

## ARMINIUS.

I have said above that the great Cheruscan is more truly one of our national heroes than Caractacus is. It may be added that an Englishman is entitled to claim a closer degree of relationship with Arminius than can be claimed by any German of modern Germany. The proof of this depends on the proof of four facts: first, that the Cherusicans were Old Saxons, or Saxons of the interior of Germany; secondly, that the Anglo-Saxons, or Saxons of the coast of Germany, were more closely akin than other German tribes were to the Cheruscan Saxons; thirdly, that the Old Saxons were almost exterminated by Charlemagne; fourthly, that the Anglo-Saxons are our immediate ancestors. The last of these may be assumed as an axiom in English history. The proofs of the other three are partly philological and partly historical. I have not space to go into them here, but they will be found in the early chapters of the great work of my friend, Dr. Robert Gordon Latham, on the "English Language," and in the notes to his forthcoming edition of the "Germania of Tacitus." It may be, however, here remarked, that the present Saxons of Germany are of the High Germanic division of the German race, whereas both the Anglo-Saxon and Old Saxon were of the Low Germanic.

Being thus the nearest heirs of the glory of Arminius, we may fairly devote more attention to his career than, in such a work as the present, could be allowed to any individual leader; and it is interesting to trace how far his fame survived during the Middle Ages, both among the Germans of the Continent and among ourselves.

It seems probable that the jealousy with which Marebodius, the king of the Suevi and Marcomanni, regarded Arminius, and which ultimately broke out into open hostilities between those German tribes and the Cherusci, prevented Arminius from leading the confederate Germans to attack Italy after his first victory. Perhaps he may have had the rare moderation of being content with the liberation of his country, without seeking to retaliate on her former oppressors. When Tiberias marched into Germany in the year 10, Arminius was too cautious to attack him on ground favorable to the legions, and Tiberias was too skilful to entangle his troops in the difficult parts of the country. His march and countermarch were as unresisted as they were unproductive. A few years later, when a dangerous revolt of the Roman legions near the frontier caused their generals to find them active employment by leading them into the interior of Germany, we find Arminius again active in his country's defense. The old quarrel between him and his father-in-law, Segestes, had broken out afresh. Segestes now called in the aid of the Roman general, Germanicus, to whom he surrendered himself; and by his contrivance, his daughter Thus-

nelda, the wife of Arminius, also came into the hands of the Romans, being far advanced in pregnancy. She showed, as Tacitus relates,\* more of the spirit of her husband than of her father, a spirit that could not be subdued into tears or supplications. She was sent to Ravenna, and there gave birth to a son, whose life we know from an allusion in Tacitus, to have been eventful and unhappy; but the part of the great historian's work which narrated his fate has perished, and we only know from another quarter that the son of Arminius was, at the age of four years, led captive in a triumphal pageant along the streets of Rome.

The high spirit of Arminius was goaded almost into phrensy by these bereavements. The fate of his wife, thus torn from him, and of his babe doomed to bondage even before its birth, inflamed the eloquent invectives with which he roused his countrymen against the home-traitors, and against their invaders, who thus made war upon women and children. Germanicus had marched his army to the place where Varus had perished, and had there paid funeral honors to the ghastly relics of his predecessor's legions that he found heaped around him.† Arminius lured him to advance a little further into the country, and then assailed him, and fought a battle, which, by the Roman accounts, was a drawn one. The effect of it was to make Germanicus resolve on retreating to the Rhine. He himself, with part of his troops, embarked in some vessels on the Ems, and returned by that river, and then by sea; but part of his forces were intrusted to a Roman general named Cæcina, to lead them back by land to the Rhine. Arminius followed this division on its march, and fought several battles with it, in which he inflicted heavy loss on the Romans, captured the greater part of their baggage, and would have destroyed them completely, had not his skilful system of operations been finally thwarted by the haste of Inguiomerus, a confederate German chief, who insisted on assaulting the Romans in their camp, instead of waiting till they were entangled in the difficulties of the country, and assailing their columns on the march.

In the following year the Romans were inactive, but in the year afterward Germanicus led a fresh invasion. He placed his army on shipboard, and sailed to the mouth of the Ems, where he disembarked, and marched to the Weser, where he encamped, probably in the neighborhood of Minden. Arminius had collected his army on the other side of the river; and a scene occurred, which is powerfully told by Tacitus, and which is the subject of a beautiful poem by Præd. It has been already mentioned that the brother of Arminius, like himself, had been trained up while young

\* "Ann." i. 57.

† In the Museum of Rhenish Antiquities at Bonn there is a Roman sepulchral monument, the inscription on which records that it was erected to the memory of M. Cælius, who fell "Bello Variano."

to serve in the Roman armies; but, unlike Arminius, he not only refused to quit the Roman service for that of his country, but fought against his country with the legions of Germanicus. He had assumed the Roman name of Flavius, and had gained considerable distinction in the Roman service, in which he had lost an eye from a wound in battle. When the Roman outposts approached the River Weser, Arminius called out to them from the opposite bank, and expressed a wish to see his brother. Flavius stepped forward, and Arminius ordered his own followers to retire, and requested that the archers should be removed from the Roman bank of the river. This was done; and the brothers, who apparently had not seen each other for some years, began a conversation from the opposite side of the stream, in which Arminius questioned his brother respecting the loss of his eye, and what battle it had been lost in, and what reward he had received for his wound. Flavius told him how the eye was lost, and mentioned the increased pay that he had on account of its loss, and showed the collar and other military decorations that had been given him. Arminius mocked at these as badges of slavery; and then each began to try to win the other over. Flavius boasting the power of Rome, and her generosity to the submissive; Arminius appealing to him in the name of their country's gods, of the mother that had borne them, and by the holy names of fatherland and freedom, not to prefer being the betrayer to being the champion of his country. They soon proceeded to mutual taunts and menaces, and Flavius called aloud for his horse and his arms, that he might dash across the river and attack his brother; nor would he have been checked from doing so, had not the Roman general Stertinius run up to him and forcibly detained him. Arminius stood on the other bank threatening the renegade, and defying him to battle.

I shall not be thought to need apology for quoting here the stanzas in which Præd has described this scene—a scene among the most affecting, as well as the most striking, that history supplies. It makes us reflect on the desolate position of Arminius, with his wife and child captives in the enemy's hands, and with his brother a renegade in arms against him. The great liberator of our German race was there, with every source of human happiness denied him except the consciousness of doing his duty to his country.

Back, back! he fears not foaming flood  
Who fears not steel-clad line:  
No warrior thou of German blood,  
No brother thou of mine.  
Go, earn Rome's chain to load thy neck,  
Her gems to deck thy hilt;  
And blazon honor's hapless wreck  
With all the gauds of gilt.

But wouldst thou have *me* share the prey?  
By all that I have done,  
The Varian bones that day by day  
Lie whitening in the sun.  
The legion's trampled panoply,  
The eagle's shatter'd wing—  
I would not be for earth or sky  
So scorn'd and mean a thing.

Ho, call me here the wizard, boy,  
Of dark and subtle skill  
To agonize but not destroy,  
To torture, not to kill.  
When swords are out, and shriek and shout  
Leave little room for prayer,  
No fetter on man's arm or heart  
Hangs half so heavy there.

I curse him by the gifts the land  
Hath won from him and Rome,  
The riving axe, the wasting brand  
Rent forest, blazing home.  
I curse him by our country's gods,  
The terrible, the dark,  
The breakers of the Roman rods,  
The smiters of the bark.

Oh, misery that such a ban  
On such a brow should be!  
Why comes he not in battle's van  
His country's chief to be?  
To stand a comrade by my side,  
The sharer of my fame,  
And worthy of a brother's pride  
And of a brother's name?

But it is past! where heroes press  
And cowards bend the knee,  
Arminius is not brotherless,  
His brethren are the free.  
They come around: one hour, and light  
Will fade from turf and tide,  
Then onward, onward to the fight,  
With darkness for our guide.

To-night, to-night, when we shall meet  
In combat face to face,  
Then only would Arminius greet  
The renegade's embrace.  
The canker of Rome's guilt shall be  
Upon his dying name;  
And as he lived in slavery,  
So shall he fall in shame.

On the day after the Romans had reached the Weser, Germanicus led his army across that river, and a partial encounter took place, in which Arminius was successful. But on the succeeding day a general action was fought, in which Arminius was severely

wounded, and the German infantry routed with heavy loss. The horsemen of the two armies encountered, without either party gaining the advantage. But the Roman army remained master of the ground, and claimed a complete victory. Germanicus erected a trophy in the field, with a vaunting inscription, that the nations between the Rhine and the Elbe had been thoroughly conquered by his army. But that army speedily made a final retreat to the left bank of the Rhine; nor was the effect of their campaign more durable than their trophy. The sarcasm with which Tacitus speaks of certain other triumphs of Roman generals over Germans may apply to the pageant which Germanicus celebrated on his return to Rome from his command of the Roman army of the Rhine. The Germans were "*triumphats potius quam victi.*"

After the Romans had abandoned their attempts on Germany, we find Arminius engaged in hostilities with Maroboduus, the king of the Suevi and Marcomanni, who was endeavoring to bring the other German tribes into a state of dependency on him. Arminius was at the head of the Germans who took up arms against this home invader of their liberties. After some minor engagements, a pitched battle was fought between the two confederacies, A. D. 19, in which the loss on each side was equal, but Maroboduus confessed the ascendancy of his antagonist by avoiding a renewal of the engagement, and by imploring the intervention of the Romans in his defense. The younger Drusus then commanded the Roman legions in the province of Illyricum, and by his mediation a peace was concluded between Arminius and Maroboduus, by the terms of which it is evident that the latter must have renounced his ambitious schemes against the freedom of the other German tribes.

Arminius did not long survive this second war of independence, which he successfully waged for his country. He was assassinated in the thirty-seventh year of his age by some of his own kinsmen, who conspired against him. Tacitus says that this happened while he was engaged in a civil war, which had been caused by his attempts to make himself king over his countrymen. It is far more probable (as one of the best biographers\* has observed) that Tacitus misunderstood an attempt of Arminius to extend his influence as elective war-chieftain of the Cherusci, and other tribes, for an attempt to obtain the royal dignity. When we remember that his father-in-law and his brother were renegades, we can well understand that a party among his kinsmen may have been bitterly hostile to him, and have opposed his authority with the tribe by open violence, and, when that seemed ineffectual, by secret assassination.

Arminius left a name which the historians of the nation against

\* Dr. Plate, in "Biographical Dictionary," commenced by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

which he combated so long and so gloriously have delighted to honor. It is from the most indisputable source, from the lips of enemies that we know his exploits.\* His countrymen made history, but did not write it. But his memory lived among them in the lays of their bards, who recorded

The deeds he did, the fields he won,  
The freedom he restored.

Tacitus, writing years after the death of Arminius, says of him, "Canitur adhuc barbaras apud gentes." As time passed on, the gratitude of ancient Germany to her great deliverer grew into adoration, and divine honors were paid for centuries to Arminius by every tribe of the Low Germanic division of the Teutonic races. The Irmin-sul, or the column of Herman, near Eresbergh, the modern Stadtberg, was the chosen object of worship to the descendants of the Cherusci, the old Saxons, and in defense of which they fought most desperately against Charlemagne and his Christianized Franks. "Irmin, in the cloudy Olympus of Teutonic belief, appears as a king and a warrior; and the pillar, the 'Irmin-sul,' bearing the statue, and considered as the symbol of the deity, was the Palladium of the Saxon nation until the temple of Eresbergh was destroyed by Charlemagne, and the column itself transferred to the monastery of Corbey, where perhaps a portion of the rude rock idol yet remains, covered by the ornaments of the Gothic era."† Traces of the worship of Arminius are to be found among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, after their settlement in this island. One of the four great highways was held to be under the protection of the deity, and was called the "Irmin street." The name Arminius is, of course, the mere Latinized form of "Herman," the name by which the hero and the deity were known by every man of Low German blood on either side of the German Sea. It means, etymologically, the "War-man," the "man of hosts." No other explanation of the worship of the "Irmin-sul," and of the name of the "Irmin street," is so satisfactory as that which connects them with the deified Arminius. We know for certain of the existence of other columns of an analogous character. Thus there was the Rolandseule in North Germany; there was a Thor-seule in Sweden, and (what is more important) there was an Athelstan-seule in Saxon England.‡

There is at the present moment a song respecting the Irmin-sul current in the bishopric of Minden, one version of which might seem only to refer to Charlemagne having pulled down the Irmin-sul.

\* See Tacitus, "Ann.," lib. II., sec. 55; Velleius Paterculus, lib. I., sec. 118.

† Palgrave on the "English Commonwealth," vol. II., p. 140.

‡ See Lappenburg's "Anglo-Saxons," p. 375. For nearly all the philological and ethnographical facts respecting Arminius, I am indebted to my friend, Dr. R. G. Latham.

Herman, sla dermen,  
Sla pipen, sla trummen,  
De Kaiser will kummen,  
Met hamer un stangen,  
Will Herman uphangen.

But there is another version, which probably is the oldest, and which clearly refers to the great Arminius.

Un Herman slaug dermen,  
Slaug pipen, slaug trummen;  
De fursten sind kaminen,  
Met all eren-mannen  
Hebt Varus uphangen.\*

About ten centuries and a half after the demolition of the Irmin-sul, and nearly eighteen after the death of Arminius, the modern Germans conceived the idea of rendering tardy homage to their great hero; and accordingly, some eight or ten years ago, a general subscription was organized in Germany for the purpose of erecting on the Osning—a conical mountain, which forms the highest summit of the Teutoberger Wald, and is eighteen hundred feet above the level of the sea—a colossal bronze statue of Arminius. The statue was designed by Bandal. The hero was to stand uplifting a sword in his right hand, and looking toward the Rhine. The height of the statue was to be eighty feet from the base to the point of the sword, and was to stand on a circular Gothic temple ninety feet high, and supported by oak trees as columns. The mountain, where it was to be erected, is wild and stern, and overlooks the scene of the battle. It was calculated that the statue would be clearly visible at a distance of sixty miles. The temple is nearly finished, and the statue itself has been cast at the copper works at Lemgo. But there, through want of funds to set it up, it has lain for some years, in disjointed fragments, exposed to the mutilating homage of relic-seeking travelers. The idea of honoring a hero, who belongs to all Germany, is not one which the present rulers of that divided country have any wish to encourage; and the statue may long continue to lie there, and present too true a type of the condition of Germany herself. †

Surely this is an occasion in which Englishmen might well prove, by acts as well as words, that we also rank Arminius among our heroes.

I have quoted the noble stanzas of one of our modern English poets on Arminius, and I will conclude this memoir with one of the odes of the great poet of modern Germany, Klopstock, on the victory to which we owe our freedom, and Arminius mainly owes his fame. Klopstock calls it the "Battle of Winfeld." The epi-

\* See Grimm, "Deutsche Mythologie," 329.

† On the subject of this statue, I must repeat an acknowledgment of my obligations to my friend, Mr. Henry Pearson.

thet of "sister of Cannæ" shows that Klopstock followed some chronologers, according to whom Varus was defeated on the anniversary of the day on which Paulus and Varro were defeated by Hannibal.

SONG OF TRIUMPH AFTER THE VICTORY OF HERRMAN, THE DELIVERER  
OF GERMANY FROM THE ROMANS.

FROM KLOPSTOCK'S "HERMANN UND DIE FURSTEN."

Supposed to be sung by a chorus of Bards.

A CHORUS.

Sister of Cannæ! \* Winfeld's † fight!  
We saw thee with thy streaming, bloody hair,  
With fiery eye, bright with the world's despair,  
Sweep by Walhalla's bards from out our sight.

Herrman outspake: "Now Victory or Death!"  
The Romans . . . "Victory!"  
And onward rushed their eagles with the cry.  
So ended the first day.

"Victory or Death!" began  
Then, first, the Roman chief; and Herrman spake  
Not, but home-struck: the eagles fluttered—brake  
So sped the second day.

TWO CHORUSES.

And the third came . . . the cry was "Flight or Death!"  
Flight left they not for them who'd make them slaves—  
Men who stab children! flight for them! . . . no! graves!  
"Twas their last day."

TWO BARDS.

Yet spared they messengers: they came to Rome—  
How drooped the plume—the lance was left to trail;  
Down in the dust behind—their cheek was pale—  
So came the messengers to Rome.

High in his hall the emperor sat—  
Octavianus Caesar Augustus sat.  
"They filled up wine-cups, wine-cups filled they up  
For him the highest—wine cups filled they up  
For him the highest, Jove of all their state.

The flutes of Lydia hushed before their voice,  
Before the messengers—the "Highest" sprung—  
The god against the marble pillars, wrung

\* The battle of Cannæ, B.C. 216—Hannibal's victory over the Romans.

† Winfeld—the probable site of the "Herrmanschlacht;" see *supra*.

‡ Augustus was worshipped as a deity in his lifetime.

By the dread words, striking his brow, and thrice  
Cried he aloud in anguish, "Varus! Varus!  
Give back my legions, Varus!"

And now the world-wide conquerors shrunk and feared  
For fatherland and home,  
The lance to raise; and 'mongst those false to Rome  
The death lot rolled,\* and still they shrunk and feared;  
"For she her face hath turned  
The victor goddess," cried, those cowards—(for aye  
Be it!)—"from Rome and Romans, and her day  
Is done"—and still he mourned,  
And cried aloud in anguish, "Varus! Varus!  
Give back my legions, Varus!"†

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS BETWEEN ARMINIUS'S VICTORY OVER VARUS  
AND THE BATTLE OF CHALONS.

A. D. 43. The Romans commence the conquest of Britain, Claudius being then Emperor of Rome. The population of this island was then Celtic. In about forty years all the tribes south of the Clyde were subdued, and their land made a Roman province.

58-60. Successful campaigns of the Roman general Corbulo against the Parthians.

64. First persecutions of the Christians at Rome under Nero.

68-70. Civil wars in the Roman world. The Emperors Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius cut off successively by violent deaths. Vespasian becomes Emperor.

70. Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans under Titus.

83. Futile attack of Domitian on the Germans.

86. Beginning of the wars between the Romans and the Dacians.

98-117. Trajan emperor of Rome. Under him the empire acquires its greatest territorial extent by his conquests in Dacia and in the East. His successor, Hadrian, abandons the provinces beyond the Euphrates which Trajan had conquered.

138-180. Era of the Antonines.

167-176. A long and desperate war between Rome and a great confederacy of the German nations. Marcus Antoninus at last succeeds in repelling them.

192-197. Civil wars throughout the Roman world. Severus becomes emperor. He relaxes the discipline of the soldiers. After his death in 211, the series of military insurrections, civil wars, and murders of emperors recommences.

226. Artaxerxes (Ardisheer) overthrows the Parthian and restores the Persian kingdom in Asia. He attacks the Roman possessions in the East.

\* See *supra*, p. 139.

† I have taken this translation from an anonymous writer in "Frazer," two years ago.

250. The Goths invade the Roman provinces. The Emperor Decius is defeated and slain by them.

253-260. The Franks and Alemanni invade Gaul, Spain, and Africa. The Goths attack Asia Minor and Greece. The Persians conquer Armenia. Their king, Sapor, defeats the Roman Emperor Valerian, and takes him prisoner. General distress of the Roman empire.

268-283. The Emperors Claudius, Aurelian, Tacitus, Probus, and Carus defeat the various enemies of Rome, and restore order in the Roman state.

285. Diocletian divides and reorganizes the Roman empire. After his abdication in 305 a fresh series of civil wars and confusion ensues. Constantine, the first Christian emperor, reunites the empire in 324.

330. Constantine makes Constantinople the seat of empire instead of Rome.

363. The Emperor Julian is killed in action against the Persians.

364-375. The empire is again divided, Valentinian being Emperor of the West, and Valens of the East. Valentinian repulses the Alemanni, and other German invaders from Gaul. Splendor of the Gothic kingdom under Hermanric, north of the Danube.

375-395. The Huns attack the Goths, who implore the protection of the Roman emperor of the East. The Goths are allowed to pass the Danube, and to settle in the Roman provinces. A war soon breaks out between them and the Romans, and the Emperor Valens and his army are destroyed by them. They ravage the Roman territories. The Emperor Theodosius reduces them to submission. They retain settlements in Thrace and Asia Minor.

395. Final division of the Roman empire between Arcadius and Honorius, the two sons of Theodosius. The Goths revolt, and under Alaric attack various parts of both the Roman empires.

410. Alaric takes the city of Rome.

412. The Goths march into Gaul, and in 414 into Spain, which had been invaded by hosts of Vandals, Suevi, Alani, and other Germanic nations. Britain is formally abandoned by the Roman empire of the West.

428. Genseric, king of the Vandals, conquers the Roman province of North Africa.

441. The Huns attack the Eastern empire.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BATTLE OF CHALONS, A. D. 451.

The discomfiture of the mighty attempt of Attila to found a new anti-Christian dynasty upon the wreck of the temporal power of Rome, at the