

severed by the successful revolts of the subject nations. The name of the Huns ceased for some centuries to inspire terror in Western Europe, and their ascendancy passed away with the life of the great king by whom it had been so fearfully augmented.*

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS BETWEEN THE BATTLE OF CHALONS, A.D. 451, AND THE BATTLE OF TOURS, A.D. 732.

A.D. 476. The Roman empire of the West extinguished by Odoacer.

481. Establishment of the French monarchy in Gaul by Clovis. 455-582. The Saxons, Angles, and Frisians conquer Britain, except the northern parts and the districts along the west coast. The German conquerors found eight independent kingdoms.

533-568. The generals of Justinian, the Emperor of Constantinople, conquer Italy and North Africa; and these countries are for a short time annexed to the Roman empire of the East.

568-570. The Lombards conquer great part of Italy.

570-627. The wars between the emperors of Constantinople and the kings of Persia are actively continued.

622. The Mohammedan era of the Hegira. Mohammed is driven from Mecca, and is received as Prince of Medina.

629-632. Mohammed conquers Arabia.

632-651. The Mohammedan Arabs invade and conquer Persia.

632-709. They attack the Roman empire of the East. They conquer Syria, Egypt and Africa.

709-713. They cross the Straits of Gibraltar, and invade and conquer Spain.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BATTLE OF TOURS, A.D. 732.

The events that rescued our ancestors of Britain and our neighbors of Gaul from the civil and religious yoke of the Koran.—GIBBON.

The broad tract of campaign country which intervenes between

* If I seem to have given fewer of the details of the battle itself than its importance would warrant, my excuse must be, that Gibbon has enriched our language with a description of it, too long for quotation and too splendid for rivalry. I have not, however, taken altogether the same view of it that he has. The notes to Mr. Herbert's poem of "Attila" bring together nearly all the authorities on the subject.

the cities of Poitiers and Tours is principally composed of a succession of rich pasture lands, which are traversed and fertilized by the Cher, the Creuse, the Vienne, the Claine, the Indre, and other tributaries of the River Loire. Here and there the ground swells into picturesque eminences, and occasionally a belt of forest land, a brown heath, or a clustering series of vineyards breaks the monotony of the widespread meadows; but the general character of the land is that of a grassy plain, and it seems naturally adapted for the evolutions of numerous armies, especially of those vast bodies of cavalry which principally decided the fate of nations during the centuries that followed the downfall of Rome, and preceded the consolidation of the modern European powers.

This region has been signalized by more than one memorable conflict; but it is principally interesting to the historian by having been the scene of the great victory won by Charles Martel over the Saracens, A.D. 732, which gave a decisive check to the career of Arab conquest in Western Europe, rescued Christendom from Islam, preserved the relics of ancient and the germs of modern civilization, and re-established the old superiority of Indo-European over the Semitic family of mankind.

Sismondi and Michelet have underrated the enduring interest of this great Appeal of Battle between the champions of the Crescent and the Cross. But, if French writers have slighted the exploits of their national hero, the Saracenic trophies of Charles Martel have had full justice done to them by English and German historians. Gibbon devotes several pages of his great work* to the narrative of the battle of Tours, and the consideration of the consequences which probably would have resulted if Abderrahman's enterprise had not been crushed by the Frankish chief. Schlegel speaks of this "mighty victory" in terms of fervent gratitude, and tells how "the arm of Charles Martel saved and delivered the Christian nations of the West from the deadly grasp of all-destroying Islam;" and Ranket points out, as "one of the most important epochs in the history of the world, the commencement of the eighth century, when on one side Mohammedanism threatened to over-spread Italy and Gaul, and on the other the ancient idolatry of Saxony and Friesland once more forced its way across the Rhine. In this peril of Christian institutions, a youthful prince of Germanic race, Karl Martell, arose as their champion, maintained them with all the energy which the necessity for self-defense calls forth, and finally extended them into new regions."

* Vol. vii., p. 17, *et seq.* Gibbon's sneering remark, that if the Saracen conquests had not then been checked, "perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mohammed, has almost an air of regret.

† "Philosophy of History," p. 331.

‡ "History of the Reformation in Germany," vol. i., p. 5.

Arnold* ranks the victory of Charles Martel even higher than the victory of Arminius, "among those signal deliverances which have affected for centuries the happiness of mankind." In fact, the more we test its importance, the higher we shall be led to estimate it; and, though all authentic details which we possess of its circumstances and its heroes are but meager, we can trace enough of its general character to make us watch with deep interest this encounter between the rival conquerors of the decaying Roman empire. That old classic world, the history of which occupies so large a portion of our early studies, lay, in the eighth century of our era, utterly inanimate and overthrown. On the north the German, on the south the Arab, was rending away its provinces. At last the spoilers encountered one another, each striving for the full mastery of the prey. Their conflict brought back upon the memory of Gibbon the old Homeric simile, where the strife of Hector and Patroclus over the dead body of Cebriones is compared to the combat of two lions, that in their hate and hunger fight together on the mountain tops over the carcass of a slaughtered stag; and the reluctant yielding of the Saracen power to the superior might of the Northern warriors might not inaptly recall those other lines of the same book of the Iliad, where the downfall of Patroclus beneath Hector is likened to the forced yielding of the panting and exhausted wild boar, that had long and furiously fought with a superior beast of prey for the possession of the scanty fountain among the rocks at which each burned to drink.†

Although three centuries had passed away since the Germanic conquerors of Rome had crossed the Rhine, never to repass that frontier stream, no settled system of institutions or government, no amalgamation of the various races into one people, no uniformity of language or habits, had been established in the country at the time when Charles Martel was called to repel the menacing tide of Saracenic invasion from the south. Gaul was not yet France. In that, as in other provinces of the Roman empire of the West, the dominion of the Cæsars had been shattered as early as the fifth century, and barbaric kingdoms and principalities had promptly

* "History of the later Roman Commonwealth," vol. II., p. 317.

† Δέονθ' ὥς, δρινηθήτην,
Ὦτ' ὄρεος κορυφῇ περὶ καμένης ἐλάφοιο,
Ἀμφὼ πεινῶντε, μέλα φρονέοντε μάχεσθον.
II., π'. 756.

Ὦς δ' ὅτε σὺν ἀνάμαντα λέων ἐβηδατο χάριμ,
Τῷ τ' ὄρεος κορυφῇ μέγα φρονέοντε μάχεσθον,
Πίδακος ἀμφ' ὀλίγης· ἐθέλοντι δὲ πύμεν ἀμφῷ.
Πολλὰ δέ τ' ἀσθμαίνοντα λέων ἐδάμασσε βίησιν.
II., π., 822.

arisen on the ruins of the Roman power. But few of these had any permanency, and none of them consolidated the rest, or any considerable number of the rest, into one coherent and organized civil and political society. The great bulk of the population still consisted of the conquered provincials, that is to say, Romanized Celts, of a Gallic race which had long been under the dominion of the Cæsars, and had acquired, together with no slight infusion of Roman blood, the language, the literature, the laws and the civilization of Latium. Among these, and dominant over them, roved or dwelt the German victors; some retaining nearly all the rude independence of their primitive national character, others softened and disciplined by the aspect and contact of the manners and institutions of civilized life; for it is to be borne in mind that the Roman empire in the West was not crushed by any sudden avalanche or barbaric invasion. The Germanic conquerors came across the Rhine, not in enormous hosts, but in bands of a few thousand warriors at a time. The conquest of a province was the result of an infinite series of partial local invasions, carried on by little armies of this description. The victorious warriors either retired with their booty, or fixed themselves in the invaded district, taking care to keep sufficiently concentrated for military purposes, and ever ready for some fresh foray, either against a rival Teutonic band, or some hitherto unassailed city of the provincials. Gradually, however, the conquerors acquired a desire for permanent landed possessions. They lost somewhat of the restless thirst for novelty and adventure which had first made them throng beneath the banner of the boldest captains of their tribe, and leave their native forests for a roving military life on the left bank of the Rhine. They were converted to the Christian faith, and gave up with their old creed much of the coarse ferocity which must have been fostered in the spirits of the ancient warriors of the North by a mythology which promised, as the reward of the brave on earth, an eternal cycle of fighting and drunkenness in heaven.

But, although their conversion and other civilizing influences operated powerfully upon the Germans in Gaul, and although the Franks (who were originally a confederation of the Teutonic tribes that dwelt between the Rhine, the Maine, and the Weser) established a decisive superiority over the other conquerors of the province, as well as over the conquered provincials, the country long remained a chaos of uncombined and shifting elements. The early princes of the Merovingian dynasty were generally occupied in wars against other princes of their house, occasioned by the frequent subdivisions of the Frank monarchy; and the ablest and best of them had found all their energies tasked to the utmost to defend the barrier of the Rhine against the pagan Germans who strove to pass the river and gather their share of the spoils of the empire.

The conquests which the Saracens effected over the southern and eastern provinces of Rome were far more rapid than those achieved

by the Germans in the north, and the new organizations of society which the Moslems introduced were summarily and uniformly enforced. Exactly a century passed between the death of Mohammed and the date of the battle of Tours. During that century the followers of the Prophet had torn away half the Roman empire; and besides their conquests over Persia, the Saracens had overrun Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain, in an unchecked and apparently irresistible career of victory. Nor, at the commencement of the eighth century of our era, was the Mohammedan world divided against itself, as it subsequently became. All these vast regions obeyed the caliph; throughout them all, from the Pyrenees to the Oxus, the name of Mohammed was invoked in prayer, and the Koran revered as the book of the law.

It was under one of their ablest and most renowned commanders, with a veteran army, and with every apparent advantage of time, place, and circumstance, that the Arabs made their great effort at the conquest of Europe north of the Pyrenees. The victorious Moslem soldiery in Spain,

"A countless multitude;
Syrian, Moor, Saracen, Greek renegade,
Persian, and Copt, and Tartar, in one bond
Of erring faith conjoined—strong in the youth
And heat of zeal—a dreadful brotherhood,"

were eager for the plunder of more Christian cities and shrines, and full of fanatic confidence in the invincibility of their arms.

Nor were the chiefs
Of victory less assured, by long success
Elate, and proud of that overwhelming strength
Which, surely they believed, as it had rolled
Thus far unchecked, would roll victorious on,
Till, like the Orient, the subjected West
Should bow in reverence at Mohammed's name;
And pilgrims from remotest Arctic shores
Tread with religious feet the burning sands
Of Araby and Mecca's stony soil.

SOUTHERY'S *Roderick*.

It is not only by the modern Christian poet, but by the old Arabian chroniclers also, that these feelings of ambition and arrogance are attributed to the Moslems who had overthrown the Visigoth power in Spain. And their eager expectations of new wars were excited to the utmost on the reappointment by the caliph of Abderrahman Ibn Abdillah Alghafeki to the government of that country, A.D. 729, which restored them a general who had signalized his skill and prowess during the conquests of Africa and Spain, whose ready valor and generosity had made him the idol of the troops, who had already been engaged in several expeditions into Gaul, so as to be well acquainted with the national character and tactics of the Franks, and who was known to thirst

like a good Moslem, for revenge for the slaughter of some detachments of the True Believers, which had been cut off on the north of the Pyrenees.

In addition to his cardinal military virtues, Abderrahman is described by the Arab writers as a model of integrity and justice. The first two years of his second administration in Spain were occupied in severe reforms of the abuses which under his predecessors had crept into the system of government, and in extensive preparations for his intended conquest in Gaul. Besides the troops which he collected from his province, he obtained from Africa a large body of chosen Berber cavalry, officered by Arabs of proved skill and valor; and in the summer of 732, he crossed the Pyrenees at the head of an army which some Arab writers rate at eighty thousand strong, while some of the Christian chroniclers swell its numbers to many hundreds of thousands more. Probably the Arab account diminishes, but of the two keeps nearer to the truth. It was from this formidable host, after Eudes, the Count of Aquitaine, had vainly striven to check it, after many strong cities had fallen before it, and half the land had been overrun, that Gaul and Christendom were at last rescued by the strong arm of Prince Charles, who acquired a surname,* like that of the war-god of his forefathers' creed, from the might with which he broke and shattered his enemies in the battle.

The Merovingian kings had sunk into absolute insignificance, and had become mere puppets of royalty before the eighth century. Charles Martel, like his father, Pepin Heristal, was Duke of the Austrasian Franks, the bravest and most thoroughly Germanic part of the nation, and exercised, in the name of the titular king, what little paramount authority the turbulent minor rulers of districts and towns could be persuaded or compelled to acknowledge. Engaged with his national competitors in perpetual conflicts for power, and in more serious struggles for safety against the fierce tribes of the unconverted Frisians, Bavarians, Saxons, and Thuringians, who at that epoch assailed with peculiar ferocity the Christianized Germans on the left bank of the Rhine, Charles Martel added experienced skill to his natural courage, and he had also formed a militia of veterans among the Franks. Hallam has thrown out a doubt whether, in our admiration of his victory at Tours, we do not judge a little too much by the event, and whether there was not rashness in his risking the fate of France on the result of a general battle with the invaders. But when we remember that Charles had no standing army, and the independent spirit of the Frank warriors who followed his standard, it seems most probable that it was not in his power to adopt the cautious policy of watching the invaders, and wearing out their strength by delay.

* Martel—The Hammer. See the Scandinavian Sagas for an account of the favorite weapon of Thor.

So dreadful and so widespread were the ravages of the Saracenic light cavalry throughout Gaul, that it must have been impossible to restrain for any length of time the indignant ardor of the Franks. And, even if Charles could have persuaded his men to look tamely on while the Arabs stormed more towns and desolated more districts, he could not have kept an army together when the usual period of a military expedition had expired. If, indeed, the Arab account of the disorganization of the Moslem forces be correct, the battle was as well timed on the part of Charles, as it was, beyond all question, well fought.

The monkish chroniclers, from whom we are obliged to glean a narrative of this memorable campaign, bear full evidence to the terror which the Saracen invasion inspired, and to the agony of that great struggle. The Saracens, say they, and their king, who was called Abdirames, came out of Spain, with all their wives, and their children, and their substance, in such great multitudes that no man could reckon or estimate them. They brought with them all their armor, and whatever they had, as if they were thenceforth always to dwell in France.*

Then Abderrahman, seeing the land filled with the multitude of his army, pierces through the mountains, tramples over rough and level ground, plunders far into the country of the Franks, and smites all with the sword, insomuch that when Eudo came to battle with him at the River Garonne, and fled before him, God alone knows the number of the slain. Then Abderrahman pursued after Count Eudo, and while he strives to spoil and burn the holy shrine at Tours, he encounters the chief of the Austrasian Franks, Charles, a man of war from his youth up, to whom Eudo had sent warning. There for nearly seven days they strive intensely, and at last they set themselves in battle array, and the nations of the North standing firm as a wall, and impenetrable as a zone of ice, utterly slay the Arabs with the edge of the sword.†

The European writers all concur in speaking of the fall of Abderrahman as one of the principal causes of the defeat of the Arabs; who, according to one writer, after finding that their leader was slain, dispersed in the night, to the agreeable surprise of the Christians, who expected the next morning to see them issue from their tents and renew the combat. One monkish chronicler puts the loss of the Arabs at 375,000 men, while he says that only 1007 Christians fell; a disparity of loss which he feels bound to account for by a special interposition of Providence. I have translated

* "Lors issirent d'Espagne li Sarrazins, et un leur Roi qui avoit nom Abdirames, et ont leur femmes et leur enfans et toute leur substance en si grande plente que nus ne le prevoit nombrer ne estimer: tout leur harnois et quantes il avoient amenement avec entz, aussi comme si lis deussent toujours mes habiter en France."

† "unc Abderrahman, multitudine sui exercitus repletam prospiciens terram, etc.—*Script. Gest. Franc.*, p. 785.

above some of the most spirited passages of these writers; but it is impossible to collect from them any thing like a full or authentic description of the great battle itself, or of the operations which preceded and followed it.

Though, however, we may have cause to regret the meagerness and doubtful character of these narratives, we have the great advantage of being able to compare the accounts given in Abderrahman's expedition by the national writers of each side. This is a benefit which the inquirer into antiquity so seldom can obtain, that the fact of possessing it, in the case of the battle of Tours, makes us think the historical testimony respecting that great event more certain and satisfactory than is the case in many other instances, where we possess abundant details respecting military exploits, but where those details come to us from the annalist of one nation only, and where we have, consequently, no safeguard against the exaggerations, the distortions, and the fictions which national vanity has so often put forth in the garb and under the title of history. The Arabian writers who recorded the conquests and wars of their countrymen in Spain have narrated also the expedition into Gaul of their great emir, and his defeat and death near Tours, in battle with the host of the Franks under King Calvus, the name into which they metamorphose Charles Martel.*

They tell us how there was a war between the count of the Frankish frontier and the Moslems, and how the count gathered together all his people, and fought for a time with doubtful success. "But," say the Arabian chroniclers, "Abderrahman drove them back; and the men of Abderrahman were puffed up in spirit by their repeated successes, and they were full of trust in the valor and the practice in war of their emir. So the Moslems smote their enemies, and passed the River Garonne, and laid waste the country, and took captives without number. And that army went through all places like a desolating storm. Prosperity made these warriors insatiable. At the passage of the river, Abderrahman overthrew the count, and the count retired into his stronghold, but the Moslems fought against it, and entered it by force and slew the count; for every thing gave way to their cimeters, which were the robbers of lives. All the nations of the Franks trembled at that terrible army, and they betook them to their king Calvus, and told him of the havoc made by the Moslem horsemen, and how they rode at their will through all the land of Narbonne, Toulouse, and Bordeaux, and they told the king of the death of

* The Arabian chronicles were compiled and translated into Spanish by Don Jose Antonio Conde, in his "Historia de la Dominacion de los Arabos en Espana," published at Madrid in 1820. Conde's plan, which I have endeavored to follow, was to preserve both the style and spirit of his Oriental authorities, so that we find in his pages a genuine Saracenic narrative of the wars in Western Europe between the Mohammedans and the Christians.

their count. Then the king bade them be of good cheer, and offered to aid them. And in the 114th year* he mounted his horse, and he took with him a host that could not be numbered, and went against the Moslems. And he came upon them at the great city of Tours. And Abderrahman and other prudent cavaliers saw the disorder of the Moslem troops, who were loaded with spoil; but they did not venture to displease the soldiers by ordering them to abandon every thing except their arms and war-horses. And Abderrahman trusted in the valor of his soldiers, and in the good fortune which had ever attended him. But (the Arab writer remarks) such defect of discipline always is fatal to armies. So Abderrahman and his host attacked Tours to gain still more spoil, and they fought against it so fiercely that they stormed the city almost before the eyes of the army that came to save it; and the fury and the cruelty of the Moslems toward the inhabitants of the city was like the fury and cruelty of raging tigers. It was manifest," adds the Arab, "that God's chastisement was sure to follow such excesses; and Fortune thereupon turned her back upon the Moslems."

*Near the River Owar,† the two great hosts of the two languages and the two creeds were set in array against each other. The hearts of Abderrahman, his captains, and his men, were filled with wrath and pride, and they were the first to begin the fight. The Moslem horsemen dashed fierce and frequent forward against the battalions of the Franks, who resisted manfully, and many fell dead on either side until the going down of the sun. Night parted the two armies; but in the gray of the morning the Moslems returned to the battle. Their cavaliers had soon hewn their way into the center of the Christian host. But many of the Moslems were fearful for the safety of the spoil which they had stored in their tents, and a false cry arose in their ranks that some of the enemy were plundering the camp; whereupon several squadrons of the Moslem horsemen rode off to protect their tents. But it seemed as if they fled; and all the host was troubled. And while Abderrahman strove to check their tumult, and to lead them back to battle, the warriors of the Franks came around him, and he was pierced through with many spears, so that he died. Then all the host fled before the enemy, and many died in the flight. This deadly defeat of the Moslems, and the loss of the great leader and good cavalier Abderrahman, took place in the hundred and fifteenth year."

It would be difficult to expect from an adversary a more explicit confession of having been thoroughly vanquished than the Arabs here accord to the Europeans. The points on which their narrative differs from those of the Christians—as to how many days the conflict lasted, whether the assailed city was actually rescued or

* Of the Hegira.

† Probably the Loire.

not, and the like—are of little moment compared with the admitted great fact that there was a decisive trial of strength between Frank and Saracen, in which the former conquered. The enduring importance of the battle of Tours in the eyes of the Moslems is attested not only by the expressions of "the deadly battle" and "the disgraceful overthrow" which their writers constantly employ when referring to it, but also by the fact that no more serious attempts at conquest beyond the Pyrenees were made by the Saracens. Charles Martel, and his son and grandson, were left at leisure to consolidate and extend their power. The new Christian Roman empire of the West, which the genius of Charlemagne founded, and throughout which his iron will imposed peace on the old anarchy of creeds and races, did not indeed retain its integrity after its great ruler's death. Fresh troubles came over Europe: but Christendom, though disunited was safe. The progress of civilization, and the development of the nationalities and governments of modern Europe, from that time forth went forward in not interrupted, but ultimately certain career.

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS BETWEEN THE BATTLE OF TOURS, A.D. 732,
AND THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS, A.D. 1066.

A.D. 768-814. Reign of Charlemagne. This monarch has justly been termed the principal regenerator of Western Europe, after the destruction of the Roman Empire. The early death of his brother Carloman left him sole master of the dominion of the Franks, which, by a succession of victorious wars, he enlarged into the new empire of the West. He conquered the Lombards, and re-established the pope at Rome, who, in return, acknowledged Charles as suzerain of Italy. And in the year 800, Leo III., in the name of the Roman people, solemnly crowned Charlemagne at Rome as emperor of the Roman empire of the West. In Spain, Charlemagne ruled the country between the Pyrenees and the Ebro; but his most important conquests were effected on the eastern side of his original kingdom, over the Slavonians of Bohemia, the Avars of Pannonia, and over the previously uncivilized German tribes, who had remained in their fatherland. The old Saxons were his most obstinate antagonists, and his wars with them lasted for thirty years. Under him the greater part of Germany was compulsorily civilized and converted from paganism to Christianity. His empire extended eastward as far as the Elbe, the Saale, the Bohemian Mountains, and a line drawn from thence crossing the Danube above Vienna, and prolonged to the Gulf of Istra.*

* Hallam's "Middle Ages."