet on the bold adventurer shall wait:
The rage of war shall yield to Hymen's reign,
For Heaven would profit by these fires profane.
No mortal yet beneath his law has swayed
The youthful bosom of the Moorish maid:
'Tis given to Monclar only to control
The unbending passions of her haughty soul!

The torch of faith was kindled then by love,
And from her wondering mind its darkness drove.

XV.

Taught by her captive, daily more endeared,
Orinda soon our solemn creeds revered;
But most did Christian wedlock, formed to bind
With deathless ties, delight her ravished mind:
At length receiving the paternal sign
Of Christ, and bent before the sacred shrine,
The wife of Monclar, now regenerate, took
The solemn vows upon our sacred book.
Amazed, o'erpowered, her subjects next were seen,
Following the high example of their queen,
And Narbonne's gates, obedient to her call,
Oped to the warriors who besieged her wall.

XVI.

Monclar advances to the Christian bands:
"I promised, warriors, Narbonne to your hands:
"That love, by which Orinda has been taught
"Herself and throne to cede, again has brought(4)
"A pagan people to the living Lord!
"Approach! and sheathe the sanguinary sword!
"Learn in these Moors, implacable of old
"In rival hate, your brethren to behold:
"I speed impatient to Lutetia's plain:
"Yours be the charge in Narbonne to restrain
"The scourge of war; whilst she, for whom I bear
"The tenderest love, shall rest beneath your care.

XVII.

"While still Orinda in these walls shall sway,
"Mine be the task her homage to convey
"To Pepin's mighty son: nor long ye wait,
"Ere my return shall fix her future fate."
He spoke: the warrior bands, with loud acclaim,
Raise to the sky the queen's, the hero's name:
The impetuous Monclar speeds his instant way
Far from his consort to the field of May:

The monarch's self, his valour to requite,
 With his own hand would arm the future knight:
 Charmed with his deeds, content with homage done,
 Charles leaves to Monclar all his prowess won.

XVIII.

The rival youths dismount upon the plain:
 The horns and trumpets swell the lofty strain:
 Exalted now, where high the platform rears
 Its brilliant stage, are seen the three compeers,
 Waiting the moment, when the brightest meeds,
 That triumph knows, shall crown their former deeds.
 Charmed with their name, and of their glories proud,
 The valiant chieftains on their footsteps crowd;
 One knight alone, the bravest of their band,
 Far from the noisy throng is seen to stand:
 His brow, severe and sad, his scornful look,
 Appear the general gladness to rebuke.

XIX.

Why grieves the generous soul of Milo's son?
 Roland, impressed with deeds of goodness done,
 Spite of her fate, his patroness reveres,
 Nor wrongs the friendship of his youthful years
 For injured Adeline; his eyes survey
 With grief the pomp that decorates the day.
 His wrathful love rejects Armelia's praise;
 The applauding knights his dormant fury raise.
 The hero's reason, yet but scarcely staid,
 Consigns his moody mind to gloom and shade.

XX.

While yet the court by Adeline was graced,
 With wandering step the paladin had traced
 The flying object of a maddening flame,
 Till to the confines of the world he came:
 Returned, he saw the Lombard's daughter reign,
 And Charles obedient to her gentle chain.

Throughout his path, extolled on every side,
 Armelia's charms the public theme supplied;
 And when the hero heard, that some would dare
 With her, his bosom's mistress, to compare
 The Lombard maid, his heart, by grief devoured,
 With frenzy boiled, that hardly he o'erpowered.

XXI.

'Gainst the king's fondness oft his taunts he throws:
 But Charles, who loves him, who laments his woes,
 And for his prowess hopes in future fields,
 To the weak passion of his bosom yields.
 Far from the loathsome triumphs of the scene,
 His love and hate the paladin would screen.
 But when the martial instruments expressed
 Their first shrill notes, joy mantled in his breast:
 Sudden he rushed across the champaign vast,
 And waved his murderous falchion as he passed.

XXII.

Foremost the hero to the camp has pressed!
 No painted plumage nodded on his crest:
 Angers' great Count no mark distinctive bore;
 Simple and modest were the arms he wore;
 Save that of loved Angelica, alone,
 The ciphered mark upon his buckler shone:
 Amidst the cohorts of the dauntless Franks
 The warrior speeds, and traverses the ranks:
 On every banner, in its turn surveyed,
 His eager glance is for a moment staid:
 'Mid thousand shouts, that from the army grew,
 In joyful welcome at the hero's view,
 These sudden sounds from every echo glance:
 "Glory to Milo's son, the sword of France!"

XXIII.

These shouts of welcome for an instant sooth
 His valiant spirit, and his features smooth:
 Short-lived his joy! more fleeting than the glare
 When rapid lightning cleaves the midnight air!

Too soon the torments of his flame succeed,
 Leaving the squire to guard his battle-steed,
 To the king's tent with anguished mind he strays,
 And troubled, restless, on the threshold stays:
 Fain on this morning would he blast the pride
 Of the dire beauty, of the sovereign bride.

XXIV.

A youthful paladin, from tenderest years
 Who followed royal Carloman, appears,
 And sits beside him: Roger, who perceived
 His sovereign's offspring of their rights bereaved,
 Was still their guardian, and in safety bore
 The flying infants to the Latian shore.
 Attached to Adeline in all her woes,
 Still for the queen, and for Laurentia rose
 The ceaseless wishes of his angry mind:
 Pained at this fatal morn to joy consigned,
 Gloomy, like Roland, inwardly he broods
 O'er speechless grief, for ever that obtrudes.

XXV.

Loud tumults now, which suddenly they hear,
 Check their dark thoughts, and royal Charles is near!
 The great Tassillon, where the chariot speeds,
 With the grand-master Egobard proceeds:
 Gannelon, renowned for many a practice base,
 Theudon, the last descendant from the race
 Of the fierce Attila; and he, whose love
 For Emma favouring Hymen shall approve,
 Bold Eginhard, with Oliver attends,
 The living model of all faithful friends:
 The impetuous Ogier, prompt with threats to dare,
 And Aquitanian Gaiffre, Clovis' heir.

XXVI.

These warrior knights upon their chargers sit,
 Fatigued and foaming 'neath the galling bit:
 Charles, through the midst appearing in advance,
 Bears in his hand the imperial rod of France;

His regal brow, which prosperous love has crowned
 With sparkling joy, in laurel wreath is bound:
 The car where gold and silver proudly vie
 In costly hues, exhibits to the eye
 A blazing throne! Taught 'neath the yoke to yield,
 Six noble palfreys guide it o'er the field:
 The stately steeds, as of their burden vain,
 Pace with slow steps the centre of the plain.

XXVII.

On Charles the crowd its fervent vows bestows:
 His mien majestic the hero shows:
 His toils, his virtues, and his deeds of fame,
 Hide the sad error of his amorous flame:
 Fit son of Pepin, still to goodness lent,
 In cares beneficent his days are spent:
 Still does Lutetia brighter beauties gain
 From his paternal hand: his lettered reign
 Sheds milder manners o'er his subject land,
 And, 'neath his deathless laws empowered to stand,
 In peace protected Innocence respire,
 And dark Oppression at his frown retires.

XXVIII.

Much had the monarch hoped the priests would bend,
 And the proud chariot of the bride attend:
 But stern and jealous is the Christian law!
 Deep in the sacred courts the priests withdraw,
 And low before the altar's foot are bowed.
 Well was their absence noticed by the crowd:
 A sullen, mingled murmur strikes the ear,
 For still to thousands Adeline is dear:
 Her nuptials, race, reverses, they proclaim,
 And thousand tongues condemn Armelia's name.

XXIX.

“What! then is France abandoned by the skies?
 “No more is reverence due to marriage ties?

"What! do we now of awful weight devest
 "The words that God's vicegerant has expressed?
 "Adeline, to every loyal Frank endeared,
 "For deeds of Christian virtue we revered.
 "These graced her life, and dignified her throne,
 "Why from our hearts is their remembrance flown?
 "A stranger holds our monarch at her nod!—
 "Dread the just wrath of an avenging God!"

XXX.

Oft at the break of morn the north wind pours
 Its rage, announcing tempest as it roars.
 The dreadful blast that congregates the clouds,
 With threatening gloom the broad horizon shrouds:
 The wary pilot, seized with inward fright,
 Wide o'er the sea extends his watchful sight,
 That dreads the storm: when lo! the orb of day
 Bursts on the firmament with sudden ray;
 Dissolves the vapours; fires the ethereal plain,
 And calms the tumults of the billowy main.

XXXI.

E'en so the crowd is hushed, and peace is shed
 Around: no more of Adeline is said:
 Her rival comes! soothed by her soft address,
 The assembled crowd their clamorous noise suppress:
 Low, flattering murmurs gently steal along,
 As near the car the admiring gazers throng.
 Around they press; her dazzling beauties gain
 The charmed attention of the fickle train!
 Approving now the frenzy of their king,
 Throughout the air these impious accents ring.

XXXII.

"Evil and wo to those, and endless shame,
 "Who rashly dare our sovereign's choice to blame!
 "Her soft engaging charms, her beauteous brow,
 "Bid every Frank to her just empire bow.
 "Long be she blest; who, who so rashly bold
 "As here the prize of beauty to withhold?

"To her, what heart its homage can deny?
 "Let us the envy of her foes defy.
 "Far from her ears their clamours shall be driven:
 "For is she not the fairest work of Heaven?"

XXXIII.

Armelia's pride awakening at the sound,
 She deems her triumphs fixed on firmest ground:
 These thoughts the brightness of her charms enhance;
 Through the glad throng she hastens in advance:
 E'en while the friends of Adeline enclose
 Deep in the heart's recess their secret woes;
 Struck with her beauty, they its power avow!
 On this proud day, around her radiant brow,
 That glorious ensign of a regal bride,
 The sparkling diadem is first descried.

XXXIV.

A costly tissue, whose reflective blaze
 A purer white than orient pearl displays, (5)
 Forms the queen's vestment, where their mingled light
 Azure and opal artfully unite:
 The scarf in wavy bend, the silver mail
 Trace the soft outline of the form they veil,
 In graceful roundness: from the circling gold
 Her sable tresses o'er her breast are rolled:
 A purple cloak, majestic, that descends
 In lengthened folds, its last adjustment lends.

XXXV.

This foreign beauty, this aspiring bride,
 In triumph seated by the monarch's side,
 Forgetting Adeline, and all her woes,
 To thoughts intrusive bids her bosom close:
 The worldly incense, poured on every part
 From the thronged field, intoxicates her heart:
 The solemn curse, that bore celestial ire
 To bands contracted by profane desire,

Against the right of former marriage ties,
 Seems vain and powerless to her dazzled eyes:
 A sire's ambition whelms the victim child,
 And Didier's errors have her soul defiled.

XXXVI.

Meanwhile the train along the billowy mass
 Of that vast multitude is seen to pass:
 Clearing the barrier's bound, the regal car
 Now rolls amid the glittering files of war:
 In sign of honour, as it onward tends,
 From the ranged lines each lofty banner bends:
 Viewing the much-loved consort of their king,
 These sudden accents through the cohorts ring:
 "Glory to Charles! and may his queen control
 " With lasting power his captivated soul!
 " Long may they reign o'er France, illustrious pair!
 " The bravest monarch and the brightest fair!"

XXXVII.

" Mine, mine alone is she, the brightest fair,"
 Cries Milo's son, starting with frantic air.
 " He, who adores Angelica, shall scourge
 " The guilty rashness of the vows ye urge!"
 Thus Roland cried: and with impetuous force
 Onwards he darts, and stops the chariot's course;
 And, as each knight with burning glance he braves,
 Before their view his brandished faulchion waves:
 Deep silence reigns; but Charles with passion blind,
 Love, rage, and vengeance in his soul combined,
 Rose in his chariot, and with weapon bared,
 The furious onset of the chieftain dared!

XXXVIII.

" Rash man!" the monarch cries; " this vengeful steel
 " Swift on thy insult shall thy death-stroke deal!"
 The regal rank and nature's voice control
 The rising fire in Roland's moody soul:
 Before his sovereign's view with slackening pace
 He stops, he falters, and averts his face;

Yet still around he rolls his glaring eyes:
 Meanwhile a troop, that with tumultuous cries
 Before him speeds, prepares with valiant hand
 His bosom's fiery transports to withstand.

XXXIX.

Useless exertion! Roland grasps his spear,
 And stands alone 'gainst thousand warriors near:
 "Fly!" he exclaims: "Charles boasts not yet the might
 "To wrest from Roland's hand the arms of fight!
 "Base, as ye are, 'gainst Roland ye inveigh
 "That wild disorders on his senses prey;
 "Yet here, displayed before the world entire,
 "Charles and his wanderings your respect acquire!
 "Ah! if indeed by long continued wo
 "This mind be clouded, yet shall Roland show
 "A heart to her he loves for ever true,
 "And honour still shall Roland's path pursue.

XL.

"But ye, who, trampling on chivalric law,
 "Marked to a cloister's gloom your queen withdraw,
 "By all abandoned, yet in crowds repair
 "To grace the chariot of this haughty fair,
 "And, as ye follow, still, with flattering voice,
 "Of Pepin's son approve the worthless choice,
 "Honour and chivalry, your native land,
 "Your prince, a nobler service might demand!
 "From frenzied Roland learn what duty speaks:
 "Scandal to him the bond of love who breaks!
 "The brand of equal infamy they share,
 "The false in love, in wedlock, and in war."

XLI.

He spoke; when Oliver, who felt his breast
 With all the bitterness of grief oppressed,
 In haste approach: "Oh! Milo's son, suspend
 "This rash defiance, or destroy thy friend:
 "Oh! cease with bold bravado to pursue
 "The prince who claims our service as his due:

**" Oh! cease at length; nor let thine old compeers
" Hear threats and insult lavished on their ears:"**
So speaks the warrior, and to Roland goes:
His sword and armour on the ground he throws
Before his view, and now with friendly hold
The raging paladin his arms enfold.

XLII.

Hail, genuine friendship! ancient knighthood's charm;
Thou only Roland's fury could'st disarm:
The well-known tones his yielding heart enthral;
He gazes, stops, and listens to the call:
His friend withdraws him from the car of state,
Whose triumph fed the fury of his hate:
Still with the noble pair is Roger found:
Abreast their coursers sweep the tented ground:
Yet Roland threatens: though subdued he seem,
From his fierce eye the flames of anger gleam.

XLIII.

Thus if in towns a noisy crowd surround
The sylvan monarch, when in durance bound,
Rousing his might—in frequent roar he speaks,
And, spreading wild dismay around him, seeks
To burst the iron barriers of his den,
Shake off repose, and loose his rage again:
Sudden his guardian checks the fierce advance—
Soon as this faithful friend attracts his glance,
Calm and submit the lordly lion grows,
Following his steps, yet roaring as he goes.

XLIV.

The busy flatterers see the chief depart,
And stir resentment in the monarch's heart.
But most Armelia's voice to vengeance warms:
Her faded triumphs, and her humbled charms,
Her ties, her rights, illegal called and vain,
Mark Roland's deed with guilt of deepest stain.

Scarce Roland's blood can wash that guilt away;
 Hatred and grief by turns her bosom sway,
 And cloud her beauties; nor can aught assuage
 The frantic transports of her jealous rage.

XLV.

But Pepin's son his rising wrath subdued,
 And with fixed eye his warlike eagles viewed.
 'T would seem that Roland, by his frenzied cries,
 Bade through his soul a beam of light arise:
 Painful remembrance on his spirit bears:
 Pensive, unmoved, his courtiers pleas he hears.
 Though outraged majesty and injured love
 The offended prince to deep resentment move,
 And Roland's life should for the crime atone,
 Still the deep trouble of his heart is shown.

XLVI.

Yet does the monarch fancy that he hears
 The voice of Roland sounding in his ears:
 In silent mood, beneath the golden bees,
 He takes his seat, and at his footstool sees
 Barons and knights, the chosen sons of France,
 Each, in his rank, successively advance:
 Placed at his side, by restless feeling torn,
 Armelia now detests this fatal morn.
 She wishes all its festal pomp away;
 A rival's name has filled her with dismay.
 Now first she trembles, and remorse has found
 Beneath the imperial robe its power to wound.

XLVII.

Monclar, Alphonso, Egbert now succeed
 To the proud marks for chivalry decreed:
 Charles to each warrior knight, thus lately made,
 Silent and sorrowful commits the blade,
 Destined against the impious foe to fight,
 And the bright broom, that beams with golden light.

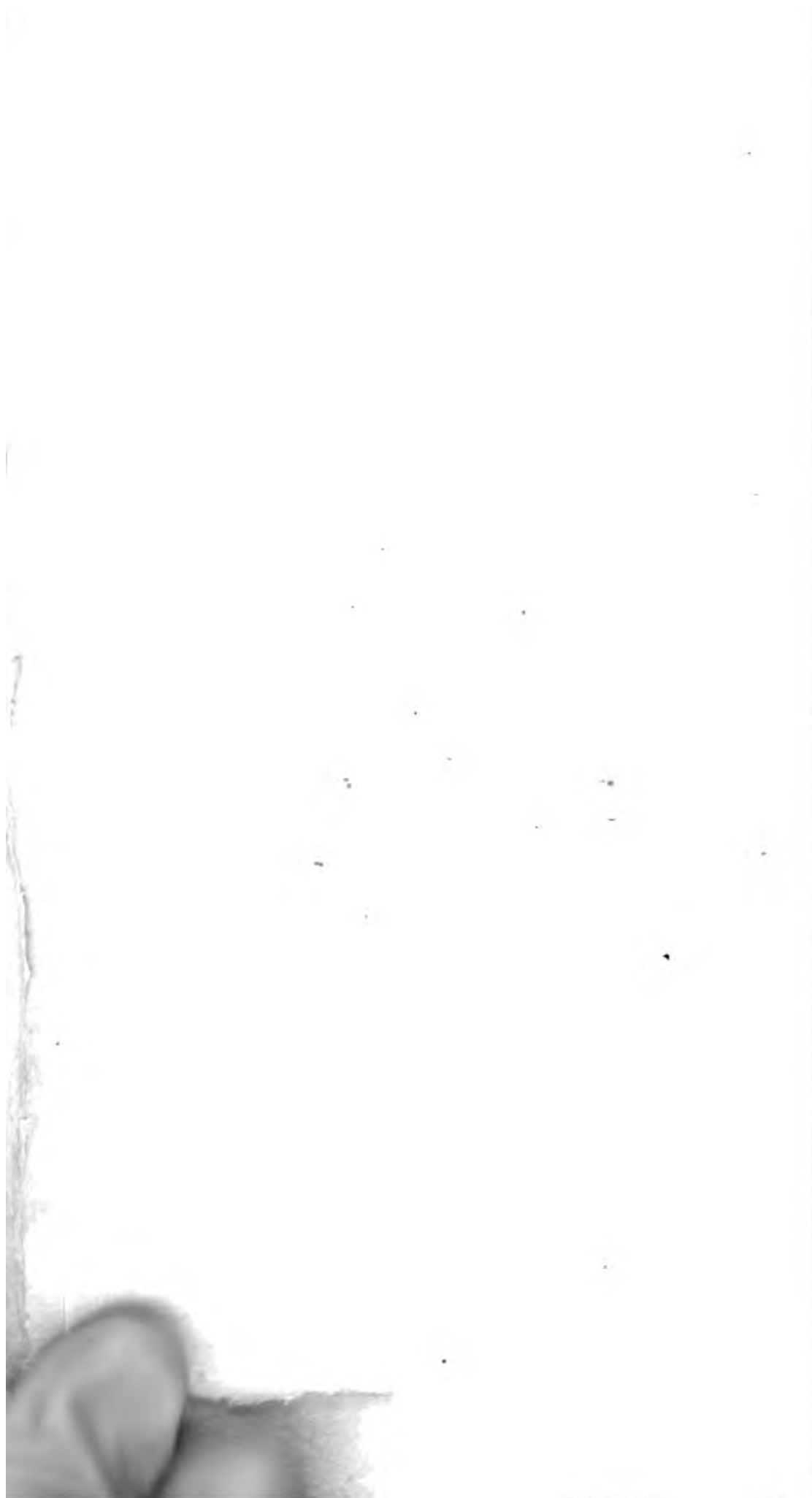
The peers remark his brows with sadness bent,(6)
 And gathering shades of inward discontent.
 Still on his sister, speechless with amaze,
 Confused, Tassillon keeps his settled gaze;
 While secret curses rising in his thought,
 Dwell on the ills this fatal morn has brought.

XLVIII.

Thus then an atom's force, a moment's space,
 Can all the pride of kingly power efface!
 So on the foaming main the seaman's eye
 Sees all his hopes in disappointment die:
 The sail that lately to the breeze was given,
 And fluttering played, in backward folds is driven:
 Blown from the driving North, and stormy West,
 The boisterous winds the liquid reign contest;
 The rival blasts with equal fury urge
 The billowy plain, and share the lifted surge:
 Dread silence lowers where joy was heard aloud,
 And the sun dies beneath a murky cloud.

XLIX.

Yet oft the ship that with the tempest drives,
 Midst shelves and broken rocks in port arrives!
 Thus, son of Pepin, from thy grief proceeds
 A presage certain of thy noble deeds,
 Thy glories yet to be: celestial care,
 Through Roland's accents, would thy soul prepare:
 The veil of error lifted from thy sight,
 Again thine eyes are open to the light:
 Then hasten, prince: Oh! hasten to restrain
 This dangerous passion: let thy foot steps gain
 The lonely tomb, within whose cavern deep
 The peaceful ashes of thy fathers sleep.



CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO III.

NIGHT OF THE SEVENTH DAY.

Translated by Dr. Butler.

ARGUMENT.

**Hymn of the heavenly tribes. The twelve disciples.
Message of Elias. The cloister of Mount Cassin.**

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO III.

I.

THE heavenly oracle with secret care
Filled Charles's breast, and wrought conviction there.
An instant can reverse, at Heaven's command,
The firmest purpose human power has planned.
Less sure, less active is the lightning's force,
Less fleet the viewless whirlwind in its course,
Ambition's daring hopes in mid career,
Or the swift ray shot from the solar sphere.
O breath of Heaven! thy secret influence shed,
At once o'er Paris, Rome, Spoleto spread,
Bade the dark mists of Charles's error cease,
And Didier's fears, and Adrian's hopes increase.

II.

Hosannas loud of peace and praise employ
The tribes that fill the changeless realms of joy.
Voice, lute and lyre, and harps of Israel
The wide-spread glories of the Church foretell.
Rome, Rome, immortal Rome, the spheres resound,
And balmy clouds of incense breathing round,
With grateful odours fill the eternal shrine.
Lowly at once the tribes of Heaven incline,
And thus before the immortal Virgin raise
Their sweet and choral symphonies of praise.

III.

" O thou, in whom the Eternal wills to place
 " His pleasure, queen of Heaven and source of grace
 " Star of the morning, Virgin mother blest,
 " Be love to thee and ceaseless praise address!
 " Both Heaven and Earth unite to bless thy sway:
 " Crushed, at thy feet Hell's daring legions lay;
 " And the wide world, o'erwhelmed with grief and
 pain,
 " Drank from thy breasts the stream of life again.
 " Thou hast reversed the lot of Adam's race;
 " Thine arms the children of the cross embrace:
 " Star of the morning, Virgin mother blest,
 " Be love to thee and ceaseless praise address!

IV.

" Doctrines of blood, which guilt and error stain,
 " Still o'er a hundred suffering nations reign:
 " O mother of mankind, thy work achieve;
 " From pagan rites the guilty world relieve!
 " Their untaught hearts from idol worship lead;
 " And fit, O fit them for the gospel seed!
 " A docile mind to wayward Christians give,
 " Who to thy faith and fold rebellious live.
 " In fields, in cities, in the savage horde,
 " O be the Lord of all by all adored!
 " May the wide world the Christian yoke receive:
 " O mother of mankind, thy work achieve!"

V.

Touched to her soul, the Virgin as they sing
 Bends on her throne to Heaven's eternal King.
 From the bright triangle three rays direct
 Dart through mid Heaven and strike the twelve elect
 Inspired and guided by the flame divine,
 They pierce the splendours of the eternal shrine,
 Beloved disciples of our Lord on earth,
 His Church they built and cherished in its birth.

And still in Heaven's abodes, their guardian eyes
 Watch o'er its growth and glorious destinies.
 Wrapt in the cloud of fire the chosen band
 Before the Holiest of the Holy stand.

VI.

Peter their chief, who feeds the Christian flock,
 And holds the keys of Heaven, the Church's rock:
 In Joppa's walls the infernal power he broke,
 And rescued Antioch from its guilty yoke:
 Then in the eternal city fixed his chair,
 The first of pontiffs and of martyrs there.(1)
 On Patra's rocks, with holy ardour fired,
 Andrew beneath the gentile rage expired.
 Three chosen brethren of illustrious line,
 Blest sons of Cleophas and Mary shine.
 In Sion, Beryt, Mauritania slain,
 Worthy their race, the martyr's crown they gain.(2)

VII.

The gospel light o'er India Thomas spread;(3)
 In Hieraple the primal Christian bled;
 Matthias conquered Egypt's idol pride;
 Beneath the knife Armenia's teacher died;
 From Levi, Persia learnt the sacred word;
 First of the twelve James felt the tyrant's sword;
 The caldron's torments did his brother prove,
 Divine recorder of his master's love;
 From Patmos' rock the sacred exile's pen
 Revealed the mystic ways of Heaven to men.(4)

VIII.

These Christian fathers saw the Church, with dread,
 By schism distracted and by sects misled.
 Pride and division has the East possest,
 Once by the cradle of the gospel blest;

The East now threatens Italy with blood.
 The hydra heresy, with venom'd brood,
 Inroaching step by step, and hour by hour,
 Mocks Peter's successor, and braves his power.
 But mortal's rage, and Hell's united train
 Assault the inheritance of Christ in vain:
 Yet Sion, and the shepherd of her fold,
 How long must bondage, impious bondage, hold?

IX.

Adrian by foes, by perils compass'd round,
 O'erspreads the immortal brows with grief profound.
 For songs of glory and triumphant strains,
 Silence in Heaven and melancholy reigns.
 Will God the tyrants of the earth o'erthrow,
 Or Rome still tremble at her impious foe?
 The twelve elect of Christ, with anxious eye,
 Read the dark volume of futurity.
 God gives his oracle to these alone,
 To all but these in Heaven's blest courts unknown.

X.

Sudden the deep and vollied thunders roll,
 Denouncing vengeance on the guilty soul;
 Quick darts the lightning through the flaming skies,
 And lo, before the angelic hierarchies,
 Disparted are the floods of viewless light,
 The chosen twelve restoring to their sight:
 These Cephas marshals with triumphant mien.
 Descending thus from Sinai's top was seen,
 While lightnings blazed and thunders rolled around,
 His radiant brows with beaming glory bound,
 Moses, Heaven's favoured minister of yore,
 When God's own laws to God's own fold he bore.

XI.

Peter to Heaven's assembled tribes reveals
 The blest events which Time's dark womb conceals:

" Glory to God most High! his red right hand
 " Shall strike with fierce rebuke the impious band.
 " Fair breaks the dawn, and Sion's walls at length
 " Shall shine, arrayed in power and girt with strength.
 " Soon shall the fierce and pagan chiefs o'ercome,
 " Crown the bright triumphs of immortal Rome.
 " O'er Hell victorious and her heathen foe,
 " No earthly prince the holy See shall know,
 " But Sion's towers by Sion's Lord be blest,
 " And Rome's high throne upon her altars rest.

XII.

" The mighty work of Constantine, Martel,
 " And Pepin, shall be finished; malgre Hell
 " And Hell's dark powers, the Church once poor and
 low,
 " Shall rise, and grasp the sovereign sceptre now.
 " This Heaven ordains in mercy to mankind.
 " Secure from war, Rome's high decrees shall bind
 " All earthly kings, the tyrant's power control,
 " And spread the Christian faith from pole to pole;
 " To unknown climes its glorious light display,
 " And bless their nations with the gospel ray.

XIII.

" May nought the sacred ark of Christ profane!
 " But if with pride elate her pontiffs reign,
 " O may the Church in that dark hour of wo,
 " No sad secession of her children know!
 " May nought the people of the cross divide!
 " When the bad reign the good are sorest tried.
 " Now God vouchsafes upon his Church to pour
 " Each earthly blessing from his boundless store.
 " The day of great eventful change is near,
 " That frees the Church from danger and from fear.
 " Her wrongs to punish and her rights protect,
 " Charles and the Franks does gracious Heaven elect.

XIV.

"If Pepin's son his passions can subdue,
 "His be the mission and the glory too:
 "Empire or ruin on his choice await,
 "His own decision must pronounce his fate.
 "If to her foes he leave the Church a prey,
 "Another hand shall Clovis' sceptre sway.
 "Some cloistered brother must with holy care,
 "So Heaven ordains, to Charles this message bear.
 "Father of Cenobites, great Carmel's seer,
 "Charles must from Adelard Heaven's purpose hear.
 "Go, then, obedient to the Almighty's will,
 "Let thy prompt zeal His high command fulfil."

XV.

He spoke.—The witness of each human deed
 Bows to the mandate with submissive heed.
 Even now the heavenly whirlwind gathered round
 Bears him towards distant spheres through space profound;
 While at his bidding, Jared's holy son(5)
 Graves the presumptuous deed by Didier done,
 His crime recording on the page of kings.
 His flight through trackless air Elias wings,
 Nor rests the minister of Heaven's commands
 Till on the confines of our earth he stands.

XVI.

▲ woollen vestment wraps his limbs around;
 With leathern zone his loins are humbly bound;
 His beard of silver hue that loosely flows
 Wide o'er his form a wavy shadow throws:
 His brow majestic, in length of years
 With time coeval, no impression bears
 Of mortal age, and on his lips confessed,
 Wisdom, celestial Wisdom, seems to rest.
 His eye, where God's own inspiration glows,
 In glance of radiant flame the prophet shows;

And beams of fire, in broad effulgence spread,
Divide, and sparkle, as they crown his head.

XVII.

Upon the confines of the world a cloud
Heaves its dark bosom to receive and shroud
The Thisbite prophet: instant he descends,
And, as o'er Judah's ancient land he bends
His downward eye, on Carmel's mountain-height,
The bane of Baäl's priests, his glances light:(6)
There, where the sacrilegious horde of yore
Fell near Jezreel, and drenched the hill with gore,
When under Ahab's yoke Samaria groaned,
And present wo for Israel's guilt atoned.

XVIII.

Celestial vengeance here has traced its path,
O'er all the land, in characters of wrath:
Cedron, Jerusalem, and Calvary's side,
Still mark at distance where the Saviour died:
The holy prophet, touched with sacred love,
Bends to the hallowed mountain from above:
O'er the dark deep then like an arrow flies,
Till the new Sion spread beneath him lies:(7)
Sudden he stops: and hovering o'er its towers,
Surveys the temple, where the infernal powers
Their rage direct, and, turning from the sight,
Swift to Mount-Cassin steers his active flight.(8)

XIX.

Hail, regal cloisters, hail, retired abode!
Where empty grandeur drops its weary load:
Ye marbles, hail! where earthly kings were known
With frequent knee to press the sacred stone:
The stormy gusts that rend the human breast,
At sight of you are hushed to peaceful rest:
The weak, the mighty, in this hallowed seat,
A refuge sure, an equal welcome meet:

Here Drogon, Carloman, from care repose,
 And Rachis' age in tranquil tenor flows:
 Within your walls, with eye impartial seen,
 Monarchs by you are levelled with the mean.

XX.

Ten years the regal sceptre Drogon swayed,
 His laws Friuli's willing land obeyed;
 His proud career the martial prince pursued,
 And conquest new to conquest still accrued.
 At length he learnt how empty is renown,
 How vain the pageant splendour of a crown;
 Heaven warmed his heart, Heaven only filled his mind:
 At Stephen's feet his sceptre he resign'd;
 Like sainted Benedict the world forsook,
 And near Modena's walls the habit took.

XXI.

Led by the bright example of their lord,
 His subjects Heaven at Heaven's own shrines adored.
 They, who in vice or indolence had lain,
 In these blest mansions turned to good again:
 Soon did Nonanthul, Fanon soon descry(9)
 Their spires, and turrets lifted to the sky:
 Two thousand cenobites have since obeyed
 The rigid rules their pious founder made,
 And, in their late-erected cloisters, spent
 A life austere, to useful labours lent.

XXII.

Fruitful Nonanthul! on thy desert soil
 Not yet did busy population toil:
 One ceaseless marsh, upon thy surface found,
 Covered the land, and blackened all around:
 Within thy forests, desolate and wide,
 Beneath the treacherous shade the wanderer died:
 What though from Rome the legionary train
 Was sometimes sent, and stationed on thy plain,

These far-famed bands, in their victorious road,
On thee but warfare, and its wo, bestowed;
Through Christian monks abundance blessed thy
 grounds:
The conqueror wastes, the cloistered brother founds.

XXIII.

Soon round the sacred dome a city grew:
Soon rose the palace in its ramparts new:
The pilgrim soon, the aged and the poor,
From worldly sorrow found a refuge sure:
A thousand warriors had of old been paid
By Drogon's wealth to bear the murderous blade;
Sudden these riches, to the poor consigned,
Rescued from wo a thousand of mankind:
Each breast towards him, the benefactor, glows
With tender awe: he only seeks repose.

XXIV.

Yet bore he rule: lowly and meek in mind
Even that monastic sceptre he resign'd.
Placed by his holy brethren at their head,
Even from that poor pre-eminence he fled;
And, self-deposed, forsook Nonanthul's seat,
To seek mount Cassin and its lone retreat.
Vain were it now amid these scenes to name
A prince, once noted for his deeds of fame;
For, losing all remembrances of men,
Drogon, the prince, was lowly Anselm then.

XXV.

Far from mankind, in study and repose,
Aided by Heaven, to lights divine he rose.
Exalted truth and meditation knew
No shelter then, but what in deserts grew:
There the fair mask, which ignorance had worn,
Was ravished from her brow; and backwards borne

Through many an age of Error's gloomy night
 Still the recluse would dart his piercing sight:
 Departed times, that long had buried lain,
 Sprung from the sepulchre to light again;
 And, nursed with care, within the monk's abode
 The torch of History, Art, and Science glowed.

XXVI.

At times the offspring of the great Martel
 Near the sage Anselm would delight to dwell:
 That son, the first who Carloman was called,
 Whose boiling wrath Germania had appalled;
 But the bright conquest in Thuringia gained,
 Blasted the glories which his arms obtained:
 Five thousand captives at his order bled!
 Fierce lived his fury though the war was dead:
 Deaf was his ear to Misery's plaintive sound,
 And waves of blood unmix'd o'erflow'd the ground.(10)

XXVII.

From that blind transport of his coward wrath
 Conscience pursued his soul, and racked his path.
 Vainly their servile zeal did Flattery's train
 Increase to draw him from deserved pain:
 No more on earth could Carloman repose,
 Till Heaven displayed, in pity to his woes,
 Its grace divine: for twice ten years renewed,
 The prince for pardon in these walls had sued:
 His long remorse approaches to its end,
 For Life's last traces to their issue tend.

XXVIII.

The attentive world his bright example viewed:
 His steady zeal the Lombard king pursued,(11)
 Rachis, who, lost in plenitude of power,
 Leant to bad counsels in a blinded hour:
 Against Perugia's walls, whose city lay
 Then subject to the pontiff's holy sway,

The Lombard army by the king was led,
 Till to the sorrowing place the pontiff sped;
 At Zachary's sight, the victor downwards bore
 His standard, and his impious plans forswore.

XXIX.

Not yet content, the sovereign pontiff told
 How Rachis' days in emptiness had rolled,
 While, as he spoke, the eternal Spirit hung,
 In words of fire, upon his glowing tongue:
 The beams of faith, more pure than orient light,
 Dispelled his errors from the monarch's sight.
 Celestial Mildness suddenly assumed
 The place, where sullen Valour only gloomed:
 Eager to emulate the example, shown
 By Pepin's brother, he resign'd his throne,
 Renounced its pomp; and Cassin's cloister saw
 Rachis, the proud, obedient to its law.

XXX.

Who can o'er these, the elect of Christ, preside?
 'Tis the sage Adelard, whose wisdom tried⁽¹²⁾
 Was wont the weal of monarchs to advance;
 Who, placed by birthright near the throne of France,
 Was used, of old, with wisdom's practised sway,
 Of Pepin's sons to guide the youthful day:
 His care severe, relieved by milder arts,
 Called forth the germ of virtue in their hearts.
 The hoary sire, when Pepin's death ensued,
 Beneath the shafts of Flattery's train subdued,
 Though slowly yielding, was at length constrained
 To quit a court with guilt too deeply stained.

XXXI.

Meanwhile, enflamed by calumny accurst,
 'Twixt Charles and Carloman division burst:

These adverse monarchs caused a moment's dread,
 Lest hostile Discord should her triumphs spread:
 The death of Carloman this fear dispelled!
 The rival sceptres, now together held
 By the same hand, o'er one dominion swayed.
 But when united to the Lombard maid
 Charles wronged his guiltless and illustrious spouse,
 Adelard in Cassin's cloister took the vows.

XXXII.

The blind delusions of the prince he wept,
 Whose infant years beneath his guidance stept;
 Adelinde's affront, Laurentia's exile, wrought,
 Ev'n in mount Cassin's desert, on his thought;
 While Didier still advancing, and his arms
 Crowned with success, redoubled his alarms:
 Stretched at the altar, wo-worn and alone,
 O'er the Frank's faded glories would he groan,
 While in the royal anchoret's earnest prayer
 His church and country bore a mingled share.

XXXIII.

Now o'er the world as spread the veil of night,
 Lost were the beetling Apennines to sight;
 The bell had sounded forth the hour of sleep,
 And all the cloister lay in silence deep:
 No foot the temple trod: a glimmering flame,
 That through the ambient darkness feebly came,
 Shot through the dusky aisles its quivering ray,
 Where shrowded bones of many a martyr lay:
 The golden lamp, with solitary gleam,
 Still through the shade prolonged its dying beam.

XXXIV.

The restless Adelard flies from slumber sweet:
 The sacred vault re-echoes to his feet:
 Christ's image now with holy awe he sees,
 And longs to cast his sorrow at his knees:

Still for the glory of the Franks concerned,
 A zealous ardour in his bosom burned:
 Elect by heavenly wisdom to fulfil
 The august intentions of the Eternal will,
 On through the long-drawn aisles, with footstep grave,
 Slowly he treads the solitary nave:
 The cross, sure pledge of safety to mankind,
 With tears he steeped, as he to prayer inclined.

XXXV.

“ Destroy, great God, this league of foreign foes!
 “ Let all, who dare thy hallowed rites oppose,
 “ All, ’gainst the Roman pontiff who conspire,
 “ Now bear impressed the signet of thine ire:
 “ Let not the offspring of the great Martel,
 “ By thee abandoned, in his errors dwell.
 “ When Europe erst, by dire divisions rent,
 “ To the stern Saracen submissive, bent
 “ Beneath the yoke, at thy Almighty word
 “ Martel arose: and from the pagan lord(13)
 “ Torn was the crown, in shatters dashed around:
 “ Be Charles, like him, the Christian hero found!

XXXVI.

“ Lord! may thy grace appear, and touch his heart!
 “ Frustrate the plots of Didier’s treacherous art!
 “ Grant to the wife again her rightful claim,
 “ And quench in wrath the usurper’s impious flame!
 “ Oh! let the Church more closely still embrace,
 “ In new-formed bands, the children of my race!
 “ And, still submissive to the faith divine,
 “ Let the Frank crown with heavenly lustre shine!
 “ Summoned by Didier’s daring call, a band
 “ Of Greeks appears upon Italia’s land:
 “ Despatch the archangel warrior in his might,
 “ And smite, O God, their impious union smite!”

XXXVII.

Scarce had he spoke, when o'er the altar raised,
 A sparkling flame in surgy volumes blazed:
 Struck by the dazzling lustre of its ray,
 Prostrate, o'erawed, before the shrine he lay.
 A voice sublime then vibrates on his ear
 In solemn tones; " Martel's descendant, hear
 " The sovereign word of Israel's God, and know
 " Elias, sent his sacred will to show.
 " He hears the entreaties of his much loved race,
 " And deigns by thee to signalize his grace.

XXXVIII.

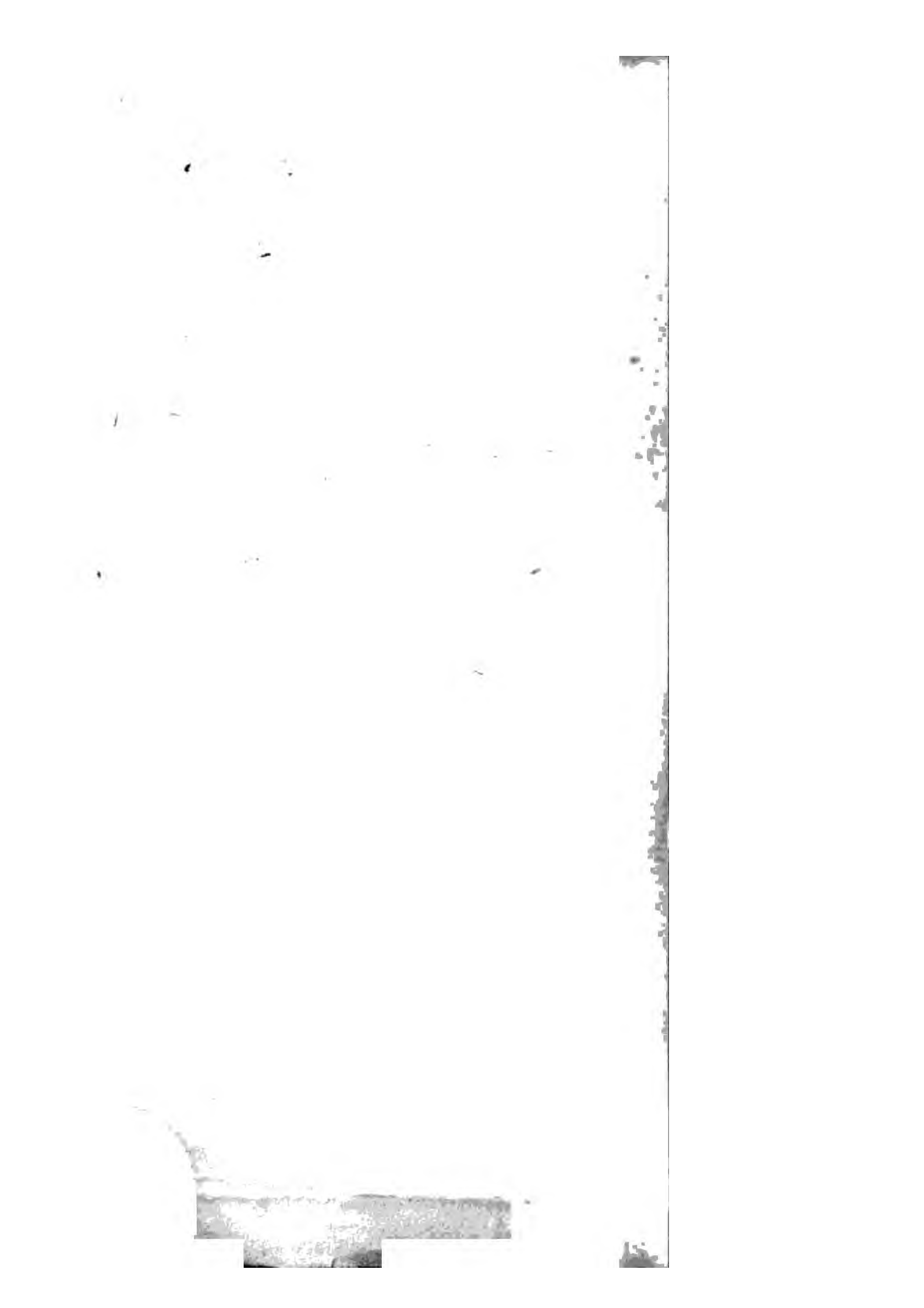
" By thee the veil of error shall be rent!
 " Charles, at thine awful warning, shall repent,
 " Shall own his errors; and the impious host
 " Shall mourn in death their prize and honour lost.
 " Vainly each Alpine pass the Lombards guard;
 " For lo! the Almighty ruler has prepared
 " Thy surer path above the clouds of air:
 " To the Frank king the sacred promise bear;
 " Swift to the Pontiff's succour let him speed,
 " For Heaven the Lombards' downfall has decreed.

XXXIX.

" Thy mission take; its sanction is my word:
 " By thee let Charles to duty be restored:
 " Bid him on Israel's God confiding stay,
 " Bid him to God his purest homage pay,
 " And then to battle! his destructive blade,
 " With answering vigour, shall his valour aid,
 " Shall to the dust his rash opponents smite,
 " Till twenty nations bend beneath his might:
 " God loves thy race: arise, my son, and tell
 " His will—that Charles and France shall vanquish
 Hell!"

XL.

**He spoke, and vanished with the lightning's speed:
Fresh hopes to care in Adelard succeed.
He feels new courage spread its growing flame
O'er all his breast, and animate his frame;
When lo, before his raised and wondering eye,
On waves of air a radiant car is nigh:
Rapt from the earth, the meek recluse attains,
With instant swiftness, the celestial plains;
And distant now, beneath his feet depressed,
Italia's mountains bow the lofty crest:
The eternal Spirit, as the chariot glides
'Twixt earth and heaven, its course stupendous guides.**



CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO IV.

NIGHT OF THE SEVENTH DAY.

Translated by Dr. Butler.

ARGUMENT.

**Tombs of Martel and Pepin: apparition of Adelard.
The felon knights and Eginhard. Confession of
Ganelon of Mentz.**

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO IV.

I.

MID Paris, formed by Seine's encircling waves,
A sacred isle once held our monarchs' graves.
There rose a cross beneath the cypress shade,(1)
Where death and stillness o'er the asylum swayed;
But ages since have past, and time and toil
Raised a new city o'er the mouldering soil:
The spot, where once the sacred pile was found,
Lutetia's precincts have encompassed round;
Still do her sons, unconscious as they stray,
Tread where the monarchs of our fathers lay.

II.

Deep in the bosom of the sacred wood,
A pious monument erected stood:
A noble structure, such as might withstand,
And mock, the touch of Time's destructive hand.
Here, on this spot revered, in former day,
Charles loved in solitude severe to stray.
Each morning saw some recent offering paid,
In faithful memory, to his father's shade:
Stretched at the sepulchre, from Flattery's train
Remote, and gathering all his thoughts again,
Truth undisguised the sovereign there perceived,
Truth, seldom heard, nor oft by kings received,

III.

No mortal else upon the island trode;
 Charles only visited the deep abode:
 But since his soul a guilty passion knew,
 From these sepulchral altars he withdrew.
 Fearing the offended spirit of the dead,
 The wholesome converse of the tomb he fled,
 With holy awe possessed: he felt within
 Need of the court, and its tumultuous din:
 His empty days amid adulterous joys
 Rolled, like the torrent, in discordant noise.

IV.

But 'midst the fatal transports of his love,
 Heaven deigned his frantic passion to reprove.
 Heaven, whose high ways, unsearchable, but true,
 Oft, for our weal, bids good from ill accrue:
 For now the monarch feels an unseen hand
 Press on his soul, resistless in command:
 He shuns his late-crowned queen: before his eyes
 His father's form, his Adelinde arise:
 Confused, alarmed, the generous monarch hears
 Their stern reproof still sounding in his ears.

V.

Weighed down by pensive Melancholy's force,
 A mingled thought of love and of remorse
 Draws him, unconscious, to the dismal shade,
 Where, in their tombs, his princely sires are laid:
 Reckless he trod the lonely fields: his breast,
 In bursting sighs, his restless pain confessed:
 The stings of sorrow, edged with bitterest smart,
 Struck through his anguished soul their keenest dart.
 Some secret power his wandering footsteps led
 To the lone mansions of the mighty dead.

VI.

When fancied dangers in our dreams are brought,
The movement thus anticipates the thought;
Surprised, we waken, and, in wild amaze,
Still on the form that mocked our fancy gaze.
While slumbers yet the torpid will restrain,
Terror is roused, and from a phantom vain
Already drawn, we rush with instant speed
Where'er with rapid force the senses lead,
Ere well the spirit, restless and astray,
As yet can fix the object of dismay.

VII.

The day's bright orb now sinks to ocean's bed;
Slow rise the shadows o'er the mountain's head;
Charles, yet conducted by its dying ray,
With pensive look advances on his way:
He seeks the bridge, which, wrapt in lonely gloom,
Unites the monarchs' palace with their tomb;
He sees the cross that marks the sacred seat
Where earthly grandeur finds its last retreat;
Views the dark cypress waving o'er the isle,
And seeks with hasty foot the lonely pile.

VIII.

Upon the steps, o'er which the porch arose,
Long grows the grass; rank briars the entrance close:
Confused, he stops; he feels the sharpened sting
Of quick remorse within his bosom spring.
Never, while Adelinde his love possest,
Had Pepin's image faded from his breast;
But now, alas! the shade, august and loved,
Seems as his lengthened absence it reproved:
The monarch passed the arcades' sepulchral round:
Within the hallowed dome's recess profound,
Remotely placed, already Pepin's tomb
Was deeply shrouded in nocturnal gloom.

IX.

As yet did twilight, from its feeble beam,
 Diffuse round Martel's tomb a pallid gleam:
 These simple words were sculptured on the verge,
 "TO ROME'S AVENGER, TO THE PAYNIM'S SCOURGE."
 Attentive, motionless, with heart subdued,
 Touched by remorse the wretched monarch stood:
 His own conviction in the line he read;
 A blush at Martel's praise his brow o'erspread.
 Ne'er, while his sires survived, knew Rome alarms
 At threatened insult from unholy arms.

X.

Pondering the lesson which the tomb had taught,
 The monarch's breast is whelmed in restless thought:
 "Leaving the Church defenceless 'gainst her foes,
 "Two years this arm has languished in repose!"
 He spoke; and hears, exhaled in deep drawn sighs,
 Through the dim vault a feeble murmur rise:
 It seemed in sound as though the voice of prayer
 From Pepin's sepulchre arise to air:
 Charles shudders, stops, proceeds, and sudden sees
 An ancient man on bent and trembling knees.

XI.

"Rash man," he cries, "whoe'er thou art, draw
 nigh;
 "Approach, and fearless to thy king reply:
 "A stranger here? and knowest thou not the law
 "That bids each common footstep far withdraw
 "From this sepulchral isle? Why cross the waves,
 "And how? Or why above these royal graves
 "Shed'st thou thy tears, and pour'st thy lonely
 sighs?"
 "My son, my much-loved son," the old man cries,
 "Thy voice my troubled soul's affliction charms:
 "Be pressed in Adelard's paternal arms.

XII.

" For thee I waited; God has led me here:
 " If I have loved thee through each infant year,
 " Hear me, my son; that love would'st thou requite,
 " Let faith thine heart re-open to its light:
 " Henceforth by Pepin's sure example tread.
 " When Bertrade's husband was of old misled
 " By flames adulterous, when the king would fain
 " Have burst the incumbrance of an irksome chain,
 " God's vicar came, condemned his impious aims,
 " And sanctioned marriage in its former claims.

XIII.

" Through this high power, that emanates from God,
 " On Pepin's throne thy mother still abode;
 " But for the Roman pontiff and his aid,
 " Bertrade to thee for portion had conveyed,
 " Thee and thy brother, in the empire's stead,
 " Shame everlasting; Pepin bowed his head,(2)
 " And owned the pontiff's power: God blessed his
 days:
 " But thou, my son, thou tread'st in sinful ways:
 " Forget'st that Adelinde abandoned lies
 " A year entire, and at the altar sighs.

XIV.

" The youthful Emma, once thy dear delight,
 " In vain with tears implores a mother's sight:
 " Here, in a foreign female's arms embraced,
 " Thy days are languishing in guilty waste;
 " Armelia's father 'mid thine ease profane,
 " Dares 'gainst the Church his impious plots maintain;
 " Ten thousand Greeks, that strengthen his com-
 mand,
 " Have joined already with the Lombard band;
 " The sacred courts the blood of Wilfrid dies:
 " Son, hear the Church, in terror as she cries.

XV.

"Thou must accomplish Heaven's almighty word:
 "Thy fame to merit, be thy crimes abhorred.
 "Above thy passions now triumphant rise:
 "The Lombards' fall is written in the skies.
 "To thee in Heaven's high name I speak: thy blade
 "By slaughter followed, shall thy valour aid;
 "In dust the boldness of thy foes shall lay,
 "And twenty nations shall confess thy sway.
 "The hour is come; the race of great Martel,
 "Aided and loved by Heaven, shall vanquish Hell!"

XVI.

Adelard advances now, with brow serene,
 Towards Pepin's son: a beam of light is seen
 Sudden to dart athwart the gloom profound,
 And thrice the thunder's voice is heard around:
 The hero cries, while in his arms he pressed
 The aged man: "The truth o'erpowers my breast:
 "Thou see'st my sense in trouble lost: elect,
 "And called of Heaven, let Heaven my sword direct.
 "Shades of my ancestors, my vows receive!
 "Guide me, my father; let me all achieve."

XVII.

In tears the sire his tenderness expressed:
 "My lot is finished, every wish possessed.
 "Now without pain the murderers I can wait,
 "Whose sword shall terminate mine aged date.
 "Yes, Heaven already calls me from thine eyes:
 "My son, my king, the earth already flies
 "Before my darkening vision; not to me
 "Is given thy future destinies to see;
 "No more on earth we meet: the hours impend,
 "In which this mortal pilgrimage must end."

XVIII.

wift, at the words, a cloud around him rolled:
 "Oh! yet," the king exclaims, "thy flight withhold:
 Not yet, my father, be thy needful aid
 Lost to thy son." While thus the monarch said,
 Before his sight a car celestial moves:
 God, who by open miracle approves
 His high commandment, to the troubled heart
 Of Pepin's son would confidence impart:
 From North to South, with swift but equal force,
 The holy sage is guided on his course,
 And as he traverses the heavenly height,
 Marks the blue vault with lines of flashing light.

XIX.

Thus from the sphere divine, a flaming ball,
 That through night's gloom precipitates its fall,
 In long-drawn furrows marks its fiery trace!
 The traveller checks his solitary pace,
 And as he stands, o'erwhelmed with mute surprise,
 On the bright meteor keeps his steadfast eyes,
 That sinks already 'neath the veil of night:
 So Pepin's son, intent, with dazzled sight,
 Fixes the horizon, and with ardent gaze,
 Through the deep gloom pursues the sacred blaze.

XX.

Meanwhile Armelia, deep in vengeful thought,
 Far in the palace sits: around her brought,
 Full twenty felon knights her cause espouse,
 And swear to execute her fatal vows:
 "Queen, we will perish all," Tassillon cries,
 "Or Roland's fury with the sword chastise:
 "'Tis time with bloodiest vengeance we requite
 "The fierce presumption of that haughty knight.
 "Charles is too lenient: fain would we repair
 "The wrongs his weak indulgence bids thee bear.

XXI.

" Roland has tendered his support, of late,
 " To Suevia's queen, the object of our hate;
 " And soon, should Angers' count direct their train,
 " Our foes their bold presumption will regain:
 " Ours be the charge, nor let us long delay
 " To drive this dangerous paladin away;
 " Henceforth, within these walls, let every brow
 " Beneath thy car of triumph learn to bow:
 " Chastising Roland, we shall serve the king:
 " To us, besides, sufficient fame will spring,
 " Thy cause if we avenge; and for thy right,
 " Dare to the field in turns this sullen knight."

XXII.

He spoke: and to his voice, with threatening cries
 Gaiffre, with Theudon, Gannelon, replies:
 Black hatred rankles in their daring zeal.
 These secret foes of Charles, once doomed to feel
 The might of Roland, now infuriate seek
 Their private vengeance on his head to wreak:
 Tassillon's sister, as they kneel around,
 Smiling regards, and lifts them from the ground.
 " Go; let the friend of Adelinde," she said,
 " Let Milo's son, beneath your swords be laid!"

XXIII.

Forth from the palace rush the knights, and vie
 Who first may boast the chieftain to defy;
 But in their souls, as Roland's name they hear,
 Fell hate is mingled with degenerate fear.
 Beneath the shelter of the midnight shade
 Tassillon guides them with his brandished blade;
 And now the paladin's abode they gain:
 But he, as closed the day, in restless pain,
 From Paris far, by melancholy led,
 The wrathful glances of his sovereign fled.

XXIV.

The faithful Eginhard had marked the peers
 Thus wildly rush, and their defiance hears;
 Alone he dares with generous soul to stand,
 And brave the fury of this hateful band:
 "Presumptuous vassals, hold your frantic pace!
 "Can you avenge Armelia's late disgrace?
 "Suits this rude uproar with fair knighthood's cause,
 "Or think ye Roland from your threats withdraws?
 "Think ye such challenge can his soul dismay?
 "Rather thank Heaven that Roland is away.

XXV.

"This night what spirit bids your fury burn?
 "Too soon for you the hero will return:
 "Here, here, meanwhile I stand before your sight.
 "Answering for him, I lift your gage of fight."
 Bold in his speech, Mayence's count replies,
 "Well know we whence these haughty threats arise.
 "The hate thou bear'st Armelia stands confessed,
 "Thou think'st her course triumphant to arrest:
 "But vain, presumptuous youth, thy hopes shall prove;
 "We know thy plots; hence, boaster, to thy love."

XXVI.

Boiling with fury Emma's lover stands;
 His sword already glitters in his hands:
 All pale with guilt, with terror in his eye,
 Mayence's count in vain essays to fly.
 "Now, traitor, now," cries Eginhard, "succeeds
 "The vengeance due to thy disloyal deeds!
 "Profuse of slanders, still dost thou debase,
 "Where'er thou goest, a dame of regal race:
 "Youth, beauty, rank—to nought dost thou attend;
 "Then turn thee, dastard, and thy life defend!"

XXVII.

Less swift, less dreadful, midst the burning hours,
A serpent rears his crest above the flowers,
Roused by the shepherd's tread; he bounds, he springs,
And with quick dart his fiery vengeance flings:
His jaws, wide threatening, to the unwary swain
Give certain death. Thus rushing on amain,
The youthful knight, disdainful of his blows,
Attacks his trembling rival, and o'erthrows;
Plunges his steel within the traitor's side,
Who shrieks in pain, as flows the sanguine tide.

XXVIII.

Charles, from the funeral isle emerging, hears
Deep groans and clamours vibrate on his ears;
Roused from his pensive thought, a distant light
Of arms and torches flashes on his sight:
Now hastening back, with angry pace he speeds
Silent, and towards the palace walls proceeds.
Through the wide courts with hurried step returns,
And soon the fate of Ganelon he learns;
Learns, that alone against the recreant knights,
His faithful Eginhard for Roland fights.

XXIX.

Fired by their bold disloyalty, in wrath
He rushes, none dare meet him on his path:
His much-loved Eginhard alone he sees,
With blood distained, and bending on his knees:
Pale grows the king, and terror fills his breast.
"Sire," cries the chieftain, "be these fears repress.
"Slight is the hurt I bear; but on the ground
"Ganelon lies writhing with a mortal wound:
"For thee he asked; I bent to his request:
"Remorse already stings his guilty breast."

XXX.

He spoke; the count Mayencal at his side,
 The dust with blood in torrents streaming died;
 The expiring traitor feels the tardy sting
 Of true remorse within his bosom spring,
 And now, as dread eternity draws near,
 He opes his soul to penitence sincere;
 And to his injured sovereign would declare
 The base projectors of this guilty snare.
 With prompt assistance Eginhard has reared
 His sinking rival, and his spirit cheered:
 Charles now approaches; but his faltering speech
 Has scarcely force the monarch's ear to reach.

XXXI.

" Eternal justice weighs upon my mind:
 " Too late in this, my parting hour, I find
 " How vain is pomp, how void all earthly bliss:
 " Guilt, guilt has brought me to the dark abyss.
 " Grant me thy generous pardon, sire, and take
 " The last avowal that my lips can make:
 " By me were plots and snares around thee spread;
 " My dangerous counsels have thy heart misled;
 " Too oft through me did calumny accurst
 " O'er royal Adelinde in fury burst.

XXXII.

" In death my fatal errors are abjured:
 " In every virtue Adelinde assured,
 " The finished pattern of all royal wives,
 " Her woes from Didier, Tassillon, derives:
 " Joining their hostile league, with well-feigned tale
 " Thine ears I still continued to assail;
 " Still, for Armelia's sake, with Didier's word
 " I taught my docile accents to accord:
 " To plots, by strangers formed, I bowed a slave;
 " And won thee, sire, the gospel's law to brave.

XXXIII.

"To avenge the outrage by his sister borne,
 "Tassillon vowed, and Roland's death is sworn;
 "Still is thy kinsman chased: the thirsty rage
 "Of many a rival must his blood assuage.
 "Death now is hovering round brave Milo's son:
 "Oh! may he yet the gloomy treason shun
 "Of Gaiffre, Theudon: even thyself may'st dread
 "Their traitorous plots against thy sacred head.
 "Armelia still——" But here the faltering breath
 Ceased on the word, and Ganelon sunk in death.

XXXIV.

Full on the monarch flashed a sudden light;
 The mist of courts has vanished from his sight;
 The dying traitor's last confessions dart
 A ray of painful truth upon his heart:
 Vain pomp of monarchs! envy, baseness, blast
 Their brightest moments, or around them cast
 A veil of darkness: when enthroned in state
 Full oft they sit, in mightiness elate,
 And dare 'gainst Heaven in proud defiance tower,
 They serve some sordid flatterer's secret power.

XXXV.

Confused, the monarch's looks on earth remain:
 "What, then, this object of my soul's disdain,
 "This traitor Ganelon could smooth the way,
 "Where passion steered, and lead my steps astray!"
 A deep sensation, o'er his thoughts that came,
 Raised on his brow the crimson blush of shame:
 Scarcely he dares descend into his soul:
 Armelia's charms maintain their strong control:
 His flame the recent storm could not subdue,
 But woke him to fresh cares and anguish new!

XXXVI.

He passed the palace gate with pensive tread:
Armelia seemed the monarch's view to dread;
Yet would she learn what issue may await
The dark designs projected by her hate,
And hopes, abandoned to her pride alone,
To see the friends of Adelinde o'erthrown:
Amidst the rigours of her mournful fate,
No plans she forms to prop her sinking state:
Death to her foes alone employs her views:
Heaven smites with blindness whom its wrath pursues.

XXXVII.

Emma, meanwhile, amidst her train bewails
The hapless fate that o'er her love prevails;
Her soul with fears for Eginhard is torn.
Charles finds her thus, lamenting and forlorn:
He sees her pallid brow with grief impressed;
He knows what power, ascendant o'er her breast,
Subdues the child of Adelinde to love,
And all his secret thoughts her choice approve:
Well may her lover, meriting his fame,
Heroes for friends, and kings for kinsmen claim.

XXXVIII.

Yet ere their loves by marriage may be bound,
Charles would that Eginhard, with conquest crowned,
Vie with his veteran knights in martial praise:
"Emma," he cries, "kind heaven preserves the days
Of faithful Eginhard: thy father's friend,
Called, at life's hazard, singly to contend,
Has crushed a league for deeds of murder made;
The base assassins fled before his blade.
Weep not, my child; thy rising fear subdue:
My vengeance shall the traitorous band pursue."

XXXIX.

These words of soothing love as Emma hears,
 She falls before the father she reveres;
 His gentlest looks her wavering heart sustain:
 She tries to speak, but all attempts are vain:
 An odious pomp had, on this day and scene,
 Filled up the sorrows of the absent queen:
 Never did Emma, when in anger most
 He seem'd, so dread the monarch to accost;
 Yet ne'er, when most in peace, did Charles appear
 In words more mild, in manner less severe.

XL.

Charles, while he looks on Emma, seems to trace
 The mother's features in the daughter's face:
 In Pepin's sight, when, on the field of blood,
 Imploring peace, the vanquish'd Suevi stood,
 Prostrate before the king, in humbled pride,
 Their monarch bowed, and, kneeling at his side,
 His daughter Adeline for mercy prayed:
 Disarmed the conqueror stood: the suppliant maid
 Enslaved his son, as, graceful in her woes,
 Her winning charms in softened beauty rose.

XLI.

Her fifteenth year had Adeline attained,
 And Charles, like her, his May of life had gained:(3)
 Soon for the illustrious couple, peace and love,
 On Rhine's fair banks, the wreath of marriage wove:
 The warlike Heral, on the bridal day,
 His child, and all who lived beneath his sway,
 The sacred sign of Christian law received:
 Braving the Saxon's rage, the Suevi lived
 Fast by the bounds of Danube and of Maine,
 Henceforth exact their treaties to maintain.

XLII.

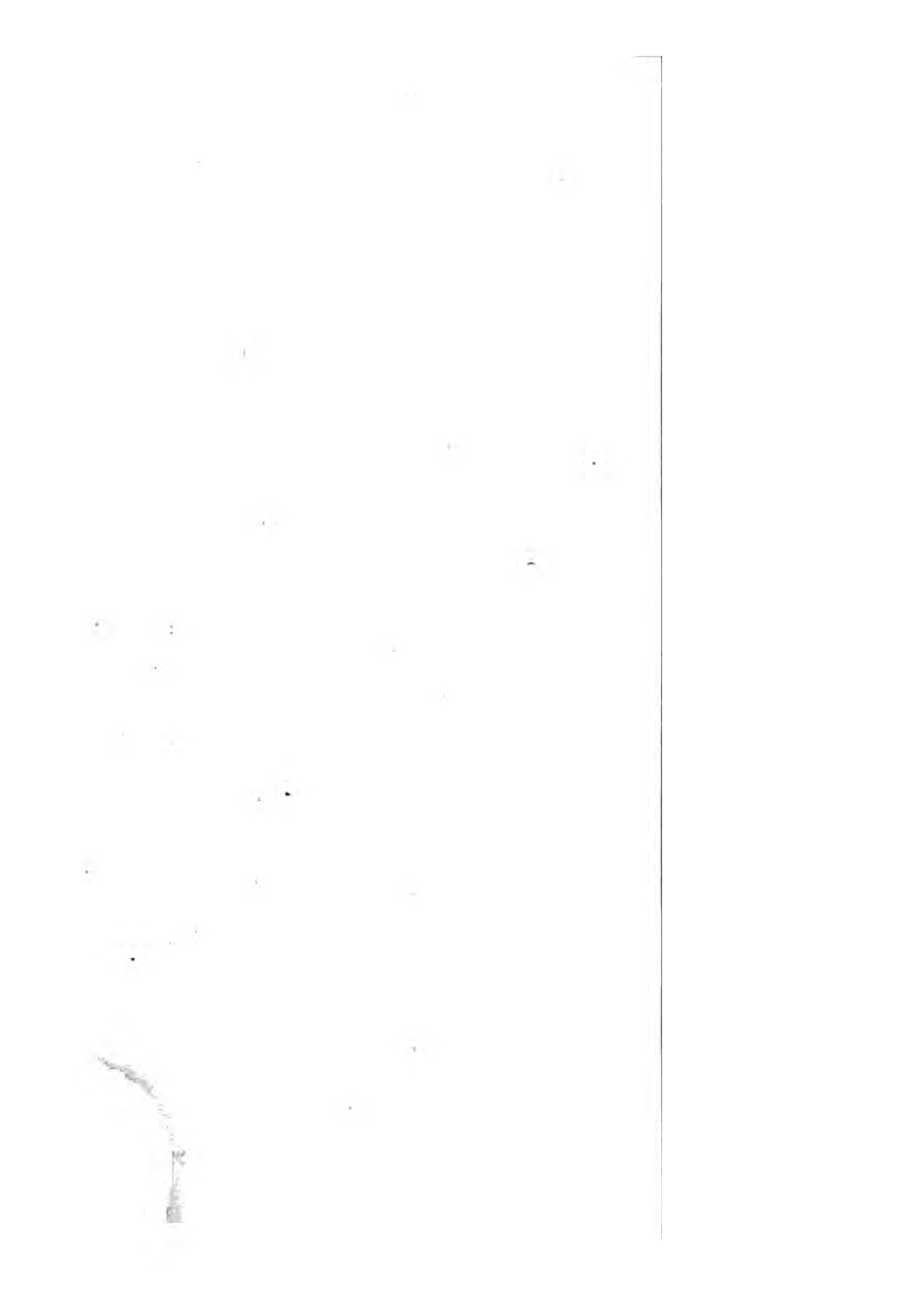
A daughter's birth made Pepin's heart embrace
 The pleasing prospect of a numerous race;
 But soon the fond illusion was repressed,
 Emma alone this early marriage blessed:
 Late, by Armelia and her charms subdued,
 A new but impious union Charles pursued;
 And dared unhallowed wedlock's ties to frame
 Submissive victim of a fatal flame.
 The treacherous Didier's plans complete had grown;
 His daughter rose triumphant on the throne.

XLIII.

Charles felt from Emma's view the blissful thought
 Of purer fires to his remembrance brought:
 Not yet was lost upon his melting soul
 True love's ineffable and sweet control.
 He raised his child: "Emma," the monarch cries,
 "A brighter day shall on thy mother rise;
 "Soon will the morning dawn upon the east:
 "Come, Emma, come to my paternal breast:
 "Still suffers Adelinde; but soon again
 "Her life's first joys and splendour shall obtain."

XLIV.

Her swimming eyes the youthful Emma raised,
 And through her tears a beam of gladness blazed;
 Chased by a father's voice, her fears depart,
 And happiest omens crowd around her heart:
 Charles yet is mindful of his faithful spouse!
 Whilst on the hand paternal Emma bows,
 Heaven-wards she looked, but from her troubled
 breast
 In sighs alone her secret vows expressed:
 In joy she parts: meanwhile, his warrior knights
 Around him Pepin's heir to council sates.



CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO V.

FROM THE EIGHTH TO THE TENTH DAY.

Translated by Dr. Butler.

ARGUMENT.

Last efforts of Armelia: incertitude of Charlemagne:
triumph of wedlock. Armelia's farewell. The
cloister of Adeline.

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO V.

I.

THE sacred bell already strikes the air:
The morning dawns: the faithful now prepare
To celebrate the day: the domes divine,
Open to view, with vivid lustre shine:
In festal joy, with holy pride elate,
The Church commemorates the solemn date,(1)
When God's own Spirit erst, in tongues of flame
To illumine the mind of Christ's apostles came;
That, heaven-inspired, they fitly might expound
The Christian doctrines to the nations round.

II.

Armelia views, with restless passion torn,
The early dawning of this sacred morn:
The solemn worship, and the hallowed rite,
Corroding torments in her soul excite:
Remote from all, she broods upon her fate,
Feeding her troubled spirits with her hate.
'Gainst her celestial justice has opposed
Its bar; 'gainst her the temple-doors are closed:
The stern anathema, with mandate dread,
Hurl'd by the pontiff at the guilty head,
Has banned Armelia, and the Lombard host:
To her the altars of the Lord are lost.

III.

The night's dread scene, Mayence's death, impart
 To her keen wounds a still envenomed smart:
 " Outrage to outrage added must I meet?
 " Lo! Roland's crimes in Eginhard complete!
 " All here," she cries, " forebodes approaching ill,
 " And adverse clouds on clouds are gathering still:
 " My long-tried friends, almost beneath mine eyes,
 " Have bled, and still their blood for vengeance cries.
 " Who reigns o'er France? Or Adeline or I?
 " Oh! let me hasten, let Armelia try,
 " Against these foes presumptuous, to arouse
 " The slumbering vengeance of her tardy spouse."

IV.

Valiant in warfare, and in councils trained,
 The Lombard Aripert near Charles remained:
 Seeking Armelia, troubled and dismayed,
 He cries, " All, all, my sovereign, is betrayed!
 " This day, from Adeline's profound retreat,
 " Even to the bosom of this royal seat,
 " The shafts she speeds have found an easy path;
 " The dreadful shafts of jealousy and wrath:
 " No more does Emma pine; and Charles again
 " Seeks his first consort, and dissolves thy chain.

V.

" Peopled with threatening priests, the palace
 swarms:
 " The slave of Rome should rouse our worst alarms:
 " Even now perhaps our last disgrace is signed:
 " Dark are the bodings that o'erwhelm my mind."
 Armelia stood, as though with pointed steel
 Her breast were pierced; disdainingly to reveal
 Her inward fears, before her pride they fled:
 " I go," she cries, " by just resentment led;
 " I go to scatter mourning o'er my foes:
 " One common ruin on their heads shall close."

VI.

Through the quick blush, that o'er her aspect flowed,
Her flaming glance with threatening ardour glowed:
Thus oft the morning, through the blood-streaked
skies,

Darts a fierce splendour, and to mortal eyes
Forebodes the tempest, which, in fury hurled,
Shall vex the seas, and terrify the world.
Bursting the feeble barriers that oppose
Her onward speed, to Pepin's heir she goes:
Humid with tears, on earth her eyelids rest,
While fear and anger agitate her breast.

VII.

Trembling, she clasps the knees of Pepin's son;
"And fly you thus," she cries, "a maid undone?
"Whilst you from empty tombs your counsels wait,
"I stand assailed by malice and by hate.
"Roland is spared; and, to complete my grief,
"An upstart youth has slain Mayence's chief.
"Unhappy Ganelon! from that fatal day,
"When to Lutetia's walls he led my way,
"And joined our loves by his unwearied zeal,
"Envy 'gainst him has raised her sharpest steel.

VIII.

"I weep my long-tried friend, who slaughtered lies;
"His blood on Eginhard for vengeance cries:
"Grant me that vengeance, to the traitor due;
"Forbearance ever feeds a rebel crew:
"If yet with thee my life and my repose
"Can interest find, shed comfort on my woes;
"Let thy just wrath quick punishment enforce,
"And quell the babbling slanderers in their course;
"Then may presumption, art, and jealous strife,
"With poison cease to blast Armelia's life."

IX.

"Check," answers Charles, "thy wrath's injurious
 thought;
 "The death of Roland in these walls was sought.
 "Ganelon confessed, repentant ere he died,
 "Changed all my views, and rent the veil aside.
 "Braving their sovereign's power, a guilty band
 "Of felon knights, the scandal of my land,
 "Athirst to bathe themselves in regal gore,(2)
 "Deserved from Eginhard the scourge they bore:
 "He saved his prince; why should Armelia's tongue
 "The generous vanquisher with censure wrong?

X.

"Even thou, 'tis said, these murderers hast enflamed;
 "Ill brooks my soul to hear Armelia named;
 "Named as confederate in the dark intrigue
 "Against my kindred blood; a traitor's league!
 "Yet, though my diadem the price should pay,
 "'Twere cheaply given to wipe thy tears away!
 "Those moving tears, which on thy cheek I see,
 "Subdue my soul, and bind it still to thee:
 "Yes, 'gainst the censure of the world entire
 "Charles still will love thee with unceasing fire.

XI.

"But now I see the torch of Heaven displayed:
 "Sovereign of France, the Church demands my aid:
 "My lot must be fulfilled; Heaven's gracious hand
 "From my veiled eyes has torn the fatal band."
 While yet he speaks his wavering courage fails,
 As o'er his zeal returning love prevails.
 Armelia's charms, with sudden gloom o'erspread,
 In paleness died away. "Alas!" she said,
 "Just were my fears; my hopes, alas! too high:
 "Go on, barbarian: let Armelia die!

XII.

" Think not, at least, thy victim to deride,
 " Nor under sacred words thy treacheries hide:
 " From Heaven's command, thou say'st, my shame
 proceeds;
 " No, traitor, Heaven commands not guilty deeds:
 " Dared then thy ruthless hand, at Heaven's behest,
 " That hand, prepared to pierce Armelia's breast,
 " Late bind an empty crown around my brows?
 " Thou gav'st me yesterday thine oaths and vows;
 " All France was seen to kneel around my throne:
 " Thou find'st me guilty in a day alone!

XIII.

" Oh! wretched day of joy and mortal fate!
 " The Franks have seen me, in triumphant state,
 " Drawn, like a victim, while the pompous show
 " Served as a prelude to relentless wo:
 " Why, with these sorrows, is my soul oppressed?
 " Within the bosom of my country blessed
 " Once knew I Peace, and all her tranquil charms;
 " Why, cruel! tear me from a father's arms?
 " Why dare these recent nuptials to suborn,
 " And doom my earliest youth to worldly scorn?"

XIV.

The monarch hears; and in his saddened soul
 Feels the wild storm of fatal passion roll;
 Countless emotions, like the billowy surge
 In tumult raised, their course alternate urge:
 Vainly his troubled reason would oppose
 Armelia's tears; the perspective of woes,
 That one, so loved, thus shortly must essay,
 O'erwhelms his soul, and chills him with dismay:
 And while for these his rashness he arraigns,
 He seems to waver, and resume his chains.

XV

Thus o'er some mount, majestic that ascends,
 The lonely pine against the storm contends;
 Its lofty crest, beneath the tempest bowed,
 Now sweeps the earth, and creaks, and groans aloud;
 Now springing upwards, in its native form
 It towers again to heaven; again the storm
 In fury thunders, and the tufted pine
 Groans as its boughs again to earth incline;
 The branchy fragments, whirling in the blast,
 Wide o'er the rocky steep a covering cast;
 The swain expects each moment to behold
 The stately trunk along the valley rolled.

XVI.

Wilt thou thy noble destinies betray,
 And yield, O prince, to Passion's troubled sway?
 To thee the Church commits her children's weal,
 And looks for conquest from thy duteous zeal.
 Dash, then, this treacherous, guilty yoke away:
 Surmount thy pain, the Almighty voice obey;
 Say, was not Christ a bleeding victim sent,
 The ties 'twixt Heaven and mortals to cement?
 Subdue thyself, and on thy prosperous reign
 The eternal signet henceforth shall remain.

XVII.

Charles yet would conquer: by degrees impressed,
 Fresh courage penetrates his drooping breast.
 Daring at length to meet Armelia's eyes,
 Fixed as she stands: "O! queen," the monarch cries,
 "Even to the grave my soul remorse shall bear,
 "For these rash ties, that cloud thy youth with care,
 "Poisoning its bloom; but this eventful day
 "Shall the sad course of impious error stay.
 "A wife and daughter, Heaven and earth assail
 "My breast at once, and o'er my heart prevail;

“ Yet shall the image of our hapless love
 “ For ever dear to my remembrance prove.

XVIII.

“ Ill-fated queen! I still shall see thee near;
 “ Still for thy woes thy just reproaches hear.
 “ Oh! that my blood thy quiet might secure,
 “ Or life itself thy happiness insure!
 “ Condemned by Heaven for ever to divide,
 “ Deep in our wounded bosoms let us hide,
 “ If yet the power be left, our fires profane:
 “ Let virtue bind, and sanctify our chain:
 “ Conquering our anguish, let us each supply
 “ A glorious pattern to the Christian eye.

XIX.

“ With regal rank distinguished by our hand,
 “ Still guard that sacred title in our land;
 “ To France be ne'er estranged: even from this hour,
 “ I grant that Aquitain shall own thy power:
 “ Let blessings mark thy wise and happy sway,
 “ That, when my people shall their homage pay,
 “ They well may estimate their king's distress,
 “ And learn Armelia's value to confess:
 “ Then shall they say: 'Led by Heaven's righteous
 laws,
 “ 'From all that charm'd his life our king withdraws.' ”

XX.

Whilst copious tears bedew Armelia's check,
 “ Still canst thou, Charles, to me of friendship speak?”
 She cries; “ forbear thy gifts, thy pity spare:
 “ What throne can please where Charles has not a
 share?”
 “ —Queen, I conjure thee in the name of Heaven,
 “ Retract the stern refusal thou hast given;
 “ And since divine forgiveness we must gain,
 “ Do thou, in future, though apart we reign,

"The bond of peace, the friendly angel be,
 "'Twixt Rome and Pavia, 'twixt thy sire and me."

XXI.

As thus the monarch said, upon his breast
 Armelia's trembling hand he closely pressed:
 Before his dewy eyes a mist is spread,
 And tears in bitterness of sorrow shed,
 The soft, last tribute his enamoured soul
 May pay, in streams upon his bosom roll!
 The warrior thus, who on the embattled ground
 A victim bleeds, and feels the sickly wound
 Deep in his vitals, rends away the dart
 With deadly point, that quivers in his heart:
 Wide flows the blood: day darkens o'er his eyes;
 And on his nerveless hand exertion dies.

XXII.

Thus dear does Pepin's heir his glories gain!
 Thus, ere he merit o'er the world to reign,
 Himself he conquers: with repentant tread
 His foot the path of guiltiness has fled:
 Pleased at the conquest, Heaven itself extends
 Its aid, and rich reward for suffering sends.
 Her brow with flow'rets crowned, with rapture bright
 Lo! Emma comes! with morning's earliest light;
 Hither she hastes, the day's glad pomp to share,
 The day that gives a mother to her prayer.

XXIII.

Her presence strikes the Lombard with amaze:
 Emma recoils, and downward turns her gaze:
 "Thy coming, doubtless warns me to depart,"
 Armelia cries, while fury rends her heart;
 "Draw nigh, nor fear: on this disgraceful day,
 "Think not that I shall tarry to survey
 "Its festal joy: no, Charles: the Lombard blood
 "That fills these veins, exalts its boiling flood:

"Though thou betrayest me, think not to insult
 "My woes at least, and o'er my pangs exult.

XXIV.

"I blush to think that thou my tears could'st move:
 "Oh! Rodmir! hero, worthy of my love!
 "Come gallant Rodmir: thee, whom I disdained,
 "I call: let vengeance from thy sword be gained!"
 Enraged she flies: yet grief, whose deadly course
 Spreads o'er her breast, belies her well feigned force:
 Soon to her chamber's solitude consign'd,
 Unseen by all, her tears flow unconfined:
 Again resolved Hope's last faint ray to seize,
 The fond illusion lulls her woes to ease.

XXV.

She summons Aripert: "Not yet, I think,
 "Can Charles forever leave me thus to sink!
 "Yet if the crown he ravish from my head,
 "Warn him the scourge of endless war to dread:
 "Safely the Suevian he to shame could force,
 "But if ungrateful, in his weak remorse,
 "In me a second victim he propose;
 "Full twenty nations shall avenge my woes.
 "Vain words! these transports rather be concealed,
 "That blind resentment has to thee revealed!

XXVI.

"No: let thy tongue from war and threats refrain,
 "Else wilt thou fill the measure of my pain:
 "His heart again to win, his soul to bend,
 "For me to lowly prayer must thou descend:
 "Say that in parting he assures my death:
 "Say, ere he dare, with unrelenting breath,
 "Pronounce my fate, at least that he allow
 "The lost Armelia at his knees to bow:
 "The words so lately from my bosom torn
 "By fierce and jealous frenzy, are forsworn."

XXVII.

The Lombard minister, in studious thought
 Fixed, and intent, by prudent foresight taught,
 That prosperous issue to the war with Rome
 Can from Armelia's nuptials only come,
 Hopes, if this sad divorce he can evade,
 To see his sovereign's power more firmly staid:
 His useless eloquence, in Charles that meets
 A bosom closed, a fruitless task completes:
 His dowcast eye, his brow with angry flame
 O'erspread, confirm the lost Armelia's shame.

XXVIII.

" Vainly, O queen," he cries, " would I explain
 " The changes now that through the palace reign:
 " Our future hopes rest only on the sword;
 " Scarce deigned the king to hear the slightest word.
 " ' Old man,' he cried, with pensive brow and stern,
 " ' Hence in three days: no more hast thou to learn:
 " ' To guide thy sovereign's wisdom now be thine:
 " ' When, in obedience to the will divine,
 " ' The ties of tenderest passion I could rend,
 " ' My life was vowed the altar to defend.

XXIX.

" ' What can I not—this grand exertion o'er?
 " ' To achieve the justest enterprise I swore:
 " ' Wo to the sovereigns, who the Church distress!
 " ' Disgrace and death upon their steps shall press:
 " ' All Didier's hopes from my remissness rose,
 " ' Now I resume the sword, and quit repose.
 " ' Go, bid your master to his mind recall
 " ' Astolph, Martel, and Pepin, ere he fall.
 " ' Tell him, in safety shall his daughter reign
 " ' O'er the rich vales of fertile Aquitain.
 " ' But leagued with Longin, if to Rome he go,
 " ' Fixed is his fate—and Charles shall deal the blow.

XXX.

"Such were the monarch's words. His realms I leave:
 "Child of my king, my last adieu receive!"
 Armelia answers, and to Heaven she turns
 Her eye, where hatred, mixed with vengeance, burns:
 "I tarry here!—together let us flee:
 "Each moment now is precious: follow me:
 "Far from an unrelenting husband's sight,
 "Beneath thy banners will I take my flight.
 "Summon thy warriors: let me quit this land,
 "Ne'er to return, but with the flaming brand."

XXXI.

She spoke, and anxious waits returning night,
 On Charles, France, Adeline, her curses light.
 Wrapt in the gloom, silent and sad she flies
 From Paris' walls, ere morning streak the skies.
 Its towers and ramparts, with returning day,
 Viewed in the faint horizon sink away.
 A wood's deep shade she gains, that once had seen
 Around her shone the splendour of a queen,
 When near her lord, the bugles, echoing loud,
 Led, through the dubious chase, the sylvan crowd.

XXXII.

This festal scene new weight to sorrow lends:
 Oft as through many a winding pass she bends
 Across this hateful wood her flying speed,
 She chides the slowness of her rapid steed.
 On Rodmir still her thoughts impatient bend,
 Where love and shame in mixed sensation blend:
 And o'er the past as busy memory flew,
 She longs, yet dreads, to meet the hero's view.
 "This day," she cries, "my folly's fruit I reap;
 "Too well have I deserved the wrongs I weep.

XXXIII.

" The son of Witikind, for valour prized
 " O'er all his peers, this foolish heart despised:
 " The aspiring hope to reign o'er France suppressed
 " The flame already lighted in my breast.
 " I broke the links of this illustrious chain,
 " The pageant glory of a crown to gain:
 " Sinning 'gainst love, when oaths were all forgot,
 " With baleful hand I bound the nuptial knot:
 " Ah! why, ere lost in Error's boundless maze,
 " Broke not at once the tenor of my days?"

XXXIV.

Armelia now by sudden sorrows taught,
 To late remorse abandons every thought.
 Soon will her troubled eyes survey the lands
 Where wild Helvetia rears her hardy bands.
 Now, crafty king, fit complice with the Greek!
 Too soon thy wretched child thine aid shall seek;
 Too soon return, of crown and throne bereaved;
 Thine own dark plottings have thyself deceived:
 A breath has crushed what cunning taught to rise:
 Heaven still avenges Hymen's sacred ties.

XXXV.

In courts all changes in a moment's space:
 Shunning the tiresome presence of disgrace,
 The servile flatterer goes where Fortune draws,
 And moulds his voice to her capricious laws:
 Scarce had Armelia on that fatal night
 Withdrawn from Paris and a rival's sight,
 Ere those with her in dearest friendship locked,
 Forgot her bounties, her remembrance mocked,
 And, loud and eager, every voice explained,
 How Emma, Adelinde, triumphant reigned.

XXXVI.

More fixed than courtiers in their honest zeal,
 Sincerer joy Lutetia's people feel.
 Cheered by the hopes of prosperous change, their cries
 Of transport echo through the distant skies;
 Loud rapturous shouts the usurper's flight declare;
 "WAR WITH THE LOMBARDS!" rings through all
 the air.

A thousand fires, that blaze upon the night,
 Rival the splendour of the solar light;
 And gathering crowds, round Adelinde's recess,
 In lengthened strains of joy their love express.

XXXVII.

Amidst the sisters, near the altar laid,
 Adelinde in prayer her matin duties paid:
 Her rival's features, on her mind impressed,
 With sad remembrance agitate her breast:
 Her lord, her child, in sweetest semblance seen,
 Still 'midst her holiest feelings intervene;
 Still mingle with her prayers. As mother, wife,
 Fond memory still disturbs her tranquil life,
 Even in those cloistered walls where far she flies
 From human sight, to close her destinies.

XXXVIII.

The enraptured people's loud acclaim she hears,
 Her name repeated but augments her fears.
 She dreads their hate: on trembling knee she bends,
 And towards the cross her suppliant hand extends.
 "Gainst me, my God, what can this people plead?
 Why to this holy mansion do they speed?
 Why thus increase my woes? can they not raise
 Their flattering incense to Armelia's praise,
 Not thus pursue me with tumultuous rage,
 Or must my death their furious hate assuage?"

XXXIX.

The shouts redouble; trembling at the sound,
 - Adeline by cloistered maids is compassed round.
 The hymns had ceased: scarcely the dawning gleam
 Had through the temple shot its earliest beam:
 Instant the people through the portal pressed,
 But at the door they paused, with awe possessed.
 Circled with holy priests, a man of years,
 Lutetia's prelate, Theodul appears.
 Before the rest advanced, "To Heaven," he cries,
 "Ye sacred virgins, let your hands arise:
 "To Heaven address your vows; the Almighty deigns,
 "To avenge the guiltless, and the weak sustains."

XL.

"Oh, queen! thy painful trial is complete;
 "Again Heaven calls thee to the royal seat.
 "Thy noble husband comes: a moment's space
 "Shall on thy brow the nuptial veil replace.
 "Thank the most High, who bids thy sorrows end!"
 He spoke, and from her eyes in showers descend
 Unbidden tears, drops of delicious joy!
 Too many a day, alas! did she employ
 In tears of sorrow, when each morn that rose
 Her cares redoubled, and renewed her woes.

XLI.

Now, in the presence of the countless band,
 Whose growing shouts their much-loved queen de-
 mand,
 Adeline advances to the sacred stair;
 And as her royal lord beholds her there,
 In floating lawn arrayed, and spotless vest,
 Armelia's form no more usurps his breast.
 He looks on Adeline, as lowly now
 Before him bent, her knees in reverence bow.
 "Oh, queen!" he cries, "forgive thy husband's fault
 "And thy crowned brow again o'er France exalt."

XLII.

He takes the golden circlet from his brows,
 And binds it round the temples of his spouse:
 Again a thousand shouts of joy proceed
 From the glad throng, responsive to the deed.
 Beneath the force of bliss extreme oppressed,
 The queen declines, and falls on Emma's breast;
 Proudly, on bending knee, the maid sustains
 The precious weight: nor Charles himself disdains
 Along the consecrated dome to aid
 Her trembling steps: from every bosom paid,
 Glory to Him, the Almighty Lord, is given,
 And strains of grateful joy resound to Heaven.

XLIII.

These bursts of transport, these enlivening cries,
 Fond marks of love, now unrestrained arise:
 The royal dame has passed the temple-gate,
 While Emma's aid sustains her tottering weight:
 The band of sacred sisters, round her borne,
 Attend to celebrate the splendid morn:
 Their brows are veiled: with voice divinely sweet,
 Their strains the sacred canticle repeat,
 That blesses kings, who on the Lord have staid,
 And bids them hope the conquering angel's aid.
 The joyful multitude, with loud acclaim,
 To Heaven extol the monarch's glorious name.

XLIV.

Branches and flowers are scattered on the ground;
 Led by the cross, with incense burning round,
 The train proceeds, and now the bride restored
 Triumphant gains the palace of her lord.
 Charles bids his warriors round the throne repair:
 Then waving bright his falchion to the air,
 "O Israel's God," he cries, "by thee be blest
 "Our high design: no more our swords shall rest,

" I swear, until in vengeance they descend
" On all, who dare against thy Church contend.

XLV.

" Our guilty rest let us repair, O knights!
" Our banners towards Italia's mountain heights,
" Ere the third day, again shall wing their flight
" Heaven and our country call us to the fight.
" Let morning find you ready to depart!"
He spoke, and in each warrior's glowing heart,
Of noble warfare roused the fierce desire;
Their valour beams in looks of generous fire;
With eager haste they vie who first shall swear,
" **WAR TO THE FOES OF CHRIST, ETERNAL WAR!**

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO VI.

FROM THE TENTH TO THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

Translated by Dr. Butler.

ARGUMENT.

Tardetz delivered by Roland: flight of the Moors.
Treason of Theodebert, duke of Gascony; his
dream of Remistan. Roncesvalles.



CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO VI.

I.

WHERE, where, O Milo's noble son, wast thou,
When thy brave comrades vowed the glorious vow?
From Paris far he traversed then the plain,
Where rolls the Loire its tribute to the main,
In quest of happier fates—" In climes afar
" We still shall meet with conquest and with war,"
He cries; " no farther warrant do we need,
" Than the past fame of many a gallant deed:
" Ne'er let us bow beneath this stranger's yoke,
" But distant serve a monarch we provoke."

II.

The daring Roger, Oliver the true,
Consent the generous project to pursue:
May they surmount, from murder's arm secure,
The blood-stained plots of perfidy obscure:
Behind them cast, they leave the flowery meads,
Where Neustria ends; already do their steeds(1)
On the rich soil of Aquitania tread,
When lo! a youthful knight, with dust o'erspread,
Panting for breath arrives; his distant view
The far-famed banners of the warriors knew.

III.

"Speed, warriors, speed: lo! from his mountain
 steeps,
 "A second time the fierce Almanzor sweeps.
 "Towards Adour's banks he bends; the Gascon lands
 "O'erflow already with his daring bands:
 "To seek the mighty monarch's aid I go,
 "And quell the pride of this Cantabrian foe.
 "Still uncontrolled, his threats more haughty rise:
 "Through me Theodebert for succour cries;
 "Lords! let your arms the hapless prince defend,
 "And o'er the Gascon camp your sway extend.

IV.

"Listen!" cries Roland to the youthful knight;
 "Too oft with unbelievers leagued in fight,
 "Thy lord, Theodebert, has dared to stand,
 "And late, against ourselves has raised his hand.
 "His sire, Remistan, too, for faith contemned,(2)
 "Beneath the blade of justice was condemned:
 "Whelmed with disgrace, he bowed his aged head:
 "But since towards us, at length by interest led,
 "The son returns, my aid will I bestow;
 "No hate can Roland towards a suppliant know.

V.

"Pursue thy journey to Lutetia's wall;
 "Say, there Almanzor by this arm shall fall!"
 He spoke, and on his march impatient turned,
 While sombre transports in his bosom burned:
 The boiling courage of his soul sublime
 Accuses oft the sluggish course of Time.
 Onward the hero bends his eager way,
 Till night ten times has closed upon the day.
 At length the three brave paladins behold
 Adour's blue waves from dark Pyrenè rolled.(3)

VI.

Towards Tardetz's ramparts they direct their pace;(4)
The Moorish standards compass all the place;
Despising art, for none does valour need,
Scorning to wait till favouring night succeed,
Reckless of death, and in the face of day,
Right through the Moorish camp they win their way:
Their murderous spears, 'mid havoc unrestrained,
Deep in the blood of Saracens are stained;
Vainly the warriors, and the walls between,
A solid cohort on its march is seen:
With equal pace, right onwards and assured,
They still advance, with dust and gore obscured.

VII.

Now, as they reach the town, exulting cries
Shout Roland's name with transport to the skies:
Forth drives the rushing throng; the chief appears,
His presence dissipates at once their fears:
The joyful Gascon, at this well-timed aid,
In lavish oaths his grateful homage paid:
Remistan's offspring, who with reverence now
To Pepin's son in vassalage would bow,
Swears to the warriors, in behalf of France,
In arms, where'er she summons, to advance.

VIII.

Fired at the hero's sight, the Gascon train
Look round their rampart-boundaries with disdain:
Ill brooks their restless valour to delay
Their martial labours to the coming day.
Not so the Moor; with different thoughts oppressed,
No hopes remaining in his anxious breast
To storm a town that Roland's valour keeps,
By night he passed Pyrenè's icy steeps,
Grieved from the sanguine carnage to retire,
That hatred promised to his fierce desire.

IX.

Fast o'er the mountains fled the Moors by night;
 Angers' brave paladin has learnt their flight.
 "Warriors," he cries, "this sanguinary crew,
 "These bands of Mahomet, with speed pursue;
 "Wipe out the memory of your past disgrace,
 "And let the blood of this detested race
 "Cancel the record of Remistan's crime:
 "The Christian world, since that disastrous time,
 "Suspects your zeal, and holds your valour low;
 "Warriors, redeem your honour from the foe!"

X.

Soldiers and townsmen, at the manly word,
 Tumultuous rush round Angers' dauntless lord,
 Crowding the spacious square; the thirst of spoil,
 Hope, honour, arm them to the martial toil:
 To follow Roland, is to march to fame,
 And conquest waits upon his mighty name:
 His name the frozen heart of age inspires,
 And warms the dastard with unwonted fires:
 Round Angers' count in arms the Gascons stand,
 And swear to execute his high command.

XI.

But in Theodebert's dark soul revived
 The pristine hatred, from his sire derived:
 The treacherous vassal, now from danger free,
 Resolves in Angers' paladin to see
 Only his sire's oppressor, and his bane.
 "What! Roland here direct my warrior train!
 "Roland!" he cries, "in this, my subject land,
 "Dictate his will, and 'stablish his command!
 "My people now, neglectful of my laws,
 "Wait not for me, but march where Roland draws;
 "No more their sovereign's vengeance do they heed,
 "But with the Franks to war and death proceed."

XII.

Pride in the Gascon's soul excites again
 Those thoughts that had awhile in slumber lain;
 Again inflames his bosom's former ire:
 As summer wakes the serpent's deadly fire,
 Soon as the sun, within the dark retreat
 Of the fierce reptile, shoots his burning heat,
 Unrolling all his spires, by torpid rest
 Benumbed, again he elevates his crest;
 And while in sinuous folds he glides along,
 Darts with malignant hiss his poisonous tongue;

XIII.

So did Theodebert with fury swell:
 At once, and undisguised, he seeks to quell
 The generous transports of the Gascon train,
 And the bold ardour of the Franks restrain.
 But Itier checks his fury in its course,
 Advising secret guile for open force;
 Itier, to whom Remistan's rage would yield,
 Faithless and base, but valiant in the field:
 "Disguise this rage," he cries; "a threatening foe
 Bears sword less sharp, and deals less dangerous blow.

XIV.

"Is then the pride of Angers' count unknown?
 He knows no laws but those of war alone.
 Scorning the sacred majesty of kings,
 His dangerous aid some lurking mischief brings.
 No way to 'scape, unless with steadfast view
 The winding paths of prudence we pursue:
 Wo to the king, who rashly would pretend
 His fatal friendship at his will to bend.
 He strikes, o'erwhelms, a tiger in his rage,
 Those to whom late he gave the friendly gage.

XV.

" No open force his projects can defeat,
 " By art alone his efforts must we meet.
 " Had but Remistan, by my counsels swayed,
 " Subdued his wrath, and given my purpose aid,
 " He had not waked a jealous sovereign's rage,
 " And on the scaffold closed his bleeding age.
 " Say, from thy soul can ought that hour efface,
 " That hour accurst and fatal to thy race,
 " When in these self-same walls Remistan found
 " This stern and ruthless chief beset him round.

XVI.

" If, 'neath the flattering veil of friendship feigned,
 " To hide his wrath thy noble sire had deigned,
 " Roland, ensnared by my propitious zeal,
 " Had, in this palace, sunk beneath our steel:
 " But filled with hatred, which he could not rein,
 " He felt great Clovis' blood in every vein.
 " Boiling with rage, disdainng to attend
 " To counsels offered for the safest end,
 " Too proud of numbers, and of native might,
 " He stood 'gainst Roland in the van of fight.

XVII.

" In one sad night, from throne and empire torn,
 " Thy hapless sire, by Roland captive borne,
 " To the last dregs the cup of sorrow drank:
 " Spite of his virtues, of his birth and rank,
 " Condemned beneath the felon axe to die.
 " Now is the hour of retribution nigh.
 " Revenge thy father's wrongs, thy father's shade;
 " But be thy generous wrath a moment staid;
 " Submit with patience to resistless need;
 " Dissemble still, nor let me vainly plead,

XVIII.

" Beneath the banners of this haughty count
 " Deign even to pass the Pyrenean mount.
 " I seek Almanzor now: our league of old,
 " From Roland's death, by closer ties shall hold:
 " Fear not that perfidy thy name should stain;
 " This murderous race the princely blood would drain
 " Of Clovis' sons: all, all to thee is right,
 " Whose vengeance would thy father's foe requite;
 " Victim to Pepin's power thy sire was made;
 " To Pepin's son be crime for crime repaid."

XIX.

As when the south wind, with its burning blast,
 On some nocturnal conflagration cast,
 Augments its rage; so Itier's pois'rous breath
 Inflames Theodebert to deeds of death.
 With look sedate and well dissembled smile,
 The Gascon prince conceals his inward guile;
 And clad in arms, with scymetar in hand,
 Joins the three chieftains, and their generous band:
 But in his bosom deep, with watchful heed,
 He shrouds the guilt of the projected deed.

XX.

People and soldiers, as each standard flies,
 Range with their chiefs: Tardès deserted lies.
 Of fierce Almanzor Roland vows the fall,
 As rush the warriors from the rampart wall.
 Still sleeps the world beneath the midnight shade:
 The lowering sky, in thickest veil arrayed,
 With frightful clouds, at intervals, is spread,
 Furrowed throughout with lines of sanguine red:
 Their fleeting forms with shapes portentous glare,
 And threatening monsters seem to crowd the air.

XXI.

By darkness favoured, Itier's swift advance
 Bears offered friendship to the foe of France:
 Soon with each other, in the fatal band
 Of crime allied, the league of death is planned:
 Almanzor smiles at Roland's mighty name:
 The guilty herald, firm in deeds of shame,
 Gaining his sovereign's tent, with rapid pace,
 Where rests his army near the mountain's base,
 Outstrips the dawn: and lo! the morning breaks:
 Its beams already gild the rugged peaks.

XXII.

The Moorish bands, upon the summits near,
 Throng and retire, and feign disordered fear.
 A thousand shouts, a thousand mingled cries
 Borne on the air, from thousand echoes rise.
 The Moorish warriors fly from Roland's view:
 He bids Remistan's son their host pursue.
 Shouting aloud, before his troop he starts
 With rapid step, and like the lightning, darts:
 More active still, evading his attack,
 The fierce Cantabrians draw him on their track
 Within the vale, where many a rocky mass,
 With sharpened summit, forms the narrow pass.

XXIII.

From this deep strait, called Roncesvalles, glide,(5)
 Poured from a rock, that opes its mossy side,
 Two streams, that, swelling Irat's billowy spray,
 Through Garalte, Ossa, wind their fruitful way:
 Still does the solar disk, with waning beam,
 Upon these valleys shed a fainter gleam:
 While here the Christians the pursuit postpone,
 Their ponderous armour from their limbs is thrown:
 Roland, who scorns the flying Moor to dread,
 Peaceful, enjoys the coolness round him shed.

XXIV.

By morn some shepherds, from Navarre supplied,
Must through these rocks the dauntless warriors guide.
Itier their succour to the Franks proposed:
France sleeps the while: but in his tent enclosed,
Remote from all, 'midst doubt and sore dismay,
Remistan's son in watchful trouble lay:
Not now the soothing calm of peaceful rest
Sheds its soft influence o'er his tortured breast;
Guilt, with her brandished torch, before him glares,
And, e'er he act, remorse his bosom tears.

XXV.

Dread of his project, its uncertain speed,
All France provoked, and outraged at the deed,
His father's death, his private danger, roll
In thoughts alternate o'er his wavering soul;
But Itier, firmer in remorseless hate,
Chides the dull night that bids his vengeance wait.
Itier alone his lord's pavilion shares,
Who seeks in sleep some respite from his cares;
But no repose in slumber can he find,
And painful visions haunt his guilty mind.

XXVI.

His dreams present a darksome cloud to sight,
That, raised from earth, obscures the horizon's light:
Approaching slowly, from its womb escapes
A sad assemblage of terrific shapes:
A hand from which a broken sceptre falls,
A throne o'erturned amidst deserted halls,
A distant scaffold in its dark attire,
And axe, whose edge darts thousand streams of fire:
'Midst these, Remistan's head before him set,
Glares on his son with eyes that sparkle yet.

XXVII.

Here Pepin, raised upon a radiant throne,
 Smiles at the dismal objects that are shown:
 "Let Clovis' blood cement our wide domain;
 "His sons, his latest children's sons, be slain!"
 Forth springs Theodebert with furious cries:
 Towards that bright throne to force his path he tries,
 Eager to drench his steel in Pepin's blood,
 When lo! he woke: yet still before him stood
 His spectral father's mutilated form,
 And vengeful thoughts his rising courage warm.

XXVIII.

At length the voice of Itier strikes his ears:
 "Rise, prince; the gloom of darkness disappears:
 "Soon from the hills the avenging morn shall peep;
 "Strike now, while yet the lion is asleep:
 "Almanzor waits upon the mountain's height;
 "Your valiant Gascons, 'mid the passing night,
 "Have joined his Moors, save that a wavering few,
 "From whom no sure assistance could accrue,
 "With yon three chieftains in the valley lie:
 "Roland they sought, with Roland let them die."

XXIX.

Ye hapless warriors, thus to death consigned,
 Would that your glories, in my song enshrined,
 Might live, that ages yet unborn might crown,
 With homage ever new, your high renown:
 Full well ye proved, that Honour's brightest flame
 Warmed your brave soul to deeds of noblest fame.
 While they, your recreant foes, in dark disguise
 Shrouded their murderous treasons from your eyes:
 O let my verse produce to light again
 Your deeds, that long in Time's abyss have lain!

XXX.

These generous Franks, to sworn engagements true,
Amid these scenes no fear of treachery knew:
Near Angers' count, in union close, they passed
A night, with gloom and guilty fraud o'er cast:
Roland, amidst them, stretched upon the soil,
Found, with his knights, a moment's rest from toil
In sweet but treacherous sleep: his helmet, crowned
With sable plume, his buckler's brazen round,
His threatening spear, the terror of his foes,
And glittering falchion, at his feet repose.

XXXI.

He sleeps: Theodebert with footstep sure,
Rejoins his friends, in Roland's rest secure:
He finds Almanzor with his troops prepared,
While every pass by fallen trees is barred;
The threatening rocks, upon each mountain crest,
Aloft in air suspended as they rest,
Each in a moment, from its cloudy hold,
Down on the hollow passes may be rolled;
The Gascon warriors guard the sloping strait,
And with the Moors round Itier restless wait.

XXXII.

In Afric's forests thus a dastard crew
The lordly lion to the toils pursue:
The ignoble hunter's band, with silent tread,
Their bonds and trammels round his cavern spread:
From every risk aloof, in scattered war,
They speed their coward arrows from afar;
He bounds aloft, by unseen weapons torn,
In useless efforts, till his strength is worn;
His dreadful fangs no victim can attain;
He shakes the forest with his roar in vain.

XXXIII.

At length with morning's light, the peers too late
 Perceive the Gascon's treasons and his hate.
 No sure ally, no trusty guide is found
 To lead their footsteps o'er this unknown ground.
 Roland appears; he waves his flashing sword;
 His lips no passage to his words afford;
 With rage he boils, for scarcely now remain
 A hundred warriors in the hero's train;
 Yet, as to Milo's son their looks they turn,
 They feel anew their native courage burn;
 Their shouts of fury ring along the sky;
 The deserts echo to the threatening cry.

XXXIV.

They seek to pass o'er Roncesvalles' steep,
 While all around seems plunged in slumber deep;
 Let to advance, upon their slow career,
 Like the fixed calm, that speaks the tempest near,
 Dead silence reigns: Itier, whose keen-eyed view
 Ne'er from the paladin its glance withdrew,
 Smiles with grim hope to mark his victim nigh:
 Trees piled o'er trees his rampart-guard supply:
 He gives the signal, instant o'er his head
 Gascons and Moors their numerous banners spread.

XXXV.

The count of Angers sees above him shine,
 High borne in air, the crescent's hateful sign;
 The Gascon prince, his outrage to complete,
 Insults the warriors whom he dare not meet,
 Threatening the victim band with taunting cry:
 "In this abyss, ye slaves of Pepin, die;
 "And thou, presumptuous Roland, not to thee
 "Is given again thy prosperous day to see;
 "No hopes remain, destruction bars thy way;
 "Repay me now my father's blood, repay."

XXXVI.

The friendly Oliver, who sees that fate
 Impends o'er Roland, would his fire abate:
 " Swift from this deepened pass thy steps recall,
 " Or, spite of valour, certain is our fall:
 " France hopes from us, from Milo's valiant son,
 " For mightier deeds, in nobler battles won:
 " Back to the plain, and disappoint the foe;
 " There may we stand, and brave the traitor's blow."
 But vain is prudent foresight; Roland slights
 His voice, and furious climbs the mountain-heights.

XXXVII.

With lightning's speed towards Itier swift he flew,
 His gallant soul no doubt of conquest knew.
 Guarded beneath his ample shield from wounds,
 He shouts, he climbs, he wins the rampart's bounds.
 Fenced was the barrier by a mighty oak,
 Of late o'erturned beneath the Gascon's stroke;
 Grasping its branches, with impetuous bound
 He springs aloft, and clears the useless mound:
 Like the ripe ears before the reaper's blade,
 The Gaseons, rolling in the dust, are laid.

XXXVIII.

As Itier cheers his soldiers to the fight,
 Foremost he falls beneath the hero's might:
 While Roland's friends, and Oliver the first,
 Fly to his call, for hostile blood athirst:
 They join their chief, whilst in the mountain's side
 The assassin band their terrors seek to hide.
 Borne through the passes of the vale they fly,
 While France pursues her fruitless victory.
 Vain Roland's triumph: on his proud career,
 With fleeter foot destruction follows near.

XXXIX.

At Roncesvalles, where Maësca rose,(6)
 The bending mountains towards each other close:
 Thick gathering clouds eternally invest
 Each sloping summit of their parted crest:
 The shepherd tends his fleecy care below;
 Nor sees the heights, where howling tempests blow:
 Yet from the top, the winding track is viewed,
 By bleating flocks, with wavering step, pursued:
 And raised in clouds, the mountaineer commands
 The laughing prospect of the champaign lands.

XL.

Safe on these heights, that all access defy,
 Remistan's offspring, with Almanzor nigh,
 Perceives his warriors, or in flight dismayed,
 Or on the earth 'neath Roland's faulchion laid:
 Starting, he cries; "My friends, the hour appears."
 Swift from the ground a ponderous rock he rears,
 A frightful wreck, that o'er the summit hurl'd,
 With gathered strength, in downward course is whirl'd:
 It falls, rebounds; and, in its dreadful sweep,
 Spreads death and terror through the valley's deep.

XLI.

A thousand rocks, now loosened from their hold,
 Are down the mountain steeps tumultuous rolled.
 These with unwonted thunders shake the plain:
 Beneath their weight o'erwhelmed and crushed, in
 vain
 The Christian warriors from their fate would fly:
 It comes amain, and they defenceless die.
 Some, hurried headlong to the torrent's brink,
 Close their career, and in the billows sink:
 Some deep in earth the massive ruin drives,
 And hides the carcase in the grave it rives.

XLII.

Now only by the mountain's base remain
The three compeers, survivors of their train.
'Gainst Roger's shield a mighty fragment driven,
Falls, swift and fatal, as the bolt of Heaven:
Crushed is the feeble buckler by the shock!
The hero sinks beneath the ponderous rock.
O'erwhelmed and lost to his companion's eyes,
Within the mighty mass entombed he lies;
Save that appears his head defiled with gore,
His sword in shivers, and the crest he bore.

XLIII.

Near Mantua thus, we view with wondering eyes
Those fabled giants, who besieged the skies,⁽⁷⁾
Where Raphael's friend, upon the ducal wall,
With hand Homeric, traced the Titan's fall:
The enormous Briareus, who dared to move
His hundred arms against the realms of Jove,
Crushed by the weight of Ossa's rolling steep,
In vain essays to lift the massive heap:
The demi-god o'erwhelmed, though death advance,
Still towards Olympus turns his threatening glance.

XLIV.

Bent o'er his friend, a moment Roland stood,
And seemed accusing Heaven in frantic mood:
Then clears the foaming torrent with a leap,
And, fierce and dreadful, climbs the towering steep:
Ceaseless in speed, excessive in his wrath,
The trees, the rocks assist him on his path:
Less swift, less gloomy, at approaching night,
The lowland mists ascend the mountain's height!
He sees already, on the summit nigh,
The traitor's standard near the crescent fly.

XLV.

The faithful Oliver is near; they spread
 Each his protecting buckler o'er his head;
 The storm of spears and arrows these receive,
 While closely joined their arms they interweave.
 Thus linked, their upward path the heroes force,
 'Midst bounding rocks, resistless in their course.
 These strike their shields, the triple brass assail,
 Till, spent with toil, the brother warriors fail.
 They sink on earth, yet rallying soon acquire
 Fresh-springing force, and renovated fire.

XLVI.

With grief and fury Roland bites the ground:
 His spear and buckler lie in shivers round:
 He bursts from Oliver, his fate defies,
 And dares again upon the steep to rise.
 That sword, which oft, amid embattled fields,
 Had ruled the fight, in vain the warrior wields:
 His strength forsakes him, and his hour impends:
 This dark abyss his course of glory ends:
 The mountain shakes; and, from its cloud-capt hold,
 Agent of death, the fatal rock is rolled.

XLVII.

Low lies the chief! loud shrieks his brave compeer,
 And Roland's drooping head essays to rear:
 Crushed by the burning rock, the hero grasps
 His friendly hand, and to his bosom clasps:
 "My hour is come," he cries; "no hopes are left:
 "Love, glory, power—I sink, of all bereft:
 "Oh! God forgive my errors: let thy breast
 "Receive me, and thy guardian wings invest:
 "And thou, loved friend, restrain, restrain thy wo,
 "And think to save thee from the treacherous foe.

XLVIII.

" I scorned the counsels which thy prudence gave,
 " My rage has brought our warriors to their grave.
 " Through me our brave companion found his end;
 " Through me they perished all: but thou, my friend,
 " Still for fair France survive, and to our land
 " Devote thy days, thy courage, and thine hand:
 " Charles soon will need thine aid: thy faith retain:
 " Say, that for him in battle I am slain:
 " Oh! may he pardon Roland's frantic zeal,
 " And to the eternal Lord entrust his weal.

XLIX.

" Approach, loved friend: I feel my force depart:
 " If e'er thou seest the cherished of my heart,⁽⁸⁾
 " Bear my last message: at the hour of death,
 " In sighs for her I waste my latest breath!"
 These accents faltering now, so dreadful once,
 To the sad soul of Oliver announce
 The closing hour of Roland's hapless days.
 But not his eye the tear of sorrow pays,
 A sob convulsive struggles into birth,
 And, near to Milo's son, he drops to earth.

L.

Will Heaven permit, that from this vale of wo,
 At least one hero shall in safety go?
 Shall Oliver behold his proud career
 Of brilliant actions close forever here?
 Or shall he carry to their destined end
 The latest wishes of his dying friend?
 No—death is near, and Roland's prayer is vain!
 The murderous rocks are lanced in air again;
 Thundering they roll: the friends, illustrious pair,
 Beneath one stone one common burial share.



CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO VII.

**FROM THE TWENTY-SECOND TO THE THIRTY-SIXTH
DAY.**

Translated by Dr. Butler.

ARGUMENT.

Council of the confederate chiefs. Cottage of the labourers. Departure of Laurentia and her sons from Rome. Junction of Didier and Ezelin.

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO VII.

I.

ON wings more rapid than the winds in speed,
The fatal tidings through the world proceed:
His daughter's fall already Didier hears;
His mind is racked by keen remorse and fears,
These certain harbingers of wrath divine
To gloomiest thoughts his troubled soul incline.
Called to his tent, his friends, at midnight's hour,
Feel like forebodings every sense o'erpower.
Amidst them Didier hides his deep dismay,
And gives, in threatening voice, his fury way.

II.

Rodmir, whose hopes their utmost height assume,
Feels not the pressure of the general gloom:
"Thank we," he cries, "kind Fortune, that accords
"A hateful prince to our vindictive swords.
"Foe to the Saxon race, he breaks the tie
"That gave protected France her best ally.
"Nought thwarts our mighty plans: let Rome respire:
"While far from Italy our arms retire.
"Now towards Armelia o'er the Alps advance,
"And write our deep revenge on bleeding France.

III.

" For her, for us, let vengeance quick be hurled;
 " Ours be the task to liberate the world.
 " The gallant Moors a signal only seek;
 " Her grievous bondage Aquitain will break.
 " Ourselves I name not—but you know my sire:
 " In arms already is the north entire;
 " And if we seize while yet within our power,
 " With prompt address on this propitious hour,
 " The realm of Pepin to its ruin bows—
 " While Charles, enamoured of his Suevian spouse,
 " Bids from his thought all fear of war depart,
 " War let us carry to his kingdom's heart.

IV.

" See, to our standards flock unnumbered friends;
 " Beyond the Alps Laurentia's sire extends.
 " O'er the Provençal march supreme command;
 " Nice opens her ramparts to our armed band;(1)
 " Nice, from whose gates a host of warriors strong,
 " To avenge the cause of Carloman, shall throng.
 " Haste, then; the Fates are governed by the brave,
 " Italia best beyond her bounds we save.
 " Still will the Vatican the conquerors greet:
 " Subue the Franks—and Rome is at your feet."

V.

He spoke; the Paynim host with rapture hears:
 Then Longin rose amid his warlike peers:
 The wily chief pursues his subtle aim,
 And marks the Saxon's zeal with praise and blame.
 " Full well the valiant paladin we trace,
 " The worthy offspring of a dauntless race,
 " In these high thoughts; and, through my voice con-
 veyed,
 " Augustus' thanks are here to Rodmir paid.
 " In peril's hour our troops let Rodmir head;
 " Myself by him to battle will be led.

VI.

" But let us not by too much valour err:
 " Spite of the flames that all our bosoms stir,
 " Yet, Rodmir, yet, far safer were thy way,
 " Should'st thou the chiefs, who formed this plot, obey.
 " Thou bidd'st us strike our tents, and march for
 France;
 " Think'st thou on numerous cities to advance,
 " Surprise them open, and by turns subdue?
 " No, prince; not such the path we must pursue:
 " Rouse not these untamed nations with alarms,
 " But crush the foe abandoned to our arms.

VII.

" Armelia's sufferings just revenge demand;
 " But has not Rome, with Charles those sufferings
 planned?
 " And has not Adrian 'gainst the Lombard name
 " Poured forth his fury with unceasing flame?
 " If we from Charles the sovereign pontiff gain,
 " Soon o'er the capitol shall Didier reign,
 " His law shall bow the priest obedient down,
 " And bend with sovereign sway the triple crown.
 " Amongst this race fanatic, restless, light,
 " A priest may outrage kings of proudest might.

VIII.

" Should Pepin's son from long repose emerge,
 " Against our powerful rival we may urge
 " The gathered efforts of Italia's soil:
 " The sovereign priest shall bless us in our toil.
 " His potent blessing and his daring ban,
 " Guided by us, shall aid our mighty plan.
 " The sons of Carloman to Rome were led,
 " What time from Charles their widowed mother fled.
 " Soon may these exiles from the altar's base
 " Arise, and fill their royal father's place.

IX.

" Fame scarce shall tell that o'er their guiltless head
 " The consecrating oil is duly shed,
 " In sight of Heaven, ere, rallying round their cause,
 " The whole glad land shall recognise their laws.
 " Ensanguined Discord, in these children's name,
 " Shall shake o'er Aquitain her brand of flame.
 " Far, far from us must harassed Charles oppose
 " The league concerted by his daring foes:
 " The name, the rights of Carloman he fears;
 " A ravished crown, that sits but loose, he wears;
 " His nephews' right—we dash it from his brow,
 " If once the Vatican to Didier bow.

X.

" To thwart our hopes is Adrian's steadfast aim:
 " Haste then to crush the foe you cannot tame.
 " Antice, or Sergius, lifted to his place,(2)
 " Our rival's nephews with the crown may grace.
 " The power of France from discord must decay:
 " Pavia, Byzantium, through each future day,
 " 'Gainst Charles in closest union are allied;
 " And Rome is conquered if we France divide.
 " Let her tiara stoop to Didier's laws,
 " And prosperous war avenge Armelia's cause."

XI.

Thus Longin hopes his victim to o'erthrow,
 Ere the strong arm of Charles avert the blow.
 Didier approves: his furious transports fall;
 The Greek's advice becomes the advice of all.
 While numerous bands prepare them to be gone,
 The Lombard monarch from his warlike son,
 The brave Adalgise, on this day divides:
 To his tried care his banners he confides.
 He fears lest France too soon in arms should rise,
 March to the field, and crush his base emprise.

XII.

At his command beyond the Alps are led
A martial host, by chiefs to warfare bred.
But who with wary prudence shall restrain
In surer limits this ambitious train?
His son becomes the cautious monarch's choicé,
To check their license with controlling voice.
To join their bands, with heart that inly bleeds,
Towards France the hero from Spoleto speeds.
Still faithful to her vows, Gisella there
Breathes for her loved Adalgise many a prayer;
Still bids him come, still wastes her beauteous youth,
In the soft languishment of plighted truth.

XIII.

Armelia's fall each latent hope defeats,
Nursed in his bosom, and his wo completes.
 "Such, such," he cries, "the bitter fruits that grow
 "From wretched pomp! beneath the glittering show,
 "By that proud purple to our eyes revealed,
 "The chain of frightful bondage is concealed:
 "And state necessity's abhorred control
 "With tyrant sway o'erwhelms the struggling soul.
 "Survey the lowest—we are lower still!
 "Doomed our career of greatness to fulfil,
 "Victims we bring, to Power's remorseless shrine,
 "Love's purest oaths and all his fires divine.

XIV.

"At Pepin's court my happy childhood flew;
 "Dear as a kinsman in that hero's view,
 "His daughter's husband by my friends designed,
 "The warmest passion filled my youthful mind.
 "Joy, light and life, Gisella was to me—
 "Now, leagued with Greeks in impious amity,
 "All, all is changed! The Franks, their royal head,
 "And loved Gisella's self, to me are dead.

" Ah, wretch! where Hymen once prepared his ties,
 " Quarrels alone and hateful wars arise.

XV

" Yet to this law severe my soul must yield.
 " Mourn my sad heart! but in the martial field,
 " Still let mine arm my country's battles fight!"
 While slowly climbing Somma's sandy height,(3)
 Adalgise thus exhaled his secret pain,
 A gathering sound o'ertakes him from the plain.
 In swift pursuit he sees a fiery steed,
 Thiek clouds of dust attendant on his speed.
 A warrior like Numidia's horseman chides
 With hot reproof the courser which he guides.

XVI.

No biting curb the generous steed had known,
 Obedient to his master's voice alone.
 Adalgise stops; and ere he gain the height,
 Soon follows on his course the Saxon knight.
 'Tis Rodmir's self:—on towards the prince he prest,
 Love, zeal, and vengeance boiling in his breast.
 " Useless," he cries, " would Rodmir's aid be found,
 " To crush Rome's pontiff and her feeble mound;
 " I seek Armelia; and to Longin leave
 " The care this easy conquest to achieve.

XVII.

" Henceforth my arms Armelia's dictate sways:
 " To her and vengeance I devote my days.
 " For her the Danes, the Huns, the Saxon ranks,
 " Shall carry terror home amid the Franks.
 " By me the crooked projects of the Greek
 " Are ill conceived: one end alone I seek:
 " To serve Armelia forms my single aim,
 " Her wrongs my soul with deadliest rage inflame.
 " Enough for me, from Rome and Pavia far,
 " That Charles is busied with Germania's war.

XVIII.

" His well-earned chastisement to me should fall:
 " I seek the Frank beneath Lutetia's wall.
 " Each hour is dear: in ardent zeal I go,
 " Resolved to meet my death, or death bestow."
 Swift as he spoke his steed is lost to view;
 So through the spacious lists the coursers flew,
 Whose feats victorious are to fame declared,
 In deathless numbers by the Theban bard.(4)
 The cheering loud acclaims, the goal in sight,
 With love of glory spurred them in their flight.

XIX.

Thus from Adalgise turning, Rodmir pressed
 His furious course, nor brooks an instant's rest.
 Ere long his eyes those fertile mounts behold,
 That o'er Ravenna tower, so famed of old.(5)
 Of fruitful Po he skirts each lengthening maze,
 Till Pavia's royal city now displays
 Her antique turrets, that in splendour rise
 Amidst the vast horizon to the skies.
 When lo, Armelia, Aripert, excite
 The sudden notice of the Saxon knight.

XX.

Ere yet the frontier bounds of France she past,
 Timantius joined the queen, by grief o'ercast;
 And as the Italian mountains rose to view,
 More doubly deep Armelia's sadness grew.
 " What, then, by all despised, of all bereft,
 " Is there no comfort for Armelia left?
 " Rodmir, whose early plighted faith I knew,
 " My sire, who makes his child his victim too,
 " All that I loved, before me seem to fly;
 " Should guilt and sorrow meet an equal eye?"

XXI.

But chiefly Rodmir wakes Armelia's fear:
 Does he no more to former oaths adhere?
 Like vulgar lovers, can the knight forswear
 The tender bondage which he vowed to bear?
 While thus the queen abandoned every thought
 To sorrow keen by doubts injurious brought,
 The sight of Rodmir charms her gladdening eyes.
 Before her bent, "I come," the hero cries,
 "Goaded by love, with soul on fire I fly,
 "Thy wrongs, Armelia, to revenge, or die."

XXII.

These soothing words Armelia's joy relume:
 So the bright day renews with freshening bloom
 The withering flowret that in youthful pride
 Shrank to the blast upon the mountain side.
 While from her eye a glance impassioned thrown,
 Beams on the knight who makes her cause his own.
 "'Gainst thee," she cries, "'gainst thee have I in-
 veighed,
 "Thee, gallant Rodmir, thee, my guardian aid,
 "My knight approved! thy pardon let me sue,
 "That e'er I deemed thy constant heart untrue.
 "That heart unchanged by wrongs or time I see,
 "And every hope of mine fulfilled in thee.

XXIII.

"Even on the throne I wept, from thee removed,
 "Thy form and features fed the griefs I proved.
 "Once more at large, I thank the fatal stroke
 "Which from my brows an odious crown has broke.
 "Yet lowering round her, a malignant cloud
 "Must still Armelia's destinies enshroud,
 "Till that blest day which to her feet shall bring
 "The severed, lifeless head of France's king.
 "Come, to my fury thine assistance lend;
 "Come, and in battle's hour my cause defend;

“ Till sinking France in fire and blood shall own,
 “ And curse, the guilty falsehoods of her throne.

XXIV.

“ Love’s gentler sentiments and soft address
 “ More suit the hour of conquest and success.
 “ This day, to hate devoted and to fame,
 “ War is the only aid my grief may claim.
 “ My wrongs in silence ne’er will I sustain,
 “ Ne’er, like *Laurentia*, to an altar vain,
 “ Stretched at its foot, my lamentations pour.
 “ Thy God, *Irmensul*, henceforth I adore.(6)
 “ Bloodshed and wrath upon his rites await,
 “ Let him but glut my vengeance and my hate.

XXV.

“ Yes, thy dread creed, *Irmensul*, I embrace!
 “ In steel completely clothed, in *Slaughter’s* face,
 “ I follow *Rodmir* to the field of fight,
 “ His dangers share, and in his toils unite.
 “ Now towards the Northern forests let us fly,
 “ Far from these climates, where in every eye
 “ My shame is writ, ne’er to return again
 “ Till deep revenge and conquest we obtain.
 “ My friends will follow: restless shall I burn,
 “ Till blood a recompense for tears return.”

XXVI.

While thus the queen her raging hate expressed,
 Tumultuous transports rose in *Rodmir’s* breast.
Armelia’s self anticipates his vows,
 Prepares to follow, and his fates espouse.
 While from its sheath he drew his glittering blade,
 “ Hear, daughter of a royal race,” he said,
 “ This solemn vow, which binds me to fulfil
 “ The sternest, deadliest dictates of thy will.

“ Yes, Rodmir swears to crush Lutetia’s king,
 “ And to thy feet his haughty head shall bring.”

XXVII.

Armelia’s eyes a radiant smile display:
 Amidst these scenes she seeks a short delay.
 Loosed from their yoke she leaves the fiery steeds
 At will to range, and crop the flowery meads.
 Some humble labourers owned the pleasing spot;
 The rustic garden and the straw-roofed cot.
 In these sequestered scenes she hopes to find
 Some gleam of peace to her disordered mind.
 Fain would she, sheltered from the burning hours,
 Forget the anguish that her soul devours.

XXVIII.

The cot, by well-tilled plains encompassed round,
 Rose on a plat of elevated ground;
 Where loaded stems, as southern gales descend,
 In gentle poise their precious burden bend.
 In a long avenue’s profoundest shade
 The ponderous ploughshare is inactive laid.
 Beside it seen, upon the streamlet’s marge,
 The patient oxen ruminant at large.
 The sounding pipes, and labour at a stand,
 All now bespeak the harvest-tide at hand.(7)

XXIX.

Amidst these plains the masters of the soil,
 Released at length from long continued toil,
 In gathered group around the cottage placed,
 Their well-earned ease in soft enjoyment taste.
 Oft in these friendly scenes, had chiefs renowned
 For martial deeds a calm asylum found.
 Around the warriors anxiously they fly,
 Ardent to please, and in their service vie.
 And ’neath this humble roof, this lonely shed,
 The youthful queen and Saxon knight are led.

XXX.

Rich streams of milk in wooden bowls are poured:
 The careful swain prepares his simple board;
 Then to each stranger with a liberal hand
 Presents in turn the produce of his land.
 Four sons, a daughter, and a wife beloved,
 His household formed: by his example moved,
 All these his hospitable labours share,
 Strangers alike to avarice and to care.
 Far from remorse or wo, secure from need,
 A life of union and content they lead.

XXXI.

A guarded silence held the Lombard queen;
 Waked to regret she viewed the tranquil scene.
 But soon each rising thought of peace repressed,
 And thus Timantius, Aripert, addressed:
 " Hence to Spoleto, to my sire proceed,
 " Haste, friends, and bid my royal father lead
 " Above these mountain steeps his warrior train:
 " Meantime with Rodmir I the Rhine will gain.
 " Soon, by the rumour of our deeds dismayed,
 " Neustria shall summon back the Frank for aid.

XXXII.

" Do thou, Timantius, urge with zealous care
 " My sire's revenge for all the wrongs I bear.
 " Henceforth the dread Irmensul I obey,
 " Disclaim my sex, and tyrant Custom's sway.
 " Yes; I will lead my followers to the field:
 " Who knows but Heaven may to my vengeance yield
 " The author of my shame? If Albion's blood(8)
 " Still through your veins preserve its wonted flood,
 " Soon o'er these heights shall haste the Lombard
 powers,
 " And leave to future spoil the Latian towers.

XXXIII.

" My sire's approach we shall await in France:
 " His voice must bid the valiant Moor advance;
 " The dauntless Lombard, and aspiring Greek,
 " In common war the common foe to seek.
 " Haste then, O haste, in Rodmir's steps to tread,
 " Or see the Franks through all your cities spread.
 " Beneath the sanction of the Church arrayed,
 " They burn for means your country to invade.
 " Would that my knowledge, midst themselves supplied,
 " Might light your counsels and your measures guide.

XXXIV.

" Fail ye to conquer, ye as slaves obey;
 " For me—no bondage shall my soul dismay;
 " Success or death shall finish my disgrace:
 " I for a father fear, and kindred race.
 " 'To these loved friends my hopes, my wishes bear;
 " Say, that a noble vengeance must prepare
 " The means that only can unite us all.
 " Bid them, if distant I am doomed to fall,
 " To spurn at weakness, and with double hate
 " Avenge my baleful marriage and my fate."

XXXV.

Timantius, Aripert, her bidding hear:
 Each from his eyelids drops the scalding tear.
 But Rodmir's voice, impatient of delay,
 Their parting urges, and rebukes their stay.
 Meantime, abandoned to celestial ire,
 War, rage, and hate, Armelia's bosom fire;
 Yet midst the tide of passions does she grieve
 Her native land, and scenes of youth to leave,
 For the last time as Pavia's ramparts rise,
 Seen in blue distance blending with the skies.

XXXVI.

While towards the North with troubled heart she
 hastes,
 Her sire the distant plains of Latium wastes;
 On towards the sacred walls with daily speed,
 In near approach his daring hands proceed:
 Where'er he moves, destruction and dismay,
 Guilt, sacrilege, and rapine, mark his way.
 'Rest of a grave, his martyr'd victims lie,
 Lombard and Greek in rival fury vie;
 And one wide field the Latian plains afford,
 O'erwhelmed with wo, and swept with fire and sword.

XXXVII.

The sovereign pontiff, midst the general fear,
 Hopes aid divine, and Heaven's protection near,
 With warlike guard the gates and town provides,
 And cheering all, himself o'er all presides.
 Saint Peter's dome, that from the rampart stands
 More distant, offers to the greedy bands
 The lure resistless of unholy spoil.
 Slight walls the precincts guard; but Adrian's toil(9)
 The strong defence of trenches deep supplies,
 Whose line is traced and sunk beneath his eyes.

XXXVIII.

The Christians haste; and soon along the ground
 Yawn the deep dykes in formidable round;
 Sires, infants, females, with unwearied care,
 Though feeble hand, the sacred labour share.
 Joined in one toil are low and high degree,
 All ranks, each sex, from age to infancy;
 Roused by the general dread all hearts unite:
 Laurentia's children, in the public sight
 Of fervent faith a bright example prove,
 And towards the sacred porch in silence move.

XXXIX.

These tender scions of illustrious line
 Even now anticipate the call divine.
 Beneath the altar's shadow have they grown,
 Though yet their second lustre scarce has flown.
 The pontiff views them from his lofty chair,
 As 'mid the crowd the general toil they share,
 And with the labours of the meanest vie;
 On each he bends a fond paternal eye.
 Fain would his care the foe's intent defeat,
 And place these orphans in some safe retreat.

XL.

Called to the Vatican, from common view,
 Laurentia far within its walls withdrew:
 There she received the pontiff's high behest,
 As thus the weeping mother he addressed.
 "Dark o'er this hapless city lowers the sky,
 "Hence with thine orphan charge, Laurentia, fly:
 "O let them find some more secure abode;
 "A name renowned is oft a fearful load
 "Fly then, fond parent, quit this dangerous spot,
 "And far from Latium seek a kinder lot.

XLI.

"Speed, daughter, speed thy flight towards Ostia's
 port,
 "My ships shall bear thee to thy father's court:
 "Secure in Nice thy tranquil days shall flow,
 "Free from the snares and terror of the foe.
 "From royal Charles no more hast thou to dread,
 "Thy children to Provence in safety led;
 "Shall there in honour and in peace reside;
 "But thou, my daughter, whatsoe'er betide,
 "With patient, pious heart, thy woes sustain;
 "Heaven sends afflictions oft for mortals' gain."

XLII.

Humbly Laurentia hears, with sorrowing heart,
God's vicar thus his sovereign will impart:
Not for herself, but children, does she fear
A second exile, and its toil severe;
Yet, fired with heavenly zeal, her spirits rise,
And fear from her maternal bosom flies.
So the moist vapour, by the potent ray
Shot from the rising sun, dissolves away.
Laurentia, to the pontiff's will resigned,
For toil and suffering arms her patient mind.

XLIII.

She hopes, ere long, to clasp her father's knees;
The hope consoles, and makes her labour ease.
Mainfroi yet reigned in Nice, o'erwhelmed with years,
'Reft of his kindred, lonely, and in tears.
Since that sad hour, when death untimely gave
His daughter's husband to an early grave,
He ruled his old domestic lands in peace,
A vassal to Lutetia's king for Nice.
Mourning the woes to which his house was doomed,
His days in sterile sorrow he consumed.

XLIV.

Long ere this hour had Mainfroi's tender cares
Called to Provence's realm his infant heirs.
But fearful, dubious of her future fate,
Laurentia chose to seek a distant state.
Still in her startled fancy did she trace
The bleeding images of Clovis' race;
Still seemed, in Charles, the tyrant to behold,
Semblance of those, whose calculations cold
The ties and claims of nature have withstood,
And shown no saving care for kindred blood.(10)

XLV.

This error, venial in a mother's breast,
 With dark forebodings all her thoughts possessed.
 She strains her children to her throbbing heart,
 Grieved from this hospitable land to part,
 Where long repose her drooping soul had cheered,
 And all her virtues and her griefs revered.
 Warned of her flight, the Latins throng around,
 While pitying murmurs through their ranks resound.
 Each seems to feel some new domestic wo,
 As from Rome's towers the royal exiles go.

XLVI.

Two thousand knights in burnished arms await
 The queen's appearance at the palace gate:
 In the first rank the numerous escort bear
 The bannered keys and mitre to the air.
 The Latin squadron 'neath Ruffinus came:
 He, to the glory of the Roman name,
 The Fabian line, his high descent could trace:
 The hero, worthy his illustrious race,
 Deserved that happier fortune's brightest rays
 Should gild the valour of his youthful days.

XLVII.

From lofty Tusculum, the chief's domain,(11)
 He leads at Adrian's call his vassal train:
 Prompt for the Church each danger to defy,
 From sons, and tender wives, the warriors fly.
 Himself with noblest hope, and soul on fire,
 Bids them to deeds of ancient Rome aspire.
 And rapturous ardour kindles in his heart,
 As from the walls his gallant bands depart.
 Proud of the pontiff's choice, with youthful glow,
 His vows impatient seek a worthy foe.

XLVIII.

While thus towards Ostia's port Ruffinus speeds,
 His bands, on Rome advancing, Didier leads,
 Where yet the first Augustus' work is found:
 Curbing two rival floods with mighty mound.
 There Nar and Tiber roll with furious sweep(12)
 Their gathered billows through those valleys deep.
 Along the banks as rest the warrior train,
 Their leader only seeks repose in vain;
 Gazing upon the stream with looks intent,
 His soul with War's approaching cares is rent.

XLIX.

"See then my arms near Adrian's towers," he cries;
 "Rome soon shall view my floating standards rise:
 " Mightiest of all the Lombard kings I stand,
 " My sword shall perfect what their counsel planned.
 " Who masters Rome must be the Cæsars' heir:
 " Why feel I then this inward weight of care,
 " So near its walls? the weakness of the Greeks
 " In surest language for their fealty speaks.
 " None can oppose—my conquest is complete,
 " And Rome shall soon lie humbled at my feet.

L.

"Far, far away, be idle terrors borne!
 " The pontiff's hostile menace let us scorn:
 " Bow we the priest beneath an iron yoke;
 " With stern rebuke his spirit must be broke.
 " Had Attila an idle curse disdained,
 " Ne'er had the brightness of his glory waned.
 " I blush myself, ashamed to read my thought:
 " I waver now, when conquest should be bought:
 " Cease we to listen to this dastard fear,
 " Nor check our glorious hopes in mid career."

LI.

He spoke; and while Ambition's flattering voice
 Bids Didier's drooping mind again rejoice,
 Along the vale a thousand shouts he hears,
 And all the farther bank is set with spears.
 A host is there with banners floating wide,
 Their neighing steeds the foaming waves divide,
 Breasting their force. With eye, that fiercely gleams,
 And lengthened hair, upon the wind that streams,
 A warrior comes, whose burnished armour shows
 A ring of gold, which double snakes enclose.

LII.

By these fierce Ezelin is to Didier known:
 Salerno, Benevent, Apulia, groan
 Beneath his yoke: joined in the nuptial band,
 Armelia's sister shares his crown and hand.(13)
 Onward he drives, with hate and fury fired,
 And cries aloud, "Even to our mounts retired,
 "O prince, our common country's voice has spread;
 "Twelve thousand Lombards, all in battles bred,
 "Their arms present; and this unconquered host
 "Round Rome's proud ramparts have assumed their
 post.

LIII.

"Beneath the Alban mount their banners stay;
 "I come before, to urge thee on thy way.
 "Haste! let us march, and crush the hated foe!
 "Strike—and at once o'erwhelm them with the blow.
 "Those among us, who had a Roman mind,
 "To well-earned death my sentence has consigned.
 "To heavenly wrath they dared devote my life,
 "And preach amid my states rebellious strife.
 "From high Lucania to Vulturus' shores,(14)
 "Unchained against them Death its fury pours.

LIV.

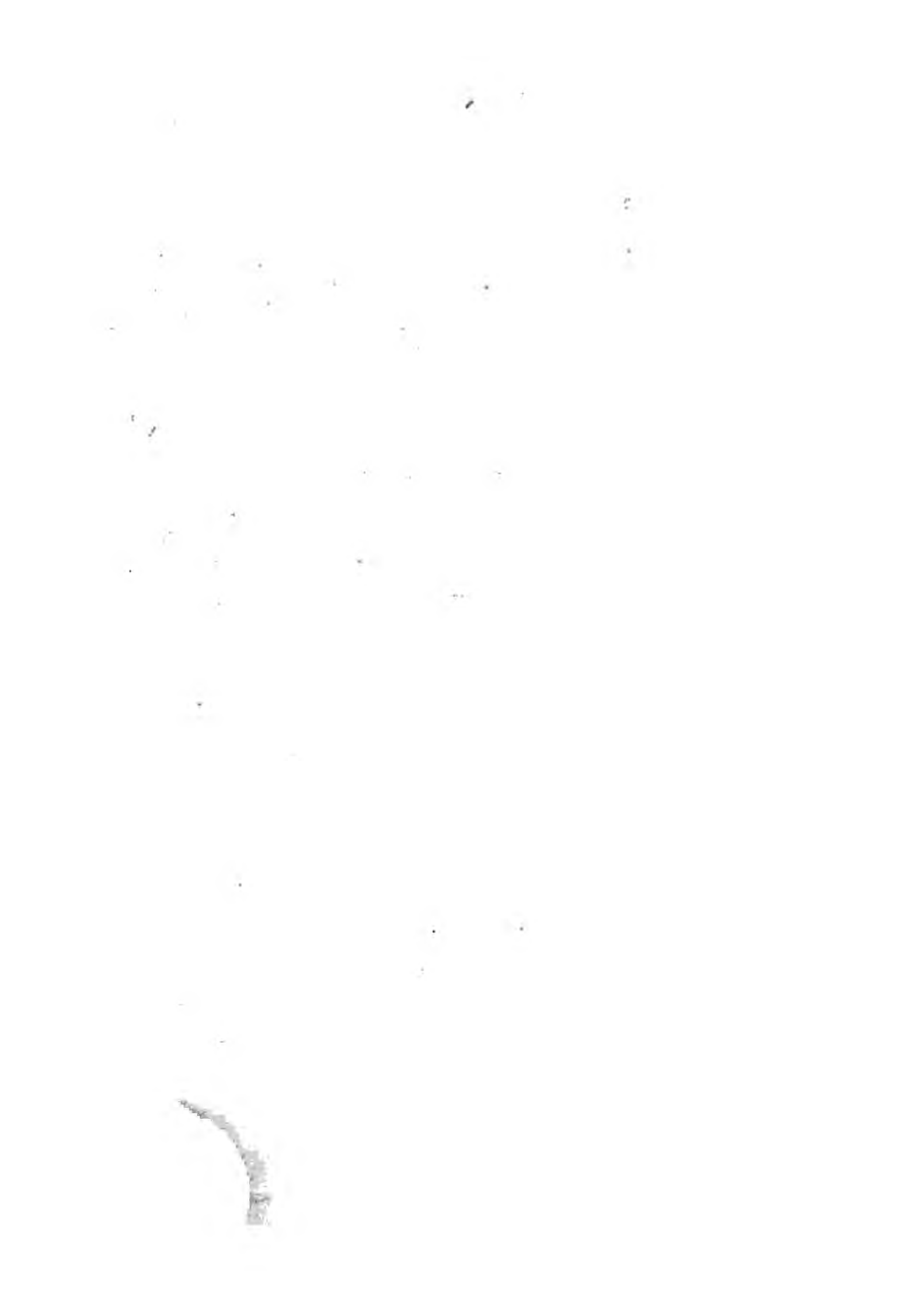
" Those numerous cloisters, where rebellion found
 " A refuge sure, are levelled to the ground.
 " Swift fire, in justice, has those haunts destroyed,
 " While envious craft the priest of kings annoyed.
 " Cassin, Garganus, proud resistance made, (15)
 " With daring show; in ashes are they laid.
 " Nor did I deign their guilty priests to spare;
 " Adrian will learn the sufferings he must share.
 " Haste, and pursue him to the altar's base,
 " Whose heart has sworn to crush the Lombard race."

LV.

The torrent oft, that long through flowery plains
 Had held its course, its early rage restrains,
 Till one more fierce, whose waves with rapid gush
 Pour from the mountains, to its bosom rush:
 The slackened tide again new force has found;
 Joining their billows, with impetuous bound,
 The rival floods above their borders rise,
 And in the hollow glens the swains surprise;
 Wide o'er the fields with sweeping ravage flow,
 And all the labourer's hopes at once o'erthrow.

LVI.

Even so the Lombard king, as Ezelin spake,
 Sudden perceives his slumbering fury wake.
 The tents are struck before the day has waned;
 The Tiber views his sacred flood profaned.
 At midnight o'er the hills their course they bend,
 And soon beneath them Latium's plains extend.
 Defenceless realms; anon their marshalled powers
 With arms encompass Rome's devoted towers.
 The tumult swells, and fire and sword prepare
 The funeral hour for many a warrior there.



CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO VIII.

**FROM THE THIRTY-SIXTH TO THE THIRTY-NINTH
DAY.**

Translated by Dr. Butler.

ARGUMENT.

Propositions of peace rejected by the Lombards.
March of the French. Enumeration of the paladins. Hermit of Mount Jove. Passage and battle of the Alps.

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO VIII.

I.

WHERE thro' the vale Arc rolls his silver stream, (1)
Soon as the sun emits his earliest beam,
Through darkened air the dust in billows floats,
And brazen trumpets ring their clanging notes.
Shrill echoes answer from the mountain's height,
And burnished fauchions glitter on the sight.
Far gleams the steel, as from Lutetia's towers
Charles towards the Alpine frontier leads his powers.
His host impatient round their sovereign press,
And loud acclaims anticipate success.

II.

One spirit animates the martial train,
Bent to invade Italia's fruitful plain;
To scale those heights, by which the glorious field,
Where erst their fathers conquered, is concealed.
Their zeal approving, Charles, with wary course,
Seeks in their chiefs to regulate its force;
And in the assembled council thus declares
The holy purpose of his generous cares.
"Not for ourselves this enterprise is planned;
"Religion's cause has armed each warrior's hand;
"I seek the welfare of the Church alone,
"And all ambition else my thoughts disown:

III.

" Pepin's example fain would I pursue,
 " And greet the Lombard king with friendship true,
 " If from this foreign league he break away,
 " And own the sovereign pontiff's rightful sway.
 " Fulrad and Egobard Spoleto seek,
 " The peace they proffer shall confound the Greek.
 " 'Tis true that vengeance we shall thus forego,
 " Pardoning the guilty outrage of the foe.
 " But such, brave Franks, my purpose and my will;
 " Armelia's father lives in Didier still."

IV.

Thus as he spake amid the assembled peers,
 Low sounds of whispered murmurs reach his ears;
 His valiant knights with martial ardour burn,
 And dread that peace inglorious should return.
 Their brilliant course through combats leads to fame,
 And Ogier dares the king's delay to blame.
 One glance from Charles the audacious Dane dismays;
 Quick signs of wrath the offended king betrays,
 Which o'er his lowering brow perceived to rush,
 Soon the bold murmur into silence hush.

V.

Fast by their standards, seated on the ground,
 The numerous bands o'erflow the valley's bound.
 The valiant paladins, assembled near,
 Ill brook the cause that checks their high career.
 In warlike songs they cheat the lingering hours,
 Or trace by turns, with active Memory's powers,
 The deeds of chivalry in ages gone,
 By the first knights and bravest heroes done.
 Beguiling thus their irksome state of rest,
 Glory and warfare all their thoughts possessed.

VI.

They who of old the Italian plains had known,
 Vaunt to their fellows, with imposing tone,
 The wondrous climate of this fruitful land;
 Tell how the Lombard kings had dared withstand
 Pepin's waked wrath, till, by his power subdued,
 Kneeling to France, for clemency they sued.
 But scarce had Pepin o'er the Alps returned,
 Ere Astolph's shameless perjuries he learned;
 His faith, so lately pledged, the Lombard broke,
 And threatened Rome with yet a heavier yoke.(2)

VII.

The attentive youth, who hear these wonders told,
 Burn with desire these regions to behold;
 Regions, of yore to fame and empire known,
 That now beneath the Lombard bondage groan.
 The towering Alps, where hostile banners fly,
 Attract each paladin's impatient eye.
 There, midst the clouds, the Cotian mountain rears,(3)
 Hid from their sight, the snows of thousand years;
 While on its sides encamped, the Lombard host
 Brave the Frank warfare and eternal frost.

VIII.

A band, descending from these mountain steeps,
 On towards the Arc its tardy progress keeps:
 Far from these heights, what warriors rash advance,
 To meet their downfall on the soil of France?
 Instant the impetuous Ogier grasps his arms;
 His soul the enlivening thought of battle warms;
 Flushed with new hopes his ardent spirits rise,
 As o'er the plain his fiery courser flies:
 Isolier next, and many a gallant peer,
 Urge their fleet steeds upon the Dane's career.

IX.

But Ogier stops, as, nearer brought to view,
 The bannered arms of Egobard he knew.
 "Beloved companions, heaven vouchsafes us war,"
 He cries; "I know the flowerets and the star,
 "The bright device that Poitier's ruler bears;
 "Doubtless the Lombard, blind in fury, dares
 "Of guilty outrage to complete the sum:
 "The trains of Egobard and Fulrad come.
 "Thank heaven, brave peers, our wishes are achieved,
 "And every hope of impious peace deceived."

X.

Around the Dane his valiant comrades press,
 While loud exulting cheers their joy confess.
 With looks upon the banner fixed they stand,
 Like the keen hunter on the fallowed land,
 Unmoved, attentive, while with eager view
 His steadfast eyes the flying game pursue:
 But nearer Egobard advances still,
 And thousand shouts at once Heaven's concave fill.
 "Rome, at her last resource, with plaintive cry
 "Implores the Franks their succour to supply:
 "Arm, arm, ye knights! perish the Lombard horde;
 "'Gainst those who brought them peace they turn the
 sword."

XI.

Fulrad and Egobard approach the king,
 And thus declare the mission which they bring.
 "He, who his fealty to thy father broke,
 "Who holds Ravenna 'neath a tyrant's yoke,
 "Proud Romuald, sire, provokes thee to the fight.
 "The daring prince commands the mountain height:
 "With rapid march advanced before our bands,
 "Full on the summit of the pass he stands.
 "With threatening brow, and eye where fury flames,
 "Thus to thy knights presumptuous he exclaims.

XII.

“ ‘ No truce, but deadly war! by dastard wile
 “ ‘ Think ye the Lombards ye can now beguile?
 “ ‘ What peace can Pepin’s son to Didier send?
 “ ‘ No; let the sword alone our quarrels end.
 “ ‘ To pass the mountain barriers if he dread,
 “ ‘ Soon will we seek him: soon upon his head
 “ ‘ The wrongs his father wrought will we repay:
 “ ‘ Rome bows already to the Lombard sway:
 “ ‘ Saxons and Greeks, with all the Italian states,
 “ ‘ Our arms shall follow to Lutetia’s gates.

XIII.

“ ‘ Astolph’s and Pepin’s days are sunk in night:
 “ ‘ Enough that once, forbearing conquest’s right,
 “ ‘ Romuald vouchsafed before the Franks to bow:
 “ ‘ We saw you then (O sight of shame!) allow
 “ ‘ Spoleto and the Exarchate to become
 “ ‘ The unrighteous plunder of aspiring Rome.
 “ ‘ From me the fruit that from my courage grew,
 “ ‘ Ravenna, then ye forcibly withdrew:
 “ ‘ Now all is changed; reconquered by my sword,
 “ ‘ Again Ravenna owns me for her lord,
 “ ‘ Fortune now smiles propitious on our fate,
 “ ‘ We brave the Franks, their anger and their hate.

XIV.

“ ‘ After those wrongs ye bid Armelia bear,
 “ ‘ What hope ye here, false envoys as ye are?
 “ ‘ Away! lest soon, beneath my arm subdued,
 “ ‘ Ye serve Italia’s hungry wolves for food.’”
 Charles here the speech of Egobard repressed:
 “ Well, then,” he cries, “ no longer let us rest.
 “ On, warriors, on—Heaven shall our path direct,
 “ And through yon mound of bristling spears protect.
 “ There, on those cliffs, the foes’ defenceless wall,
 “ The allies of Greece beneath our arm shall fall.”

XV.

The threatening clarions with awakened throat
Quick to the march proclaim the signal note:
O'er the wide host, advanced before the line,
Waves the bright banner where the lilies shine;
The sparkling plains are wrapt in fiery blaze;
The burnished steel reflects a thousand rays;
The dazzling light, at distance as it beams,
Like some wide raging conflagration seems.
Romuald, his followers, in tumultuous mass,
Rush to the heights, and barricade the pass.

XVI.

In columns ranged, and guarding silence deep,
The Franks successive rise from steep to steep.
Torrents, and vales, and woods, as they appear,
Each in its turn with rapid step they clear.
But soon the mantle of the night, unfurled,
Spreads its dense shadows o'er the darkened world.
In these wild regions, as its chief directs,
Each band the dawning of the morn expects:
'Neath the sharp axe the pine trees strike the ground,
And thousand watch-fires mark the encampment
round.

XVII.

Then Charles in council thus the peers addressed:
" Our troops, brave peers, have closed their eyes to
rest;
" 'Tis ours to wake, 'tis ours, with valiant deed,
" Worthy our sires, their daring steps to lead.
" I guide you on, and be my path pursued;
" This night is destined for a night of blood.
" I will, that morning at its earliest light
" Shall find our banner on the Alpine height.
" Your virtues, warriors, and your high renown,
" From me may claim the first victorious crown,

“ And foremost risks; ours be the glorious boast
“ To smooth the passage for our sleeping host.”

XVIII.

He spoke, and towards the heights impatient flew;
His course with rival speed the knights pursue.
Thou, that canst chase the shadows of the grave,
And mighty names from wasting darkness save!
Do thou, O Muse, repeat the glorious toil
Of these brave chieftains: tell what happy soil
May boast their birth; those warriors' names unfold,
Who dared the faith in warfare to uphold,
The throne of France supported by their might,
Their country's honour, and their sovereign's right.

XIX.

Proud of chivalric honours late conferred,
Alphonso, Egbert, Monclar first appeared.
Burning in fight to meet the impious foe,
Fast by the king with Eginhard they go.
Isolier next, whose prowess Mainfroi loved:
Far from Lutetia, in an isle approved(4)
For warriors brave, his earliest breath he drew:
His noble sire, whose sway Ajaccio knew,
Oped to the great Martel his friendly doors,
What time the Franks pursued the vanquished Moors.

XX.

Three days Martel on the Cirnesian wave
Harassed the Saracens, nor respite gave.
And thus from Tours, with perfect conquest crowned,
Drove back the foe to desert Afric's ground.
Then did Isolier's sire, Ajaccio's lord,
Each welcome hospitable rite afford,
When to his shores the conquering chief withdrew;
Repaired his fleets, refreshed his weary crew;
Stored them with produce of his fertile land,
And every want supplied with bounteous hand.

XXI.

Preparing now his vessel to ascend,
 Martel with brilliant armour clothed his friend,
 And to his breast affixed the golden broom.
 When sunk the aged chieftain to the tomb,
 To young Isolier by succession fell
 These honoured gifts conferred by great Martel.
 By glory fired, he left his native port,
 His youthful bride, and sought Provence's court;
 Received by Carloman, he soon became
 Dear to the king, and known for deeds of fame.

XXII.

The grateful hero to Provence's lord
 Thenceforth his life devoted and his sword;
 And when in death his sovereign's eyes were closed,
 Long time Austrasia's chieftains he opposed,
 And for the orphans raised his generous voice
 'Gainst Charles, supported by the nobles' choice.
 Ill then could that brave islander enure
 His soul this great reversal to endure.
 Still, still does Charles, in his remembrance deep,
 The painful feeling of his conduct keep:
 He knows him blameless, justly can approve
 The warrior's faith, but cannot give his love.

XXIII.

Henry, Friuli's duke, in warfare done
 Who Pepin served, as nobly serves his son.
 He, with Theoderic, with Isere's lord
 Thierra, and with Sigeric drew the sword
 Of old 'gainst Witikind: full oft the flood
 Of hapless Elbe and Weser ran with blood(5)
 Shed by the falchions of these warriors famed:
 With pristine ardour still they are enflamed:
 The warlike Saxons, though they ne'er subdued,
 Yet like a mound their inroads they withstood.

XXIV.

Godfrey of Bouillon, who of conquest here
Makes his first essay, in his twentieth year,
Ranked with the paladins deserves to stand.
The chief whose arm redeemed the sacred land,
Whom Tasso's song in deathless fame enrolled,
Among his ancestors this hero told.
Young, valiant, good, replete with zealous flame
To serve his Church and prince, Archambaud came,
Three Mon-maurs then, each eager to obtain(6)
The wreath of conquest, marched amid the train.
Long has this race, by virtue ever swayed,
A fruitful line of gallant knights displayed.

XXV.

Fulrad is next: with War's distinguished signs
This chief the honours of the Church combines;
But never bore his arm the murderous steel,
Till Heaven commanded for the Christian weal.
Prompt at the call, against an impious horde,
Then Fulrad, leagued with Pepin, drew the sword.
And when the exarchate from the foe was won,
Fulrad to Rome was sent by Martel's son,
At the saint's tomb, in Pepin's name, to lay
The keys that opened to this mighty sway.

XXVI.

Romuald in fury quits Ravenna's walls,
And all his deadliest hate on Fulrad falls.
Boiling with rage, his vengeance had decreed,
That Fulrad in the mountain pass should bleed.
The right of nations this revenge suppressed,
And checked awhile the transports of his breast.
Not Egobard amidst these chosen knights
Had shunned the perils of the Alpine heights,
But Charles to him the army's guidance gave,
Beneath his care the royal banners wave.

XXVII.

Who is yon aged chief whose looks disclose
 O'er his dark brow the trace of deep-felt woes?
 Rialto long owned Zeno for its lord,(7)
 Until, in Alboin's time, the Lombard horde,
 Like a fierce torrent o'er Italia spread:
 Then from their native seats the Christians fled.
 In hopeless fear, on Ocean's oozy strand,
 They sought a refuge from the conqueror's hand.
 Soon Adria's gulf upon its billowy breast
 Beheld the wondrous city rear its crest.

XXVIII.

Each doge that o'er this new republic reigned,
 His sovereign power from general suffrage gained.
 The Pavian princes, hopeless to debase
 Beneath their yoke indignant Adria's race,
 Still looked with confidence to secret feud,
 Till Zeno's care these inward broils subdued.
 Awhile he reigned—but factious hate at last
 Availed his virtues and his fame to blast,
 Till through vile agents was he forced to roam,
 Driven by the Lombard monarch from his home.

XXIX.

Preferring exile to the servile chain,
 These generous souls the applause of Charles obtain.
 He loved the courage of Rialto's band,
 And midst his paladins bade Zeno stand.
 Pisano, faithful in misfortune's hour,
 Moves at his side, once witness of his power.
 And, near, Clothaire is seen: Clothaire, whose height
 Of towering stature, and gigantic might,
 The trace of Celtic ancestry retains;
 He saw the light amid the Armoric plains.(8)

XXX.

Lo, next a troop advances, blithe and young:
 First Visige comes, from Aquitain who sprung;
 The graceful Isambard, whose wounded heart
 Of hopeless love conceals the biting smart;
 Ogier the Dane; and Richard, Aimon's son,
 Sustains the hereditary glories won
 By Clermont's race, in these his earliest years:
 Ranier, with Baldwin, Childebert, appears;
 Geilon; and he, whose thoughts with awe incline
 Before the Homeric and the Muses' shrine,
 He, Angibert, in eloquence renowned,(9)
 The warrior bard, with golden tresses crowned.

XXXI.

Nor Gaiffre, nor Tassillon here are found:
 When rash Mayence's count had bit the ground,
 Struck by brave Eginhard's avenging blade,
 His felon friends their base desigus betrayed.
 They bade the ties of treacherous friendship fall,
 And now, at distance from Lutetia's wall,
 The plains of Aquitain, the banks of Rhine,
 See them new discords eagerly design.
 Such then the fruit from Pepin's grace that grew,
 Whose pardon once these rebel vassals knew.

XXXII.

He too, who reckons first among his sires
 The name of Attila, with these conspires:
 The barbarous Theudon—he who ne'er belies
 His kindred blood, but earth and heaven defies.
 Late, by an artifice profound and base,
 He feigned the Latin worship to embrace:
 The monarch of the Franks, who wished to guide
 His new career to destinies untried,
 With gifts o'erwhelmed him. Theudon now forswears
 His former oaths, and insolently dares,

Presumptuous, ingrate, faithless, and profane,
With traitors joined, to lead his hostile train.

XXXIII.

Can plots like these true paladins affright?
The less their numbers, greater is their might
On conquest bent, regardless of repose,
They climb with patient toil the trackless snows.
The dreary waste presents no guidance sure;
Scarce can the coursers hold their foot secure.
At length amidst those frozen peaks they gain
A ruin vast, where gloom and silence reign;
An antique monument, in former day
Where dark Idolatry maintained her sway.

XXXIV.

Of old Jove's temple here had raised its head;(10)
Now, midst these walls, in circling ruin spread,
Where granite shafts and broken marbles lie,
A simple altar meets the wondering eye.
In bright example to his troops displayed,
Charles on his knees invokes the Almighty's aid.
Rising from prayer, before his sight appears
A reverend sire, oppressed and bowed with years;
Grief on his brow has marked its furrowed road,
And time has bent him with its weary load.

XXXV.

With tardy step the valiant peers he meets:
Fast by the altar are the sacred seats
Where peaceful hospitality resides;
Thither the aged man the warriors guides.
Thrown from a single lamp, a trembling beam
Athwart the cell austere diffused its gleam.
On the low hearth, as blaze the crackling brands,
The stranger monarch from his host demands,
If solitary thus, and still resigned
He lived, apart from converse with mankind.

XXXVI.

"Alas," he answers, "no retreat so sure,
 "But wretched mortals will access procure.
 "Rash are their vows, and oft from guilt arise;
 "Even here at times the tempest they despise,
 "And meet destruction in these chasms profound.
 "Oft as we hear the sad and piercing sound
 "That speaks the wretched traveller astray,
 "Ah, who but we assistance could convey?(11)
 "Here do we learn the whirlwind's wrath to brave,
 "And, lengthening life, our dying neighbour save.

XXXVII.

"My numerous brethren, on this dismal eve,
 "Distant from me their daily course achieve.
 "I wait their coming: for with them no more,
 "Thus bowed to earth, can I these mounts explore.
 "Ye, who the Church seem destined to defend,
 "Haste, haste, your sacred enterprise to end.
 "Haste, in Heaven's name, and if ye service bear
 "Beneath the banners reared by Pepin's heir,
 "Learn the dread outrage of our Lombard foes,
 "And thus to royal Charles our wrongs disclose.

XXXVIII.

"Late from Apulia's rocks have I arrived,
 "Where in Mount Cassin sixty years I lived.
 "Nor long the time, since at the morning's dawn,
 "Around our walls an impious host was drawn.
 "'Twas the fierce Ezelin led them: him nor prayer
 "Touched to remorse, nor pity moved to spare.
 "Thrice I beheld him smite the breast of age,
 "Adelard the bleeding victim of his rage.
 "Short is the tale, brave knights, though sad to tell,
 "How Rachis, Carloman, beside me fell;
 "How holy Adelard, though faint in death,
 "Called on your sovereign with his latest breath."

XXXIX.

Vainly would Charles his rising griefs conceal,
 Roused at Mount Cassin's name, his senses feel
 A secret dread, and to his restless thought
 The tears the adieux of Adelard are brought.
 "The race of Adelard is run," he cried,
 "Soon shall this hand, my father, friend, and guide,
 "Avenge thy fate: yes, from the living race
 "This hand Italia's tyrants shall efface:
 "To me, to me, is Ezelin's heart's-blood due,
 "All, all too little for a life so true."

XL.

With generous warmth transported while he glows,
 The hoary sire Rome's high patrician knows.
 Fain would he kneel: Charles lifts him from the
 ground,
 And sinks, in bitterness of sorrow drowned.
 His oath the knights with eagerness repeat;
 Their hearts for vengeance burn with restless heat.
 They swear this impious outrage to repay;
 The aged Cenobite directs the way.
 Charles swift re-enters on his midnight course,
 And seeks with rapid march the hostile force.

XLI.

Above mount Jove, exalted o'er the rest,
 Piercing the clouds, one mountain rears its crest;
 Its awful peak to ceaseless storms enured,
 Gives to the searching eye no track assured.
 No forests here, no germ of life aspires,
 Vainly the dog-star darts his burning fires
 On the smooth surface: by the drifted snows
 That here a changeless pyramid compose,
 Nature is smothered, and the faithless earth
 To the sad scene accords no fruitful birth.

XLII.

Yet here does Charles pursue the adventurous way,
 The steeds abandoned in the valley stray.
 Through many a turn the dreadful squadron keeps
 Its tardy progress o'er those horrid steeps:
 The star of night attends their silent course;
 Loud beat the impetuous winds with driving force;
 Lance strikes on lance, as wild the tempest blows,
 And howling storms their hardy march oppose;
 Following their chief, unheeding toil or pain,
 At length the mountain's frowning crest they gain.

XLIII

Round Pepin's son, arrayed in circle fast,
 His worthy peers their downward glances cast,
 Where dense, profound, and black, in wide-spread
 mass,
 Mists without end, and floating vapours pass;
 Propt on their swords, above the sphere they stand,
 Where the loud thunder lights his flaming brand,
 When warring clouds in adverse shock are thrown:
 Thus by the bard the gleamy shades are shown(12)
 Of Osear, Fingal, wandering high in air,
 While brandished still the blazing lance they bear.

XLIV.

Near Ilion thus the gods whom Homer made,
 On Ida's rocking summit are portrayed:
 As o'er its crest in gathering crowds they ran
 Round Saturn's son, to fix the fates of man.
 These brilliant phantoms were in tale renowned,
 But warriors tried; when times in darkness bound,
 Daring Jehovah's image to debase,
 Upreared the altar to this fabled race;
 Strengthening the work Idolatry had planned,
 Warriors obscure grow gods in Homer's hand.

XLV.

Thus round their king the paladins appeared,
 Listening attentive to his voice revered:
 "For us the Almighty's favour is displayed,
 "The foes of Heaven shall at our feet be laid:
 "See these famed mounts, that guard Italia's plains,
 "Where blind in impious pride the Lombard reigns.
 "Trusting to these, he dares our arms oppose,
 "But Heaven a new-found path above them shows.
 "Heaven guides our steps; a few short instants more,
 "Our swords shall reek with unbelievers' gore.

XLVI.

"All is prepared.—Each hour is duly told.—
 "Soon as the morning shall her light unfold,
 "On Cotius' mount shall Egobard display
 "Our marshalled banners and our bright array.
 "Then to their camp shall Romuald's boasters fly,
 "Or midst our ranks o'erwhelmed, defeated, die.
 "Mark ye yon vale that winds beneath our feet,
 "A guard of foes we there must look to meet.
 "They watch the pass; or haply sleep secure—
 "Let your good falchions make their slumbers sure."

XLVII.

Now down the mountain steps, across the plain,
 The monarch marches with his warrior train.
 A distant flame athwart the tufted pines
 Darts through the night, and on the darkness shines.
 A band detached upon this mountain head
 Had Romuald stationed, while beneath he spread
 Along the narrow vale his numerous tents;
 Mount Jove, he knows, no pass but this presents:
 Placed near the cliffs in sleep his soldiers lie
 Through the still camp, nor dread the tempest night.

XLVIII.

The Christian knights the feeble fence assail,
 The Lombards waken as the dying wail.
 Bleeding, surprised, dismayed, in scattered flight,
 They fill the Cotian mountain with affright.
 Romuald is roused, but scarcely can his ears
 Believe the sounds of terror that he hears.
 Above the barriers of Italia's lands,
 How could the Frank conduct his daring bands?
 Has he Mount Jove's high summit cleared? this fight
 A marvel only can explain aright.

XLIX.

Doubtful, yet gathering all his warriors round,
 In brilliant arms arrayed, is Romuald found.
 Each fresh alarm, the still-returning groan,
 A secret horror o'er his soul have thrown,
 Spite of himself: Charles, like the rapid fire,
 Pursues with ardour as the foes retire.
 Still as they fly, disordered and dismayed,
 Death marks the flashings of his dreadful blade;
 All yield before him: in amasement lost
 The Lombards think him followed by his host.

L.

Aurora's fires the field of carnage light,
 And show where Egobard has gained the height;
 The strong battalions posted at its neck
 Had left the pass, the invading Franks to check.
 Soon Romuald sees upon the mountain hold
 The royal banner of the Franks unrolled:
 Sees before Egobard his cohorts fly:
 Vain every wish his succour to supply.
 The conquering heroes press, surround his force;
 To yield or perish is his sole resource.

LI.

While proud despair is boiling at his heart,
 Resolved full dearly with his life to part,
 Propt 'gainst a rock he stands: even in a foe
 Still prompt due praise on valour to bestow,
 Charles reins the fury of his numerous host,
 And pities Romuald in disaster lost.
 "Thy pity, Charles, is irksome to my soul,"
 Exclaims the Lombard, while with strong control
 Rage shook his frame; "not thus, proud Frank, even
 now
 "Shall Romuald at thy feet a captive bow.
 "What though deserted by yon dastard train,
 "His sword, his courage, and his hate remain."

LII.

Then on the brave Clothaire with fierce advance
 He springs, and strikes him twice with ponderous lance.
 The iron corslet, and the mighty shield,
 In splinters fly, and widely strew the field:
 The ashen spear, whose lengthened shaft is crowned
 With sharpest point, and biting brass is bound,
 With lightning's speed beneath the shoulder rushed
 Of the brave knight; the blood around him gushed:
 Onward the hero bounds, the wound disdains,
 And in his sinewy grasp the Lombard strains.

LIII.

Fiercer than lightning to his foe he springs,
 His murderous javelin from his hand he wrings,
 Lifts him with nervous arm, and clasps him tight:
 "Justly my vengeance on thy head may light;
 "Thou canst not 'scape; thy death should I bestow,
 "Thy base assault would justify the blow.
 "But Charles, the honour'd prince whose arms we bear,
 "Reserves thee captive, and thy life I spare.
 "Bow to his will: soon from the Latian plains
 "Enough companions sent, shall share thy pains."

LIV.

With useless struggles does the Lombard seek,
Foaming with fury, from Clothaire to break.
His fiery vigour wasting by degrees,
In the brave knight his vanquisher he sees.
Even so, 'tis said, Alcides once subdued
Earth's fabled offspring, who his might withstood,
Antæus dire: limb twined with limb they strove,(13)
And long and doubtful did the contest prove.
At length the demigod the Titan sent
Lifeless to earth: beneath Clothaire thus bent
Ravenna's tyrant, and, subdued with toil,
Totters, blasphemes, and sinks upon the soil.

LV.

Thus Romuald yields, and Charles along the vales
In prompt pursuit the flying foe assails.
Meanwhile the sorrowing plains of Latium lie
Crushed by the yoke of direst tyranny.
Ah! why did Charles on this victorious day,
While warm with holy zeal, his purpose stay,
Nor on to Latium with his warriors go?
Alas! what ravage, massacres, and wo,
The world's great Ruler to mankind had spared,
Had Charles that hour to Tiber's banks repaired.

LVI.

But Heaven has willed, and Heaven is just and true:
Charles all the pagan world must first subdue.
And Hell's dark gates for many a coming hour
Against the Church must try their vengeful power.
The North and South, in slaughter and in blood,
Recall the Franks, to stem the raging flood
Of Rodmir's wrath; while, felt on every side,
Tears, death, and discord spread their empire wide.
So many woes, could Hell know joy, awhile
Might make even Satan midst his torments smile.



CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO IX.

THIRTY-NINTH DAY.

Translated by the Rev. Francis Hodgson.

ARGUMENT.

Hell.

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO IX.

I.

WHAT sudden madness bears my soul away?
Far from my sight have vanished earth and day:
Hell opens deep;—o'er all her chaos dire
Rages an ocean of eternal fire.
—**What** shall uphold me through this gulf of shade?
Daughter of Heaven, I supplicate thine aid,
High, holy Faith! thou guardian of the just,
Thou dread of guilt, to me thy lamp entrust,
And shed o'er conscious crime an awful light,
And bare the abyss of torture and of night.

II.

Far be the Pagan's lying dream from me,(1)
Far shadowy Pluto's baseless royalty;
He, who endures the almighty wrath of God,
What throne has he in penal wo's abode?
All, whom he dragged in his astounding fall
Down to his depth, with threatening voices all
Incessantly upbraid him with their grief,
And curse, incessantly, their rebel chief;
While with loud groanings that infernal band
Repose, from him who ruined it, demand.

III.

Fresh, without end, these imprecations fell,
 Pay his sole tribute to the Prince of Hell.
 He, still alone, accursed by all their wrath,
 Through burning realms pursues his restless path;
 While, plunged immovable in lakes of gloom,
 His vassals, numberless, no more presume
 To breathe vain threats; but inwardly devour
 Their own sad heart with thoughts of ravished power,
 With raging thirst for guilt; o'erwhelmed, deprest,
 And dangerous foes no more to human rest.

IV.

The unconquered chief with scorn his host surveys,
 Archangels once, and robed in Glory's rays,
 Now shorn of half their beams—he hears their ~~moon~~
 Weak and disgraceful; he, their prince, alone
 Still dreams of vengeance, still through night immense
 Alone uplifts the brow of insolence.
 Roaming with rapid glance, his baleful eyes
 Pierce the dark void, and distant earth comprise;
 Furious, yet sad, his hollow tones begin,
 And lash his struggling spirit into sin.

V.

“ What! rage and hate, still powerless rage and hate!
 “ There is no change in Satan's vengeful fate:
 “ By feeble mortals braved, subdued I groan,
 “ And (heaviest ill!) e'en hope itself has flown.
 “ God! well I know the atoning blood that streamed
 “ From thy dear Son the race of earth redeemed;
 “ And, mounting to thy kingdom in their pride,
 “ They wear the glittering robes I cast aside.
 “ Their Sion's towers each day more bright become,
 “ And Man usurps my abdicated home.

VI.

“ For ever, Vengeance! have I lost thy joys;
 “ My first greast conquest every hour destroys;
 “ Wide flies the Gospel on a mighty wing,
 “ And Rome’s whole race confess a Christian king.
 “ My once-loved Franks, who o’er each gloomy wood
 “ Poured the foul tide of tributary blood,
 “ Now bear no victims to my fallen shrines,
 “ Renounce their vows, betray my high designs,
 “ Cast off my yoke; and now (apostate band!)
 “ Props of the Church, its mightiest bulwarks, stand.

VII.

“ Must I then bear this rebel nation’s chain,
 “ And powerless murmur in the dens of pain?
 “ No!—Lucifer is known to heaven and earth—
 “ His slaves, forgetful of their deathless birth,
 “ May faint in courage, and blaspheme their head—
 “ But he, deserted by the bands he led,
 “ Shall yet retrieve his daring and his skill,
 “ Shall stand alone against the Almighty still.
 “ Wo to the Franks!—wo to that line, whose fame
 “ Already boasts Martel’s and Pepin’s name!”

VIII.

Thus as he spoke, he mounted with a bound
 In one vast column o’er the gulf profound;
 And, ’mid bituminous and flaming light,
 Shot rapidly across chaotic night.
 So from her bursting flanks old Etna pours
 Her shadowy whirlwinds, and her blazing showers;
 Pale grow the nations o’er the rocking ground,
 And all is death, and dread of death, around.
 Fierce as that fire, the fallen son of day
 Rose through black chaos, on his eager way
 To where the realms of hateful mortals lay.

IX.

Now on his fatal course he soared elate,
 Now in proud thought he touched his prison-gate;
 When, all at once, that oracle of God,
 Borne by the breath of heaven to Grief's abode,
 (That voice, which made the Virgin's children free,
 That changeless fiat of eternity,)
 Resounding, like a bolt of thunder, fell,
 And raised one cry, that drowned all cries in Hell.

X.

“AGAINST THE CHURCH, WEAK MAN SHALL NE’ER
 PREVAIL;

“AGAINST THE CHURCH THE GATES OF HELL
 SHALL FAIL.”

The immortal sanction, in tremendous tones,
 Shakes angry Tartarus;—the dark air groans;—
 And Lucifer recoils—that echo dread
 Lingers and vibrates o’er his guilty head;—
 One moment, hovering o’er the abyss, he stays,
 And rage impels, and fear his flight delays;
 Then to its lowest depth the gulf divides,
 And drags him, struggling, down its fiery sides.

XI.

On calcined rocks, where lava’s boiling stream
 Swelled up, and sank, and glared with frightful gleam,
 Lay the cursed angel: overwhelmed, ashamed,
 Pallid with rage, he shuddered, and exclaimed,
 “Dread voice of God! thy menacing decree
 “Shall shake these blazing caves unceasingly;
 “Shall echo o’er these rocks, by thunder riven,
 “And deepen my despair of conquering Heaven.
 “Sole torment that I fear, avenging word!
 “Spare me thy terrors, be no longer heard.

XII.

" Let fiercer fires, if yet in Heaven's high power,
 " Shoot through my being, and my soul devour;
 " To cast remorse, and flames, and pangs away,
 " I ask from Hope but one consoling ray.
 " Great God! let doubt, let ignorance be mine;
 " In pity shroud my intellect divine,
 " Blot out the memory of my glorious home,
 " And close my knowledge of the grief to come.
 " Make me like those most vile of mortal race,
 " And all remains of Heaven from Satan's soul efface.

XIII.

" Then might I joy to dream, that soon or late
 " Thy Church and Rome would feel my anger's weight,
 " And future pride for present shame atone—
 " But doubt, but hope, belongs to man alone!
 " Wretch! what avail thy hatred and thy rage?
 " Late, when I closed a feeble prelate's age, (2)
 " What cares, what plots were mine! and what my
 gain?
 " I snatched his day of life, and changed his pain
 " For deathless glories in the ethereal plain.

XIV.

" Christ then, the conquering Christ, must be obeyed;
 " Rest, coward Satan! in thy realms of shade;
 " Resign to Heaven the world's command, and see
 " The hateful cross advance its sovereignty;
 " O'er some new clime grow greater every hour,
 " And mock thy fruitless rage and baffled power.
 " Cease to resist, thy conscious burthen bear,
 " And, like thy victims, yield to blank despair.

XV.

" Their fears, perchance, may lighten their distress;
 " And social murmurs make their sufferings less;

" While no revived ambition dares defy
 " The insatiate anger of their foe on high.
 " Too much, perchance, I scorned them in my pride:
 " Ah! be my vain rebellion laid aside,
 " My vengeance lulled to sleep, my strength deprest
 " Beneath the stillness of a dreadful rest:
 " Yes, yes, I faint, to no new effort rise,
 " And my degraded soul within me dies."

XVI.

Thus as he spoke, upon his slaves he turned
 An eye where envy and fierce anger burned.
 From that sad mount, where still alone he lies,
 And pours on Christ his ceaseless blasphemies,
 From that red lava's height, his seat of wo,
 The accursed archangel views the world below;
 Discovers Hell through all its vast profound
 In dreary desolation spread around;
 Terrible vales, dark circles, realms of pain,
 And mournful barriers, none shall pass again.

XVII.

The fallen companions of his early rage,
 Before the sons of men, his sight engage;
 Devoured by agonizing flames they lie,
 Their brows yet marked with traces of the sky:
 Yet circled half with Glory's broken blaze,
 With Heaven's own halo of diminished rays.
 Thus, through the darkling air of misty night,
 The ill-omened comet sheds uncertain light;
 Runs the wild course by gravitation given,
 And glimmers round the immensity of Heaven.

XVIII.

Near the lost angels men of guilt are laid,
 Plunging and disappearing in the shade;
 In heaps whole ages and whole kingdoms fall,
 And Hell's remorseless gulf devours them all.

There, in the rags of wretchedness, accurst
By gnawing pangs of hunger and of thirst,
A mournful shade pursues its lonely way:
Yes, he was rich in life's unfeeling day,
And Pity was a stranger to his feasts,
And Poverty unknown among his guests.

XIX.

Too late he mourns the inhospitable door,
Rich for an instant, and forever poor:
His gold, his palaces, his proud domains,
Sooth not the horrors of his present pains.
There the corrupt deserter of the laws,
The judge who sold the equitable cause;
He in whose balance wealth and power had weight,
In the dark realm his fraud shall expiate.
That righteous Judge, whose sentence none can buy,
That Judge has weighed his crime and destiny.

XX.

Traitors, ingrates, calumniators there,
And faithless priests who sell the sacred chair;
And sceptic wits, whose genius, like a curse,
Corrupts and cheats the darkened universe;
Adulterous, thieving, and incestuous hands,
And lawless foes of unoffending lands,
Proud, warlike kings, beneath whose fatal thrones
Each clime is blasted, and each nation groans,
And all their flatterers, and their poisoners fell,
Howl in one mass amid the fires of Hell.

XXI.

Bound, o'erwhelmed, by torture's heaviest chains,
What bloody phantoms in night's utmost plains
Beneath those burning rocks forever lie?—
The murderers those—a mournful company!—
Their darker doom apportioned to their crime,
Most odious tenants of that odious clime,

Trembling each moment at some foe's attacks,
 Sharp on their hand they feel the falling axe;—
 Their hand revives—new wounds, with new alarm,
 Again divide it from the quivering arm.

XXII.

—Up stands the horrid hair of shrieking Cain!—
 His brow yet blushes with the bloody stain:
 “Where is thy brother, Cain?—Reply!”—that sound
 In icy fetters every sense has bound—
 The murderer shudders at his brother's sight!
 Abel before him floats in clouds of light;
 Abel again he seeks in quenchless strife,
 And aims, infuriate, at his second life:
 The glorious shade, escaping from his aim,
 Tortures his heart with Envy's heightened flame.

XXIII.

Atreus, Thyestes, hideous forms of fear,
 With earthly hatred burn forever here.
 Pale Clytemnestra vainly would evade
 The dread encounter with her lord betrayed:
 Beneath Ægysthus' robe she hides her face—
 But Agamemnon's ghost, from place to place,
 Implacably pursues; while, threatening nigh,
 With sword upraised, with fixed and fearful eye,
 Orestes runs and strikes her—at the blow
 Long echoes groan through the sad vaults below.

XXIV.

Here the bold robber, who with lawless band
 Ravaged so long the peaceful Latian land,
 He, whom his flatterers styled of heavenly strain,
 The murderer of Remus, groans with Cain.(§)
 Thy son, Olympias! here—that boaster wild,
 Madly self-named the God of Thunder's child,
 He—whose blind rage was wreaked on Clitus brave,
 Who made the prostrate East one mournful grave

Through the proud course of ten victorious years—
 O'er his too lengthened life now sheds remorseful
 tears.(4)

XXV.

The first of warriors on the embattled plain
 He shone, he conquered half the world, in vain;
 The murderers claim him in their dark retreat—
 Whilst, on our earth, ephemerally great,
 He bears the matchless Alexander's name.—
 —There the triumvir too, of guilty fame,
 He, who brave Cæsar's clemency belied,
 And decimated Rome's remaining pride,
 Octavius, reads, still reads that bloody page,(5)
 Linked with the two cursed partners of his rage.

XXVI.

The blissful reign of many a year of rest,
 By noblest bards in rays of glory drest,
 Bids the triumvir's foulness be forgiven—
 But murder ne'er escapes the wrath of Heaven.
 —Deeper in hell dark Nero is descried;
 Assassin of his brother, matricide,(6)
 Still at his breast he sees a dagger raised—
 Whilst He, whose voice a mother's murder praised,
 The tyrant's tool, the apologist for crime,
 Feels hundred horrors in the same sad clime.

XXVII.

'Mid the condemned those homicides appear
 Who heard their own blood cry, with heedless ear;
 Who dared against their sons the sword to draw,
 And hid their daring with the veil of law.
 Timoleon there, with Manlius, mourns his guilt;
 There either Brutus rues the blood he spilt;(7)
 Ambitious cowards, fraudulent heirs of fame,
 Spite of the blinded world's unjust acclaim:

Yes, of all ties, thine, Nature! are the first,
And he, who breaks their union, is accurst.

XXVIII.

How many a king amid these murderers lies!
Pride of vain power caused all their cruelties.
Clothaire, and Chilperic, with heaps of slain,
And Fredegonde, with arms of bloodiest stain;(8)
And Athalia, slaughtering all her kin,
To fix a tottering throne by barbarous sin—
—Wretch! what was then thy momentary hope?
Think'st thou to rule thy future horoscope?
Think'st thou the world that now thy laws enslave,
Will yet confess thee monarch in the grave?

XXIX.

Phrenzied Ambition, in her greedy thought,
Her noblest works on moving sand has wrought:
An atom kills a tyrant; unforeseen,
The rapid movements of this worldly scene
Snatch all the product of his guilt away:
Or, if he shines in Fortune's brightest ray,
One hour he shines, and with tremendous stride
Eternity comes on, the deep, the wide,
The measureless abyss, and overwhelms his pride.

XXX.

More thankless, punished more, in gulfs of pain,
Rolling and burning ever, they complain,
Who own the law from Sinai's clouds that flowed,
Yet, murderous, wrong their nature and their God.
Bathed in his wife's and slaughtered offspring's gore,
And crowned with flames that from his forehead pour,
Herod too late his dreadful will destroys,(9)
Curses too late his glories and his joys—
To hideous reptiles an eternal prey,
Reptiles that ate his dying hours away.

XXXI.

How weighs the love of royalty with Saul!
 What harmless crowds beneath his anger fall!
 Therefore, with Doëg, in exhaustless pains,(10)
 Heaven's wrath he feels, the vengeful cup he drains.
 The homicidal steel that gored his breast,
 Stabs ceaseless there, spontaneously imprest—
 Envy, the ruler of his rankling mind,
 With her fierce vipers holds him still entwined;
 While Israel's harps, that heavenly strains could pour,
 Calm the lost tyrant's agony no more.

XXXII.

Here mourns that son of Gedeon, he, whose rage
 (Alone to reap a boundless heritage)
 Slew in one day a hundred of his line—
 Terrible price of Sion's throne divine!(11)
 Abimelech, thy bloody hand began,
 Completed, the foul hecatomb of man,
 On one sad stone—that stone forever pours
 A ruthless river o'er the infernal shores;
 Covers the wretch who made its fountains flow,
 And bids him shrink beneath his chain of wo.

XXXIII.

A hundred ghosts that fratricide surround—
 But whence this cry? this lamentable sound?
 Night's deepest shades the lonely cavern hide,
 Where buried lies the blinded suicide.
 Wretch!—bear'st thou not the burthen of an hour?
 What gave thy valiant cowardice its power?
 Breakest thou the bonds that bind thee to the day,
 Those nameless bonds thou canst not cast away?
 Scattering thy Maker's form thou yield'st thy breath,
 And seek'st dark Nothing in the arms of Death.

XXXIV.

Herod is girt with sacrilegious kings,
 With daring scorers of all holy things;
 Polluters of each privilege divine,
 Assailants rude of every sacred shrine:
 Antiochus, Constantius, guilty pair!
 Maxentius, and Tiberius, suffer there;
 Galerius, Diocles, an impious band!
 The dreadful Alaric, whose blood-stained hand
 The Roman pastor checked, but checked in vain—
 And he, the first amid these troops profane,
 Fierce Attila, the scourge of God; and all
 Who shook the Christian shrines, and bade them fall.

XXXV.

These ravenous tigers, whose abhorred offence
 Martyred fair youth and virgin innocence,
 Cry out forever from the caves of wo,
 Disturb the black immensity below;—
 —Fixed by a lake of blood, in horror stand,
 Where the red waves resounding rush to land,
 Strike restless on their sides, and fiercely pour
 Down their pale forms in floods of streaming gore.

XXXVI.

Thus, by vast seas, dim rocks arrest our sight,
 Beat by the tempest in the gloom of night;
 O'er their torn flanks they rear their steepy head,
 The wind's asylum, and the pilot's dread;
 The wave impetuous rolls their crags around,
 Lifts its loud voice in long re-echoing sound,
 Bursts deep within, and gathering on its course,
 Recoils, returns, and breaks with doubled force.

XXXVII.

The deicide apostle crowns the band,
 Who sold his Saviour to the murderer's hand;

Led the blind Hebrew to the garden's shade,
 And with a kiss the Lord of life betrayed.
 Satan admires and gazes on his son!
 Their matchless guilt, their punishment is one;
 Both from a rank almost divine they fell,
 Both in their bosoms bear the whole of Hell.

XXXVIII.

On a rock's point extended Judas lies:
 With savage shouts of triumph o'er him flies
 A livid phantom, that with fleshless fangs
 Holds down the wretch, and still renews his pangs—
 Blood-dripping hands and teeth his entrails tear,
 And throw the smoking remnants into air;
 In vain he rages, and in vain blasphemes,
 And shakes the rocks with agonizing screams;
 Lured by his cries, and glorying in his pain,
 Remorse, pale spectre, seeks her prey again!

XXXIX.

When thus his hordes of victims he descried,
 The heart of Satan swelled again with pride:
 "What human crowds are passing every hour
 "The dreadful threshold of my realm of power!
 "Shall I then yield that happier world's domain,
 "While yet whole nations bend beneath my chain?
 "While crimes, while combats, and dark treasons
 there
 "Pay all my toil, and answer all my care;
 "Act as my faithful instruments of ill,
 "And promise woes, in black abundance, still?

XL.

"So dire to man, inactive shall I rest?
 "Depart, unworthy terrors, from my breast:
 "Wretch! if the Church must ever brave thy hate,
 "Yet man at least shall feel its dreadful weight.

"The Eternal Power thou'rt destined to defy—
"Go, robbed of hope, go combat with the sky!
"Sustain the Almighty's thunderbolts of fire,
"And on his cherished children wreak thine ire:
"Spread wars and crimes till Earth's whole circle
 bleeds,
"And Heaven itself shall shudder at thy deeds."

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO X.

THIRTY-NINTH DAY.

Translated by the Rev. Francis Hodgson.

ARGUMENT.

**The forest of Eresbourg. The worship of Irmeasul:
the Suevian captives at the altar of the Druids.**

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO X.

I.

UP-SPRINGS the archangel o'er the fiery sphere,
And darts through chaos with unchecked career;
Soon, in mid air, the radiant orb of light
He sees, and curses the celestial sight:
Full upon Rome look down his lurid eyes—
There, where encamped the Lombard army lies,
Confusion reigns, and blasphemy, and dread:
O'er Didier's realms the Franks in torrents spread;
Back to Ticinus, from the Tiber's banks,
E'en now the chief would lead his martial ranks.

II.

Fierce in each glance the archangel's fury gleams—
Who now shall execute his vengeful schemes?
Who strongest now on earth? O'er whose domain
Bends he his flight? To threatened Aquitain
The moors are marching from Pyrené's height:
Masters of Spain by Conquest's lawless right,
Wide they diffuse their prophet's hell-born lies,
And far the insulted cross before them flies,
From hot Medina's sands to Gaul's protecting skies.

III.

Ferocious Mahomet! the appointed rod,
 The blind avenger of a righteous God—
 Conqueror, whom guilt to Fortune's summit bore,
 Whose lengthening path grew redder yet with gore,
 By thee, in darkness died the promised light;
 By thee, the o'ershadowing canopy of night
 Enveloped all; while, of thy triumphs proud,
 Hell fought beside thee, and increased the cloud;
 Lending thy power, for basis and defence,
 Extinguished reason, and disordered sense.

IV.

The glowing Moor, the Saracen is thine;
 Afric and Asia guard thy cause divine;
 Dark treason guides thee through Hesperia's gates;
 Gaul, in her turn, thy plundering horde awaits.
 Already, like a flood, the warlike train
 Rushed on their course, and covered fair Touraine;
 But great Martel and France at once awoke:—(1)
 One field, one day, Earth's guilty thralldom broke.
 War from that day, the eternal war of Hell,
 Pursues the hated lineage of Martel.

V.

From that blest day, to vexed and bloody Spain
 The troubled Mussulmen their powers restrain;
 Attack those hills where lurks the patriot band,(2)
 And Goths still guard their dying native land.
 Sons of Pelagius, Christ's illustrious race,
 Against a Pagan yoke's abhorred disgrace
 They fight—they gain the auxiliar peers of France—
 Charles in his father's footsteps dares advance;
 Religion spreads abroad her peace divine,
 And bids the Asturian with the Frank combine.

VI.

Foiled in these hopes, dark Lucifer at length
 Sees the ripe moment of his vengeful strength:
 Alphonso mourns in banishment—again
 Longin awakes the embattled host of Spain,
 And threatens France—this artizan of crimes,
 Courting allies, has left the Ausonian climes;
 Seeks the new caliph's aid, and spreads alarms,
 Till every royal Moor has flown to arms:
 Great Abderama pants to pour, ere long,
 O'er Aquitania's fields his conquering throng.

VII.

This prince, when Ommius' royal offspring bled,
 Alone the sword of Syrian murder fled;(3)
 Past fearless o'er the desert and the main,
 And roused the allegiance of indignant Spain:
 Hating dark Abbas and his crimes, the yoke
 Of Asia's tyrant caliphate she broke:
 The illustrious exile, rising from disgrace,
 Receives the fealty of the Iberian race:
 Thus east and west, in adverse kingdoms set,
 Divide the sons of impious Mahomet.

VIII.

Promptly, while yet his throne beneath him shakes,
 The exarch's offer Abderama takes;
 Blest, for his friend a mighty king to know,
 And (happier still) his rival caliph's foe.(4)
 The prophet's standard rises at his voice—
 But, anxious yet, he balances in choice,
 Who, of his vassal chiefs, against the Franks,
 Shall best conduct his gathering warlike ranks?
 Renowned for deeds of blood in peril's hour,
 The fierce Cantabrian heads the caliph's power.

IX.

While hatred, pride, and rage, his bosom fill,
 O'er Roland's death the chief exulted still:
 To ruthless war he guides the Panyrn band,
 Prepared to burst o'er Aquitania's land:
 Sworn to root out Martel's accursed line,
 'The throne already and the Christian shrine
 (Such his mad hope!) he sees in dust disgraced,
 And Tours' dread day by vengeance is effaced:
 His hand still armed against the just appears,
 No God he trusts in, and no thunder fears.

X.

Beneath Almanzor's banners, for the fight,
 Madrid, Cordova, Arragon, unite;
 The Murcian pastures, and Toledo's plain,
 Valentia fair, Asturia's mountain reign,
 Grenada rich in fruits, and Leon bold—
 By Biscay's sanguinary chief controlled,
 In one subservient mass of arms they rise,
 And feel no more their factious enmities:
 Hatred for France absorbs their mutual hate,
 And joins in ardent league full many a hostile state.

XI.

Almanzor, Longin, o'er each province past,
 And raised throughout the battle's angry blast:
 Their call awoke the farthest hills of Spain,
 And crowds of princes followed in their train.
 Northward from Cadiz' wave, from coast to coast,
 The ministers of Hell collect their host;
 Spread as they go, and Discord's torches light—
 The fallen archangel triumphs in the sight:
 "Bear we the war to other realms!" he cries,
 "Prey to my rage, Iberia prostrate lies.

XII.

My half-formed wish is here to action wrought,
 The Greek, the Moor, divine my rankling thought:
 Well can their hands complete the plots begun—
 But back I hasten, and their aim is won.
 May such devotion in the North be mine!
 The Druid calls his God to guard his shrine;
 Calls me to aid my own insulted laws,
 And bind the wavering Saxon to my cause:
 From my dread worship he has shrunk at times;
 Fix we the coward in his course of crimes.”

XIII.

He speaks—to Longin leaves Iberia's care,
 And, big with ruin, mounts the northern air.
 Terror and war, with unrelenting yoke,
 Weighed down Germania, and her spirit broke:
 To her vast forests bends the archangel's flight—
 Thirsting for guilt, he rests his steady sight
 On Eresbourg's far towers, where, as of yore,(5)
 Worshipped by all, Irmensul's name he bore.
 There, day by day, his helpless victims fell,
 And human blood bedewed the shrine of Hell.

XIV.

Forced to obey Irmensul's priests, to arms
 The Saxons rush, and spread revived alarms
 O'er every bordering realm—with warlike ire
 Rodmir and Witikind the land inspire,
 And breathe throughout their own vindictive fire.
 Controlled by France, the Suevians dwelt at rest,
 Since first their wandering multitude confest,
 With Adelinde's rude sire, the Christian light,(6)
 And fled Irmensul's murderous groves of night.

XV.

The Suevian, softened with too long repose,
 To Rodmir, fiercest of his Paynim foes,
 Surprised by night, becomes an easy prey:
 Dragged by their savage conquerors away,
 The new-made Christians from his vengeance feel
 The exhaustless cruelties of fire and steel.
 Loud shouts of joy from Eresbourg resound—
 The numerous captives, in long order bound,
 At dark Irmensul's shrine their days must close:
 With lingering step the sad procession goes
 To that blood-altar—Witikind is there,
 Rodmir, and fierce Armelia (fierce as fair!)
 Girt with exulting troops, who rend the echoing air.

XVI.

Sunk in that Saxon forest's last retreat
 Was dire Irmensul's solitary seat:(7)
 Pines and tall oaks, old offspring of the land,
 Stood, all inviolate by human hand,
 In ranks around the unhallowed scene arrayed,
 And veiled it with a century of shade.
 In vain the day-star pours his flood of light
 On those foul trees—invincible in night,
 Their natural roof on high they interwine,
 And guard their god's abominable shrine.

XVII.

Vast in disorder there his altar stood,
 One mass of stones, piled shapeless in the wood.
 His sacred sword, the minister of guilt,
 Still bore the stain of blood, so lately spilt.
 What reeking remnants near that altar lie!
 O'er these sad relics of mortality
 Devouring beasts contend, and worms unclean
 Heighten the horrors of the savage scene;

ured by their loathsome feast, where oft before
 That shrine of stones had blushed with human gore.

XVIII.

High on the mount above Irmensul stands,
 Tailed in full brass—his awful head commands
 The loftiest summit of the circling pines—
 Large in his breathing features darkly shines:
 His body rests upon a monstrous spear—(8)
 The scales of battle in his hand appear,
 And shake with fate—his ample buckler shows
 A leopard, raging to destroy his foes,
 With talons dropping blood, and eye that fiercely glows.

XIX.

Roars the wild clarion through the air aloud!
 Poured from the walls of Eresbourg, the crowd
 Turn to the wood their eager step and sight:
 The arch-druid Ormez for the murderous rite
 Prepares, and sheds in thought the captive's blood—
 The attentive Saxons through the waving wood
 Form their vast circle, while the sacred band
 Of numerous druids round the altars stand,
 Dark as their chief, and silent—but their eye
 Smiles with dread light—the light of cruelty.

XX.

Thro' the deep shades the advancing warriors spread;
 On to their centre are the captives led—
 In Ormez' breast unbounded raptures spring,
 And thus his barbarous rage inflames the king:
 'Irmensul gives the conquest to thy sword;
 'Thanks to our God! our glory is restored!
 'So may he still his gracious aid afford;
 'While each vile German, who blasphemes his power,
 'Dies, at his statue's base, this righteous hour.

XXI.

"Our God proscribes the Suevians, and commands
 "Their blood to stream from our avenging hands:
 "Lighted by them, intestine war has burned;
 "Their swords against all Germany were turned;
 "To faithless Pepin Heral gave his child—
 "By these pernicious nuptial rites defiled,
 "He wronged his country's laws, and outraged Hea-
 ven:
 "Be not the renegade by us forgiven!
 "Or let that Christian God, he deems so great,
 "Come, if he can, and shield him from his fate."

XXII.

Thus Ormez speaks, and seizes Heral's chain;
 Each druid drags a victim from the train.
 To see the slaughter haste the un pitying crowd,
 Joy in the guilt, and praise their priests aloud.
 Heral, with settled calmness in his eyes,
 Moves on to death; but vainly checks the cries
 Of him who follows;—for his years were few,
 And death was dreadful in that infant's view:
 His two first lustra were not finished yet—
 His very foes for him might feel regret.

XXIII.

Tears of alarm start forth as they advance:
 The unhappy brother of a queen of France,
 His guiltless eyes, his arms are raised to Heaven—
 Death to his mother by his birth was given;
 Last of his race, his father's last relief,
 His smiles appeased the widowed Heral's grief;
 Shed their sole comfort on his waning years,
 And wiped away some portion of his tears:
 His daughter lost, forever lost his wife,
 Who now but Ulric sooths old Heral's life?

XXIV.

The king of heroes gave the child this name:
 When as to firmer years young Ulric came,
 Destined he was, beneath his sister's care,
 For knighthood's glorious labours to prepare;
 And great Lutetia's prince had pledged his word,
 To gird the brave boy his martial blade to gird.
 vain hope! remorseless war has cropt the flower;
 His short career has reached its closing hour:
 Who can Irmensul's gloomy power assuage?
 Who turn aside the druid's ruthless rage?

XXV.

The chieftain's wild air his agony betrays:
 His aged arms the trembling Ulric raise,
 And are weak children too your enemies,
 "Ye Saxon priests?" the wretched father cries;
 It is my child, my child, whose blood you shed—
 Be not this hateful murder on your head,
 By Nature's voice, by Heaven condemned alike;
 Spare not my days—this fearless bosom strike!
 My life is o'er—well-pleased I yield my breath,
 But stain not manhood with an infant's death!"

XXVI.

The sad old man, as thus in tears he cries,
 On Witikind, on Ormez rests his eyes.
 Young Ulric's terrors, and his blooming age,
 The royal Saxon's sympathy engage.
 "King!" cries the sire; "Have mercy on my boy!
 Do not a dying father's hope destroy;
 Look with kind eyes upon his youth again,
 And spare the Saxon sword this impious stain:
 Useless his death; and Gaul's great prince will give
 Ransom immense—Oh! suffer him to live!"

XXVII.

"For me—I hope not: well the druid's heart
 "I know—and pity never there had part.
 "From false Irmensul's faith my soul has fled,
 "Christ is my God, and death has lost its dread:
 "I wait my recompense in Heaven—and, oh,
 "May'st thou, like me, the Gospel's comfort know!
 "Doctrines of blood ill suit thy noble mind;
 "Hear my last prayer—and let me die resigned,
 "Sure in thy faith my son's defence to find."

XXVIII.

The softening Saxon viewed that aged man,
 And through his heart the father's accents ran—
 By friendship's ties in youth together brought,
 Beneath one banner had the heroes fought:
 Active ambition, and the state's defence,
 Long joined them close in warlike confidence:
 But since fair Adelinde had Suevia bound
 To France, a hostile interest had they found;
 And the brave Saxon saw, with keen regret,
 His ancient friend their northern league forget.

XXIX.

But now the memory of their old campaigns
 Full o'er the hero's breast its power regains:
 Kind he accosts his fellow-soldier's son,
 And Ulric's chains already are undone.
 "Yes, Heral, yes! thy child is safe with me—
 "And, if the faithless foes of Germany
 "Did not thy generous mind with spells inthral,
 "Should but our God his servant yet recall,
 "Forgetting all the treasons of his friend,
 "This day would Witikind thy life defend.

XXX.

"Live, Heral, live! again a German be,
 "And break this yoke of hateful slavery.

I adjure thy faith (the moment is not gone)
 And march with us to certain conquest on.
 But not thy heart against thy country's cries,
 With us for her, for liberty, arise!
 United to our standards shall thy nation fight,
 And Germany reclaim each ancient right.
 League we again before this shrine our ranks,
 And swear eternal warfare with the Franks."

XXXI.

Ark Ormez lifts his troubled brow, where fear,
 Dilemma, and rage, in mingling clouds appear:
 The throng is touched; his father's generous aims
 Find answer full in Rodmir's heart of flame.
 The circling Saxons press and gather round—
 With eye of vengeance fixed upon the ground,
 Ermelia, leaning on her brazen spear,
 Sees but her own disgrace and sufferings here.
 Fury and hate the unhappy fair control,
 And stifle Nature's pleadings in her soul.

XXXII.

Her thoughts are fixed on Adeline alone:
 Oh! when this fearful sacrifice is known,
 What streams of sorrow from her eyes will flow!
 How will her nuptial pomp grow dark with woe!
 The queen disturbs the palace with her cries,
 Hears the first vengeance of her enemies,
 And calls for succour on her trembling train—
 See, to the knees of Charles she clings in vain,
 And stirs the tardy vengeance of her spouse:
 What can the victims of the grave arouse?"

XXXIII.

The report of the fiend, that lurks her breast within,
 Thus the fair Lombard shudders not at sin:
 Till as she yields to Passion's hell-born fire,
 From Heral's face her looks abashed retire:

The good old man who pleads for innocence,
 The band of captives, robbed of all defence,
 Yet waiting death with calm unclouded eyes—
 A scene like this had waked Armelia's sighs;
 But Charles, in Adelinde's embraces blest,
 With one dire image all her soul possest.

XXXIV.

Now Rodmir hopes the captive crowd to spare,
 And to their silent chief prefers his prayer:
 "Accept thy pardon, Heral! at our hands:
 "Be free, and combat France with Freedom's bands.
 That aged chief retreats from his embrace—
 "And think'st thou, warrior! I can brook disgrace?
 He cries—"or that a Christian fears to die?
 "No! Heral keeps his faith to his expiring sigh!

XXXV.

"France gave me all—beneath her banners ranged
 "I was not conquered—I was nobly changed!
 "From the fierce god to whom your vows are given,
 "My heart was opened to the God of Heaven.
 "Fifteen blest years, beneath that guardian sway,
 "My wandering hordes have cast their crimes away.
 "The laws of Christ have humanized their hearts,
 "And Peace has charmed them with her useful arts.
 "Such, on the Necker's banks, our happy life;
 "Restless before, and lost in savage strife.

XXXVI.

"Safe in the shield of France I still am free;
 "Oh copy, noble Witikind! from me:
 "This land will feel from benefits alone,
 "The tranquil influence of that friendly throne.
 "Peace to the kings of France thy realms have sworn
 "Then be the furious lust of war forborne:
 "Respect their oaths, and honourably burst
 "The chains that bind thee to these rites accurs;

Outrage no more the Almighty God of all,
But bid Hell's idols here forever fall."

XXXVII.

Mark! on the air a shout of vengeance breaks—
lengthened shout—Irmensul's statue shakes!
The gazing troop stand horror-struck around—
Listen, ye guilty Germans! to that sound,"
The arch-druid cries, "Wo, wo upon your head,
If ye defy what Heaven itself has said!
'Tis time to stop yon impious captive's voice:
Heaven dooms the sacrifice—have we the choice?
Ye Saxon chiefs, obey your deity!
Let all his foes beneath our falchion die."

XXXVIII.

Uprose the people at their druid's word,
And in his voice the avenging angel's heard:
Loud gusts of wind rush sudden through the trees,
And, wrapt in fire, the astonished circle sees
Each lofty pine wave wide its blazing head—
Sunk on their failing knees, in deepest dread,
Females, and warlike males, and all around
Feel, as if Hell was opening through the ground!
All bend to Ormez—at his high command
The murderous poniard gleams in every hand.

XXXIX.

Down on his aged knees the arch-druid throws
The Suevian chief—more loud the clamour grows,
"Die, die, the Christian!" At this warning word
A hundred captives stain the German sword.
When lo! the monarch, with impetuous strides
Darts swiftly through the host of homicides,
And, lifting high that orphan in the air,
"I claim young Ulric by the rights of war!"

He cries, and, covering with his brazen shield,
Bears him far off from that ensanguined field.

XLI.

Ormez beholds the deed with rage and grief,
But dares not check the pagan's noblest chief:
Erect he stands amid the Christian dead,
While savage transport from his eye is shed.
O'er his white robe fresh drops of slaughter ~~shine~~;
Through all the host he stalks from line to line,
And thus interprets what his gods ordain:
"Irmensul's children! to the war again!
"Heaven is appeased, and victory is your own!
"Advance! the Frank already is o'erthrown.

XLI.

"Follow the standard of your valorous king,
"And to our shrines unnumbered victims bring.
"No foe shall check you in your glorious course,
"Lutetia's towers shall fall before your force.
"Seize on this hour, when, blinded by his hate,
"Charles tempts to war the Lombard's distant state—
"Waste his own realms, o'erpower his scattered train,
"And die the tyrant on Italia's plain!"

XLII.

The crowd, the troops, in ardent daring high,
Exult, and hail the perjured augury:
They quit the woods; and, in victorious trance,
Already scour the invaded fields of France.
Firm on her prancing courser for the fight,
Didier's fair daughter views, with haughty sight,
The countless hordes—advancing at her side,
The king and Rodmir move in martial pride:
Shouts from the thundering plain re-echo far,
And Satan glories in the coming war.

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO XI.

FROM THE THIRTY-NINTH TO THE FIFTIETH DAY.

Translated by the Rev. Francis Hodgson.

ARGUMENT.

**Embassy of Timantius. The Exarch in Spain. The
shipwreck of Laurentia. The Alcazar.**

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO XI.

I.

THROUGH Neustria's realms while poured the Pa-
gan ranks,
Milan's proud towers received the victor Franks:
The scattered Lombards, struck with wild affright,
Towards Pavia's walls precipitate their flight.
Too late Adalgise for their aid arrives,
And hears the tale from countless fugitives,
How o'er Mount Jove the nightly path was won,
What deeds of valour by the host were done—
They mourn the loss of Romuald the brave,
And weep o'er many a gallant soldier's grave.

II.

Pale at the news, the prince to sorrow yields:
His flying squadrons o'er their native fields
The Frank pursues, and soon shall reach the Po—
To check the course of his victorious foe,
O'er each high bulwark, and embattled tower,
And guarded gate, he plants his warlike power:
Sleepless they watch; while, rolled with hollow sound,
War's brazen engines shake the groaning ground,
And line, in dreadful files, the walls around.

III.

Now for the toils of war the prince prepares,
 And, as the danger heightens, doubly dares:
 But well he knows the Frank's impetuous fire,
 And fears, before the legions of his sire
 Regain the Po, that Charles may lead his bands
 Across the stream, and from Italia's lands
 Cut off Milan and Pavia at a blow—
 While, at each mountain pass, the watchful foe
 On Umbria's heights great Didier may detain,(1)
 And keep the king from his invaded reign.

IV.

That lake of Thrasymene, so dire to Rome,(2)
 Now sees the Lombard on his progress home:
 Here the sad tale his heart with terror fills;
 In eager haste he mounts the opposing hills;
 To his own frontier bends his martial course,
 And checks, in hope, the Frank's advancing force—
 Weak hope! for onward still, and uncontrolled,
 Active, and indefatigably bold,
 Charles from Milan pursues his glorious way,
 Threatening to crush the Lombard's proud array.

V.

No human help can save the city's fall:
 A few short hours, and Charles surrounds its wall—
 —But fierce Irmensul from the northern skies
 Turns to the conqueror's camp his noxious eyes:
 Borne on the obedient pinions of the blast,
 That space of air already has he past,
 To guard his impious friends—He hovers now
 Over the cold and sea-girt mountain's brow,
 Where floats the Christian flag—he now descends,
 Where round Milan the fruitful vale extends.

VI.

Girt by his valiant peers, the king reclined
 At evening in his tent, and still combined
 The plan of battle for the coming day;
 And showed each warrior where his duty lay.
 Young Eginhard received his last commands:
 Himself resolved against the Lombard bands
 To head the war; the Church's foes o'erwhelm,
 And bar their access to their native realm:
 While he who led the foot, brave Egohard,
 Was left, beleaguering Pavia's host to guard.

VII.

Timantius' form the fallen archangel wears,
 And in his hand the branch of olive bears:
 His long white hair upon his breast depends,
 To the king's tent with silent step he bends.
 Envoy of peace he comes to every view,
 Their monarch's well-known clemency to sue:
 Lowly to earth he stoops, admitted now,
 Grief in his eye, and meekness o'er his brow.

VIII.

"Great and victorious prince, attend!" he says;
 "She who once formed the pleasure of thy days,
 "Didier's fair daughter, with her failing breath
 "Calls for thy succour, speaks to thee in death.
 "Armelia speaks—Armelia's self entreats
 "The scourge of war to spare her guardian seats.
 "Oh! bear the battle from her trembling eye,
 "And leave her here at least in peace to die.

IX.

"Yes, sire! the hand of death is on thy wife!
 "Grief for thy loss has worn away her life.
 "With one last prayer she would thy bosom move—
 "By her sad marriage, by her changeless love,

" She bids thee spare her wretched father's age,
 " And turn from him the terrors of thy rage.
 " Peace in her name from thee the Lombards seek,
 " Burst their foul bonds, and hate the traitorous
 Greek.

X.

" We own the Roman pontiff's rightful powers,
 " And yield Spoleto's and Ravenna's towers.
 " Gladly our king would quench each spark of hate,
 " And closer knit his union with thy fate.
 " His daughter's woes oppress him now; but still
 " Conscious he bows to Heaven's offended will,
 " And feels the nuptials, that he formed, profane;
 " Yet may a wiser bond more bliss obtain,
 " And fair Gisella's willing hand be won
 " By the tried ardour of his royal son.

XI.

" Should pitying Heaven Armelia's pangs allay,
 " And yet relume her life's expiring ray,
 " In cloistered walls, where holy altars rise,
 " O'er her past guilt will breathe her ceaseless sigh.
 " In the first transport of her blinded grief,
 " She called for vengeance from the Saxon chief,
 " And wronged her love; but soon that wrong for-
 swore,
 " And bears to thee the faith she ever bore.

XII.

" When first she learned thy conquering host's care
 " Her troubled senses shook with grief and fear—
 " Does then my lord bring fire and sword to me?
 " Sighing she said—Ah! whence this enmity?
 " What is my crime, that thus my cup of wo
 " E'en for my father's lips should overflow?

" If such the ordained unkindness of my fate,
 " Let Charles o'erwhelm Armelia with his hate:
 " All has she braved for him—'tis right she prove
 " The full requital of her reckless love.

XIII.

" I die adoring him—let this atone—
 " And these, my last regrets, to Charles be known:
 " Tell him, forgiveness for my sire I pray,
 " And that my death may wash his fault away:
 " Tell him, to give these realms tranquillity,
 " Where I was born, where I shall cease to be:
 " Here let him quench War's sanguinary flame,
 " And let my countrymen his mercy claim:
 " Love still to him, obedience still I vow;
 " Can he behold my griefs, indifferent, now?"

XIV.

Thus as he speaks, Irmensul lowly bends,
 And, kneeling, to the king a scroll extends,
 Where, with faint hand, the dying queen addrest
 Endless adieus to him she loved the best.
 The monarch trembles—and, with deep-struck soul,
 Fixing his gaze on that perfidious scroll,
 Feels through his melted frame soft-gliding fires;
 Hears the loved voice, the well known face admires;
 Drinks in delicious poison at his eyes,
 And vainly chides the tear-drops as they rise.

XV.

The king's alarms when Eginhard surveys,
 Full on Timantius rests his piercing gaze,
 In anxious thought—but, blinded by his art
 Charles meets the traitor with undoubting heart:
 The venom circling in his veins, he cries,
 " No! not in vain she breathes her piteous sighs;

“ I grant her prayer; her father’s offers take;
 “ And stay the course of conquest—for her sake.

XVI.

“ Driven from Italia’s soil, that Grecian train
 “ Must cease the Church’s precincts to profane.
 “ With heart repentant, with submissive mien,
 “ Prostrate at Adrian’s knees be Didier seen;
 “ And yield to me the band whose impious rage
 “ Closed holy Adelard’s unblemished age.
 “ The ruthless Ezelin shall never find
 “ Pardon, or peace, from my relenting mind:
 “ Let Didier leave him to his fate—and then
 “ Our jarring kingdoms are at rest again.

XVII.

“ To-morrow, Eginhard, in Pavia’s towers,
 “ Shall speak my will—but slow and sad the hours
 “ Till thy return must to the queen appear;
 “ Then haste, and tell her, that her voice is dear,
 “ Is sacred to my soul—may this relief
 “ Arrest the progress of her fatal grief!
 “ Heaven interrupts our ties; but, though we part,
 “ While beat the pulses of this troubled heart,
 “ Here shall those ties in soft remembrance dwell,
 “ And all my truth, and all my sorrow tell.”

XVIII.

An odious smile on Satan’s visage smiles—
 He quits the camp, contented with his wiles.
 The unguarded king, at this ill-omened hour,
 Seems to forget the voice of Heaven’s high power;
 No more to war his valiant peers he calls;
 Milan again receives them in her walls,
 And peaceful hope revives with their return:
 The host rejoices, but the leaders mourn;
 Dread this short space of mercy and of rest,
 And blame the monarch in their secret breast.

XIX.

Timantius' form the archangel throws aside,
 And mounts in darkness o'er the welkin wide.
 Now twice ten monarchs led their impious train
 O'er the huge summits of the hills of Spain:
 Earth, by their squadrons covered, disappears—
 Less close, less eager, from their native spheres
 Driven by the freezing north to milder lands,
 The travellers of air, in winged bands,
 The radiance of the sun a moment hide,
 And, swift as arrows, o'er the mountain glide.

XX.

Now o'er the well-known cliffs of Roncevaux
 Roam Satan's eyes; and, in the pass below
 Crushed by huge fragments of the rock, descry
 Where the fallen heroes' mangled bodies lie—
 Upon the mountain's top his awful form
 Reclines, embosomed in the beating storm:
 His downward eyes run o'er the circling climes:
 "Rich is thy harvest, Spain, of promised crimes!"
 Pleased he exclaims—"and all these standards tell
 "What hordes of victims they conduct to Hell!

XXI.

"But this is not enough, to ravaged France
 "That Grecian, Saxon, Lombard, Moor advance:
 "Discordant war must shake her inmost state—
 "Dear to my vengeance is fraternal hate!
 "The sons of Carloman, against their will
 "Must wear a crown, and my designs fulfil:
 "To me that mother and her race shall bow—
 "In vain Laurentia would escape me now,
 "In vain avoid the dangers of a throne;
 "Attractive pomp shall make her yet my own."

XXII.

Thus spoke the exulting fiend in gloomy trance—
 When, o'er the main, close steering to Provence,
 A sail appears—He rises at the sight,
 And down, impetuous, from the cloud-clapt height,
 Swift as a bolt of thunder on the sea,
 Shoots through the bursting floods invisibly—
 The shuddering pilot, mid the peaceful wave,
 Vast round the vessel sees a yawning grave:
 Hurried along by strange and sudden force,
 The bark pursues the infernal current's course.(3)

XXIII.

Cries of confused distress Laurentia hears,
 The danger learns, and for her children fears,
 Runs to their voice, and hushing their alarms,
 Defends them feebly with a mother's arms.
 At once they kneel—and in this dreadful hour
 Invoke the succour of life's Guardian Power.
 To Heaven's pure vault, their God's paternal land,
 By turns they raise the supplicating hand.
 Swift moves the vessel on its new career,
 And soon the fading headlands disappear.

XXIV.

The pilot yields, worn out with fruitless pains,
 And near the helm, immovable, remains:
 "Oh queen," he cries, "thy baffled hopes give o'er;
 "In vain we labour for the Gallic shore.
 "Breathless the wind—unclouded are the skies—
 "But yet these agitated billows rise,
 "As if, beneath the bosom of the deep,
 "Volcanic fires burst sudden from their sleep,
 "And struggling upwards to the watery plain,
 "Blazed through the rocks, foundations of the main.

XXV.

" Once, as I voyaged on the Tuscan seas,
 " And neared the expected port of Hercules,(4)
 " The flood, as now, arose with causeless shock,
 " And furious, dashed our vessel on the rock;
 " Then too I thought the hour of death was nigh—
 " Such at this moment, and more terribly,
 " Threatens the tide to whelm us in its breast:
 " Some more than natural power disturbs its rest—
 " No help, O queen! our instant doom can save,
 " If on the shore now hurried by the wave.

XXVI.

" Too happy that the land eludes our eyes!
 " What if Provence awhile access denies?
 " The current's awful impulse let us aid;
 " Our threatened shipwreck we shall thus evade."
 So to Laurentia speaks that pilot old,
 But speaks in vain—still anxious to behold
 The well known coast, her eyes with tears run o'er,
 And dread the prospect of a foreign shore;
 While Fancy paints some new impending care,
 She sits, and watches by her sons in prayer.

XXVII.

Like a keen dart the vessel shoots along,
 Whirled through the night upon that eddy strong:
 Scarce had the day-star lit our hemisphere,
 When a cry rose that made the stoutest fear—
 " Take to your oars! the Moorish coast is nigh!"
 A thousand piercing shrieks at once reply:
 To helm, sails, oars, they run on every side—
 In vain! within Hamilcar's gulf they ride.(5)

XXVIII.

Laurentia clasps her children to her breast—
 The crew with labour and alarm opprest,

Now doubly struggle to retrace their way,
 Hear their chief's voice, and eagerly obey.
 With firm-set oars against the sea they strive,
 And up the o'erwhelming tide the vessel drive:
 Their strength and skill reanimated seem
 To brave the billows of that mighty stream;
 A Moorish yoke their heaviest ill would be,
 And worse than death such dreadful slavery.

XXIX.

The rapid oar, with a successful force,
 Reverts the labouring vessel on its course,
 Helped by the wind against the tide to gain—
 The incensed archangel o'er the watery plain,
 Darkening the murky atmosphere about,
 Like some tremendous ocean water-spout,
 Raises his arm—High roll the billowy deeps,
 And strike the rebel bark in rushing heaps:
 As some frail boat it feels the infernal check,
 Runs on the shore, turns, bursts, and floats a wreck.

XXX.

Viewing the Latin vessel from the land,
 The Moors with cries of triumph shake the strand:
 In ready chains the captive dame they bring
 To the proud palace of the Moorish king.
 Along these shores Marsilius held the sway:
 A generous prince, who oft in civil fray
 Had met the rude Cantabrian's cruel force;
 And now beheld his banner with remorse
 Obey his foe; but Longin, tried in art,
 Urged by these words the monarch to depart:

XXXI.

“ Without Marsilius shall the fight be won?
 “ Almanzor's troops o'er Aquitania run:

" See, every town and distant province bring
 " Their bannered hosts to join Cantabria's king.
 " Be not thine ear to envious counsel given—
 " Almanzor is the choice of Spain and Heaven.
 " Haste to obey his consecrated power:
 " Perchance thy country, at some future hour,
 " May justly recognise thy warlike might,
 " And march beneath thy standard to the fight.

XXXII.

" Sure of success without thy tardy aid,
 " Almanzor's conquest will not be delayed.
 " Gaiffre, Theodebert, a thousand Franks,
 " Partake his glory, swell his martial ranks.
 " Seek then with me Bordeaux' appointed plain;
 " And through the labours of this hot campaign,
 " In Abderama's eye conspicuous stand—
 " For war, the war of heroes! is at hand.
 " Rise all thyself, from jealous passion free,
 " And soar above unworthy rivalry."

XXXIII.

Marsilius answers—" Why would'st thou disgrace
 " My fairer honour with a charge so base?
 " I of Almanzor, jealous! Exarch, no!
 " In house, in state, in heart, I am his foe—
 " But, envy him! that monster of the age,
 " Whose countless treasons, whose barbarian rage,
 " Cover the cause of Mahomet with shame—
 " Lost to high chivalry, and generous fame,
 " Remorseless tyrant! whose dread course has shown
 " A long variety of guilt alone.

XXXIV.

" And yet the favourite of Spain behold!
 " His savage valour, his ambition bold,
 " Have shone, delusive, in the caliph's sight—
 " And this is he, who leads my steps aright!

" Yet must I yield to the supreme control:
 " Doubtless it sits not easy on my soul,
 " To see great Spain and all her knights contend
 " Who most to such a chief as this shall bend:
 " But, in a thankless country's spite, I go
 " By morning's dawn, with thee to meet the foe."

XXXV.

Marsilius thus—the generous chief could trace
 From Fatima the fair his lofty race:
 Young, fearless, foe to every base intent,
 Almanzor's rival honoured his descent.
 His sire, the first, from Asia's golden reign
 Planted his native luxury in Spain;
 Softened the manners of his savage band,
 And shed a glowing splendour o'er the land;
 In sage repose bade murderous combats end,
 And gave to virtue and to law a friend.

XXXVI.

Marsilius crowned the work his sire began;
 Peace, learning, art, pursued the noble plan,
 And pleasure charmed his happy subjects' hours—
 For them, exerting her audacious powers,
 Commercial enterprise from every soil
 Brought to their ports the treasures of her toil;
 And with them brought the frozen northern host,
 And men more favoured on their sunny coast.
 So bright the glories of the monarch shone,
 The circling kingdoms envied Arragon:
 Her knights were fired with generous love of praise,
 And wreathed their brows with myrtle and with bays.

XXXVII.

In chains Laurentia and her children bound,
 Draw near the court, while thousands gaze around.
 The king beholds a captive dame advance;
 But the great sister of the chief of France

appears to Longin's recognising sight;
 by o'er his visage shoots a sudden light,
 and, "Prince!" he cries, "by this auspicious hour,
 A glorious prize is placed within thy power!
 Know'st thou the prisoners who approach thy throne?
 Laurentia and her sons are thus thine own.
 Thanks to the storm! by them discordant war
 Spreads at thy will o'er trembling France afar."

XXXVIII.

scarcely had the monarch heard what Longin spoke,
 When noble feelings in his heart awoke—
 'Relict of Carloman! forgive," he cries,
 'This chain, and these unconscious injuries.
 'We too have heard the echo of thy fame,
 'And to the splendours of thy virtuous name
 'Long have I known the homage due to pay;
 'Suffer my hand to take these bonds away.
 'Not every Moor is rude and unrefined;
 'We too have good and bad, and all the shades of
 mind."

XXXIX.

Cheering the mother and each infant son,
 Thus by Marsilius are their chains undone—
 Laurentia thanks him—with arrested ears
 Her touching voice the generous monarch hears.
 Within the Alcazar's walls attentive bands
 He bids anticipate the queen's commands;
 And is himself the royal captive's guide
 To that vast palace, where on every side
 Rich ceilings glow o'er Asia's gathered pride.

XL.

Soft through the air a cloud of perfume swells,
 And purest water plays in silver shells.

O'er the smooth marble floors that shine around
In wanton groups the pictured Houris bound.
All speaks of pleasure in this charming place;
And round the Alcazar's bright and airy space
Runs an enchanted wood, where sheltering rows
Of fragrant orange-trees invite repose;
And baths, delightful in the day-star's heat,
Through all their circles sound with voices sweet.

XLI.

Laurentia, gazing on the proud abode,
With strange emotions feels her soul o'erflowed;
Her husband's rank, her former fortunes rise.
And all their first allurements charm her eyes:
"Wanderers no more from foreign land to land,
"Their father's sceptre in their rightful hand,
"Her mourning race might rest in peace again,
"Why did their kinsman king usurp their reign?
"Why did their vassals break each holy vow,
"And tear its honours from their princes' brow?"

XLII.

These keen regrets the mother's bosom fill,
Fond, for her children's sake, of grandeur still;
And thus revives, in soft temptation's hour,
The brilliant weakness of the love of power.
But far apart Byzantium's exarch strove
With counsel deep the Moorish prince to move:
Praise lent persuasion to his artful voice,
"And well," he said, "has Heaven declared its choice
"Of brave Marsilius for the orphan's friend;
"Yes! 'tis thy part Laurentia to defend.

XLIII.

"No longer rival of Almanzor be,
"But give its crown to injured majesty!

A deed like this will make thee truly great,
 And overcome the injustice of thy fate.
 Honour and victory, so nobly won,
 Place o'er his peers the chief of Arragon:
 Great Abderama shall confess at length
 In thee the firmest bulwark of his strength.
 Go, bid thy rivals at thy fame repine,
 And reap the harvest of thy sage design.

XLIV.

Forward to-morrow, to the fields of France
 Let these thy captives, sent by Heaven, advance:
 The queen, now shuddering at thy faith alone,
 Would choose a prison rather than thy throne—
 Ill formed for power, she loves the peaceful shade,
 And would but tremble at thy proffered aid.
 Pursue thy course, but spare her female fear:
 When at her feet the rebel Franks appear,
 The grateful fair will feel her terrors less,
 And all thy cares, and conquering force, confess."

XLV.

To Longin's voice Marsilius yields, and now
 Himself around the royal orphan's brow
 In old Bordeaux aspires to bind the crown;
 His beating bosom hails the high renown:
 Two days are granted to Laurentia's ease,
 The third his troops approach the Pyrenees:
 An emir shall protect the captive's way,
 While he pursues his march without delay,
 And thrice ten hundred knights increase his brave
 array.

XLVI.

But first the Alcazar's guardian walls he seeks,
 And thus to Carloman's sad relict speaks:

" O royal fair, attend our warlike train,
 " And see thy sons their conquered realm regain!"
 A mingled feeling of surprise and dread
 Seized Mainfroi's daughter:—" Be not thus misled,
 " Chieftain," she cries, " for virtuous peace alone
 " I pray; I sigh not for Austrasia's throne:
 " Power's evanescent shadow to reclaim,
 " Far be from me to wake the battle's flame!

XLVII.

" May Heaven preserve me from this guilty wo!
 " Freedom, existence, to thy grace we owe:
 " But ere our hands our country's weal attack,
 " Resume that grace, and give our fetters back."
 This high refusal to Marsilius' ear
 Seems to betray the secret pulse of fear.
 " Queen, be assured in soul; our arms shall place
 " Their glorious crown on thy much-injured race:
 " Howe'er the struggle of our valour speeds,
 " Our bloody wars are not thy children's deeds.

XLVIII.

" When conquest makes the Neustrian realm our
 own,
 " Plain is their passage to their father's throne:
 " A child of Carloman may guiltless be,
 " Yet take Austrasia's diadem from me—
 " Still would I ne'er thy bosom's wish constrain;
 " Free, though protected, in my camp remain;
 " Thyself decide the tenor of thy fate,
 " And let thy choice on time and conquest wait:
 " I will restore thee to thy rightful land;
 " In all the rest I follow thy command."

XLIX.

Laurentia yields to Fortune's altering tide:
 Graced by the Moor with all a sovereign's pride,



Slowly she marches to Pyrenè's height—
While, mingling with Almanzor for the fight,
Girt by their chiefs, and earlier than the day,
The king and exarch urge their martial way.
Through the rude rocks they hasten on their course,
And Aquitania feels their impious force;
Till o'er her ancient towers Bordeaux descries(7)
Her Gaiffre's banner with the crescent rise.



CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO XII.

THE FIFTIETH DAY.

Translated by the Rev. Francis Hodgson.

ARGUMENT.

The combat of the three chiefs. Victory of the Saxons: despair of the paladin Raymond. Oath of Charlemagne.

CHARLEMAGNE.

CANTO XII.

I.

NOW, through the royal Frank's encamped array,
Almanzor's treason scattered deep dismay:
No soldier there could curb his manly grief
For his brave comrades, and their slaughtered chief;
They burn to follow at their country's call,
And on the accursed Cantabrian fiercely fall—
With glowing vengeance for his guilt imprest,
They blame no more the Italian battle's rest;
Already borne by active rage afar,
They seem to shake Austrasia's fields with war.

II.

But Roland's loss to sorrowing Charles appears
His own offence—and, anxious yet, he fears,
E'en yet, the Gascon's treason will not cease,
But casting off the faithless mask of peace,
Through Aquitania's gates admit the foe—
And, "Go!" he cries, "my valiant Monclar, go;
"Discharge thy noble trust, thy king's command,
"And chase yon impious crescent from the land;
"Guard from the Moor that sae ^{the} land, and take
"A brave revenge for murdered Roland's sake.

III.

" Soon shall I trace thy steps—the Lombard pleads
 " Suppliant for peace, and mourns his guilty deeds:
 " Myself ere long against the Moorish hordes
 " Conquering shall lead a hundred thousand swords.
 " Let Gaiffre learn the triumph I have gained,
 " And be his treacherous plans by fear enchained;
 " Announce the presence of his king, and chill
 " The unlicensed boldness of a vassal's will:
 " Dare he my free forgiveness now refuse,
 " Let him all hope of future mercy lose."

IV.

Proud of his prince's choice, brave Narbonne's peer
 Sets forth exulting on his high career;
 And seeks those walls, that yielded to his sword,
 When young Orinda met her conquering lord.
 Asturia's prince, Pelagius' heir, attends
 His path, as toward Hispania's hills he bends:
 Each in his realm anticipates the sight
 Of impious bands advancing to the fight;
 Almanzor's fiercest foes, their warlike zeal
 Burns to destroy the Moor and bids them feel
 Their dearest interest in their country's weal.

V.

Charles would pursue their steps—but first commands
 Young Eginhard to seek the Lombard bands:
 Soon as the Church in safety rests, secure
 From Adour's banks to chase the routed Moor,
 He pants to signalize his valiant arm—
 Pleased yet he listens to the flattering charm
 Of false Timantius' voice—yet hopes this day
 Will dawn for peace, and close the bloody fray;
 While long repose shall bless the Roman towers,
 Safe in the shield of his protecting powers.

VI.

With bended brow the youthful warrior stands,
 And takes the monarch's peaceable commands,
 When Grimoald appears—with martial tramp
 His steed advances through the kingly camp:
 Brother of Egobard, from that far shore
 Where in the Rhine the impetuous waters pour
 Of Necker's closing course, the chief appears—(1)
 There Berenger arrayed the Gallic spears,
 And twice ten thousand soldiers swelled his host,
 On that wide frontier's honourable post.

VII.

War's dangerous art the youthful soldier tried
 At gallant Berenger's experienced side:
 Since from the Necker's bank his course began,
 Seven daily rounds the star of light had ran.
 Nought could delay his course; for now he bears
 To France a weight of sorrows and of cares:
 Swift he advances to the monarch's sight;
 And in his eye dark trouble and despite,
 And sad alarm o'er all his features pale,
 Speak him the herald of a fatal tale.

VIII.

"Sire!" he exclaims, "thy foe's success I tell,
 "Where thy brave chiefs by German faulchions fell—
 "(2) The Saxon's o'er the Maine!—e'en now per-
 chance
 "His squadrons violate the fields of France:
 "In vain to Berenger thy power was sent;
 "For, rashly urged by envious discontent,
 "Raymond and Guy their duty's claims forgot,
 "And though their chief reproved, they heeded not,
 "But onward rushed, and by their lawless fault
 "Laid bare their country to the foe's assault.

IX.

" Such countless hordes to battle ne'er set forth,
 " Ne'er flamed so high the fury of the north:
 " Hamlets and towns are given to sword and fire,
 " And all their captives at the stake expire.
 " The Huns increase the hostile league, and come
 " At Theudon's voice to seek a richer home,
 " From rude Pannonia's native limits led—
 " Thy generous pardon from their minds has fled;
 " And on they sweep to these insulted climes,
 " Stained, as they go, with blood and growing crimes.

X.

" Now, twice a traitor, Tassillon unites
 " His banner to the foes, and with them fights:
 " Thro' Ausburg's walls the thick battalia spread,(3)
 " To war by this rebellious vassal led.
 " Against us all the northern tribes engage—
 " To Rodmir's care Armelia in her rage
 " Trusts her defence; and, following in his path,
 " Breathes through the German host congenial wrath:
 " Myself have marked her with astonished sight
 " Rival the son of Witikind in fight."

XI.

The soldier ceased; and sad and troubled here,
 Spite of himself, betrayed the starting tear;
 But soon against the unmanly weakness strove,
 And told the horrors of that Saxon grove.
 When thus the monarch's anguish burst abroad—
 " Oh, deadly guilt! Oh, execrable fraud!
 " Behold, my faithful Eginhard," he cries,
 " Accursed Timantius' horrid perjuries!
 " See, by this treaty with the foe betrayed,
 " Suevia and France a prey to rapine made!

XII.

" On Rhine's proud banks, on far Pyrene's hill,
 " Blood from my noble friends is flowing still;
 " And I (too weak!) have here delayed my toils—
 " The fatal messenger's deceitful wiles,
 " His poisoned voice, stirred pity in my breast;
 " And following yet, by no remorse repress,
 " That impulse soft by yielding fondness given,
 " I dared speak peace to those who outrage Heaven!
 " Ah! here I swear, no more my shame shall last—
 " I have been guilty—but my guilt is past.

XIII.

" Haste, Eginhard! collect my valiant bands;
 " The gathered earth in vain against us stands:
 " Determined death shall all our foes pursue—
 " What can his arms, who fights for God, subdue?"
 Faint o'er the far horizon breaks the dawn,
 When from the presence of his king withdrawn,
 Emma's young lover takes his ordered way—
 " Grimoald," the monarch cries, " thy message say;
 " Nothing conceal of all our deep disgrace:
 " Hear we the shame and thraldom of our race."

XIV.

Now in the royal tent brave Grimoald waits;
 And, as the monarch hears what he relates,
 Before his gazing sight presented seem
 Rhine's fatal banks and Necker's winding stream.
 " Sire," said the chief, " no more my firmness fails;
 " Full shalt thou hear my story's sad details:
 " Expiring Raymond gave this charge to me,
 " Nor names, nor actions, now disguised shall be;
 " What may thy empire's common good advance
 " Belongs alike to every heart in France.

XV.

" From Necker's source to where he meets the Maine,
 " Our warlike squadrons covered all the reign:
 " In three brave bands we spread the extended line,
 " And formed the frontier bulwark of the Rhine.
 " The plains of Mentz the valiant Guy obeyed:
 " Raymond, beneath his banner ranged, surveyed
 " Twelve thousand soldiers near Lorissa's towers: (4)
 " The prudent Berenger restrained his powers
 " True to thy charge; observed the Saxon spears,
 " Escaped the fight, and checked his ardent peers

XVI.

" When Heral's doom he heard, the league of blood,
 " The scenes of guilt in Eresbourg's sad wood,
 " The chief enjoined his partners in the war
 " From doubtful, dangerous fields to keep afar,
 " And hold by Soler's walls their backward post;(5)
 " Himself from Necker's frightened banks his host
 " Reluctant leads, to Omfroi trusts the reign,
 " And guides to Soler's towers our warlike train,
 " Sure that his peers their station would retain.

XVII.

" Here in the night our bands we should have joined,
 " And thus, against all Saxony combined,
 " Thy twice ten thousand swords had held the sway,
 " And France had never mourned this fatal day—
 " But ah! what ills from rival hatred rise!
 " Misled by blind and fatal jealousies,
 " The peers suspect their chief, betray their cause,
 " Envy his honours, and renounce his laws;
 " Run, e'er he comes, in danger's face, and try
 " To snatch his rightful prize of victory.

XVIII.

" At Frankfort's walls their legions they unite,
 " Pass o'er the Maine, and at the fall of night

" In Hombour's plains encamped the Saxons find—(6)
 " Their prosperous king, with high elated mind,
 " From the sad ruin of the Suevian race,
 " Led to the startled Rhine with rapid pace
 " His blood-stained bands: all yielded to his course,
 " Or, vainly struggling, bent beneath his force:
 " Less fierce, less active the destroying fire
 " O'er arid plains extends its furious ire.

XIX.

" On those far shores the impatient chiefs excite
 " The ill-concerted clamour of the fight:
 " At their first onset gloriously they spread
 " The German earth with heaps of native dead:
 " But with redoubled force the countless host
 " Wearies, o'erwhelms the warriors on their post:
 " Guy falls beneath the powerful Rodmir's blows;
 " Wasting his fruitless courage on his foes,
 " Despairing Raymond, driven to flight at last,
 " Curses in vain the rashness of the past.

XX.

" Now Soler's walls we reached, expectant there
 " To join our faithful comrades in the war,
 " When straggling fugitives, distrest and pale,
 " Of Hombour's field brought in the fatal tale;
 " When Raymond's self, abashed, suffused with blood,
 " Before our eyes, despair's resemblance stood:
 " The noble Berenger with kindness met
 " The chief, and raised his soldiers' courage yet.

XXI.

" " Comrades," he cried, " let Frankfort's walls receive
 " " Our hastening squadrons, and our loss retrieve;
 " " There let us hold the Maine's protecting wave,
 " " Or mid its waters find a glorious grave.
 " " Say, could we bear a foreign host to stain
 " " (Trusted to our defence) our monarch's reign?



- " " Could we survive defeat? Companions, no!
 " " Forward the current of the fight must go;
 " " Retreat is over—rush we on the foe!"

XXII.

- " Raymond has joined the remnants of his band—
 " The few who fled from Hombour's deathful land
 " Followed his steps: recovered from his pride,
 " On Berenger's advice the chief relied;
 " The sounding clarions gallantly declare
 " The gathered host's departure for the war:
 " The roofs of Graffe and Loris we survey,
 " And spread (when now retires the star of day)
 " Beside the streams of Maine, our brave array.

XXIII.

- " Fierce on the adverse bank, by Frankfort's walls,
 " The exulting Saxon to the battle calls:
 " Thus the dire vulture o'er his food elate,
 " Aloud rejoices in his victim's fate.
 " Restless, in arms, we watch the lingering hours;
 " In one vast line our chief displays his powers;
 " Thus in the sight of the confounded foe,
 " Anxious his doubled ranks and seeming strength to
 show.

XXIV.

- " Up with the day, to meet our squadrons spring
 " Armelia, Rodmir, Albion, and the king:
 " Around them numerous knights their banners spread,
 " And furious crowds against our host are led.
 " By lengthened howls, by sharp and threat'ning cries,
 " Irmensul's race salute the dawning skies,
 " And seem to load the light with blasphemies.
 " Full in the van the Lombard's daughter rides,
 " Plunging her warlike courser in the tides.

XXV.

“ The stream has disappeared beneath the ranks;
“ A cloud of darts has covered all the banks:
“ Senal inspires his soldiers for the fight,
“ And mid our host, beneath that arrowy flight,
“ Undaunted falls—Here Raimbaud finds his grave,
“ And the land reddens with the bleeding brave;
“ Blush, too, the floods with gore; where, hot in wrath,
“ The Saxon monarch cuts his deadly path;
“ Shakes in each awful hand a ponderous spear,
“ And bids fresh carnage follow his career.

XXVI.

“ Our leader lifts the royal banner high,
“ Leaps in the stream, and hastens to defy
“ The hostile king: now twice with rapid blow,
“ He strikes the brazen buckler of his foe:
“ Armed with his fatal lance, see Rodmir come,
“ Assault the chief, and drive the weapon home;
“ Far from his failing grasp these eyes beheld
“ Thy sacred ensign cast upon the field;
“ Raymond caught up the precious charge, arose
“ In sudden power against the reeling foes,
“ And snatched a brave revenge for Hombour's plain
of woes.

XXVII.

“ Beyond the battle's rage our chief was led;
“ But if he lives, or rests among the dead,
“ Or groans in impious chains, 'tis doubtful all—
“ I followed prompt at valiant Raymond's call;
“ Before him Witikind drew back his force,
“ While o'er the Maine we urged our ardent course,
“ Dreaming too soon, in conquest's ardour vain,
“ The northern hero would his glory stain.

XXVIII.

" This soothing dream a moment put to flight—
 " One half their host escaping from our sight,
 " Lost in the deep ravines, had only fled
 " But farther down to cross the river red;
 " Soon on our camp the fiery Rodmir driven,
 " Returns against us like the storm of Heaven:
 " The monarch halts his standards at the sight,
 " Turns on our vanguard and renews the fight;
 " While, on our rear, and threatening our retreat,
 " The sword of Rodmir, or the floods, we meet.

XXIX.

" Despairing Raymond would resist in vain,
 " And strive to form our frightened host again.
 " All fly, dispersed—the cowards in the wave
 " Find, where they fancy an escape, a grave.
 " Clairval of Mentz, and Aquitania's knight,
 " The shame of France, give signal for the fight:
 " The generous Montfort still undaunted stands;
 " Beneath the ducal ensign holds his bands,
 " And saves the oriflamme from pagan hands.

XXX.

" Amid our ranks the noble chief appears,
 " Girt by four hundred gallant cavaliers:
 " Far from the fatal banks our steeds we spur,
 " And pierce the Saxon's iron barrier.
 " Their deepened files in vain our rush oppose,
 " And Rodmir's sword in vain confronts his foes.
 " Joined in close phalanx, mailed in steel complete,
 " We fight to fly, and conquer our retreat.
 " Our rapid course we turn not, nor restrain,
 " Till Soler's hospitable walls we gain.

XXXI.

" A stupor dark o'er Raymond's soul was spread:
 " No word escaped the soldier as he fled:

' His downcast eyes, his savage silence, told
 ' The avenging conscience that his breast controlled.
 ' Our warriors shrink reproachful from their chief:
 ' Their troubled ranks exasperate his grief:
 ' They mourn good Berenger, untimely slain,
 ' And curse the cause of our defeat again.

XXXII.

' Not Montfort's self these murmurs could repress—
 ' Raymond at length, o'erwhelmed by his distress,
 ' With looks that veil his fury from our eyes,
 ' Arrests his course, and thus serenely cries:
 ' " Yes, I deserve, my friends, your heavy blame;
 ' " Too late I suffer from remorseful shame—
 ' " The flower of France was given to death by me!
 ' " Henceforth unfit to guide her chivalry,
 ' " In Montfort's hands I leave my forfeit powers,
 ' " And follow him to Soler's sheltering towers.

XXXIII.

' " Some rest be yours within those friendly walls!
 ' " But Grimould, hasten where our monarch calls;
 ' " Relate the triumph of his impious foes,
 ' " And tell him—I was author of his woes.
 ' " Guy only joined me in my rebel pride;
 ' " But Guy atoned his fault, and nobly died,
 ' " Where slaughtered Saxons fell in heaps around:
 ' " Such glorious death I sought, but have not found:
 ' " My weary spirit to despair is driven—
 ' " Be but my memory by my king forgiven!

XXXIV.

' He spoke; and plunged the weapon in his side,
 ' Fell at his courser's feet, and deeply sighed:
 ' Pale with alarm, to stay his hand we fly,
 ' But burst already was the vital tie.
 ' Thus sank the chieftain, by his shame opprest:
 ' But I, obedient to his last request,

" Mastering my grief, these hurried tidings bear;
 " So may we yet lost Raymond's fault repair;
 " So by thy presence, and by thine alone,
 " Great king, the Pagan host shall be o'erthrown."

XXXV.

The monarch as he hears the tale of gloom,
 Plans in his heart the hostile armies' doom:
 His chosen troop of faithful cavaliers
 In haste, meanwhile, with Eginhard appears:
 Ranged round their prince, within the tent they stand,
 And learn the daring of the Saxon band
 With restless rage—Charles tells the tale again
 Of Guy, of Berenger untimely slain;
 Heral and Raymond once the battle's boast
 And thus inflames their agitated host.

XXXVI.

" May this reverse augment our glory yet!
 " Be taught, my friends in arms, and ne'er forget,
 " That high success mere valour cannot win:
 " Conquest is nursed, secured by discipline.
 " A lawless courage is unworthy you;
 " Behold what jealous rivalry can do!
 " Disorder, envy, and confusion rise,
 " And turn to dust our noblest energies;
 " Renounce, ye brave, above each fault beside,
 " That all-destructive fallacy of pride.

XXXVII.

" Obey, to conquer—in the battle's hour
 " Revere the prudence of the guiding power;
 " The chief must lead blind courage on its way,
 " And all the soldier's art is to obey:
 " Thus by sage concert often is subdued,
 " By happy plan, war's countless multitude;
 " Thus to the wisdom of the chief alone
 " The danger of the precipice is known:

While ardent soldiers, to their duty true,
Strike their bold stroke, unconscious what they do.

XXXVIII.

'Twas thus Martel, victorious lord of Spain,
O'ercame the Saracen on Poitiers' plain:
By Weser's banks, at Pepin's dread command,
'Twas thus unnumbered Germans bit the land:
Thus had our bands their glory now displayed,
Had they the noble Berenger obeyed:
Proud as my father's ensigns mine had flown;
But Raymond's fault their honour has o'erthrown:
In vain would Grimoald exalt his fame,
Our pity only can protect his name.

XXXIX.

Glory rejects him—to his just remorse
He should have joined firm resolution's force,
And not, himself, have sought a sordid grave:
He who endures his fate alone is brave.
Far from our eyes his image sad remove—
Now sorrowing France her children's love would
 prove;
Fly we to check the advancing Saxon's powers,
And back as conquerors haste to Pavia's towers.

XL.

Here, in my absence, Egobard commands:
Let him with care avoid the Lombard bands,
(Such my behest) and guard the city's wall:
Be this the chieftain's charge, and this be all;
His orders be supreme; and Didier's mind,
Met by his skill each cunning art shall find.
Let Ranier, Eginhard, his followers be;
Spite of their youth, well pleased those chiefs I see,
Fit to support their leader's energy.

XLI.

“ Let not my soldiers fight till my return;
“ Check they the fires that in their bosom burn;
“ Close to Milan their guarded force restrain,
“ Unmoved by clamours or reproaches vain:
“ Soon shall I guide them in their high career;
“ And the rash Lombard, with awakened fear,
“ Shall see me conqueror o’er that barbarous train—
“ Lutetia’s gates I will not pass again,
“ On the saint’s tomb, till I’ve fulfilled my vow,
“ That here, in sight of Heaven, I utter now.

XLII.

“ Though ceaseless war should still my life infest,
“ And rouse against me all the raging west,
“ Didier shall fall!—By Him, the living God,
“ I swear to break the Lombard’s impious rod,
“ And tread his lawless banner in the dust—
“ Free from the thraldom of a guilty lust,
“ I ask nor peace, nor respite, nor repose,
“ But fighting, one by one, Heaven’s countless foes,
“ My voice, my sword, shall prop the Christian cause,
“ And spread throughout the world my God’s eternal
 laws.”

NOTES.



NOTES TO CANTO I.

(1) *At the dark hour has seized Spoleto's gates.*

Spoleto, an ancient city, and capital of the duchy of that name, belonged at this time to the Holy See. It is about twenty leagues distant from Rome. The Lombard kings Luitprand, Astolph and Didier, under the pretext that they were heirs to the Greek emperors in Italy, laid claim to this city. But the Lombards had given up their pretensions to Pepin.

(2) *Forsaking Thurium and its fruitful lands, &c.*

Sybaris, or Thurium, was an ancient city in the province of Bruttium, situated in the gulf of Tarentum. This province, with several others, in the southern part of Naples, belonged then to the Greek emperors some time after their expulsion from the rest of Italy. Byzantium was the ancient name of Constantinople.

(3) *The son of Witikind to Didier came.*

Witikind was chief or king of the Saxons, and was long an enemy to Charles.

(4) *A broken image which their ensigns raise,
Their impious tenets, and their creed betrays.*

The sect of the iconoclasts, or image breakers, prevailed at Constantinople. They did not even tolerate the image of Christ upon the cross. This sect spread disturbance through the Greek empire and the Church. It troubled even France for a moment, because in a false copy of the acts of the Nicene council, it was pretended that this council admitted the adoration of images. The Church of France protested against this pretended decision, and Charles himself wrote on the subject the famous Caroline books. Pope Adrian silenced these disputes, by determining the sense which the Nicene council had given to this worship of images, and drew the line within which all the catholics ranged themselves, and which drove the iconoclasts from the bosom of the Church.

(5) *Well pleased, Augustus to thy wish inclines.*

Constantine, son of Leo and Irene: Leo was a zealous persecutor of images. The exarchate of Ravenna had been taken from the Greek emperors, and given by Pepin to the popes. These emperors however still maintained all their pretensions to those provinces.

(6) *Against Armelia, and her splendid ties, &c.*

Hermengarde, Bertha, Desiderade, or Armelia, was married to Charlemagne, although that prince had already a lawful wife, whom he had married during the life of his father. The Pope pronounced an anathema against this adulterous marriage with Didier's daughter, and wrote a letter on the subject to king Charles, in which we find the following passage:

“*Conjugio legitimo, ex præceptione genitoris vestri copulati estis, accipientes de eadem vestra patria pulcherrimas conjuges. Impium est alias accipere uxores super eas, quas primitus vos certum est accepisse.*”

“You were joined, by the command of your father, in legitimate marriage, with women of your own country, of the most distinguished beauty. It is impious, therefore, to take other wives during the lifetime of those, whom all know you have originally received.”

It is certain, from these documents, that Charles was separated from his lawful wife, who was a Frank, in order to unite himself with Didier's daughter. But we have no decisive proof as to the first wife of Charles. Several historians incline towards Imiltrude, the mother of Pepin the crooked; but as Charles never admitted Pepin to any share of his dominions, this omission seems to prove, that this son was the issue of a concubine. It is at least equally probable that the former wife of Charles, whom he repudiated in order to make room for Didier's daughter, was Adelinde the mother of Emma, whom some historians reckon among his concubines. This first wife did not long survive his divorce from Didier's daughter, for Charles soon after espoused Hildegarde the daughter of Childebrand, duke of Swabia, who brought him four princes, and several princesses. In the midst of these uncertainties, that opinion is here taken up, which considers Adelinde, the mother of Emma, as the first of the lawful wives of Charlemagne.

As to the repudiation of Didier's daughter, it is ascertained that it took place by the advice of the bishops. The reason alleged by several writers, that this princess was incapable of bearing children, appears improbable. For as she was queen of France for a year only, the trial was not sufficiently long to establish the proof of her sterility. Why shut our eyes to the letters of the pope? Does a reason cease to be admissible, because it proves the influence of religion and morality?

(7) *Beneath thy sway may, like Ticinus, glide.*

The river Ticin falls into the Po, after having washed the city of Pavia, the capital of Lombardy.

(8) *Gaiffre repressed the progress of his bands.*

Gaiffre, duke of Aquitain, a descendant of Clovis, revolted frequently against Pepin and Charlemagne. Tassillon, duke of Bavaria, had espoused a daughter of Didier, and sister of Armelia. Being a secret enemy of Pepin and of Charles, he often joined in conspiracies against them.

(9) *Adeline, of lineage high-born as thine own, &c.*

It is supposed that Adeline was the daughter of one of the chiefs of the Suevians, a German tribe, which had been subdued and converted by Pepin. Adeline might therefore be considered as a Frank, and the expression in the pope's letter, *de eadem vestra patria*, may apply to her.

(10) *Hate for the Latins though the exarch feel.*

Exarch was the title of the governors appointed by the Greek emperors in Italy. Although the exarchate was no longer under the dominion of the Greeks, the title was still in existence.

(11) *Of late, like you, Irene was misled.*

Irene, the mother of Constantine, was accused of worshipping those images in private which her husband, Leo, persecuted with so much violence. Her chamber was searched, and an image of Christ having been found under her pillow, the empress was very severely treated. She afterwards reascended the throne.

(12) *Till Terni's hospitable land they gain.*

Terni is a celebrated town, near the great cataract of the river Velino, which precipitates itself from a very considerable height: it is fifteen leagues distant from Rome.

(13) *Here Christ's apostles sleep —*

The tomb of the two apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, is under the great cupola of St. Peter's church. The descent to it is by a magnificent flight of stairs, which lead to the vast crypt of the church. The churches of Rome are decorated with numerous columns, and other ornaments, taken from the pagan temples. Several Greek statues have been purified, and converted into the images of saints. Although St. Paul is not one of the twelve disciples of our Lord, he is generally known as an apostle, and his festival is always kept at Rome with that of St. Peter.

(14) *The metal worn where lips devout have pressed,
Of Latin fervour bears the pious test.*

The brazen statue of St. Peter, which is alluded to in the preceding note, is in a sitting posture, and elevated in the middle of the church, so that its feet are at the height of the lips of the faithful. By the continual kisses of devout Christians, one of the feet of this statue has been worn away in a very remarkable manner.

(15) *And where the Vatican its courts expands,
In distant view God's earthly vicar stands.*

The poet supposes that the church of St. Peter and the Vatican were built at that time, as they now appear, and that the pope, in order to reach the church, crossed the porticoes of the Vatican which are above it.

(16) *This solemn day the assembled Christians see,
On the rich walls, that wonderous tapestry, &c.*

There are several pieces of tapestry preserved at St. Peter's, on which the striking events of the Bible are represented. They are employed in the decoration of the porches and temples on solemn occasions. It is supposed that they were embroidered in the convents.

(17) *The Labarum here, in sign of heavenly aid, &c.*

The poet alludes to the famous battle fought by Constantine, which is painted in fresco on one of the halls of the Vatican, by Julio Romano, after the designs of Raphael. The Labarum is the name of the imperial standard of Constantine, on which he ordered the monogram of Jesus Christ to be painted.

(18) *To Peter's sainted hands, on Jordan's sides,
Here Christ the keys of Paradise confides.*

Allusion is here made to one of the fine cartoons of Raphael, which was formerly in Hampton-court palace, and is now in Windsor Castle.

(19) *The scourge of earth, the abhorrence of mankind, &c.*

This is another allusion to one of the finest pictures of Raphael, painted in fresco on one of the halls of the Vatican, and engraved by Volpato.

(20) *And Charles their vast inheritance obtains.*

In these ages, on the death of the king, the nobles assembled themselves, and, frequently without any respect to the order of succession, elected a prince of the family. Carloman left but two children, both in their infancy, and the nobles of Austrasia, fearful of a minority, transferred the crown to Charles, who had not the virtue to refuse it. I have called Carloman's widow Laurentia: her real name was Gerberge.

(21) *Elias writes upon his iron roll, &c.*

Elias, or Elijah, was carried away alive from the earth. This prophet was a witness of the transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor. He is looked upon as the father of the Cenobites. He was of the city of Thisbe, whence he is called the Thisbian or Thisbite.

(22) *The patriarch's prayers, on Carmel's mountain-seats.*

Mount Carmel, in Judea, served for a long time as an asylum to Elias. Several monasteries are still seen there.

(23) *The tyrant ravisher of Naboth's field.*

Every one knows that Ahab, king of Israel, ordered Naboth to be killed, in order to appropriate his field to himself, and how he was punished for this crime. Racine, in his Athaliah, that master-piece of modern tragedy, has beautifully touched upon this instance of divine justice.

(24) *Type of the Trinity, and God alone,
Sudden a flaming triangle is shown.*

This image, familiar to many fathers of the Church, *Triangulum in nube*, has always appeared to me more poetical and more conformable to our mysteries than the more detailed particulars which others have wished to substitute for it. Is it not from an ill-advised imitation of the Jupiter of Phidias that Buonarrotti and Raphael have painted the Trinity under human forms? By endeavouring to develop too much of the mystery to the senses, is it not weakened? The pagan mythology abounds with brilliant details, varieties, and contrasts; but our religion being one, mysterious and sublime, have not those poets and painters who possessed the finest genius sometimes erred by imitating too closely the ancient poets and painters, and representing things, like them, too much in detail? The criticism of Boileau might be well applied here.



NOTES TO CANTO II.

(1) The Franks are hastening to the field of May.

Under the first race, the Franks were usually assembled at the beginning of the month of March, and their assemblies were then called the field of March. Subsequently this custom was deferred to the beginning of May, as a season more favourable to the cavalry, of which the greater part of these assemblies consisted. Here the king and the chieftains discussed the important measures of peace and war: the army and the people assisted; and their intervention in public affairs, which at first was positive, diminished by degrees, in proportion as the throne acquired strength.

*(2) Egbert the heptarch first is seen, whose sway
The western realms of Albion's isle obey.*

Egbert, king of Wessex, was the friend of Charlemagne. Having been expelled from England by his enemies, he lived a long time at the court of France. It is said, that in taking leave of him, Charles presented him with his sword; Egbert made such good use of it, that the seven crowns, which constituted the heptarchy, were united on his head.

(3) The second place Pelagius' grandson fills.

Alphonso, of Asturia, the grandson of Pelagius, inherited the virtues and designs of his grandfather. Retiring amongst the mountains of Asturia, he defended himself against the Moors. Subsequently he succeeded in extending his small kingdom, which, increasing daily under his successors, in the end united all Spain, after the expulsion of the Moors, under Ferdinand and Isabella.

*(4) That love, by which Orinda has been taught
Herself and throne to cede —*

It is at Narbonne, or Carcassona, that the chronicles have placed a Moorish queen, the fair Orinda, who changed her religion, in order that she might marry a paladin. One of the Moorish kings of Spain besieged her in her capital during the absence of her husband. The young queen sallied out at the

head of her troops, and repulsed the enemy. It is said that the coarsely-sculptured image of a female, armed with a lance, is still to be seen on the gates of Carcassona.

(5) *A costly tissue whose reflecting blaze
A purer white, than orient pearl, displays.*

Silk was at this time very rarely seen, and was brought from the east.

(6) *And the bright broom, that beams with golden light.*

The golden broom is the first order of chivalry. It was instituted by Charles Martel, and designed to reward military valour. The knights wore a golden broom, suspended by a triple chain of the same metal. The motto was: *Exaltat humiles*: "He exalts the humble;" a device suitable to warriors, whose valour might, in a moment, render them illustrious, and redeem them from obscurity.

The author, in introducing Roland in a transport of frenzy upon the scene, wished to present an heroic rage in opposition to the many extravagancies which the romance writers have celebrated, and by which Ariosto debased the harmony of his muse. Trees torn up by the roots, flocks rent in pieces, and devoured, Roland naked, and covered with filth, running about the country, or carrying a dead filly on his shoulders, &c. &c. with a thousand other similar inventions, do not belong to the dignity of epic poetry. Such exploits bear but little resemblance to those of Achilles, Godfrey, or Æneas; and Roland in love is of the tribe of the heroes of romance, rather than of that of the heroes of epic poetry, in spite of the volumes which have been written by the Italian literati, who have ventured to prefer Ariosto's work to Jerusalem Delivered. It cannot be too much regretted that Ariosto, who so often marches with giant-steps on the summit of Parnassus, should sometimes drag himself upon the traces of the most wretched authors, and that he should be content with occupying the first place amongst poets of romances, while he appears able to have contested the epic palm with the first poets of any age or country.

NOTES TO CANTO III.

- (1) *Then in the eternal city fixed his chair,
The first of pontiffs and of martyrs there.*

Simon, Peter, Cephas, the prince of the apostles, converted the city of Joppa, founded the church of Antioch, and came to Rome, where he preached, established his residence, and fixed the supreme pontificate. He was crucified there, under the reign of Nero. Andrew, brother of Cephas, went to Achaia, where he preached the gospel, and suffered martyrdom at Patras.

- (2) *Worthy their race, the martyr's crown they gain.*

James the less, Simon, and Jude, or Thaddeus, were all three sons of Cleophas and Mary, sister of the blessed Virgin. The first, surnamed the Just, was bishop of Jerusalem, and the Jews precipitated him from the top of the temple. Simon preached and suffered martyrdom in Mauritania. Jude, or Thaddeus, preached in Arabia and Idumea, and died in the city of Beryt. What a spectacle is this, of these sages without pride, devoting their lives to enlighten the world, living and dying like their divine master.

- (3) *The gospel light o'er India Thomas spread.*

Thomas Didymus, surnamed the Incredulous, because he at first refused to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, brought the faith into Media and India. He died in Calamyne, a city of Indostan. Matthias, who succeeded to Judas Iscariot, preached in Egypt, and in Ethiopia, where he died. Philip was the first whom Christ called to follow him. He suffered martyrdom in the city of Hieraple. Bartholomew ended his preaching in Armenia by suffering cruel torments. Matthew, or Levi, one of the four evangelists, brought the gospel into Persia.

- (4) *From Patmos rock the sacred exile's pen
Revealed the mystic ways of Heaven to men.*

John the evangelist, the beloved disciple of our Saviour, was the son of Zebedee, as well as James the elder, called Zebedee

after his father's name. Zebedee was the first of the twelve disciples that obtained martyrdom (under the reign of Herod Agrippa.) He preached in Spain, where he is venerated, particularly at Compostella. John, brother of Zebedee, did not perish by the sword; he suffered, at Rome, the punishment of being thrown into boiling oil, which did not prove fatal to him. He preached the gospel to the Parthians, and was bishop of Ephesus; being banished to the isle of Patmos, he wrote there his sublime Apocalypse.

(5) *While at his bidding Jared's holy son, &c.*

Enoch, son of Jared, carried away, like Elias, and reserved for the same destiny.

(6) *The bane of Baal's priests, his glances light.*

All the priests of Baal were assembled on Mount Carmel, by order of Ahab. Being convicted of imposture, they were all cut in pieces.

(7) *Till the new Sion spread beneath him lies.*

New Sion, or Rome.

(8) *Swift to Mount-Cassin steers his active flight.*

Mount-Cassin, a famous monastery in the kingdom of Naples, in the province of the territory of Labor. In the seventh and eighth centuries several princes retired to this cloister, which was renowned for the sanctity of its rules.

(9) *Soon did Nonanthul, Fanon soon descry, &c.*

Nonanthul and Fanon, monasteries near the city of Modena, round which several large towns were built, which owed their prosperity and the cultivation of their land to the cloisters.

(10) *And waves of blood unmixed o'erflowed the ground.*

Carloman, son of Martel, and brother of Pepin, behaved with great cruelty towards the vanquished, after his victory of Thuringia over the Germans: and, being soon after disgusted with the world, he retired to Mount-Cassin, where he lived a long time, performing all the duties of penitence.

(11) *His steady zeal the Lombard king pursued.*

Rachis king of the Lombards, lived likewise many years at Mount-Cassin; where, several centuries after, the vine of Ra-

ehis was shown, which that king had cultivated with his own hand.

(12) *Tis the sage Adelard.*

Adelarde, a prince of the house of Pepin, actually lived in a cloister: he was abbot of Corbia. He retired afterwards to Mount-Cassin.

(13) ————— *at thy Almighty word*

Martel arose.

The poet alludes to the battle of Tours, in which Charles Martel destroyed a hundred thousand Saracens, who had already made themselves masters of Touraine.

NOTES TO CANTO IV.

(1) *An island stood, &c.*

The isle of St. Louis, formed by the Seine, where it is supposed that Pepin and Martel were interred before their remains were transferred to the abbey of St. Denis. The palace of the baths, belonging to the emperor Julian, which had been the residence of the kings of the first race, is presumed to have been the residence of Charles. The author supposes that the gardens of this palace extended as far as the Seine, and were connected by a bridge with the isle of St. Louis.

(2) *Thee and thy brother, in the empire's stead,
Shame everlasting.*

Pepin wished to repudiate Bertrade, the mother of Charlemagne, but the sovereign pontiff opposed this divorce, and Pepin yielded to his paternal exhortations. In the forty-fifth epistle of the Caroline code, already quoted, is the following passage on this subject.

“Mementote hoc præcellentissimi filii, quod sanctæ recordationis prædecessor noster dominus Stephanus papa, excellentissimæ memoriæ genitorem vestrum obtestatus est, ut nequam præsumeret dimittere dominam et genitricem vestram, et ipse—obtemperavit.”

“Remember, my noble sons, that our holy predecessor pope Stephen, intreated your father, of blessed memory, not to presume to dismiss his wife, your mother, and he obeyed.”

(3) *Her fifteenth year had Adelinde attained,
And Charles, like her, his May of life had gained.*

This stanza marks the age of Charlemagne. His marriage with Adelinde had been contracted early in his youth, and Emma, the only offspring of this marriage, had reached her fifteenth year when her father divorced the daughter of Didier. Thus Charlemagne, at the period of this poem, was thirty-two years of age. He was born in 742, and his first expedition into Italy took place in 774.

NOTES TO CANTO V.

(1) *The church commemorates the solemn date, &c.*

The feast of Pentecost: these descriptions, with which the poem is interspersed, particularize the different epochs. The action of the poem commences in the month of May, and finishes in October.

(2) *Atirst to bathe themselves in regal gore.*

It is well known that Roland was the son of one of the sisters of Charlemagne.

NOTES TO CANTO VI.

- (1) *Behind them cast, they leave the flowery meads,
Where Neustria ends.*

The Loire, of which the ancient name was Ligeris, separated, from east to west, Neustria from Aquitain.

- (2) *His sire, Remistan too, for faith contemned, &c.*

For particulars in regard to Remistan, duke of Gascony, his son Theodebert, and Gaiffre, duke of Aquitain, see the preface.

- (3) *Arrives, where Adour laves the fertile plain.*

The river Adour, formerly Aturus, flows from the Pyrenees, towards the ocean, into which it falls near Bayonne.

- (4) *Towards Tardetz's ramparts they direct their pace.*

Tardes or Tardetz, in the Lower Pyrenees, upon the river Guyzon.

- (5) *From this deep strait, called Roncesvalles, glide, &c.*

The valley of Roncesvalles, so famous in the chronicles of that age, is upon the frontiers of Spain and Gascony. The Irat issues from this valley, and waters the plains of Ossa and of Garalt. All the Spanish romance-writers have pretended that Charles and his twelve peers were beaten at Roncesvalles by their troops, and that Roland and the greater number of the peers lost their lives. Charles was never in Spain: and this fable has no other foundation than the treachery of the duke of Gascony, who, in conjunction with the Moors, surprised Roland, accompanied by a few soldiers, at Roncesvalles.

- (6) *At Roncesvalles where Maesca rose, &c.*

Maesca was a village on the Higher Pyrenees, near which the two mountains, which formed the valley of Roncesvalles, leant towards each other.

(7) *Those fabled giants, who besieged the skies.*

In the palace of the dukes of Mantua, beyond the walls of the city, Julio Romano, a pupil of Raphael, has painted upon the walls and the cupola of one of the saloons, the fall of the Titans. It is one of the master-pieces of painting: the effect which it produces not being surpassed by any other painting in fresco.

(8) *If e'er thou seest the cherished of my heart, &c.*

The famous Angelica, so much celebrated by our romance-writers, and immortalized by Ariosto.

NOTES TO CANTO VII.

(1) *Nice opens her ramparts to our armed band.*

Nicee or Nice, a maritime city celebrated for the mildness of its climate, made part of the march or frontier of Provence.

(2) *Antice or Sergius lifted to his place.*

Antice and Sergius, Roman priests in the interests of Didier at Rome.

(3) *While slowly climbing Somma's sandy height.*

Somma is a mountain near Spoleto.

(4) *In deathless numbers by the Theban bard.*

Pindar, who in his odes celebrates the men and horses who were victorious in the Olympic games.

(5) *That o'er Ravenna tower, so famed of old.*

Ravenna, under the emperor Honorius, son of the great Theodosius, became the residence of the court. Afterwards it was the capital of the exarchate and the residence of the exarch, who governed all the provinces of Italy in the name of the emperor of Constantinople.

(6) *Thy god, Irmensul, henceforth I adore.*

Irmensul, the god of the ancient Saxons, is thought to have been the same with Mars. Human victims were sacrificed to him.

(7) *All now bespeak the harvest tide at hand.*

The period marked by these lines is the month of June, in which some crops are gathered in Lombardy, and they prepare to reap the rest.

(8) *If Alboin's blood*

Still through your veins preserve its wonted flood.

Alboin, chief of the Lombards, who invaded Italy, was famous for his impetuous courage.

(9) Slight walls the precincts guard.

The ancient walls of Rome, repaired by the emperor Aurelian, still exist, but they terminate at both extremities with the Tiber. The church of St. Peter and the Vatican are beyond the Tiber. The popes united them to the ancient fortifications by walls less thick than those of Aurelian. Pope Adrian fortified this part of the city by ditches.

(10) And shown no saving-care for kindred blood.

The first race of the kings of France offers a frightful picture of fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, uncles, and nephews, assassinated by each other to secure the throne. Clovis himself was stained with the blood of many of his relations. Historians seem to forget, that wretched beings, covered with crimes, can never be great men; and that, instead of a foolish admiration, horror and execration are the only sentiments which such princes ought to inspire.

(11) From lofty Tusculum the chief's domain.

Near the ancient Tusculum arose in the middle ages, the rock of the counts of Tusculum, the ruins of which still remain. These counts were powerful vassals of the holy see: their race is extinct. The twentieth canto furnishes more details on this subject.

(12) The Nar and Tiber roll with furious sweep.

The bridge of the Nera or Nar, built by Augustus, near the confluence of the Nar and Tiber, the ruins of which still remain.

(13) Armelia's sister shares his crown and hand.

A sister of Armelia married the duke of Beneventum, whose dominions comprised all the present kingdom of Naples except Lucania and some districts possessed by the emperors of Constantinople.

(14) From high Lucania to Vulturinus' shores.

The Vulturinus, a river which flows through part of the kingdom of Naples.

(15) Cassin, Garganus, proud resistance made.

There was a church and monastery on Mount Garganus, famous in the kingdom of Naples.

NOTES TO CANTO VIII.

(1) *Where through the vale Arc rolls his silver stream.*

The Arc descends from the Alps, and passes the south of Savoy; it is thought to derive its name from the rapidity of its course. It empties itself into the Isere.

(2) *His faith, so lately sworn, the Lombard broke.*

Astolph, conquered by Pepin, promised to restore to the Holy See the territories which he had invaded. But after Pepin withdrew he recommenced the war, and went to besiege Rome. Pepin returned to Italy, beat the Lombards again, and obliged them to restore the Exarchate and Pentapolis to the Holy See.

(3) ————— *the Cotian mountain.*

Mount Cotius was the ancient name of Mount Cenis and Mount Genevre, high mountains of the Alps, which must be passed in travelling from France to Italy. The Cottian Alps derive their name from Cottius, who, in the reign of Augustus, possessed himself of an independent state among these mountains, consisting of twelve cantons.

(4) ————— *in an isle approved*

For warriors brave—————

Cirnos is the ancient name of the island of Corsica. Strabo says that this name was given it by Cirnos, son of the Phœnician Hercules, who established himself here. This island, remarkable for its manners at once pastoral and warlike, was often ravaged by the Saracens, who, in the time of Charles Martel, established themselves there in the city of Aleria, and reigned over the coasts and a considerable part of the interior. The islanders resisted the Saracens as they had resisted the Romans, the Carthaginians, &c. and retired into their mountains there to defend their liberty. Charles Martel, after his victory at Poitiers, passed over in person into Corsica, and there beat the Saracens in three successive engagements. After the departure of the conqueror, the Moors again appeared, and regained the ascendant. They were not entirely driven out till the old

age of Charlemagne, by the troops whom that emperor and pope Adrian sent there; and Corsica was then annexed to the domains of the Church. Hugh Colonna, a Roman baron, and one of the chiefs of the expedition, was named count of Corsica under the sovereignty of the Holy Sec.

The deliverance of Corsica from the yoke of the Saracens, thirty years after the destruction of the Lombards, appeared to me to present a fit subject for a second epic poem, in which, after the example of Homer in his *Odyssey*, the reminiscences of the former poem might be collected, and domestic and insular manners be more closely painted. This task I have endeavoured to accomplish in a poem entitled the *Cirneid*, the hero of which is *Isolier*. This work will appear some time after Charlemagne.

The city of Ajaccio is said to have been founded by Euryaces, son of Ajax the Telamonian. Many Greek colonies in different ages took refuge in Corsica. These circumstances have allowed me to intermix with the recollections of Charlemagne those of ancient Greece, while celebrating an island to which nothing is wanting but poets and historians, and which has been distinguished by its love of independence above all European nations.

Charles Martel (or, *the hammer*,) so called because he *hammered down* his enemies without ceasing, pursued the Saracens into Corsica after the battle of Tours, and defeated them in the gulf of Ajaccio. There is yet to be seen in the mountains of Corsica a fountain which bears the name of Charles Martel. (*See the History of Corsica by the abbe de Germanes.*)

(5) *Of hapless Elbe and Weser* —————

The Elbe and Weser, great rivers of Germany, whose banks were possessed by the Saxons in the eighth century.

(6) *Three Mon-maures next* —————

Mon maure, or Montmorenci; the origin of this name is explained in the twentieth canto.

(7) *Rialto long owned Zeno for its lord.*

Rialto is the principal of the islands which Venice incloses in its bosom. The name of Venice was given to the island of Rialto by Pepin, son of Charlemagne, and king of Italy. We know that at the end of the sixth century some families of Pa-

dua, and other cities of Italy, to avoid the fury of the Lombards, conducted by their king, the famous Alboin, took refuge in the marshy parts of the Adriatic. Rialto became the centre of these establishments. The first doge of Rialto was Paul Anafesto, in the year 709. These doges were elected for life, and they even named their successors, till, in the year 1172, their power was limited by the senate. Charlemagne, conqueror of the Lombards, confirmed the republican government of Rialto, and his son Pepin, following the example of his father, granted many privileges to this republic, which he called Venetia, from the Veneti, the name of a people who inhabited the neighbouring continent. The Zenos and Pisani, distinguished among the most ancient families of Venice, have given many doges to their country.

(8) *He saw the light amid the Armoric plains.*

Armorica, or Bretagne, in France. The conformity acknowledged by many learned men between the Armoric, Welsh, and Celtic, or ancient Gaulish languages, and many other customs of these people, give reason for believing that the Bretons and Welsh descend from those ancient Celts who carried their victorious arms into Italy, Greece, &c. See on this subject the valuable work on Celtic origin by La Tour d'Auvergne, a descendant of Turenne.

(9) *He, Angibert, in eloquence renowned.*

Charlemagne founded in his palace an academy of belles lettres, the members of which took the names of those ancients they most admired. Alcuin, a learned Englishman, the master of Charlemagne, called himself Flaccus Albinus, Charles called himself David, and Angibert Homer. This germ of an academy unfolded itself in time, and we are said to owe to it the establishment of the university of Paris.

(10) *Of old Jove's temple here had raised its head.*

Mount Jove; one of the highest summits of the Alps, derives its name from the temple of Jovis or Jupiter, of which there are now no remains; but the name of Mount Jove has been preserved to our age.

(11) *Ah, who but we assistance could convey?*

On various summits of the Alps the Christians have erected convents to assist travellers surprised by storms or avalanches amidst the snows. Some of these convents still exist.

(12) *Thus by the bard the gleamy shades are shown.*

The bard by way of excellence: Ossian, a Scotch poet, whose poems Mr. Macpherson has collected and set in order, and Cesarotti has so successfully translated into Italian. Fingal was the father and hero of the poet, Oscar his son. Various translators, and particularly Mr. Bahour Lormian, have lately brought us acquainted in France with this fine genius, the glory of Scotland.

(13) *Antæus dire.*

Antæus according to the fables, was a giant of Libya, the son of Neptune and Terra. Hercules strangled him by lifting him from the ground into the air; for the Earth, his mother, as often as he touched it, supplied him with new vigour.

NOTES TO CANTO IX.

(1) *Far òe the Pagan's lying dream from me.*

Christian poets have given themselves up too much to the recollections of the pagan hell: Tasso himself, that worthy rival of Homer and Virgil, and the sublime poet of Paradise, have represented Satan, like Pluto, encircled by his court. Pluto reigned in Tartarus, as Jupiter did in heaven, and Neptune over the sea. Homer and Virgil represented them rightly as divinities; but Lucifer has nothing in common with Pluto: and we must regret, that, in this point, the noble genius of Tasso and of Milton have been enslaved by mythology.

(2) ————— *When late my rage
Had closed a feeble pontiff's sinking age.*

The murder of the bishop Wilfrid in the church of Spoleto. The infernal intervention introduced upon this subject, in the first canto, with little eclat, is confirmed and developed in this soliloquy.

(3) *The murderer of Remus groans with Cain.*

Romulus, who killed his brother Remus, and thus became the chief of the barbarians who founded the city of Rome. Rhea or Cybele, mother of the heathen gods.

(4) *O'er his too lengthened life now sheds remorseful tears.*

Scander, or Alexander, who died so young, and yet died so much too late for the interests of humanity, was the murderer of Parmenio, to whom he owed a part of his success, of the philosopher Callisthenes, and of Clitus, who had saved his life at the passage of the Granicus.

What were the results of the victories of this much admired man? After his death Asia was for many ages distracted by domestic and foreign wars; Greece, weakened by a considerable emigration into the kingdom of Egypt, Syria, and the other provinces of Asia, was unable to defend itself against the Gauls, who invaded it forty years after the death of Alexander, and

against the Romans, who subsequently conquered it. The sons of Alexander did not inherit even Macedonia. They were killed, as was also the queen Olympias, his mother, in the civil wars. Thus was this boasted conqueror the scourge of his friends, of Asia, Greece, and his own family.

(5) *Octavius reads, still reads the guilty page.*

Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus, the triumvirs, drew out the fatal lists of proscription. Every one of them gave up reciprocally his friends, his relations; and by order of these three monsters the Roman people were gorged with the blood of the most illustrious victims. At a later period, the fortunate Octavius, under the name of Augustus, softened his character, and reigned as a great man. Virgil and Horace have been too forgetful of the triumvirate in praising their master: the object of poetry ought to be to inspire a horror of guilt, and love of virtue: she is degraded when she prostitutes herself to the celebration of tyrants.

(6) *But farther on dark Nero is descried,
Assassin of his brother, matricide.*

Domitius, or Nero. Seneca, whose life gave the lie to his writings, dared to write the apology for the murder of Agrippina, which Nero pronounced before the senate. History does not offer a more hideous spectacle than this false sage thus praising the paricide committed by his pupil.

(7) *Timoleon there, with Manlius, mourns his guilt;
There either Brutus rues the blood he spilt.*

Manlius Torquatus, consul and dictator in the year 340 before Christ, commanded the Roman army against the Latins. He had forbidden all duels: his son, provoked by a chief of the enemy, suffered himself to be carried away by his courage, accepted the challenge, and overcame his adversary. The savage consul ordered the conqueror to appear before his tribunal, and to be put to death for his disobedience. He then returned to Rome, where a triumph was decreed to him for his victories; but the young men, indignant at his barbarity, refused to march before his chariot. Timoleon, contemporary with Manlius, lived at Corinth; his brother, Timophanes, having wished to usurp the sovereign power, Timoleon conspired against him, and deprived him of his life. He received the reward of his fratri-

cide, and the Corinthians raised him to the first dignities of the republic. The first Brutus condemned his son to death for having conspired in favour of the Tarquins; and owing to this parricide, he preserved his power. The second Brutus, in spite of the ties of blood, killed the merciful Cæsar, and became by this crime the chief of a party, which Antony and Octavius soon destroyed. These are the heroes before whom the schools have prostrated themselves! The crimes of an ungovernable pride and ambition were transformed by these false philosophers into sublime virtues. How has the light of the gospel illumined our minds as to the false and revolting wisdom of these parricides, whatever may be the veil with which they cover themselves!

(8) *Clothaire and Chilperic—
And Fredegonde.*

Fredegonde, wife of Chilperic, the first king of France, marked every day of her life by some atrocity. She shed the blood of princes and bishops, of the children of her husband, and even her husband himself. Clothaire, the first son of Clovis, and Chilperic, son of Clothaire, and husband of Fredegonde, are too well known in our history by the murders of their wives, sons, and nephews.

(9) *Herod.*

Herod, king of Judea, the favourite by turns of Antony and Augustus, sacrificed to his suspicions his wife Mariamne, whom he had greatly loved, his two sons, Aristobulus and Alexander, and a thousand other victims. He perished consumed by a horrid disease, and devoured by worms, which crept out of his body. Knowing that the day of his death was to be a day of festival for the Jews, he ordered the heads of the nation to be confined in the Circus, where they might be sacrificed at the moment of his death, to the end that every family might then shed tears. This testament of blood was not executed. The monster raised a temple and two altars to his protector Augustus.

(10) *Saul.*

Saul, king of Israel, persecuted David: learning that the high-priest Abimelech had received David at Nob, he commanded that this high-priest, and all the priests in his family, might be put to death before him. Doeg, the Idumean, dared not dis-

bey this sacrilegious order, and he massacred the whole family of Abimelech. Saul, defeated by the Philistines in the year 1055 before Christ, put himself to death in the field of battle.

(11) *Abimelech.*

Abimelech, the natural son of Gideon, after the death of his father, usurped the power in the city of Sichem; and to secure it, he himself murdered on the same stone seventy of his brothers. Jonathan was the only one who escaped his rage.

(12) *Antiochus, &c.*

Antiochus Epiphanes, murderer of seven brothers of the Maccabees; Constantius, the second son of Constantine the great, an Arian, and persecutor of the Catholics; Maxentius, the rival of Constantine, who was conquered at the battle of the Labarum. Tiberius, successor of Augustus, Diocles, or Diocletian, and Galerius, were all three signalized amongst the Roman emperors by their persecutions of the Christians. Alaric, king of the Goths, pillaged Rome at the beginning of the fifth century.

NOTES TO CANTO X.

(1) *One field, one day, earth's guilty thraldom broke.*

The battle of Tours, which decided the fate of Europe, between the Saracens, commanded by the viceroy Abderama, and Charles Martel.

(2) *Attack those hills, where lurks the patriot band.*

Pelagius was descended from the Gothic kings who reigned in Spain before the Moors. He retired into the mountains of Asturia; and the famous grotto of Covagonda became his retreat. The posterity of Pelagius preserved their independence among these rocks; and, some ages after, they sallied out of them, and, step by step, drove the Moors from their possessions. The Christian religion, preserved and transmitted by these heroes in their Asturian retreat, at length destroyed Mahometanism in the peninsula, under the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella.

(3) *This prince, when Omnius' royal offspring bled,
Alone the sword of Syrian murder fled.*

In 752, Mervan II, last caliph of the race of the Omniades, was conquered, put to death, and succeeded by Abbas, chief of the dynasty of the Abbassides. This Abbas, upon his accession, ordered a general pardon to be proclaimed for all the princes of the Omniades who should betake themselves to his palace. The unfortunate men, induced by this amnesty, came to him in crowds. The ferocious Abbas put them all to death; and having ranged their bodies upon the ground, he had them covered with boards, and upon the bleeding remains of his victims a splendid entertainment was served up for his courtiers. One sole survivor of the race of the Omniades, Abderama, saved himself in Egypt, and passed over into Spain, where the Saracen kings acknowledged him as caliph of the west, and crowned him in the city of Cordova. This prince, feeble at first in the midst of the rival kings by whom he was aggrandized, finally subdued them all, and reigned gloriously more than thirty years. He patronized the sciences and agriculture, and succeeded in polishing the manners of the Spanish Arabians.

We must not confound this **Abderama**, first caliph of the west, with the **Abderama** whom Charles Martel vanquished at the battle of Tours, forty years before. The **Abderama** of Tours was viceroy of Spain for the eastern caliph of the race of the **Omniades**. The famous caliph **Haroun Alraschid** was one of the successors of this ferocious **Abbas**, the murderer of all the **Omniades**. In the old age of Charlemagne, **Haroun** sent him a celebrated embassy, the details of which will be found in the fifth canto of the *Cirneid*.

(4) *Blest, for his friend a mighty king to know,
And (happier still!) his rival caliph's foe.*

Constantine, son of **Leo**, like almost all the Greek emperors, was at war with the caliphs of the east, whose residence was **Bagdat**. He made haste to acknowledge the caliph of the west in order to divide the power of the Moors. This league, so conformable to the interests of the two sovereigns of **Constantinople** and **Cordova**, was renewed under many of their successors.

(5) ———— *He rests his steady sight
On Eresbourg's fair towers.*———

Eresbourg was the principal town of the Saxons, taken and destroyed by **Pepin**; it suffered the same treatment from **Charlemagne**. The sacred forest of the **Druids** extended in the neighbourhood of **Eresbourg** upon the banks of the **Rora**, about ten or twelve leagues from **Cologne**.

(6) *Since first their wandering multitude confest,
With Adelinde's rude sire, the Christian light.*

The father of **Adelinde** was the chief of the **Suevians**, who frequently changed their country, or rather their encampment, before **Pepin** conquered, and converted, and fixed them upon the banks of the **Maine**, in order to defend his frontiers.

(7) *Sunk in that Saxon forest's last retreat
Was dire Irmensul's solitary seat.*

Irmensul was the god of the Saxons. His name has been supposed to be derived from **Mars**, and corrupted through various dialects in the lapse of time. To this idol they offered human victims.

(8) *His body rests upon a monstrous spear.*

The statue of **Irmensul** was in fact clad in brass, completely armed, and holding a balance, as an emblem of the fate of battle.

NOTES TO CANTO XI.

(1) *On Umbria's heights great Didier may detain.*

Umbria, or the duchy of Spoleto, is a province of the Roman states, between the limits of Ancona and the duchy of Urbino. The Lombards had invaded this province, which Charlemagne afterwards gave to the holy see.

(2) *That lake of Thrasymene so dire to Rome.*

The lake of Thrasymene, or Perugia, between Rome and Florence, is famous for the victory which Hannibal gained over the Roman general Flaminius.

(3) *Hurried along by strange and sudden force,
The bark pursues the infernal current's course.*

In the gulf of Lyons there are frequently found rapid and violent currents, that carry vessels towards the coasts of Spain.

(4) *And neared the expected port of Hercules.*

The port of Hercules, or Porto Ercole, is on the Tuscan coast, between Leghorn and Civita Vecchia.

(5) *In vain—within Hamilcar's gulf they ride.*

The gulf of Hamilcar, or of Barcelona. This city, founded by Hamilcar Barca, derives its name from its founder.

(6) *O'er the smooth marble floors that shine around,
In wanton groups the pictured Houris bound.*

The Houris are the beauties with whom Mahomet has peopled his paradise; and whom he promises to his believers. The Spanish Moors at Cordova, and afterwards at Grenada and in other provinces, carried architecture, luxury, and the arts and sciences, to the highest pitch of refinement. We still see at Grenada the magnificent ruins of the Alhambra, or the palace of the kings of Grenada. M. de la Borde, in his picturesque survey of Spain, leaves us nothing to wish for on this subject.

(7) *Till Bordeaux, o'er her ancient towers, descries.*

The city of Bordeaux was the capital of that part of Aquitania, which fell to Carloman at the death of Pepin. This city had been long illustrious under the Roman emperors.

NOTES TO CANTO XII.

(1) *Since from the Necker's bank his course began.*

The Necker, Neere, or Niger, takes its source to the north of the Danube, in the Black Forest, and throws itself into the Rhine at Mannheim, after having received in its course the Ents, the Muhr, and some other small rivers.

(2) *The Saxon's o'er the Maine.*

The Maine a great river of Germany, takes its source in Franconia, washes the bishopric of Bamberg, passes Francfort, and throws itself into the Rhine at the gates of Mayence.

(3) *Through Augsbourg's walls.*

Vindelicia, a province to the south of the Danube, which formed a part of the duchy of Bavaria. Augsbourg, or Augusta Vindelicorum, was the capital of it.

(4) *Twelve thousand soldiers near Lorissa's towers.*

Loris or Laurissa, a Roman colony, between Mayence and the embouchure of the Necker into the Rhine.

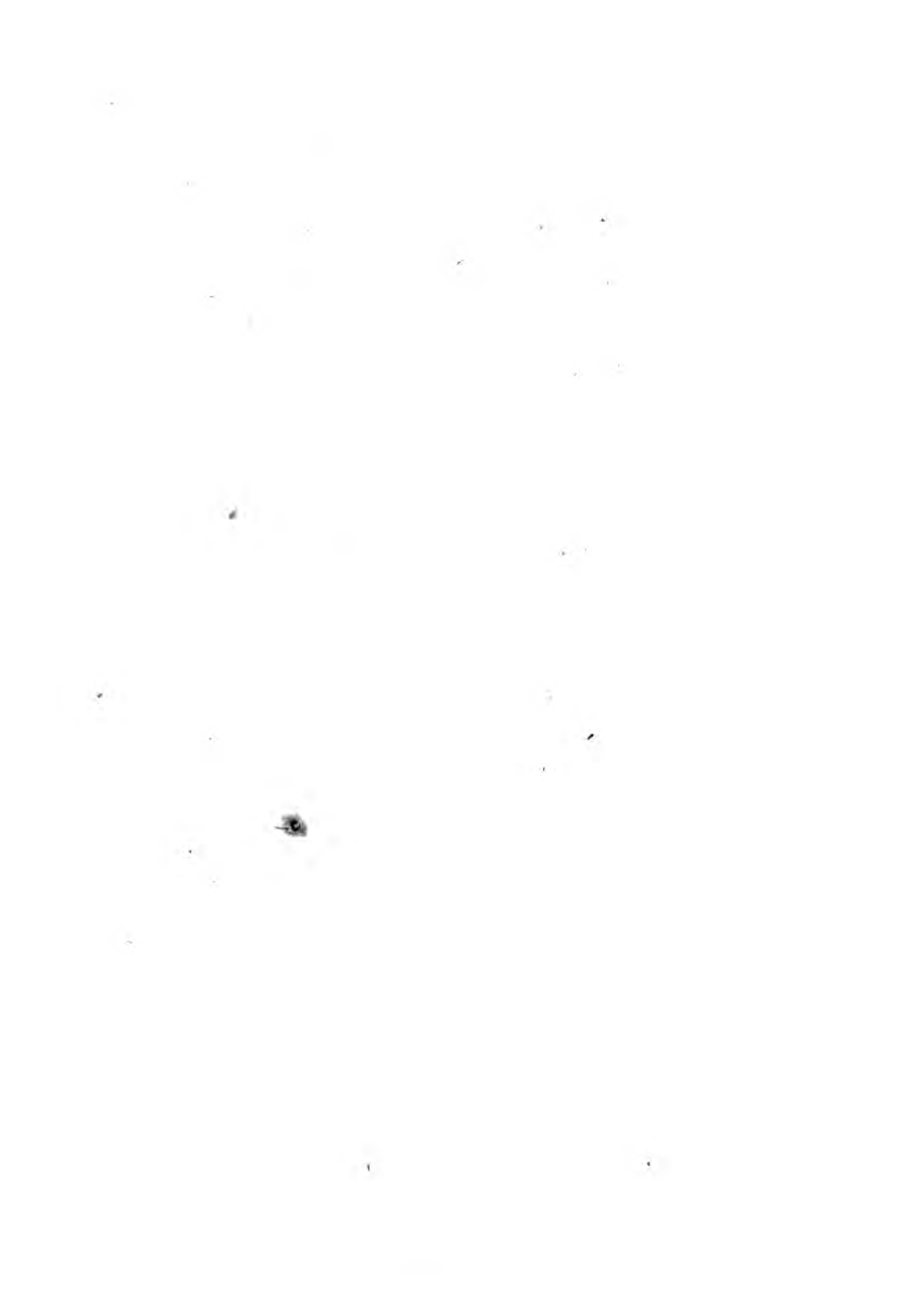
(5) *And held by Soler's walls their backward post.*

Soler was between the embouchure of the Necker and Loris, opposite Alta Regia.

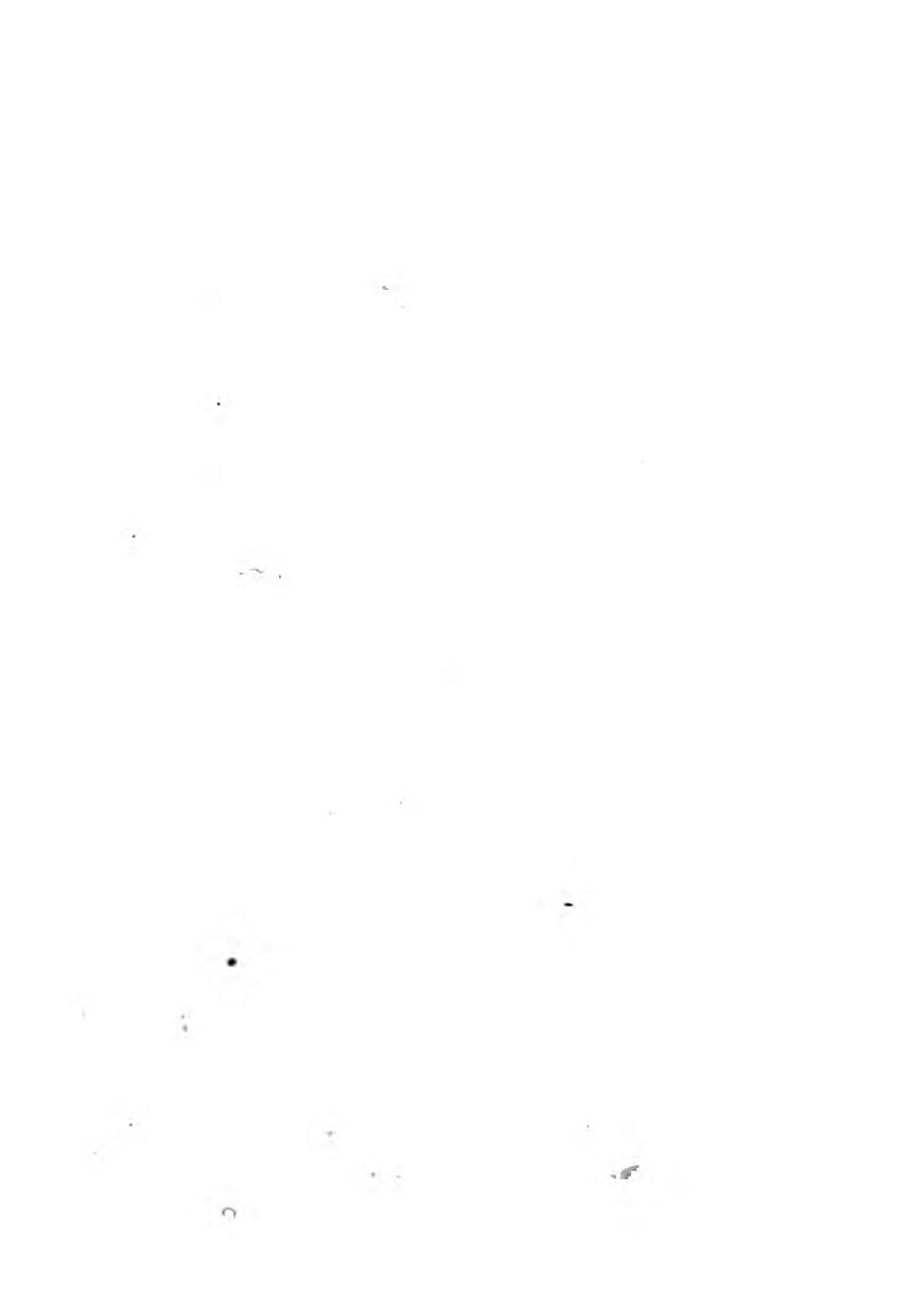
(6) *In Hombour's plains encamped the Saxons find.*

Hombour, some leagues from Francfort on the Maine, to the north of this river.













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