

with her weak and confiding husband, perhaps that she might reign alone, perhaps through fear that Chilperic might discover her guilty relations with Landry, an officer of the court, and subsequently mayor of the palace. Whatever the reason, soon after these events, King Chilperic, while in the act of dismounting on his return from the chase, was struck two mortal blows by a man who took to rapid flight, while all around the cry was raised, "Treason! it is the hand of the Austrasian Childerbart against our lord the king!"

The readiness with which this cry was raised seemed evidence of its falsity. Men ascribed it and the murder to emissaries of Fredegonde. But, heedless of their opinions, she installed herself as sovereign guardian of her infant son, and virtual reigning queen of Neustria. It was now the year 584. Fredegonde had by her beauty, ambition, boldness, and unscrupulousness raised herself from the lowly rank of a peasant's daughter to the high position of sovereign over a great dominion, a queenship which she was to hold during the remainder of her life, her strong will, effrontery, artifice, skill in deception, and readiness to strengthen her position by crime, enabling her to overcome all resistance and maintain her ascendancy over the restless and barbarous elements of the kingdom she ruled. She was a true product of the times, one born to become dominant over a barbarous people.

Gregory of Tours tells a story of Chilperic and Fredegonde, which will bear repetition here as a picture of the times. In addition to the sons of Chil-