

and gave him Clotilde's ring and message. Clovis was alike pleased with the favorable report of his messenger and with the judicious advice of the maiden. He sent a deputation at once to Gondebaud, bidding the envoys to make no delay either in going or returning, and to demand of Gondebaud the hand of his niece in marriage.

They found Gondebaud, and found him willing. The request of the powerful Clovis was not one to be safely refused, and the Burgundian king was please^d with the idea of gaining his friendship, by giving him his niece in marriage. He had no suspicion of the hatred that burned concealed in the heart of the injured woman. His consent gained, the deputation offered him a denier and a sou, according to the marriage customs of the Franks, and espoused Clotilde in the name of Clovis. Word was at once sent to Clovis of their success, and without delay the king's council was assembled at Châlons, and preparations made for the marriage.

Meanwhile, news startling to Clotilde had reached Geneva. Aridius was on his way back. He had arrived at Marseilles, and was travelling with all speed towards Burgundy. The alarmed woman, in a fever of impatience, hastened the departure of the Franks, seemingly burning with desire to reach the court of the king, really cold with fear at the near approach of the shrewd Aridius, whose counsel she greatly dreaded. Her nervous haste expedited matters. Gondebaud formally transferred her to the Franks, with valuable gifts which he sent as a marriage portion, and the cortege set out, Clotilde in